“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, … ;
that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.”

[Isaiah 2:3]

The season of Advent is upon us and for the Christian Church worldwide there is a clear shift in focus. Our liturgical colors and scripture readings indicate a shift from the season of Pentecost. For the Church of Jesus Christ, we get the opportunity to start a new liturgical year; a New Year!!!

The secular world is also showing signs of change in focus. Department stores are vying for our attention and our money by enticing us with sale fliers and advertisements. It is very easy to lose our focus on what is really important in this season of Advent. That is why the scripture quotation from the Prophet Isaiah (above), which comes from our assigned readings for the first Sunday of Advent is significant. The prophet is calling the people of God to that sacred place where an encounter with God is always guaranteed; the mountain top! Mountains in scripture signify sacredness. Jesus was known to retreat to the mountain to pray. His transfiguration happened on top of a mountain. Mountains, therefore, have come to symbolize a place of transformation. What is unique about Isaiah’s herald is that learning the ways of God and walking in God’s right paths happens when we encounter God on top of the mountain.

The Christian New Year calls us to focus on what God is doing in our lives as we prepare to welcome the Son of God into our world. The four Sundays leading to the birth of our Savior are designed to refocus our attention on the important things in life. Thus, Advent is not only a time to begin a new liturgical year, but also a time of preparation and anticipation.

During Advent, we prepare ourselves to receive God’s greatest gift to the world. During Advent, we anticipate the coming of Jesus into our hearts. During Advent, we wait patiently for God to intervene in our lives, by making all the crooked things straight. During Advent, we are filled with hopefulness in the midst of all the adverse challenges that we face in our lives every day.

And when we heed the call of the Prophet Isaiah to retreat to the mountain; that sacred place where God meets us, we will discover that God Himself will teach us his ways and will incline our hearts to walk in His ways. It is through this transforming encounter with God that we are able to experience the true meaning of Advent.

I wish you all a very Holy Advent! Remember, God loves you more than you can ever ask or imagine, and I love you too.

John +
Advent
It is the beginning of a new year for the church. We are in year A. It is also a time of love and reflection as God prepares to reveal himself on earth. Being mindful of the season we are in, be gentle with yourself and each other as we strive to be God’s shepherds on earth. Prepare to help those in need as Jesus would. Feed the hungry, clothe the naked and share with all the Good News of the coming of our Saviour. Most of all, be kind to each other.
With love
Blessings, Janet

ST. GREGORY’S PANTRY NEEDS FOR DECEMBER
Canned hams, mustard, juices  TOYS
A red wagon is at the rear of the church for your donations

Please join me in welcoming our own Nancy Feindt to a new (and vital) ministry at St. Mary’s. Nancy brings her gifts of warm hospitality (and interior decorating) to this ministry of making visitors and potential new members feel welcome. You will notice some changes at the entrances into our sanctuary. Thank you Nancy, for taking on this important ministry. Nancy welcomes your suggestions and ideas in making St. Mary’s a house of worship for EVERYONE.

STEPHEN MINISTRY - one of the countless ways that God reaches out to us to heal the spirit, mind and body. In times of crisis or tragedy, shared burdens become divided and weakened. Stephen Ministers are compassionate, faithful and trust-worthy; trained to help hurting people find a way through the pain caused by events in their lives. We’re here for you when, in spite of all the media gadgets, communications systems and technological tools, you need someone to truly listen and understand.

ST. MARY’S SOCIETY CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
Tuesday, December 10, 2013 at Noon
Vinnie’s Pizza and Restaurant
337 Herbertsville Road,
Brick, NJ
Members and All Saints ECW: individual checks provided for lunch/dinner menu
Guests: it’s our treat!
If you bring an approximately $10 gift to trade, there will be a Yankee Swap
R.S.V.P. to Merry Joerg in church, 732 840-1285 or joerg31415@aol.com

Pet First Aid and Pet CPR course available at St. Mary’s
When: Saturday, January 4, 2014
9:00-11:30am or 1:00-3:30 pm (choose one session)
Where: St. Mary’s by the Sea Church
Farnsworth Hall (Atlantic Avenue entrance)
Instructor: Steve Ross and staff, First Aid & CPR, LLC
Cost: $40 per student (No refunds)
Registration:
- Advanced registration is required – no walk ins.
- Check made payable to St. Mary’s by the Sea Church and mailed to Chelisse in the parish office.
- Priority registration for St. Mary’s parishioners ends December 16.
- After December 16, any remaining seats will be made available for friends of St. Mary’s, Point Pleasant community, etc.
- Registration deadline: December 30, 2013
Questions: If you have any questions please contact Tracy Benson at 732-899-7481
Cancellation/rescheduling: Please provide an email address and phone number where you can be reached on Friday Jan 3 or Saturday Jan 4 if the event is canceled due to weather.

ADVENT OFFERING
The vestry has designated this year’s offering go to support the outreach ministries of St. Mary’s.
The envelopes can be found in the pews or at the back of the church.

We mourn with you
We mourn the loss of
Bruce Braender
May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Pray for the sick of our Parish Family
John Thorpe, Alyce May, Sean Hogan, Carl Lepis, Doris Smith, Elmer Joerg, John, Jared Quintaglie, Rich, Carol P., Joshua, Rosemary Benedict, Barbara, Julie Oppel, Carol Rappoccio, Lucille Goller, Elmer James Joerg, Tom Wilson, Paul Sherman, Wally Bauer Jr., Chance, Tim Figuerora, Hope Barnes, Lyla Bogardus, Cludia Gammon, Phyllis Fecci

Pray for the friends of our parish family who are sick
Judy Larson, Tina, Doris, Joe Reo, Winnie, Jane Sandrowsky, Finn, Gregory Seavers, Carmine Gerizzo, Tammy Saragusa, Barbara Straub, Marjorie Furlong, Nancy Granda, Majorie Fennessy, Nancy Hite Speck, Pete Carlson, Gail, Betty, EmmyLou, Gail Crowley, David Black (We will keep the names of the Friends of our Parish on the list for a period of 8 weeks. Please resubmit the names to Cherisse if necessary)

Pray for the Homebound
Mary Hill, Ruth Currie, Holly Longstreet, Viola Ferris, Ann Hoyer, Richard Heanni, Linny Hatch, Carol Rappoccio, Kim Wooten, Tom Wilson

Many of life’s circumstances can contribute to a feeling of being alone, of ‘feeling blue’ in the midst of social pressure to ‘be happy’. There are years when we hurt at Christmas time and can’t get into the festivities that others seem to be able to do. For this reason St. Mary’s invites you at 7:00PM, Wednesday, December 18th, to come and join in sharing and hearing prayers, Scripture and music that acknowledge that God’s presence is with those who mourn, and for those who struggle - and that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!
St. Mary’s will hold it’s annual meeting on Sunday, January 19th, 2014 immediately following the 10:00AM worship service. The 8:00AM worship service will be held as normal.

Blessing of a Life Long Covenant
Elsa Fuentes & Carol Ryan
Debbie Donlon & Karen Altemose
Trudy Garrett & Lisa Bonin
Loretta DeSantis & Pat McKinstry
Jane Stoedter & Jo-Anne Montanti

Congratulations to all our recently married couples!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES
Tuesday, December 24
Christmas Eve
5:00PM Holy Eucharist (Family Service)
10:30PM Carol Sing
11:00PM Holy Eucharist (Midnight Mass)

Wednesday, December 25
Christmas Day
10:00AM Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Sunday, December 29
8:00AM Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:00AM Lessons and Carols

SOMETHING NEW
IN THE SECOND TO LAST PEW!
A new ministry rolled out on Sunday, December 8th at the 10 AM service. At St. Mary’s where everyone will know everybody’s names, volunteers with the Name Tag Welcoming Ministry will be providing a lanyard and name tag for each person who walks through our church doors. This will help all of us learn, know (and remember) everybody’s names along with the names of newcomers and our guests! Volunteer responsibilities include handing out name tags before the service and collecting and filing them afterwards. Similar to the usher, altar guild and counter schedules, ministry organizers, Eileen Denicole, Daryl and Lynn Schambach, are looking for a number of volunteers so coverage can be scheduled. Everyone interested in joining this welcoming ministry is asked to sign the sign-up sheet (name, phone # and email) at the name tag station in the second to last pew. Thank you!
St. Mary’s Holiday Bus Trip
Christmas Spectacular
at
Radio City Music Hall

Celebrate with the St. Mary’s family at Radio City’s Holiday Spectacular 2013 with the famous Rockettes!
Plenty of time after the show, take in the sites of mid-town NYC at Christmas Time!

Information
December 22, 2013
Bus Departing 12 Noon from St. Mary’s
Show starts 2pm
Cost: $90 per person
For more info call Dru at (732) 892-4247
The Monthly STAR is mailed electronically. Copies for those who do not have email will be available for pick up at the rear of the church and the homebound will receive their copy through the mail. **If you would like to receive information via email please send your address to Cherrisse at stmssecretary@verizon.net.** Those who wish to receive it via mail should also indicate that. Please note that the idea is to cut cost not cut you off from communication.

### Self Help Groups at St. Mary’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time &amp; Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>- 1:00PM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 7:00PM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 8:30PM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>- 1:00PM, Alanon in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 7:00PM, AA in the Jones Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>- 1:00PM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 8:00PM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>No Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>- 9:00AM, AA in Farnsworth Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 11:00AM, Alanon in the Jones Room</td>
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</tbody>
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St. Mary’s STAR is published the first of each month.

If you would like to submit something for next month’s issue please send it to Cherrisse at stmssecretary@verizon.net no later than the 20th of the previous month.

St. Mary’s by-the-Sea
The Rt. Rev. William “Chip” Stokes, Bishop
The Rev. C. Scott Trull, Rector Emeritus
The Rev. C. John Thompson-Quartey, Rector
The Rev. Kathleen Bishop, Priest Associate
The Rev. William Burt
The Rev. Janet Daniels, Deacon
Esther Graham, Director of Music
Cherisse Petruzzi, Parish Administrator, Bookkeeper

**Wardens**
Jack Greene, Senior Warden
Jenn Mattison, Junior Warden
Carleton Dlatush, Warden Emeritus

**Vestry Members**
Karen Altemose ~ Edie Crowning ~ Al Fecci
Joe Fritsche ~ Merry Joerg ~ Dru Kegreiss
Nick Mazzola ~ Mike Mercuro ~ Tom Sullivan

**Finance**
Gary Smerillo, Treasurer
John Drew, Assistant Treasurer
Alan Wagner, Financial Secretary

Fr. John Thompson-Quartey, Rector
Tuesday thru Friday from 9:00AM-5:00PM by appointment.

Deacon Janet
Monday mornings from 9:00-11:00 by appointment

Cherisse Petruzzi, Parish Administrator
Monday through Friday 8:00AM-3:30PM.

There is a staff meeting each Wednesday morning from 11:00-12:00PM and the office is closed each weekday from noon-1:00PM for lunch. If you miss any one of us, please just leave a message and we’ll call you back as soon as possible. You can email Cherisse in the parish office at: stmssecretary@verizon.net or phone 732-892-9254

### Worship Schedule

**SUNDAY**
8:00AM Holy Eucharist Rite I
10:00AM Choral Eucharist Rite II
Church school begins at 10:00AM in the church

**TUESDAY**
7:15AM Holy Eucharist

The Tuesday morning chapel service begins at 7:15AM with morning prayer, Rite II. After a short minute of silent prayer and contemplation, the service continues with the Holy Eucharist, Rite II. Breakfast at Vicino Di Mare immediately follows. If your schedule does not permit attendance for the entire service, you are welcome to attend any portion of it. **All seats in the Chapel are good seats!**

Please join our small (but faithful) group.