

non-evangelism background, changes have occurred in my heart and mind regarding the E word. I have realized that wonderful things happen in my life as a direct result of my being a Christian and as a Christian, 'bad' things that happen are bearable. Even though I continue to wrestle with my faith—I make progress and often regress—in my heart, I know this is too good not to share. (As a matter of fact, I'm pretty sure it is part of my job description as a Christian to spread the word).

A nearly painless and highly effective way to share this good news can be as simple as a personal invitation. You do not have to quote scripture or explain the meaning of life to others. There is no hard selling or cold calling involved. Just invite someone to St. George's for a service or an event. We have Easter services and a Mardi Gras dinner coming up—ideal ways to introduce people to our church. It is amazing how effective it can be to tell someone, "This is where I go to church and I like it. You might like it, too." or "This is what has been working for me, it may work for you, too." I encourage you to say a

prayer and give it a try. Let's do it the easy way: invite, invite, invite. Don't make me buy a tent!

Annual Mardi Gras Party and Silent Auction

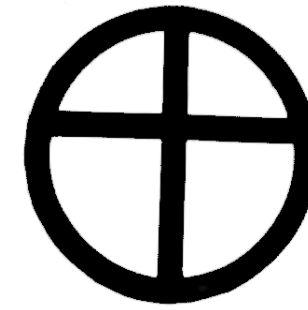
Our annual Mardi Gras Party and Silent Auction will be held Saturday, February 21, from 6 to 9 pm. Cost of the dinner is \$16 per person, under 10 years free, with a household maximum of \$48. Please sign up to attend on the narthex bulletin board. Also on the board is a sheet to sign-up for donations to the silent auction, which supports our general fund. Be creative! And why not invite a friend? What a great way to introduce someone to St. George's!

Lent is Coming!

Ash Wednesday is February 25. There will be three service opportunities: 7 am in the Chapel; Noon at Holy Trinity Church, Bowie; and 7:30 pm in the Church. All services will include imposition of ashes.

Address correction requested

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The Wider Circle

St. George's Episcopal Church
Glenn Dale Parish, Maryland

"Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free."

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What has God been up to?

Telling the Story of the Episcopal Church Over the Last 40 Years

Beginning in the 1960's, significant winds of change began sweeping through the Episcopal Church. The Sunday morning adult formation class during Lent will explore these changes with five individuals who not only witnessed them but were part of them. These sessions will be a major opportunity to hear the story that, among other things, is the background to how St. George's as it is today came to be. This is a major offering and it is hoped that more than the usual number of folks will attend.

At newsletter deadline time, the first two Sundays in Lent have been booked. On the First Sunday in Lent (February 29) our guest will be **Dr. Louie Crew**. Louie founded Integrity in 1974 while living in rural Georgia and has been a national figure in the Church ever since. He currently is on the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, as well as the Standing Commission on Anglican and International Relations. He has also served on the Board of *The Witness* magazine, and runs a website (<http://newark.rutgers.edu/~lcrew/rel.html>) that has become a major communications organ of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. He lives with his partner of thirty years, Earnest Clay, in East Orange, NJ.

On the Second Sunday in Lent (March 7) our guest will be **Ms. Diane Pollard**. Diane is a long-time member of the Episcopal Urban Caucus, the Union of Black Episcopalians, and other justice organizations in the Episcopal Church. She is one of the conveners of "the Consultation," the steering committee that brings together representatives of all the major independent peace and justice organizations within the Episcopal Church. She too currently serves on

the Executive Council of the Church and has served on the board of the Church Pension Fund. She is the co-chairperson of the Nominating Committee for the next Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. She lives in New York City.

The three remaining speakers will be announced in the March issue of *The Wider Circle*.

A Budget Review

by Libbie Griffin, Senior Warden

On behalf of the Vestry, I want to review our financial picture with you. I am pleased to say that, unlike some other parishes, we are financially fairly healthy; but, as always, we could do better.

We began 2003 with some quite considerable challenges—primarily related to the size of our "new" building and the costs associated with maintaining it without our Investment Fund cushion. Once the Investment Fund was drawn down to \$90,000 (the original gift), we were unable to withdraw any further funds. We must now build the fund back up again—a goal for 2004!

As 2003 progressed, we found that we had cornered the market on private parties looking to rent a large space. Miller Hall is being booked as frequently as 3-4 times a month, usually on weekends. This is apart from the community groups that already use the space—such as AA, CDA, and Girl Scouts. The increased use of Miller Hall has brought its own set of challenges—sometimes requiring St George's groups to hold meetings elsewhere in the building.

We were able to finish 2003 with a surplus of \$2,500 thanks to some very generous donations we received towards the end of the year.

We begin 2004 with some very significant challenges with our budget. Every year that I have been on the Vestry, we seem to have faced financial challenges; with faith, prayer and your

generous support, we have managed to complete each year fairly healthily! We expect that this \$200,000 budget for 2004 will be sufficient to cover some financial challenges we have not had to face before.

When we sold the former vicarage some time ago, we put the proceeds into a Clergy Housing Fund and used it to supplement the Rector's housing allowance—realizing that the fund would be depleted in a few years. That cushion has gone away.

We are looking at supporting additional staff positions. Beginning midyear, we must pay our share of the new Area Youth Minister position. We would also like to hire an office assistant, a position that has been filled on a volunteer basis for the past 8 years. And, finally, we need to hire a Night Manager to be available to take care of the private parties renting Miller Hall.

The 2004 budget will cover these positions, but only if we can increase our pledges—which are now \$10,000 short of budget. Despite both new and renewed pledges, we are still short and many still have not pledged. We really need your assistance in letting us know if you plan on renewing your pledge for 2004. If you plan on renewing and increasing, that is really great news! We probably will not be able to hire the Office Assistant or Night Manager without those additional pledges.

I continue to be amazed and very grateful for the financial generosity of the community of St George's. Your generosity enables us to pay our clergy and staff salaries according to diocesan guidelines, which is a commitment this Vestry has made.

Thank you to everyone for making this possible and here's to another great year!

Office Changes at St. George's

As explained in the previous article, the Vestry has chosen to fund a position of Office Assistant. Parishioner Joan Dickson has been doing this work for many years as a volunteer. Joan's desire is to pursue other activities rather than continue in the position. She will continue to volunteer as bookkeeper and pledge steward, and will help out with the transition to the new assistant, which the Rector hopes to have on board by Easter. The parish owes Joan a great debt of thanks for her offering to our ministry over the years! Thanks Joan!

Amazon.com Report; Giant/Shoppers Scrip Now Available

For 2003, our total contribution from purchases made through the St. George's website on Amazon.com was \$310.96. Thanks to all who have been using this service!

Merchant Scrip (also known as "gift certificates") will be available beginning Sunday, February 15 from Giant and Shopper's Food Warehouse. Unlike previously, this scrip will be available for direct purchase (no ordering and waiting!) and will be available every Sunday. Shopper's purchases give a 5% return to St. George's; Giant, 4%. Those who shop at Safeway may register their Club Cards online at www.escrip.com. We then receive an automatic return from your Safeway purchases. When you register on-line you

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- Jeanette Greaney
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- Kim Newman
- Jeanette Davis, Treasurer
- Debbie Nebel, Clerk
- Karen Horrocks, Convention Delegate
- John Clinton Bradley, Alternate Convention Delegate

Mission Statement

The mission of St. George's is to build a Christian community of love and support that actively seeks and includes all people.

We commit ourselves to spiritual growth through worship and education that empowers us to follow Christ's example in the world.

will need our group name (St. George's Episcopal) and ID# (1037796).

We hope to offer other popular scrip in the near future, again on a same-day basis.

Intergenerational Book Group

As part of the new area youth ministry, we are proposing a group for both youth and adults to get together to discuss some interesting literature. The first few months will focus on a theme of intergenerational spirituality. Three books, focusing on spiritual growth for both adolescents and adults, have been selected that should spark discussions well. The books include *Evensong* by Gail Godwin, *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok, and *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. These three books are thematically related as they describe spiritual growth and the difference it makes in one's life for both adolescents and adults. Protagonists and other characters encounter their own needs for spiritual growth, catalyzed by the circumstances in their lives. Teenagers move from childhood to adulthood through spiritual as well as practical epiphanies and understanding. Both adult and teenage characters confront the consequences of spiritual growth in the practical aspects of their lives, addressing questions of how their philosophy of life should influence how they live it.

The reading group will be open to high school students and adult participants from all four parishes, and is scheduled to start on Sunday, February 22, at 2:00 PM, at St. George's. Gail Godwin's *Evensong* will be the first selection for discussion. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Laura McShane at Ishane@eudoramail.com or 301-867-6275.

Henderson House Update

by Serena Wyckoff

I am pleased to share with you that I now represent St. George's on the Henderson House Council. This assisted living residence is an Episcopal Senior Ministries partnership project with five area churches, including St. George's. Members of the churches' congregations form the council, which has overseen the development of the home and coordinates volunteers and other support for the residents. Located in the Pointer Ridge section of Bowie, Henderson House opened in 2002 and can be home for eight seniors. In addition to representation on the council, there will be other ways for St. George's to be involved with Henderson House and its residents. I will soon let

you know about volunteer opportunities and a joint fundraiser of the gastronomic (that is, food!) variety that is being planned for early May. If you would like more information about Henderson House, please see Father Michael or me (serena301@att.net or 301-459-1941).

Report from Martha's Closet

The ministry of Martha's Closet moves on apace. At a recent board meeting it was reported that the last quarter of 2003 saw 141 families served with food and children's clothing. 288 volunteer service hours were logged. The financial report for the year showed \$10,700.83 in income and \$8,850.98 in expenses.

St. George's has two volunteer months in 2004: May and November. Volunteers will be needed during those months on Tuesday mornings, from 9:15 am to Noon. If you want to volunteer at other times, please call Martha's Closet (301-699-8001) and they will be happy to schedule you.

Keep up the food and children's clothing donations! Especially needed are new children's underwear of all sizes.

Another Successful Nickels for Nicholas

Nickels for Nicholas raised \$843.41 for Sanyu Orphanage in Uganda. Thanks to everyone who made a contribution. The kids of Sanyu are grateful! Fr. Michael is in the process of transferring the money to Uganda and receiving word on its use.

Evangelism as Invitation

by Jeannette Greaney

As a member of the Vestry, I relish the opportunity to give something back to this church that has served me in so many meaningful ways. My position as head of the Evangelism Committee being the first thing I would love to give back. I'm just kidding. Sort of. See that? Right off the bat I'm reinforcing the stereotypical Episcopalian fear of/distaste for evangelism. Webster's *New World College Dictionary* defines evangelism as "a preaching of, or zealous effort to spread the gospel, as in revival meetings or by televised services." Oh THAT makes me feel better. Revival meetings in big tents? Televangelism? Ewww! Whose side is Webster on, anyway?

In spite of this definition and my Episcopalian