

St. Francis Episcopal Church

Newsletter



January - 2012

Church News and Announcements

NEWS FOR JANUARY

Oh Grand December!!! I would imagine that most of you were doing the same as Paul and I as we watched in awe the glorious productions on PBS... Andrea Bocelli, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Celtic Women, the Nutcracker --- beautifully produced sights and sounds of the Christmas season! These experiences so outdo the madness of Christmas shopping (except that I love that madness), getting those Christmas cards out and the packages mailed in time --- I will say that I do think a lot of us really enjoyed "cyber Monday, free shipping on line, having UPS Randy stop at your house -- getting the tree all decorated, freeing those angels from their packing and placing them about, listening to the wonderful carols on 99.9 or on Sirius 76 -- enjoying the excitement of grandchildren as they make their Santa lists, shopping for your "angel tree" person -- hoping that we will not have temperatures in the 70's for Christmas Day! Aren't we all so thankful that we have our friends and family to share this very special time with? Yes, we are truly blessed!

St. Francis is getting all spruced up -- thanks to Paul Opanowitz' overseeing -- loose or bad boards have been replaced, the grounds look wonderful -- yes, red berries on the hollies -- the cypress trees were so pretty -- now are bare -- our cherished snowbird friends are here with us, Roger Porter has been a true blessing to us, ECW is busy preparing for Christmas -- buying gifts for island children, getting ready for the 25th anniversary... lots to do! A big "Thank you" to Merrill and Jo McPhearson for keeping the greenery on the altar all spruced up --- the red berries added a joyful touch --- a "happy" during Advent . Another "happy" was Tommy Watts' purple Advent shirt on the 18th -- looking spiffy there, Tommy!

Dana Fleming returned safely from Germany ---and a delightful side trip to Portugal -- she had a wonderful trip and thoroughly enjoyed

being with her daughter there. John and Mary Porter had a busy and fun time in Birmingham when they went up to be with Mary's family and to see the granddaughters in their recital. Wimberly, Mack and Joy were filled with grand revues of the "Nutcracker" performance at the Saenger. Stella packed up her van and left for her time with her family in Talladega... I know that Evelyn is so happy to have her mother there as she hosts several Christmas parties. Blanche packed herself up and flew off to be with her granddaughter, Lottie -- son Rob and Michelle, daughter Caroline and Sarah. Who knows but she just might enjoy a white Christmas! New grandparents, Al and Jean Clark, are off to visit family in Virginia --- Wimberly is so very excited about having her granddaughter, Garland, here for the holidays -- lots of fun and good food there! Mel and Lamona's bags were loaded in the car as they headed for Islemarada until the end of February. We all hope that the sun will heal Lamona's back --- I do know that having daughters Deb and Dawn and their families there for Christmas will make them both feel better --- Mel is thrilled to have those boys as fishing partners! We are all so happy to have Mary Hutchinson back with us -- she is having quite a time with her back so we all pray that she will be much better very soon. Connie and Lynn Johnson opened up their house on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day to a big bunch of "homeless" islanders and snowbirds... Lynn serves up Tom and Jerries (I have no clue what those are but they sound fun for sure!) and a merry time is had by all! (Isn't this what Christmas is ---sharing with family and friends) Also looking to enjoy themselves are Don and Eugenia Carey --- they packed up their RV and headed for San Antonio to take in the sights and lights there! Eugenia ordered them both Kindle Fires so they had plenty to read, Mardi (the MOST special poodle) had every single thing she could ever desire and off they went...".happy trails" to them! Happy trails also to Jean and

News and Announcements (Cont.)

Al as they hosted their families to a week in Disney World ---I think Al & Jean had every need accounted for-- a memorable time for everyone! What a wonderful Christmas present I received a few days before Christmas – a phone call from Mary Ely in New Mexico -- she just sounds great – she sends love and Christmas cheer to all of you! I do love that girl! Another treat for all of us was the arrival of Annie and Charles Ferguson!!!! We've been waiting for them to come and now they're here! Thank you Lord.

On the 18th, St. Francis celebrated its 25th anniversary--- I think we were all fascinated by the many "story boards" that Dana Fleming had made and displayed around the parish hall. Great pictures going back to the original building – when it came over the bridge in two parts! – then progressing along as the building and congregation grew. It was also fascinating to hear Jo McPhearson tell of the first group that got together wanting to have Episcopal rituals. Jim Early picked up the story as we all were told of the growth of our beloved St. Francis Church. After being assured that we all had a glass of champagne punch, Mel led a toast to our special guest, Ellis Wilkins for his leadership and caring as the group grew from those few meetings in each others homes to the largest congregation on the island! I am positive that Ellis and Virginia's

hearts swelled with pride as they were able to track our church from its beginning to now... of course, just having them with us is always very special for us! Ellis' account of how he entered the ministry, how he scoured the countryside looking for a church for us, how he then begged the bishop to let him have the church found in Irvington, how the grounds came into St. Francis' possession --- it is so easy to take all of this for granted when really St. Francis has a wonderfully interesting history! A huge THANK YOU for the many who have contributed to our church in so many ways.

We look forward to the new year --- we especially ask for prayers for our new Senior Warden – Julia Willis as she takes on her duties. And then hanging over us are those yukky New Year's resolutions! As for me, I have a ton of them to make but really have no intention to keep any of them so --- this year my resolution is to make NO resolutions!

On a personal note – I can never thank you for the caring notes, visits and phone calls -- your encouragement to me and most of all, your daily prayers. I am looking at being cancer free in the very near future ... I'm a walking miracle and I thank you for it! Love, peace and joy to you from me - martha

Remember in Your Prayers

Jaylene Brooks Allen, Carolyn Allender, Sharon Beach, Sue Beech, Jo Blount, Patty Borman, Charles Bromley, Barbara Crapps, Eldon Dugan, Glenn Foster, Ross Havard, Marcia Hayes, Jerry Hocutt, Alison Lane Kasten, Jamie Kent, Michael Lane, Sandee Mackinaw, Martha Mayson, Jamelle Roy, Paige Saas,

&

Those in our armed forces; Stacy Eubanks, & Stanley Robinson.

The Vicar's Remarks

Dear People of God,

As I was contemplating the "Christ-mass" or the Holy Eucharist we have just celebrated, I remembered something I read by Matthew Kelley - an excerpt follows:

There is great power in the Eucharist. We don't go to Mass to socialize. We don't go to be entertained. We go to receive. We go to Mass to be fed and nourished by the Word of God - both in Scripture and in Sacrament. Open your heart, open your mind, and open your spirit.

Life is not about what sort of shoes you wear. It's not about what street you live on. It is not about how much money you have in the bank or what sort of car you drive. It's not about whether or not you get that promotion, or where you and your family vacation each year. Life is not about who you have dated, who you are dating, or who you married. It is not about whether you made the football team. Life is not about what college you went to, what college may or may not accept you, or what college your children are going to. Life isn't about these things.

Life is about who you love and who you hurt. Life is about how you love yourself and how you hurt yourself. It's about how you love and hurt the people in your life. You can't see these things, but they are powerful and real.

Mass is not about who you sit next to. It's not about which priest says Mass. It's not about what you wear or who is there. Mass is not about the music. It's not even about the preaching. Mass is about receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, not just physically, but spiritually. Perhaps you have been receiving the Eucharist physically every Sunday for your whole life. Next Sunday, prepare yourself, be conscious of the marvel, the wonder, the mystery, and receive spiritually.

Rediscover the wonder.

Pax Christi!

Roy †

Bible Study Group

We are fortunate to have Fr. Roger Porter to lead us in a weekly bible study group again this year starting January 12 at 2:00 pm in Wilkins Hall.

The text for the study is "Speaking Christian" by Marcus J. Borg, a pre-eminent Jesus scholar.

Books have been ordered and are available in Wilkins Hall for \$16.50

Report from The Vestry

VESTRY NOTES DECEMBER 2011

I thought when I did my Annual Report last month, I would not be doing this again but here I am. This month, once again, has been very busy. I know you have seen all the work going on repairing and painting our church. We are extremely indebted to a benefactor who is a sometimes visitor. He gave us the funds to do all this work. I know you join me in being very grateful to him for his generosity.

The wonderful celebration of our 25th Anniversary on Sunday, December 18, did not just happen. It required a lot of hard work by a lot of our members. Special thanks go to Dana and Julia for the story boards depicting our history. Who knew Jim Early was such a great speaker? Thanks Jim. Incidentally Jim is the one who called our attention to this important milestone in the life of St. Francis.

A special treat was having Rev. Ellis Wilkins who was our first priest attend. Ellis was in rare form as he described the early days and especially the trip of St. Francis over the bridge in two pieces. He called to mind the hard work and dedication of those early members who literally reconstructed the building and added Wilkins Hall. We owe a lot to those who have gone before us.

We are also all very grateful to Rev. Roger Porter for being with us while Roy is on sabbatical. Roger, we loved having you and you are always welcome at St. Francis. I hear you are again planning a very good bible study this winter.

Again I thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Senior Warden. Lamona and I wish you all a very lovely Christmas. We will see you next year!

Mel Lucas
Senior Warden 2009-2011

Before we begin a new Vestry year we need to acknowledge the untiring work of Mel Lucas and the drive behind him, Lamona. In all seriousness they have both worked to keep St. Francis on track and moving ahead. Thank you both for your caring, sharing and love.

This year in November at our annual meeting Diane Hall, and I were elected to serve on the Vestry for the next 3 years. Mack Russell, was appointed as Jr. Warden, I have been appointed as Senior Warden. Members of the Vestry, Mack, Diane, Paul Opanowitz, Jr. Warden Emeritus, John Porter, Stella Anderson, Dana Fleming, (Altar Guild) Gail Opanowitz, Treasurer, Mary Porter and Lamona Lucas, (ECW), are in place to serve in the "business" of St. Francis. We can only accomplish the task with your help. As we call upon you, members and friends of St. Francis, for help we hope you will respond with patience, understanding and prayers.

I will do my best to serve St. Francis, and thank you for the privilege.

Julia A. Willis Senior Warden 2012

Report from the Episcopal Church Women

The ECW monthly meeting was December 12, 2011 with eleven ladies present. Prayers were said, minutes were read, reports were given and we all took a few minutes for a debriefing of the Fall Bazaar. It is always good to talk about what went well and what could be done next year to make it even better. It was agreed that all in all it was a wonderful day and the proceeds will go to help local social service organizations and disadvantaged individuals.

Congratulations to the newly elected officers for 2012:

President: Lamona Lucas

Vice-President: Diane Hall

Secretary: Connie Johnson

Treasurer: Mary Porter

A Year in Review

Looking back over 2011 our ECW members have accomplished a lot – as always, our accomplishments were the results of hard work and the dedication of many of our church members.

- > We hosted several Covered Dish Dinners including one to honor our winter visitors. These are events that are enjoyed by many of our island friends as well as our members.
- > The Annual Arts and Crafts Bazaar hosted over 60 vendors who reported a day of sales and fun. The proceeds from the vendors went to Wilmer Hall.
- > A small group of ECW members under the tutelage of Lamona Lucas, met, studied and completed all the requirements to become members of The Episcopal Community. Several members attended a weekend retreat at Camp Beckwith to be installed and others were installed by “Skype.” The members met with Father Roy to discuss what the role of the members should be. This meeting culminated in the Sisters of St. Francis being served communion by Father Roy. The Sisters of St. Francis were recognized by the Bishop during his visit in July.
- > On June 28, 2011 ECW members hosted the reception following the Committal of Ashes for Frank Hawkins. The loss of Frank brought much sorrow to our congregation but we were so grateful to be able to honor him with a lovely reception and to be able to share this time with Theo and family members.
- > Bishop Duncan, his wife, Kathy and a visiting deacon visited on July 31, 2011. ECW members again made this a memorable event by providing a lovely “stand up” lunch. He was very pleased over our gift of gumbo.
- > Perhaps the most fun thing ECW did this year was to celebrate the 90th birthday of our wonderful Jim Early! He was surprised and we were thrilled.
- > Our Fall Festival was in November. We sold casseroles, gumbo, chicken salad

sandwiches, baked goods, etc. The lawn was covered with participants in our annual "Bring Your Own Garage Sale."

- > We made gumbo (did we make gumbo? 160 gallons during the year!), pickles, Wimberly's famous chicken salad, casseroles and much more.
- > We were delighted to be able to contribute over \$10,000 to community needs and projects. This includes Camp Beckwith, Wilmer Hall, The Salvation Army, Bay Area Food Bank, Dauphin Island School projects, Ozanam Pharmacy and local individuals.

It has been my privilege and honor to serve as president for the past year. St. Francis is indeed blessed to have such faithful members and I in turn have been blessed to be a part of this church and the ECW organization.

Our next ECW meeting is Monday, January 9, 2012 10:00, Wilkins Hall. Please join us.

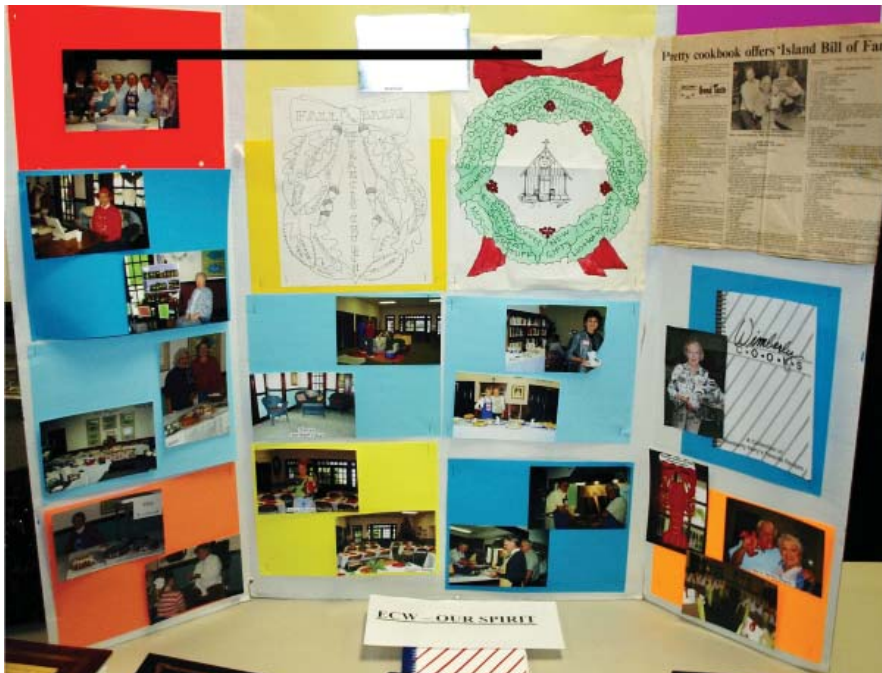
Happy New Year!

Mary Porter

ECW President

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling

1 Peter 4:8-9

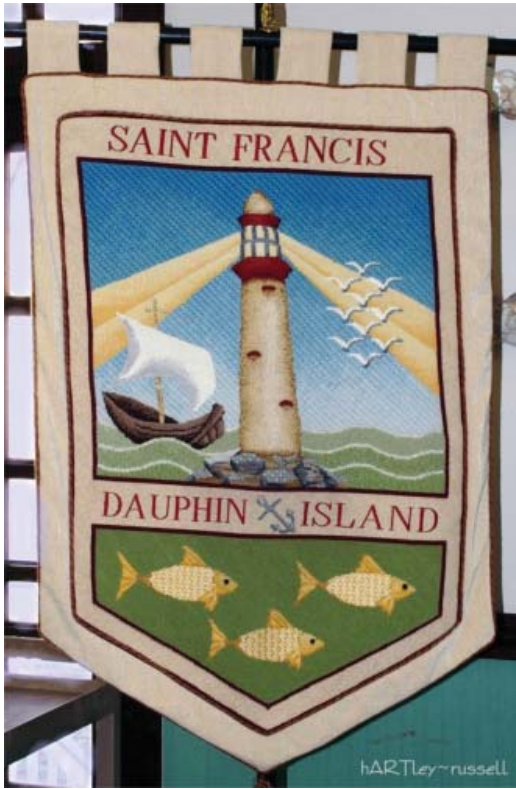


A Toast - to the 25th Anniversary



Fr. Ellis & Virginia





Jim Early recalls fond memories of St Francis





Dana designed wonderful Story Boards



Calendar for January 2012

Holy Eucharist Rite II @ 10:30 am

	January 1 Last Sunday of Christmas	January 8 1st Sunday of Epiphany	January 15 2nd Sunday of Epiphany	January 22 3rd Sunday of Epiphany	January 29 4th Sunday of Epiphany
Reader	John Porter	Cindy Smith	Diane Hall	Kathryn Carver	Jean Clark
Chalice	Mary Porter	Blanche Emerson	Mary Porter	Linda Percival	Julia Willis
Ushers	Wimberly Hory & John Porter	Joan & John Lane	Leo Jones & Jo McPhearson	Mack & Joy Russell	Al Clark & Stella Anderson
Refreshments	Blanche Emerson	Judy Bogar	Joan Rockstad	Linda Griswold	Ann Warmack

Wednesday Evening Prayer Service @ 5:00 pm

Jan. 4	Jan. 11	Jan. 18	Jan. 25
Mary Porter	Blanche Emerson	Mary Porter	Linda Percival

Choir Practice Sunday @ 9:45 am

Dates to Remember

Vestry Meeting	January 8 @ 11:00 am
ECW Meeting	January 9 @ 10:00 am
Bible Study Group	Thursdays @ 2:00 pm