

Saint Mary Magdalene Episcopal Church

January 2021 Newsletter



The Work of Christmas

When the star in the sky is gone
When the kings and princes are home
When the shepherds are back with their flocks
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoners,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart
Howard Thurman

A NEW NORMAL

Fr. Becker served drive-by Holy Eucharist at the church on December 19. Fourteen parishioners participated. This will be served again January 21, 4:30 p.m. as we adjust to a new normal.



Due to Covid 19, church gatherings have been suspended until further notice

JANUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Every Tuesday Morning – Healing & Intercessory Prayer, 11:00 a.m. From Home. Prayer list is available. Contact Valerie Doolittle

January 3 and 17 –Morning Prayer via Zoom – watch for a link

January 18 –Vestry Meeting, 3:00 p.m. – (Third Monday of each Month) - All Are Welcome! If you wish to join in, contact Bob Rinaldi for a Zoom link.

January 21 – 4:30 p.m. Drive-by Holy Eucharist offered at the church,

January 24- Virtual Worship Service – Watch for a link

January 27– Articles for February Newsletter are due. Contact Phyllis Olson.



Those celebrating January birthdays:

Linda Sapp

Linda Lindner

Steve Loomis



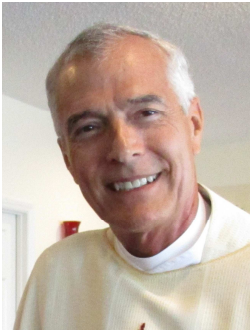
Those celebrating wedding anniversaries in January:

Jane and Henry Fisher

Linda and Bill Lindner



Thank you, Tim



God's Purpose for 2021

As I was viewing the rare conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn this past week with my family, I enjoyed hearing about others who were observing the same phenomenon with telescopes. What made it even more remarkable was that it took place on December 21st during the winter solstice—the longest night of the year. As I pondered its significance, it made me wonder, “What is the telos of our lives as we head into the year 2021?” Telos is a Greek word meaning “end, purpose, or goal.”¹

We are given clues to help answer that question in both the Old and New Testament. Paul tells us in his letter to the Ephesians that we were created “to the praise of his glorious grace.”² And later in that same letter, Paul relates, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”³ This predesigned purpose means that God has set us on a course, where “the path of the just is like a shining light that gets brighter and brighter until the perfect day.”⁴ The prophet Jeremiah put it this way, “For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for evil, to give you a hope and a future.”⁵ This telescopic view of God's purpose for our lives gives us confidence as we face the changes and challenges ahead in 2021.

Yours in Christ,

- 1 Wikipedia dictionary
- 2 This phrase is repeated three times in Ephesians 1:6, 8, 12
- 3 Ephesians 2:10
- 4 Proverbs 4:18
- 5 Jeremiah 29:11

Around and about the parish:



Our friend, Jeanne Helmstetter, wrote recently that she is fine but weary of the isolation. Her family is nearby and she treasures their time together. She still loves and misses St. MM.

Donna McClung reports that Emmanuel Thrift shop, though closed for much of 2020, was able to donate \$18,000, to Moore County charities this year. We thank Donna for representing St. MM so well there.

Fr. Dan Mannen, our supply preacher for some months, and his wife Elizabeth Anne, have moved from North Carolina to Virginia. We wish them Godspeed as they leave and thank them for their service to us.

In early December Linda Lindner drew our attention to the needs of residents at Seven Lakes Assisted Living and Memory Care. The response was heartwarming as parishioners generously filled a box with personal items and treats to be delivered as Christmas gifts. Linda is hopeful this will become an on-going outreach effort.

On Dec. 21, the Doolittles set up their telescope to view the "Christmas star" (Jupiter and Saturn). Neighbors gathered to view the sight through the telescope and see clearly that the star was indeed two objects appearing to be one. Their daughter Emma, Tim Burgess and the Marions, joined in to behold the spectacular, once in a lifetime sight.



Jim and Sherol in Connecticut with nine-year-old grandchildren, Emery & Finn



Ella, granddaughter of
Bob and Linda Rinaldi

NEW VIDEO EQUIPMENT IS NOW IN SERVICE



Kim records the Christmas Eve service with our new video camera, just another sign of a new normal. We are learning as we go. Thank you, Kim, for your willingness to serve and offer your expertise.



Elana & Evan sing for our
Christmas Eve Service

News and Notes from the Diocesan Celebration/Convention - November 2020

Phyllis Marion

Oh what a difference a year makes! Though Covid forced the Convention to be virtual, our Bishops, Sam and Anne, did their best to create a personal gathering, though it was not close.

Over 300 delegates tuned in via Zoom, a slightly smaller attendance than last year's in-person meeting. One presenter admonished that "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape."

The inspiring opening worship service included musicians from St. Paul's and The Advocate. Congregations reported necessary adjustments to their worship and community ministries. Some churches now provide outdoor communion either by walk-up or by car. Virtual technology is widely used in the diocese, making worship services available.

In an effort to meet nutritional needs, parish groups raised gardens and made produce available to community members. Others programs provide take-out meals and/or donated groceries as needed. Some programs provide child care so workers can keep their jobs. All of this is happening within the ever-changing Covid restrictions.

The diocesan budget and the mission strategy were discussed. Priorities include 1) Racial Justice and Reconciliation, 2) Support for Congregations, 3) Collaboration and New Communities, 4) Lifelong Christian Formation and 5) Creation Care. Workshops were held on these areas; more on that another time.

Josephine Hicks and Deacon Anderson discussed the "1,000 Days of Love" campaign. Because the first 1,000 days are so critical in a child's life, the funds donated will allow the establishment of community-led and sustained programs to improve nutrition, health care, mental and emotional stimulation and nurturing. If we can save one child, we can save the world! Bishop Curry asks for \$15 from each member to accomplish this important task. Please help. For more information contact Phyllis Marion. jaymar41@earthlink.net

Regarding accountability:

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.
Hebrews 4:13 NIV



JUST FOR FUN, A BIT OF WORTHLESS TRIVIA:

February 1865 is the only month in recorded history not to have a full moon.

In the last 4,000 years, no new animals have been domesticated.

If the population of China walked past you, in single file, the line would never end because of the rate of reproduction.

It's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

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FYI:

Former Vicar, Fr. Bob Brown, turned 90 in December. If you would like to send him a greeting, here's his address:

1301 Brittany Pointe
Lansdale PA 19446

St. MM is now fitted out with internet connection.

On Dec. 3, a group of faithful parishioners completed an eight-session study of **The Beatitudes** led by Fr. Stephen. The group gathered via Zoom bi-weekly, viewed a video, and then joined in a discussion. We thank Fr. Stephen for leading this study. The Zooming experience gave participants insight into the challenges and restrictions school children face as they join their classes from home.

An updated church directory will be issued in January. Please advise Phyllis Olson if your information has changed.

phyllisandpete@gmail.com

Jeanne Helmstetter's mailing address:
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Nashua, NH 03063



Pray for Peace in 2021.

Vestry Members

Senior Warden – Bob Rinaldi
Junior Warden - Julia Poisson
Charlotte Kennedy, Linda Lindner, Phyllis Marion, Skip Ragland and John Sapp

Treasurer- David Poisson

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A Mission of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina

