

THE BANNER



**St. George's
Episcopal Church**

4301 North IH-35 | Austin, TX | www.sgchurch.org

December 2021



Advent • Christmas

4301 North IH 35 • Austin, TX 78722

512.454.2523 • stgeorgeaustin@gmail.com

www.sgchurch.org

Office hours: Monday – Thursday, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sunday Schedule

- 10:30 am [Holy Eucharist Rite II](#)
Online/In-person
- 11:30 am Coffee Hour

The Rev. Ann McLemore
Interim Rector

Dia Park
Music Minister

Jennifer Joslyn-Siemiatkoski
Office Administrator

Jerri Thompson
Day School Director

Josh Beckham
Rob Blech
Mark Casstevens
Ed Crawford
Dale Curry

Brad Dieringer
Hye Na Lucy
Belinda McGhee
Samantha Stevens
Vestry

Brad Dieringer
Senior Warden

Ed Crawford
Junior Warden

Samantha Stevens
Financial Secretary

Ashley Carrera
Treasurer

Belinda McGhee
Clerk

Bridgette Beinecke
School Board Liaison

Mark Your Calendars

- Sat 12/11** Women's Book Group
Holiday Tea
- Mon 12/13** Vestry Meeting
- Mon 12/20** School Board Meeting
- Fri 12/24** Christmas Eve Services
- Sat 12/25** Christmas Day

[St. George's Events Calendar](#)

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Feast Days

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Charles de Foucauld, Monastic and Martyr, 1916 | 14 John of the Cross, Mystic and Monastic Reformer, 1591 |
| 2 Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1637 | 15 Nino of Georgia, Missionary, c.332 |
| 3 Francis Xavier, Priest and Missionary, 1552 | 17 Dorothy Sayers, Apologist and Spiritual Writer, 1957 |
| 4 John of Damascus, Priest and Theologian, c.760 | 20 Katharina von Bora, Church Reformer, 1552 |
| 5 Clement of Alexandria, Priest and Theologian, c.210 | 21 Saint Thomas the Apostle |
| 6 Nicholas of Myra, Bishop, c. 342 | 25 The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ |
| 7 Ambrose of Milan, Bishop and Theologian, 397 | 26 Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr |
| 12 Francis de Sales, Bishop, and Jane de Chantal, Monastic, Workers of Charity, 1622 and 1641 | 27 Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist |
| 13 Lucy of Syracuse, Martyr, 304 | 28 Holy Innocents |
| | 29 Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury and Martyr, 1170 |
| | 31 Frances Joseph Gaudet, Educator and Social Reformer, 1934 |

Interim Rector's Corner

Dear St. George's Family:

Happy New Year as we enter this first season of the Church calendar, Advent! Advent is considered, to varying degrees, a penitential season, as preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ at Christmas. Church linens and vestments were typically purple, as in our long penitential season of Lent before Easter. However, the more contemporary commemoration of Advent has been with the color blue. Floral arrangements are exchanged for evergreen wreaths and/or poinsettias. Wreaths of pine offer a symbolism as they stand for the circle and eternal regard for life. Holly used during Advent is symbolic of the crown of thorns. Poinsettias used during Advent are seen as an offering of welcome and a symbol of how we regard one another.



How we regard one another is a “way of life” we might each consider and pray about as we enter into Advent and all the craziness of commercial “Christmas.” Continuing to come out more and more into the world after the isolation of the pandemic, let us not forget the cost that was taken around the world to reach this point. As we prepare for the coming of Christ during Advent, we continue to pay the cost of all the ways the pandemic has changed our lives, but we cannot let that stop us from looking for Christ in all around us and in all the people we encounter in our day to day lives.

How we regard one another... sadly, we will be saying good-bye to Jennifer this week. She has served St. George's well for six years, years that came with all kinds of challenges: rector leaving, interim priest, interim rector, COVID, break-ins... and life goes on! We wish her all the best with this new position as Director of Operations at St. Mark's. A blessed Advent and Christmas to Jennifer and her family. Most of all, a grateful “thank you and well done” from all of us!

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann R. McLemore" with a small cross symbol at the end.

The Rev. Ann McLemore



Search Committee Update



Hello St George's family! As a part of the search process, I'll be sharing monthly information on our process for calling "Rector Next," as I've started to referring to our future partner in ministry.

One of the search committee's first tasks was developing a wide range of questions to be used in our upcoming interviews using the STAR Method (STAR is an abbreviation for Situation/Task, Action, Result.)

The STAR method of interviewing helps us focus on the specific criteria for a rector. In addition, it provides a method whereby the committee members can hone their ability to interview and gain relevant and extremely important information which can ultimately inform our evaluation of the candidates.

With or collection of STAR questions tailored to St George's, we'll be able to maximize the time we have with candidates. Additionally, the STAR method gives a structure where rector candidates can share what actions in their past ministry did (and sometimes didn't) have the desired results.

Here are a couple examples of STAR questions from our last working meeting:

1. Our location in a growing city garners us a fair number of visitors looking for a church home. What steps do you routinely take to gain the trust/commitment of new prospects who are considering joining the congregation? What were the results?
2. Recall a task you have delegated to a committee or lay leader at your church. What accountability procedure did you require of that committee/person? Describe how this committee/person has responded.

Now for my recruiting plug – the diocese welcomes nominations from parishioners. If you know of priests you think would be a good candidate, names can be sent directly to our Transition Minister, the Rev. Kellaura Johnson at kjohnson@epicenter.org. The diocese has a process to keep all nominations strictly confidential. Also, even if your candidate isn't available, they may know someone who'd be a perfect fit for St George's!

Please keep in mind that the search committee can discuss our process for making a call, but we are strictly limited on how much we can discuss about our progress through that process. In this era of immediate connections, information that seems incidental has the potential to sink a nomination and set us back months.

Finally, please keep our candidates and the search committee in your prayers. As much as this resembles a corporate hiring process, we're here for the Holy Spirit to work through us and our future rector.

Peace,

Brad Dieringer

Senior Warden

The Season of Advent

The first Sunday of Advent, which falls on November 28th this year, begins the Church's liturgical year. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and lasts until Christmas Eve. It is a time of reflection, waiting and preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ.

The season's name is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming" or "arrival." Advent is a time of preparation and expectation for the coming celebration of our Lord's nativity, and for the final coming of Christ. The Scripture readings throughout the season reflect this double anticipation of the coming of Christ – his First Advent as a babe in Bethlehem, and his Second Advent in power and glory. Advent is a reminder that we live between the times, when what has been promised has not yet been fulfilled. Advent is also an invitation into a space of prayerful expectation that is often at odds with the larger culture's approach to the weeks before Christmas.



The most common symbol of Advent is the Advent Wreath – a circle of greenery with four (or five) candles, each of which represents one of the Sundays of the season. (If a fifth candle is used, it is placed in the center and called the Christ Candle, and it is lit on Christmas Eve.) Each Sunday, the circle of light expands, as Christ comes ever closer.

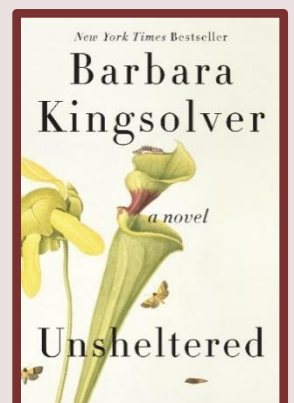
Women's Book Group



Mark your calendars for the St. George's Women's Book Group's Annual Holiday Tea! Please join us on **Saturday, December 11th**, from **3:00 to 5:00 pm**, at the **home of Sarah Campbell** to be part of our annual Holiday Tea, a book exchange, conversation with remarkable women, and a discussion of *Unsheltered*, by **Barbara Kingsolver**. The meeting will be held indoors, with masks optional. All St. George's women are welcome to attend – even if you haven't read the book!

- Holiday Tea – Our custom is to share in creating the banquet table. Sarah will provide a main course, and guests are asked to bring a side dish.
- Book Exchange – To participate, please bring a gift-wrapped book (it doesn't have to be new) that you'd love to have other amazing women discover. Everyone who brings a favorite book to give away will take home a book someone else wants to share! (Participation is optional.)
- Book Discussion – And of course, we'll be discussing a book! If you can, read *Unsheltered*, by **Barbara Kingsolver**, and come prepared to share your thoughts.

If you have never joined us, this is the best time to come – we're having a party! Please contact Alice Nelson at mzlsnlsn@gmail.com with any questions. Happy reading!



Christmas Outreach



Calling all angels! This holiday season, we have again been given the opportunity to help those in need by giving \$20 H-E-B gift cards to the 35 residents of Casa Marianella and the 70 residents of St. George's Court. That's a total of 105 gift cards, which is a lot, but we can do it!

To participate in this project, purchase a \$20 gift card from H-E-B, and either place it in one of the stockings on the tree in the south entrance to the church for St. George's Court, or place it in the basket for Casa Marianella. You may also donate online at the [St. George's Donation page](#) by indicating the amount of your gift in the section labeled "Christmas Outreach." The deadline to participate is **Sunday, December 19th**.

The gift cards for the Court will be delivered in lovely stockings handmade by Sarah Campbell and Alice Nelson, and decorated by Outreach volunteers.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Sarah Campbell at cowmarket2@gmail.com or Alice Nelson at mzlsnlsn@gmail.com.

Poinsettias

St. George's will be adorned with poinsettias for our celebrations of the Nativity of our Lord and throughout the Christmas season. We invite you to make an offering for poinsettias, perhaps in a loved one's memory or in thanksgiving for a person or other blessing in your life.

The [2021 Poinsettia Donation Form](#) is available online and in the Sunday bulletins. Names of donors, along with any memorials or thanksgivings (optional), will be listed in the Christmas service bulletins. Be sure to complete the form by **Sunday, December 19th**, in order to have your name and dedication listed in the bulletins.



The suggested donation is **\$20 per plant**. Donate online at [St. George's Donation page](#) by indicating the amount of your gift in the appropriate section (*Designated Gifts, Altar Guild, write "Poinsettias" in the notes section*), or send a check made out to "St. George's Episcopal Church" with "Poinsettias" in the memo line to the church office.

Our poinsettias this year will come from [Down Home Ranch](#), a non-profit farming community in Elgin that works to empower the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities through social, educational, residential and vocational opportunities.

Wednesday Weavings

Wednesday Weavings, St. George's adult discussion group, will be taking a break during Advent. Please join us for our first meeting of 2022 on Wednesday, January 5th!

In-Person Worship



Our Sunday morning services continue to grow as we enjoy gathering in-person and re-connecting with our community as we emerge from the pandemic. We hope that you can join us! We are continuing to take measures to be safe, and our policies evolve as the situation changes. Masks and social distancing are required; we are remaining in our pews to receive communion; and in-person worshipers are asked not to sing until the final hymn.

The 10:30 service continues to be accessible via both Zoom and Facebook Live, so if you don't feel safe coming back to in-person church just yet or can't make it every Sunday, you can still worship with us!



Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour in Kleberg Hall is back! We are thrilled to once again be enjoying a time of fellowship in our newly renovated parish hall. Please join us after the service in Kleberg for this time of fellowship.

We are asking that two or three households make a commitment to host Coffee Hour each week. That responsibility will include set-up and clean-up, as well as providing finger-food snacks. A sign-up sheet will be available at Coffee Hour, so please be generous with your time and find a Sunday on which you can help out. Complete instructions for coffee hour hosting are available on the Kleberg refrigerator or upon request.



Nineteen Steps to Calling a New Rector

Just as there are 19 steps in the Wright House up to the Rector's Office, there are 19 steps for the congregation going through the process of preparing for and calling a new rector. The whole congregation is invited to be part of the process of each of these 19 steps, the ultimate goal being the arrival of a newly called rector on Step 19! The steps are:



- 1. The Rector announces that s/he is leaving.
- 2. Supply clergy lead worship; work out interim priest arrangement.
- 3. The Interim priest arrives; work out Interim Rector arrangement.
- 4. The Interim Rector arrives and begins transition work.
- 5. The congregation completes a survey provided by the diocese.
- 6. The results of the survey are shared with the congregation.
- 7. The Parish Profile Committee is formed and generates a Parish Profile.
- 8. When the profile is ready, the diocese approves it.
- 9. The Profile is circulated locally and nationally for six to eight weeks.
- 10. The Search Committee is formed and prepares for interviews.
- 11. The Search Committee reviews applications and holds interviews.
- 12. Zoom visits or (if safe and possible) in-person visits are held with the candidates.
- 13. The Search Committee narrows the list to one or two finalists and presents them to the Vestry.
- 14. Throughout the work of the Parish Profile and Search Committees, transition and interim work are taking place.
- 15. The Vestry reviews the name(s) from the Search Committee.
- 16. The Vestry votes to extend a call to one candidate.
- 17. A call goes out to the new Rector.
- 18. A Transition Team is formed to welcome the new Rector and his/her family.
- 19. The new Rector arrives.

2022 Pledge



Our stewardship season came to an end in November with Gratitude Sunday, but it's not too late to make a pledge to support St. George's in 2022! You can still place your pledge card in the offertory baskets or [pledge online](#). (If you have not received a pledge packet, please contact Jennifer in the church office at stgeorgeaustin@gmail.com.) For more information or to pledge online, visit the [Stewardship page](#).

Christmas Pageant

This year is different! We are in a time where things keep changing, fortunately changing for the better this year. So instead of a video, like last year, we can come to church for our Christmas Eve Pageant! We hope you'll join us for our Pageant Service on **Friday, December 24th**, at **5:00 pm**.



Advent is a good time to look ahead, think of the story and see where you might be in that crowd who came to Bethlehem, the night our Christ was born. If you had been there, who would you be? Shepherd? Angel? A Queen? A King? Or just you? You can make a costume at home or come get one from us. On December 24th we'll be in Wright House starting at 4:15 pm with costumes laid out for people to choose. You can dress in costume or come as you are, because the story goes on, and we are, here and now, part of that ongoing story.

Christopher House Bags



Delivery people needed! St. George's has a long-standing ministry of delivering hospitality baskets to the families of patients at Christopher House. As with everything else, the logistics of this have changed with the pandemic, but we continue to deliver baskets (except now they are bags with handles), and we need more delivery people! To be a part of this ministry, sign up for one or more weeks between now and December on the [Online Christopher House](#)

Basket Calendar. A \$10 donation is requested per basket, and you can also add a note and other goodies (nothing perishable). You can make the donation online via the [St. George's Donation Page](#) under Outreach, or by placing a check in the offertory basket (or mailing it to the church office) made out to "St. George's Episcopal Church," with "Christopher House Baskets" in the memo line. Then, contact Alice Nelson at mzlsnlsn@gmail.com to make arrangements to get a basket before your delivery week. Delivery includes no patient contact, and only brief outdoor and masked contact with a staff member.

Hands for Hope Update

El Buen Samaritano's Hands for Hope project was again a great success this year, and St. George's contributed nearly \$2,000 to that success! Many thanks to everyone who contributed, and especially to Carolyn Moreau, who coordinated the drive at St. George's, was our contact with El Buen Samaritano, and spent half the day on Saturday, November 20th, handing out food!



2022 Altar Flowers/Candles Calendar



St. George's 2022 Altar Flowers/Candles Calendar is available! You may use the paper calendar at the church entrance or the online calendar at [2022 Altar Flowers/Candles Calendar](#). Either way, enter your name and, if you wish, your dedication, next to the week or month of your choice. You can give flowers or candles in honor of someone, in celebration of an important event, in thanksgiving for a blessing in your life, or in memory of loved one. **A donation of \$35** is requested. You can make your donation online or by check. To give electronically, visit the [St. George's Donation page](#), scroll down to "Designated Gifts" / "Altar Guild," and enter the amount of your donation. Make checks payable to St. George's, with "Altar Flowers/Candles" in the memo line, and place them in the offertory basket or mail them to the church office.

Annual Parish Meeting

St. George's Annual Parish Meeting is coming up on **Sunday, January 30th**. The annual parish meeting is our opportunity to elect members of the Vestry, hear reports on various parish activities, and discuss other church business. If you lead a St. George's ministry of any kind, please begin thinking about your report outlining your ministry's activities throughout the past year. These reports will be compiled into a parish report to give us all a larger picture of the life of St. George's.



Goodbye from Jennifer

Dear St. George's community,

Working at St. George's for the last six years has been a wonderful experience for me. I've thoroughly enjoyed getting to know so many of you, and I've loved being becoming a part of this community. I've gained skills and experiences that will help me in the rest of my career. I will miss this place and all of you very much. Thank you for all your support of me, and in particular for the kind words and thoughts that so many of you have shared since my departure was announced!

May God bless the St. George's community in all that you do going forward, and especially in this transition process and your search for a new rector.

Peace,

Jennifer Joslyn-Siemiatkoski

News from the School



Nora Garcia Loran's forward thinking, along with Father Ed Hartwell and the parishioners of St. George's Episcopal Church are ultimately responsible for bringing this avant garde school into existence. And over the course of 55 years, the school has provided exceptional care and education for children in the surrounding community. It is not unusual to see second-generation families attending the school. Our mission of being an inclusive community, inspiring children to love learning by nurturing each child's mind, body, and spirit, is even more evident today with the school's expansion from serving three- to five-year-olds to now serving ages ranging from 3 months to pre-kindergarten, as well as a popular Summer Camp program.

Now, it's time to incorporate the outdoors even more into our curriculum inspiring children's creativity, exploration, and physical endurance. The school's inspiration in developing our playgrounds into a magical play world comes from two books: *Natural Playscapes* by Rusty Keeler and *Natural Playgrounds* by Ron and Ethan King.

When people ask what makes St. George's School different from all the rest, the hope is for the answer to be: "the amazing playgrounds." We are fulfilling our mission by implementing the highest standards and obtaining the highest early childhood accreditation through the National Association of Young Children. Our teaching staff and curriculum are known for their excellence.

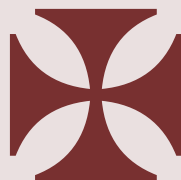
The importance of early childhood care and education was made evident to the nation during this recent pandemic. Building a strong foundation for young children to develop their mind, body, and spirit is a worthy goal and one that St. George's Episcopal School takes seriously. We invite you to join with us and [donate to our Annual Fund](#), so we can continue to build a legacy for future generations of children.

Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Respectfully,

Jerri Thompson

Head of School





December Birthdays & Anniversaries

We wish the following parishioners a happy birthday:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Brian Wolfe (Dec 3) | Vivienne Landry (Dec 20) |
| Ryan Wagner (Dec 4) | Jackson McGonigle (Dec 21) |
| Katie McGhee (Dec 6) | Mi-Young Kim (Dec 22) |
| Lexie McGhee (Dec 6) | Patsy Chandler (Dec 26) |
| Raul Carrera (Dec 15) | Stella Rose Tavrdes (Dec 26) |
| Janna Cormier (Dec 17) | Robert Erik Colón (Dec 27) |
| Belinda McGhee (Dec 18) | Miriam Long (Dec 31) |

And a happy anniversary to:

- Divesh & Vanamala Manohar (Dec 22)
 Nancy & Raul Carrera (Dec 27)



Congratulations and Best Wishes!

January *Banner* Deadline



The deadline for news for the January issue of *The Banner* is Thursday, December 16th.
 Please email news and articles you would like included in the next issue to stgeorgeaustin@gmail.com.



Links for Further Information

[St. George's Church website](#)
[St. George's Episcopal School](#)
[The Episcopal Diocese of Texas](#)
[The Episcopal Church, USA](#)

[The Lectionary](#)
[Camp Allen](#)
[St. George's Court](#)
[Episcopal Relief and Development](#)