

THE BANNER

December 2009 ✦ Issue 09-12 ✦ *Advent into Christmas*

St. George's Episcopal Church

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Christmas Services at St. George's

Wednesday, December 23, 7:00p.m. – Children's Christmas pageant followed by potluck dinner with a la Posada flavor, carol singing and fellowship with our St. George's family and friends.

Thursday, December 24 - 10:15 p.m. – Choral prelude, with choir anthems and congregational singing, **10:30 p.m.** – Holy Eucharist Rite II, with adult choir.

Friday, December 25, 10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist Rite I, no music

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✠ **ADVENT IN THE HOME** ✦ Christmas has increasingly become a holiday cut off from its purpose of celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, important for Christians to recapture the season of Advent as a time for preparing for Christmas. An Advent wreath service takes only a few minutes each night, yet it can become a wonderful time to center oneself or the whole family with a nightly remembrance of Christ's Incarnation and promised return. It is a time to celebrate God's promise to always be with us.

Located in the narthex of St. George's are guidelines for *Celebrating Advent in the home.* In it you will find information on the Advent Wreath service, creating a Jesse Tree, a nativity scene, and an Advent Calendar. Additional resources for observing Advent at home can be found on the [St. George's website \(Worship/Current Season\).](#)

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*The **Pink** Candle Party !*

Sunday, December 13, in Kleberg after the 10:30 service. Luncheon will be hosted by our youth. In addition to the food, fun and fellowship, the Christmas Pageant planning will begin.

✝ **CHRISTMAS AT THE RECTORY** ✝ David and Terrie Hoster invite you to join your parish family to Christmas at the Rectory. Sunday, **December 20, 7 – 9 p.m.** 7505 Daughtery. Bring a bottle of wine or a favorite holiday appetizer to share. If you get lost or need directions, call, 459-3997.

✝ **POINSETTIAS FOR ST. GEORGE'S** ✝ If you would like to make a contribution to decorate the church with poinsettias for our Christmas celebrations, please complete one of the cards available on Sunday mornings each Sunday of Advent and place it in the alms basin. A contribution of **\$15** is suggested (make checks payable to *St. George's*, noting "Poinsettias" on the memo line). You may make your contributions in honor of, in thanksgiving for or in memory of someone. *Deadline for donation information to be printed in the Christmas bulletins is **December 20.***

✝ **MUSICAL EVENT and INVITATION** ✝ The congregation is invited to attend the UT String Project winter concert to celebrate several of our young peoples' musical gifts. Several of our St. George's children have been spending every Saturday morning learning to play string instruments. UT graduate music students teach the classes. The next free concert is on Saturday, **December 5** from **9:30 to noon** at Bates Recital Hall in the Butler School of Music on the **UT campus**, 26th and Medical Arts Blvd. Seating is limited so please come a little early and be prepared to be awed. Performers include the Stevens children: Luke (violin) Mae (violin) and Sutton (cello) Ellen Scarborough (violin) and Noah Savage (cello). Their talents are truly inspiring.

✝ **NICARAGUAN PROJECT UPDATE** ✝ Nicaraguan Outreach Project Hits Goal!
Thanks to the generosity of the folks at St George's and others who supported this project with purchase of cards and coffee, I am happy to announce that it is over! We made goal! John Doty, Executive Director of Austin Samaritans, is deeply moved to hear that funds were raised, awareness of the huge issue of cervical cancer is made and Nicaraguans will be assured of support from us.

Additionally, after submitting a grant proposal for World Mission Funding, I am happy to announce that we also received notice that Austin Samaritans will be the recipient of a \$3000.00 grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, World Mission Funding. This brings the total of funding through our Outreach Committee to **\$5500.00.**

Another outcome of this project is that John Doty loved the greeting cards so much; he has commissioned additional cards to be printed so they can continue selling them as a fund-raiser. Further more, he intends to use the thank you notes as his official thank you notes for donors and supporters. You ask how does this concern us? St. George's Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas and our website is on the back of all the cards. I hope this will bring attention to us as time goes by. Who knows, it just might recruit a new member to the church!

Thank you for your support and kindness.
Sincerely,
Sandra Villalaz

✝ **HOLIDAY MAIL FOR HEROES** ✝ The American Red Cross and Pitney Bowes, Inc. have joined forces to invite Americans to “send a touch of home” to United States service members and veterans across the country and abroad. In its third year, the Holiday Mail for Heroes program is an opportunity to share joy and thanks with our service members throughout the holiday season by way of a greeting card.
There is an extensive process to ensure all cards sent are safe and arrive in time for the holidays. Every card received is screened for hazardous materials by Pitney Bowes and then distributed to participating Red Cross chapters nationwide.

Once the cards arrive at the Red Cross chapters, they are sorted and reviewed by volunteers who then distribute them to service members, their families and veterans in communities across the country. On Sunday, **December 6**, St. Georges' will have an opportunity to participate. There are strict rules with which we must apply so there will be a table set up in Kleberg with cards ready to sign for anyone who would like to send holiday greetings. Please join us again this year!

✝ **THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE** now meets on the second Sunday of the month and will continue to meet at noon in the library although we will not meet in December or January. Our annual retreat will be Saturday, **January 23** and regular meetings will resume **February 14**. This committee is dedicated to making the world a better place for those in need within our local community as well as those across the nation and around the world. We would love to have you join us next year; whether you participate on a monthly basis, serve on a one-time project, or simply sit in on our meetings, your input, prayers and presence are appreciated.

Angel Tree—Hollie and Spencer Gordon lead the Angel Tree project this year that will sponsor the Robinson Group Home for Teen-age Girls and St. George's Court. We are grateful to the EYC who made 63 stocking ornaments for the tree and decorated them as their service project for the \$10.00 gift cards for the elderly and disabled residents at St. George's Court. The round paper ornaments are for the foster girls who will each receive two unwrapped \$20-25 gifts and one \$25.00 gift card. Each ornament will be numbered and have a gift suggestion written on the back plus a removable square card. If you would like to participate please select an ornament that has a gift you would like to sponsor. Write your name on the square card and leave it in the gift box beside the tree. Take the ornament with you as a reminder of your gift selection. **The ornament, which will be used as a package decoration, needs to be returned attached to the unwrapped gift to the church or to the church office no later than December 20.**

We will have a wrapping party after coffee hour December 20 and Santa will deliver the gifts to the girls that afternoon. The stockings will be delivered to St. George's Court on December 22 at their holiday luncheon.

Year End Contributions – We invite anyone interested in making year end contributions to please consider the fundraising projects that we have supported this past year. The Nicaraguan Project and the Sudan Project had direct fundraisers attached to them. Other projects supported by Outreach are the Foundation Communities, directed by Walter Moreau, which provides affordable living to those who qualify and, Casa Marianella, directed by Jennifer Long, which primarily houses political refugees and immigrants from Central and South America. Trinity Center serves the downtown homeless and provides them with counseling and skills to make a new start. SafePlace is nationally recognized for its innovative and effective programs, providing women, children and men a place of safety from abuse, compassion and empowerment since 1974. All organizations will provide you with a tax-free donation statement.

Nicaraguan Project is accepting direct donations in the offertory plate through the end of December.

Sudan Project donations can be sent to the Mother Maryam Foundation for Humanitarian Development, Inc. at 1306 Guadalupe Street; Austin, Texas 78701; Attn: Awad Abdelgadir or Steve Hake.

Foundation Communities donations can be made online at www.foundcom.org or a check made out to "Foundation Communities" can be mailed directly to Foundation Communities; 3036 S. First; Austin, Texas 78704.

Casa Marianella donations can also be made online at www.casamarianella.org or a check made out to Casa Marianella and mailed to Casa Marianella; 821 Gunther Street; Austin, Texas 78702.

Trinity Center accepts online donations at www.trinitycenteraustin.org

SafePlace accepts online donations at www.safeplace.org

Advent Blessings – *An Open Letter to the Congregation: As we enter Advent I reflect on how the Light of Christ was illuminated this year by your acts of love as you allowed yourself to be a vessel of God's compassion to those in need. For every prayer offered, for every penny given, for every heart touched by your caring... from every foster girl that came our way... every homeless person with a full stomach at Trinity Center... every grieving family consoled at Christopher House... every mother, father, and child with a Safe Place to go... every family sustained by an ABC food bag... every child who received a present at Foundation Communities from the school... every resident at St. George's Court who found an unexpected gift in a precious stocking... every woman saved from cancer in Nicaragua... every person with improved medical care in Sudan... to every refugee given shelter at Casa Marianella happened because you cared and because you taught our children to care. What greater blessing is there than to be where God is at work! Wishing each of you a most blessed holiday as we prepare to celebrate the greatest gift of all in the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, Gayle Wall*

✠ **FRIENDS IN ST. GEORGE'S** ✘ This past July we held the first meeting of a Public Policy Group for St. George's. In that first meeting a dozen members decided to look for ways to respond to appeals for policy input from Episcopal national, state and local groups.

We receive news from the Episcopal News Service and e-mails from the Episcopal Public Policy Network inviting us to influence public policy and alleviate human suffering. Such requests, dealing with issues like poverty, education, health and women's rights, often ask us to write letters or phone representatives. You probably receive such requests yourself and respond to them when you can.

As an outgrowth of our first meeting, we encouraged you to participate in national discussions on health care reform by communicating your thoughts to your elected representatives. We will not be speaking on behalf of St. George's but rather seeking to help you become part of the discussion on issues of concern to the church at large.

Now we plan to meet once more after the coffee hour on **Sunday, December 6**. Please join us for this conversation. This time, we will try to develop processes for selecting future issues and ways to inform you on making your own opinions effective. Toward the end of coffee hour, we will invite you to the library to the talk.
Elzy Cogswell, poetryplease@mail.utexas.edu, 452-4314 or Ralph Hausser, r_hausser@hotmail.com

✠ **CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWLY WEDS** ✘ Fr. Hoster shared this news with the Vestry and I pass it on to you. He wrote, "Terrie and I went to Dallas last Friday and Saturday (November 6,7) to represent St. George's at the wedding of Nancy Rickett's son David. The marriage took place in the bride's Roman Catholic Church so, for a change, I got to sit in the congregation. Nancy was able to vest and take a role in the ceremony and she made all of us Episcopalians look very good. Congratulations to David and Leslie who will make their home in the Dallas area."

Grant that their wills may be so knit together in your will, and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may grow in love and peace with you and one another all the days of their life. Amen.

✠ **A NEW FLOWER CHART** for the year 2010 is hanging in the narthex of the church. If you would like to **give altar flowers** on any given Sunday, or candles for any given month, please print clearly on the sign-up sheet so you can be recognized in the Sunday pewsheets. Be sure to note if you are giving the flowers or candles in memory of someone or in thanksgiving for some blessing in your life.

A donation of \$25 (for either flowers or candles) is requested; checks may be made payable to St. George's and placed in the alms basin on Sundays or mailed to the church office. Be sure to note on the memo line that the check is for altar flowers/candles.

✠ **ST. GEORGE'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING will take place on Sunday, January 10.** On that day we will take the opportunity to worship as one congregation at **9:30 a.m.**, have brunch together and then take care of some church business immediately thereafter. The annual parish meeting is the time we elect members to the Vestry, select Diocesan Council delegates, hear reports on various parish activities, etc.

✠ **SUNDAY, JANUARY 10**, is also a major feast day in the Church Year--that of the Baptism of our Lord. As such, it is one of the most appropriate times for us to celebrate the sacrament of Holy Baptism. **If you, your child, or someone you know desires to be baptized**, please contact the rector as soon as possible.

✠ **THE CHURCH OFFICE** will be closed **the week between Christmas and New Year's**.

✠ **FROM THE VESTRY** - Below is a statement of St. George's actual income and expenses compared with the budgeted income and expenses for the first 10 months of the year. If you have any questions about this report, please contact Frances Rickard, Treasurer.

YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JANUARY - OCTOBER 2009

	Actual	Budgeted
Loose offering & pledges	\$131,112	\$141,616
Other income*	\$40,283	\$44,515
Total Income	\$171,395	\$186,131
Total Expenses	\$190,710	\$186,683
Difference between Income and Expenses	-\$19,315	-\$552

*includes donations for altar flowers, building use fees, reimbursements from the day school and St. Hildegard's, etc. This does not include donations to outreach committee projects or other special fund-raisers.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Dec 6	Public Policy meeting at noon in the library
Dec 6	EYC meets after church 12:15 – 1p.m. Location to be announced
Dec 13	Pink Candle Party and Christmas Pageant planning
Dec 23	Christmas Pageant 7p.m. followed by potluck dinner
Dec 24	Christmas Eve church service at 10:30p.m. Choral prelude begins at 10:15p.m.
Dec 25	Holy Communion, 10:00a.m. No music.
Jan 6	The Feast of Epiphany – 7p.m. candlelit service and Holy Communion
Jan 10	Annual Parish meeting following one service at 9:30a.m. Brunch
Jan 23	Outreach retreat
Feb 13	Diocesan Council, Killeen

✠ **LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD RANCH HANDS** ✠ News from Down Home Ranch.
We have some very important job openings and wanted to ask you to help spread the word.

First of all, we're looking for people that really want employment at a working farm and ranch. We are not simply a care-giving-facility that happens to be in the country. We are a ranch community where getting a little donkey poop on your boots is routine and rising early to accompany a Rancher with Down syndrome to the barn to feed horses is just another part of the day.

Yes, we want people as Resident Assistants and Associate Resident Assistants who want to spend their time and talent working with people with disabilities. And, we'd love to find a Program Director who is well versed in ICF-MR lingo. But we also want folks who are country at heart and would like to combine working with people with special needs while helping meet the demands of farm and ranch life.

If you or someone you know might be interested, check us out. Jobs and descriptions are on our website: www.downhomeranch.org

Jerry Horton, Executive Director, Down Home Ranch

Links to:

<http://www.sgchurch.org/worship4.asp> Lay ministry schedule
<http://www.sgchurch.org/events3.asp> The Banner including past electronic issues
<http://www.sgchurch.org/worship3.asp> Sermons via podcast
www.stgeorges-austin.org St. George's Day School
<http://www.io.com/~kellywp/> The Lectionary – a calendar of current scripture readings
<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/index.htm> Episcopal Life Online
<http://www.epicenter.org/edot/Calendar24.asp?SnID=309494341> EDOT calendar year
<http://www.foundcom.org/> Foundation Communities
www.campallen.org/html/summer.htm Camp Allen registration for multiple programs
www.earth911.org Recycling and other earth friendly information
www.elbuen.org El Buen Samaritano Episcopal Mission

The Rev. David W. Hoster *Rector*
Paul Pew *Music Minister*
James Thomas *Parish Secretary*
Deborah Hughes-Habel
Senior Seminarian
Laura Colangelo
Day School Director

Vestry

Alice Nelson *Senior Warden*
Martha Paull *Junior Warden*
Kristi Couvillon-Wise *Clerk*
Ruth Crawford Robert Blech
Andrea Sparks Hollie Gordon
Jan Phillips Hal Stevens

Sunday Morning Schedule

8:00a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
(with Morning Prayer on
first Sundays)
8:00a.m. Contemplative prayer
10:30a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II
with Kids Word
(Nursery available)

at a glance...

- * Advent observation
- * Christmas services change
- * Pink Candle Party
- * Poinsettia donations
- * Christmas at the rectory
- * Mark your calendar

For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders;
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9: 5

The next issue of *The Banner* will go
out on January 1st. Deadline for news
is **Sunday, December 20th**.
E-mail information to Alice Nelson
mzlsnlsn@gmail.com.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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