

The Messenger

St. Philip's Episcopal Church
Laurel, MD
January 2008



CHRISTMAS

What is Christmas, after all?
A festival of the heart.

A celebration of life.
A renewed sense of love
that reaches across miles.
Across time.
Across Eternity.
And those who have left us
with memories of their faces
at our Christmas dinner tables
are perhaps not really so far away.

Christmas—the worst
and the best of us—is maybe
a reminder that
there is more to us
than tinsel facades.
The ornaments of ourselves taken down,
the lights put back in the box,
the angel on top wrapped carefully,
the presents opened. . .
what remains?

A bare, brown tree that says,
“This is what I am.
With arms upraised, I am
stripped and dying.
Yet in death,
I give life to spring up
in promised beauty.”

What is Christmas, after all?
It is something for each one of us.
It is for our tear-streaked faces
to search a crystal-cold winter night sky.
To find somehow
the promise of a Bethlehem star.
To let its Light
heal our broken souls.

The Rev. Sheila N. McJilton



Photo by the Rev. Sheila N. McJilton



**Mark Your Calendars:
Important Dates for
Your Personal Life Planning**

On Wednesday, January 23, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., and Sunday, January 27, from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. there will be a presentation on estate planning. The sessions will be given by Mr. Thomas Downs. Mr. Downs is an attorney specializing in estate planning and is a resident of West Laurel with offices on Main Street. These sessions will be given in Wyatt Hall. It is extremely important for you to have a will and other attendant legal documents to insure the management and disposition of your assets when you are no longer able to do so. Not having a will can lead to tremendous legal, tax and personal complications. These sessions will afford you the opportunity to get valuable and needed information. There will be a "starvation prevention" light lunch for the Sunday session. All attendees will be eligible for a free consultation and if you use Mr. Down's services you will get a 10% discount. *There is no obligation to use his services.* The church's objective is to help you with your stewardship in your life and family. In order for us to plan for food and materials, please call the church office (301-776-5151) to indicate which session you will attend.

*Jim Marchbank
Chair, Finance Committee*

Outreach Committee News

Thanks to everyone who helped brighten Christmas for the needy folks of Laurel. The response to requests for gifts for the three families that St. Philip's adopted through Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services (LARS), as well as for children of parents in treatment at Reality House, was wonderful. St. Philip's also opened its doors on Thursday evening, December 20th, for the Christmas party for LARS' ten transitional-housing families. The food, decorations, and gifts were provided by the employees of PNC Bank, but they couldn't have held their party unless Wyatt was made available to them.

By the time the January Messenger reaches you, our week of hosting Winterhaven (Sunday evening, Dec 30 until Sunday morning, January 6) will be about to start. We can always use another volunteer, another bag of tangerines, another gallon of milk. Please check the sign-up sheets in Wyatt Ministry Center. It takes a heap of paper plates, napkins, and cutlery to make a house of worship a home. During this week, our stock of kitchen supplies will run low, so please pick up a few items the next time you are at the store and leave them in the kitchen. We're not expected to need more plastic knives until 2012, but we can use just about anything else.

—Cynthia Chase


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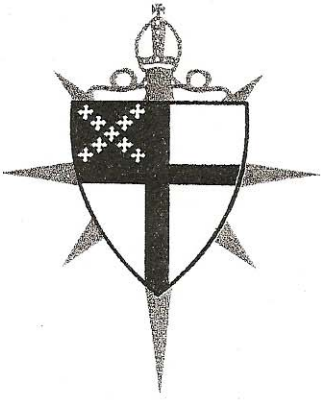
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The Rev'd John A Andrews
8800 East Fort Foote Terrace
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Dear Sheila, Libby/Sue, Vestry Members and Parishioners of Saint Philip's:

I am still warmed by being with you on Sunday last to celebrate at your altar as priest, and to teach-preach to both congregations attending the two Eucharists. How wonder-full it was and is as priest to have an altar available as one observes any anniversary of their priesting, yet to be at yours was special. Saint Philip's was the first parish where I helped out when I moved to this diocese in retirement seven years ago now, and it is grand how we have kept abreast of all together over the years. It is also nice now that when I go to you the weather seems to be cooperating and no longer do I have to face blizzards as I did seven, six and even five years ago this time of the year!!!

How honoured I also am to have had a fine coffee hour following the half 7 am Eucharist, and then a luncheon following the later one. You certainly made me feel well at home and to realise how important this is to any priest, but maybe more especially to retired ones whom The Church can tend to "forget" in retirement. Thanks-be-to-God for all of you who provided for these gatherings, for they were indeed enjoyable and are so important to our fellowship beyond the altar itself as we break bread in other ways as a family in Christ Jesus.

And then, heavens above, this was not all. There came cards and greetings and hugs and gifts, ranging from crosses for the tree at Christmas to coffee all the way from Jamaica! I have also been told of the purse being gathered for me, and am humbled by it indeed. All I can say is thank you so, so very much. You are special to me and all the moreso now.

Due to all of the above, it is difficult indeed to be in the process of "re-retiring" and moving later in 2008 to The Diocese of Rochester in Western New York Region. Yet, maybe you will have me come back to do supply work if ever such is needed? It will be good to see you all again and again.

And a word to you, Sheila: as has been said, often clergy are rather territorial and do not easily open their parishes to other clergy. How astounding it is to me to have you so invite me to 9 December at Saint Philip's. I shall not soon forget such collegiality so well expressed! If I can ever assist you in any way, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Blessings to you all as Advent advances. May we be in harmony more now than we were a year or two ago, so as to receive the wonder of The Incarnation at The Christ Mass. Thank you all once more.

11 December 2007

Fondly so,

Diversity/Heritage Dinner

Parishioners are invited to attend a Diversity/Heritage Dinner on Sunday, February 24th, at 5:00 p.m., in Wyatt Hall. The dinner is being sponsored by the Vestry and the Absalom Jones Committee to celebrate the birthday of Absalom Jones, first African American priest in the Episcopal Church. In addition, the dinner will also celebrate the diversity we have at St. Philip's.

The dinner will be pot-luck, and parishioners are asked to bring a dish that represents their ancestral or cultural background. There will be index cards available for parishioners to write the name of the dish, country, or culture represented, as well as main ingredients. We are blessed at St. Philip's to have parishioners who are from or have ancestors who were from Central and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia, as well as Europe.

Come and celebrate our diversity and the birthday of Absalom Jones! For more information, call Arleen Leis at 301-490-2844.

—Arleen Leis

Adult Forum, Jan. 13

Even if you've never come to the Adult Forum at 9:00 a.m. every Sunday, you are encouraged to participate on January 13 when everyone will share for two or three minutes, the story of their family's origins and arrival in the United States. For some of us, it was in the bottom of a ship that came into Ellis Island or hauled slaves from Africa. Others have stories about crossing the Pacific Ocean, Mexican or Canadian borders. What is your family's story? Please come and share it in the meeting room next to the kitchen in Wyatt Hall.

St. Philip's has served a four-county community since the 1840s. With Laurel as its hub, this region has gradually moved closer to achieving racial balance and equity. Prince George's County alone has evolved from being *the* major, slave-holding county in Maryland to one of the wealthiest majority-black suburbs in the nation and a model for racial progress. More recently, St. Philip's has welcomed people with Hispanic backgrounds.

Diversity has become a treasured hallmark reflecting St. Philip's belief that no one is a second class Christian. All are welcome here at God's table.

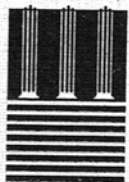
—Sally Bucklee

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Ushers

It's the start of the new year. A time for new beginnings, new year's resolutions, and, also, the time to think about offering your time and talent to a ministry here at St. Philip's. I am writing to let everyone know about a fun ministry that is need of some more volunteers—The Ushers. This ministry is one the whole family can participate in together. Currently, we only have five families or groups of people who usher every Sunday, and I am acting head. The ushers need a head usher as well as some others to be the first people seen when entering the church. It's a once-a-month commitment and is done during the service so there is no additional time needed since you are already at church. I ask that anyone who is interested to see me to learn more. Thanks.

—Amanda Bain-Colindres

Post Holly Days Thoughts

“You Episcopalians have more fun”. This was a comment from visitors to the Holly Days Bazaar. If you were in Wyatt Hall on November 17, you would certainly have agreed with that statement. From the candy cane “antlers” that kept slipping down on the foreheads of the pizzelle makers to the squeal of a child when running into St. Nick as he entered Wyatt Hall you would say, “Yes, we Episcopalians have more fun”.

Here are some rambling thoughts of that day, in no particular order:

✳ To satisfy our hunger, the Vestry managed the Holly Inn again this year.

✳ Mrs. Claus’ Attic had an abundance of specials. The famous “Mouse Lady”, Ruby Taylor, and her able assistant Carla arrived from Richmond and were surrounded in minutes of their arrival. Needless to say the mice were “adopted” quite rapidly.

✳ The Village Sweet Shoppe was truly a “groaning board”. Parishioners were very generous supplying goodies ranging from jams and pickles to pies, cakes, candy, cookies, and cupcakes. All of those special items we love so well! One vestry member (whose name will remain a secret) brought six fantastic pies. Sorry you didn’t see them on Saturday. They sold on Friday to the decorators! Maybe next year you will want to work with that crew! (Does that sound like a bribe? YES!)

✳ Grammas Stitchery, Christmas Boutique, and Village Card Shoppe were kept busy all day, as well as the Wishing Well.

✳ In Kinder Korner on St. Nick's Lane, the children worked to become future crafters and had their pictures taken with St. Nick.

What a great Day in the Village of St. Philip’s. All of this would not be possible without the efforts of so many people. So to all the crafters, sellers, buyers, decorators, bakers, donors, and, last but not least, the “cleaner-uppers”. I thank you for all your support in so many ways. The monies from this sale

help the Women of St. Philip’s to support a vast array of organizations locally and across the nation and world. What a great way to give and have a ball doing it. So THANK YOU all and the blessings of the Christmas season. We’ll have even more fun next November at the 42nd HOLLY DAYS BAZAAR.

—Betsy Brothers

Pastoral Care Team-- Update to Congregation

After meeting with Sheila+, the 'team'--coordinators and our rector—have decided to try to deal with some of the pastoral care issues more efficiently, effectively, etc. Top on this list was our ever-lengthening prayer list.

We have been remiss for various reasons in not following the guideline: a name to remain on for one month. Our New Year's resolution is to pay better attention to this. So in January, you will see a very much smaller list.

Therefore, your part is this: 1. Call the office each month if there is a need for the person of concern to remain on the list. 2. When you call, please leave an address if you would like to have a card sent from the church. 3. Have you asked if the person wishes to be named? Some people may not wish the attention.

Each week the newly added names will be read aloud. All the others will be in print. At the time of the prayer in the liturgy, please offer a name aloud if you wish.

In addition, as the year progresses, we will be looking for more training opportunities. As they come available, we will let you know and please join us if you are interested.

Faithfully,
Nancy Marchbank, Leslie Cain, Pat Hammer,
Mary Rogers, Sheila+

The Messenger is published monthly by St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, 522 Main St., Laurel, MD 20707. Phone: 301-776-5151. Website: www.sphilips-laurel.org. Items should be submitted by the 15th of each month to editor Lura Waters at lauraw208@hotmail.com. The picture of St. Philip’s on page one is by Michele Ben.

Vestry Meeting Highlights

December 2007

Open Forum. There were no parishioners present for the Open Forum time. Scott Aker reported that unless he can obtain the replacement trees for our property in the next week or so, the planting will have to be postponed until the spring.

Adoption of Minutes. The November 13, 2007 Vestry meeting minutes were adopted, as submitted.

Agenda/Consent Items. The December 2007 Vestry meeting agenda was adopted, as amended [adding a New Business item], along with two Consent Agenda Items: (1) the Vestry approved reimbursement to Sheila of the cost of her formal Rector's portrait to be displayed in the McKee Room and (2) the Vestry approved the necessary IRS designation of the Rector's Housing Allowance pursuant to Section 107 of the IRS Code.

Treasurer's Report. Amie Littmann, Treasurer, submitted reports through October 31, 2007. As reported last month, October was a normal month with nothing unexpected occurring. We are staying on budget: the Operating Fund (General and Building Funds) still reflects a surplus, due in part to expenses coming in below expectation in some areas.

Pledge Report. Doug Hayes, Pledge Treasurer, reported that, as of November 30, 2007, giving was nearly identical to last month: 56% of pledgers are meeting (12%) or exceeding (44%) their pledges; this, however, indicates that there are as many people NOT meeting their pledge (44%) as those who exceed it, which is preventing our numbers from being truly outstanding. The Building Fund continues to catch up – it is now at 80% of its total pledged amount.

Finance Committee. The Rector, Wardens and FC Chairman attended the Diocesan Treasurer's Workshop that was held December 8th and found it to be excellent.

Rector's Report. In addition to her written report, Sheila+ reported that while the ongoing lack of Internet service to the Parish House (modem issues) has complicated every-day matters (such as no email access) and has certainly created stress and frustration at times, Verizon continues to work on the problem and, hopefully, will be able to resolve the issue shortly.

Senior Warden's Report. In addition to her written report, the Senior Warden advised that the designation of the Anna Earp bequest be delayed until the final numbers for the 2008 budget have been reached (January Vestry meeting) at which time we will also hopefully have a fi-

nal estimate of the remaining Nave wall and too expenses; such information will allow the Vestry to make an informed decision on how best to use this generous gift.

Junior Warden's Report. In addition to her written report, the Junior Warden brought an example of the pictorial directory being assembled. The finalized submission of materials to Life Touch Studios is scheduled for December 12th.

OLD BUSINESS:

2008 Budget Review. The Vestry reviewed the most recent draft of the 2008 budget. This "full request" budget (meaning the numbers reflect the full amounts requested by the ministries) shows expenses exceeding income by \$44,000. A balanced budget is again the Vestry's goal for 2008 and in order to facilitate that, the Wardens and Budget Subcommittee are working on a plan for "getting to a zero balance", which will be the starting point of discussions at the January Vestry meeting.

2008 Pledge Campaign Status Report. We are twelve weeks into our 2008 Pledge Campaign. As of now, 102 pledging units have been received for a total combined (general and building) pledge amount of \$255,168. A comparison to the 2007 campaign indicates we are some \$17,000 behind where we were last year at Week 12, yet a little ahead of last year in terms of pledges received by the second Sunday in December. Nine new people are pledging in 2008 who did not pledge in 2007; nine more pledges are pending.

NEW BUSINESS:

A Mutual Ministry Review with Canon Mary Sulerud will take place on January 20, 2008. In preparation, Vestry members will receive "homework" to complete prior to the meeting.

Preparations for St. Philip's annual meeting (February 3, 2008) are underway and Vestry members have been assigned tasks, some of which include arranging for child care during the meeting, conferring with various groups about food, and attending to the many administrative details required for the meeting.

The Absalom Jones Committee, along with the Vestry, will be hosting a Diversity Dinner in February. This parish event will be a celebration of our many different heritages and backgrounds and also in honor of Absalom Jones whose birthday falls in this month.

Closing Prayer. The meeting ended at 8:45 p.m. with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Cain, Clerk of the Vestry

St. Philip's Vision: Every day, Saint Philip's proclaims Christ's love by nurturing our church family, young and old, and actively reaching out to our community. Through our words and deeds we inspire, welcome and encourage others to journey together in Christian faith and growth.



JANUARY 2008

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Church Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.		1 <i>New Year's Day</i> Winterhaven	2 Winterhaven -Girl Scouts 7p	3 Finance 9:15 am Winterhaven Choir Practice 7:30 pm	4 Winterhaven	5 Winterhaven (Winterhaven ends Sunday morning, 1/6.)
6 Holy Eucharist 7:30 & 10:15 -Youth Choir 11:30 am -Stewardship 11:45 am <i>Feast of the Epiphany</i> Youth Group 6 p	7 -Bell Choir 7:30	8 -Afternoon Guild 1 pm -Vestry Exec Cmte 7 pm -Crafts 7 pm -Quilters 7 pm	9 Bible Study 10a	10 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	11	12
13 Holy Eucharist 7:30 & 10:15 Baptism 10:15 -Name Tag Sunday Enhanced Coffee Hr -Adult Forum -Sunday School 9a -Youth Choir 11:30 <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i>	14 -Worship Cmte 7 Toastmasters 7p -Bell Choir 7:30p	15 -Newsletter article deadline -Vestry 7 pm -Crafts 7 pm -Quilters 7 pm	16 Bible Study 10a Girl Scouts 7p	17 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	18	19 Men's Breakfast 9 am
20 Holy Eucharist 7:30 & 10:15 -Sunday School 9a -Adult Forum 9a -Youth Ch 11:30 a -Youth Group 6 p	21 <i>Martin Luther King Day</i> Bell Choir 7:30p	22 -Crafts 7 pm -Quilters 7 pm	23 Bible Study 10a Estate Planning 7p (See p. 2)	24 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	25 Diocese of Washington Convention	26 Diocese of Washington Convention
27 Holy Eucharist 7:30 & 10:15 -Youth Choir 11:30 -Estate Planning 12 pm (See p. 2)	28 Bell Choir 7:30p	29 -Crafts 7 pm -Quilters 7 pm	30 Bible Study 10a -Pastoral Care 7p -Finance 7 pm	31 Choir Practice 7:30 pm	Parish Contact Info: Phone: 301-776-5151. Pastoral Counseling Needs: Call <i>Pastoral Care Committee:</i> 301-776-5151, ext. 13. Wyatt Hall rental info: Call Sue O'Connor, 410-292-2313. Find updated information about St. Philip's at our website: www.stphilipslaurel.org .	

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522 Main St.
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Episcopal Senior Ministries

The diocesan ESM will hold an **Appraisal Day & Jewelry Show** fundraising event With Sloans & Kenyon Auctioneers and Appraisers on Saturday, February 2, 2008, from 11 am to 3 pm at Sloans and Kenyon Auction House, 7034 Wisconsin Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland.

For a modest fee, you can receive a verbal appraisal of your treasures. Proceeds support ESM and the programs and services it offers to seniors in the Diocese. Cost for the appraisal is \$10 per item or 3 items for \$25. An added bonus will be a jewelry show by Angela Franco, featuring one-of-a-kind designs of beautiful South American jewelry. For more information call 202-414-6313.

—Arleen Leis

FIRST CLASS POSTAGE

Simple and Smart

Tired of hunting for that check as you rush out the door to Sunday service? There's a better way to meet your pledge obligation to St. Philip's, and it's actually better for St. Philip's, too. It takes about four minutes on your computer in your on-line banking account to set up a weekly or monthly payment (bank-generated check). Your account number is your pledge number. If you don't do on-line banking, then the next time you go to your bank, speak with someone about setting up direct payment. It's really simple. You don't need St. Philip's account number—just St. Philip's Episcopal Church, and the address: 522 Main St., Laurel, MD, 20707. The great value for St. Philip's is that it stabilizes our cash flow every month so that we don't have to

worry about getting your pledge payment during summer vacations or holidays when you are away from us. It will really help us manage our budget if you would please take the time to do this. And we will really appreciate it.

Bob Waters,
Vestry and Finance Committee

You're an Angel!

Thanks for all who were ANGELS this year! We provided 23 gifts for clients of Reality House on Main Street, in Laurel, to share with their families. These folks are fighting addictions. This tradition is a wonderful small way for us to reach out in Laurel.

—Betsy Welsh