

# Dragoneer

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December 2009

## Speaking of Stewardship

On Sunday we entered a new church season – the season of Advent. Advent means “coming,” or “arrival,” and is the very beginning of our church year. During Advent we try not to get caught up in the worries and preoccupations of the world and pay closer attention to two things: What God has already done and what God will do; Advent is a season of paying homage and paying attention. Advent is also a season of expectation – a time when we look forward to and expect great things from God.

As I reflect on this new season of the church year I can't help but think of the holiday we just celebrated – Thanksgiving. Quite literally, in just the last week we have moved from a time of giving thanks for all that God has given us into a season hope and expectation for all that God has yet to do. What a God we have!

In many ways this shift in seasons is resonant with our recent life together at St. George's. We have moved from a season of thanksgiving into a season of expectation and hope for great things. This is especially true in regard to stewardship.

This year's stewardship committee has done absolutely wonderful work in communicating to the parish why your annual pledge to the church is important. They have done an excellent job in explaining why our budgeting process depends on your telling us what your financial contribution to the church will be; about how and where your generous pledges are used (as well as how and where they are not used) in the church; and perhaps most important, why your pledge to the church is an expression of thanksgiving to God, for *“all that we have been given, even the air we breathe, is a gift from God!”*

As your rector I'm tremendously thankful for the work, in years past and present, that God has done with the people of St. George's. Take a look

around – we have an extraordinarily beautiful nave and sanctuary; our worship is compelling and engaging; our downstairs facilities are vastly improved; our ministries are expanding; the long-awaited memorial garden is nearly complete; with the addition of *Barrington's Breakfast* our volunteer base from parishioners has enlarged beyond anyone's expectations and the ministry of the Dragon Café now feeds more than 1000 hungry souls each and every month! The leadership of our laity, of our very part-time and part-time staff (and even occasionally from our clergy) are incredibly effective for a church that is our size. These are but a few of the wonderful things that God is doing at St. George's... But wait, Advent has only just begun – just think what God has yet to do! Better hold on to your pews (ha)!

The great Christian thinker Augustine said “Without God, we cannot; without us, God will not.” Included in your most recent stewardship mailing is an annual giving form. Included on that form are some compelling facts about how easily we can increase giving at St. George's, and we must! In this season of Advent, as always, we are expecting great things from the God who has already done great things. But we are also expecting great things from you. If you have not yet made your pledge to St. George's annual fund please do so on or before December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

You know, speaking of stewardship, I'm thinking that we are all going to be amazed at what God does this year; I think that God is going to surpass all our expectations. I also think we can surpass God's. How about you?

Holy Advent,  
Jim



## *Service Schedule*

### Christmas Eve

- 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist with  
Children's Pageant
- 10:30 pm Choir Concert
- 11:00 pm Holy Eucharist (High Liturgy)

### Christmas Day

- 9:00 am Holy Eucharist (no music)



## **Barrington Breakfast a Huge Success!**

Barrington's Breakfast has proved to be a vital ministry to the community. We have been feeding over 85 hungry people every Sunday morning.

We would like to thank all those who have dedicated a Sunday morning in making this ministry successful: Hugh Ettinger, Jeffrey Pruit, Lyn Koppel, Meg Kenney, Bruce Ingber, Byron Lilly, Karen Mackey, Effie Anderson, Trey Burvant, Martin Davies, Ellen Quigley, Harold Meaker, Liz Mitchell, Mary Nass, Kelly Eldridge, Doug Mabile, Stacey LaFleur, Toddy Wobbema, Steve Wobbema, Lisa Gaye, Errol DiBona, Norma Sallinger, Licelot Mercer, Mary Lou Bensabat, Nathan Weidenhaft, Mitch Bourque, Michael Neyrey, Sally Neyrey, Reba Mackey, Hollis Eddins, Sharon Eddins, Tom Forbes, Steve Guin, Bill McSherry, David Raphael, and Paige Cassarino. Many parishioners have come to just sit and eat with our guests. We thank you for that too.

Pending vestry approval the Barrington Breakfast Ministry will continue indefinitely. We would like to ask all current Barrington Breakfast volunteers to let us know if they would like to continue serving Barrington Breakfast as well as invite new parishioners to join this wonderful ministry to the poor.

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*I \_\_\_\_\_  
make a commitment to serve God at  
Barrington's Breakfast.*

*(Please place in the offering plate or mail to the church  
office-4600 St. Charles Ave, New Orleans, LA 70115)*

## Dragon Café Ornaments

*“... Come you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me something to drink...”*



Need the perfect gift for someone? Consider purchasing a Dragon Café Christmas Ornament designed by Gary Reggio. The cost of the ornaments were donated in memory of Allen Blow's father. Ornaments cost \$10 and all proceeds will be donated to the Dragon Café Feeding Ministry to provide meals for our hungry neighbors. It comes with a card so you can mail it to your special someone or we can mail it for you. You can even purchase one for yourself. Every time you look at this ornament you can remember that with your help a child of God has been fed.

Ornaments will go on Sale Sunday, December 13. Look for the display in the parish hall after services or stop by the church office during the week.

## St. George's Wants You! 2010 Vestry Nominations

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

As of the end of December, there will be four openings on the St. George's Vestry. Three of us are completing our terms of service and one opening is due to a Vestry member who has moved out of the area. A few paragraphs below you will find a wordy (but necessary) description of what Vestry members do for the church.

Before reading the technical description about Vestry service though, we'd like to offer a word of encouragement and hope. St. George's is experiencing a kind of crossroads. Like our city, St. George's is entering a new and exciting era. We don't mean to overstate this, but there are many new and talented members in the church; several of our "old guard" leaders have moved away; some have retired (some have done both!). The recent death of Eleanor Caldwell also comes to mind as but one more signpost pointing to the fact that at St. George's we are truly in a time of growth and rebirth! Like the old songs goes, "Make new friends, but keep the old, one is silver and the other gold! At this point at St. George's we have both silver and gold and we are glad about that.

St. George's is also, like other churches in New Orleans and across the country, facing real challenges. Finances and fundraising are real priorities; keeping the church and its worship traditional but also lively and relevant is a priority; maintaining our historic but needy buildings are a priority; educating our children about God is a priority; deepening the faith and discipleship of our mature church members is a priority... so much to do!

Yes, there is much to do, and while we have a Rector, much of this responsibility lies in our hands. This is a sacred responsibility. But we love our church and consider it a privilege, or calling, to serve God and St. George's church as a member of the Vestry. From Vestry bible studies and retreats to thoughtful discussions about who we are as a church, serving on the Vestry at St. George's has been an honor. If you are a dedicated member of the church who would like to step up and serve God and our wonderful parish, please keep reading! And also please feel free to contact any one of us to ask us about our time as Vestry members at St George's.

Sincerely,

Mary Nass, Scott Griffith, Ed Brown & Toddy Wobbema.

*A Dictionary for Episcopalians* defines a Vestry as such: [A vestry is the] “Legal governing and decision-making body of a parish church, consisting of the rector and elected lay representatives. Its duties include calling the rector, approving the budget, making policy, and approving expenditures... Often vestry members are also heads of parish committees or commissions, but each parish chooses its own way of structuring its vestry.”

In effect, obtaining a seat on the vestry means that you have been called to serve as a leader in your faith community. Vestry members are charged with property management as well as fiduciary administration and human resource responsibilities. Serving on a vestry, however, is quite different than serving as a board member for a corporation or a not-for-profit entity; serving on a vestry is “**a call to a sacred ministry by the body of Christ.**” Vestry persons play a crucial role in the life of the congregation and are asked to “apply baptismal vows to their acquired business experience in carrying out the mission and ministry of their congregation.”

Mary Nass, Scott Griffith & Toddy Wobbema will serve as the nominating committee for the Vestry Roster in 2008. If you are interested in serving on the Vestry or would like to nominate someone to serve, please call Mary, Scott or Toddy and they can talk with you more about serving or about who you’d like to nominate (please speak to individuals to obtain their permission before you nominate them!).

*A few things to keep in mind:* A typical vestry term is a three year commitment. In choosing a vestry, the Episcopal Church canons place no restrictions on how members of the vestry are elected and do not specify terms of office or eligibility for re-election. 12 member vestries are typical but not mandated by canon law – a vestry must consist of at least 5 but no more than 25 members. Finally, eligibility for Vestry requires that all candidates for vestries are those “confirmed members in good standing,” and eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. Canon law dictates that “Those entitled to vote at an annual meeting shall be Communicants in good standing of the Parish who are at least sixteen (16) years of age, and who have been contributors of record toward the support of the parish during the six (6) months preceding the meeting.”

Thanks you so very much,  
Your 2010 Vestry Nominating Committee.

# Music Making at St. George's for Christmas

*Donna Clavijo, Music Director*

As we enter this blessed season, I want to invite you to join me in making music at St Georges! There are several opportunities:

First- the St George Choir is preparing special music for the service of Lessons and Carols on December 20th as well as the 11 pm service on Christmas eve-and a short concert at 10:30 pm prior to the service. We will meet this Wednesday from 6:15-7:15 and then the following three Wednesdays from 7:15-8:45. If you like to sing, please come join us as we prepare some beautiful arrangements of some familiar Carols.

Second- the children of St George will be preparing a special song to sing at the Offertory at the 5 pm Family service on Christmas Eve. We will meet the next three Sundays for about 30 minutes right after church- 11:45-12:15 to rehearse. We'd love to have you!

As you move through this season, listen to the sounds of Christmas- music is everywhere- and particularly special in our services, we are celebrating Advent with sung psalms, canticles, a new Sanctus and the addition of a fraction Alleluia. I ask that God will bless as you sing wonderful sounds to His Name!

## Children's Christmas Pageant

*Effie Anderson, Christian Education Director for Youth*

During this season of Advent as we await the arrival of our Lord and Savior, the children of St. G's are busy preparing for their annual Christmas pageant. Our children will have an active role in our worship this year, from participating in the pageant, greeting our guests, reading scripture or singing in the children's choir. In preparation our choir director, Donna Clavijo will be working with the children for the next three Sundays from 11:45 - 12:15. A rehearsal will be set for the pageant with a party to follow. We will be contacting parents in a few days with a rehearsal date and assignments for the pageant so that costume arrangements may be made. The children of St. George's Episcopal Church invite you to join them at 5pm on Christmas Eve as they bring the wonderful story of our Saviors birth to life.

*" And a little child shall lead them" Isaiah 11:6*

## ***Mardi Gras Spirits - Kicking it up a notch***

For twenty-plus years, St. George's has opened its doors and served as restaurant and respite for parade goers in Uptown during Mardi Gras. *Mardi Gras Spirits* is one of St. George's most important fundraisers and traditionally the income from Mardi Gras Spirits (about 10k per year) is used to fund critical capital projects like repairing our beautiful stained glass windows. Recently we borrowed income from the Mardi Gras Spirits fund to complete the renovations to the parish hall & kitchen.

Most parishioners are familiar with Mardi Gras Spirits and its success is due to the parishioners at St. George's who volunteer to cook, maintain facilities, take orders, pass out fliers to parade-goers, etc. Volunteers – you know who you are... THANK YOU!

This year we'd like to see if we can increase the success of the Mardi Gras Spirits event. We'd like to brainstorm ways that we can widen our exposure, expand our offerings, reduce overhead and increase our income. There are a myriad of ways in which this can be done, from finding sponsors to marketing to expanded offerings to donations from vendors.

The first Mardi Gras Spirits brainstorming session will take place on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, after the 10:30 service. This is a great opportunity to allow your entrepreneurial spirit to help us make Mardi Gras Spirits an even more successful event for the preservation and maintenance of our beautiful building. Hope to see you there!

# St. George's Episcopal Church 2010 Stewardship

## Pledge Facts Facts

Currently, 75% of active St. George's households pledge. Can you imagine how we could increase the reach and impact of our mission and ministries if all active households pledged? If all non-pledging households pledged at our current annual average (\$2,653), our pledge base would increase by almost \$50,000! If each current pledging household increased its pledge by choosing to **Proportionally Give**, and each pledge increased by just \$10 a week on average, our pledge base would further increase by \$40,000 - over 23%!

**Annual Giving Pledge Form** *(please return to this form only to St. George's)*

Recognizing that the support of every member is valued and vital to the mission of St. George's Episcopal Church, and in thanksgiving for the blessings we have been given, I/we pledge to contribute to the mission and ministries of St. George's Episcopal Church:

A total of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in 2010 *(please write annual amount)*, to be paid *(please check one)*:

weekly  
 monthly  
 quarterly  
 yearly

This is a new pledge (I/we did not pledge in 2009).

Please check here if you'd like contribution envelopes.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

We are most grateful for your prayerful reflection.

# St. George's Episcopal Church 2010 Stewardship

Tithing example:

Tithing is what we strive to give back to God through our Church, and it is 10% of one's income. Mike earns \$52,000 annually.

Mike's 2010 pledge as suggested by tithing is :  
\$5,200 annually  
\$433 monthly  
\$100 weekly

Proportional Giving example:

Proportional Giving asks that we consider giving to the Church in proportion to our income. It begins with our current level of giving, and asks that we consider raising our pledge by one half a percent of our income per year.

Mike earns \$52,000 annually. In 2009, Mike pledged \$3,600 or 7% of his income. Mike's 2010 pledge suggested by Proportional Giving is :

$$\begin{aligned} & \$52,000 \times 7\% = \$3,600 \\ \text{plus } & \underline{\$52,000 \times \frac{1}{2}\% = \$260} \\ & \text{2010 annual pledge total of } \$3,860 \end{aligned}$$

=\$322 per month

=\$75 per week