

INTERIM PRIEST REPORT 2009

It has been a joy and a privilege for me to serve as the ordained leader of St. Mary's for these past eight months. In particular, I have been thankful for the spirit and generosity of the congregation, the strong dedication of the staff and Vestry volunteers, and the excellent music and outreach programs of our church. For many decades, these longstanding aspects of St. Mary's have cemented our reputation as a wonderful neighborhood church in the Diocese of Massachusetts. I have also been thankful for the congregation's readiness to embrace the challenges inherent in the transition time of a new Rector search. I observe many groups and individuals in our congregation using this interim time to try out new ministries and new ways of doing things and to test new ways of organizing old ministries. I want to highlight some of the new work underway at St. Mary's:

Children's Ministry has taken on new dimensions thanks to the excellent work of Isabel Philips. Isabel took on the role of Interim Director of Religious Education this year, and she has created some marvelous opportunities for our K- 6th grade children and tweens. We have a growing Godly Play Church School while we have maintained a strong middle school classroom thanks to Jeffery Hughes. Highlights include our first "Children's Sunday", a Godly Play Christmas Pageant on Advent IV, and a Children's sermon during our 5 o'clock Christmas Eve Service. Parish members have supported this work with parent meetings in the summer to help determine the direction of church school, and financial support for the purchase of new materials and the upgrade of school rooms. We have also connected to our Deanery ministry of tweens and parents which holds four deanery wide events each year.

Our Acolyte Group took on a new leadership structure; Tim Green has expanded the leadership of the guild to include four Acolyte parents. Tim and I co-led a successful Acolyte training in November, and we plan to hold another one in the spring.

St. Mary's connected to new outreach opportunities with a work day at B-SAFE and a "Cradles to Crayons" event at St. Mary's this fall.

We also took on some new liturgical experiences:

We used wood cuts on the front of our bulletin during Advent and Christmas; we are currently using Eucharist Prayer C during Epiphany, and we were gifted with beautiful red kneelers by the altar rail in November. This fall, we also held a Prayer Vigil for the Environment during the deliberations in Copenhagen.

St. Mary's Vestry has done an excellent job of increasing the safety and security of the building with new locks and other equipment. They have also been proactive and clear sighted about addressing some current needs for the continuing excellence and safety of the buildings and programs of St. Mary's.

I am so thankful to be part of an excellent staff and leadership team. Kristen, Isabel, Denise, Paul and Mary are talented, dedicated, and generous people.

The Reverend Ms. Margaret K. Schwarzer

January 2010