

Birthdays: Pat Camper, Maggie Carpenter, Ginny Nutt, Kyle Haynes

Anniversaries: Steve & Jean Strickland, Geoffrey & Kaija Mayfield

Friday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m. A Way Out
9:30 a.m. Life Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
8:00 p.m. Friday Night Young Peoples' AA

Today's Ministry: Nursing Home & Home Visitors

Saturday, December 8

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the archangel's call, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall always be with the Lord.* (vv.16-17)

Our Epistle lesson for today continues the Advent theme of the coming of Christ. What an amazing picture Paul paints for us in his first letter to the church at Thessaloniki. Great artists throughout history have sought to depict this breathtaking scene on canvasses and in church frescoes. But I don't think anything can prepare us for how awesome, and awe-inspiring, will be the actual return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

According to this passage, first there will be the Rapture of living Christians, then the resurrection of deceased believers—and all of us will be with the Lord forever. The "special effects" that go along with Jesus' return sound pretty terrifying. But God's promise to take us to be with Him forever is a great comfort. It certainly gives me inner peace—during what can be a hectic season in our worldly culture (as well as the church!)—and I pray it will do the same for you this Advent.

Isaiah 4:2-6; Psalms 20, 21; Luke 21:5-19

Birthdays: Bill Tily, David Ralicki

Anniversary: Valentino & Laura Rangel

Saturday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
8:00 a.m. Eucharistic Visitor Training
9:00 a.m. Shepherd Group
9:30 a.m. AA Step Study for Women
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Today's Ministry: Office Volunteers

By The Rev. Dr. Nina George-Hacker, FHC

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"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with love"

The Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Todd L. Cederberg, *Rector* - frtodd@stmarys-stuart.org
The Rev. Christian S. Anderson, *Assistant Rector* - christian@stmarys-stuart.org
The Rev. Steve Fregeau, *Retired Assisting* - frsteve@stmarys-stuart.org

Lay Staff

Pat Channing, *Praise Band Director* - pat@stmarys-stuart.org
Debbie Flerx, *Assistant to the Clergy* - debbie@stmarys-stuart.org
Brandon Glick, *Music Ministry Director* - brandon@stmarys-stuart.org
Sheryl Konen, *Office Manager* - sheryl@stmarys-stuart.org
John Kelly, *Sexton/Facilities*
Alexis Stuckey, *Youth Ministry Director* - alexis@stmarys-stuart.org



St. Mary's Episcopal Church
623 SE Ocean Blvd. | Stuart, FL 34994
Phone (772) 287-3244 | www.stmarys-stuart.org

St. Mary's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 2

2 Peter 3:1-10 *First of all you must understand this, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own passions and saying, "Where is the promise of his coming?"* (v.3a RSV)

I don't know about you, but I'm not good at waiting for anything. If I'm stuck in a line at the store, I fidget and look all around, hoping another cashier will open up immediately. When I'm behind a bunch of stalled traffic and I'm in a hurry, I may not lay on the horn, but I'm tempted to say things a Christian shouldn't. So, it's no wonder people are impatient about Christ's promised return—after all, we've waited over 2,000 years! And yet, in this same passage, we are reminded that "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (v.8). So maybe we've only been waiting for two years.

This paradox is a good perspective to adopt, whether about life's many circumstances that try our patience, or about the Second Coming of Christ, which we anticipate during this season of Advent. Perhaps it would help us to think more about when Jesus came the first time, and how he comes into our hearts, minds, and lives *daily*—when we invite him.

Isaiah 1:1-9; Psalms 146, 147; Matthew 25:1-13

Birthday: Jeanne Simon

Anniversary: Joe & Dorothy Germain

Sunday's Calendar

EPISCOPAL CHARITIES SUNDAY
7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m. Contemporary Family Worship Service
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II (Youth)
10:15 a.m. Coffee Hour - Smith Hall after 9:00 A.M. Services
10:15 a.m. New Member's Gathering
11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
6:00 p.m. Movie in the Courtyard, "Elf"

Today's Ministry: Mary's Library Book Group

Monday, December 3

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 *We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brethren beloved by God, that he*

has chosen you. (vv.2-4)

I was almost always the last kid chosen for any kind of sports event when I was in school. Granted, I wasn't the athletic type. As an adult, I joke, "I lift weights. Feel my purse." Thank goodness, the days of having to try out for gymnastics or field hockey are long over. And how blessedly reassuring it is, that—as today's Epistle lesson tells us—we have been chosen by God. In fact, Ephesians 1:4 (NLT) declares: "Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ." *Wow!* That is way better than getting chosen first for the softball team.

Advent is a season in which we are called to an expectant hope, while at the same time honestly bringing to mind our sins. Because God wanted and chose us even before He created the world, we should feel so hugely loved that we can safely and securely open ourselves to the Lord in both anticipation and repentance. *Maranatha*—come, Lord Jesus!

Isaiah 1:10-20; Psalms 1, 2, 3; Luke 20:1-8

Birthdays: Jurgen Kok, Mara Broderick

Monday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
5:30 p.m. Stephens Ministry Supervision
5:30 p.m. ACA Families

Today's Ministry: Men's Cursillo

Tuesday, December 4

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12 *...for you know how, like a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.* (vv.11-12)

Every one of us could use some encouragement, and we are all born to "lead lives worthy of the God who calls us." That's why I am so deeply grateful for the teachers, pastors, parishioners, family members, friends, and mentors, who, over the years, have both spoken words of encouragement and hope to me, and reminded me of, and supported, God's calling upon my life.

During Advent, as we await the coming of our Savior, pray about how you might exhort and encourage someone who may also need a friendly reminder that God has called them into His kingdom and glory—which *are* coming!

Isaiah 1:21-31; Psalms 5, 6; Luke 20:9-18

Birthdays: Tom Gilson, Martha Tuthill

Tuesday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study
12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist & Healing
5:30 p.m. Soul Care
6:00 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous

Today's Ministry: Mission Trip

Wednesday, December 5

Isaiah 2:1-11 *O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD.* (v.5)

For a certain period when I was a small child, at bedtime I was terrified of my dark closet. My father installed a night light, but I was still frightened. Then Daddy had the brilliant idea of telling me an adorable little fuzzy creature lived in the closet, but needed to come out at night, so we had to leave the door open for him. (This was decades before the great kids' movie, *Monsters, Inc.*) Because I loved and trusted my Dad so much, I believed him, and calmed down.

The prophet Isaiah writes of a light that is even more comforting than a night light: It is the Light of the Lord, and we are to walk in it, amidst the scary darkness of a world that seems to have gone mad with hatred, violence, and evil. How do we do this? In verse 11, Isaiah ends with an exhortation to humility. This attitude of the heart turns on the Light. Perhaps Micah 6:8 sums it up best: "Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God."

Psalms 119:1-24; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-20; Luke 20:19-26

Birthdays: Jessica Armstrong, Flip Stevens

Anniversary: Jim & Cindy Ziemba

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
10:00 a.m. Adult Life Group
11:00 a.m. Stephen Ministry Care
4:45 p.m. Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m. AA "Daily Reflections"
6:00 p.m. Life Groups

Today's Ministry: Music Ministry

Thursday, December 6

Psalms 18:1-20 *In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.* (v.6)

Every Sunday, for several weeks before my "Emmaus Road" conversion experience (the living Christ was revealed to me in the Breaking of the Bread), I sat in the balcony at the church I attended and cried through the entire service. At that time, I was unfamiliar with 2 Corinthians 7:10, "godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret." Later, I would understand those tears from God's perspective. My personal life had hit a wall, and everything I held dear was falling apart—from relationships to ideologies. I felt I had totally messed up my life, and wasn't keen on continuing it.

Then, on All Saints' Day 1987, the living Christ was revealed to me during Holy Communion, and my life was changed forever. Truly, in His temple, the Lord had heard my distressed cry for help, and He answered with a love and forgiveness so profound, that the following year He called me to preach that Good News for the rest of my life. Thanks be to God!

Isaiah 2:12-22; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13; Luke 20:27-40

Birthdays: Cathy Bell, Barbara La Mirand, Barbara Taft, Jenny Martin, Gary Bach, Grace Mack

Anniversary: Francis & Heloise Wu

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:30 a.m. Altar Guild
5:30 p.m. ACA Men's Group
6:30 p.m. Choir
7:00 p.m. Al-Anon "Stepping Stones"

Today's Ministry: New Member Ministry

Friday, December 7

Psalms 16 *I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.* (v.7)

I've struggled with insomnia my entire life. As an older kid, I'd hide under blankets with a book and a flashlight when I couldn't sleep. Now, I prop myself up on pillows with reading material and a clip-on LED book light. Sometimes I fall asleep OK, but then I wake up a few hours later. When I'm lying awake in the middle of the night, I'm tempted to start worrying about one thing or another. But there's a saying, "Give your troubles to God; He's up all night, anyway." So, I try to pray. Psalm 16 reminds us that even in the night, God can give us counsel and instruct our hearts. Maybe that's why sometimes I awaken with the perfect solution to a problem that had eluded me in waking hours!

The fastest way for me to fall asleep is to imagine myself snug in bed at my grandparents' home by the sea, in Greece. Actually, an earthquake destroyed the house in 2008. But in my mind, that much-beloved refuge is still there—and so am I—hearing the waves slap the shore and smelling lemon blossoms through the open window. Not only is God with us through every night, He also gives us wonderful memories to lull us to sleep.

Isaiah 3:8-15; Psalm 17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12; Luke 20:41—21:4