

THE BANNER



St. George's Episcopal Church

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

December 2020



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

Online Sunday Schedule

- 10:30 am [Liturgy of the Word](#)
- 11:15 am Zoom Coffee Hour
- 5:15 pm Compline

The Rev. Merrill Wade
Interim Priest

Mi-Young Kim
Music Minister

Jennifer Joslyn-Siemiatkoski
Office Administrator

Jerri Thompson
Day School Director

Josh Beckham
Bridgette Beinecke

Rob Blech
Melissa Brackin
Ed Crawford

Brad Dieringer
Hye Na Lucy
Stefan Schuster

Samantha Stevens
Vestry

Melissa Brackin
Senior Warden

Ed Crawford
Junior Warden

Samantha Stevens
Financial Secretary

Ashley Carrera
Treasurer

Brad Dieringer
Clerk

Ed Crawford
School Board Liaison

Mark Your Calendars

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| Wed 12/2 | Wednesday Weavings | Wed 12/16 | Wednesday Weavings |
| Thu 12/3 | Advent Evening Class | Thu 12/17 | Advent Evening Class |
| Tue 12/8 | Choir Meet-up | Tue 12/22 | Choir Meet-up |
| Thu 12/10 | Advent Evening Class | Thu 12/24 | Christmas Eve Services |
| Sat 12/12 | Women's Book Group | Fri 12/25 | Christmas Day |
| Mon 12/14 | Vestry Meeting | | |

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

In This Issue

Interim Priest's Corner	2	Christmas Eve Pageant	6
Christmas Services	2	2021 Pledge	7
January Banner Deadline	2	Christopher House Baskets	7
The Season of Advent	3	Online Flower Donation Calendar	7
Wednesday Weavings	3	Annual Parish Meeting	7
Women's Book Group	3	Congratulations!	8
Advent Evening Classes	4	Behind the Scenes	8
Diocesan Council Delegates	4	Amazon Smile	9
Christmas Outreach	5	News from the School	10
Poinsettias	5	December Birthdays & Anniversaries	11
Compline Services	6	Links for Further Information	11
Advent Blue Bags!	6		

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 Priest's Corner

Dear St. George's Family:

Well, I have been here for two months! Serving with you all is a privilege and a real pleasure. My term ends on December 31st, but don't let that get in the way of reaching out to me if you want to talk. Email me at merrill76@utexas.edu or call the office at 512-454-2523 ext 2 and leave me a message. I'd love to make an appointment to see you.



I am very impressed with the parish commitment to the community around us. I was deeply moved when I saw all the comfort bags for SAFE after church last Sunday, arrayed around the fireplace in the Wright House for blessing. Truly, this was a visual icon of compassion, and a beacon, in all those beautiful colors and designs, of authentic hope. It is obvious that St. George's cares for those in need. I do not take that for granted.

We have now held outdoor services for five weeks. We gather on Sunday evenings at 5:15 pm. We use the Book of Common Prayer service for the Compline liturgy, which is meant to be the final prayers before retiring for the night. Compline is an ancient monastic rite with a flowing rhythm of readings, psalms, and prayers. The liturgy has special concern for those who work or watch or weep in the night hours, while others sleep. If you have not attended, please sign up online and come and least once during the Advent Season! We have ample space for 20 persons to spread out in the playground. It is a good and happy 15 minutes together, and for those of you have not been on campus much since the pandemic, you might find it satisfying to come back to your church home if only for a while. (See the article on page 6 for more information, including how to register.)

I invite all of you to participate in three 7:00 pm Thursday evening classes that I will teach online in December. My intention is for us to study the Advent Season of the church year with a deep dive into the Scriptures through the lens of the Book of Common Prayer. My hope is that you all are yearning for some serious study as a means of drawing closer to our Lord in the Advent Season. (See the article on page 4 for more information.)

Faithfully,

Merrill Wade

The Rev. Merrill Wade

Christmas Services

Thursday, December 24th, Christmas Eve

- 4:00 pm Christmas Pageant
followed by a virtual Coffee/Hot Chocolate Hour
- 8:30 pm Christmas Eve Liturgy of the Word Rite II
preceded by a virtual Coffee/Egg Nog Hour at 8:00 pm



January Banner Deadline



The deadline for news for the January issue of *The Banner* is Monday, December 21st. Please email news and articles you would like included in the next issue to stgeorgeaustin@gmail.com.

The Season of Advent

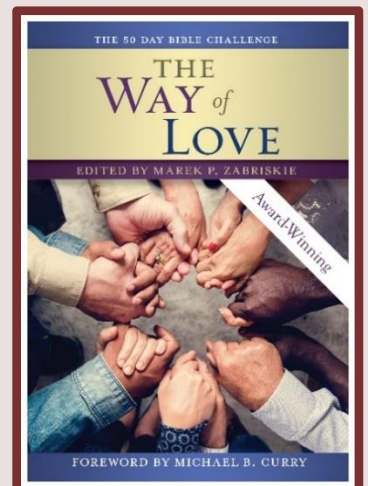


The first Sunday of Advent, which falls on November 29th this year, begins the Church's liturgical year. Advent begins four Sundays before Christmas and lasts until Christmas Eve. It is a time of reflection, waiting and preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ. The season's name is derived from the 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.

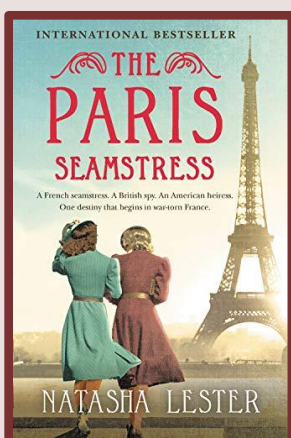
The most common symbol of Advent is the Advent Wreath – a circle of greenery with four (or five) candles, each of which represents one of the Sundays of the season. (If a fifth candle is used, it is placed in the center and called the Christ Candle, and it is lit on Christmas Eve.) Each Sunday, the circle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

Wednesday Weavings

St. George's adult discussion group is continuing to meet via Zoom, from **7:00 to 8:00 pm** every other Wednesday. All are welcome to join the group for discussion and a closing service of Compline. This month we will meet on Wednesdays, **December 2nd** and **December 16th**. We are continuing our study of *The Way of Love*, a Forward Movement publication edited by Marek Zabriskie. The book offers 50 meditations, each consisting of a Scripture reading, reflection, discussion questions, and prayer. The meditations are divided into seven sections based on seven spiritual practices for a Jesus-centered life: Turn, Learn Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest. Frances Rickard will send out the Zoom invitation along with the reading and/or video before each meeting to the group's email list. If you are not on the list and would like to receive the email, or if you have any questions, please contact Frances at fajrickard@gmail.com. The Zoom screen has plenty of room for all who want to join us!



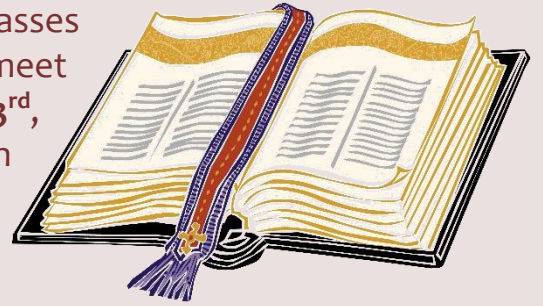
Women's Book Group



Please join us for our next meeting on **Saturday, December 12th**, from **3:00 to 5:00 pm**, via Zoom. We will discuss *The Paris Seamstress*, by **Natasha Lester**. All St. George's women are welcome to attend – even if you haven't read the book! We hope you can join us for interesting conversation and our book discussion. The Zoom invitation will be sent out to the group's email list prior to the meeting. To be added to the list, or if you have any questions, please contact Sandra Villalaz at 512-762-8349 or sandra.villalaz48@gmail.com. Happy reading!

Advent Evening Classes

You are invited to participate in three Thursday evening classes led by the Rev. Merrill Wade in December. The classes will meet via Zoom at **7:00 pm** beginning on **Thursdays, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th**. Participants will study the Advent Season with a deep dive into the Scriptures through the lens of the Book of Common Prayer (BCP). The topics for each class are as follows:



- **December 3rd:** *If the word Advent suggests expectant waiting, who are we waiting for and what do we expect?* This class will examine the Gospel reading and Collect of the Day for the First Sunday of Advent. To prepare, please read Mark 13:24-37 and the appropriate collect on page 211 of the BCP.
- **December 10th:** *What is prophecy, really, and do we listen?* This class we will look at the nature of prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures and the emergence of John the Baptist as the prophet who pointed to Jesus declaring he was not worthy to carry his sandals. To prepare, please read three prophetic proclamations from Isaiah which will be read on the first three Sundays of Advent – Isaiah 64:1-9, Isaiah 40:1-11, and Isaiah 61:1-11. And from the gospels please read the accounts of John the Baptist in Mark 1:1-8 and John 1:6-8, 19-28. We will also look at the Collects of the Day for the First and Second Sundays of Advent, found in the BCP on pages 211-212.
- **December 17th:** *The Christmas Bible Study – the birth of Jesus set in stark contrasts.* In this class we will closely examine the texts in the New Testament that refer to or tell the story of the birth of Jesus. To prepare please read through the birth narratives available in the first few chapters of all four gospels. In addition, please read the Collect of the Day for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and the first Collect for The Nativity of our Lord: Christmas Day, both found in the BCP on page 212.

If you are unable to prepare in advance please do not let that stop you from participating, as the participants will read most of the texts together in class as well. Please contact Merrill at merrill76@utexas.edu with any questions. The Zoom link will be emailed to the congregation; to be added to the email list, contact the church office at stgeorgeaustin@gmail.com.

Election of Diocesan Council Delegates



The Diocese of Texas will hold its annual Diocesan Council virtually this year, from Friday, February 26th, through Saturday, February 27th, and we want St. George's to be represented! In order to elect our delegates to Diocesan Council, we will hold a parish-wide vote for this year's delegates via email.

St. George's delegation to Diocesan Council consists of the Senior Warden, three elected delegates serving three-year terms, and two alternates serving one-year terms. We currently need to elect one delegate and two alternates. Any adult member in good standing may serve as a delegate, and anyone interested is encouraged to put your name forward as a nominee. If you would like more information about Diocesan Council or about what being a delegate entails, or if you're interested in serving, please contact Melissa Brackin at melissaeason@gmail.com. And watch for a delegate election email the first week of December.

Christmas Outreach

This holiday season, we have been given the opportunity to help feed the hungry by raising money for \$20 H-E-B gift cards to give to the 35 residents of Casa Marianella and the 70 residents of St. George's Court. That's a total of 105 gift cards, so our goal is to raise \$2,100. This is an ambitious reach for our congregation, but the needs in our community are great, and we want to help!



Because of the pandemic, Outreach will purchase all the gift cards. To participate in this project, we encourage you to donate online at the [St. George's Donation page](#) by indicating the amount of your gift in the appropriate section (*Christmas Outreach*, either *Casa Marianella* or *Angel Wreath* for St. George's Court). You may also mail a check to the church office (made out to "St. George's Episcopal Church," with "Christmas Outreach" in the memo line), but be aware that check deposits may be delayed.

This year, as in years past, the gift cards for the Court will be delivered in lovely stockings handmade by Martha Paull, with stocking decoration coordinated by Alice Nelson and the Dieringer and McGhee families.

We know that Outreach has kept you busy this season with many projects, and that our members have many calls on their funds. Because of our funding strategy, we will accept donations through the twelve days of Christmas, to allow a little more flexibility in giving. If we do not receive enough donations, we will fund the gift cards from general Outreach funds. If we receive more than enough for the cards, we will divide the extra between Casa and the Court to be used in their feeding programs.

If you have any questions about this project or about how to give online, or if you would like to help, 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 [Poinsettia Donation Form](#) is available online. 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 **Thursday, December 17th** 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.

Compline Services

St. George's is holding in-person outdoor Compline services at 5:15 pm on Sunday evenings. Compline is a beautiful evening prayer service, led by our Interim Priest Merrill Wade. The services are limited to approximately 20 people and require registration. To attend, please [register online](#).

Compline lasts approximately 15-20 minutes and is held at the rear of the playground. If you wish to sit, please bring your own chair; you are also welcome to stand. Masks and social distancing are required, and bathrooms are not available. Please bring a Book of Common Prayer or a device to access [Compline online](#). We look forward to seeing you in person!



Advent Blue Bags!



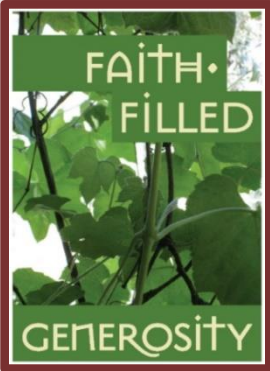
Advent is here! Time to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of Light! We are challenged this year to find new ways to keep our old traditions. Since KidsWord can't meet in person, we want to offer families with children some things that you can use in Advent observations at home. So this year we're giving out **Blue Bags** to all our church families with children! Blue Bags will have an Advent calendar, patterns for paper ornaments, Advent devotions, and a Pageant song book. We also have a limited supply of Advent wreaths and candles, available upon request. We can also make some of our church Pageant costumes available to take photos of kids to use in our Christmas Pageant video (see the article below.) Please contact Jan Phillips at janphillips62@gmail.com to arrange a time to come by the church and pick up your family's Blue Bag.

Christmas Eve Pageant

This year for the Christmas Eve Pageant, we boldly venture into video land, with your help. Please think about what role your child would like to play in the Nativity story. We need Angels, Shepherds, and Queens and Kings, bearing special gifts. And we would love to have a Mary and Joseph in the same family, so they can be photographed together! Once you've decided what role(s) to play, have your child(ren) dress in a costume from home and take a picture in character. You can also borrow a costume from St. George's; contact Jan Phillips at janphillips62@gmail.com to arrange a time to come by the church and pick one up. Send your photo to Suzette Puckett at cshpuckett@austin.rr.com by **Wednesday, December 9th**, and we will include it in a video for the early service on Christmas Eve. You can even send a photo from a Christmas past!



Then, tune in to the [St. George's Facebook page](#) at **4:00 pm on Christmas Eve** to attend our pageant service and celebrate the nativity of our Savior. Feel free to share the link with grandparents or other friends and family, near or far.



2021 Pledge

Our stewardship season came to an end in November with Generosity Sunday, but it's not too late to make a pledge to support St. George's in 2021! You can [pledge online](#) or by mailing your pledge card to the church office. (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](#).

Christopher House Baskets

Many thanks to those of you have signed up to deliver Christopher House Baskets this fall. We need more basket delivery people for December and beyond! To be a part of this ministry, sign up for one or more weeks on the [Online Christopher House Basket Calendar](#). (You can also check the calendar if you're not sure whether or when you're signed up.) Contact Alice Nelson at mzlsnlsn@gmail.com to make arrangements to get a basket before your delivery week.



Online Flower/Candle Donation Calendar



St. George's [2021 Online Flower/Candle Donation Calendar](#) is now available. To give altar flowers for one or more Sundays in 2021, or altar candles for one or more months, visit the online [Online Donation Calendar](#) and 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. (To be sure that your donation is listed in the bulletin, please sign up at least one full week in advance.) **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 made payable to St. George's, with "Altar Flowers/Candles" in the memo line, and mail them to the church office.

Annual Parish Meeting

St. George's Annual Parish Meeting is coming up on **Sunday, January 24th**. 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.



Congratulations!



Congratulations to Dale Curry and James Duran on the celebration and blessing of their marriage on Sunday, November 1st.

*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.

Behind the Scenes of Online Worship

Many thanks to Brad Dieringer, who has been working tirelessly to make our virtual worship services happen and improve our audio-visual capabilities. He researched and purchased our current system, and he and his son Henry have been serving as our Sunday morning technicians for the past several months. Here's a glimpse of what's happening behind the scenes on Sunday mornings (thanks to Bridgette Beinecke for the photos):



Hands for Hope Update

Thank you, St. George's, for your generous support of El Buen Samaritano's Hands for Hope campaign – we raised over \$7,000! In total, 1,250 local families were served. On Saturday, November 21st, 800 families received Thanksgiving meal kits including all the essentials to cook a holiday meal, with enough to share with friends and family. In addition, 450 families of El Buen's partner organizations received vouchers to purchase Thanksgiving meal items, and another 500 families will receive a meal kit in December!

Your gifts did more than feed families for Thanksgiving – they will ensure that families are able to receive emergency assistance all year long through El Buen's food pantry, whether that's vegetables, baby food, or even cleaning supplies. Below are photos from some of St. George's volunteers (Gabriel, Samantha and myself). Also check out this [video of the day](#) from El Buen. We are so grateful for your help in making Hands for Hope a success these challenging times.

~ Carolyn Moreau



Support St. George's with Amazon Smile

amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

As you're doing your Christmas shopping, don't forget about using [AmazonSmile](#)! The AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

When you first visit AmazonSmile, select St. George's Episcopal Church in Austin, TX, as your charity of choice (or just follow [this link](#)). Once you've selected your preferred charitable organization, your preferences will be saved; then just do your Christmas shopping as usual! (Note that you can support many different worthy organizations through AmazonSmile, including our school. If you already support St. George's with your pledge and feel called to use your Amazon shopping to support another organization, feel free to do so.)

News from the School

Happy Holidays!

Can you believe it's the end of 2020? What a year this has been. I miss seeing all the activity here and pray everyone is safe.

Here are some of the highlights of my recent Head of School Newsletter, which was sent out to both school families and parishioners:

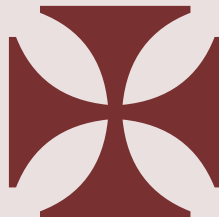


- The school has planned an outside Christmas Pageant event on Wednesday, December 18th, after which we will break for Christmas.
- With COVID on the rise, the school sent out reminders to our families about how we are keeping children safe and how they can help.
- The school is preparing for the 2021-22 school year registration, and we announced a programmatic change. Our new school hours will be from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm. The school will offer Early Birds from 8:00-9:00 am, with school from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, followed by Fun Zone from 3:30-6:00 pm. We will also implement a tuition increase for that school year.
- The school will stop using Kleberg Hall as of June 1, 2021. The school plans to enroll seven classes rather than nine for the 2021-22 school year and summer camp program, while we wait to see what happens with our building plans.

I wish everyone a Merry Christmas. May it be filled with joy, laughter, and reflections on our blessed lives.

Respectfully,

Jerrit Thompson
Head of School





December Birthdays & Anniversaries

We wish the following parishioners a happy birthday:

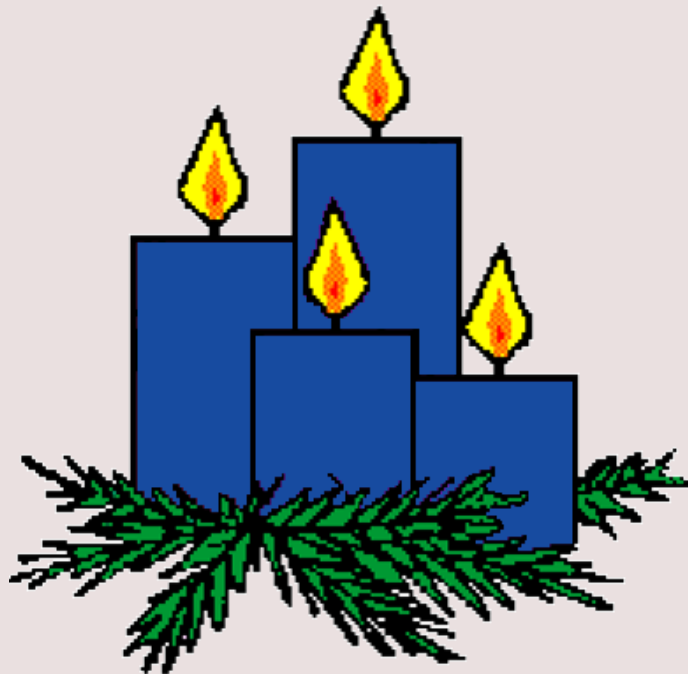
Brian Wolfe (Dec 3)	Belinda McGhee (Dec 18)
Ryan Wagner (Dec 4)	Vivienne Landry (Dec 20)
Katie McGhee (Dec 6)	Mi-Young Kim (Dec 22)
Lexie McGhee (Dec 6)	Patsy Chandler (Dec 26)
Raul Carrera (Dec 15)	Stella Rose Tavriles (Dec 26)
Janna Cormier (Dec 17)	Miriam Long (Dec 31)

And a happy anniversary to:

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



Congratulations and Best Wishes!



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](#)