

Saint Andrew's Celtic



Advent, 2011

From the Rector.....	Page 2
Christian Formation	Page 5
Farewell from Nancy Maestri.....	Page 9
Financial Questions and Answers.....	Page 9
Announcements.....	Page 12
Stewardship.....	Page 13
From the Office.....	Page 14
Vestry Minutes.....	Page 15

From the Rector

Advent 2011

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness-- on them light has shined. (Isa 9:2)

Every year, it seems like the holiday season starts earlier than it did the year before. We're getting used to seeing Christmas decorations on display in the stores before Halloween is even over. And yet there is something about the week of Thanksgiving that brings home the reality that the holiday season is upon us. Just the sight of a bell-ringing Santa Claus at the grocery store can make us apprehensive about the amount of things we feel we have to get done before Christmas.

Ready or not—that's the message we hear at church, too, during these four weeks before Christmas. Advent is a time of hope and expectancy, not only for the day we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus—that momentous day when Christ first came into the world. Advent is also a time we remember Jesus' promise to return. It is a time we are encouraged to stay awake, to not miss the opportunity to see and welcome the Christ who has come and will come again.

Advent can be a time we become aware of a deep yearning for something more than our own happiness, and the happiness of those we love. It's a yearning that goes beyond that, a yearning that is almost too deep for words. Mingled into our preparations for Christmas is a poignancy that touches us in unexpected ways, as we find ourselves hoping for what we most long for—what so often seems to elude us—in our relationships and in our world. And that is the peace of God.

Here at St. Andrew's, we find ourselves at a crossroads, one that is calling us to a new awareness of what it means to be a people of God in this time and place. We are saying good-bye this month to Nancy Maestri, who has led many Christian Education programs over the years and has been a friend to those with whom she studied and worked. We are becoming more aware of the need for transparency and communication as we struggle to align our resources more carefully with our mission. We are readying ourselves for a planning process that will help us vision our future together. This is a time of change for us, and change always involves loss. Advent gives us an opportunity to sit with any losses we may be experiencing and see where God's light may yet shine in that darkness.

Advent reminds us each year that we are a people of hope. We await the fulfillment of God's promise as broken yet eager people. We look for the light to come again even as we are aware of the encroaching darkness. May the Light of the Christ who came and who comes again shine in your heart and in the hearts of those you love this Advent season.

Carol+

There are several things that we all can do this Thanksgiving season to help fulfill our Mission Statement to “have a special care for all God’s Children in our neighborhood”

The first easy project really belongs in the Christmas season, but we have to plan ahead. It involves making a small bag of gifts for people living with HIV/AIDS who are working with Samaritan Ministry. This is much easier than it may sound, as it really only involves a trip to the drug store and a few minutes of wrapping.

From the Daughters of the King to Samaritan Ministry, with love

Our annual project, filling Christmas bags for Samaritan Ministry's ministry to people living with HIV/AIDS has started. We will be collecting them throughout November, ending on November 27.

Fleece Scarves for Christmas Bags

This year all our Samaritan Ministry bags will include a warm fleece scarf. You can make one with minimal effort, and they are truly appreciated by the recipients. Fleece is currently on sale at Jo-Ann Fabrics. Plaids are the easiest to cut in a straight line. You can make one at home following the instructions below. If you would prefer you can come to a group effort in the Parish Hall after church Sunday.

How to Make a Simple Fleece Scarf

One yard of 58- to 60-inch-wide polar fleece will make four to six warm scarves.

Lay the material out on a firm cutting surface, trim the selvages, and cut the material crosswise into 6- to 9-inch wide strips using scissors or a rotary cutter. (A yardstick or sewing ruler is handy for keeping the strips an even width.) If desired, fringe the ends by cutting 2 to 2 1/2 inches into the fabric at quarter-inch intervals.

The second project is very seasonal, as we seem finally to have entered into Autumn weather.

Coats for Kids

The children at “our” elementary school, Langley Park-McCormick need our help. Each year we collect new (or lightly worn, in perfect condition) winter coats for kids ages 4 through 13, and deliver them to the school. Many of the families are not prepared, either financially and culturally, for a Maryland winter. Please help fill the box in the back of the church so that the kids can arrive at school warm and ready to learn.

The last project is also Christmas themed, but needs quick action as the Christmas party for the families involved will happen very soon.

Merry Christmas to ALL

Here's your chance to surprise more children on Christmas Day . This year you are invited to purchase Christmas gifts for the children of people served by Samaritan Ministry. Shopping for children is fun, and we know the gifts are going to children who will really appreciate them. The party is early in December, so your gifts should be brought to St. Andrew's next Sunday, 27th. Remember DO NOT WRAP THE GIFTS !

Thank you again for your generous response.

From the Director of Christian Formation

Advent Church School Classes and the No-Rehearsal Christmas Pageant

During Advent, the Godly Play lessons will prepare the children to “enter the mystery of Christmas.” They will learn the seriousness of the color blue, why we need time to get ready, and the role of the prophets in pointing the way to Bethlehem: “They were the only ones who knew that someone was coming who was so different that he would make everything else different.”

They will hear about the mother Mary and the father Joseph, the shepherds who heard the angels’ song of joy, and the Magi who traveled from the far East, following the “wild star” all the way to Bethlehem. On Christmas Eve, they will be ready to enter the mystery of Christmas. “The mother Mary gave birth to and held the baby who was the God who cared for her and for us. This is the Mystery of Christmas.”

At 5:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, we will have our Family Christmas Celebration. The first part of the service will be a presentation of the NO REHEARSAL Christmas pageant. All children are welcome to participate. They can bring their own costumes or choose one from the church’s collection; wise people and animals are always welcome, as are shepherds and angels.

We encourage parents to help their children decide in advance what role they would like to play. We will have many costumes available for angels, shepherds, and wise *persons* during coffee hour on Dec. 18th. Parents may help their children choose their costumes in a relaxed atmosphere and then take them home, returning with them on Christmas Eve. Costumes will also be available in the parish hall before the pageant for visitors and others who are unable to pick them up ahead of time. **Please arrive by 4:30 p.m. if your child needs to choose a costume.** All children should be in costume by 4:45 p.m. Following the pageant we will move into a celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Preparation for Christmas at Home

December is a busy time of year. In the words of the Godly Play lesson for Advent 1, “this time of year you will see people hurrying in the malls buying things and doing this and that, but they will miss the mystery. They don’t know how to get ready or they did not take the time to get ready.”

Adults are busy making preparations for Christmas, buying gifts, preparing food, host-

ing and attending parties. Children are busy with their usual after-school activities and their own holiday parties and activities in school. School systems are concerned with adhering to the letter of the law, strictly separating church and state, so much of this busyness is *holiday* centered rather than *Christmas* or *Christ* centered.

Simple family activities at home centered around mealtime or bedtime can help children and parents learn how to wait in hope. Advent brings together waiting, believing, and praying as we prepare for the promise of God's coming at Christmas. Lighting the Advent candles on the Advent wreath at dinner time can be the opportunity for a short prayer and meditation that reflects the meaning of Advent. The Advent wreath liturgy found in the folders in the rear of the sanctuary follows the Godly Play lessons for Advent. Singing the different Christmas carols suggested for each week of Advent will help your children learn some of our favorite songs.

Exploratory meeting for Youth Confirmation

On Sunday, November 27 all youth (sixth grade and older) who are interested in being confirmed and their parents are invited to a meeting in the Rectors' Lounge following the 10:30 Eucharist. This exploratory meeting will last about an hour. Please respond to the Rev. Dr. Carol Jablonski if you are planning to attend (rector@saeccp.org). Please also respond if you are interested in confirmation but unable to attend this meeting.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES – SAVE THE DATES!

December 10 th	Kids' Play starts 9:00 am in the parish hall
December 11 th	Cookies and Carols in the ESC 5:00 pm
December 24 th	Christmas Pageant 5:00 pm

More information will follow as these dates approach.

Kids' Play

Saint Andrew's has agreed to host young children, their parents and caregivers, and friends in the community for Saturday morning children's play throughout the winter. In general, kids' play is scheduled to occur in the Parish Hall from 9 to 11:30 AM on specific Saturdays from December through March. Kids' play is an opportunity for parish parents and caregivers to enjoy fellowship with one another and with friends throughout the community, and for children to enjoy unstructured fellowship and play with each other during the cold winter months. Attendance is on a drop-in basis, and families need not stay for the entire time, but we do ask that one parent or caregiver stay with their children at all times. The following Saturdays are reserved for Kids' Play in the Parish Hall: Dec. 10 and 17; Jan. 7 and 21; Feb 11 and 25; and Mar 17. Volunteers are needed to help with set-up and tear-down; to volunteer, or for questions please contact John Rigg at john.rigg@gmail.com

Advent Adult Forum Topics

November 27—Opening the Door to Advent: A Spiritual Approach to Advent, with Carol Jablonski

December 4—The Colors and Textures of Advent: How the Church Dresses for Advent, with Mike Platt

December 11—Looking for Christ in the Seasonal Rituals of our Culture: How Cooking, Shopping, and Our Own Family Rituals prepare us for Christmas, with Carol Jablonski

December 18—Looking for Christ in Film: What Do our Favorite Christmas Films Tell Us About Ourselves and our Search for Christ? with Carol Jablonski

Farewell

November 20, 2011

My dear, dear Friends,

While it is difficult to write this farewell letter, it is also joyful to remember our shared journey over these past ten years. When I first came to St. Andrew's in 2001, I had several years of academic training in theology and bible study; I had a couple of decades of experience teaching Sunday School, but I had virtually no experience with parish ministry. I was initially hired to develop the Godly Play program, oversee youth ministry, and to assist the rector with adult formation. You were my teachers and mentors; learning from you was a joy. My role soon expanded to include more adult formation, and my 30 hour a week position was converted to full-time after 15 months.

I have wonderful memories of our times together. We got to know each other during Mardi Gras pancake suppers and intergenerational Lenten programs. We prayed together during contemplative prayer and played together at ShrineMont. We were silent during quiet days and Lenten programs, and talkative and engaged during adult forum, EfM and Bible Study. We cooked together for Warm Nights and Loaves and Fishes, and walked together during the Fannie Mae Mini-Walk for the Homeless and St. Andrew's Day processions. I have watched your children grow from infants to toddlers to very independent boys and girls. I held them in my lap in nursery, and took joy in watching them create Alleluia banners and their own spirit sticks. They have thrived in their Godly Play classrooms. Your youth have graduated from high school and college and become young adults. It's been a rich and full time, and I am very grateful.

I want to thank you all for the gracious welcome you gave me when I first arrived; for your enthusiastic support and participation in so many programs. I have learned so much from you – from your deep faith, your love and compassion; from your outreach to the homeless and those in need, and from your love and care for each other. You have shown God's love and lived the Great Commandment – to love God with your heart, and soul and mind - and you have loved your neighbor as yourself.

I pray that God will richly bless St. Andrew's parish as you continue to live out your mission. You are a strong and gifted parish. I will miss you all deeply and pray that *"the Lord will watch between you and me while we are absent, one from another."*

Faithfully,

Nancy

Many Vestry and Finance Committee members have been asked a number of questions about Saint Andrew's fiscal situation. Here are some answers to some of those questions.

Questions and answers about St. Andrew's finances

Q: Is a deficit projected for the current year?

A: Yes. Current Finance Commission estimates are that we will finish the year with a deficit of between \$15,000 and \$25,000.

Q: Is this the first year we have been faced with a deficit?

A: No. Total expenses exceeded income in 2007, 2009 and 2010 as well.

Q: In that case, how have we been able to pay our bills?

A: In much the same way that an individual might decide to draw down savings to pay current bills, we have been borrowing from funds designated for special purposes in our budget. The problem is that we have not been able to fully replenish these funds, creating an ongoing deficit that our 2011 shortfall will only make worse.

Q: What is the total of this ongoing deficit, not counting this year?

A: The cumulative deficit, from 2006 through 2010, is \$24,597.11.

Q: Has the parish been informed of this situation before now?

A: In an April 2011 *Celtic* article, Senior Warden Laurie Paulson stated that "2011 will be a year of continued financial challenges. The budget approved by the Vestry, which assumed that 2011 revenues would match those in 2010, had a deficit of \$11,830. Unfortunately, the final numbers from the 2011 stewardship campaign show that pledges are actually down about \$20,000 from 2010, putting our projected deficit for the year at over \$30,000." Conservative spending, despite some unexpected buildings and grounds expenses, has enabled us to finish the year in somewhat better shape than we expected in the spring.

Q: Has a decline in pledges contributed to these deficits?

A: The amount of the average pledge has increased at a modest rate, but the total number of pledging units has been declining, from a high of 162 in 2003 to 113 in 2011.

Q: If we're so short of funds, how have we been able to undertake projects like the columbarium and the redesign of the church entranceway?

A: St. Andrew's has been blessed through the years by the generosity of individuals who have shown their love for the parish through gifts and bequests designated for specific projects or for particular categories of spending such as the improvement and preservation of our buildings. The construction of the columbarium was made possible by special gifts and the purchase of niches in the wall. The ongoing entranceway project was also funded by a special gift. Our Preservation Endowment Fund was the recent beneficiary of a substantial bequest **that has enhanced our ability to maintain our extensive physical plant.**

Q: What's the revenue outlook for 2012?

A: The 2012 Annual Giving Campaign is under way, and while the official end of the campaign is Nov. 20, our St. Andrew's Day observance, experience tells us that we won't really know pledge totals until the end of the year or even mid-January 2012. We are very hopeful that the campaign will reverse the decline in total pledges; our goal is 150 pledges this year. Of course, pledges are not the only revenue source for the parish. Income from the use of the church has been below budget this year, largely because of a decline in wedding rentals that has probably been caused by the recession. It's unclear whether this trend will continue in 2012.

Q: Then what is the plan for improving the parish's financial health?

A: The Vestry is committed to approving a realistic, balanced budget for 2012 that will align our mission and our resources in a ongoing, sustainable way. This will involve some difficult and sometimes painful decisions. Already the Rector in her capacity as staff director has announced that the full-time position of Director of Christian Formation will be converted to a half-time position of Director of Children's and Youth Ministry. Besides ensuring that there we will not add to the ongoing deficit in 2012, the Vestry is committed to repaying the special funds that have been drawn down in previous years, although this will undoubtedly be a multi-year effort. Non-pledge income is another area that needs to be addressed. For example,

there may be potential renters of our facilities that can take up the slack if weddings do not rebound, but we may have to make a special effort to reach new markets.

Q: You've been talking up to now about what we're going to do to make things better in 2012. What can we do about 2011?

A: The most important thing is to complete your pledge for the year in a timely fashion. If you can make an additional contribution, that would be gratefully received.

Buildings and Grounds

A Very Good Day

Saturday, November 5th was deemed "Restoration Saturday" by the Buildings and Grounds Commission. But a work day by any other name is still a work day and over 15 parishioners showed up on the chilly morning eager to get moving. An impressive measure of the group's industriousness was the pile of plant limbs and trunks lined up along Princeton Avenue by mid-afternoon. It was no less than 30 feet long and 5 feet high! Its removal relieved overgrown areas around the church, particularly around the primary church sign on College Ave, the area in front of the breezeway, and the lawn between the church and the Episcopal Student Center.

Yet only a portion of the effective work force was responsible for that tremendous achievement. The others were tackling various additional jobs. Among them, 3 broken windows and two missing windows of the Student Center garage were replaced and glazed and a hole in the roof was repaired. Also on the outside of the church, a trap door was installed on the landing outside the Thrift Corner door to allow easy cleaning of the drain there, the Columbarium capstones were sealed and an electrical outlet cover just outside the keypad entry door was replaced. Many bulbs were also planted, but more awaited rejuvenated laborers later in the week.

The inside of the church was occupied by both a multi-congregational choir rehearsing for the Bishop's consecration service at the Cathedral and a fraternity conducting its initiation ceremony for new members. This limited availability of many of the church areas, but before our guests got started, the rolling platform carrying the baptism font was repaired and after they left a faulty switch connection was discovered and repaired restoring full lighting to the kitchen. In spaces unused by the morning's guests, ceiling tiles damaged by a recent water leak in Nancy Maestri's office were replaced, a cluttered space in the undercroft used by the Altar Guild was cleaned up, lots of unwanted items in the attic were removed and pieces from two broken tables in the Parish Hall were combined to make one workable table. Yes, it was a very good, and productive work day, indeed and the Buildings and Grounds Commission thanks everyone who took part.

St. Andrew's at the Crossroads: Annual Giving Campaign

Stewardship is Not Just About Money

The ministry and mission of God's Church are supported by our gifts of time, talent and treasure. When we talk about the stewardship of treasure, we are simply asking that you consider putting God first in your planning and your budget. The Lord asks us for the "first fruits" of all that we have been blessed with; He is providing us with an opportunity to give something back to Him, with thoughtfulness and gratitude and faith.



Even with all the emphasis we put on time and talent, when the third component, treasure, is mentioned, people see: \$teward\$hip. Let's take the \$ out of the word and replace it with the S — S for spirituality, S for service, S for selflessness, S for our Savior, Jesus Christ.

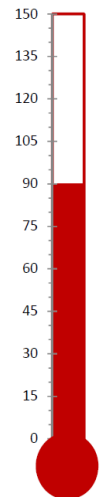
Many of us fear pledging some big scary amount of money. What if we are not able to follow through? Times are tough, incomes are uncertain. Pledging is a leap of faith — no doubt. Pledging, however, offers each of us an outward, tangible sign that we are "in". We are saying "yes" to God, "yes" to this faith community; "yes" to something beyond ourselves.

The amount you pledge is far less important than *that* you pledge. With a large enough base of supporters, the thinking goes, the overall health of our Church will be assured. We are grateful beyond measure for those individuals who can and do give much but we also rely heavily on the many who consistently give according to their more modest abilities.

Our goal this pledge season is to receive pledges from 150 St. Andrews Parishioners. **To date, our Church has received pledges from 90, or 60% of our goal.** Please consider demonstrating your gratitude to the Lord, your commitment to the mission of St. Andrews, and your willingness to say "yes" by pledging your support.

Thank you to all who have already made a commitment to St. Andrews for 2012. If you have not yet filled our a pledge card, you can find one in the back of the Church or you can also pledge online at www.saeccp.org/giving.php

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give. —Sir Winston Churchill



2012 Annual Giving Campaign — St. Andrew's at the Crossroads

**From the Office—Dave Carpenter, Parish Administrator, 301-864-8880
office@saeccp.org**

Plant now, enjoy later

The newly formed Garden Committee is hard at work planting hundreds of spring bulbs around various parts of our property. If you would like to help, please contact the office, or committee chair Charlie Jones.

From the Archives

Now *That* Would be a Nice Meeting to Attend

The Vestry Agenda for the St Patrick's day meeting in 1991 had 3 business items. Number 2 was "Take orders for pizza".

Indoor Fun

The Buildings and Grounds Commission will be hosting an indoor work day sometime in January or February. If you would know of some things inside the buildings that need some attention that dedicated amateurs could provide, please fill out a work request and we will add it to the list. Also, base all the rest of your winter plans around this one vague request, so that you are available when we announce the date. Or, you could just keep it in mind. Thank you.

Pictures

With all the i-phones out there in the congregation, we should have more lovely pictures for our Celtics. Please send any pictures you especially like to the office via email, so we can brighten up the pages. Remember to ask people, and especially parents of kids for permission before sending pictures for publication.

A Thank You from our fiends at Samaritan Ministry-



November 18, 2011

The Rev. Dr. Carol J. Joblonski, Rector
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
4512 College Avenue
College Park, MD 20740

Dear Dr. Joblonski,

On behalf of the Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington's Board, staff, volunteers, and more than 1,000 *Next Step* program participants, we want to thank you for St. Andrew's generous gift of \$500.00 to "Help the Homeless" received on November 7, 2011, for the benefit of the *Friends of Samaritan Ministry* partner group. Because of your contribution, **we reached the \$100,000 goal, and will receive a \$20,000 bonus** from Fannie Mae!

We are very grateful for your support - it makes a tremendous difference in our ability to serve people in the Washington area who are homeless, jobless, living with HIV/AIDS or otherwise in need, to improve their lives.

Thank you for your generosity, and your investment in Samaritan Ministry's *Next Step* program!

Sincerely,

Carolyn Peirce
Chairperson, *Friends of Samaritan Ministry*

David Downes
Executive Director, Samaritan Ministry

P.S. Please note that gifts of \$250 or more will be acknowledged for tax purposes by the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region which handles all contributions to the Help the Homeless program on behalf of Fannie Mae.

Cc: Peggy Alexander

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