



December 2011

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Venice, Florida**

THE MESSENGER

- Rector**
James H. Puryear
- Associate Rector**
Earl D. Beshears
- Deacons**
Lynne T. Greene, M.D.
Fran McKinney
- Interim Choir Director**
Lunetta Knowlton
- Interim Organist**
Kathy Pendergrass
- Director of Youth and Family Ministries**
Jackie Overton
- Parish Nurse**
April Merrill, R.N.
- Parish Administrator**
Sandy Albanese
- Administrative Assistant**
Carlotta Woolpert
- Financial Secretary**
Maury Leman
- Preschool Director**
Barbara Levesque
Betty Albee, Assistant
- Sexton**
Vicki Mahon
Jim Gietek, Assistant
- Vestry Members**
Jim Brandt,
Senior Warden
Michael Knowlton,
Junior Warden
Janie Dunn-Rankin,
Secretary
Bob Miles, Treasurer
Elsa Dempsey
Ted George
Roma Johnson
Bob Miller
Debbie Pfender
Dave Sayer
Cathie Tiemeyer
Mack Wilcox
Betty Williams

Waiting for Christmas —The Rev. Earl D. Beshears

“Will Santa come this year?”

“I think so honey but we can never be sure. Santa has so many children to take care of.”

“If Santa doesn’t come, how will I know if it’s because I haven’t been good or because Santa ran out of gifts?”

“You’ll know. If Santa is able to come, he’ll leave something. He might leave presents or he might leave a note.”

“If there’s nothing then it means he ran out of time?”

“That’s the way I understand it. But there’s a good chance he’ll come. He always has.”

“My friends at school say there is no Santa. Is there really a Santa?”

“Mmmmmmm, you ask so many questions.”

Christmas Eve was cold and clear. This would not be a white Christmas. Worship was beautiful. All the candles were lit and the scent of frankincense was in the air. Children sang *Silent Night* and ringing bells filled the air. The old guy in the back had one too many drinks but the ushers helped him. The drive home in the dark was gorgeous - past Christmas lights and mangers and Santa balloons and blinking reindeer.

“If there is not any snow, how will Santa’s sleigh work?”

“Santa has had Christmases without snow before, he’ll manage.”

“Can we leave out some cookies for Santa and carrots for the reindeer?”

“Of course we will, Santa’s favorite is oatmeal raisin.”

Their house seemed dark compared to most of the others. All the lights were off except for one candle in the window. The little candle seemed so feeble against the darkness. They entered through the back door as always and into the kitchen. They put together a plate of cookies and a plate of carrots and set them under the small Christmas tree in the middle of the kitchen table.

“Can I stay up and watch for Santa?”

“No, you need to go to sleep. Morning will be here soon enough. I’ll tuck you in and we’ll say our prayers in a minute.”



In the dark living room, the single candle dimly lit the room. On the end table, the answering machine blinked a steady blink. The message indicator blinked “1” message. She pushed the button.

“Hi, Merry Christmas! I didn’t think I’d get a chance to call but the chaplain got us a phone link. I love you and wish I was home with you. Leave Santa some cookies. He loves oatmeal raisin. The rest of the squad says Merry Christmas. I’m cold but doing fine. Oh God I miss you. You really should take my voice off the answering machine and use yours. Tell my folks Merry Christmas for me. Gotta’ go. Others are waiting for the phone. Love you both, Merry Christmas.”

They snuggled together and hit the play button again and again. The message played over and over. They wiped each other’s tears. They sat there in the dark listening, waiting for Santa and waiting for Christmas morning. They sat waiting for peace.



QUESTIONS ABOUT WORSHIP

Each month, Fr. Jim and Fr. Earl will answer questions about our worship. This month Fr. Jim addresses the following:

What is the meaning behind the Season of Advent and the significance regarding the “colors of Advent?”

Advent (from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming") is a season observed by many Western Christian churches associated with a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas. The Latin *adventus* is the translation of the Greek word *parousia* commonly used in reference to the Second Coming of Christ. For Christians, the season of Advent serves as a reminder both of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of the Messiah as well as the waiting of Christians for Christ's return. Advent is also the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve.

Historically, the primary color of Advent is purple. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. Purple is still used in some traditions (for example Roman Catholic). The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering used during Lent and Holy Week. This points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and death. The nativity, the Incarnation, cannot be separated from the crucifixion.

In recent times, however, Advent has undergone a shift in emphasis, reflected in a change of colors used in many churches. Except in the Eastern churches, the penitential aspect of the Season has been almost totally replaced by an emphasis on hope and anticipation. Most Protestant churches now use blue to distinguish the Season of Advent from Lent. Royal Blue is sometimes used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use Bright Blue to symbolize the night sky, the anticipation of the impending announcement of the King's coming, or to symbolize the waters of Genesis 1, the beginning of a new creation. Many churches also use the color pink or rose on the third Sunday of Advent to mark joy regarding this coming. This does not eliminate any sense of penitence from the Season, though. With the focus on the Advent or Coming of Jesus, especially in anticipating Jesus' Second Advent, there remains a need for preparation for that coming.

The focus, therefore, of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent and his Second Advent and the symbolic spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that Christ is present in the world today, and that Christ will come again in power and glory. Thus, Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God. It is that process which we now participate, and the consummation of which we anticipate. Scripture readings for Advent will reflect this emphasis on the Second Advent, including themes of accountability for faithfulness at Christ's coming, judgment on sin, and the hope of eternal life.

YOU ARE INVITED Soup, Sandwich & Memories

Are you tired of eating lunch alone? Do you like to talk about Christmases past? Do you like those good old songs from the good old days? Do you enjoy a nutritious meal, conversation and laughter with friends?



If the answer to any of these questions is "yes," then join us for soup, sandwich and memories on Wednesday, December 14, 21, 28, and January 4 at noon in Gray Hall. We'll share a delicious lunch and we'll share our memories. If your answer to these questions is "no," you are still invited so join us anyway.

Sign up in the narthex or Gray Hall.

**Soup, Sandwich & Memories
NOON ON WEDNESDAY IN GRAY HALL
DECEMBER 14, 21, 28 AND JANUARY 4**

If you can help with this ministry – serve a meal, drive, cleanup, etc., please call
Lunetta Knowlton at 484.9952.

Brown Bag Christmas Pageant

Something new this year in the way of our Christmas Pageant. The pageant will be presented at the 5:30 Christmas Eve service. Every child who wants to participate will have a costume and a role to play! Just show up by 5:15 to pick the brown bag which will contain your costume. Brief instructions will be given and the play will begin!



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR DIVINE CONSIGN

Showroom Sales & Furniture Movers

Flexible hours between
10 & 4, Tuesday thru Saturday

Contact Debbie Johnson
at the showroom 941.485.3366



Christmas Flowers, Decorations and Poinsettias

In Memory of OR In Thanksgiving for

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY. THANK YOU.

Submitted by: _____ Phone: _____

If you wish to make a donation to help offset the cost of Christmas flowers, please make check payable to St. Mark's Episcopal Church and note "Christmas Flowers" on memo line. Your gift, in any amount, helps to pay for the greenery and poinsettias. Deadline for submission is noon Friday, December 16.

The Messenger is a publication of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Venice, Florida, published and distributed free of charge to the families and friends of St. Mark's parish. *The Messenger* is published monthly with a combined summer issue. Mailing address: St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 513 Nassau Street South, Venice, Florida 34285-2816. Call us at **941.488.7714** or visit us on the web at www.stmarksvenice.org.

December 2011

Issue No. 120

st. mark's youth & family

The Second *Youth Group Work Day* will be held on Sunday, December 4. Your last day to buy tickets and for the drawing is Wednesday, November 30. The youth work really hard and all of the money they raise goes to support their mission trip efforts!

December 14 There will be *no Youth Group* Wednesday, December 14.

December 21 The children and Youth Group will be *caroling at Village on the Isle*. Plan to gather at the church at 5:30 for a quick dinner and head over for caroling at 6 o'clock. This is open to any one who wants to join us for a night of singing and visiting!

The Paper Bag Pageant- We will be trying something different this year for our pageant and will be putting on a Paper Bag Pageant at the 5:30 service on Christmas Eve. The paper bag pageant is meant to be inclusive for everyone including anyone that might be coming to visit from out of town. When you arrive at church you can select your "part" from a paper bag. Inside will be your costume and you simply follow the instructions and come forward when your part is called. Once the Christmas story is told and everyone is gathered around the manger we will bless the crèche!



HOMEMADE *SOUP COOK-OFF* COMING IN FEBRUARY! Let Jackie know if you would like to compete.

Jackie Overton

Director of Youth and Family Ministries (488.7714)

St. Mark's Book Circle - All welcome!

The selection committee of St. Mark's Book Circle has chosen the following books for our monthly discussions:

December 13 (Note date change!):

What's So Amazing About Grace, by Phillip Yancey
Joan Mann, discussion leader

Please feel free to join us whether you have read the books or not. We meet the third Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. in the Picture Room of Gray Hall, unless otherwise announced. Next year we will be reading:

<p>JANUARY—<i>Caleb's Crossing</i>, Geraldine Brooks</p> <p>FEBRUARY—<i>Digging to America</i>, Anne Tyler</p> <p>MARCH—<i>Funny in Farsi</i>, Firoozeh Dumas</p> <p>APRIL—<i>Land Girls</i>, Angela Huth</p> <p>MAY—<i>The Dive from Clausen's Pier</i>, Ann Packer</p> <p>JUNE—<i>Abraham</i>, Bruce Feiler</p> <p>JULY—<i>The Book Thief</i>, Marcus Zusak</p>	<p>AUGUST—<i>Mao's Last Dancer</i>, Li Cunxin</p> <p>SEPTEMBER—<i>The Glassblower of Murano</i>, Marina Fiorato</p> <p>OCTOBER—<i>Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First Hundred Years</i>, Delany et al.</p> <p>NOVEMBER—<i>The Devil in the White City</i>, Erik Larson</p> <p>DECEMBER—<i>Gifts from the Sea</i> Anne Morrow Lindbergh</p>
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Empty Nesters!

Join the 50+ crowd for hors d'oeuvres and beverages on Friday, December 16, 6 p.m. at John & Linda Moore's house. Look for sign-up sheets in narthex and Gray Hall.



TEAM WINSLOW wins golf's top honor!

St. Mark's Men's/Women's Fun Golf Outing is over for the season. This year's overall winning team is:

Al Winslow, Beth Todd, Sue Ardizzoni,
Dave Todd
Team average - 75
Low score - 70

Hope to see everyone back next May!

Safeguarding God's Children

If you need to take the Safeguarding class, watch for announcement in the Sunday bulletin for St. Mark's classes, or check the diocesan website (search on *safeguarding*) for classes being held around the diocese. This class is required of everyone working with children and those wishing to do home visits or lay service. If your certification is more than five years old, it's time to renew. Contact Deacon Fran if you have any questions about *Safeguarding*.

Contribution Envelopes

For those who requested contribution envelopes, they will be available for pick up in the narthex before the end of the year.

Please note:

- (1) Make sure you pick up the envelopes assigned to you. Very important.
- (2) Do NOT use the new envelopes until January 1, 2012.
- (3) Do NOT continue to use your 2011 envelopes after this year. *Throw them out.*

Adhering to the above will insure your contributions are credited to you and not someone else. Thank you!

DONALD HOSTETLER

Thank you to the Hostetler Family for a generous gift in memory of Don Hostetler. We will use the funds to purchase new hymnals. Watch for copies of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* arriving soon. Don Hostetler was a valued member of St. Mark's Choir and will be sadly missed.

Lift Every Voice



and Sing

Grief Group Meeting

For those suffering from any type of loss, contact Deacon Fran about attending the Grief Group gathering scheduled for Thursday, December 15, at 5 p.m. in the Gray Hall Picture Room.

Gifts Received

In Memory of

Donald Hanson
Donald Hostetler
Dar Read
Bob Zettler

by

Mercedes Alcantara
John Allbee & Joanne Peace
Larry & Dorothy Berry
Vonnell R. Burke
Anne M. coggins
Jack & Joanne Hostetler
Roy & Dolly Hostetler
Mary Lou May
Nancy & Bill Rimmey
Dorothy Mae Rice
Dick & Liz Suchanec
Louann Ulanowski
Hubert & Barbara Willis

Remember our shut-ins with prayer and visitation.

Clare Bridge of Venice
Priscilla Craig

HarborChase
Dorn Craig
Hazel Ficker
Barbara Gerrish
Wayne Haviland
Nan Shilling

Harbor Inn of Venice
Bradford Jahnes

Harbor Inn South - Rutland Road
Jean Albanese

Pinebrook Rehab & Nursing Center
Virginia Safford Blais
Dorothy Tucker
Polly Walther

Summit
Mildred Straeffler

Venetian Gardens
Dot Brown

Village on the Isle
Allen Bryant
Ann Dover
Louise Hood
Marguerite Vaughan

Shut-ins at Home
Walt & Jo Bell
John Bishop



Volunteers Corner

This will be a busy month for all of us and especially for many of our scores of ministries at St. Mark's. Here are some particularly needy service opportunities. If you can help, pick up your phone and "jump in."

Soup, Sandwich and Memories – see article on page 2: Simple kitchen help needed on December 14, 21, 28 and January 4. Call Lunetta Knowlton at 484.9952.

Divine Consign – a morning or afternoon once a week. Call Diane Kerin at 488.3219.

Gift Shop – to help on Sundays and at various church functions. Call Judi Pennington at 496.4299.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers for the holiday kettle campaign. Call Steve Plichta, 480.1611.

Messenger: An editor for this monthly Volunteers Corner column. Call Sandy at the church office 488.7714.

CROPWalk coming up in February: Administrative help needed. Call Dave Sayer at 445.5071



For the life of the flesh is in the blood. . . —Leviticus 17:11

Check your Blood Pressure!

Do you check your blood pressure? You can purchase an in-home blood pressure machine; you can stop by your local pharmacy; or visit the Parish Nurse on the first Sunday of the month after the 8:00 and 9:30 services- preferably before coffee & breakfast. Ask for a convenient record keeper to carry with you so you can record your blood pressures where ever you decide to have them checked. The high range of normal is 130/85, but don't wait until you are diagnosed with Hypertension to make some simple life-style changes.

Please consider these preventive measures:

Lose weight – if your BMI is above 25.

Eat a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (they are low in sodium and high in potassium).

Cut back on sodium, avoid prepared foods and avoid the salt shaker at the dining table.

Work up to at least 30 minutes of physical exercise on most days of the week.

If you consume alcohol, do so in moderation (no more than 2 drinks a day for men; and one drink for women).

If you smoke, quit. Contact www.floridaquitline.com for help in quitting.

I look forward to seeing you Sunday morning, December 4, for your B/P check!

April Merrill, R.N.

A note from St. Mark's Preschool children, parents & staff~

We wish you all happy holidays and a blessed Christmas!

And a BIG THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this year's Preschool Winter Wonderland Dinner and Silent Auction a success!

Make a note for the coming year: We are forming a Playground Committee to renovate and update the preschool playgrounds. If you would like to volunteer or have ideas, please call Barb in the preschool office at 484.8707.



Shop St. Mark's Gift Shop for Christmas!

St. Mark's Gift Shop has many new items for Christmas!

Stop by and check us out! - No sales tax.

Remember: Gift Shop proceeds go to benefit the mission and ministries of St. Mark's.

Music News



The search for our new music director has gone very well. We had nearly 50 applicants from all over the United States and a few foreign countries. After prayerful consideration, the Search Committee worked through the process and feel that they have found several excellent candidates. We hope that by the time this newsletter is printed, the clergy will have made a decision as to who will be coming to St. Mark's in early January.

IN THE MEANTIME - Both the Adult and Men's Choir have been very busy. We hope you have enjoyed the various offertory anthems. We also want to let you know that we encourage anyone who likes to sing, and who has a few extra hours each week, to give choir a try. A little hard work sprinkled generously with fun makes a great recipe for success.

Adult Choir rehearsals are: Wednesday, 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Men's Choir rehearsals are: 3rd Tuesday of the month 5 to 6 p.m.

Upcoming Events:

December 7, *Advent Lessons and Carols*

6:15pm following our annual Tree Trimming Dinner in Gray Hall

December 24, *Caroling at St. Mark's* on Christmas Eve

7:30 p.m. (prior to 8 o'clock Holy Communion)

10:00 p.m. (prior to 10:30 Holy Communion)

Contact **Lunetta Knowlton**, **484.9952** if you have questions concerning Music at St. Mark's.

THE REV. KEITH BACKHAUS TO ADDRESS MARKSMEN

Marksmen will meet for dinner and program on **Tuesday, December 20**. Watch for blue sign-up sheets in the narthex and Gray Hall. Our guest speaker will be our own Reverend Keith Backhaus, newly ordained deacon at St. Mark's. Keith will speak to the group on *Aging in the Arms of the Church*. Chef Blow will serve up a great dinner at 6 p.m. sharp and a \$10 donation will be asked. All men of the church are invited to sign up. Guests are welcome. If you have any questions call **Bobby Wood** at **488.0077** or **Chip Andrews** at **485.2170** or **Steve Plichta** at **480.1611**.



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

The deadline for contributions to be included on your 2011 tax return is Saturday, December 31. You can drop in the plate on Saturday night or mail. If you choose to mail, the envelope must bear a 2011 postmark.

Contributions received on Sunday, January 1, will be considered a 2012 contribution—no exceptions, even if you use your old envelopes, which should have been tossed out at the end of 2011. If you have any questions, contact Maury Leman in the church office; 488.7714.

Episcopal Church Women

Women's Evening Fellowship Annual Christmas Party

The Women's Evening Fellowship will enjoy their annual Christmas gathering with potluck and fellowship on Monday, December 12. This will also be our planning party for the new year so please come prepared with ideas for our next course of study. Sign up on the lavender sign-up sheets in the narthex and Gray Hall beginning December 4. Please sign up to bring an appetizer, an entrée, or a dessert. The contact for questions and more information is **Sue Benak** at **485.6114**.

ECW General Membership Meeting

The general membership of the Episcopal Church Women (ECW) will meet on **Tuesday, December 6**. We'll gather in the church at 10:30 a.m. to watch *The Living Nativity* presented by St. Mark's Preschool.

The Christmas Brunch will be held at 11:30 in Gray Hall following the preschool presentation. Reservations required. A sign-up sheet will be in the narthex and Gray Hall. The cost of the luncheon is \$15.00. Make checks payable to St. Mark's ECW. See Joan Mann, 485.0255 for more information and to make reservation.

ECW General Membership Meeting
St. Mark's - Tuesday, December 6, 2011
Deadline to sign up: Friday, December 2

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Send to: *St. Mark's ECW*
% 513 Nassau Street South
Venice, Florida 34285



Upcoming...

January 10, 2012 Episcopal Church Women morning social. No Formal program.

January 23, 2012 ECW Board Meeting

January 29, 2012, Church Periodical Club ingathering.

NO ECW BOARD MEETING IN DECEMBER

UTO BOXES AVAILABLE YEAR ROUND

For those who like to share their blessings year round, pick up one of the blue United Thank Offering coin boxes in the narthex or in Gray Hall. As you feel blessed, make a donation to the box. We will collect them at our Spring Ingathering.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 513 Nassau Street South
 Venice, Florida 34285-2816
 941.488.7714

www.stmarksvenice.org
 email: info@stmarksvenice.com

Please remember St. Mark's in your will.

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*For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God
 that is within you... —2 Timothy 1:6*

Place label here.



December 2011						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Write this down!

- December 4 Second Youth Work Day
- December 4 Parish Breakfast & Free bp check in Gray Hall
- December 6 ECW General Membership Meeting
- December 7 Tree Trimming, Lessons & Carols, Festive Dinner!
- December 12 Women's Evening Fellowship
- December 12 Duplicate Bridge (Erica Crawford)
- December 13 Book Circle—*What's Amazing About Grace* **Date change!**
- December 14 First soup Sandwich Memories Luncheon
- December 15 Grief Group Gathering
- December 16 Empty Nesters at The Moore's
- December 15 Grief Group
- December 15 Vestry Meeting **NOTE DATE CHANGE!**
- December 20 Marksmen Dinner & Program
- December 21 Youth Caroling at Village on the Isle
- December 24 Christmas Eve Service & Pageant at 5:30 (see p. 3)
- December 24 Christmas Eve Services & Caroling (7:30 & 10 p.m.)
- December 25 Christmas Day Service at 10 a.m.
- January 1 New Year's Day Services at 8 and 10 a.m.