

Saint David's News

<http://www.saintdavidsgf.org/>
860 464-6516 • StDavidsGF@aol.com

Gales Ferry, Connecticut-----An Episcopal Church founded in 1963 -----Dec. 2009

Dates for Your Calendar

Dec 14	6:30 pm	Joyful Bell Practice
Dec 15	6:30 am	Women's Group
	6:00 pm	<i>St. Vincent de Paul's prep party</i> (at St. David's in the gathering space)
Dec 17	4:00 pm	<i>St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas party</i> (Norwich)
Dec 18	4:30 pm	Glory Ringers Practice
Dec 19	2:00 pm	Pageant Rehearsal
Dec 20	12:30 pm	Pageant
Dec 20	4:30 pm	Lessons n' Carols
Dec 25	1:00 pm	<i>Christmas Feast</i>
Dec 27		No Sunday School
Dec 28	7:00 pm	Outreach Committee
Dec 29	4:30 pm	<i>Community Service Dinner</i>

Opportunities are shown in
bold italics in this issue

*Stay REALLY current! Check the announcements
section of the parish web page -*
<http://www.saintdavidsgf.org/>

Women's Group 6:30 am on Tuesdays (1st & 3rd)
Men's Group 7:00 am on Wednesdays
Holy Eucharist & Healing Service 9:30 am on Wednesdays
Women's Study 10:30 am on Wednesdays
Bible Study 7:10 pm on Wednesdays
Adult Choir 7:00 pm on Thursdays * * Divine Ringer 12:20 pm on Sundays
Glory Ringers 4:30 pm Sundays * * * Joyful Bells 5:30 on Sundays
Chamber Bells 6:20 On Sundays



Saint David's
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
GALES FERRY, CT

From the Rector

What God Has Done

I approach Christmas this year with a sense of expectancy and wonder. We have been talking about renovated and expanded facilities for a long time. Now behold! The long awaited dream is a reality. To me, it is a wonder what God has done through us.

More than most, we can celebrate Jesus birth with the conviction and evidence that God still comes to his people, transforming lives so that they may become beacons of hope for others. He still uses ordinary people and circumstances to do extraordinary things! My prayer is that each of you will enjoy a holy Christmas season, filled with the same expectancy and wonder that blesses you and those around you.

Fr. Chuck †



From the Senior Warden

Vestry Update from November, 2009

At the regular November vestry meeting the Outreach committee made a recommendation to disburse \$1,000 to the Haitian Health Foundation to replace Decide's deceased ambulance donkey.

Treasurer, Chris Curcio, reported that as of October 31, our current income exceeds current expenses by almost \$3,300. After reviewing the quarterly Fund Balance Report, the vestry voted to close out the Tag Sale and Kitchen Renovation Funds and to transfer the balances to the Furnishings and Capital Campaign Funds, respectively.

An update on the Stewardship committee was presented by Father Chuck. Pledge Sunday was November 15; get your pledge cards in. This committee has requested that the vestry develop a Stewardship Mission Statement, which would aide us in developing a year round stewardship concept. The vestry will plan on tackling this request at its next retreat.

The weekend of January 9 and 10 will be used to host a community open house and celebratory dedication of our new and renovated facility. Bishop Smith is planning on attending as well. More to follow.

Our annual meeting will be help on January 31, 2010 with one service at 9 AM followed by the meeting. The nominating committee, Mike McLane, Nancy Randall, and Steve Forbes, has met and started the process of identifying new members.

Finally, Pete Landolt will be reimbursed for any expenses exceeding the proceeds received in the creation of the new church directory.

Steve Forbes



From the Financial Secretary

Pledges & Stuff

Thank you for cooperating in using your envelopes and/or using your envelope number on your checks. The counting team really appreciates your assistance.

I will have your new envelopes available by the end of December. I, again, urge you to use these envelopes. Once the number is assigned, no one else can use the envelope. IF you don't use the envelope, PLEASE put your envelope number on the check and designate where it is to go. for example, Capital Campaign, Operating Expense, or some other specified gifts, such as flowers, memorial fund, etc.

REMINDER - FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2009, THE LAST SUNDAY OF DECEMBER (12/27/09) WILL BE THE LAST DAY THAT ST. DAVID'S COUNTERS WILL BE AUTHORIZED TO RECORD ANY AND ALL DONATIONS FOR THE YEAR 2009.

Checks received after 12/27 will be counted and recorded on January 3, 2010.....too late to be included on the 2009 statement from St. David's. However, you can still have your check count towards your church 2009 donation for Income Tax Purposes, if you write your check prior to 12/31/09. However, you will be responsible for keeping a record for that transaction.

I will be away until 12/9 but please call or email me if you have any questions at all regarding your financial records.

Again, many thanks for your cooperation.

Pat Bowden-Fialkosky
bowdenpat01@att.net



Compulsive Eating

Compulsive overeaters are invited to new weekly Step 11 Meditation meetings of Overeater's Anonymous. The meetings are held Sunday afternoons starting Nov. 15th. 4:00-5:15 p.m. in the St. John's Catholic Church Community Building meeting room. The address is 22 Maple Ave. Uncasville.

Overeaters Anonymous is not a diet club. There are no dues, fees or weigh-ins. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop eating compulsively.

OA members seek recovery on three levels: physical, emotional and spiritual by following a twelve step program patterned after that of Alcoholics Anonymous. Welcome to Overeater's Anonymous. Welcome Home!

Questions?

Contact: Maren

maren@snet.net

Phone: (860) 848-7066



My time in Prison

Kairos is an interdenominational prison ministry that offers a three-day course in Christianity. The Outreach Committee at St. David's, to whom I am very grateful, sponsored my participation in Kairos #13, at York Correctional Institute on Nov. 4th-7th.

The volunteer Kairos team with whom I served this year was a diverse group composed of ordained and laywomen from all over the state of Connecticut, as well as three women from Rhode Island and two from Maine.

Meetings to prepare for Kairos #13 began in September and were held on Saturdays from 9 AM to 2 PM at St. John's Episcopal Church in Niantic. The purpose of the meetings was for team formation and building as well as training to conduct the retreat according to the International Kairos Regulations and Guidelines. St. John's Outreach Committee also hosted a light lunch to send the team off for our first visit to prison together, which they have been doing for the last ten years, if my memory serves me correctly.

In many ways a Kairos Retreat is quite similar to The Emmaus Weekend that many of our St David's young people and adult volunteers have experienced. The retreat is full of prayer and non-traditional praise songs that raise everyone's' spirits and certainly sustain my energy through the long hours spent in prison from 8 AM to PM.

The days are formatted around a series of talks or lessons on basic Christian principals and designed to heal the "sin sick soul." After each talk the same small groups, called table families, gather for discussion followed by the creation of posters and sometimes skits, songs, or poems. At the end of the retreat is a closing ceremony in which the participants receive certificates that can be used in the parole process and the new Kairos Sisters are asked to speak about their experience to the larger Kairos Community composed of previous Kairos participants, current volunteers and joining the celebration from outside the prison are past volunteers, and clergy.

I have had the pleasure of attending several closing ceremonies for Emmaus Weekends and the comments from the teen participants are, in essence, much like what I hear from the residents at York, that the love of God experienced over the last several days has impacted them in such a way that they are forever changed. I too am forever changed. At every Kairos closing ceremony my heart is so happy listening to the new Kairos Sisters speak about their Kairos Retreat and what it meant to them. Often they share very real and dramatic testaments to the undeniable transforming power of the "good news," that God loves us for all eternity and nothing can separate us from His Love made possible through Jesus Christ, not even a crime that requires time in a prison. The gift of a full and joy filled loving relationship with the Creator and His creation has been given and the choices we make determine the degree of intimacy we experience and ultimately how much joy, peace, and happiness we have in our lives, no matter the circumstances, even in a negative environment like prison.

"Kairos" is Greek for "special time" unlike our ordinary clock ticking time. In God's special time at Kairos Retreats, His Kingdom is briefly revealed. The time spent at York Correctional Institute for Women at Niantic is the most special time of the year for me because I get to witness miracles and feel that my cup truly runneth over, as I loose the illusion of separation and experience the TRUTH of my oneness with the Divine through Christ's Sonship. It is truly humbling and exhilarating to be used by God for the purpose, for which he created me, to receive and give His love. At York it is almost like I become the cup God fills to overflowing and onto the dry, parched and thirsty souls of the women at Niantic. I first came to prison ministry in fulfillment of my baptismal covenant but somehow I become part of the living water. For a few days I am so intimately grafted into the Body of Christ that I no longer see inmates, guards, or volunteers, just the face of Christ looking back at me and surprise he found a place in me too! To quote my best friend, " Kairos is an intensely moving and wonderful experience, but how else would it be to see God?" I am filled with immense appreciation for God and His "special time" and to my church family for supporting this important aspect of stewardship.

Hilda Z.



Happy "New" Year

Advent History & Traditions

Advent is the beginning of a new liturgical year; in essence it is the "New Year" of the Christian calendar. The word advent comes from the Latin word which means arrival. It is a season of special preparations and waiting with expectancy for the birth of Jesus, into our lives and we also look in hope at the promise of his second coming at the end of time. Blue is the color of the season used at St David's to celebrate this joy filled upcoming event. The season of Advent has many traditions from a great variety of cultures and historical periods that help us focus on renewing our spiritual life. This article will focus on just three Advent traditions that our parish family uses in our corporate worship.

St. David celebrates the feast of St. Nicholas, who was born in the 4th century and eventually became the Bishop of Myra, in present day Turkey. Some believe he may be the origin of the present day Santa Claus and is the patron saint of children. One legend has it he saved three young girls from slavery by secretly placing bags of his own gold into the girls stockings which hung in front of their fireplace to dry and another relates he habitually tossed his gold coins to all the homeless children begging in the streets for food. That is why when St. Nicholas visits St. David's, on or near his feast day of December 6th, he passes out gold coins filled with chocolate to the children.

The origins of using greens at this time of year are found in the Germanic tradition. The advent wreath used in worship at St David's has a beautiful stand that I believe was lovingly crafted by a parishioner. The circle of the advent wreath stands for God's never ending, eternal love, the green represents new life in Christ, and the candles are symbolic of God's light coming into the world at the birth of his son. Some people give each candle a different

meaning. The first blue candle to be lighted is the Shepherds Candle because the shepherds like all of God's people were waiting for the birth of the Messiah. A second blue candle is designated the Prophets Candle for many of God's prophets in the Old Testament who foretold the birth of Jesus. The third candle is rose colored and is called Mary's Candle for the joy Mary felt at the news she was to become the mother of the long awaited Messiah. The last blue candle is the Baptist's Candle for John who prepared the way for people to receive the good news Christ preached. On Christmas Eve the white candle in the middle of the wreath is lighted and is called the Christ light because Jesus is born and God's people no longer have to walk in darkness.

On the other side of the sanctuary, opposite the wreath, is where St. David's crèche or manger scene is generally located. The origin of this tradition comes from Italy. In 1223 the beloved St. Francis of Assisi created the first crèche using livestock and people to celebrate the nativity of Jesus. Our lovely manger scene is filled with all sorts of God's creatures along with Mary and Joseph who wait for the birth of baby Jesus, who arrives in his manger-bed on Christmas Eve. The Three Wise Men or Magi are placed towards the back of the sanctuary at the start of the Advent Season. Each Sunday they move a little closer to the crèche and finally arrive on the Eve of Epiphany, twelve days after Christmas.

May you have fun exploring the numerous traditions of this wonderful Advent Season, all of which serve to stimulate our senses into the awareness that we joyfully await the birth of Christ in our lives, instead of just overloading our senses, which can easily happen with all our culture's commercialism. I hope by adopting one of these traditions into your family life your experience of the Advent Season will be deepened and enriched.

Oh by the way, Happy New Year to all!

Hilda Z.



21st. Annual Christmas Feast

Saint David's Episcopal Church's 21st. Annual Christmas Feast, Friday, December 25th, 1:00 - 3:00 pm. Eat in, take out, or home delivery to all of New London County! Turkey, ham, potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, cider, rolls, & home made pies!

Some food donations are needed and there is lots of work to share, sign-ups are located in the new meeting space outside the sanctuary at the church. We are also soliciting warm, clean, lovingly used coats and jackets, and new scarves, hats, gloves, mittens, and unwrapped Christmas toys for our guests to take home on Christmas Day! Great way to spend Christmas Day! Everyone is welcome! To order a dinner, or arrange a ride to the church, or to volunteer (if you can't get to those sign-ups); please call the church office at 860.464.6516.



St. Vincent de Paul's Christmas Party

On Thursday, December 17th, from 4-6 pm, St. David's is hosting our 5th Annual Christmas party at St. Vincent de Paul's Place in Norwich for the families who utilize their food pantry. (They are presently providing weekly food bags to over 500 children and their parents in the Norwich area.) There are many opportunities for you to help!

* If you like to bake, **please make your favorite holiday treat** (cookies, dipped pretzels, fudge, etc.) and bring them to the church office before Tuesday, December 15th.

* We need **workers on Tuesday, December 15th, 6-9 pm**, in the new meeting space outside the sanctuary to **sort the Christmas gifts** for the 65 children we adopted, put together the goodie bags, and the gift bags for the parents for the party. Supper will be provided!

* If you like to **cook**, PLEASE come to St. Vincent's at **2:00 pm on Thursday, December 17th**, we are preparing all the food that day for that evening's dinner at St. Vincent's.

* If you like to **socialize**, please come to the party at St. Vincent's **3:30-6:30 on the 17th** and help us present the party and help us clean up!

If you can help with any of the above, please sign up in the new meeting space outside the sanctuary or call the church office at 860.464.6516. Help us bring Christmas Joy to our neighbors...you'll be surprised, it will be you who is blessed!

Sandi Brown
for the Outreach Committee



Stewardship, what is it?

As a member of St. David's newly formed Stewardship Team, I am striving for a better understanding of what that word – stewardship – really means, not as an abstract concept but as a principle for my life. I am coming to realize that, as a friend told me, **stewardship is the work of our lives**. It is my job/our job, to love one another as God loves us and to **use the gifts God has given us to care for ourselves, each other and our community**.

In just a few weeks, God willing, we at St. David's will explode into our new and beautiful building. I think this building exemplifies stewardship: in a profound way it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, a sacrament. The building itself grew out of our conviction that in order to do God's work, we needed more space. It reflects, too, our willingness to commit considerable financial resources to underwrite its' cost.

It is supremely fitting that the first major event to be held in the new parish hall will be the Christmas Feast, open to all who may come. On December 25, 2009 we will, first, celebrate the birth of Christ, "the food of new and unending life". At the Christmas Feast we will share that bread of life, though it may

look like turkey and dressing and cranberry sauce. Everyone involved in preparing for, serving and cleaning up after the Feast will tell you that it is a labor of Love. It is an effort that involves not only our parish family, but many others throughout the area. As the result of our sharing our time, talents and money, it is certainly a fine example of stewardship.

In the coming months our Stewardship Committee will be meeting, talking and praying together to discover ways in which a sense of stewardship is present in our life as a parish now ... and how it might be in the future. How do you see your own commitment to care worked out... in teaching a church school class, in study and prayer, in pledging money (possibly tithing), in supporting the music programs or assisting with specific outreach activities? Please join with us as we seek to do God's will on earth as it is in heaven.

Pat Anderson.

Member St. David's Stewardship Committee

**Share the Blessing ~
Pledge Campaign 2010**

Have you filled in and submitted your 2010 pledge card and made your financial commitment to your Saint David's family for next year? It is a lovely act of kindness which enables your vestry to plan a sound budget for 2010. If you need a pledge card, please call Pam in the church office at

**~Lessons and Carols ~ ~
Sunday, December 20th. 4:30 p.m.**

Choirs, Carols,
Handbells, and Harp.
Bring a friend with you!
A great way to put Christ back into
Christmas

Average Sunday attendance in
November - 177

Pictures (in color) are available at:

<http://http://gallery.me.com/mmclane#100627>
Use slideshow button at bottom of window for full screen
Or try the "mosaic" button, also at the bottom
(Pictures can be downloaded, if you wish)



The Peace and Announcements

Our mission statement begins: “St. David’s is a warm and caring parish...” That is a true statement. We clearly enjoy the fellowship we share and see ourselves as an extended family. As commendable as that is, and it is; it has the potential to divert our focus when we worship. This shows up in two places: Sharing of the Peace and making announcements.

The Peace is not a time to check in with everyone. It is a shared expression of thanksgiving to God for the peace we have received through the confession and forgiveness of our sins. Clean and restored, we share His peace with one another. It is important that each one speaks and hears this declaration of peace, but it loses something when it becomes an extended time of greeting.

The second diversion can be announcements. We have made some progress with efforts to minimize them and move them to the end of the service, but our tendency is expansion. Please try to get necessary announcements in the bulletin so the need for verbal ones is limited.

From the Worship Committee and Fr. Chuck.

