



# The St. John's Banner

Mount Rainier, MD

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

November 2009

December 31st at 10 p.m.

## ON THE CALENDAR

### Harvest Sunday

November 22nd

**We will have the usual two services on this date, at 8 and 10 a.m.**

**(This is a change from previous announcements)**



**Parishioners are requested to bring in non-perishable food items for the Food Pantry**

Saturday, December 5th



### *Prayer Breakfast*

sponsored by the  
Altar Guild

Theme: THANKSGIVING



### Advent

begins Sunday,  
November 26th

This is the beginning of the  
new Liturgical Year.

**2nd Sunday in Advent:**

St. John's Youth Sunday  
December 6th at 10 a.m.

**3rd Sunday in Advent:**

Service of Lessons & Carols  
December 13th at 10 a.m.

**Christmas Eve Eucharist**

**December 24th at 8 p.m.**

**Watch Night Service**

*Message from the Priest-in-Charge*

**“The Choices We Make”**

When Moses was leading the Israelites in the wilderness, he gave them the opportunity to choose life by walking with God. Life is full of choices and God will never choose for us how we should live our lives. He has given us free will and the freedom to choose what we want in life.

In Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Moses said: “I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God, that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord, your God, and walk in His ways, and observe His decrees and ordinances,

then you shall live—and the Lord, your God, will bless you”.

Moses made it clear to the Israelites, the reward of making the right choices and the consequences of bad decisions. When Joshua succeeded Moses, he also gave the people the opportunity to choose which God they wanted to serve.

In Joshua 24:15 he said: “If it seems evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve—but as for me and my household, we will service the Lord.”

Life is indeed full of choices. Even choosing a friend can be challenging in the sense that you really never know people until you have lived and fellowshiped with them. Some people are not what they seem to be. As the old saying goes; “All that glitters is not gold, and perception is not always reality”.

A friend is someone you can trust with your secrets and even with your life. Trust is earned not purchased.

In John 15:13; Jesus said “Greater love has no man than this that a man lays down his life for his friends”. A positive attitude will help you to attract the right people into your circle of friends.

Life is full of choices, and the choices you make today may determine your destiny. Let God help you to make the right choices in life.

In God's Love and peace,  
The Rev. Canon Daniel D. Darko

# Centennial Celebrations Wrap Up

## *A Gala Evening*

St. John's finally reached the milestone of one hundred years' existence as a congregation on Saturday, October 17th. On that evening, a grand Gala Banquet was held at Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt.

Attendees were greeted at the door and escorted to their tables by members of the Centennial Committee. Once inside, an artistically arranged hors d'oeuvres table and open bar established a festive atmosphere. Following introductions by committee chair Eugene Wright and the blessing by Fr. Darko, people proceeded to the buffet tables, where a variety of meats, vegetables and desserts was available.

The Master of Ceremonies for the presentations following dinner was Sonny Meier, who had been an active member and leader at St. John's for many years until he recently retired and moved to Delaware. His duties included introducing the two speakers for the evening: the Rev. Canon Dr. William B. Lewis and the Rev. Larry Donathan. Fr. Lewis began his pastoral career as a seminarian at St. John's and has visited many times since.

Fr. Donathan was the last – and only surviving – full-time Rector of the parish; he delivered the keynote address reminding us that our history is important and serves as a guide and inspiration as we enter our second century.

The Committee also had selected nine individuals and three parish organizations to receive certificates honoring them for “personal commitment, dedication and performance.” The individuals were: Sandra Bramble, Shona Bramble, Annie Forster-Jones, Eleanor McDaniel, Estelle Miller, Margaret Miller, Brian Roman, Amelia Williams and Eugene Wright. The groups so honored were the Choir, Social & Cultural Committee and the Ushers.

Following the speakers, Shittu Williams was introduced as Entertainment Master of Ceremonies, and he presided over an evening of dancing to the tunes spun by our DJ-in-residence, Alfred Mammah. Meanwhile, guests were also purchasing tickets to a raffle of several fine prizes, including a basket of cosmetics, an iPod, and the grand prize – a home theater system.

Unnoticed in all this commotion was an observer of the passing scene, who has her own take on the evening's doings. To see what she noticed, read her report on the following page.

## *The Bishop visits*

The Bishop of Washington, the Rt. Rev. John Bryson Chane, regretted that he was unable to attend the

Gala but was able to schedule his Episcopal Visit to St. John's for the following day. He celebrated the Eucharist on Sunday afternoon (October 18th) at 4 o'clock in the afternoon – the only service at St. John's on that date. That gave parishioners plenty of time to rest up after dancing all night at the Gala!

(More on the Bishop's visit in next month's issue.)

## *International Day*

Since 1988, no year at St. John's has been complete without our annual celebration of the multi-national character that the parish has assumed over the past quarter century or so of our life. The tradition continued in 2009 on the October 25th.

The international connection was reflected in the opening hymn “O God of Every Nation” and in all the national flags hung around the sanctuary. This year there was a Centennial connection as well. The Centennial prayer and song were included as the conclusion of the Prayers of the People. And in recognition of St. John's founding 100 years ago as a Mission Chapel of St. Matthew's Parish, Hyattsville, our preacher for the morning was the Rev. Noreen Seiler Dubay, the current rector of that parish.

The conclusion of the celebration was the traditional international buffet served in the Father Brown Room.



*Visit St. John's web site for lots of photos of the events!*

**The St. John's Banner**

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# The Episco-Apostolic Cat's Journey thru St. John's

## The Centennial Gala from The Episco-Apostolic Cat's View



*"Fur Ball the Cat"*

Even though the evening was dreary and rainy outside, the atmosphere inside of Martin's Crosswinds was warm, friendly - and excitement stirred the air.



My trip was not without incident-my fur got all wet-but I found a quiet place to compose myself and found a comfortable place where I could observe the events of the evening.

Simply fantastic is all I can say—everything was purrrfect! Ladies all dressed in their beautiful gowns and evening dresses; the men in their tux's and evening suits --MEOW! Each person who entered was greeted by men in their finest who instantly became gracious escorts guiding you to your seat. Tables laden with fruits and cheeses made it difficult for an Episco-Apostolic cat to remain unnoticed.

While the members, family and friends of St. John's continued eating, drinking and dancing way into the night this proved to be all the covering I needed. While trying desperately to make my way to the food stations of delectable food, some caring human dropped a piece of salmon, chicken and a bit of cheese to the floor and I managed to have a delightful dinner. Centennials come but once in a life time—St. John's you did it up just right!



*The buffet*



*Keynote address*



*Dance ... Dance ...Dance!*





## ┌ Vestry Corner ┐

### **Highlights of the October 12th meeting:**

Vestry meetings are normally held after the 10 o'clock service on the second Sunday of each month, but the October meeting was moved to the following evening in order to allow members who also served on the Centennial Committee to hold their final meeting before the Gala on Sunday, the 11th.

#### *From the Treasurer's Report*

Fredericka Ortiz submitted the Treasurer's Report for September. The report corrected transfers from savings that were previously reported as income. Several months for 2009 now show operating deficits. Some months also show negative results for restricted and designated funds: this does not mean the funds themselves have "negative" balances in bank accounts, but that disbursements exceeded income. Our savings balance of approximately \$57,000 currently includes about \$40,000 in designated funds that are therefore *not* available for operating expenses.

A recent increase in expenses for Office Supplies was attributed largely to supplies for printing Centennial materials.

#### *From the Priest-in-Charge's Report*

Fr. Darko distributed to the members a copy of the financial information page from St. John's 2008 Parochial Report to the Diocese, calling attention to line 13. The Diocese looks at the report to see what we are doing for outreach. He suggested that the food people bring in should count toward outreach, which would mean putting a dollar value on it. He would like the

Stewardship, Evangelism & Outreach Committee to put a value on it for this purpose.

#### *From the Senior Warden's Report*

Leslie Rogers-Wright distributed a recommendation of the responsibilities of the committees and Vestry members for specific goals, and an outline for 2010 budget planning for specific activities.

He also raised the issue of children not having a well-supervised area to gather after services. Two ideas for parishioners to consider: perhaps an older teen could stay with and supervise the younger kids – possibly as a form of Community Service for school credit. Long-term, he would like to modify use of rooms in the building to allow kids to have space closer to where adults congregate but still be in a separate space.

#### *From the Junior Warden's Report*

Kojo Dixon reported that he is working to finalize the parish audit for the previous year, and that the new organ has been constructed and shipped. The Vestry approved a motion authorizing a loan of \$9,000 from the savings account to the organ fund to make the second payment on the instrument.

#### *Other Business*

Fr. Darko read a letter from the Bishop on behalf of this event requesting people to participate; the event will take place on the National Mall on the Saturday before Thanksgiving (November 21st). For more information, visit [www.samaritanministry.org](http://www.samaritanministry.org)

Desirée Slaone offered a comment that the Centennial Gala could have been a lot more successful if the congregation has been more involved, feeling

that the Centennial Committee should have sought more assistance from others. Fr. Darko hopes that we have learned from this experience when it comes to planning for future events.

There was a discussion to the effect that people often over-commit or make a pledge out of pride but do not meet the obligation, or that the same people are asked repeatedly to contribute and may reduce their gifts because they know they are going to be asked again.

**Readers may notice that the October meeting included discussions about a number of issues concerning the state of parish life. Parishioners who have thoughts on these issues are welcome to bring them to the attention of a member of the Vestry or send them to the parish e-mail address to the attention of the Clerk of the Vestry.**

*A draft copy of the complete minutes of the meeting is now posted on the Vestry Corner bulletin board.*

## Baptisms

The following individuals received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism at St. John's on All Saints' Day, Sunday, November 1st:

***Eric Harold Abubakair  
Campbell-Kargo***

***Layla Renee Elias***

***Octavious Lyndon Manning***

***Musa Mohamed***

## A Look Back in *The Banner*

**Number 11 in our Centennial Series of reprints of past articles**

From *The St. John's Banner*

**June/July/August 2003 Issue**

by *Shona Bramble*,  
Editor of the *Banner* at that time

Imagine if you will... waking up tomorrow and you've lost your sight, or your sense of hearing, or your ability to speak. What would you do? Don't know? I'm not sure what I would do either. I would probably get mad, I would probably cry, I would probably have a pity party of sorts thinking about what life was like when I could see, or hear, or speak.

You're probably wondering where I'm going with this, but it's quite simple. It's like the old adage, "Don't know what you got 'til it's gone." Whenever I start feeling sick I think about getting better and what I would do if I were feeling better. We don't appreciate the good things that we have until it's taken away from us.

I remember being eight years old and falling breaking my right hand, and having to go to school, and writing with my left hand, and doing other things with my left hand. The simple act of rubbing an itch was a task. I had to get a long pointed stick to place under the cast so that I could relieve the itch. The pain was unbearable. When the cast finally came off I was happy and relieved, and appreciated the ability of being able to use my hand again.

Breaking a limb may not be as severe as what others go through, whether physical or emotional, but it is the same emotion of not appreciating something when it's there right in front of you.

That's what we do sometimes as Christians. We don't appreciate God enough. Yet He stays. He's always there. We forget to thank Him for the small blessings and the acts of grace, yet He stays. We get angry at Him because we can't get what we want when we want it, yet He still stays. We do so much in His presence and He stays.

I wonder sometimes what it would be like if God were to decide to take a break from us — what would we do? What if it were like the movie "It's a Wonderful life" and He simply was not in our lives, what would we do? See, that was a trick question, because if there was no God in our lives, there would be no LIFE — no US.

I try to remember to always thank God for His many blessings, for giving me a roof over my head. For feeding me daily. For keeping me safe. I also thank Him for my many talents, for the ability to use them to help others. I could not imagine what a day would be like if I couldn't write, or I couldn't see the beautiful trees outside, or if I couldn't hear the beautiful music I listen to everyday.

I wrote a poem ten years ago, and I consider it to be timeless — it also speaks to the human condition. It reminds us that we need to appreciate the here and now, and make the best of life — for without life, and without God, we are NOTHING.

### ***Tomorrow is Not Promised***

Today, I woke up and I went to the mountains.  
I had never gone to the mountains before. Today, I walked to the beach and I looked at the sun set.  
But never like that before.  
Today, I saw the sky with a closer eye in a hot balloon.  
I had never been that high before.  
Today, I put all my worries in my pocket and I stashed away my fears.  
I've been dying to do this before. Today, I took a chance and I decided to do all these things.  
Because it is today I live,  
. . . But tomorrow is not promised.



### ***November Birthdays***

1 - Rosamond Edwards  
4 - Bill Wyble  
7 - Mariama Johnston-Taylor  
9 - Haleem Hall  
9 - Dennis Isaac Thomas  
10 - Cynthia Thomas  
10 - Edward Weller

13 - Princess Cole  
14 - Judith Davies  
14 - Egerton Forster-Jones  
16 - Margrette Kargbo  
16 - Madline Thomas  
17 - Daisy Hoske  
17 - Patricia Peters  
18 - Annis Creese  
22 - Kaliyah Mammah  
22 - Chizobo Nwabueze  
23 - Ekundayo Williams  
24 - Josiah Chatman

25 - Shanice Creese  
25 - Louie Johnson  
27 - Amy Bangura



### ***November Anniversaries***

6 - Annie & Bert Harris  
17 - Gloria June & Ralph Dove

# A Stewardship Minute

NOVEMBER 2009

**"A Stewardship Minute" is a brief reflection on one of the articles appearing in the *Stewardship* newsletter, distributed monthly by Parish Publishing, LLC. Copies of the newsletter are available in the tract rack at the front door of the church.**

There is an old legend about how the great beasts first learned to live as they were set upon the world by God. Each of them had been quite self-centered, but realized that being what God intended them to be and do led to them great freedom and joy.

The legend went on, sadly, to point out that when humankind learned to live in God's world, mankind had not made the same realizations; had not learned that the greatest joy comes in doing the will of God. When our main focus is on ourselves, the legend says, we have wandered from freedom into a sort of bondage. We are locked into the misery we have brought upon ourselves by not choosing to love, obey, and serve our Creator. The Good News Christ came to say to mankind is this: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." (*Matthew 6:33*)

This month's issue of *Stewardship* brings to light that the secret of living an abundant, joyous life comes as we live one will and that "one will" is the will of God. Living any other way is to struggle in a lost and confused state, and with the nagging feeling that life should be better than it is. That includes being whom God wants us to be, doing what God wants us to do, having what God wants us to have, and giving what God wants us to give. The legend says that the animals ultimately do what God intends for them, but that humankind does not. Who knows about the animals, but we all know about ourselves!

**Prayer:** Lord of all, grant us the courage and the will to be what you want us to be and to do all you want us to do. **Amen.**

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