

## Stay Connected – Sunday 7th December

Second Sunday of Advent

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: **Matthew 3:1-12**

### Peter's Blurb

No matter which way you approach it – St. Mark's looked splendiferous this morning. And the further down the aisle you went it just kept getting better. There was the Children's tree on the right – thanks to Violet and Conrad – and on the left it was the Guild Tree – thanks to Tim for the lighting and many other hands making the lights work and doing all the trimming. Eventually approaching the Altar there is the MAWI tree awaiting decorating tomorrow or next day.

Finally, you find the beautifully decorated Altar with its manger scene. All this to feast one's eyes on and marvel the creativity and artistry of our decorators of whom Annie, as always, deserves special praise.



While the trees were being trimmed, on Saturday evening, we had a good group of volunteers doing the trimming along with an audience of some of our senior citizens, myself included, looking on and No! we did not interfere nor offer suggestions for how some things might be better done differently. We were quite happy catching up with each other's various ailments and treatments. I've always believed that one should never enter a doctor's waiting room and, upon seeing a friend, ask them how they are. Then they tell you and you wished you

hadn't asked! It was a bit like that but we all had experiences to share from which we drew our own conclusions and hoped that would never happen to us. But it probably will – just not over Christmas we pray.



After the trimming and decorating was completed to most people's satisfaction it was off to the Parish Hall where we all enjoyed the Guild's Christmas Party with traditional Pumpkin Soup and accompanying savoury nibbles and sweetmeats provided by the ladies. Official Pianist Vernon tickled the ivories while we grazed and then we had a good round of Carol singing before calling it a night. It was a bit disappointing actually that the numbers were small. I can remember many years past when a large crowd turned out on this occasion.

Our services this morning were led by the Archdeacon in a calm and dignified manner as usual. The main character this week was John the Baptist – a well-known tale, coming as he did, to herald the eventual coming of Christ into the world.

Earlier in the week I was making my usual pit-stop at Supermart when, suddenly, there appeared Santa Claus. Oh Wow! I thought he IS real. Excitedly I approached to chat with him:

Lo! And behold! It was actually none other than St. Mark's own Colin Campbell doing Kettle Duty for the Salvation Army. What a generous gesture to dedicate some hours to a worthy cause – lending a helping hand to those less-fortunate than ourselves. As you will all know, the Salvation Army dedicates itself to this important service in the community and, if you don't already, please consider donating. They have two main fund raisers each year in May and at Christmas – the Kettle campaign is just a part of the Christmas effort – and such donations should be a welcome addition to everyone's payment ledger – to give food and support to those who are in need.



The MAWI Gift Card campaign organized by St. Mark's is another such worthy cause directed at the patients who attend MAWI's Out Patient clinic. It was obvious from the number of gift request cards this year that there is a growing need for this project. All but a couple of dozen request cards have been taken up and the rest will be. Just to remind you that next Sunday is:

**Gift Sunday, 15th December.** Let me remind you of the next part of the process: This is when members and friends of St. Mark's supporting the MAWI project all bring their gifts, appropriately wrapped, and place them under the Guild tree. It is **IMPORTANT** that the identifying gift request tag be attached to the outside of the package. This will ensure that each gift gets to the person who requested it. After the service the gifts will be collected by MAWI folk and taken to the clinic where they will be distributed at the patient's Christmas Party later that week.

**DO NOT FORGET TO ATTACH THE TAG TO THE GIFT WHEN YOU PLACE IT UNDER THE TREE**

**Also some deadlines are fast approaching in regard to the Christmas Bake Sale**

If you signed up as a Baker then your deadline for delivery of your goodies is **no later than 4pm, Friday December 12<sup>th</sup>**



**ST. MARK'S CHURCH – CHRISTMAS BAKE SALE**

**SATURDAY – DECEMBER 13<sup>TH</sup>, 2024 – 9am – 2pm**

**St. Mark's Church will once again be holding our annual Christmas Bake Sale. Pre-ordering will also be available. Contact for any pre-order requests.**

**This message is a call for bakers please!! Please support the Church in this year's endeavour. Thank you to those who have already signed up. Sign up sheet is in the South Porch.**

If you are willing to offer baked goods, kindly call or email me as soon as possible, so that I know what you will make and the quantities. I will need to know this before I can post items to facilitate pre-order requests. I will post the list of items for sale on the Church WhatsApp for anyone who wishes to pre-order.

I will need to receive your goodies no later than 4pm, Friday December 12<sup>th</sup>, so that I have time to put the orders together and/or price for sale. The earlier in the day we receive your donations the better prepared I can be! Some like to bake bread, so delivery on Saturday morning is fine. Please call me for drop off directions or if you need your goodies collected. I am centrally located in Devonshire.

As always, if possible, please have your goodies festively packaged, so that they can be seen, ready for sale.

Debbie Cottingham 236-8155 or

Thank you in advance for your support.



## Seasonal Calendar

Just to remind you of the Schedule of Services and Events at St. Mark's and HTC over the Christmas season. Also included are some items that are either open to all or in which members of SMC are involved. Here is a list of dates for your diaries: 😊

**Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup>** – 9.00 am until – Cottingham Family Bake Sale + Vendor's Market

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** – 9.30am – MAWI Gift Service

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** – 11.00 a.m. – Service of Lessons & Carols at HTC

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** – 3. P.m. – Kids' Christmas Disco

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup>** – 3.00 p.m. Carol Singing at "Easter Lily" care home at HTC & SMC choirs will entertain

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup>** – 6 p.m. – Mulled Wine + Carols – a fun evening of song and cheer at SMC

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** – 5 p.m. – Christingle Service

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>** – 11p.m. – Carols by Candlelight

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup>** – 10 a.m. – Christmas Worship

We hope to enjoy your support and see you at many of these events or occasions.

**These are all happening at St. Mark's in December or involve members of SMC/HTC.** For other events in the Diocese please also see Coming Events below.

## SAVE THE DATE

We all had tremendous fun last year with our “Mulled Wine & Carols” evening. It was a great opportunity for members and children to come together with a glass of spiced cheer and a mince pie or two and just sit in the pews, socialize and sing popular carols.

We plan to repeat this again this Christmas so keep the evening of **Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> December** clear from (say 6.00 pm) for this joyful lead up to Christmas. Bring your friends too – the more the merrier. More details to follow in coming weeks.



See also **Coming Events** section below.

## St. Mark's Guild

At this time of year, we are especially mindful of our duty of care to those who need our support. To this end Pansy along with Guild members and other volunteers are working on a number of outreach projects which need revisiting. This message bears repeating.

**Individual Cooked Meals** – seeking ways of reaching those experiencing food insecurity.

**Pantry Programme** – reviving this programme of supplying dry goods food stuffs to the needy. Previously a popular programme to be re-visited.

**Christmas Hampers** Reaching out to those who would welcome a hamper for Christmas and might otherwise be without. Offers of Turkeys for the hampers have already been secured but more is needed for this project.

If you are not already involved in these discussions but feel you would be able to contribute to realizing these goals, either by gifting or by offering time and talents, please make yourself known to Pansy. Many hands make light work! There are few things more rewarding than making Christmas joyful for those less fortunate.

### The Lord's Larder – Christmas Hampers

Hi everyone! It's that time again!

We are asking for your assistance as we put together this year's list of recipients. Do you know a family in need that would truly appreciate the gift of a Christmas hamper this holiday season?

If so, please contact Jean Flath, 705-2378 or Pansy Nichols 332-2074.

Also, if you would like to donate food items for the hampers, we will be sending out a list of needed items this week, and a sign-up sheet will be up in the church on Sunday.

Monetary donations will also be greatly appreciated, and can be made online via the church's bank account – **please be sure** to include Lord's Larder/Christmas Hampers in the Beneficiary space when you make the transfer.

Let's do our best to make Christmas brighter for those less fortunate than ourselves!

### Other Guild requests:

The Guild would truly welcome some new members to share the load and add their own Gifts and Talents to the life of the Church through service in the Guild. We can never have enough people to organize and manage events such as Bingo Suppers, the occasional Dance or whatever social activity is planned from time-to-time.

So, any of our congregation and/or membership not already committed to supporting the work of the church other than attending on a Sunday would be welcome to volunteer for Guild activities. Pansy, Evette and Barbara would be delighted to hear from you. Please seek them out and have this conversation – “What can I do to help?”

That’s more than enough blurb for this week. I’ve probably forgotten something 🤔

Until next week – stay safe and well,  
Peter

## Archdeacon John’s Talk

**Second Sunday, of Advent 7<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

**Matt. 3, 1-12 The Forerunner**

*Lord, take my lips... our minds... our hearts...*

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy & peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

A wonderful description of our life in Christ, from the Letter to the Romans, our second reading today: true for every season, every generation, every member of the church, each one of us.

*May the God of hope fill us with all joy & peace as we trust in him, so that we may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

This confidence in God is rooted, literally, in Christ, who was foreseen by the Prophet Isaiah in our first reading, as the ‘shoot’ that would ‘come up from the stump of Jesse’. From this root would grow Christ, the Branch. He would be the undying Tree of Life – see our Trees!

We are grafted onto that Branch, and into that Tree, so that we may bear the fruit of the Spirit (see, the decorations!) - the joy and peace of our trust in him, and the overflowing of hope that is our special treasure.

And in our Gospel today we hear how John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ’s coming.

John’s teaching reawakened the ancient prophecies, in an atmosphere of great expectancy: which is why John the Baptist features so often in our Advent readings, as we prepare ourselves inwardly for Christmas.

So let’s now consider *our calling* - what we do in the power of the Holy Spirit - in the light of the witness of John the Baptist.

John the Baptist’s ministry was about:

- *Announcing the Kingdom of God*
- *Proclaiming the Love of God*
- *Witnessing to the Truth of God*

*Announcing God’s Kingdom* was the heart of John’s message. Jesus picked this up in his own teaching, with parable after parable explaining what the Kingdom of God is like.

Often Jesus compared God’s Kingdom to a feast, to which all are invited, especially the humble and meek.

This is a precious part of our ministry here at St Mark’s Church. Hospitality and the offer of a warm welcome to all, adults and children of all ages. This is what we do!

Some years ago, we came through all the restrictions necessary to protect us and others from Covid, which made our hospitality harder, but praise God! He didn’t withhold his gift to us and nor have we forgotten it.

And now during this time of the Rectory being vacant, between Gavin’s leaving and Terry’s arrival not long to come, we faithfully maintain our welcome this Christmas, at every event and service including our Christmas concert with carols and mince pies. A pretty flower arrangement, a welcoming smile, a warm handshake, an open door (the life group!) shared refreshments – these are very real ways for us align ourselves in human terms with the way God expresses his divine rule.

Through such things, offered humbly and intentionally, we are announcing the kingdom of God.

Next there’s *Proclaiming the Love of God*. This we are called to do through our care for one another, our outreach and our

giving – we do this too, in whatever measure we can.

Our Christmas gifts are, of course, an expression of seasonal goodwill. Among them there are the gifts for patients at MAWI - you've seen the tree in the porch for how to contribute.

This and the other ways in which we give – the Lord's Larder and the Cathedral breakfast programme which starts off again in the New Year - responses like these are offered as a channel of God's love, mirroring what we see in Christ, how he poured out his life for others.

Our giving is as much a part of our worship as our prayer and praise in church. For Jesus told us 'What you do for the least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me.'

Through our giving we proclaim the love of God.

*... Announcing the Kingdom of God*

*... Proclaiming the Love of God*

*And witnessing to the Truth of God:*

We are all of us called to be witnesses, we're all *missionaries*, meaning 'those who are sent', like the first disciples. After being invited to 'Come and See' they were told to 'Go and Tell', to go tell everyone the news that the Kingdom of God has come.

Now, usually telling the Good News is taken to mean something we *say*.

But according to communication experts, only 10% of what others understand us to mean is transmitted by the words we say - the rest, the far greater part, is communicated by our attitude, our demeanour, our expression! We use words in church, as part of our worship, about the truth in which we believe. So that's 10% of our witness. But the rest, the other 90%, the far more effective part, is how we live out the truth we say we believe in.

And that's hard. John the Baptist spoke the truth to King Herod, and paid for it with imprisonment and martyrdom. If we meet with suspicion or misunderstanding when we put our faith into action, or even opposition, we can't say we haven't been warned.

Welcoming others, caring for those in need, living the truth – this is how, like John the Baptist, we prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight and point to the coming of God's Kingdom.

In theory, God doesn't need us to build his Kingdom. He has the power to do it perfectly well without us. But God became Man, to show us what the Good News of his Rule actually means:

*Welcoming everyone, caring for others, Living the Truth.*

He invites us to do this with him and for him, and there is plenty of work to be done.

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

## In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta, David, and for Sally Brown and Hilda Warner. Prayers also for Val Moffatt. And we pray for Carys & Glenn, the Cottingham family and Debbie's Mum, Tina, and any others who are/will be travelling over the coming Holiday Season.

### This Sunday



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda> and/or

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

### Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **14th December** – services will be as usual – Peaceful Worship at 8 am led by Archdeacon John and Contemporary

Worship at 9.30 am led by Rev. Terry.

### Coming Events

- **Life Group Startup** – The popular Life Groups have resumed but it **may not be too late** to get involved. Reach out to Cathy or Stephen West if you would like to know more: [cathjwest@gmail.com](mailto:cathjwest@gmail.com) or [cswestmd@logic.bm](mailto:cswestmd@logic.bm).
- St. Paul's Christian Education Centre – will be holding a Community Tree-Lighting Night event on **Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December from 6.30 pm**. All are welcome. See poster below for details.
- **St. Paul's Guild Mini-Fair and Fundraiser** – the Guild of St. Paul's, Paget, along with their Boys Brigade will be hosting a Mini-Fair on **Saturday, 6th December from 9 a.m.** See poster below for details.
- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 7th December** in the Parish Hall.
- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be on **Saturday, 13th December**.
- **Mulled Wine & Carols** – It was so much fun, we plan to repeat this again this Christmas so keep the evening of **Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> December** clear from (say 6.00 pm) for this joyful lead up to Christmas. Bring your children and friends too – the more the merrier. More details to follow in coming weeks.

**Down the Debt** – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

### Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot's happnin' or vot's comin' dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

### End Stuff:

**Here's a thought.** It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

**Direct deposits** can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

**St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.**

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. "Grave 273 Peter Nash" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and "Donation" e.g. "Nash Donation" in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

**Use of the "Beneficiary" space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.**

**Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!**

**COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING NIGHT**  
 Thursday 4th December, 2025  
 6:30pm – 8:15pm

- ★ Tree decorating
- ★ Caroling
- ★ Hot Chocolate Station
- ★ Yule Quiz & Games

St. Pauls Anglican Church  
 Christian Education Centre  
 69 Middle Road, Paget  
 Email: Victoria.Outerbridge@uo.anglican.org.uk

**ST. PAULS GUILD, PAGET**  
 presents their

**MINI FAIR & FUNDRAISER**  
 along with the

**RAFFLE**

**THE BOYS BRIGADE**

**Car Wash**

**Soups**

**Pop Up Bistro**

**Bake Sale**

**SATURDAY 6th DECEMBER, 2025**  
 9am – 2pm  
 \*Carwash ends at noon

St. Pauls Anglican Church  
 Christian Education Centre  
 69 Middle Road, Paget  
 Email: Victoria.Outerbridge@uo.anglican.org.uk

All proceeds from the carwash will be donated to the Family Centre

**mulled wine & Carols**

Mulled Wine and Carols –  
 St. Mark's Church  
 Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> December from 6.00 p.m.