



St. David's  
Episcopal Church  
Southfield

November-December 2018

Inside this issue

Rector's Message ..... 2  
 Just Wondering ..... 3  
 An Adoption Story ..... 4  
 Attending Convention ..... 6  
 Book Review ..... 11  
 Photo Gallery ..... 12  
 An Advent Prayer ..... 16

# Reflections of St. David's

## From the editor...

Karen Robertson Henry

*"When we speak of the Advent or waiting for Christmas...we're not talking about waiting for the little baby Jesus to be born. That already happened 2,000 years ago. We're in fact welcoming... the Christ that is forever being born in the human soul". ~Richard Rohr*

And how do we give birth to that Christ, as we wait during this Advent season? We love. We love God, and we love each other. We bring light into the world through love. Our great pundit on love, Solomon (8:6-7) says *"Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is strong as death, passion fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, a raging flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it"*. Imagine, a world drenched with this love! That is what Advent allows us to do—to be still enough to mindfully receive the light (the love) through prayer and meditation, solitude

and community, silence and words. It allows us time and space for love strong as death to be sealed upon our hearts, filling up to an outpouring of adoration for God, so that like Mary we can say *"my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my savior"*. Advent allows us this time.

And filled with the light (the love), we shine the light *"in the darkness and the darkness will not overcome it."* (John 1:5) We press forward in our ministries—feeding and housing the homeless, nurturing the young minds, looking around us and providing for our neighbors; loving the seemingly unlovable in our midst, seeing God in everything and responding accordingly; Advent allows us this! And then from Advent we slip into the delights of Christmas...

Enjoy this end-of-year publication of *Reflections of St. David's*. We made a shift this

year in our style and frequency of publication and asked for your increased input as regards your stories. We thank those who submitted their stories and continue to encourage each one of you to share your story—thoughts, observations, challenges, delights, triumphs, questions, anything that builds and strengthens this Christian community that we call home.

Let us continue to love one another with a fiery love that water cannot quench and soon we will together sing "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"



## From the Rector



### The Noon Service

Finding Jesus.

That's a goal many of us bring to worship. We want to hear from Christ, we want to thank

Christ, we want Jesus to give us direction. For 2,000 years Christians have used innumerable ways of coming together to do that. A very basic structure, based on Word and Sacrament, has stood the test of time and lies at the heart of our Prayer Book worship as we practice at 8 am and 10 am each Sunday at St. David's.

But what if we were to remove a number of elements, to pair back to Word and Sacrament, what would that worship look like?

Welcome to The Noon Service, an hour-long worship experience that takes place each Sunday at, you guessed it, noon. I like to call it 'experimental worship' in that it is just that, an experiment in getting to know Jesus, and each other in a different way. The service takes place in the church, as we gather in chairs in a circle. We begin with a time of check in and centering that allows everyone a chance to talk and share if they choose. The theme of the day is announced and we briefly look at the service ahead so we're comfortable before we begin.

Next, we pray a collect that I have authored for the day before we pause in silence, inviting the Holy Spirit to be with us. Next we offer up a song (I bring my guitar, and we often include a Taizé selection). Then we hear our readings, one is from the Gospel, another is usually non-biblical, but relates to our theme of the day. I lead a reflection time on the readings, usually paraphrasing the sermon I've prepared for the 8 am and 10 am services. Next we pause to pray before moving to the altar, where we celebrate Eucharist 'in the round, holding hands for the

Our Father. The Communion bread is usually furnished by a parishioner.

Following Communion, we find our seats again and pray and sing a closing song before ending our service with 'The Peace.' The idea is to shake hands and chat and not to, then, have to leave, but stick around and move into fellowship immediately after the Eucharist.

In starting The Noon Service, the hope is not for numbers or pledges, but that St. David's would offer yet another way for us to see, celebrate, and hear from Jesus. All are welcome, we'd love to see you there.

Fr. Christ†



### Advent and Christmas at St. David's

- December 2, 10 am First Sunday in Advent
- December 9, 5:00 pm, Feast of St. Nicholas with Special Music from *Song and Spirit* followed by refreshments in the foyer
- December 24, 5:00 pm, Christmas Eve Children's Service, Nativity Pageant
- December 24, 9:30 pm, Choral Concert and 10:00 pm, Christmas Eve Service
- December 25, 8:00 am Christmas Day Mass
- December 25, 26, 31, January 1: Church Office Closed
- December 30, 11:30 am, Christmas Caroling at St. Anne's Mead
- January 1, 8:00 am New Year's Day Mass



# Just Wondering

Mary Margaret Bair

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## The Story of St. David's

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For the benefit of our newcomers, and as a refresher for others, we are doing a little “look back” at the formation of our St. David's community and some of the things that are special to us.

**Beginnings:** St. David's began with a group of five families who met with the Rector of St. James, Birmingham, and the St. James Chapel was started. They initially met in Berkley at the Oxford School. After the purchase of our present property and the construction of our present building, we became St. David's of Southfield. The name St. David's was chosen since the first service was held on March 1, 1952. St. David is the patron saint of Wales, where his sixth century monastery was built and it remains an active church today.

**Things We See:** There are many artifacts and mementos that are a part of St. David's history. The most prominent one is the cross that hangs on the front of the balcony. This cross was fashioned out of brass pieces that the early members contributed for this purpose. Fr. Arlain Taylor, a priest and long time member of St. David's, oversaw the project. This also reminds us that our chapel is named for Fr. Taylor, who served as a wonderful example for all of us.

On the back wall of the narthex, what we call the history wall, is a wrought iron group composed of three pieces -- the alpha, the omega, and a piece that depicts St. David. As a whole, the piece represents the hills of Wales, and a dove carrying a leek. These were made for Father Myers, St. David's first rector, by his father, a blacksmith in Ohio. They were originally hung above the altar.



The symbol of the dove that is used by St. David's represents the miracle that St. David needed. He was addressing a large group who had come to hear him, but they complained they could not see or hear him properly. Suddenly the ground rose underneath him, forming a hill on which he stood. At the same moment a dove descended and perched on St. David's shoulder. The white dove was a sign of God's grace and blessing.

**What We Look Like Now:** Today we come from many places in our faith journeys, and we look for much the same things that the early families that began St. David's were seeking—a loving and warm church to raise our children, have baptisms, confirmations, and share the Holy Eucharist. Times change, we change with them, but we still continue to keep St. David's as a family church, and take pride in our past, present, and future.

This is a reprint of an article that Mary Margaret wrote for the September 2014 issue of *Reflections*.



Is there something you have always wanted to know about the church—the Bible, hymnal, prayer book or some other question about the church in general? Just ask Mary Margaret by submitting your question along with your contact information to the parish administrator [lynne@stdavidssf.org](mailto:lynne@stdavidssf.org) (248-557-5430).



## An Adoption Story

*Jessica Rienstra*

When Karen asked if I'd write up an article for the church newsletter after my talk on adoption in early November (National Adoption Month), I readily agreed. How hard could it be to write what I'd already talked about? Well, I'm now on my third draft. I've written about 6 pages so far, and deleted half of them, which is more than anyone would ever care to read in a church newsletter. While I found I can't easily summarize our adoption story in a short article, I can share some of the lessons that I've learned since adopting our little boy from Ethiopia.

I've learned that even babies can experience trauma and have lasting effects from time spent in an orphanage.

I've learned that loving someone who doesn't trust you and isn't sure how to receive that love is heartbreaking and one of the most difficult things I would ever do.

I've learned how early food deprivation can cause a child to be so scared of not having enough food that they will eat until they throw up. And then cry because they still feel hungry.

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*A child born to another woman calls me Mommy.  
The magnitude of that tragedy and  
the depth of that privilege are not lost on me. ~Jody Landers*

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I've learned that all babies deserve to be the center of someone's world; to be fed every time they're hungry, to always be given a clean diaper when needed, to have someone to rock and sing to them whenever they're sad or tired—or just any time, really.

I've learned that babies belong with their birth mamas whenever it's possible and safe for both Mom and Baby.

I've learned how to parent with connection, always seeking to connect with my child before I correct him to help him know that I'm on his side and I want what's best for him only.

I've learned about the white privilege I've had all my life without realizing it, and how that changes a little bit when I have a black child with me.

I've learned that fear usually looks like anger or defiance.

I've learned that a child desperate for love will usually ask for that love in very unloving ways.

I've learned that when you bring your Ethiopian child to an Ethiopian restaurant, the wait staff will bring him extra scoops of ice cream just to see him smile.

I've learned that I have so much more to learn.

An Adoption Story





Bishop Wendell Gibbs

## On Attending Diocesan Convention— As a Grown Up

*Anne Jeannette LaSovagee*

Way in the back of my mind, I have a memory of being at a Diocesan Convention. In my memory I was probably about 16 years old. I remember Mama Jane (Johnson) and Deacon John Fitzgerald and maybe Irene Stringer sitting at a round table near the back of a big crowded room full of other round tables. Aside from the physical setting, my only other memory of that time is what seemed like hours of “microphone ping pong” during which participants scrutinized a 25 page budget while making tedious line item changes and math corrections. I will concede that my memory *may* be exaggerating the length of time and the length of the budget, but honestly, that’s it. That’s all there is in my memory of that day.

Now, fast forward some (mumble mumble) years later...

Last month I attended the 184<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Michigan as a delegate from St. David’s. As I have had time to reflect on the convention and its theme “*Fire of Renewal: Being and Becoming God’s Beloved,*” I do find myself feeling renewed and beloved, and also inspired. In contrast to my first Convention experience years ago, this time I had a much deeper experience. I now decidedly feel like a very adult member of my parish and see myself differently in both what I do (and why I do it) and what I can further do in the world we live in.

For me, the convention began at four o’clock on Friday afternoon, although there was a full day of activities before that (you can ask Maureen Maher and Father Chris about those). The opening business session was fairly uneventful with introductions, report submissions, and the admittance of a new resolution. Delegates got our first official chance to vote, signifying yes or no by holding our orange voting cards in the air. After less than an hour, formal business adjourned for the evening and we moved into a social reception and the convention banquet.

As priest and lay attendees mingled and visited the exhibitors, I felt like I was in the right place. I will say, however, it has been a long time since I have been in the company of so many people wearing white collars!

The four delegates from St. David’s sat with new friends and enjoyed a delicious meal together. As dinner concluded, a worship service began. I am fairly certain this is the first time I have participated in a Eucharist service in a ballroom, and I am fully certain it is the first time I have participated in a service after enjoying pumpkin cheesecake! Even so, the real highlight of the event was not the meal, but the sense of communion and identity I felt in the worship service itself.

We sang, we prayed, we broke bread. The lyrics of familiar songs jumped off the page as if they were speaking directly to me. The offertory music by the Diocesan Clergy Choir was amazing. The sermon continued this poignant experience. The Convention Keynote speaker, the Very Rev. Robert Wright, Bishop of Atlanta, blew us away. His message and his manner were captivating, thought provoking, and inflaming—in the good sense. If you ever have a chance to hear him speak, you should definitely take advantage of it. For those of you so inclined, you might consider following him on social media as well.



The Very Rev. Robert Wright giving keynote address at Diocesan Convention

The joyful service concluded and we parted for the evening. I think I got home at 11 pm on Friday night and returned at 7 the next morning for the main business of the day—convention is definitely an all-in event!



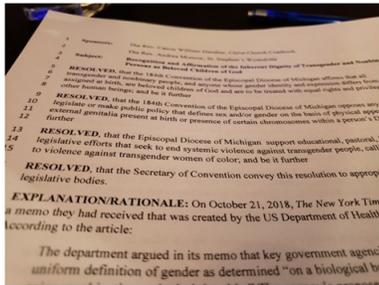
Voting to pass Resolutions

Polls were open in the morning to elect candidates to Diocesan committees, and morning business included reports and voting on canon bylaws. (After such a short night's sleep, I was particularly pleased with the ready access to chocolate!)

The keynote address by Bishop Wright was as illuminating and inspiring as his sermon was the night before. He spoke earnestly



Bishop Robert Wright of Atlanta



Resolution 4

and personally about the need for each of us (including himself) to divest from smallness, separateness and superiority. He dove deep into the topic of diving deep—to refuel from the Source which is our purpose and the driving force for everything we as individuals and Christians do and should do. The fire of sharing God’s fire was truly evident.

We heard a presentation from the Diocese’s Youth and Young Adult Ministry (YAYA) which I found informative and exciting. Then, Bishop Gibbs gave his annual address and shared information from the national level, extending Bishop Curry’s invitation to “The Way of Love.” (Check out details at <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love>.) In reference to the resolutions to be voted on at this convention, Bishop Gibbs expressed his sentiments that passing a joint statement like a resolution should be considered just the beginning, not the end.

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**L**ove the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.

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Any resolution passed by a Convention should be a call to action—the impact of one piece of paper from the diocese pales in comparison to a postcard or letter writing campaign with hundreds of letters expressing individual support for that same document. His argument was sound. Bishop Gibbs ended his address by humoring the crowd with answers to his list of “frequently asked questions” of the retiring Bishop. (Anyone interested in other aspects of the address should feel free to see me.)

During a working lunch, I attended a meeting of Diocese’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee. (Our own Ivy Forsythe-Brown and Sister Susan Brigit are on this committee.) After a summary of the committee’s initiatives and progress, members of individual parishes shared what has and has not been working in their own efforts in this area. A church in Canton shared some unfortunate challenges they faced this year involving a rainbow flag symbol. St. James in Dexter shared about diversity challenges in their unique setting and how they are having impact with some evening events open to the full community. (Check out examples here: <http://stjamesdexter.org/events/>.) Some topics from Dexter inspired a few ideas for possible Adult Forums at St. David’s. Sadly, tragically, ironically, we were still in this meeting when we heard news of the shooting at the synagogue in Pittsburgh. We prayed, of course, and the depth of grief permeated all of us. This is not the world God wants for us or the world we

should allow. I know more than one of us was thinking that promoting diversity and inclusion is at once a starting point and a tremendous task to undertake.

The second moment is actually a photograph. It is of two people standing in front of a barbed wire fence with ICE's T. Don Hutto Residential Center in the background, a detention facility for women. The sign they are holding says, "The Episcopal Church Is Here." The Episcopal Church cares about God's people.



Sending a message of love to women detained in the T. Don Hutto Residential Facility

Additional important business in the afternoon was passage of our own Diocesan resolutions. Four resolutions were passed. Each of them dealt in some way with compassion and caring for the rights of others. From my vantage point, I believe all four passed unanimously.

- Resolution 1: Opioid Crisis
- Resolution 2: One Person One Vote
- Resolution 3: Protecting Voters rights
- Resolution 4: Recognition and Affirmation of the Inherent Dignity of Transgender and Nonbinary Persons as Beloved Children of God

Resolution 4 was a late added resolution, submitted by two priests who are parents of LGBTQ children, one of whom sadly lost her child to suicide.

Unamended texts of Resolutions 1-3 can be found at: <https://www.edomi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/report-of-the-committee-on-reference-2017-BLUE.pdf>. Feel free to see me if you would like to see a copy of Resolution 4 if it is not posted on the edomi website.

If you're still reading this, way to go! I didn't realize I had so much to say. I'm almost done, I promise.

As I looked up links for this article and verified spellings and names, I read some comments beneath articles. I can understand how some people might feel the Episcopal Church is "liberal" or even political. I can also empathize with people who may need more experiences and time to move to acceptance or comfort with some topics that were discussed in the resolutions.

However, as for me, I am all on board. Beyond politics and borders and identities, we are all children of God and are all God's beloved. I am very proud to be a part of the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement—even more so after this Convention. And I am hoping to increase what my hands and actions can do to be and bring Christ to others.



The Episcopal Church not being silent.

## The Joys of Winter

*Simone Charter-Harris*

Every year around this time friends, family, co-workers, and strangers all lament the end of summer and fall, and dread the coming of the long, dark, winter—the snow, the cold, and the grey skies. Someone always greets me with “cold enough for you?” If I am not careful I can find myself bemoaning the weather (and life) along with them, because winter is a big part of life in Michigan, and so it becomes very easy to grumble through, each year, a big part of my life. This year, I have decided not. I decided that I would respond with more positive comments about this season, and be very mindful of and take part in the joys of winter.



I am not an outdoor winter sports or activities type of person, I don't ski or ice skate, or ice fish or sled, or enjoy the white open spaces on a snowmobile but for me, there are some really special things that make this for me, a most joyous time of year, weather and all.

Thanksgiving, one of the season's highlights, (though not officially winter) is the most celebrated holiday for family and friends. Sometimes it is cold and snowy, sometimes not—but it is always a happy event for family and friends. It is also an opportunity to reach out to those less fortunate, (staying mindful of the needs of others), and making it a wonderful day for them making it a more fulfilling time. The weather does not matter because there is warmth all around.

We also celebrate Christmas in the winter, and as we know, Christmas isn't just one day, it's an entire season, in which we joyously celebrate the birth of Christ. Some of us start the celebrations the day after Thanksgiving, others after Advent, some in between, but we string lights and decorate a tree; there is music, family, food, giving

and receiving—a general joie de vivre that carries us into the Epiphany season. Laura Ingalls Wilder had the idea, when she said “we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas.” During Epiphany our senses are heightened as we watch for where God is manifesting the Godself, and provoking from us a response. Lent soon follows and we embrace the Lenten season even though more somber and even though the weather is becoming “heavy”, and we long for it to end. It is during this time though that we experience some of the most beautiful church music that can also soothe our souls.

The winter weather does not stop the celebration of life—birthdays, anniversaries, goals accomplished, and the myriad events throughout the winter months. If we are retired, we are lucky and can snuggle with another cup of tea instead of going out when the weather is “bad” and driving is difficult. If we have no choice, we say a prayer and take our time to get where we need to be safely and soundly.

My plan for this winter and every winter is to enjoy the beautiful sunrise, or those special winter wonderland mornings; enjoy family, friends and the joyous holiday season—take time to meditate and reflect and thank God for this wonderful life. I plan to enjoy the joys of winter!.



## Book Review

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### ***Vintage Saints and Sinners***

By Karen Wright Marsh

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*The Very Rev. Chris Yaw*

Have you ever found the lives of the saints hard to relate to?

Karen Wright Marsh has written an inspiring and compelling collection of essays about the saints that really brings them to life. She chose a group of saints that mean a lot to her and, as becomes quite obvious, took her time ruminating and then writing about the ways they lived their lives and how this has affected her.

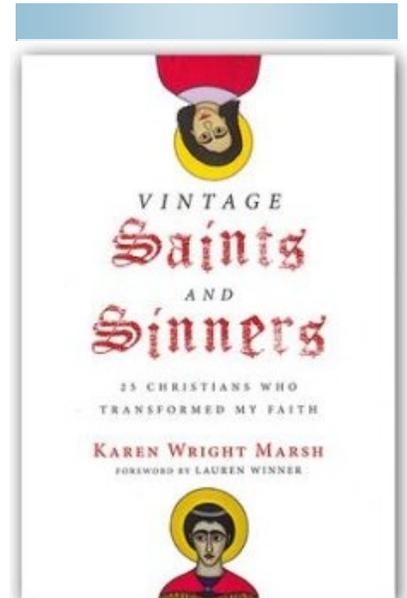
Vintage Saints and Sinners opens with a cogent quotation from a writer I admire, a fellow priest named Lauren Winner, who says that, 'hagiography is the best form of spiritual formation,' hagiography, of course, being the study of the lives of the saints. The idea is that humans are humans, Christians are Christians, and the challenges and victories present in their lives can inspire and encourage us, as St. Paul said a few different ways in his writings, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Marsh goes on to write a handful of pages of essays on each of 25 hand-picked saints including Soren Kierkegaard, Dorothy Day, Howard

Thurman, and Flannery O'Conner. She writes with humility and insight, trying to relate to the lives of each saint and to apply their lesson to our times.

Karen Wright Marsh runs a unique, university based ministry that puts her in touch with students and the questions they bring; this has helped her assemble a book that's both relevant and readable. If you're looking for an informative, modern guide to some of our greatest heroes and heroines of antiquity, this may be it.

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**Photo Gallery**

Parish Life  
at St. David's

*Joanne and Len Sackett*



Some children were cute and tiny.



Others were grown and lovely.



Some families were large.



Some were multi-generational.



Grandfathers celebrated. too!



Fr. Chris and his kids having a good time.



Francois' mother....



Tyler's father....



and Brent's mother

Over the summer several of our parishioners parents came to visit



Enjoying our new benches in the Memorial Garden.



Celebrating a 90th birthday. Happy Birthday, Sitella!



The lunch packing line

September 2018—Serving the needy at Crossroads of Michigan



Serving the beverages



At her art show in October, we all listened as Fr Chris interviewed Lorraine about her career in art.



She had many interesting things to tell us about her journey.



Lorraine and Kate discussing the art at the show.



On Youth Sunday, young people help with the Eucharist.



St. David's Quilters enjoy their fall retreat.



Bright and bold quilt to perk up any room.



Trick or Treating at St. Anne's Mead.



It's always fun to visit the folks at the Mead.



Fr. Chris offers a prayer for members moving to homes out of state.



The Junior Warden gives a presentation about the upcoming renovations to our building.

## Reflections of St. David's

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Steve Ernst, Digital Editor  
John Hawkes, Writer and Editor  
Joanne Sackett, Photographer  
The Very Rev. Chris Yaw, Rector  
Lynne Zacharias, Production Asst.

# A Prayer for Advent

Lord Jesus, master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Henri J. M. Nouwen



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