

YEAR ROUND STEWARDSHIP CALENDAR

Based on work by the Diocese of West Texas and modified for the Diocese of Atlanta

We are accustomed to thinking of stewardship in terms of the annual "pledge drive." It happens once a year, and mostly we endure it as a necessary evil to raise money to run the church. Nevertheless, stewardship is not an annual "event" we hold in October. ***Stewardship is what we do with all that God has given us, all the time.*** This calendar takes stewardship out of the "annual occurrence" category and places it where it should be - right in front of us, all year round.

The calendar gives congregations suggestions and resources for practicing year round stewardship. Each month, the ***church season*** is explained and a ***theme*** is identified around which activities might take place in five recurring categories: Spiritual Growth, Ministry Spotlight, Financial Health, Outside Ourselves and God's Creation.



To get it started, we are identifying a theme for each month, along with resources and suggestions for implementing the theme in each category. However, this is only a starting place. Use as many or as few of the suggestions and resources offered that work for your parish. Be brave and creative! Custom-fit the ideas to your congregation. For instance if the calendar suggests thanking your music ministry team and you don't have a music ministry at your church, take this is opportunity to raise that awareness in your congregation and think about what you need and how you can accomplish it.

This is truly a continuing project. As you come up with your own ideas, send them to the Diocese of Atlanta Commission on Stewardship at tammypallot@gmail.com and we will add them to the calendar. We are especially interested in stories about how your congregation adapts these suggestions locally so we can learn from each other. We will post updated versions on the Commission on Stewardship's web page at www.episcopalatlanta.org/Resources/Stewardship.

An explanation of each of the five categories of our Stewardship "pie" is on the following page.



Spiritual Growth

Faithful stewardship is deeply connected to a healthy spiritual life. This category offers ways to deepen the spiritual lives of individuals and the congregation. The focus of the spirituality component will always go deeper into the theme of the month.



Ministry Spotlight

The mission of a congregation is largely carried out through its ministries. Focusing on a different ministry each month is a way of giving thanks for that ministry and raising awareness about it to attract new participants (the time and talent part of stewardship). Ways to do this include commissioning ministry members during a church service, highlighting a different ministry in the church newsletter each edition, or inviting the ministry head to say a few words about the ministry during the announcements segment of worship.

This component also encourages saying "thank you" to a particular ministry every month by writing thank you notes to individual ministry members or serving dinner at one of the ministry's meetings (or any way that you think of).



Financial Health

This category offers a particular opportunity for an appeal, focus on fiscal responsibility, or financial ministry offering. Some of these activities can be used to communicate the congregational leadership's good stewardship of the congregation's material resources. Activities in the financial component should not be limited to congregational finances; there are also many ways families can be intentional about how they manage their money including what they are saving and what percentage of their income they are giving away.



Outside Ourselves

In outreach we take our stewardship to the streets of our communities. These activities help people connect their pledge to ministry; in addition, communicating and celebrating the stories of meeting the needs of people are important motivators for personal stewardship decisions.



God's Creation

A steward is a person to whom something is entrusted, and how we care for the environment that God has entrusted to us is a mark of our faithfulness. This category can include caring for the environment in our communities, in our homes, and in our churches. Activities that show care for the environment are especially attractive to children and families.



JANUARY

Season - Epiphany

Epiphany, which means "manifestation," is the celebration of the magi arriving at the manger and laying their gifts at the feet of Christ, the manifestation of Christ to all nations. The Church celebrates Epiphany on January 6th. It is the celebration of the light of Christ that leads the way overcoming the darkness. Epiphany can also be described as a moment that takes our breath away, when we are so closely aware of the magnitude of our Creator! One can experience these "aha" moments while gazing up at the night sky ablaze with countless stars, witnessing a beautiful sunset, or watching a young child eagerly reaching out for communion.



Theme - Light

Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lamp stand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the good you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:14 16

We are people of the light, the light of Christ that shines from within us. How do we let that light shine out into the world? How do we shed light on the path for others? In our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to seek and serve Christ in all others. Epiphany is a time to reflect on how, where, and to whom are we sharing the light of Christ. As we begin a new year of ministry, may we be prayerful about how we are using our gifts and our resources to shine the light of Christ in our communities and beyond.



Spiritual Growth - Seek and Serve Christ in All Others

Christian stewardship is using the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do. Discerning and carrying out God's purpose is the primary purpose of our lives. Do you hear a call to be truer to your Christian beliefs?

Complete the **spiritual gifts assessment** developed by Michael Anne Haywood and see if you have more or different gifts than you thought you had. A PDF is available for download on the Diocese of Atlanta Stewardship page. Online version at <http://home.earthlink.net/~haywoodm/SpiritualGiftsDiscernment.html>

Sometimes we are quick to dismiss, or we are unsure of the wealth of gifts God has given us. We might tend to shy away when someone asks about our talents, thinking we do not have some special gift. But God's grace is found in the simplest of gifts.

Consider the **gift of listening** and the challenge of listening. Examine your willingness to truly listen - to your spouse, your children, a parent, a friend a stranger. "Listening is not a **need** we have, but a **gift** we give." Michael Nichols.

Set aside some time to learn about being a good listener.

Listen to Learn- Ten commandments of good listening-Dave Gray
<http://communicationnation.blogspot.com/2005/11/how-to-listen.html>

How to Be a Better Listener - Marshall Goldsmith
<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2009-09-03/marshall-goldsmith-how-to-be-a-better-listener>



Ministry Spotlight on Music Ministry

Highlight someone working in one of your ministries - someone who is using their gift(s) to shine the light of Christ in their life, their community and or beyond. Suggestions below pertain to Music Ministry, but could be applied to any ministry.

1. Thank you letters: Seek out parishioners to write thank-you letters to those who share the gift of music.
2. Consider the simple act of praising the choir and musicians during Sunday service and asking for a show of hands of all those who enjoyed the musical offerings.
3. Interview musicians and present their story at a Sunday Service: Seek out two or three people (depending on the number of those involved in music ministry) to interview those in music ministry and tell their story. Ask them: how long they have been sharing their gift, do they share their gift outside church, why music is important, what are their three favorite songs and or composers, favorite musicians, how many hours do they prepare and share their musical gifts? Ask them if there is one thing people would be surprised to know about them or what other talents and gifts they have.
4. Plan a dinner or something special on the night your music ministry practices.



Financial Health

A narrative budget tells the story of your congregation's ministry in terms of lives touched rather than dollars spent. People are motivated to give when they see the difference that their giving makes. For an explanation of how to create a narrative budget, this offering from the United Methodist Foundation:

Read [Building a narrative budget.pdf](#) courtesy of Missouri United Methodist Foundation.

Information about how to create a narrative budget is available at the following websites:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/document/example-narrative-budget>

<http://www.covchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2011/10/Brochure-Narrative-Budget.pdf>

<http://www.realepiscopal.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Narrative-Budgeting.pdf>

For a chart giving a dollar amount to volunteer hours, see http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time



Reaching Out to Feed the Hungry

Think about volunteering for a local non-profit or supporting the Atlanta Community Food Bank. You can involve your family, invite a friend to come along, or get a church group together.

Red Door Food Pantry – Sharing Christ's love by sharing food has always been an active ministry at the parish. Every Sunday, contributions of food are made by churchgoers. Those contributions along with contributions from the community at large allow us to feed over seventy-five families each week. To find out how you can get involved, visit <http://www.ascensioncartersville.org/food-pantry/>

Suthers Center for Christian Outreach – St. Martin in the Fields formed a partnership which serves needy families and individuals who live within the 30319 and 30341 ZIP codes. They offer a food bank and emergency assistance. To find out how you can help, visit <http://www.sutherscenter.com/>

St. Paul's Outreach Center – The St. Paul's Outreach Center operates out of a church-owned property—an old house—at 365 Peyton Road, a few doors from the church. From this facility, the center provides programs and meaningful services to meet the basic needs of individuals, youth, families, and senior citizens. Every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the center distributes food to the community. More than 500 families are served monthly and approximately 7,000 pounds of food are distributed per month. Turkey baskets are also distributed during the Thanksgiving holiday season. To find out how you can get involved, go to <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Mission-Work/Around-the-Diocese/St-Paul-s-Outreach-Center/>

Circles of West Georgia – Join St. Margaret's in Carrollton to partner with Circles of West Georgia, an innovative, community-driven way to effect poverty. It is different from simply providing assistance to people in poverty. Circles' mission is to inspire and equip families and communities to thrive and end poverty. St. Margaret's serves as a feeder program, identifying participants for Circles of West Georgia. To find out how you can participate in Circles of West Georgia, go to <https://circlesofwestgeorgia.com/>

Malachi's Storehouse is dedicated to addressing food insecurity in Metro Atlanta. They are an outreach ministry of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church, providing both groceries and a hot meal for those in need of emergency support. Find out how you can get involved at <http://malachisstorehouse.org/>

Volunteer on Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service: Need help finding a place to volunteer- type in your zip code and or interest to find opportunities near you- <http://mlkday.gov/>

100 ways to serve others: <http://learnthis.ca/2010/02/100-ways-to-serve-others/>

Find volunteer opportunities at the **Atlanta Community Food Bank** <http://acfb.org/>

Feed America offers a great resource for locating Food Banks in your area <http://feedingamerica.org/#>



God's Creation - Caring for Our Trees

Give your Christmas tree a second life. Have it recycled into pine mulch. **Bring One for the Chipper** is Georgia's annual Christmas tree recycling program. Find recycling locations in your area at http://www.keepgeorgiabeautiful.org/bring_one_for_chipper.asp

Plant a tree in the forest to replace your cut Christmas tree.

Check out [6 Ways to Recycle Your Christmas Tree](#) at About.com

Commit to some New Year's Green Resolutions- 15 tips that actually make a difference <http://www.thedailygreen.com/environmental-news/latest/green-new-years-resolutions-10109>

January Worksheet

Season: Epiphany

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Theme: Light

Jesus said, “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one lights a lamp to put it under a bucket, but on a lamp stand where it gives light for everyone in the house. And you, like the lamp, must shed light among your fellow men, so that they may see the good you do, and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:14-16

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Spiritual Growth – Seek & Serve Christ In All Others

Ministry Spotlight on Music Ministry

Financial Health – Telling your Story in Narrative Budgets

Reach out to Feed the Hungry

God’s Creation – Caring for Our Trees

FEBRUARY

Season - The Season of Epiphany

The church calendar recognizes the season of Epiphany from January 6 until the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which is celebrated as the Transfiguration of our Lord. The length of the season of Epiphany varies because it is determined by the date of Easter each year; the longest this season can be is nine weeks. During this time, our scripture readings focus on the revelation of Christ, including Christ's baptism, Christ as the light of the world, Christ's public ministry, and how to grow in our own spiritual journeys as the hands and feet of Christ.



Theme - Sacramental Life

The definition of a sacrament that may be most familiar to us may be from the Book of Common Prayer –“an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace”. God meets us in the sacraments in a profound and mysterious way. God works through the ordinary in our lives, some that man has made with gifts God has given us, like bread, wine, oil, and others that come straight from God like water and our hands. God makes Himself known in the most intimate way when we invite His presence and we promise to show up in receiving the sacraments. When we turn to God in faith, God transforms the ordinary into something incredibly sacred.

God is incarnationally present in the sacraments. God's presence is palpable and breathtaking. Sacraments are not something we deserve, but something that God gives us and promises to make Himself known through when we believe in Him. The two sacraments recognized by the church are **Eucharist** and **Baptism**, and the five sacramental rites are **Marriage, Confirmation, Ordination, Unction, and Reconciliation**.



Spiritual Growth - Christian Community

Find time to learn more about the two sacraments and the five sacramental rites recognized by the church, including what they mean and when applicable in the life of the community. A good resource is *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer (Revised Edition)*, Leonel L. Mitchell.

Adult Formation Class – Create an Adult Formation class or a Wednesday night program to learn more about the sacraments and sacramental rites.

Sunday Bulletin – Include one or two facts about the Eucharist in the Sunday bulletin. For example “Holy Water is in the baptismal font near the entrance of the church. Some choose to dip a finger in and make the sign of the Cross with water when entering or leaving a church. This ritual is to remind you of your Baptism and Confirmation in which you were signed with the sign of the Cross.” More examples available at <http://www.holycross-weare.org/2009/03/17/body-language-in-worship/>

Instructed Eucharist Periodically it might be helpful to devote one of the Sunday Eucharists to an instructed Eucharist. You can either provide a written explanation for each part of the service in the order of service encouraging the congregation to read as they participate in the liturgy or have a narrator instruct during the service. More information available at <http://www.instructedeucharist.org>.

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Ministry Spotlight - Church Staff and Ministry Team Leaders

Take time to recognize your church staff and ministry team leaders, which may include volunteers as well as paid employees. Ideas include recognizing them during a morning service, small gifts, or soliciting parishioners to write appreciation cards to staff.

Get to know staff by finding out what their favorite things are: favorite cookie or candy, favorite songs, favorite place to eat, favorite movie, favorite author, interests and hobbies. Burn a CD of their favorite songs; put together a movie basket with candy, popcorn, favorite movie or movie gift certificate. Deliver a special lunch or breakfast to staff members. Work with other parishioners to organize staff appreciation week and deliver small treats to the staff each day.



Financial Health - Debt Management

Every year, millions of Americans go overboard at Christmas. After the holidays are over, they quickly realize just how much overspending they did. For some people, this is a time to panic and wonder how they'll ever recover. Consider offering a debt management class and/or providing resources to help with debt.

Thrivent Financial – Thrivent creates financial strategies that help Christians be wise with money and live generously. They offer a broad range of financial products and services, including life insurance, annuities and mutual funds, plus tailored guidance from financial representatives nationwide. For more than a century, they've helped their member-owners show God's love to others by being good stewards of the gifts they've been given. More information at <https://www.thrivent.com/financial-coaching/resources/tools.html>

Christian Credit Counselors – A national non-profit organization that was created to help individuals and families regain control of their finances through the use of educational tools, credit counseling and other resources. Visit <http://www.christiancreditcounselors.org/> for more information.

Budgeting resources – <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/resources/money-resources>

Children and Youth money resources – <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/resources/children-and-youth>

The Christian financial planning courses below challenge participants to examine money in the context of their Christian Faith. The courses focus on eliminating personal debt, building savings, and learning to use money in healthy ways. That includes putting God first financially. Rather than asking, "How much of my money should I give to God?" we learn to ask, "How much of God's money should I keep for myself?"

Financial Peace University – Visit <http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/locate-class/> for a class in your area.

The Good \$ense Budget Course was developed by Willow Creek Association who believe deeply that stewardship of financial resources lies at the heart of Christian discipleship. Learn more at their website: <http://www.goodsensemistry.com/>

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Reaching Out To The Exiled

We are all familiar with the story of how Moses and the Israelites were forced into exile. Although we may want to believe exiles are a thing of the past, the reality is that there are exiles among us today. There are foreign exiles, refugees forced to leave their homeland because of war, violence, or poverty; and domestic exiles, those forced to leave their homes because of sex trafficking, gender identity, sexual orientation, or HIV status. We, as Christians, are called to welcome the exile. Discover ways your community can reach out to those who are separated from their homes and families.

Georgia Cares – Georgia Cares (formerly Georgia Care Connection Office) is the single, statewide coordinating non-profit agency connecting services and treatment care for child victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Georgia Cares serves any and all youth who have been victimized in the state of Georgia. We believe that youth can be restored to safety, health and wellbeing when they are recognized as victims of sexual abuse and supported with appropriate treatment. Our mission is to ensure that child sex trafficking victims receive quality care and services in the state of Georgia. It is our vision that child sex trafficking is one day eradicated, and survivors are restored and thriving with the help of trauma-informed treatment. Find out more information about how you can help at <http://www.gacares.org/>

Commission on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking – The Commission on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) in the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta will serve as a body of concerned lay and clergy representatives who will provide resources to, network with, and propose appropriate actions and/or legislation for parishes and other organizations to end the sex trafficking of minors. Visit the Diocese of Atlanta's Commission on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking website at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Parish-Support/human-trafficking-commission/under-construction-commission-on-domestic-minor-sex-trafficking/> for up to date information and DMST resources.

Middle Georgia Aids Network – Middle Georgia Aids Network provides support for those who are HIV+ in Middle Georgia. For more information, contact Susan Locke at 844locke@cox.net

Integrity – Integrity is a nonprofit organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] Episcopalians and our straight friends. Since our founding by Dr. Louie Crew in rural Georgia in 1974, Integrity has been the leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Episcopal Church and our equal access to its rites. For more information visit <http://www.integrityusa.org/>

Diocese of Atlanta LGBT Ministries – For information about LGBT Ministries within the diocese, visit <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/LGBTMinistries/>

The South Georgia Farmworker Project Community Partners - The SGFHP is a program from Emory University that uses a mobile outreach model to provide free out-patient care to migrant and seasonal farm workers and their dependents southern Georgia counties. In addition to medical care, SGFHP with the help of Community Partners, also provides water bottles, socks, clothes, and goodie bags. "People doing good just because and only because they choose to, that's what's so terrific about this Project, it touches every single body involved in such a moving way that even on those long days momentum propels you to continue doing the work that brought you to Emory in the first place." To find out how you can become a Community Partner, visit http://med.emory.edu/pa/about_us/community_service/farm_worker/partners.html

Episcopal Farmworker Ministry – EFwM responds to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, and actively supports opportunities for them to become self-directive. We seek to minister to farmworkers in three principal ways: through direct services; through development and support of programs that work towards the empowerment of farmworkers; by encouraging leadership development, advocacy, and education aimed toward a systematic change of agricultural policy at local and state levels. Visit <https://episcopalfarmworkerministry.org/> for more information.

New American Pathways – New American Pathways, our local affiliate of the Episcopal Migration Ministries, provides approximately 4,000 refugees per year with the necessary tools to rebuild their lives and achieve long-term success. Our specially designed programs provide proven pathways for refugees and other immigrants to realize their full potential and dreams while becoming productive, contributing members of Georgia's communities. Visit <http://newamericanpathways.org/volunteer/> for more information about volunteer opportunities.

World Relief Atlanta – At World Relief Atlanta, we consider the refugees in our community some of the most vulnerable among us. We work to meet their need by providing compassionate and holistic care from the moment they arrive at the airport through their journey to self-sufficiency. We hope to engage refugees with the local Church by connecting refugee families to American friends through our volunteer services. Our volunteers are a vital component of the resettlement process as they provide ongoing cultural orientation to America, transportation for various needs, but most importantly, friendship. If you are interested in learning about how to become a volunteer with a refugee family, visit <http://worldreliefatlanta.org/volunteer>

Immigration Advocates – Immigration Advocates provides resources for nonprofit advocates, organizers and service providers including a list of National Immigration Legal Services. More information at <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/search?state=GA>

Mark Jones – Mark Jones is a professor at Mercer Law School who teaches Immigration Law. Immigration laws are changing rapidly with the new administration, causing confusion and anxiety. As a guest speaker, Mark provides up to date information about the legal realities for immigrants as well as how your church can help. Contact Mark at 478-301-2636 or by email at jones_ml@law.mercer.edu



God's Creation - Recycling

Recycling should be encouraged by placing clearly marked containers throughout your facilities. If your recycling service permits commingling, place blue containers next to every trashcan. If not, create a recycling area in an easy to access area plus specific containers in certain areas (i.e., paper recycling container by copy machine).

Free garage giveaway – a giant garage sale where nothing is priced and every item is free for the taking. The only requirement is each shopper has to be able to carry his load. The "sale" is about need, not greed, and gives us a way to love our neighbors, which is what Jesus calls us to do with abundance. Begin planning in February for a March event. Organize one with your congregation, your neighborhood or consider an ecumenical event. A free garage giveaway is a great way to recycle, while also helping those in need.

Find out if a local school is recycling or help them get a program started. The following resource gives cash for phones/PDAs and inkjet cartridges. <http://www.phoneraiser.com/>

Start a program that earns rewards for recycling with **Terracycle** <https://www.terracycle.com/en-US>

The following suggestions are from the Green Church Association.

Create a Green Team – If you do not already have a Green Ministry, create a ministry team with people who are interested in assuming a leadership role at your church to take responsibility for this green effort from beginning to end. They will be in charge of recruiting and assembling a team of volunteers to create a plan for the recycling program, delegate responsibilities and see the plan through.

Electronics – We encourage churches to make it standard practice to recycle electronics like computers rather than throwing them in the trash. This not only saves energy and landfill space, but it also keeps the more than 100 toxic chemicals found in electronics from seeping into our soil and water. You can contract with an independent e-recycling service. Yet, we encourage you to explore what free services are available. For example, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, and Apple have free recycling programs for their products. A great source for a list of companies with similar programs can be found <http://mygreenelectronics.org/>

Battery Recycling – Most of us are familiar with the practice of recycling lead-acid automotive batteries. Due to widespread legal mandates, about 90% of these batteries are recycled in the U.S. The recycling rates of other batteries is much lower. This results in a lot of heavy metals and other toxic chemicals going to landfills. We encourage all churches to establish a battery-recycling program. One great resource for locating recycling centers is to go to <http://earth911.com/> and search by entering batteries and your zip code.

Lamps – Standard fluorescent lamps and CFLs save energy, yet they contain mercury. We need to do all that we can to avoid mercury contamination of our land and water. We encourage churches to establish a lamp recycling program. Some provide local pickup. Others, provide boxes used to ship used lamps. <http://www.lamprecycle.org/> offers a way to search for local vendors.

Ink and Toner Cartridges – We encourage you to recycle empty ink and toner cartridges. You can take advantage of bins at local office supply stores. Some vendors offer programs in which you mail back used cartridges and they send you reconditioned replacement cartridges.

Construction Recycling – An enormous amount of waste is generated through construction. A significant portion of this waste can be reused or recycled. We encourage you to include recycling mandates in any construction contracts you sign.

Composting – One great practice that we acknowledge is not always practical in all settings is to compost items like food. A great way to deal with the issue of unpleasant smell is to use Red Wiggler Worms to break down the trash. There are examples of large office buildings that use large bins of worms for high volume composting.

Evaluating Your Recycling Efforts – A good goal for most churches is to seek to recycle at least 50% of your trash. There is great power in setting goals and measuring achievement. With recycling, it is ideal when your service provider uses trucks that weigh each pickup and provide you with the data. Some large cities require this from their vendors, yet this practice is still relatively rare.

The most practical way to evaluate recycling achievements is usually to conduct a waste audit. This involves sorting and weighing trash and recycling from one day. You can record (by weight or volume) the quantity of recyclable materials that made it into the recycling bins versus the standard trash bins. We have seen where it was written into a contract with a cleaning contractor to conduct a waste audit once a year.

When you make the effort to conduct a waste audit, make sure you communicate this information to promote action. If you find that paper recycling is going well, but aluminum can recycling is not, strategize on ways to achieve improvement.

Donate Used Items – Reuse can be better stewardship than recycling. Before recycling products, make sure you have considered if they might still have a useful function in another setting.

February Worksheet

Season: The Season of Epiphany

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Theme: Sacramental Life

The definition of a sacrament, which may be most familiar to us, is from the Book of Common Prayer...an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace. God meets us in the sacraments in a profound and mysterious way. God works through the ordinary in our lives, some that man has made with gifts God has given us, like bread, wine, oil, and others that come straight from God like water and our hands. God makes Himself known in the most intimate way when we invite His presence and we promise to show up in receiving the sacraments. When we turn to God in faith, God transforms the ordinary into something incredibly sacred.

God is incarnationally present in the sacraments. God's presence is palpable and breathtaking. Sacraments are not something we deserve, but something that God gives us and promises to make Himself known through when we believe in Him. The two sacraments recognized by the church are Eucharist and Baptism, and the five sacramental rites are Marriage, Confirmation, Ordination, Unction, and Reconciliation.

Spiritual Growth – Christian Community

Ministry Spotlight on Staff and Team Leaders

Financial Health – Debt Management

Reach out to the Exiled

God's Creation – Recycling

MARCH

Season - Lent

Early Christians observed a season of penitence and fasting in preparation for Easter, a season that gradually extended to 40 days in imitation of Christ's fasting in the wilderness. This season of preparation, which we now know as Lent, came to be a time when converts to the faith were prepared for baptism and those who had committed notorious sins were reconciled to the faith community. Lent, which is still a season of penitence in the Church, extends from Ash Wednesday to Easter. The 40 days do not include Sundays, which are always celebrated as mini-Easters.



Theme - Discipline

In a general sense, Christian discipline is the right ordering of Christian life and community. Lenten disciplines are specifically designed to help us focus on Christ's self-sacrificing passion, death, and resurrection which have brought us acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption. Traditionally, these disciplines include prayer, repentance, fasting, and works of love. During Lent, we set aside specific time to spend time with God in prayer, we examine our consciences to determine if we are living as Christ calls us to, we fast from a particular food or activity in order to open ourselves to God, and we intentionally take on some good work that enriches the lives of others.



Spiritual Growth - Spiritual Inventory

Lent has always been recognized as a penitential season, a time for examining one's relationship with God and with our fellow man. This can be done informally by spending some quiet time in honest, serious self-reflection and asking questions such as: Where is the hurt in your life, where is the anger and resentment and disappointment? Where's the phoniness and pretension and fear? How have you turned away from God, failing to love Him and others? What do you really want God to do for you?

Read again the Litany of Penitence from the Ash Wednesday service in the Book of Common Prayer (page 267). Another option is to read The Great Litany from the BCP on page 148. The Book of Common Prayer is online at: <http://www.bcponline.org>

Reflection on Taking a Spiritual Inventory by Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor –
http://www.diocesewnc.org/dfc/newsdetail_2/3177675

For a formal examination of conscience, submit yourself to the sacramental rite of Reconciliation of a Penitent with your priest.

Renewal Works – Through a guided methodology of self-reflection, sharing and workshop discussion, Renewal Works challenges parishes to refocus on spiritual growth and to identify ways that God is calling them to grow. To learn more about Renewal Works and sign up your parish, visit <http://renewalworks.org/>



Ministry Spotlight on Prayer Ministries

Daughters of the King - recognize those in your congregation that are involved in Daughters of the King ministry. If you do not have anyone participating in this ministry consider learning more about it, or recognize another prayer ministry within your congregation.

Daughters of the King: The Order of the Daughters of the King® (DOK) is a spiritual sisterhood of women dedicated to a life of prayer, service, and evangelism. We have made a commitment to Jesus as our Savior, and we follow Him as Lord of our lives. We are an Order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church, churches in communion with it, or churches in the Historic Episcopate. Today our membership includes women in the Anglican, Episcopal, Lutheran (ELCA) and Roman Catholic churches. <http://www.doknational.com/>

Recognize members of your prayer ministries with a hand written thank you card, recognition during a worship service, and featuring members in the newsletter and Sunday bulletins.



Financial Health - Sacrificial Giving

Sacrificial giving is an ancient spiritual practice. It opens us up more to the presence and activity of God. It is not an easy practice to start, and it is not always an easy practice to keep. But giving out of abundance is a major antidote to the temptation to insulate through the widely supported habits of hoarding and protecting. Giving out of abundance is the gateway to gratitude and generosity. The practice of sacrificial giving, not only opens up the soul, but also opens us up to the discovery of God's handiwork in our lives and in the world.

UTO Mite boxes – The United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through UTO, men, women, and children nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God. These prayers of thanksgiving start when we recognize and name our many daily blessings. Those who participate in UTO discover that thankfulness leads to generosity. UTO is entrusted to promote thank offerings, to receive the offerings, and to distribute the monies to support mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Blue Boxes are used to collect the daily offerings given in response to the good things that happened through the day. The boxes are available free at <http://episcopalmarketplace.org/Products/United-Thank-Offering>

ERD Hope Chest – Individuals or congregations can use these colorful boxes for offerings designated to Episcopal Relief & Development. They are available for free at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/lent>



Reaching Out through Volunteering

40Acts: Do Lent Generously 40 days of giving back, doing good and living generously – Lent is one of the most important times of year for many Christians around the world, particularly those within the Anglican traditions, held at a similar level of importance to Advent – the build up to Christmas. Different people observe Lent in different ways, though by and large most people do this by giving something up for Lent. Whether you are intending to give up chocolate, fast food, alcohol, or the Internet, 40acts encourages you to do something generous during Lent, too. Free resources are available for individuals, adult Sunday school classes, children, middle school youth, and high school youth. You can sign up to take the challenge at <http://www.40acts.org.uk>.

Hunger Walk/Run – Episcopal Charities Foundation partners with the Atlanta Community Food Bank for the Annual Hunger Walk/Run. Parishioners from parishes across the Diocese gathered with thousands of runners and walkers join together to raise funds and awareness for hunger relief through a sponsored 5K event every spring. It brings people together to support our neighbors in need and celebrate the work that's being done in Middle and North Georgia. The funds raised by ECF at the 2015 Hunger Walk/Run were used to fund the Northeast Georgia's Food Bank's exciting and innovative Fresh Frozen Initiative. Create a team at www.hungerwalkrun.org.

Nursing Homes – Nursing homes rely on volunteers to interact with their residents. They need volunteers to provide company for residents and assist in hosting dances, card games and bingo nights. Activities run by volunteers are an integral part of bringing the feeling of home to the nursing home.

To discover other ideas about where you can volunteer in your area, visit <https://www.volunteermatch.org/>



God's Creation - Clean Water

World Water Day – March 22 – On World Water Day, people everywhere show that they care and that they have the power to make a difference. They get inspired by information and use it to take action and change things. Ideas about how to get involved available at <http://www.unwater.org/worldwaterday>.

The Thirst Project's **Dirty Little Secret** – By educating and reaching out to students, the Thirst Project aims to educate and motivate young people to dissolve the global water crisis. The Thirst Project's Dirty Little Secret campaign is raising awareness of the fact that millions of people don't have access to clean water. To participate in this month-long initiative, take a selfie with a dirty water bottle and upload it to Instagram. Make sure to use the campaign hashtag, "#thirstproject." Snapping a selfie will not only advance a worthy cause, but it can also win you an exciting prize too. Visit the campaign site at <https://www.thirstproject.org/dirtylittlesecret/> for more info including the dirty water bottle recipe!

Water Life Hope is a team of passionate individuals working to bring clean water to the people of Haiti that has built over 333 wells, bringing clean water to 500,000 people. More information at <http://www.waterlifehope.org>.

Learn more about **Episcopal Relief and Development's Clean Water** program and how you can help at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/what-we-do/our-programs/clean-water>

The **Georgia Water Coalition's** mission is to protect and care for Georgia's water resources, which are essential for sustaining Georgia's prosperity, providing clean and abundant drinking water, preserving diverse aquatic habitats for wildlife and recreation, and strengthening property values. Learn more at <http://www.garivers.org/>

March Worksheet

Season: Lent

Early Christians observed a season of penitence and fasting in preparation for Easter, a season that gradually extended to 40 days in imitation of Christ's fasting in the wilderness. This season of preparation, which we now know as Lent, came to be a time when converts to the faith were prepared for baptism and those who had committed notorious sins were reconciled to the faith community. Lent, which is still a season of penitence in the Church, extends from Ash Wednesday, this year March 9, to Easter, April 24 in 2011. The 40 days do not include Sundays, which are always celebrated as mini-Easters.



Theme: Discipline

In a general sense, Christian discipline is the right ordering of Christian life and community. Lenten disciplines are specifically designed to help us focus on Christ's self-sacrificing passion, death, and resurrection which have brought us acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption. Traditionally, these disciplines include prayer, repentance, fasting, and works of love. During Lent, we set aside specific time to spend time with God in prayer, we examine our consciences to determine if we are living as Christ calls us to, we fast from a particular food or activity in order to open ourselves to God, and we intentionally take on some good work that enriches the lives of others.

Spiritual Growth – Spiritual Inventory
Ministry Spotlight on Prayer Ministries
Financial Health – Sacrificial Giving
Reaching Out Through Volunteering
God's Creation – Clean Water

APRIL

Season - Holy Week and Easter

We can't get to Easter without going through Holy Week. Without Christ's Passion and Death, we can't find the empty tomb. Except for Easter Day itself, the Church's most ancient annual observances center around the events that took place in Jerusalem during the days that led up to Jesus' crucifixion and death. The Church has long recognized the centrality and the essential quality of these events for those who follow the Way of Jesus. The writers of the four Gospels spend a great deal of time describing the events that unfold in the days we remember as Holy Week – so much so, that some biblical scholars refer to everything else contained in the Gospels as "prelude" to the heart of the Good News: Christ's Passion and Death, with Easter as the sign of God's victory over sin and death on the cross. Without these events, none of the rest of the story of Jesus makes sense.



Theme - Death to Life

Time slows down as the Church moves from the triumphal Palm Sunday procession to the cross. Time slows down in the Gospels as well, as Jesus moves toward his self-offering and death. Probably the greatest acts of stewardship the Church can call us to in this short season center around the use of our time, not least in giving time to join the Holy Week pilgrimage in the liturgies offered. Taking time to enter into these stories with the gathered church really does matter. Considering Christ's complete and perfect offering leads us to consider how we are offering (or not offering) our own lives in service to God and his world, for Christ's sake. Another fruitful stewardship consideration might center around reconciliation, that is, what is accomplished for us by Christ's death and resurrection. To whom do I need to be reconciled? To whom is your congregation called to reach out in your community? As Jesus entered fully into the suffering of the world, how is he now calling us to do the same? As exercises to lead us into this work, we might consider tasks of mending and repairing, of knitting together and binding up. It is holy and hard work, but it is the Way of our Lord.



Spiritual Growth - Death and Resurrection

Jesus did not get to Easter without going through Good Friday, and neither can we, really. This year, make a commitment to attend all Holy Week liturgies, especially the ones for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil of Easter on Saturday. Having experienced the death of Christ, and perhaps a little dying to yourself, you will rejoice all the more on Easter morning.

For daily meditations during Holy Week, written by the Rev. Mary Earle, visit the [Explore Faith website](#).

50 Days of Easter Prayer – In the Episcopal Church, Easter is celebrated not for just one day but for 50 days — until the Day of Pentecost. So, beginning Easter Sunday, you are invited to join other worshipers in the Diocese of Atlanta during the 50 Days of Easter to share how you celebrate the Risen Christ through prayer: inside or out, formal or informal, words, pictures or music on Facebook and Twitter. There is no right way. No rules either! More information is available at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Communication/50-Days-of-Easter-Prayer/>

Stations of the Cross – Participate in the Stations of the Cross. The Rev. Daniel Dice, from the Diocese of Atlanta, has collected and edited the Stations of the Cross. They are available online at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Resources/Stations-of-the-Cross/>



Ministry Spotlight on Altar Guild

The ministry of the altar guild is a true servant ministry, accomplished reverently and quietly. Holy Week is the busiest week on the liturgical calendar for the altar guild, and one of the most meaningful - particularly in the poignant act of the stripping of the altar at the conclusion of the Maundy Thursday service. The local church might publicly thank the members of the altar guild during the Easter morning service, listing them in the service bulletin. Or the congregation might provide supper for altar guild members before the Maundy Thursday service or at another time.

Serving on the Altar Guild is often a thankless job. Sending a handwritten thank you note to each member of the Altar Guild is a great way to let them know how much they are appreciated.



Financial Health - Death and Taxes

Planning for your loved ones' welfare and the care of your assets following your death is a priority that many overlook. There are a wealth of local and national resources to help guide you through the process of creating a living will and estate planning. Consider having a workshop about End of Life issues using the resources below.

Online resources:

Do Your Will Online – Free wills, Power of Attorney, and other documents <https://www.doyourownwill.com/>

Planning for the End of Life by the Episcopal Church Foundation – A free guide with step by step instructions to help you create a Medical Directive, Healthcare Proxy, Funeral Instructions, Burial Instructions, and Will. It is available for download at http://www.ecfvp.org/files/uploads/Planning_for_the_End_of_Life.pdf

Planned giving is an act that allows you to designate your assets to a non-profit organization before your death, so that your gifts continue to provide financial support. You can designate your desires for planned giving in your will. The Episcopal Charities Foundation for the Diocese of Atlanta has developed steps to help you in planning your legacy giving to your church or to the diocese. If you do not have a Planned Giving program in your church, consider starting one. For help starting a Planned Giving program or for more information, contact Lindsey Hardegree at lhdegree@episcopalatlanta.org.

Organ Donation – Being an organ donor is a way to give the gift of life. Donate Life Georgia has speakers available to civic and community groups, houses of worship, schools, corporations, and businesses. Speakers are trained to provide information and dispel myths about organ, tissue, and eye donation and transplantation. Presentations are free to the public and tailored to the specific audience. To schedule a speaker for your next event or to learn more about the Speaker's Bureau contact info@donatelifegeorgia.org or call 1-866-57-SHARE. For more information about Donate Life Georgia or to register as an organ donor, visit <https://www.donatelifegeorgia.org/>

Continued on next page.



Reaching out – Prison Ministries

Arrendale Children's Center—This is a great entry point into prison ministry, because it is focused on women and children and because the requirements to get in aren't as rigorous as they are for other volunteering. Volunteers do have to clear a background check. The center is a prison-based parenting program with many components, including parenting classes, pastoral counseling, phone calls, etc. The centerpiece is the Saturday visitation program, which allows mothers and their children to spend a day together in a fun, structured setting. We can support the Center in a couple of ways: volunteering for the visitation day, contributing supplies, or financial support. I am happy to give you more details. Not only is a good way to be introduced to prison ministry, but this is also an opportunity for some of our churches to work in partnership. For more information or to partner with a church already active in this ministry, contact: Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit (Keith Oglesby keith.oglesby@gmail.com) or Grace Calvary (Edith Swarthout eeswarthout@gmail.com or Holly White hwhite@rabungap.org).

Commission on Healing Justice – A joint commission of the Diocese of Atlanta and the Diocese of Georgia that is working toward restorative justice in Georgia. Our laser focus for now is abolishing the death penalty. The commission is made up of lay and ordained people from both dioceses. The Commission is still in the formative stages, but expects to have a platform for people to get involved soon. Contact Cathy Zappa at CZappa@stphilipscathedral.org for more information.

Healing Communities and Stations of Hope – Healing Communities is a faith-based model of reentry, which the Governor's Office of Transition, Support, and Reentry has adopted. They are inviting faith communities to participate by becoming "Stations of Hope," churches/communities who are ready to receive and support someone being released from prison. Visit <http://dcs.georgia.gov/healing-communities-georgia> for more information.

Faithful Friends – This is a new reentry ministry is in development at the Cathedral. "Faithful Friends is a network of individuals who facilitate reentry with women recently released from prison, in order to welcome and encourage them; form healthy, trusted, mutually enriching relationships; and share the journey of reintegration into community." Contact Cathy Zappa at CZappa@stphilipscathedral.org for more information.

Justice Journeys: Education and Advocacy Action Group – Justice Journeys pilgrims carry real, personal stories to government representatives from incarcerated individuals in order to increase awareness of injustices in the criminal justice systems throughout Georgia and the US. The Vision: To inspire major, positive change within the criminal justice system and to help incarcerated individuals experience recovery, release and their best quality of life. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/justicejourneys.org> for more information.

Reentry – Reentry in general is a BIG area of need and an opportunity for us to work together as a diocese. If you are interested in forming a partnership to use our diocesan network to receive people all around Georgia, please contact Cathy Zappa at CZappa@stphilipscathedral.org.



God's Creation - Celebrating the Earth

Earth Day, on April 22, reminds us to nourish what God has given us, the ground under our feet and all of our natural surroundings. God called our earthly home, "good," and he has left it in our hands.

Hikers Eucharist – Nurture and deepen the awe for God's wonderful creation by sharing the wonder of God's creation with a group of like-minded hikers. Schedule a Saturday morning hike. Along the way pause to offer several prayers and have the Eucharist at a spot of beauty & inspiration along the way.

Parish Work Day – A Parish Work Day is a great way to celebrate Earth Day. Organize a fun day for parishioners to gather in fellowship while taking care of some much needed upkeep and yard work.

Organize an Electronics Recycling Drive – The EPA and other agencies suggest that electronic waste (aka e-waste) is the fastest growing waste stream in the world. Chances are, you have outdated electronic appliances gathering dust somewhere in your house right now, and your neighbors probably do too. This Earth Day, help make sure those gadgets end up properly recycled instead of taking up space or leaching toxins in a landfill. Many Habitat for Humanity Restores recycle electronics, which helps the earth and raises money for Habitat. For other locations to recycle electronics in the Atlanta, visit <http://www.ajc.com/news/local/five-ways-recycle-electronics-atlanta/n9YxRVogrtdb0widl9V1KK>

Clean Out Your Closet and Donate to a Charity – It may not always be so obvious, but manufacturing new clothing requires both energy and water, and there are many people who don't have money to buy their own. So this Earth Day, why not clean out your overstuffed closet and then donate those t-shirts and shorts you haven't worn in years to a local charity.

Children's Activities – Coordinate children's activities such as a nature walk, building birdhouses, and educational games.

To learn more about Earth Day, visit <http://www.earthday.org/earth-day>.

April Worksheet

Season: Holy Week and Easter

We can't get to Easter without going through Holy Week. Without Christ's Passion and Death, we can't find the empty tomb. Except for Easter Day itself, the Church's most ancient annual observances center around the events that took place in Jerusalem during the days that led up to Jesus' crucifixion and death. The Church has long recognized the centrality and the essential quality of these events for those who follow the Way of Jesus. The writers of the four Gospels spend a great deal of time describing the events that unfold in the days we remember as Holy Week—so much so, that some biblical scholars refer to everything else contained in the Gospels as “prelude” to the heart of the Good News: Christ's Passion and Death, with Easter as the sign of God's victory over sin and death on the cross. Without these events, none of the rest of the story of Jesus makes sense.



Theme: From Death to Life

Time slows down as the Church moves from the triumphal Palm Sunday procession to the cross. Time slows down in the Gospels as well, as Jesus moves toward his self-offering and death. Probably the greatest acts of stewardship the Church can call us to in this short season center around the use of our time, not least in giving time to join the Holy Week pilgrimage in the liturgies offered. Taking time to enter into these stories with the gathered church really does matter. Considering Christ's complete and perfect offering leads us to consider how we are offering (or not offering) our own lives in service to God and his world, for Christ's sake.

Another fruitful stewardship consideration might center around reconciliation, that is, what is accomplished for us by Christ's death and resurrection. To whom do I need to be reconciled? To whom is your congregation called to reach out in your community? As Jesus entered fully into the suffering of the world, how is he now calling us to do the same? As exercises to lead us into this work, we might consider tasks of mending and repairing, of knitting together and binding up. It is holy and hard work, but it is the Way of our Lord.

Spiritual Growth – Death and Resurrection

Ministry Spotlight on Altar Guild

Financial Health – Death and Taxes

Reach Out – Prison Ministry

God's Creation – Celebrating the Earth

MAY

Season - Easter

The season of Easter gives us the gift of growing into a deeper understanding of the power of the resurrection of Christ. We hear stories of encounters with the risen Christ in the upper room and on the road to Emmaus. Those who had followed his teaching and preaching were slow to recognize Him, but Jesus made Himself known to them through bidding peace, showing them His wounds, and giving thanks and breaking bread. We remember the ascension of Christ and we prepare to celebrate Pentecost.



Theme - Encountering Christ

Luke 24:30-31 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

We encounter Christ in our daily life if we have eyes to see Him. We find Him in visiting the sick or lonely, in watching children worship, in witnessing a beautiful sunrise, and in the sharing of a meal. The question is not, "Does Jesus show up?", but rather, 'Do we remember to show up in our own lives so that we may see Him?' May the Season of Easter be a time in which we intentionally look for the places and spaces in our lives where we encounter Christ so that we might see Him in those with whom we live and move and have our being.



Spiritual Growth - Encountering Christ in the Daily

"Getting from Sunday to Monday is a code phrase for bridging the gap between belief and experience, between what we say, and what we do. It reflects our desire to live authentically, so that the 'trip' from the head to the heart-and eventually to the hand-is congruent with the true self, or God's will for us," writes Linda Douty in her article on the Spirituality Every Day pages of the ExploreFaith website (www.explorefaith.org).

This series focuses on moving from belief to experience, from information to transformation. It can be found at http://www.explorefaith.com/livingspiritually/spirituality_every_day/index.php and includes:

A Rule of Life -- The benefit of sticking to a daily practice, even when you are not feeling motivated.

Becoming Human -- Core Teachings of Jesus: Excerpts from the book by Brian Taylor.

Beyond Nothing but To More Than -- There are five drivers that get in the saddle and drive us. They've got spurs on their boots and they kick us, and all of our emotional miseries come from being dominated by one of those drivers.

Simply Satisfied -- Why simplifying our lives is good for the soul: A series of articles on developing a life of simplicity.

Confronting Lions -- Scripture shows that we must face the trials in our lives by putting our trust in God.



Ministry Spotlight on Women's Ministry

The Episcopal Church has a multitude of Women's Ministries. The ones listed here are only a few of them. If you do not have one of the ministries below, consider exploring starting one in your church. To find out more about women in the Episcopal Church, visit <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/women-church>

Episcopal Church Women – The Episcopal Church Women meet in parishes across the Diocese of Atlanta and gather together twice a year for a daylong meeting in the fall and a weekend retreat in the spring.

Society of St. Anna the Prophet – The Society of St. Anna the Prophet is made up of lay and ordained Episcopal women over the age of 50 who are living the Christian life within vows of simplicity, creativity and balance. Some are single, and some are married or partnered, divorced and widowed. Some are retired, some work part-time, and some are working actively in full-time positions. To learn more about this recognized religious order of The Episcopal Church, founded in Atlanta in 2005, visit the SSAP website at <http://annasisters.org/>

Anglican Women's Empowerment – Since its establishment in 2003, Anglican Women's Empowerment has been working for gender justice as well as the empowerment of women and girls, in the church and the world. Seeking to be faithful to the Gospel, AWE gathers and connects women from the Episcopal Church and throughout the Anglican Communion to share resources and opportunities, the focus of which is to serve the vulnerable in our society. For more information, visit <http://anglicanwomensempowerment.org/>

The Episcopal Women's Caucus – The Episcopal Women's Caucus strives to make real the Gospel vision by challenging the way the church worships, looks at Scripture, lives theology, educates clergy and laity; stimulating the healthy spiritual growth and faith development of adults and children; educating and advocating for the full equality and participation of women of color and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender persons in church and society; and assisting the church to dismantle system racism, sexism, and homophobia. Find out more information at <http://www.ewc-ecusa.com/>

Feature the Women's Ministries in your parish by sending thank you notes to the members, feature stories about the ministry in the newsletter, recognize the members during a worship service, and/or thank the members by name in the Sunday bulletin.



Financial Health - Children and Money

The earlier the better when it comes to teaching our children the value of money, the benefits of saving, and the joy of giving. Embedded in money management education is responsibility, and our children are future grown-ups who need to have the fundamental basics of dealing with grown-up stuff.

The Secrets of the Blue Pig: How to teach your children about saving, spending and sharing. – An article with a variety of concrete ways to teach your children about money. It is available for download at https://www.thrivent.com/money-matters/files/25707_Secrets_of_blue_pig_reprint.pdf

Thrivent Financial offers two interactive, values-based workshops that can help parents and children talk about money. **"Parents, Kids and Money Matters"** is geared toward 6- to 10-year-olds, and **"Parents, Teens and Money Matters"** is designed for ages 11 to 14. For more information, contact our Thrivent Financial representative, Tracy Leary, at tracy.leary@thrivent.com.

Financial Peace University Jr. for Kids, a program from Dave Ramsey, comes with a stockpile of accessories to get your family started. From the piggy bank to a balanced checkbook ledger, your child will learn fiscal responsibility. Visit <http://www.daveramsey.com/store/kids-teens/cYOUTH-p1.html> to learn more.



Reaching Out - Mental Health Awareness

Mental illness affects one in four families, and only half of those living with mental illness are seeking treatment. Consider becoming an advocate to help improve the lives of those living with mental illness. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is a mental health advocacy organization. NAMI focuses on three cornerstones of activity that offer hope, reform, and health to our American community: Awareness, Education, and Advocacy." Visit the NAMI website at <http://www.nami.org/> or the Georgia NAMI website at <http://namiga.org/> for a vast array of resources on becoming involved and becoming an advocate. Help to make your church aware of the resources available to those with mental illness and educate yourself so you can serve as an aid to those in need.

Ending the Silence – Ending the Silence is an in-school presentation from the National Alliance on Mental Illness designed to teach middle and high school students about the signs and symptoms of mental illness, how to recognize the early warning signs and the importance of acknowledging those warning signs. Find out how you can host an Ending the Silence presentation by contacting <http://namiga.org/>

In Our Own Voice – A National Alliance on Mental Illness presentation for the general public to promote awareness of mental illness and the possibility of recovery. The presentation strives to change attitudes, assumptions and stereotypes by describing the reality of living with mental illness. People with mental health conditions share their powerful personal stories in this free, 60- or 90-minute presentation. Find out how you can host an In Our Own Voice presentation by contacting <http://namiga.org/>

Holy Comforter Episcopal Church – Holy Comforter is a unique church and fellowship center reaching out to the intellectually impaired. About 60 percent of the congregation lives with mental illness. For more information about how you can get involved, visit <http://www.holycomforter-atlanta.org/>

The Friendship Center – The Friendship Center is an inclusive day program and community that promotes the mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of adults marginalized by mental health challenges and by poverty. To find out how you can get involved, visit <http://www.friendshipcenter-atlanta.org/>



God's Creation - Plant a Garden

Begin a community garden and watch those in your neighborhood come together to sow seeds.

[Community Garden: 10 Steps to starting a community garden.](#)

ACGA – The American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) is a bi-national nonprofit membership organization of professionals, volunteers, and supporters of community greening in urban and rural communities.

A **Georgia Planting Calendar** is available online at <http://sustainagga.caes.uga.edu/documents/GOplantingcalendar.pdf>. The UGA Extension Office is also a great planting resource: <http://extension.uga.edu/>

May Worksheet

Season: The Season of Easter

The season of Easter gives us the gift of growing into a deeper understanding of the power of the resurrection of Christ. We hear stories of encounters with the risen Christ in the upper room and on the road to Emmaus. Those who had followed his teaching and preaching were slow to recognize Him, but Jesus made Himself known to them through bidding peace, showing them His wounds, and giving thanks and breaking bread. We remember the ascension of Christ and we prepare to celebrate Pentecost.



Theme: Encountering Christ

Luke 24:30-31 ³⁰ *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.* ³¹ *Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.* ³² *They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"*

We encounter Christ in our daily life if we have eyes to see Him. We find Him in visiting the sick or lonely, in watching children worship, in witnessing a beautiful sunrise, and in the sharing of a meal. The question is not, "Does Jesus show up?", but rather, 'Do we remember to show up in our own lives so that we may see Him?' May the Season of Easter be a time in which we intentionally look for the places and spaces in our lives where we encounter Christ so that we might see Him in those with whom we live and move and have our being.

Spiritual Growth – Encountering Christ In The Daily

Ministry Spotlight on Women's Ministries

Financial Health – Children and Money

Reach Out – Mental Health Awareness

God's Creation – Plant A Garden

JUNE

Season - Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Ordinary Time

Pentecost occurs on the fiftieth day after Easter. On this day, we remember the power of the Holy Spirit descending and empowering Peter to preach in such a way that thousands were baptized and came to believe in Christ. During the Season of Pentecost, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to fill us and send us out so that we may witness in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Trinity, the perichoresis (dance) of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. During the Season of Pentecost, we grow through our scripture readings and discover what it means to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the work of Christ in the world.



Theme - The Power of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:4-13 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

We are called by Jesus to go out in the world baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And we are not left alone to act on this call, but rather we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to equip us and light the fire within us to be the hands and feet of Christ. How do we experience the power of the Spirit? Experiences are very different for each person; we might be aware of the Holy Spirit during a Baptism, looking up into the sky lit up by a countless stars, gazing upon a newborn child, or singing a favorite hymn from childhood. The Spirit moves us to live and grow into what it means to be the Body of Christ.



Spiritual Growth - Life in the Spirit

In her sermon, *How to Recognize the Holy Spirit in Your Life*, The Rev. Canon Renée Miller, writer, conference leader and Episcopal priest writes, "I believe that everything that we do in God's name begins by the Spirit of God that is in us. We do not do anything in our own power. However, sometimes we don't acknowledge the power of God's Spirit within us, and we don't rely on that Spirit's power when we serve God." [Read more](#)

Explore the Holy Spirit through [two-way journaling](#). Study provided by Communion with God Ministries.

Consider exploring the Holy Spirit with others; [group study](#) provided by Reformed Evangelism.com

Holy Spirit Journal – Here's our Pentecost challenge: start looking now. Be observant. Be watchful. Ask others: Where have you seen the Holy Spirit? Look. Listen. And when you find something, no matter how big and grand, no matter how insignificant or small, write it down or make a mental note to remember what you experienced or observed or heard. Jot down a few words to refresh your memory or pick a particular way to remind yourself. Why are you doing this? What you focus on becomes your reality. If you start looking for the action of the Holy Spirit you will see more of what God is doing in your life, the lives of others, and in the church. The second reason is: You will have a journal of the Holy Spirit. Your journal can be internal or external, an actual journal or in your heart and mind. Keeping a journal of the Holy Spirit reminds us to live daily into the person Jesus calls us to be: to love, to serve, and to worship God above all else in our lives. (*The Rev. Nicolette Papanek*)



Ministry Spotlight on Fathers and Men's Ministries

Father's Day is traditionally celebrated on the third Sunday in June. It is a special day to honor fathers and other men who have influenced our lives. Feature the Men's Ministries in your parish by sending thank you notes to the members, feature stories about the ministry in the newsletter, recognize the members during a worship service, and/or thank the members by name in the Sunday bulletin.

The Brotherhood of Saint Andrew is an international ministry to men and boys in the Anglican / Episcopal Church. The Brotherhood was founded in 1883, and was incorporated in 1908 by an Act of Congress, signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. The Boy Scouts of America, and the Brotherhood are the only two organizations incorporated by an act of Congress. The incorporation of the Brotherhood reads: "The sole purpose of the Brotherhood is the spread of Christ's Kingdom." The mission of the Brotherhood is to bring men and boys into the deepest possible relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ by following the rules of prayer, study, and service. Recognize those in your congregation that are involved in the Brotherhood of Saint Andrew ministry. If you do not have anyone participating in this ministry consider learning more about it at <http://www.brothersandrew.net/>

Ideas for celebrating Father's Day

Consider having a church breakfast-- recognizing fathers who have the most kids, grandkids, or the oldest dad and youngest dad. Or how about highlight fathers with an art gallery (or slide show) of children's portraits or photos of their fathers. Honor those whose fathers have died, those not present for other reasons--military, work, divorce. Father's Day can be a sad time for those people whose dads are no longer living. The online resource ehow.com offers many ways to honor a deceased father or grandfather on Father's Day, and to keep his memory alive.



Financial Health – Renting vs Owning & Mortgages

Navigating the housing market can be overwhelming. Is buying a home better than renting? What do you need to consider before purchasing a home? How do mortgages work? What are the pros and cons to refinancing? Offering an educational workshop on home ownership is a great way to help people be better stewards of their resources. In addition to these online resources, consider contacting a local bank, financial advisor, or realtor to lead an educational workshop.

Khan Academy – Khan Academy offers free online classes that explore a wide range of subjects including renting vs. buying a home as well as a mortgage tutorial. In addition to using the video classrooms for workshops, the resource could be shared with members of your congregation in a newsletter article or in the Sunday bulletins. More information available at <https://www.khanacademy.org/economics-finance-domain/core-finance/housing/renting-v-buying/v/renting-vs-buying-a-home>

Money Crashers – Money Crashers has a very detailed article "Renting vs. Buying a House – How to Make a Decision, Pros & Cons" at <http://www.moneycrashers.com/rent-or-buy-a-house/>

Bank Rate – Bankrate's step-by-step guide will help you understand the sometimes-difficult journey to homeownership. Chapters includes Rent or Buy – Should You Rent or Buy, How Much Can You Afford; Mortgage Types – About Fixed-Rate Loans, About ARMs, 7 Facts About FHA Loans, Other Mortgage Types; Know Before You Buy – Your Credit Score, About Down Payments, Low Down Payment Loans, Beat Student Loan Debt, PMI (Mortgage Insurance), Should You Pay Points, How Lenders Set Rates, Why Get Preapproval; Applying – Avoid Mortgage Mistakes, Q's to Expect From Lenders, Papers You'll be Asked For, Good Faith Estimate Guide, Disclosures You'll Get, Rate Lock Q-and-A, From Approval To Closing, Inspections and

Insurance, Snags Can Trip You Up, When You're Rejected; Closing – What to Expect At Closing, Saving In An Escrow Account; Owning – About Mortgage Servicing, Why Your Payments Change, The Scoop On Paying Ahead, Removing PMI, Refinancing The Mortgage, and How to Avoid Foreclosure. The guide is available at <http://www.bankrate.com/finance/mortgages/mortgages.aspx>



Outside Ourselves - Reach out to Those Who Cannot Afford Homes

Habitat for Humanity – Atlanta Habitat for Humanity transforms communities by acting as a catalyst for neighborhood revitalization through education, innovative development, partnerships, and long term relationships with families. Join a Faith Build to build home for a needy family. More information at <http://www.atlantahabitat.org/>

You can also support Habitat for Humanity by shopping or donating to one of their many ReStore outlets.

Find a Habitat affiliate or Habitat ReStore in your area here: <http://wp.habitatgeorgia.org/find-your-habitat/>

Family Promise – Family Promise helps homeless and low-income families achieve sustainable independence by integrating educational outreach, smart programming, effective policies, and the hands-on work of thousands of volunteers. They provide food, shelter, and support services for homeless families. Host Congregations rotate hosting of families weekly among Host Congregations in the Network. In turn, each host congregation provides lodging, three meals a day, and caring hospitality 3-4 times a year. Support Congregations are paired with one or more Host Congregation to provide meals and dining hospitality, overnight hosts, set up/take down, and supplies. They may also provide Network volunteers such as Van Drivers, Day Center volunteers, Fund Raising & Special Events. Several Episcopal Churches in the Diocese of Atlanta are currently Family Promise partners including Ascension, St. Dunstan's, Holy Innocents, St. Columba's, Holy Spirit, St. Catherine's, St. James, St. Peter and St. Paul, Grace, and Resurrection. For more information, visit <http://familypromise.org/>

Church of the Common Ground – A worshipping community in downtown Atlanta that provides support for the spiritual, social, emotional and physical needs of people without a place to live. At Church of the Common Ground, we believe each person has unique gifts they bring to our church family.

We are always looking for men and women from other congregations to serve alongside our parishioners to spread the Good News that we are all God's Beloved. We currently need volunteers for:

Foot Clinic: Wash, massage and pamper feet and listen to the stories of folks who come to refresh themselves at our weekly foot clinic, Common Soles.

Office Work: If you have a knack for organization or a gift with technology, Church of the Common Ground could use your skills for assistance in the office. By providing support with crucial office work, Mary is able to spend more time on the streets and visiting with parishioners.

Pastoral Care Givers: If you feel a call to be a witness to the lives of our brothers and sisters on the streets, you may feel comfortable joining Mary to offer pastoral care. The goal is to be a holding place for men and women on the streets, not to "fix," but to be with. We also need pastoral caregivers to visit parishioners in jails and prisons or to accompany folks to hospital visits. You may chose to be dedicated to one or two individuals developing a close relationship or spend time getting to new friends by walking to streets of downtown.

Sunday Visitors: Church of the Common Ground celebrates Eucharist at 1pm in Woodruff Park. We welcome visiting churches, youth groups and organizations to join in worship with us. Our wish is, through common prayer and fellowship, we can begin to breakdown barriers that separate people.

Because of this, we ask that visitors participate fully in service and provide lunches to share with parishioners during our fellowship hour after service. To find out more information about how you or your group can best share in Sunday Service, please review the handout here.

Supply Needs: Church of the Common Ground is so thankful for the gifts from individuals and parish communities that so faithfully give to our church. If you are able to donate supplies, some of our ongoing needs include:

New, white crew socks for our Common Soles Foot Clinic
Packages of peanut butter or cheese crackers
individual water flavor packets
New reading glasses, especially higher strengths
gift cards to McDonald's, Subway or Kroger
MARTA cards

Church of the Common Ground tries to be faithful to its mission to be a pastoral presence on the streets of Atlanta. We work closely with the various service providers in Downtown Atlanta. If there is a specific donation you would like to extend to Church of the Common Ground, please contact us at 404-438-1016 (Church cell, which is checked daily) or info@churchofthecommonground.org. Learn more online at <http://www.churchofthecommonground.org/>

Rainbow Village – Rainbow Village is a community of transformation for homeless families with children from across Georgia. Most of the heads-of-household at Rainbow Village are women who have fled lives full of domestic violence and poverty. Community Partners provide meals weekly for Rainbow Village families on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in our Campus Community Center. Meals provide the chance for staff, residents, and the community to fellowship together. Ideal opportunity for groups! More information and other volunteer opportunities at <http://rainbowvillage.org/>



God's Creation – Wildlife Habitats

Become certified as a “**Community Wildlife Habitat**” from the National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org/Get-Outside/Outdoor-Activities/Garden-for-Wildlife/Community-Habitats.aspx

Learn about creating pollinator habitat from the Xerces Society’s “**Pollinator Conservation Handbook**” www.xerces.org

Use **Audubon Society** resources to create habitat for birds, bats and butterflies http://web4.audubon.org/bird/at_home/

Plant shade trees to reduce heat gain and help with storm water management

Wildlife Sanctuary Certification – Atlanta Audubon Society’s Wildlife Sanctuary Program encourages property owners to enhance their land for birds and other wildlife. Through planting and providing native plants, removing or controlling exotic species, and providing food, water, and shelter for wildlife, local property owners can provide critical wildlife habitat and create a safe-haven for wildlife. Visit <http://www.atlantaaudubon.org/backyard-wildlife-sanctuary-certify> for more information.

Georgia DNR – The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division has a myriad of resources available for attracting wildlife at <http://www.georgiawildlife.org/BackyardWildlife>

Certified Pollinator Habitat – Monarchs Across Georgia program through Environmental Education Alliance: http://www.eealliance.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=27%3Amap&id=59%3Aapollinator-habitat-certification-program&Itemid=93

June Worksheet

Season: Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, Ordinary Time

Pentecost occurs on the fiftieth day after Easter. On this day, we remember the power of the Holy Spirit descending and empowering Peter to preach in such a way that thousands were baptized and came to believe in Christ. During the Season of Pentecost, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit to fill us and send us out so that we may witness in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Sunday after Pentecost, we celebrate the Trinity, the perichoresis (dance) of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. During the Season of Pentecost, we grow through our scripture readings and discover what it means to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the work of Christ in the world.



Theme: Encountering Christ

1 Corinthians 12:4-13 *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

We are called by Jesus to go out in the world baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And we are not left alone to act on this call, but rather we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit to equip us and light the fire within us to be the hands and feet of Christ. How do we experience the power of the Spirit? Experiences are very different for each person; we might be aware of the Holy Spirit during a Baptism, looking up into the sky lit up by a countless stars, gazing upon a newborn child, or singing a favorite hymn from childhood. The Spirit moves us to live and grow into what it means to be the Body of Christ.

Spiritual Growth – Life in the Spirit

Ministry Spotlight on Fathers and Men's Ministries

Financial Health – Renting vs Home Ownership and Mortgages

Reach Out To Those Who Cannot Afford Homes

God's Creation – Wildlife Habitats

JULY

Season - Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time, also known as the Season after Pentecost, is the longest season of the church year. It is a time for us to focus on Christian Life. Parables are part of our scripture readings during this time, and they draw us in to discovering what it means to be a Christian. Parables take ordinary aspects of life, seeds, sowers, weeds, and fish and weave them into a story that turns us upside down and inside out. Every time we enter a parable, we discover something new about ourselves and our relationship with God and each other.



Theme - Vacation/Liberation

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Ordinary Times is the church season that contains summer, which is an opportunity for us set apart a time from our "ordinary days" of work and school. Changes to our routines allow us to moments of rest, recreation, and freedom. By spending time "re-creating", we can discover glimpses of God in our lives in ordinary places such as parks, seashores, and mountains, but in extraordinary ways. We can take the time to breathe in the awesomeness of God's creation and be blessed by a sunset or a pelican swooping down low across the water. By resting and enjoying moments free from our daily routines, we can be restored, emotionally and spiritually fed, and truly enjoy the time with family and friends without worrying about what work is not getting done.



Spiritual Growth - Sabbath Time

The Meaning of Sabbath

The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word shavat, meaning "to cease and desist." This definition gives us some indication of what Sabbath is all about. Sabbath is referred to a number of times in the Old Testament. In Exodus 20: 1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21, the observance of Sabbath on the seventh day of the week as a holy day is commanded. The passage from Exodus is part of a dialogue between God and Moses at Mount Sinai. In this dialogue, God lays down the purpose of the Sabbath as both a covenant between God and the people of Israel and a day of rest to be observed faithfully.

The above text is posted on [My Faith My Life: A Place for Episcopal Teens and Their Mentors](#). The link offers a great resource not only teens, but for all of us as we seek a deeper understanding of Keeping the Sabbath.

Ask parishioners how they keep the Sabbath. Include responses in Sunday bulletins or newsletter.

Schedule a Sabbath Retreat – Invite a mentor to come and lead you in devotions and prayer. Spend an entire weekend basking in the love of God.



Ministry Spotlight: Parish Life

Members of the Parish Life Ministry are often known as the church's party planners, but they much more than that. We come together at the altar, but events organized by Parish Life are the threads that strengthen our bonds to one another. If we are to do God's work in the world, we must get to know each other. Without

fellowship this cannot be accomplished. Fellowship is a critical entity and must extend beyond our Sunday services. Parish Life offers us a myriad of opportunities for fellowship, which help us grow as a body and as individuals in Christ.

Send a thank you note to each member of the Parish Life ministry.

Create a slide show with pictures from events organized by Parish Life.

Feature one or members of Parish Life in each Sunday's bulletin.

Write an open thank you letter to the members of the Parish Life ministry in the newsletter.

Christmas In July – This is a great day of fun and fellowship with Christmas karaoke, pot-luck Christmas cookies and homemade ice cream! The children and youth won't want to miss the "Melted Snow Slide" (aka water slide) and "Melted Snow Ball Fights" (aka water balloons). The ministries create a wish list and since Santa is on vacation in July, everyone needs to help him out by choosing something off the wish list, writing it on the back of an ornament made by the children, and hanging it on the tree! It's a great way to celebrate the life of the parish while helping ministries obtain some needed supplies and/or help. For more information contact Tammy Pallot at tammypallot@gmail.com.



Financial Health - Wise Consumer Spending

In 2000, people spent \$7.98 billion on video games. By 2010, people spent \$19.66 billion on video games. Somehow, people "found" an additional \$11.68 billion a year in 2010. That amount could have stopped child deaths and evangelized the world. We need to get organized about Jesus' priorities and educate our parishioners about spending. This month consider having a Sunday school class or workshop to help your parishioners be wise consumers. Below are a few of the resources available.

Money Sanity Solutions – Linking Money + Meaning is designed to get families talking about money by leveraging everyday life experiences. Topics include: budgeting basics, spending with a conscience, learning to earn, savings revolution, gift giving/receiving, etc. Nathan introduces all 15 chapters with lively and engaging DVD video segments that provide insights, stories, and wisdom from his 20—plus years of working with families and organizations. Each chapter includes thought-provoking conversation starters, relevant case studies, as well as activities and exercises (20 downloadable PDFs). Purchase online at <http://www.sharesavespend.com/products/money-sanity-solutions>

Practical Money Skills for Life – Give your students a deeper understanding of money management using a curriculum offered by Practical Money Skills. Here you'll find lesson plans for students of all ages – from preschoolers and elementary school students to teens and college students. We also offer course materials for students with special needs. Topics range from the basics for the very young, such as "What is Money?" and "Spending Plans" to more comprehensive courses for young adults who are about to venture off into financial independence. These more advanced courses cover everything from budgeting and bill paying to the influence of advertising and issues of consumer privacy. Here, educators will find everything they need to teach a class on personal finance. Our lecture guides, worksheets and even quizzes and tests are free to download and ready to use. Available for download at http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/foreducators/lesson_plans/

The National Endowment for Financial Education – NEFE is a nonprofit foundation dedicated to helping you make sound financial decisions throughout life's ups and downs. They offer practical articles, worksheets, tips and valuable resources from across the Web to help you understand and manage your money. For more information, visit <https://www.smartaboutmoney.org/>



Reach out - Staying Connected to Graduating Seniors

As summer comes to a close, many high school graduates are preparing to leave for college. For some, the prospect of leaving home can result in mixed emotions including excitement, uncertainty and even sadness. With many moving away from their families and faith communities, supporting them in their faith journeys is essential.

The Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta has created **A Bridge from Congregation to College** as a means of connecting Young Adults to Campus Ministries. Please encourage your graduating seniors to fill out the registration at <http://www.eycdioatl.org/a-bridge-from-congregation-to-college.html> You can also contact Easton Davis, the Missioner for Youth & Young Adult Ministry, at edavis@episcopalatlanta.org or 404-343-9870.

Consider starting a mentor or support group to encourage students in their first year. Perhaps there are adults within your congregation that would like to befriend a college-bound senior, sending notes of encouragement and/or small care packages through the year. Alma Mater spirit runs deep, so consider pairing a student with an adult alumnus who attended the same college or university as a student.

Wisdom Jar – Make a decorated jar for each graduating senior. Place it in the Parish Hall with paper and pens and ask parishioners to write a short note to each senior wishing them well and giving them "wise words" as they continue their journey to adulthood. Give the filled jars to the senior as a graduation or going away gift.

Graduation Blessing – Honor your graduating seniors during worship service with a blessing and a gift from the parish, such as a rosary, episcopal shield, or cross. Items are available at the Cathedral Bookstore or online at <http://www.cathedralbookstore.org/>



God's Creation - Water Conservation

Being good stewards to all of God's gifts is essential, and water is one of our most precious gifts. Water usage among North Americans is staggering when compared to those in developing countries.

According to WaterAidAmerica.org, the average North American uses 400 liters of water or **105.7 gallons every day**. The average person in the developing world uses 10 liters of water or **2.64 gallons every day** for their drinking, washing and cooking. (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC)) Learn more interesting facts about water usage and the trickle-down effects access, or lack of, has on everything from disease to education.

100 easy ways to conserve water at <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve>.

Plant a rain garden or install a bioswale – www.raingardennetwork.com

Repair leaking pipes, fixtures and seals and consider purchasing low-flow toilets and waterless urinals

Install controls that turn faucets off automatically, and/or put reminder signs near faucets to not run water unnecessarily

July Worksheet

Season: Ordinary Time

Ordinary Time, also known as the Season after Pentecost, is the longest season of the church year. It is a time for us to focus on Christian Life. Parables are part of our scripture readings during this time, and they draw us in to discovering what it means to be a Christian. Parables take ordinary aspects of life, seeds, sowers, weeds, and fish and weave them into a story that turns us upside down and inside out. Every time we enter a parable, we discover something new about ourselves and our relationship with God and each other.



Theme: Vacation/Liberation

Matthew 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Ordinary Times is the church season that contains summer which is an opportunity for us to set apart a time from our "ordinary days" of work and school. Changes to our routines allow us to moments of rest, recreation, and freedom. By spending time "re-creating", we can discover glimpses of God in our lives in ordinary places such as parks, seashores, and mountains, but in extraordinary ways. We can take the time to breathe in the awesomeness of God's creation and be blessed by a sunset or a pelican swooping down low across the water. By resting and enjoying moments free from our daily routines, we can be restored, emotionally and spiritually fed, and truly enjoy the time with family and friends without worrying about what work is not getting done.

Spiritual Growth – Sabbath Time

Ministry Spotlight on Parish Life

Financial Health – Wise Consumer Spending

Reach Out to Graduating Seniors

God's Creation – Water Conservation

AUGUST

Season - Ordinary Time

In our lectionary readings during the month of August, we continue to learn what it means to say, "I believe." Everything we do and say is a reflection of our heart. Are we learning to love as Jesus loves or to see one another as Jesus sees us? Jesus asks us to trust in Him in all we do for the kingdom of God. We learn from Peter just how hard it is to trust enough to "walk on water" even when Jesus is waiting for us with outstretched arms. In spite of our weakness, Jesus trusts us to build His church and to be his hands, heart, eyes, and feet in the world.



Matthew 16:18-19 And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Theme - Family

Jesus does not call us to shine the light of Christ in the world by ourselves, but rather we are members of the Body of Christ working together to do this work. God puts people in our lives, our families, friends, and faith communities, so that we may learn, grow, and share our journeys with one another. Our families are where we learn to form relationships, make decisions, and develop boundaries. This time of year is a wonderful time to focus on spending time with family; take the time to have fun together before the business of fall begins all over again. Go to the park, the beach, the mountains, or wherever brings you joy.

Psalms 47:1 Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.



Spiritual Growth - Covenant Relationships

Developing Covenant Relationships

The online resource Dictionary.com defines covenant several ways, among the definitions:

1. an agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified.
2. *Ecclesiastical*. a solemn agreement between the members of a church to act together in harmony with the precepts of the gospel.
3. the conditional promises made to humanity by God, as revealed in Scripture.
4. the agreement between God and the ancient Israelites, in which God promised to protect them if they kept His law and were faithful to Him.

John David Hicks, Evangelist and Bible Teacher, in his article [Developing Covenant Relationships](#), references 1 Samuel 18:1,3

After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself . . . And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

Hicks goes on to write, Jonathan and David give us an example of a covenant relationship--one in which there is unconditional acceptance, loyalty and commitment to one another. It is the fulfillment of Jesus' words in John 13:35, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." In the book of Acts, it was the quality of life and fellowship that caused the world to look in and say, "Behold, how they love one

another." The New Testament Greek word for this love and fellowship is *koinonia*. It means a relationship with God and other Christians that is interwoven in covenant and implies a deliberate, deep commitment with open, honest caring and sharing. It was commonly used to refer to an enduring commitment of a business partnership or a marriage.

Authentic relationships take effort and work. The key to friendships is not trying to find the right person. It is being the right person. A friend is a person whose needs you can meet, not someone you look for to meet your needs. The commitment is to be a friend, not the desire to have a friend. Relationship means the mutual sharing of life between two or more persons. We need friendships. True enjoyment is not found in what we do but in our relationships. The Bible tells us that life is found in loving. Reaching out can be uncomfortable, but it is what a true Christian must do.

Create a Family Covenant – The National Council of Churches offers a great resource for creating a Family Covenant. The instructions are designed for a group gathering, but can also be used for a single family. It is available at <https://www.belairnazarene.org/ministry/fuse/create-a-covenant/>. Another example of a Family Covenant is available at <http://storage.cloversites.com/marinecreekchurch/documents/Family%20Covenant%20-%20Example.pdf>

Create a Family Covenant for Your Parish – A “family” isn’t only people who are biologically related to one another. Consider how the church functions as a family and develop a family covenant.

Family Technology Covenant – Establishing family rules for technology use, and especially online use, can be complicated. [StickyJesus.com](http://stickyjesus.com) is an online resource whose mission is to equip you, the Christ follower, to live out your faith boldly in your online communities and move confidently in the online world all while sharing the gospel in powerful, relevant ways." Their *Family Ground Rules Guide for living Sticky (and Safe) Online* provides a great covenant for parents and children to sign in regard to online use and safety. It is available at http://stickyjesus.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/FNL_SJ_FamGrndRules.pdf



Ministry Spotlight - Teachers

With school starting up, August is a great month to spotlight the ministry of teaching. Schoolteachers are certainly what comes to mind when we think of educators, but it is not necessary to limit your recognition to school teachers alone. Think of all those who have been educators in your life and let them know how much you appreciate them. Feature the teachers in your parish by sending individual thank you notes, feature stories about them in the newsletter, recognize teachers during a worship service, and/or thank teachers by name in the Sunday bulletin.

Consider those who teach within your church--those who teach Sunday school (children and adults alike), music teachers, youth directors, your priest and those who teach through outreach ministries.

A teacher's highest reward is feeling the true appreciation and gratitude of his or her current or former students. If you feel that a particular teacher is or has been crucial in your personal growth, or in your child's life, or if you are simply fond of him or her and the way they teach, don't be shy to let them know. You'll feel great and you will give that person the best possible gift, because teaching is their life. The website <http://www.teacher-appreciation.info/> offers ideas on recognizing teachers.

Finding a Former Teacher - The internet offers free resources for finding people. If your favorite teacher is retired or no longer teaches at the school you attended, try finding him or her through social media websites such as [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) or consider using the free search engine [whitepages.com](http://www.whitepages.com) and online U.S. white page directory.



Financial Health – Church Savings with a Ministry Fair

Many people in your church may not be able to increase their financial contribution, but they can volunteer their time, talents, and abilities to the church. Whether it's mowing the lawn, vacuuming the foyer, or designing PowerPoint sermon slides, volunteers can make a huge difference in the financial life of a church. Rather than depending on hired help, consider recruiting volunteer helpers. One way to recruit volunteers is with a Ministry Fair.

Organize a Ministry Fair - A Ministry Fair is a wonderful way for parishioners to meet and gather information about the various ministries, committees, organizations, and educational opportunities that are available within the parish community. Each ministry is showcased through the use of a display at a table or booth.

The fair serves to educate parishioners about stewardship while also helping them grow in their relationship with the Lord. This festive event allows parishioners to ask questions, discern their many gifts and talents, and learn how they can share their gifts within a particular parish ministry. For those already involved in ministry, parishioners are afforded an opportunity to recommit their time and talent in order to carry out the parish's mission statement and help build the Kingdom of God on earth. A Ministry Fair also encourages the practice of stewardship of time and talent by fostering a deeper realization about our Baptismal call to be followers and disciples of Jesus Christ.

Read more from the "How to Organize a Ministry Fair" provided by the Catholic Diocese of Venice Florida at <http://dioceseofvenice.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/2006-Ministry-Fair.pdf>

A Guide for Organizing a Ministry Fair is available from the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland at http://catholicstewardship.com/documents/doc_view/474-ministry-fair-process

Ministry Fair Booklet – Create a booklet that includes a description of each ministry and who to contact for more information. Be creative in your descriptions and think about ways to make your ministries sound appealing to others. Include lots of pictures to make the booklet visually stimulating. A Ministry Fair Booklet is a great resource for current members as well as for a newcomers packet. An example is available at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzKVcwcM6wF7eHdoYzROYktoSOU/view?usp=sharing>

Ministry Spotlight – During worship have one or two ministry leaders give a brief “sales pitch” for their ministry. The leader should tell the congregation what their ministry does, why it is great, and how they can get involved. Have the leader be available after the service to answer questions and recruit new volunteers.



Reaching Out - School Supplies

School Supplies have gotten extremely expensive and often can cost as much or more than \$75 per child or more for secondary school students. And for those families with multiple children, covering the cost of school supplies can be difficult. Add to that school clothes and the additional donations that many public schools are asking of parents, and the start of school can be very overwhelming. Consider having a school supply drive for those in your congregation and or for those in your local community that might need help.

Adopt a school – Check with the school to see what they need. If you are donating supplies to give to children at the beginning of school, ask for a supply list or if the school buys in bulk consider buying supplies through the school. If you would like to donate supplies to a classroom, consider working with a particular grade and or teacher and request a wish list.

Kids helping kids – Consider a youth-sponsored event to raise money for school supplies: a taco or bake sale, parent's night out, movie night for kids, arts and crafts, perhaps an overnight church lock-in for older children. Use the proceeds to buy school supplies.

Path to Shine – Path to Shine is a unique after-school mentoring and tutoring program for at risk and underserved children. We aspire to inspire these children to achieve hope-filled dreams and encourage them to stay in school until they graduate by partnering with faith communities that provide academic support necessary for elementary students. We hope to develop good academic skills and self-confidence in the students, needed for them to find their own “path to shine.” Contact a Path to Shine online at <http://pathtoshine.weebly.com/> or contact a Path to Shine program near you to find out what supplies are needed and how you can get involved. Path to Shine programs are currently sponsored by:

St. Teresa's in Acworth
Holy Trinity in Decatur
St. Clements in Canton
St. Thomas' in Columbus
St. Edward's in Lawrenceville
St. Francis and Christ Church in Macon
Olive Springs Baptist Church in Marietta
St. Augustine's of Canterbury in Morrow
St. Bede's in North Atlanta
St. Christopher's at the Crossroads in Perry
St. Aidan's and St. David's in Roswell
San Benedict's in Smyrna
All Saints in Warner Robins

Online bulk school supplies resources: [Dollar Tree](#) and [Dollar Days](#)

Appleton Episcopal Ministries has been a diocesan ministry with a focus on children for more than 140 years. The mission of Appleton Episcopal Ministries is to share God's love by partnering as parishes in the Macon Convocation of the Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta to promote the health, safety, education, and well-being of children and families. Appleton is funded, in part, by a special offering for Appleton Episcopal Ministries to be taken in all churches "on Thanksgiving Day or between the Sundays preceding and following Thanksgiving Day, both inclusive" as directed by diocesan Canon 24. To learn more about Appleton and how you can get involved, visit <http://www.appletonepiscopal.org/>



God's Creation - Emergency Preparedness

Caring for ourselves, our loved ones, neighbors and even strangers is part of what God calls us to do. While caring is a part of our day-to-day routines, offering care and help during an emergency situation is something that we might not always prepare ourselves to do. Take time this month to review, train and plan for emergency situations.

Create a Parish Disaster Preparedness Plan – We need to prepare our families, our homes, and our congregations and institutions for the unexpected and unpredictable. By working to be prepared, we are acknowledging our vulnerability against these potential disasters, while working to empower ourselves and, hopefully, to minimize the damage and destruction they cause. Several disaster plans are available online, including:

FEMA Guide for Developing High-Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship

https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1919-25045-2833/developing_eops_for_houses_of_worship_final.pdf

Diocese of Oklahoma Disaster Preparedness Plan: A Resource Tool For Congregations

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/162/file/Diocesan%20Disaster%20Preparedness%20Plan%20-%20Fillable.pdf>

A Resource Manual Developed by Province IV of the Episcopal Church

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/105/file/ProvIV-Disaster-Manual.pdf>

Parish Emergency Planning by the Diocese of Texas

<http://www.episcopalrelief.org/uploads/EducationFileModel/106/file/Diocese-TX-Parish-Emergency-Planning-Guide.pdf>

CPR or First Aid Class – To see what classes are available in your area or to organize one at your congregation, visit the American Red Cross website at <http://www.redcross.org/courses/index.jsp>

Create an Emergency Phone Tree – After a natural disaster, how will you know which parishioners need help? An emergency telephone tree allows you to get messages to and check on the wellbeing groups of people quickly and effectively. The tree divides call responsibility between the group. The first person on the tree may have three people to call; each of these people will call another three people. This carries on until the entire group has the message. Instructions and a template are available at <https://www.techwalla.com/articles/how-to-create-an-emergency-telephone-tree-template>

Family Disaster Plan – Encourage members to create their own Family Disaster Plans. Information and examples are available on the American Red Cross webpage at <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/be-red-cross-ready/make-a-plan>

Episcopal Relief and Develop has compiled a multitude of resources regarding disaster planning and response, which are available at <http://www.episcopalrelief.org/press-and-resources/resource-library?q=&category=5&topic=&perpage=50&useFullQuery=true>

The **Rev. Paul McCabe** is the **Disaster Planning and Response Coordinator for the Diocese of Atlanta**. Multiple resources, including his contact information, at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Resources/Disaster-Response>.

August Worksheet

Season: Ordinary Time

In our lectionary readings during the month of August, we continue to learn what it means to say, “I believe.” Everything we do and say is a reflection of our heart. Are we learning to love as Jesus loves or to see one another as Jesus sees us? Jesus asks us to trust in Him in all we do for the kingdom of God. We learn from Peter just how hard it is to trust enough to “walk on water” even when Jesus is waiting for us with outstretched arms. But in spite of our weakness, Jesus trusts us to build His church and to be his hands, heart, eyes, and feet in the world.



(Matthew 16:18-19) ***And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.***

Theme: Family

(Psalm 47:1) ***Clap your hands, all you peoples; shout to God with loud songs of joy.***

Jesus does not call us to shine the light of Christ in the world by ourselves, but rather we are members of the Body of Christ working together to do this work. God puts people in our lives, our families, friends, and faith communities, so that we may learn, grow, and share our journeys with one another. Our families are where we learn to form relationships, make decisions, and develop boundaries. This time of year is a wonderful time to focus on spending time with family; take the time to have fun together before the business of fall begins all over again. Go to the park, the beach, the mountains, or wherever brings you joy.

Spiritual Growth – Covenant Relationships

Ministry Spotlight on Teachers

Financial Health – Ministry Fair

Reach Out – School Supplies

God's Creation – Emergency Preparedness

SEPTEMBER

Season - Ordinary Time

Jesus calls us to love one another as He loves us, which includes having merciful and forgiving hearts. This is hard work, but it is the work we are called to do as Christians. We are also called to welcome all in the kingdom of God regardless of when one's heart is transformed by the Holy Spirit. Fall is a time in the life of the church when we reconnect with those who have been gone over the summer as well as a time of welcoming newcomers to the community. The ministry of hospitality is an integral part of our mission as a church regardless of when someone shows up in our midst!



Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Matt. 20:16

Theme - The Rhythm of Fall

In late August and early September, we anticipate returning to the rhythm of our normal routine. For some, this time finds us preparing for a new school year and returning to extracurricular activities such as soccer, football, or piano lessons. In our church communities, Sunday School is gearing up and plans for Rally Days and Ministry Fairs are right around the corner. There is a rhythm, perhaps rapid for some, and familiarity to this season; everyone seems to be back to "where they belong." As Nat King Cole used to sing, "Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer" are drawing to a close, and our faces are turned towards fall.



Spiritual Growth - Developing Spiritual Disciplines

Spiritual disciplines are practices that we willingly pursue in response to a God who created us, saved us, and guides us. Spiritual disciplines draw us closer to God, deepen our understanding of who he is, and help make us into the men and women he desires us to become.

The list of spiritual disciplines is varied and inexact. Prayer, Bible study, Fasting, and Meditation are commonly cited examples of spiritual disciplines. Many people end the list with these four, whereas others add additional activities. One way to explore other spiritual disciplines is by reading *Finding Hope in Hard Times, Seven Spiritual Practices: A Faithful Steward's Guide*, which is available for download at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/Hope_In_Hard_Times_booklet1.pdf

Bible Study - In keeping with the 2011 diocesan theme of "a sower goes out to sow," The Rev. Dr. Jane Patterson and The Rev. Dr. John Lewis invite you into deeper study. "Rooted and Grounded in Love" is a Bible study of the letter of Ephesians. The study, produced by [The Workshop](#), a ministry devoted to teaching faithful Christian practice in the light of the New Testament offers online weekly study session. [Explore weekly lessons](#).

Centering Prayer is a method of silent prayer that prepares us to receive the gift of contemplative prayer, prayer in which we experience God's presence within us, closer than breathing, closer than thinking, closer than consciousness itself. This method of prayer is both a relationship with God and a discipline to foster that relationship.

Daily Meditation - [Forward Movement](#) is a non-profit agency whose mission is to reinvigorate the Episcopal Church day by day. The organization publishes the quarterly devotional Forward Day by Day, as well as pamphlets, booklets, and books that encourage and nourish people in their lives of prayer and faith.



Ministry Spotlight - Youth Ministry

Youth Leaders – Recognize those in your church who are youth leaders. If there is not a youth program in your church consider starting one, or look in your community for other churches who you might partner with. Recognition goes a long way. Honor those who serve during a worship service. Ask parents and teens to right thank-you notes and or perhaps collect for a gift certificate.

Celebrate Youth – Recognize your Youth members. Spotlight different youth each week. Include a write up about them in the Sunday bulletin (who they are, what they do, why they are a treasured member of your church).

Feature members of the youth on your bulletin board.

Send thank you notes to youth acknowledging their contribution to the church.

Feature the Youth Ministry in your parish by sending thank you notes to the members, feature stories about the ministry in the newsletter, recognize the members during a worship service, and/or thank the members by name in the Sunday bulletin.



Financial Health - Retirement Planning

Retirement Planning is often overlooked or put on the back burner. But it is never too late to begin to plan for retirement.

Lynn Miller, in an article titled “[What Your Retirement Planner Doesn't Tell You](#), Save in order to give your Live away, not to retire comfortably,” writes, "There is a difference between most financial planners' thinking about retirement and my own. I don't think of retirement at all, at least not in terms of idle comfort. The alternative to retiring comfortably is not to retire uncomfortably, but to live as an offering to God and of God. I understand my life as a gift that is managed so that I can afford to give it away at any age. I believe I should organize my life as if it were something to use up, to give away, to expend."

Host a Retirement Planning Workshop – Use the resources below or have a local financial manager lead the class.

Thrivent Financial provides information about when to take Social Security, adjusting your financial plan as life changes, IRA income potential, and a retirement planner calculator at <https://www.thrivent.com/goals-and-life-events/goals/planning-for-retirement/>

The [Church Pension Group](#) provides a wealth of resources for life planning.

To help you manage your retirement planning efforts, Money Watch published 16 weeks of posts that describe retirement planning steps you can take each week. Each post contains links to additional articles for further reading, so you can control how much detail you want to read. Available at <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-free-online-retirement-planning-guide/>

CNN has a step-by-step retirement planning guide available at <http://money.cnn.com/pf/money-essentials-retirement-how-much/index.html>

Retirement Planning Tips – Feature retirement planning tips in the Sunday bulletin, newsletter, and/or posters.



Reaching Out – Reaching Across Faiths

“The faith community of Atlanta in partnership with all people of goodwill could make our city more glad and God more at home among us if you and I would dare more greatly than we have before. This is what each faith teaches. That the barriers we encounter and the limits we set are not insurmountable. Giants can be slain. The blind can see. The prisoner can be released. Today is important because no faith alone can accomplish what must be achieved for our common thriving. Until people of faith find a way to work collectively, all faith communities will be looked at suspiciously.

To be committed to interfaith work is an easy thing, really, if you understand God. God is always simply but sublimely calling us to be the words we pray. Listen to the great Sufi Rumi: “I was dead then alive, weeping then laughing. Love came into me and I became fierce like a lion and gentle like an evening star.” Listen to the great Jewish call to worship: “Shema Israel, adonai elohainu adonai ecahd. Hear O Israel the Lord your God is one.”

Listen to Jesus remind his disciples not to be religiously narrow. “I have sheep who are not of this fold,” he told them. My purpose is to go after the lost. Or in another place, real worship is in spirit and in truth. The good news today is God is for all of us. Goodness is for all of us. We were made by good to do good.

I’m saying God is not a Christian, a Jew, or a Muslim. But God is real, and able, good and generous. And while we have this faith in the real world, we serve a yet more real God. That’s all you have to believe to collaborate with others. That there is truth, but none of us have the copyright on it. And our understanding of this truth is evolving. So while we are growing up in the full stature of the divine, let us do those things together that we know are of God. Those things that are ethical and moral.” - *Excerpt from Bishop Robert Wright's 2014 address marking the beginning of Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed's second term.*

Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations – The ecumenical movement is The Episcopal Church's response to Jesus' prayer for his disciples in John 17:21 "that they may all be one." The Office for Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations offers prayers for unity and participates in formal dialogues to nurture a spirit of understanding and respect, while collaborating actively in mission and ministry opportunities. A vast array of resources available at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/blog/eir/resources>

The Islamic Speakers Bureau of Atlanta (ISB) is a dynamic and trusted resource of information about Islam and American Muslims serving the metro Atlanta area and beyond. The ISB offers many services including customized presentations, Interfaith Panels, interfaith and community engagement and much more. The focus of the ISB is to increase religious competency that leads to better communities and a better world. To arrange for a speaker to come to your parish, go to <http://isbatlanta.org/>

The Elijah Interfaith Institute – Elijah’s motto is “Sharing Wisdom, Fostering Peace.” Our mission is to share the wisdom of the world’s great religious traditions. Our scholars have collated and produced excellent resources for religious leaders, academics, teachers and students. You can find sources and commentaries on a variety of topics at <http://elijah-interfaith.org/sharing-wisdom>

Lifting the Veil on Islam – The Islamic Society of Augusta holds a monthly program introducing interesting topics dealing with certain aspects of Islam. Audience will participate in a dialogue with a group of ISA members. This program is open to the public. More information at <http://openhouse.isaugusta.com>

Islamic center of Macon – The Islamic Center of Macon holds a monthly community dinner and lecture series. They also host a quarterly event “Similarities in Our Faith”, with speakers from various faiths. More information at <https://www.facebook.com/IslamicCenterofMacon>

Kids4Peace is a global movement of youth and families, dedicated to ending conflict and inspiring hope in divided societies around the world. Kids4Peace operates international summer camps, leadership programs and a six-year, year-round program for more than 500 Palestinian, Israeli and North American youth. To learn more about Kids4Peace, including how to get involved, visit <http://www.k4p.org/>



God's Creation - Peace and Justice

The Episcopal Church defines advocacy as being involved in efforts to educate, motivate, organize and empower Episcopalians to action for justice, peace and care for all of God's creation. We are charged and empowered by General Convention and Executive Council through resolutions that direct the mission work of the church. These resolutions dictate the policies through which we seek and serve Christ, and advocate justice for all creation.

Explore The Diocese of Atlanta Global Missions opportunities for promoting peace and justice at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Mission-Work/Around-the-World/>

Hold a Gun Violence Awareness Bible Study and Education Class – Resources available at <http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/files/gunviolence/GVP%20Toolkit2.pdf>

Offer Effective Non-Violent Leadership Training for Vestries – <http://epfnational.org/epf-nonviolence-tool-kit/engage-vestry-effective-nonviolent-leadership/>

Organize a Multi-Faith Peace Project – <http://epfnational.org/epf-nonviolence-tool-kit/organize-multifaith-peace-project/>

Create a Community Peace Garden – <http://epfnational.org/epf-nonviolence-tool-kit/create-community-peace-garden/>

Faith and Citizenship: A Guide to Effective Advocacy for Episcopalians available for download at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/faithcitizenship-updated.pdf>

The Episcopal Church Advisory Council for Stewardship of Creation – Resources available at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/ecojustice/episcopal-churchs-advisory-council-stewardship-creation>

Eco-Justice Ministry – Care and justice for all creation is a core value of The Episcopal Church. Eco-justice ministries seek to heal, defend, and work toward justice for all God's creation and to respect the kinship and connection of all that God created through education, advocacy, and action. Information and initiatives available online at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/blog/EcoJustice>

The Episcopal Public Policy Network – The Episcopal Public Policy Network is the national grassroots network of Episcopalians who are engaged in advocating for the public policy issues of the Church. Network members contact members of Congress and the Administration, raise awareness about priority issues, and share their own stories to inform lawmakers and government officials about the impact of particular decisions and policies. More information available at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/office-government-relations>

The Episcopal Ecological Network (EpEN) – We increase our awareness of the responsibility to act in ways that protect, heal, and honor the integrity of God's creation, leading to intentional changes in lifestyles that reflect a reverence for God's Creation. We feel it is necessary to develop responsible individual and community activities which protect and heal all Creation. More information available at <http://www.eenonline.org/>

September Worksheet

Season: Ordinary Time

Jesus calls us to love one another as He loves us, which includes having merciful and forgiving hearts. This is hard work, but it is the work we are called to do as Christians. We are also called to welcome all in the kingdom of God regardless of when one's heart is transformed by the Holy Spirit. Fall is a time in the life of the church when we reconnect with those who have been gone over the summer as well as a time of welcoming newcomers to the community. The ministry of hospitality is an integral part of our mission as a church regardless of when someone shows up in our midst!

(Matthew 20:16) ***Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?' So the last will be first, and the first will be last.***



Theme: The Rhythm of Fall

In late August and early September, we anticipate returning to the rhythm of our normal routine. For some, this time finds us preparing for a new school year and returning to extracurricular activities such as soccer, football, or piano lessons. In our church communities, Sunday School is gearing up and plans for Rally Days and Ministry Fairs are right around the corner. There is a rhythm, perhaps rapid for some, and familiarity to this season; everyone seems to be back to “where they belong.” As Nat King Cole used to sing, “Those Lazy, Hazy, Crazy Days of Summer” are drawing to a close, and our faces are turned towards fall.

Spiritual Growth – Developing Spiritual Disciplines

Ministry Spotlight on Youth Ministry

Financial Health – Retirement Planning

Reach Out Across Faiths

God's Creation – Peace and Justice

OCTOBER

Season - Ordinary Time

In this time of year, the climate begins to change from the end of "hot months" to the beginning of fall. Days are shorter and foliage begins to transition; this change in our environment catches our attention. The month of October tends to find congregations on the cusp of their annual pledge campaigns. We have a heightened awareness of discovering what it means to be stewards, both in our faith communities and beyond. God has entrusted us to care for all God's creation. We do so with all that we are, all that we have, all of the time. Christian Stewardship is living our lives with the realization and gratitude that all that we have is a gift from God.



Theme – Shepherding

(Psalm 8) When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

God gives us all that we need to carry out the work of caring for God's creation; we have to decide to use our gifts to produce fruit from the earth and from our words and actions. Are we tillers of forgiveness and mercy or of greed and judgment? Do we sow love or do we live in fear? Do we show others the kingdom of God by our thoughts, words or actions? Are we living our lives trusting in God's abundance? God has, is, and will provide all that we need to care for one another, the earth, and all that God has entrusted us with. Thanks be to God.



Spiritual Growth - Hospitality Ministries

Dr. Richard J. Krejcir defines Hospitality on the [Into thy Word Ministries website](#), "as a willingness to share, with discernment, what God has given us, including our family, home, finances, and food. It is an attitude of stewardship, where we do not own anything because we are merely the caretaker for the real owner, God. He desires that we share His stuff and His love, and we comply out of reverence and gratitude to Him. In relationships, it is honoring the boundaries of others, and sharing all we have without strings attached. In the church, it is to be welcoming, regardless how we may feel."

Consider these questions as you explore what role Hospitality Ministry plays in your life:

1. What part does Hospitality play in your relationships with church members, friends, coworkers, and family?
2. How does being annoyed counteract Hospitality? What is the cost to others (God, family, friends, neighbors, church, workplace, etc.) when you are a person who is inhospitable?
3. What happens to your relationship with God, with others, and with the opportunities God gives you, when you are unfriendly or are unwilling to share?
4. When have you been filled with Hospitality the most?
5. In what situation did you fail to be Welcoming when you should have?
6. What issue is in your life that would improve with more Hospitality? Do you just give advice, or do you also lend a hand?

Arm Up Your Hospitality by Kathy Copas in Vestry Papers <http://www.ecfvp.org/vestrypapers/welcoming-newcomers/amp-up-your-hospitality/>

The Rev. Canon Stephanie Spellers, Canon to the Presiding Bishop for Evangelism and Reconciliation, provides a **Hospitality 101** program and a **Hospitality 101 Worksheet** on The Episcopal Church website <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/evangelisminitiatives/hospitality-101>

Chris Walker of EvangelismCoach.org identifies [Five Barriers to Effective Church Hospitality](#).



Ministry Spotlight - Clergy

October is Clergy Appreciation Month. It is a special time to recognize and honor your clergy for all they do and all that they are. Betty Mulloy writes in her article [Clergy Appreciation: Honoring the Person and the Call](#), "A pastor's job is as difficult as it is important. As our shepherds, teachers, mentors and God's chosen servants, pastors exercise great love for the people of their congregation. But they also must contend with their own families, personal lives, and finite resources of time, energy, and finances."

Every day, your pastor is at work building your community of faith. You, too, have a role to play in this important work. And showing your gratitude to the pastor is a great place to start. Why not begin by simply saying thank you to your pastor - creatively, tangibly, actively, sincerely. Then, keep the "gratitude attitude" going throughout the year. It's the kind of gift that will mean more than you could ever imagine."

Feature your clergy by asking members to send them thank you notes, feature stories about how they have touched individuals in the newsletter, recognize the clergy during a worship service, and/or include specific reason members are thankful for the clergy in the Sunday bulletin.

Ideas and resources for honoring Clergy:

Focus on the Family website provides an extensive [Clergy Appreciation Planning Guide](#).



Financial Health - Giving in Response to God's Call

Stewardship teaches that all that we have and all that we are is a gift from God. We are the stewards - not only of our financial resources, but also of this created earth, our time, our talents, our families, our relationships, life itself, but most importantly of God's word. Christian stewardship is using the gifts God has given us, to do the work God is calling us to do.

How we use money says more about our value system than anything we say and do. How we value it - hoard it - and spend it defines us. Who are you becoming? Who do you want to be? To explore more on Giving in response to God's Call, visit the [Diocese of Atlanta Commission on Stewardship](#).

- Annual Giving (ordinary stewardship) is the regular practice of returning to God a portion of all that God has given us.
- Capital Giving (extraordinary stewardship) involves the special occasions that arise in the life of Christian communities that call us to give beyond our ordinary habit.
- Planned Giving (legacy stewardship) is the way in which we address the matter of disposing of the accumulations of our lifetime.

Most parishes hold their Annual Pledge Campaigns in October. Remember, stewardship is not about the church budget. Instead of focusing on the church budget, encourage parishioners to spend some time

thinking about God's abundant blessings in their life and to prayerfully consider, "What is God calling you to do with the gifts God has entrusted to you?"

The Diocese of Atlanta Commission on Stewardship has consultants available to assist with your annual campaign. Visit <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Stewardship/Consultants/> to contact a consultant.



Reaching Out – Reconciliation

Atlanta Pride – Support our LGBTQ brothers and sisters by participating in the Integrity Atlanta Pride Eucharist at All Saints Atlanta, help staff the diocese booth at the Pride Festival in Piedmont Park, and/or join the diocese contingent in the Atlanta Pride Parade. More information is available at <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Mission-Work/LGBT-Ministries/Events/>

Reclaiming Hope through Remembering: Pilgrimages to Georgia Sites of Martyrdom – Join other members of the Diocese of Atlanta on the last Saturday in October on a pilgrimage to one of Georgia's sites of martyrdom— most commonly known as lynching sites. All of us—whites and people of color who make up the generations of their descendants— need to acknowledge these martyrs and mark these places where their lives were brutally taken. We will do so in hope for a day when this legacy of terror will be vanished forever, and can break fully into a new dawn of healing. Registration and more information can be found at [https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Dismantling Racism/reclaiming-hope-through-remembering/](https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Dismantling_Racism/reclaiming-hope-through-remembering/)

St. Francis Day, October 4, is a wonderful day to organize a Pet Blessing. This is also a wonderful opportunity to invite your local police department's canine unit. The program provides a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the community and law enforcement. Invite your community to bring their pets, collect supplies for a local pet shelter and see if shelter might bring animals available for adoption. Resources for St. Francis Day, including liturgy, can be found at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/st_francis_day_resources.pdf and [Episcopal Network for Animal Welfare](#).



God's Creation - Food Sustainability

Participate in World Food Day – World Food Day is a day of action against hunger. On October 16, people around the world come together to declare their commitment to eradicate hunger in our lifetime. Because when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number in the world is zero. Learn more at www.worldfooddayusa.org

Become involved in direct farm marketing or other sustainable food practices at your church. See Green Faith's "Repairing Eden" for more ideas at <http://greenfaith.org/resource-center/stewardship/food-and-faith>

Be a pick-up location for Community Supported Agriculture – www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/csa/csa.shtml

Serve Fair Trade, Organic, Bird-Friendly Coffee, and Fair Trade, Organic tea and hot chocolate at all refreshment hours, meals and events.

When purchasing pastries, choose items that are lower in fat and sugar, and are free of trans-fats. Support your local bakery whenever possible.

Serve fresh fruit and vegetables at all community gatherings. Where possible, purchase organic, local and seasonal produce. Find local farmers' markets at www.localharvest.org

Reduce your carbon footprint, and bear moral witness by serving vegetarian meals. Provide at least one vegetarian option at all meals and events. Vegetarian recipes available at www.vegetariansrecipes.org

Choose Certified Organic and Certified Humane meat where available, and support smaller farmers in your community.

Choose sustainable seafood by using Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch guide. www.seafoodwatch.org

Teach members the basics of healthy eating by hosting expert speakers, posting explanatory signs at mealtime, or distributing recipes and helpful guides.

Promote local farmers' markets, farm stands and CSAs in your newsletter or bulletin, and encourage members to garden at home or in a community plot.

October Worksheet

Season: Ordinary Time

In this time of year, the climate in the part of Texas that is our diocese begins to change from the end of “hot months” to the beginning of fall. Days are shorter and foliage begins to transition; this change in our environment catches our attention. The month of October tends to find congregations on the cusp of their annual pledge campaigns. We have a heightened awareness of discovering what it means to be stewards, both in our faith communities and beyond. God has entrusted us to care for all God’s creation. We do so with all that we are, all that we have, all of the time. Christian Stewardship is living our lives with the realization and gratitude that all that we have is a gift from God.



Theme: Shepherding

(Psalm 8) *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

God gives us all that we need to carry out the work of caring for God’s creation; we have to decide to use our gifts to produce fruit from the earth and from our words and actions. Are we tillers of forgiveness and mercy or of greed and judgment? Do we sow love or do we live in fear? Do we show others the kingdom of God by our thoughts, words or actions? Are we living our lives trusting in God’s abundance? God has, is, and will provide all that we need to care for one another, the earth, and all that God has entrusted us with. Thanks be to God.

Spiritual Growth – Hospitality

Ministry Spotlight on Clergy

Financial Health – Giving In Response To God’s Call

Reach Out – Reconciliation

God’s Creation – Food Sustainability

NOVEMBER

Season - All Saints/Christ the King/Thanksgiving

November begins by remembering and celebrating the saints in our lives, those we love but see no longer, who by their life and example have shaped and molded our own lives. God does not call us to live out our faith alone, but rather surrounds us with witnesses, those known to many and those known to us alone, who give us the courage to be steadfast in our faith and to persevere in seeking to know Christ and to make Him known to others. We are called to have hearts full of gratitude and love, and to live out of our thankfulness.



(Hebrews 12:1-2) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Theme - Gratitude

Being thankful changes us! To even recognize that I am thankful, I have to be alert and aware that there are gifts or blessings in my life, but I cannot stop there. Because to be able to recognize that I am thankful means I have to also recognize that what or who I am thankful for comes as a result of something or someone outside of myself.

Thank and thankful means to feel or express gratitude, appreciation, and or acknowledgement. Being thankful makes us aware that we are in relationship with someone other than ourselves. For us as Christians, expressing our thankfulness acknowledges that we are in relationship with God. Expressing thanks also means we are in relationship with someone else or others. Thankfulness calls us to action. We cannot keep gratitude all to ourselves; we must share it with one another. When we become blessings to others in our lives, we continue to grow in our understanding of what it means to be blessed.



Spiritual Growth - Growing Grateful Hearts

"To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch Heaven." – Johannes A. Gaertner

There are many ways to express gratitude: through direct and immediate acknowledgment to others, by keeping and by inner acknowledgment of thankfulness. Gratitude calendars and journals offer an opportunity show gratitude while also setting a positive intention for the day.

Tips for keeping a Gratitude Journal

http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/tips_for_keeping_a_gratitude_journal

The Gratitude Challenge offers a gratitude calendar at <http://gratitudechallenge.com/downloads/gratitude-calendar.pdf>

There are even digital gratitude journals for smart phones, such as the [happytapper](#) for use on iPhones and [Gratitude Journal](#) for Android.

The website [Think Exist.com](http://ThinkExist.com) offers inspirational gratitude quotes to get you started.

Thanksgiving Gratitude Traditions - Being thankful goes hand in hand with Thanksgiving day celebrations. Consider starting traditions focused around giving thanks. [Tip Junkie.com](http://TipJunkie.com) provides over 200 Thanksgiving Day Ideas. [Place cards](#) are a wonderful way to share gratitude and thanks at meal time. Decorate place cards any way you would like or download a place card [template](#). You can write why you are thankful for others inside their place cards, or everyone can write or draw something they are thankful for in their own card and then cards can be passed around so that each person reads another's message.

Create a Thanksgiving [nature banner](#). A fun project for children is gathering things from nature to decorate with. Fall leaves acorns, seed pods, berries and other things can make wonderful table decorations. It offers children a chance to appreciate God's creations up close.

Gratitude Cards- If you are not having a holiday dinner with family or guests, consider sending a card to someone you are thankful to have in your life. The power of a handwritten note is immeasurable.

Give thanks by helping others- volunteer to serve at a homeless shelter, help organize a thanksgiving meal drive in your congregation, take dinner to a homebound person. If you live near a military base, see if there is a program that connects service men and women to local families for Thanksgiving meals. [Find a shelter](#) in your area.



Ministry Spotlight - Annual Council Delegates

November is a great time to highlight Annual Council and your congregation's delegates. Keep in mind there might be some parishioners who may not know what Annual Council is or why it is important. Visit <https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Communication/2015-Annual-Council/> for developing details.

Pre-council highlights - Encourage parishioners to be a part of Council through the Stop Hunger Now service project. More information about Stop Hunger Now is available at www.stophungernow.org

Annual Council Lock-In - Every November, we gather at Annual Council as an entire Diocese. The youth segment is no different. All youth in middle and high school are invited to participate in the Lock-In @ Annual Council. They start the night by participating in a massive meal building project with Stop Hunger Now and the rest of Council. After packaging the meals, they are "locked-in" at the location on site at Council where they play games, sing songs, have midnight mass, and end the night with a movie on a private big screen. The next morning, they lead Annual Council in worship. This includes a few songs, readings and a sermon. There is a Youth Sermon, the Youth Address, preached by a junior in high school.

Post council - Highlight your Council delegate, let them report on their council experience.

Feature the Annual Council Delegates in your parish by sending thank you notes to the delegates, feature stories about their role as delegates in the newsletter, recognize the delegates during a worship service, and/or thank them by name in the Sunday bulletin.



Financial Health - Money 101

Being grateful and giving thanks for all you have includes managing your finances and planning for your future and the future of your family. Consider offering a financial workshop using the resources below.

CNN Money, a service of CNN, Fortune and Money offers a step by step guide to gaining control of your financial life. The program offers lessons on making budgets, basics of investing, controlling debt, planning for retirement and much more. It is available at <http://money.cnn.com/pf/money-essentials/>

Children and Money - Neale S. Godfrey is not only an expert in family finance, but also a parent who puts her advice to work in her own home. Chairman of the Children's Financial Network, mother of two, and a frequent commentator on national television, Godfrey has designed a unique program for kids -- from those as young as three to those in their teens -- that teaches them how to earn, save, and spend money wisely while it lets parents clearly communicate their family's values. Read more about Godfrey's book *Money Doesn't Grow on Trees* - A parents' guide to raising financially responsible children at <https://www.amazon.com/Money-Doesnt-Grow-Trees-Financially/dp/0743287800>

Money Sanity U - Money Sanity U® is a subscription-based virtual video library designed for organizations to proactively address the topic of money and the role it plays in people's lives. Created by personal finance expert, Nathan Dungan, Money Sanity U® offers unique insights, relatable examples, and actionable ideas—all designed to help individuals and families build healthy money habits and enhance their financial wellbeing. More information available at <http://www.sharesavespend.com/money-sanity-u>

Money Sanity Solutions: Linking Money + Meaning – is designed to get families talking about money by leveraging everyday life experiences. Topics include: budgeting basics, spending with a conscience, learning to earn, savings revolution, gift giving/receiving, etc. Nathan introduces all 15 chapters with lively and engaging DVD video segments that provide insights, stories, and wisdom from his 20—plus years of working with families and organizations. Each chapter includes thought-provoking conversation starters, relevant case studies, as well as activities and exercises (20 downloadable PDFs). More information available at <http://www.sharesavespend.com/products/money-sanity-solutions>

Thrivent Financial offers two interactive, values-based workshops that can help parents and children talk about money. **“Parents, Kids and Money Matters”** is geared toward 6- to 10-year-olds, and **“Parents, Teens and Money Matters”** is designed for ages 11 to 14. For more information, contact our Thrivent Financial representative, Tracy Leary, at tracy.leary@thrivent.com.



Reaching Out - Armed Forces

Veterans' Day is intended to honor and thank all military personnel who served the United States in all wars, particularly living veterans. It is marked by parades and church services and in many places the American flag is hung at half-mast. A period of silence lasting two minutes may be held at 11am. Some schools are closed on Veterans Day, while others do not close, but choose to mark the occasion with special assemblies or other activities. Veteran's Day on November 11th. To read more about Veteran's Day visit timeanddate.com

Veteran's Empowerment Organization of Georgia – VEO serves Veterans that have offered their lives to protect the freedom we all enjoy as U.S. Citizens. Upon homecoming, our Veterans have faced tremendous challenges finding affordable housing and sustainable employment to support themselves and their families. VEO makes the mission of becoming self-sufficient possible for Veterans & Their Families. Our Self-Sufficiency Model focuses on taking "Invisible Veterans" off the streets of our cities and placing them into a safety net of support that provides immediate and long-term housing, treatment and recovery for addiction, healthy meals, basic necessities, and clothing, as well as medical care, mental health counseling, life-skills training and workforce development support. To find out how you can help, visit <http://www.veohero.org/>

Organize a Collection Drive for a VA Hospital – To find out more about what items are needed, visit the VA hospital's website:

Atlanta VA Hospital: <http://www.atlanta.va.gov/giving/>

Carl Vinson VA Medical Center in Dublin: <http://www.dublin.va.gov/giving/>

Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta: <http://www.augusta.va.gov/giving>

Volunteer at Georgia War Veteran's Home in Milledgeville – The GWVH is located on 17 acres in Milledgeville and provides skilled nursing care for 375 veterans. Call 478-445-6826 to find out more about how your group can sponsor activities such as movies, games, dance parties, bingo, and picnics for the general well-being of the veteran patients at the home.

Operation Gratitude – Operation Gratitude annually sends 200,000+ care packages filled with food, entertainment, hygiene, and handmade items, plus personal letters of appreciation to Veterans, First Responders, New Recruits, Wounded Heroes, their Care Givers, and to individually named U.S. service members deployed overseas and their families waiting at home. Our mission is to lift the spirits and meet the evolving needs of the Military and First Responder communities, and provide volunteer opportunities for civilians anywhere in America to express their appreciation to all who serve our nation. To find out how you can organize a letter writing campaign or organize a collection drive for Operation Gratitude, visit <https://www.operationgratitude.com/can-help/>

Veterans Cemetery – Organize a group to go to one of Georgia's Veteran Cemeteries to pick up trash or place flowers on the graves. Many of the cemeteries offer an educational component as well. There are five veteran's cemeteries in Georgia:

Georgia National Cemetery in Canton:

<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/georgia.asp>

Marietta Nation Cemetery in Marietta:

<http://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/marietta.asp>

Georgia War Veterans Home Cemetery in Milledgeville:
478-445-2544

Georgia Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Milledgeville:

<http://veterans.georgia.gov/gvmc-milledgeville?vgnextoid=afe0f0d1ca7f7210VgnVCM100000bf01020aRCRD>

Georgia Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Glennville:

<http://veterans.georgia.gov/gvmc-glennville?vgnextoid=19e0f0d1ca7f7210VgnVCM100000bf01020aRCRD>



God's Creation – Energy Use and Conservation

Encourage employees to turn off computers, monitors, printers, and copiers when they are not being used.

Exit Signs can be a fast way to cut costs – Replacing your 10, or 20-watt incandescent lamps in your facility's exit signs with Light Emitting Diode (LED)-powered signs leads to savings. LEDs are easier to maintain, last longer, and are less expensive than their incandescent and neon light counterparts. ENERGY STAR estimates an LED-powered exit sign costs \$50 less per year to operate than an incandescent sign.

Replace existing light bulbs with LED bulbs – LED bulbs improve lighting, reduce maintenance costs, and save up to 85% in energy costs.

Improve Your Lighting Control – Lighting control is perhaps the most important element of any lighting energy conservation program. Its benefits are concrete, measurable and, in most cases, quickly realized. Many lighting control projects have payback periods of less than one year. On/off controls are most suitable for applications where lighting is not needed for extended periods of time, but where manual switches might be left on. Use occupancy sensors to turn lights on/off automatically in spaces that see little traffic, such as restrooms, break rooms, supply rooms, and locker rooms. The choice between occupancy sensors and time-based controls should be based on the nature of the operation being performed in the affected space.

Raise the thermostat on AC without causing discomfort to occupants – Most systems are set to 72-75 degrees F and 50 percent relative humidity. By raising the thermostat to 78 degrees F and 55 percent relative humidity, you can reduce the energy required for cooling by roughly 13 percent.

Georgia Interfaith Power and Light – GIPL's Power Wise program has helped hundreds of congregations save precious energy and money in their facilities by providing low-cost, professional energy audits. GIPL provides energy audits for churches, temples, mosques, synagogues and religious schools. Power Wise also includes a matching grant program that helps fund energy efficiency projects in congregational facilities. Visit www.gipl.org to request a reduced cost energy audit and get more information about the Power Wise program.

November Worksheet

Season: All Saints/Christ the King/Thanksgiving

(Hebrews 12:1-2) *Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.*

November begins by remembering and celebrating the saints in our lives, those we love but see no longer, who by their life and example have shaped and molded our own lives. God does not call us to live out our faith alone, but rather surrounds us with witnesses, those known to many and those known to us alone, give us the courage to be steadfast in our faith and to persevere in seeking to know Christ and to make Him known to others. We are called to have hearts full of gratitude and love, and to live out of our thankfulness.



Theme: Gratitude

Being thankful changes us! To even recognize that I am thankful, I have to be alert and aware that there are gifts or blessings in my life, but I cannot stop there. Because to be able to recognize that I am thankful means I have to also recognize that what or who I am thankful for comes as a result of something or someone outside of myself. Thank and thankful means to feel or express gratitude, appreciation, and or acknowledgement. Being thankful makes us aware that we are in relationship with someone other than ourselves. For us as Christians, expressing our thankfulness acknowledges that we are in relationship with God. Expressing thanks also means we are in relationship with someone else or others. Thankfulness calls us to action. We cannot keep gratitude all to ourselves; we must share it with one another. When we become blessings to others in our lives, we continue to grow in our understanding of what it means to be blessed.

Spiritual Growth – Growing Grateful Hearts

Ministry Spotlight on Annual Council Delegates

Financial Health – Money 101

Reach Out – Armed Forces

God's Creation – Energy Use and Conservation

DECEMBER

Season - Advent

The word Advent derives from a Latin word for "coming." These four weeks, which actually begin the Church year, are set aside to prepare for the coming incarnation and also for the final coming of Christ in power and glory. Although Advent is not a mini-Lent, it is a time for self-examination and setting aright those things that call us away from following Christ. We are particularly called to resist the frenzy of the secular preparations for Christmas and to focus on receiving the Christmas gift in humility and wonder.



Theme - Preparing the Way

(Isaiah 40.3) In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

In Isaiah's era, the coming of a king was announced ahead of time and people literally leveled the road on which the king would travel, getting the rocks out of the way and smoothing the path where it was not level.

Notice that Isaiah says to do this in the wilderness and in the desert - in all the places of our lives, not just the ones frequently traveled. Preparing for the coming of our King means dusting out and opening up our entire lives to receive him. We spiffy up the church during December to prepare for those who will visit. How do we prepare our selves, our souls and bodies, to receive the gift of the Christ-child? That will be the focus of our Advent stewardship.



Spiritual Growth Through Advent Disciplines

Christian disciplines help us order our lives with the focus on God. During Advent we take time to prepare our hearts to receive the magnificent gift of the Incarnation. ECF Vital Practices offers a special Advent page at <http://www.ecfvp.org/tools/advent-resources/> with weekly reflections, daily meditations, a good-books list, and alternative gift opportunities as particular disciplines to adopt this Advent.

Have your own grown-up Advent calendar. Here are a few suggestions. Find them all at Amazon.com.

1. *A Simply Wonderful Christmas: A Literary Advent Calendar*, Editor Silke Leffler. It is a collection of 24 short stories from around the world illustrated with charming designs.
2. *Lighten the Darkness: An Advent Journey Through Hope*, by Dena Hobbs. It is a collection of scriptures, readings, and meditations on God's entering into our darkness with rays of light. The book contains 37 short devotions, beginning on the first day of December and reaching through Epiphany. This book will light the path for those seeking deeper meaning amidst the busyness of the days leading up to and through their Christmas celebration.
2. *God With Us: Rediscovering the Meaning of Christmas*, edited by Greg Pennoyer and Gregory Wolfe (Paraclete Press).

A free Literary Advent Calendar is available online at <http://bookriot.com/2015/12/01/literary-advent-calendar/>

The ancient Advent disciplines included **prayer, penance, fasting and alms giving**. Concentrate on each of those for one week during Advent.



Ministry Spotlight on Children's Ministry

Volunteer to help with the children's Christmas pageant.

Write personal thank you notes to the Children's Ministry staff and volunteers in your congregation.

Feature different Children's Ministry volunteers in each week's bulletin.

Create a t-shirt for ministry volunteers.

Write an article in the newsletter about the great things that happen in your Children's Ministry.

Encourage parishioners to take time on Sunday mornings to walk into the nursery and say, "thank you".

Recognize members of the Children's Ministry during Sunday Worship.



Financial Health – Spend Less, Give More

Advent Conspiracy – The Advent Conspiracy is a global movement of people and churches resisting the cultural Christmas narrative of consumption by choosing a revolutionary Christmas through Worshipping Fully, Spending Less, Giving More and Loving All. Give one less gift this year than last and use the money to give the gift of water or farm animals or other resources to third world people. Encourage your church to participate in the Advent Conspiracy for the month of December. Materials such as Sunday school curriculum, project ideas, templates, posters, and family guides are available for download at www.adventconspiracy.org

Alternative Christmas Gifts – In your family, give a gift to the world this Christmas through one of the many Alternative Christmas Gift catalogs such as [Heifer International](#), [Episcopal Relief and Development](#), and [Diocese of Atlanta Mission Work](#). Make these resources available to your parishioners by ordering the catalogues online and providing links to the websites in your newsletters and bulletins.

Alternative Christmas Shop – Create an Alternative Christmas shop for 3 or 4 of the local outreach ministries you support. Create decorative cards with the logo and information about the ministry for people to give as gifts. "A gift has been given in your honor to ____" is a great gift for co-workers and relatives.



Reaching Out to Celebrate Christmas

Many families with children who live in poverty cannot afford Christmas gifts. Hosting a Christmas Party for children in need is a great way to share God's abundant blessings. If your church does not already work with children, consider connecting with one of the ministries below.

Emmaus House Christmas Ministries – Each Christmas Eve, Emmaus House hosts a Children's Christmas Eve Festival. With the support of volunteers and donors, they distribute gifts to over 800 children in the Emmaus House service area. The Epiphany congregation has participated in this caring ministry since 1995 by donating gifts to the children in need and also by helping to stock the Secret Santa Shop where these same children can shop for gifts for their families. To find out more information about these and other opportunities for outreach, please go to <https://emmaushouseatlanta.org/>

Agape Community Center – Agape Community Center is to help neighborhoods build communities. The Center offers programs and facilitates community organizing for the residents of the Bolton Community. Agape's current programs include after-school and summer enrichment programs for youth, a day program for senior citizens and disabled adults, English as a second language classes (ESL), Mami Y Yo classes, counseling services for youth participants and their families, a support group for parents, and a mentoring institute to assist high school juniors and seniors. They also have an annual Christmas Giving Tree. For more information, visit <http://agapeatlanta.org/>

Path to Shine – Path to Shine is a unique after-school mentoring and tutoring program for at risk and underserved children. We aspire to inspire these children to achieve hope-filled dreams and encourage them to stay in school until they graduate by partnering with faith communities that provide academic support necessary for elementary students. We hope to develop good academic skills and self-confidence in the students, needed for them to find their own "path to shine." Contact a Path to Shine online at <http://pathtoshine.weebly.com/> or contact a Path to Shine program near you to find out how to sponsor a Christmas Party.

Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry – Committed to promoting social justice, the Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry has been serving and standing beside people in need for 30+ years as a ministry of the Chattahoochee Valley Convocation, the Diocese of Atlanta, and a Jubilee Ministry Center of The Episcopal Church. Visit <http://www.cvemjubilee.org/> for more information.



God's Creation - Stop and Be Aware

Visit [Sharing Nature](#), an organization established in 1979 by naturalist and author Joseph Cornell. [Sharing Nature](#) uses creative activities to give people joyful and inspiring experiences of nature. It is dedicated to helping people of all ages experience their oneness and harmony with all life. Enjoy!

Quiet Day – Have a quiet day with meditations and reflections focused on ecology and conservation.

Organize a group to go **Geocaching at a Georgia State Park** – Geocaching combines the high-tech feel of online games with the old-fashioned fun of a treasure hunt. It's the perfect activity for families and groups of all ages. Using a GPS (or smartphone with a GPS app), you search more than 60 Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites locations to discover hidden containers or "caches" which contain a small prize. You take a prize and then leave one for the next person. More than 40 State Parks participate in the Parks GeoTour, and more than a dozen historic sites are on the History Trail GeoTour. <http://gastateparks.org/geocaching>

Hide a Geocache at Your Church – <https://www.geocaching.com/about/hiding.aspx> explains how to create and hide a geocache. Watching strangers search for a geocache in your bushes is not only great entertainment, but it is also a great way to welcome new people to your church.

Fun outdoor games for kids and nature activities can provide your child with a gateway into the natural world. The fun doesn't have to end with the warm weather! For fun outdoor winter ideas, visit <http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/813166/10-outdoor-winter-activities-for-kids>

Outdoor Games for Kids <http://www.kidspot.com.au/things-to-do/collection/outdoor-games>

50 Unique Outdoor Activities in Georgia <http://365atlantafamily.com/52-georgia-adventures-every-kid-must-experience>

December Worksheet

Season: Advent

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