

Dragoneer

December 2008

Advent Prayer by Henri J.M. Nouwen

Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Amen.

Advent and Christmas Service Schedule at St. George's Episcopal Church

Sunday , December 7th 6pm

Advent & Christmas Festival of Lessons & Carols/ End of Semester Celebration for Episcopal & ELCA University Ministry to Tulane and Loyola University at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit (1000 Broadway St.)

Thursday, December 18th 7pm

Christmas Service for St. George's Episcopal School to be held at St. George's Church

Sunday, December 21st 10:30am

Advent Lessons & Carols for the Fourth Sunday of Advent (8am service will be a Rite II Service of Holy Eucharist as usual)

Wednesday, December 24th 5 pm

Christmas Eve

Service including Choral Music with Children's Christmas Pageant

Thursday, December 25th 9am

Christmas Morning

Service with Music



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE– 100% PARTICIPATION

Desperate Times Call for Desperate Measures ...

by Mary Lou Bensabat , Senior Warden

I was asked to write something about stewardship and giving. Ugh! What a task! By now most of you are tired of hearing about the church needing money, especially when the news media predicts less of it in our own personal futures.

So, in desperation, I turned to the internet for something, anything to help me.

A definition on an Episcopal church site states that “stewardship is using the gifts God has given us to do the work God has given us to do. Our giving is a thankful response to all that God has given us.” We all know this, but how will it convince the non-givers to give? Maybe a pithy quote would be more eye-catching. “Stewardship is the act of organizing your life so that God can spend you.” Or “You should give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving.” “Examples are few of men ruined by giving.” Maybe Billy Graham’s “give me five minutes with a person’s checkbook, and I will tell you where their heart is” will change a few minds. No? Something on the lighter side, perhaps ... “I shovel [money] out, and God shovels it back ... but God has a bigger shovel!”

Humor did not seem to be exactly what I was looking for. After all, resources, or lack of them, is serious. Other quotes caught my attention. “Out of the freedom from worry that God’s generosity provides comes an impulse toward simplicity rather than accumulation.” And “In all of my years of service to my Lord, I have discovered a truth that has never failed and has never been compromised. The truth is that it is beyond the realm of possibilities that one has the ability to out give God. Even if I give the whole of my worth to Him, He will find a way to give back to me much more than I gave.”

Finally I hit upon a story that said something new to me.

One father was complaining to another that his son cost him a great deal of money- for books, clothes, lunch, allowance, and tuition. “It’s strange that you feel that,” the other father replied. “My son doesn’t cost me a cent. I haven’t spent a dime on him in over two years, but I sure wish I could.” “Why doesn’t he cost you anything?” asked the first father. The second father replied, “A little over two years ago he died.”

Here’s the point: A church that is alive needs the generous, sacrificial support of those who love it. Only a dead church demands no sacrifice. Have you ever thought or said, “I wish I could belong to a church that never needed any money.” Any church that is alive needs money. Only dead churches do no call on their members for support. We can be thankful that St. George’s needs money because we are a church that is living and productive for Jesus Christ rather than a dead, stagnant organization from which the glory of Christ has departed.

Prayerfully consider your 2009 pledge. Thank God for His unwavering care and attention to your own well-being and send in your pledge card. St. George’s is alive. It is bursting with potential- 100% participation will yield 1000% increase in blessings for our little corner of the world.

Stewardship Update

by Allen Blow, Stewardship Chairman

As of last week we are almost half way to our pledge goal of 102 total pledges. If you have yet to pledge please do so soon! If you have any questions or concerns please let me know. Email me at Allen_Blow@URSCorp.com or call at 504-352-8830.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY AT ST. GEORGE'S

EDOLA Saturday for Kids– Saturday, December 13th 8:30 – 3:30

We will prepare no-bake cookies to share with the Poydras home and the Desmond Project. We will visit the Poydras home after lunch and sing a few carols and return to the church for snacks and a movie. Please bring a package of socks and a wrapped gift of a shirt, pants or any article of clothing for the homeless. Various sizes are fine – just mark the outside of the box with size and content. Contact Effie for questions or information at (228) 355-1786 or mzeffie@gmail.com! EDOLA Saturday for adults will resume after the holidays.

EDOLA Saturday volunteers needed I need a few volunteers to help with EDOLA Saturday on the 13th. This is really a fun day and a wonderful opportunity to spend precious time with the children of our parish. Contact effie@stgeorge-nola.org or (228) 355-1786.

Safeguarding Gods Children Training

A session will be held at St. Martin's Episcopal Church for those of us in need of training on Thursday, January 29th at 6:30 in Gayle Hall. Refreshments will be provided and training will last for 3 hours. Please let me know if you are interested and we can caravan and carpool over. This training is required by the National Church for anyone working with children.



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Presented by The children of St. George's Episcopal Church
Wednesday, December 24th 5pm.

Rehearsal Sun. Dec. 21st after the 10:30 service.

All interested persons contact Effie Minkler at mzeffie@gmail.com, 228-355-1786
or Beth Burvant at badgerbethy@yahoo.com, 208-9790.

Please join us for this heart warming production.

A Farewell to Carmen Springer

by the Rev. Giulianna Gray

Carmen Springer has been the peer minister for the Episcopal and ELCA Campus Ministry for about a year now. She came to New Orleans to pursue a MPH (Master's in Public Health) Degree at Tulane University, and will soon go to South Africa where she will serve in the Peace Corps.

We send her out rejoicing at her future in ministry with the Peace Corps, but we who have worked closely with Carmen will greatly miss her. In just a year, she has made a remarkable contribution to the lives of many University Students and to the development of our programs. Carmen has established the student-led Wednesday evening dinner and discussion series, and has helped to set a tone of respect and openness for the entire community. She provided leadership and stability at a time of much transition for the University Campus Ministry of Tulane and Loyola.

We will say goodbye to Carmen in formal way during her last Sunday at St. George's on Sunday, December 14th. Please join me in thanking Carmen for hard work, and in praying for her as she prepares for this new and exciting chapter of life.

End of the Semester for the University Ministry to Tulane and Loyola

by the Rev. Giulianna Gray

The fall semester is coming to a close. Our final Sunday evening service will be Sunday, December 7th at 6pm. We will enjoy a Celebration of Advent and Christmas Lessons & Carols at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit. All are welcome to come for the service and reception following. This will be our last Sunday evening service until classes resume in January.

In addition to our final service, the University Ministry will host a finals support week for students from December 8th-12th. The Chapel of the Holy Spirit will be kept open as much as possible for prayer and reflection during the week, and lots of food and coffee will be offered to students as they prepare for their exams.

I want to thank those of you who have helped to prepare meals for students and/or who have attended one of our Sunday services. It is my hope to involve many more parishioners of St. George's in this ministry during the Spring Semester. Please let me know if you would like to be on our list to cook and host a Sunday night dinner next semester-- our college students are wonderful, and providing dinner on a Sunday will provide you with an opportunity to get to know them and to support this important ministry which now has been linked to St. George's Episcopal Church.

Lay Reader Sign up

by Trey Burvant

Hello everyone at St. George's!

I'm setting up the schedule for readers from January to Easter and I wanted to invite and encourage all in our community to sign up to read. It's one of the simplest ways to participate in the life of St. George's and help us reach 100% participation as directed by our rector.

In addition, I will be organizing a few more lector training sessions through out the coming months so that we can really grow this ministry and take it to the next level. So, please don't be shy, I am more than happy to work with anyone at anytime with the readings to really help lift the text off the page and into our hearts.

For those already on the rotation, we will do same thing as in the Fall which is to email me your known conflicts between January and Easter. And if you'd like to get in on this growing ministry, just do the same and I will release the schedule before Christmas.

Vestry Nominations

Nominations for the Vestry are now being accepted. Candidates must be confirmed Episcopalians, givers of record, and active in the life of the church. Names may be submitted to Allen Blow at allen_blow@urscorp.com

Christmas Greening

To get the church ready for the St. George's School Program on Wednesday, Dec. 18, and for Christmas Eve Service on Dec. 24, assistance will be needed in the following areas:

Tuesday evening –December 17th – 4:30 p.m. until, we will decorate the Christmas Tree and arrange the poinsettias.

Wednesday, December 23 1:00 p.m. until, we will put up the Candles, arrange the flowers, water the poinsettias.

All are welcome to help. Contact Reba Mackey at 421-1465 or mackeyrw@bellsouth.net



The Dragon Café Feeding Ministry

*Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread
and said, "Take eat, this is my body, given for you..."*



All Dragon Café dinners are served without charge.

The cost to prepare and serve each meal is \$7.

The Dragon Café serves dinner every Wednesday and Thursday.

The Dragon Café serves approximately 250 meals every week.

A GREAT Christmas Gift Idea and Way to Help the Dragon Café

Do you still have some names on your Christmas list this year? Why not give a gift in honor of one of your loved ones, and help feed guests at the Dragon Café? After services during Advent, we will have beautiful cards available at the church which you can give to a loved one stating that a gift was made in their honor. The cards, which were created with the image of one of our stained glass windows on it, will be available for anyone making a minimum of a \$21 contribution.

SUGGESTED DONATION LEVELS

- \$21** Sponsor three Dragon Café dinners
- \$42** Sponsor six Dragon Café dinners
- \$56** Feed a Dragon Café guest for one month
- \$182** Feed a Dragon Café guest for three months
- \$364** Feed a Dragon Café guest for six months
- \$728** Feed a Dragon Café guest for one year
- \$875** Sponsor the Dragon Café for one night
- \$1,750** Sponsor the Dragon Café for two nights
- \$3,500** Sponsor the Dragon Café for two weeks
- \$7,000** Sponsor the Dragon Café for one month



Pardon Our Dust

The renovations to the kitchen and undercroft are now well underway. The good news is that the nursery, restrooms, and Sunday School Rooms will be fully functioning for the duration of the renovations. We also will still have coffee hour after our 10:30 am services, though our fellowship after services will be moved either outside or to a different location in the church. Please excuse the dust and temporary challenges that our renovations will cause for us over the next several months.

The Ordination of Peter Whittlesey Gray

Rev. Peter Whittlesey Gray, husband of our Associate Rector Julianna, will be ordained to the Priesthood on Saturday, December 13th at 10:00 am at St. Anna's Episcopal Church (1313 Esplanade Avenue). The reception will be held at Grace Episcopal Church (3700 Canal Street) following the service. Peter currently services both congregations. Grace Episcopal Church on Canal Street has a large parking lot behind the church, and a parking shuttle will be used to shuttle guests from Grace to and from St. Anna's where the ordination will take place. Your prayers and presence are requested.

Women's Spirituality Group During Advent

by Rev. Julianna Cappelletti Gray

Our first Women's Spirituality Group had its first meeting yesterday, on the first Monday evening in Advent. I was delighted by the turnout, and so enjoyed a chance to get to know many of the women in parish better. We first shared a simple supper of soup and bread, had a brief bible study, and ended the evening with Compline (a service of night prayers) in the choir stalls of the church.

We will gather in the chapel of St. George's each Monday evening in Advent from 6:30pm-8pm (we have 3 dates left: December 8th, 15th, and 22nd). The format of the remaining Mondays will be the same. We will continue to focus our scripture study on selected readings that highlight women in the Gospel according to Luke, provide a simple supper, and end with Compline. As a reminder, all of the women of the parish are invited join us!

The Dragon Café is adapting to the changes due to the ongoing renovations. We will STILL serve free meals twice a week. For the first week in December, Trinity Episcopal Church's outreach ministry, Mobile Loaves and Fishes, made sandwiches. Each week we will try to offer something different, basically serving cold food, until we have the kitchen back. We can use all kinds of help, ideas, volunteers, cookies (ready to eat), etc. This past week feeding our folks in front of the church proved that the Dragon café has a following. During the holidays things will be a strained, but we continue to be here for everybody.

Stan Jahncke, Dragon Café Manager