

THE BANNER



**St. George's
Episcopal Church**

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

December 2022



Season after Pentecost

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. Matt Boulter
Rector

Dia Park
Music Minister

Madeline Sparks
Office Administrator

Jerri Thompson
Day School Director

Brad Barcus
Josh Beckham
Mark Casstevens
Brad Dieringer
Spencer Gordon
Belinda McGhee
Alice Nelson
Ramon Trevino
Sandra Villalaz
Vestry

Brad Dieringer
Senior Warden

Dale Curry
Junior Warden

Samantha Stevens
Financial Secretary

Frances Rickard
Treasurer

Belinda McGhee
Clerk

Bridgette Beinecke
School Board Liaison

Mark Your Calendars

Sun, 12/10 Annual High Tea
Sun, 12/11 Pink Candle Party
Fri, 12/16 Christmas Caroling
Fri, 12/16 School's Christmas Pageant
Sun, 12/18 Church Decorations
Sun, 12/18 Deadline for Poinsettias
Sat, 12/24 Christmas Eve Pageant Service; Midnight Mass
Sun, 12/25 Christmas Day
Sun, 1/1 New Year's Day
Weds, 1/4 Wednesday Weavings

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Feast Days

Thurs, 12/1 Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, 1916	Mon, 12/12 Francis de Sales, Bishop and Jane de Chantal, Vowed Religious, 1622 and 1641
Fri, 12/2 Channing Moore Williams, Bishop and Missionary, 1910	Fri, 12/16 Ember Day
Sat, 12/3 Francis Xavier, Priest and Missionary, 1552	Sun, 12/18 The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Sun, 12/4 The Second Sunday of Advent	Weds, 12/21 Saint Thomas the Apostle
Mon, 12/5 Clement of Alexandria, Priest and Theologian, c. 210	Sun, 12/25 The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ
Tues, 12/6 Nicholas of Myra, Bishop, c. 342	Mon, 12/26 Saint Stephen, Deacon and Martyr
Sun, 12/11 The Third Sunday of Advent	Tues, 12/27 Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist
	Sun, 12/28 The Holy Innocents

Rector's Corner: House in Order

I still can't believe I get to be the rector of St. George's Church!

Ten weeks into this job (sidenote: I don't usually like to refer to being a priest in the church as a "job"; I see it more as a vocation) I do believe that I have gained a good bit of clarity: clarity greater than what I had before, clarity about what going on, clarity about the true nature of the situation in which we find ourselves.

Am I sad that the A. S. A. (average Sunday attendance) of St. George's has apparently not grown over the last ten weeks? Yes. I admit it.

On the other hand, do I still believe that I am gifted for, and have some skills/passions/gifts necessary to, bring St. George's into a new epoch of growth? Yes, yes I do.

In fact, I am beginning to see a few twigs of kindling come together. (One of my fave metaphors for community growth within the church is the building of a fire: all that is needed for even the largest bonfire to get started is a few twigs of kindling. Once three of four such twigs are ignited, who knows how bright the fire might become?) As I slowly find the time to begin networking in the community, connections are beginning to be made. Three examples from just yesterday: a dear friend and supporter finally attended our service (with his wife and mother in law); a new (unchurched) contact asked me (as I hung out in his art studio, just two blocks south of the church) if I knew a parishioner family who lives right across the street from him (this same contact stopped by our voter registration drive at Fiesta Market a few weeks ago); another old friend (and former parishioner) was asking me last night about the when & where of our Sunday services, saying he hopes to come soon.

I am excited about these and other connections, especially as, more and more, we "get our house in order." I do not mean that our house is in shambles. But there are many ways in which we are striving to implement "best practices" in our office and in our organization/administration as a church. I am so thankful for tireless servants like Frances Rickard, Dale Curry, Samantha Stevens, Brad Dieringer, and others who are helping me to bring more and more order and stability to our church. A strong stewardship campaign is relevant here, as is the excellent assistance provided by Madeline Sparks, a kind and competent teammate. A functioning photocopier/printer is a sine qua non, as is an internet connection that actually works. (Of course Mikail McIntosh-Doty got us through a rocky situation, allowing us to hang on by a thread, as it were. Thanks be to God for her!)

We want to get to the point where the day-to-day administrative issues and tasks are pretty much automated (with everyone being on the same page), as if we were doing them "on the back of our hand" as it were. (This may have been how things were when Jennifer Siemiotkoski was here.) We need firm foundation on which to build, and in this post-COVID moment with a new rector at the threshold of a new year, now is the time to press forward to that goal.

Why? So that we can, together, do the real work of ministry: forming disciples, experiencing and extending the Kingdom of God, engaging in contemplation, being the Body of Christ to each other and to the world.

Yours in Christ,

Matt+



Coffee Hour

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.



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. To be a part of this ministry, sign up for one or more weeks (2 bags per week) on the Online Christopher House Basket Calendar. A \$10 donation is requested per bag. You can make the donation online via the Saint George's Donation Page under Outreach, or by placing a check in the offertory basket (or mailing it into the church office) made out to "St. George's Episcopal Church," with "Christopher House Baskets" in the memo line. The bags are located in Kleberg just behind the piano on the wooden bookshelf. We encourage donors to personalize the bags with fresh fruit, baked goods, and a handwritten note. The bags may be delivered any day of the week you select and there is no patient contact. If you feel called to participate in this ministry or have any questions, please see Alice Nelson after church or contact her at mslznlsn@gmail.com.



Randall's *Good Neighbor Program* Ending

Randall's / Tom Thumb has notified us that they recently assessed their Good Neighbor Program and, due to low activity, St. George's will no longer receive a percentage of purchases made by parishioners who have linked their Randall's card account to St. George's (through Good Neighbor number 1809). If you are one of the few who have your card linked to benefit St. George's through the Randall's Good Neighbor Program, please be aware of this change. St. George's can still benefit from your Amazon purchases through the Amazon Smile program (smile.amazon.com).

Holiday Wreaths!

The holidays are right around the corner! Order a festive holiday wreath and a portion of the purchase will be donated to St. George's Episcopal School. These are fragrant, high-quality, hand-crafted wreaths made with real branches and pine cones. Order here:

<https://give.hellofund.com/pages/JxJ7SFDY>





Pink Candle Party

Dec. 11 after church

While most of the Episcopal Church uses 4 blue candles for Advent wreaths, St. George's has held to the older tradition of a pink candle on the 3d Sunday in Advent. Pink is for joy, for the nearness of Christmas. We'll host a Pink Candle Party for our church family right after church, in Kleberg Hall! Come for lunch and Christmas cookies. Sing some favorite seasonal songs and make decorations for Christmas. And contribute what you can to a collection benefitting a cause that our children will choose! * If you would like to help with food or crafts, please contact Suzette: cshpuckett@austin.rr.com.

Christmas Eve Pageant service @ 5p.m., Dec. 24 (costumes @4:30 in Wright House)

Everything old is new again! We've watched and waited for the day when we could gather again for our Christmas Eve Pageant service. Now, we're dusting off Angel's wings and Wise Ones' crowns, sorting Shepherds' tunics and robes for royalty. And we invite all of you to come help with the telling of the Christmas story. Come in costume from home or come at 4:30 to Wright House to borrow one from our costume stash. When you are ready, go sit with your family in the church until it's time for your character to come to the Manger. All are invited, young and old, in costume or in your everyday clothes. Because we are, all of us, part of this ongoing story.



Christmas Outreach

Calling all angels! Join us in giving Christmas blessings to residents of **Casa Marianella** and residents of **St. George's Court**. For the next three Sundays -- Nov. 27, Dec. 4, and Dec. 11 — you can put \$20 H-E-B gift cards in the stockings on the mini-Christmas tree in the church for St. George's Court, or in the nearby basket for Casa Marianella. You may also donate online at the **St. George's Donation page under "Christmas Outreach."** The deadline to donate online is December 14! **If you have any questions about this project, please contact Andrea Sparks at andreasparks@gmail.com. Our goal is 120 gift cards!**



Christmas Luncheon

Join us at George's Court Christmas Luncheon Thursday, Dec.15 at 11:30 to give out the gift cards to and socialize with the residents! We'll be providing turkey, ham and pies **but need volunteers to bring prepared sides** — corn, green beans, mashed potatoes, rolls. You can sign up to bring a side to feed 10 people at church entrances on Sunday or by emailing Andrea Sparks at andreagalsparks@gmail.com.



Women's Book Group

The Women's Book Group will have its annual high tea at the home of Sarah Campbell 4601 Shoal Creek Blvd on December 10 from 3-5 pm. The book is *The Liar's Dictionary* by Eley Williams (only 265 pages!) She'll provide wine and her traditional offering of crab cakes; the rest of the feast will be pot luck. We can use 3-4 sweets and the same for savories, like cheese, chips etc. Please consider signing up to bring something delicious!

Please also continue to add book suggestions to our **Book Recommendation Form**. Check out the books we've recommended at **Compiled Book Recommendations**. Be generous and inclusive with your ideas.

Church Decorations

On the last Sunday of Advent (Dec. 18), we ask for anyone available to stay and help with light decorations for the annual "greening" of the church for Christmas. Since it will be a full week before Christmas this year, we'll just be doing the decorations, but we still need folks to tie ribbons, add some bling, and put up wreaths. The greens and poinsettias will arrive closer to Christmas. As always, we're hoping that John Rickard and his power screwdriver and Raul Carrera with his amazing wreath pole are available, but there's plenty for others to do as well. Generally, we cancel coffee hour and serve cookies, coffee, and cold cider in the back of the church as we work. Watch the Sunday Banner for details. Contact Mikail at mikail@alum.ssw.edu with any questions.

Christmas 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 **2022 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 18, to have your name and dedication listed in the bulletins.

Please consider a donation of \$20 per plant. Donate online at **St. George's online donation page** (click the "Donate" button at sgchurch.org/stewardship, then "Christmas Poinsettias"); write a check made payable to "St. George's Episcopal Church" with "Poinsettias" in the memo line; or place cash in an envelope marked with "Poinsettias" and your name.

Our poinsettias this year will again 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

St. George's adult discussion group, Wednesday Weavings, will take a break during Advent and most of Christmastide. Please join us for our first meeting of 2023 on Wednesday, January 4th. Contact Frances Rickard at fajrickard@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to know more.

2023 Altar Flowers and Candles

St. George's 2023 Altar Flower and Altar Candle Calendar is now open for sign-ups. Use the paper calendar on the bulletin board inside the north entrance of the church or the online version at [2023 Altar Flower/Candle 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 a loved one. A donation of \$35 is requested. You can make your donation online or by check. To give online, visit the [St. George's online donation page](#) and click "Donate" on the Altar Flowers and Candles tile to complete the form. Or write a check payable to St. George's, with "Altar Flowers/Candles" in the memo line, and place it in the offertory basket or mail to the church office.

El Buen Samaritano Hands for Hope

Thank you for providing funds for this year's Hands for Hope event! Although we don't have the exact amount raised yet, St. George's was one of the top churches to donate! Your generous support helped bless 1,000 families with a full traditional Thanksgiving meal so families can gather to cook, serve, eat and be thankful together. It was rainy and cold on the November 19th meal kit distribution day, but there was a joyful spirit in serving our community together. Music, dancing and smiles kept all the volunteers a little warmer.



News from the School

The school's annual 'Tis the Season event was a joyous occasion with families and staff. The children visited Santa Claus and interacted with a Live Nativity Scene (something for everyone). 'Tis the Season is a holiday tradition that St. George's began 8 years ago. It's a wonderful way to connect with families. Parents see the teachers as they engage with their children while doing art and crafts, singing, reading, and cooking. All the things we do here on a regular basis, but parents don't get to see first-hand. It's like inviting them into a huge classroom.



The school's next big event is The Christmas Pageant on Friday, Dec. 16 @ 3:00 PM. All are welcome.

As we enter Advent, I am filled with hope for the future of the church and school. The school is still rebuilding since the disruption of the pandemic, but as the school continues to prepare for its rebirth, I can feel the joy and love that surrounds this place.

I pray each of you has a meaningful Advent Season!

Blessings,

Jerri 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) | Jackson McGonigle (Dec. 20) |
| Lexie McGhee (Dec. 6) | Patsy Chandler (Dec. 26) |
| Stephanie Andrews (Dec. 9) | Stella Rose Tavriles (Dec. 26) |
| Raul Carrera (Dec. 15) | Robert Erik Colón (Dec. 27) |
| 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!

January *Banner* Deadline



The deadline for news for the January issue of *The Banner* is December 20th. 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](#)