Dear Friends,

Lent is a journey that begins in ashes and ends in triumph. It traverses a desert landscape filled with voices and shadows, demons if you will, beckoning us with their siren call to cease our wandering, to lay our crosses down, to acknowledge the futility of thinking that we can change the world. The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, that led the people of God out of slavery in Egypt so long ago, does, in fact, continue to lead us (the Church) in our own day. Oases of refreshment (called Sundays) are strategically situated for our sustenance because the journey is too difficult to sustain in our own strength.

Along the way we will see things long hidden, aspects of our very identity too long buried in the busyness of our lives and the pride of our other loves. Those treasures can be mistaken for lumps of coal because the layers of dust and neglect shield us from recognizing our true self. This accumulated detritus can be revealed as anger and resentment, as guilt and shame, as sadness and regret. That is why Lent is 40 Days and 40 Nights—the shadow side of ourselves instinctively rejects the light.

As we near the end of the journey with olive and palm branches in our hands, with our joyful shouts of Hosanna ringing in our ears, the ascent of Mount Zion begun and the desert behind us, all is well until suddenly it is not. With a ferocious counter-attack, the forces of this world begin the final crucifixion. Darkness covers the land. Light is swallowed up in darkness (powerfully articulated in the service of Tenebrae during Holy Week) and all is seemingly lost.

When we have given everything to this journey and still it is not enough, then suddenly the dawn from on high breaks upon us (the reason that the Great Vigil of Easter is the liturgy from which all others are drawn), the stone is rolled away, and we once again see clearly in the light of the Risen Christ. We see ourselves and others as God sees us—beloved, forgiven and free.

Do not lose heart when you get lost in the desert; you are not alone.

Do not avert your gaze when the wind blows the sand away and things forgotten are remembered; you have always been held fast in the sight of God. Face the fear and fatigue that seem to be our constant companions. Call upon Christ in your hour of need and rest in his promises. If you fall, get up and keep going knowing that when you fall again that it is Jesus who walks before you and beside you blazing the path ahead.

If this all sounds clichéd remember that it is not that clichés are not true, it is that they are not taken seriously. Journey, desert, oasis, steep ascents, darkness, despair, the sudden piercing light of wisdom and acceptance—these are things that countless pilgrims have discovered to be true throughout the ages. May we be counted among their number as we journey together through this season we call Lent.

May the Peace of the Lord always be with you.

Faithfully,

Andrew
For the good earth, which God has given us...

This is, for me, an almost heart-stopping phrase from the prayers on Sunday morning as I reflect upon this good earth and what we have done to it, and continue doing to it. Sometimes my mind wanders to the St. Mary’s environment I explored as a child, and the changes that have taken place over the years.

I began attending St. Mary’s at the beginning of WWII when gas rationing made it impossible for my mother and me to continue going to the Clarendon Baptist church, my father to go to St. Agnes, and still have enough ration coupons for dad’s work commute to Washington. We then walked to St. Mary’s from our home on Florida Street, and we never looked back. It was a life changing experience for her and the beginning of a lifetime in the Episcopal Church for me and, eventually, John and our children.

At that time, diagonally across Glebe Road was a large grassy field, adorned with ox-eye daisies in June, filled with bees, insects and a family of bobwhites. I wandered through a path that cut across there on my way to John Marshall School, picking wild flowers and examining insects as I went.

Traveling south on 26th Street you would have seen few houses. Between 26th and Little Falls Road was a grove of hardwoods, sheltering a wide variety of birds, notably fox sparrows, chipping sparrows and three kinds of woodpeckers. Standing at the edge of the woods, I’d hear wood thrushes sing—a sound so unique and beautiful that one never forgets it. About where 27th Street is today, you would have found springs and a pond large enough for winter skating. What is now George Mason Drive was a stream, which was fed by springs and a swamp behind what is now the Lee Harrison shopping center. The stream now hidden beneath the median of George Mason Drive, reappears near Little Falls Road and later joins Pimmit Run. For a kid who spent hours tromping around outdoors, that swamp, that stream, the woods were the stuff of paradise.

Yet today, I can count on my fingers the kinds of birds I see at my feeder. Will I never hear the ethereal wood thrush song again in this neighborhood? The familiar call of the bobwhite disappeared long ago. The towering oaks along 26th Street are mostly gone, as are the streams and ponds that teemed with life. The bees and butterflies are a fraction of what they used to be.

Story continues on page 3

Call for Vestry Nominations

St. Mary’s will elect new Vestry members at its annual meeting, Sun., May 7, following the 9:00 a.m. service.

Prayerfully consider if you are being called to serve on the Vestry.

At the most basic level, candidates should have a passion for the mission and ministry of St. Mary’s, and be known and trusted in the parish. Eligible parishioners must be 18 or more years of age, attendant at worship, a pledging member, and a confirmed member of the Episcopal Church, whose letter resides at St. Mary’s. Review requirements and duties listed online at www.StMarysArlington.org/vestry/ then contact the Vestry Senior Warden at jane@ned.org to express your interest.

Save these Important Dates

- Lenten Clean Up Day: Mar. 11
- Preventing Children/Elderly Abuse and Misconduct Training: Mar. 11
- Lenten Quiet Day: Mar. 18
- Rise Against Hunger: Mar. 25
- Episcopal 101 Begins: Mar. 26

- Register for highlighted events at www.StMarysArlington.org/Sign-Up/
- Learn about additional Lenten Programs at www.StMarysArlington.org/Lent/
What can we do? The fields, woods, streams and swamp can’t be returned, but surely there is something we can do to slow down the diminishing of our varied natural environment. As a gardener, I always feel a tension between wanting to make the landscape beautiful and the necessity of encouraging wildlife. Both are possible.

We can choose flora that are part of our ecological system. Native oak trees host numerous kinds of caterpillars, whose presence encourages Carolina chickadees to reproduce. Think twice before adding an non-native tree, which may add beauty but does not benefit wildlife. In fact many exotics invade native plants and threaten the survival of small animals, birds and insects. Consider planting native flowers that attract pollinators in the summer, as well as winterberry and holly shrubs whose berries feed local birds.

As Christians, we are stewards of this planet, of this little piece of North Arlington, of our backyards, and we need to take this stewardship seriously, doing all that we can to nurture and sustain what is left of what God entrusted to us.

...for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

**Why St. Mary’s Outreach Supports Together We Bake**

Together We Bake is an empowerment based job training program for women in need of a second chance. Following is a first-person account of how the program transforms lives.

“I remember him calling my father. I remember his exact words: ‘Come pick up your daughter now. I’m going to kill her.’ I guess he’d finally gotten everything from me he wanted.”

Battered, exploited and deep into a crack addiction, Rebecca had crash-landed at the bottom of a downward spiral of poor decisions and unsteady relationships. The last stop was Philadelphia, living with a man who promised the moon but instead got her hooked on drugs, tracked her every move, kept her sequestered and at his whim exposed her to violence and pornography.

Rebecca’s father tracked her location through his smart phone and brought her back home to Virginia. Now safe and wanting to recover her life, she was eager to reconnect with her five children; however, given her history Child Protective Services (CPS) demanded that she confront her unresolved issues.

“At first I denied everything. But a few days later I went back to the CPS worker and said I needed help,” says Rebecca. “She told me about this new program called Together We Bake (TWB). I was still pretty screwed up, but thought I’d see what it was.”

What she found was an environment of unconditional support. “I didn’t know how to open up to people about what happened, but just knowing that these guys were here, they gave me the confidence to talk about it. Also being accountable was a big step for me.”

Through self-empowerment sessions, Rebecca’s emotional scars began to heal; through time in the kitchen working to complete her ServSafe certification, she discovered a love of baking. Just a week after TWB graduation, she landed a job at local retailer Great Harvest Bread Company.

The TWB team also helped Rebecca connect with Alexandria-based nonprofit Empowered Women International, which helped her obtain the necessary licenses to sell breads at local farmers markets.

Rebecca continues to take brave steps both personally and professionally. She’s now the proprietor of her own business, Second Rising Bread, whose goal is to benefit a specific population via employment and funds, and whose name has a double meaning: the stages of bread dough rising and her soft-spoken, powerful mantra of resilience.

“I still don’t really feel like I understand what happened in Philadelphia. There’s a lot of stuff that has come back over time,” she says. “If hadn’t been for TWB program, I don’t know if I could have made it.”

Today, Rebecca is determined to own her recovery, and to do her part in protecting young women and men from having to endure what she did.

_by Cathy Applefeld Olson, Together We Bake Board Member_
Dear Friends,

It is with great joy and gratitude that I join you at St. Mary’s, serving as the Associate Rector for Community Life as together we begin our annual journey into the mysteries of the cross and resurrection of Jesus.

Many of you know that while attending Virginia Theological Seminary I completed my field education at St. Mary’s. In many ways, this new beginning feels like coming home.

Most recently, I served as the Associate Rector for Families and Youth at Christ Episcopal Church in Ponte Vedra, Florida. Prior to that, I was called to serve as the first chaplain at the University of North Florida (UNF).

At UNF, I laid the foundation for a sustainable college ministry by securing a grant from the Lilly Foundation to help students explore vocation and Christian leadership. I organized a coalition to design a new interfaith center with chaplain workspace and built a partnership between UNF, the Diocese of Florida and local parishes.

I have a Master of Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary, a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Florida, and a Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Georgetown University.

My husband Tom and I have been married for 30 years and we have two children, Sarah and Austin. Tom is an attorney with Pajcic & Pajcic, P.A. in Jacksonville, and will be back and forth between there and his home office in Arlington. Sarah lives in Boston and works as a consultant with Deloitte, and Austin plays for the San Francisco Giants in their minor league system, with the hope of eventually entering the big leagues. In my free time, I love to bike, cook and share meals with family and friends.

I look forward getting to know all of you, hearing your stories and exploring creative ways we can deepen relationships and encounter God through worship and outreach. I am inspired by this community’s passion for service and our potential to engage our neighbors in the surrounding community and the world at large in new and transformational ways.

I look forward to what God will teach us as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus together this Holy Lent and beyond.

Faithfully,

Mother Amy
Episcopalians welcome everyone, no exceptions. At St. Mary’s we strive to make everyone feel like they belong. While some members of our church are comfortable with an informal affiliation, others may want to take the next step in becoming official members of the parish.

If you’re feeling called to be involved more deeply in the life of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, but are not sure where to start, here are a few suggestions to consider.

Visit the Ministries page at www.StMarysArlington.org/Ministries. When you join with others and serve, St. Mary’s will become your church in a deeper and more profound way. Online you will find opportunities to give of your time to benefit Worship, Children, Youth, Outreach, Pastoral Care, Music, Hospitality and Study Groups. Learn the cornerstones of Anglican faith by taking Episcopal 101 and/or 102. These six week courses are a great way to learn about Anglican spirituality and how it can foster our individual and corporate resilience. Register for a class by March 26, at www.StMarysArlington.org/Sign-Up/Make a financial pledge to St. Mary’s. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:12

Finally, if you are interested in baptism or transferring your membership from another Episcopal church, please call St. Mary’s Parish Administrator, Pam Frick, at 703-527-6800.

Seeing as a Holy Act. Using passages from scripture, short readings from theologians and great works of art, parishioner and artist Peggy Parker will lead the group and discuss ways the habit of “holy seeing” helps open our eyes and hearts. Tues., Mar. 7-Apr. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary’s.

Spirituality of Resilience. Participants will explore with parishioner Dr. Joan Turkus the practical ways in which our Anglican spirituality can foster our individual and corporate resilience. Tues., Mar. 7-Apr. 4 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary’s.

Living Simply in our Culture of Consumption. Parishioner Tom Gallagher will guide this small group via a GoToMeeting webinar to consider how living more simply (choosing to consume less, do less, or have less) is both the path and the fruit of sane living. Wed., Mar. 22, 29 and Apr. 5 Webinar, 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Sign up in Paca Hall or online by Mar. 7! Questions? Contact lay leaders Joan Turkus and Jay Liwanag.

This Lent, as in the past, Mite Boxes are being given to children in our Church School classes.

Mite boxes are named for the story of the “Widow’s Mite.”

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on” (Mark 12:41-43).

Our children are being encouraged to put coins in the Mite Boxes regularly as a Lenten discipline.

Putting coins in a mite box is a concrete way for our children to move beyond themselves and participate in a meaningful way in sharing God’s care and compassion for all.

We hope you will encourage your child to share their blessings with others by filling a Mite Box with coins and bringing it to the service on April 30th. The funds collected will be donated to the Arlington Pediatric Center.

Thank you!

By Janet Tasker, St. Mary’s Finance Manager
FIRST OFF I want to say congratulations to all of you, on completing your spiritual journey to confirmation. You have attended a lot of classes, spent hours together as a group, and hopefully learned more about your faith. I want to share a Bible verse with you that I think you can reflect on as you are confirmed.

"The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."
Deuteronomy 31:8

I want to spend my time up here talking about, not what you have accomplished, but what lies ahead. You are all now official members of the church. You can attend senior high youth group events, read the lessons on Sundays, and acolyte, which I know some of you already do. Also most, if not all, of you will be moving on to high school in the fall. This thought seems daunting at first but let me tell you my thoughts as a second semester Freshman.

As an eighth grader I was not necessarily scared of high school, just not thrilled about it. I was not excited to do hours of homework every night, and was not looking forward to losing a lot of my free time. Let me just tell you that these are eighth grade thoughts. Once you get to high school you will realize that all it takes is a bit of time management and you will still be able to play the sports or do the activities you participated in, in middle school. I was also not thrilled about high school because of the amount of kids that attend the school. I want you all to know that since there are so many students, there is a lot of opportunity to make new friends.

As put by the bible verse, “Do not be afraid.” Be outgoing; talk to people that went to different middle schools than you. And if someone tries to talk to you, do not push them away.

After all this, high school can still seem daunting. But remember this: “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”

IT HAS BEEN A VERY LONG TIME since last March and your mentors, family, the church and its members are all proud of you for going this far. I am Aidan Burnside and this is my 7th year at St. Mary’s Episcopal, but I was confirmed just last year. While my immediate attachments to this class are to cheer on my family members and some football teammates here nearing confirmation today, all of you have made this journey together, and I commend each and every one of you for that.

This confirmation also signifies that you all are ready for one of the biggest leaps of your life. As it says in the Book of Common Prayer, Confirmation is the sacramental rite in which the candidates (you all) “express a mature commitment to Christ, and receive strength from the Holy Spirit through prayer and the laying on of hands by a bishop.”

Next school year, you will be entering a place where a lot will be going on. Whether it’s boarding school or Yorktown, there are definitely going to be risks. You will see bad things and have bad times in high school, but I want to give you the most important piece of information I can.

God loves you, and because of his love he blessed you with this church. This church is filled with members who love you for who you are. They want nothing more than for you to succeed, whether it be in sports, school, or life in general. Also, never forget when you don’t succeed, because trust me, you are going to take lots of bad grades, losses and break-ups before you graduate in June 2021. That is why God has blessed you with this church.

This Church will be your rock for the rest of your life in Arlington. Its members will be here to listen and glad to help, and while they have been there, life will come at you hard and happen fast after confirmation. On a much lighter note, high school already has been a very fun time with new friends and great stories.

Whether you see me at school, during sports or church, I’d be glad to hear how you’re doing, help you in any way, or point you in the right direction. Good luck, and welcome (almost) to the Episcopal Church of Virginia.
Y o u r  S u p p o r t  W i l l  K e e p  T h e m  S i n g i n g

St. Mary’s parishioners are familiar with the following question and response from the Baptismal liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer:

Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?

People: We will.

St. Mary’s is fortunate to have youth serving as leaders of the liturgy: readers, acolytes, ushers and as members of the choir. In addition to learning an offertory anthem for the 9:00 a.m. Eucharist, choristers receive a weekly music education in singing and music reading skills.

They also receive training in understanding the meaning and purpose of the individual elements of the liturgy so that they can first become thoroughly engaged participants and then effective leaders. This is a development process that occurs over a period of years and cannot happen without support from parents, clergy and parishioners.

Choir is a training ground for the future of the church, and my primary goal as a choirmaster is to train young people to have a vocation within the church.

For some it may be a profession; for others, an avocation, but I hope that each young person will find in the choir a vocation and calling to service, and a place to call their own.

It is my hope that some of our choristers will become priests, deacons, poets, composers, organists, vestry members—leaders of the next generation of the Episcopal Church.

How can you help to support these persons in their life in Christ?

Perhaps you take on one of these suggestions as a Lenten discipline.

- Pray for the work of the choir outside of services.
- Write notes of encouragement periodically to our youth choristers.
- Speak a word of praise to a chorister after a Sunday service.
- Attend one of our Special Services throughout the year.
- Be a Music Skills Teacher or Assistant Teacher.
- Volunteer at a Music Reception.

- Offer to help plan one of our Choir Trips.
- Make a gift to our Music Fund to support scholarships to summer singing camps.

We have wonderful choir parents who can assist with some duties, but mentors and supporters from the rest of the parish are also needed to communicate the message that our youth choristers and liturgical leaders are valued, honored and supported.

My heartfelt thanks goes to those who support the ministry of music at St. Mary’s.

By Dr. Gregory Hooker
Minister of Music.
Giving online to St. Mary’s through Tithe.ly is quick and easy!

- You may make one-time payments or you may set up automated, recurring payments.
- You may pay with VISA, Mastercard, Discover or American Express credit/debit cards or you may pay with an e-check through your bank.
- You may include the Tithe.ly service fee with your donation. (The service is not free. By including the fee in your donation, more funds are available for St. Mary’s ministries.)
- The Tithe.ly app is linked to the St. Mary’s Website. Look for the “GIVE” button.
- The Tithe.ly app has the highest possible security rating available in the electronic payment processing industry.