

A CHOSEN GENERATION



The 12 Days of Christmas

By The Rev. Natalie Blasco, Rector

“It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas.” Well, it’s been looking like Christmas since October, especially at all retail stores. I guess the world doesn’t know that the first day of Christmas isn’t till December 25 and that we still have eleven more days of Christmas after that. Everyone wants to get straight to the celebration but there is so much more to prepare for – there is so much that we have yet to do.

That time of preparation is now – the season of Advent. I’m not talking about buying presents, planning your holiday meals or even decorating your homes for Christmas. I’m talking about preparing – not only for the birth of our Savior but also for the Second Coming of Christ. I’m pretty sure that you know the Nativity Story in detail. You have read it, it has been read to you, you may have played the part of an angel or a shepherd in a Christmas play as a child, you’ve seen movies, and the images are everywhere during the Advent and Christmas seasons. We don’t have to be worried about preparing for that specific event. But we do have to prepare for the rest of the story, which is still a big mystery to all of us. In our Gospel reading for the First Sunday of Advent, Jesus tells us, “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” But how do we prepare for that moment?

During the season of Advent, we are asked to take the story of Jesus’ birth into our hearts and utilize the circumstances of that event, as well as the events of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection, to inform our own lives.

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Special points of interest

- Angel Tree
- Baby Blankets
- CHO Update
- Christmas Food Bag Blessings
- Christmas Performance and Cookie Reception
- Kids’ Club for Jesus
- Rakad Christmas Camp
- Church-wide Work Day

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The 12 Days of Christmas

(Continued from page 1)

Why was the Christ Child born in a lowly manger to a socially insignificant family?

Why was the Messiah not a strong man with the power to overthrow the oppressive structures of this world?

How does Jesus' willingness to sacrifice Himself for all humanity inform our responsibilities in this world?

Our answers to those questions are important because the story of Christ is not over. We have received Him as our Savior and we celebrate His birth, but we now must live our lives in the way He has taught us, through His example. For those of us who are not perfect, unlike Jesus, it is a heavy task to undertake. This is why we must constantly re-evaluate and adjust ourselves. The Church gives us that time during the seasons of Advent and Lent, but we should not limit that hard work to only those times. We all struggle with trying to live righteously. The Lord knows that full well and has sent us the beautiful gift of His Son – not only to show us that living in that way is possible but also to show us that He has loved us since the very beginning of time and, although He knows full well we struggle every day to be faithful to Him in everything, He is always faithful to us, despite our shortcomings.

This Advent and Christmas seasons, I pray that you find clarity of thought, a renewed faith in God's love, and, most especially, a renewed faith in your worth as a child of God, beloved by Him unconditionally.

Beloved in Christ, in this season of Advent, let it be our care and delight to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the Angels, and in heart and mind to go even unto Bethlehem, to see the Babe lying in a manger.

Let us read and mark in Holy Scripture the tale of the loving purposes of God from the first days of our disobedience unto the glorious Redemption brought us by his holy Child; and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world; for peace and goodwill over all the earth; for the mission and unity of the Church for which he died, and especially for his Church in this country and within this city.

And because this of all things would rejoice his heart, let us at this time remember in his name the poor and the helpless; the hungry and the oppressed; the sick and those who mourn; the lonely and the unloved; the aged and the little children; and all those who know not the Lord Jesus, or who love him not, or who by sin have grieved his heart of love.

Lastly, let us remember before God his pure and lowly Mother, and all those who rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no one can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom, in this Lord Jesus, we for evermore are one.

- Book of Occasional Services, 2022

December Calendar

| | | |
|-----------|---|---------------------------------|
| 1 | English Service Spanish Service / Xmas Play Rehearsal | 9:30 am 12:00 pm |
| 4 | Baby Luv - <i>Open</i> Bible Study | 9:00 am 6:00 pm |
| 6 | Movie Night - Polar Express | 6:30 pm |
| 7 | CHO Food Pantry - <i>Open</i> | 7:30 am |
| 8 | English Service Spanish Service / Xmas Play Rehearsal | 9:30 am 12:00 pm |
| 10 | ECW Glory Circle | 10:30 am |
| 11 | Baby Luv - <i>Open</i> | 9:00 am |
| 14 | CHO Food Pantry - <i>Open</i> Christmas Performance | 7:30 am 2:00 pm |
| 15 | Bilingual Service Potluck Lunch Vestry Meeting | 9:30 am 11:00 am 12:00 pm |
| 16 | Virtual Prayer Circle | 6:30 am |
| 18 | Baby Luv - <i>Open</i> Bible Study | 9:00 am 6:00 pm |
| 19 | Grace Circle | 11:30 am |
| 21 | CHO Food Pantry - <i>Open</i> Rakad Christmas Camp | 7:30 am 9:00 am |
| 22 | English Service Spanish Service | 9:30 am 12:00 pm |
| 24 | CHRISTMAS EVE: Candlelight Service | 7:00 pm |
| 25 | MERRY CHRISTMAS! Morning Service | 10:00 am |
| 28 | CHO Food Pantry - CLOSED | |
| 29 | English Service Spanish Service | 9:30 am 12:00 pm |

Advent Schedule: Dec. 1 - 29

Advent Worship Services held in the Sanctuary.

Advent 1

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1:

9:30AM Worship Service
Blessing of Chrismon Tree
12:00PM Spanish Service

WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY:

Cancelled this month.

Advent 2

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8:

9:30AM Worship Service
Blessing of the Crèche & Magi
12:00PM Spanish Service

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14:

2:00PM Christmas Program and
Cookie-Exchange Reception

Advent 3

ROSE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15:

9:30AM Bilingual Service
Blessing of the Baby Blankets
11:30AM Potluck Lunch
12:00PM Vestry Meeting

Advent 4

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22:

9:30AM English Service
12:00PM Spanish Service

CHRISTMAS EVE

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24:

7:00PM Candlelight Service
Church Office CLOSED

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25:

10:00AM Service

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29:

9:30AM Worship Service

DECEMBER 24 - JANUARY 2:

Church Office CLOSED
Resume normal business hours
Monday, January 6, 2025.



St. Peter's

Angel Tree

Pick up a child's name on Sunday December 1.

Return wrapped gifts by Sunday December 15.

Help us support families in need this Christmas Season.

St. Peter's



Senior Warden
Virginia Pillsbury

Junior Warden
Collin O'Hara

Clerk
Linda Boyd

Treasurer
Tina Griffin

Vestry Meeting
the **3rd Sunday** each
month in Room 2.

Next meeting:

December 15

at 12:00 noon

Episcopal



Church Women

All women are welcome to join the following monthly small groups.

GLORY CIRCLE: Tuesday, **December 10**, at **10:30 a.m.** at the home of Marilyn Whiddon. Please bring a sandwich to share and **6** gifts for the Christmas bags for our shut-ins.

Contact: Ann Weeks, 904.287.7103 or email rowahw@aol.com

GRACE CIRCLE: Thursday, **December 19**, at **11:30 a.m.** Home of Tina Griffin, 904.207-3223

VIRTUAL PRAYER CIRCLE: Monday, **December 16**, at **6:30 p.m.**

- † Call: 408-418-9388
- † Access Code: 799 169 983
- † Password: 37299826

Contact: Ann Weeks, 904.287.7103 or email rowahw@aol.com

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Philipians 4:6

Bless A Family This Christmas

By Leslie Oxford, Children's Ministry Director

St. Peter's will provide Christmas blessings to local families again this holiday season. Starting **December 1**, we will have names of **10** families and their children's details for parishioners to choose and then provide groceries and Christmas gifts.

Thank you for participating in this wonderful outreach to children in our community.

Contact: Leslie Oxford
904-705-8064
leslieoxford91@gmail.com

or Virginia Pillsbury
904-307-6808
vpillsbury1125@gmail.com



Baby Blankets for Rose Sunday

By Virginia Pillsbury, Senior Warden



We will celebrate Rose Sunday on **December 15** with the annual donation of baby blankets for the new non-profit partner ministry, *Positive Family Pivot* (PFP) see **page 9**. Baby blankets are an essential part of the PFP ministry and they provide love and comfort to the babies in our community.

Knit, crochet, or buy baby blankets and bring them to church on Sundays leading up to Rose Sunday. On that day we will pray over them and have them consecrated to the glory of God and the comfort of the babies who will receive them.

Thank you for your help with this as well as with your constant support of the "*Miles of Diapers*" Diaper Drive! You are blessing PFP in mighty ways.

Contact:
Virginia Pillsbury
904.307.6808
vpillsbury1125@gmail.com

Core Outreach Village Update

By Virginia Pillsbury, Senior Warden

Core Outreach Village will take a break in December and be back to serve the community on **Saturday, January 26 from 8 to 10AM.**

Each month, on the last Saturday, we have a variety of organizations come to our parking lot to serve our community with food, clothing, diapers, and other resources.

Come volunteer! This is a great way to be the hands and feet of Jesus and build strong relationships with our neighbors.



End-of-Year-Giving

Submitted by JoAnne Rodriguez, Church Administrator

“...Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord.” Deuteronomy 12:11 (NIV)

A reminder of our end-of-year giving policies: Tithes and offerings given to St. Peter's Church before midnight Tuesday, **December 31, 2024** will be credited to your giving account for the year 2024.

Anything given after December 31 will be credited to the New Year **2025**. The IRS requires that money must be in our possession prior to the new year in order for it to be credited for that year.

If you give online, you can scan the QR code here on the side bar, for your convenience.

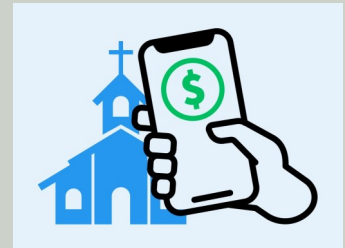
I would encourage you to put all your offerings in the plate on **Sunday, December 29** to insure proper credit. If you must drop it by the Church Office, when closed, place your check in the mail slot at the bottom of the front door. We will pick them up, so you can be credited for the proper year.

Remember to postmark donations no later than December 31 to count toward 2024 tax deductions.

Thank you for your faithfulness in giving to St. Peter's Church and may you have a blessed Christmas season!

Contact: Church Office,
904.778.1434 or
jrodriguez@stpetersjax.org

ONLINE GIVING



For your convenience, scan the QR code here.



Thank you for supporting St. Peter's Episcopal Church and its Ministries.

Stpetersbytheriver.org

A Chosen Generation

First Steps Outreach Ministries, Inc.

By Sarah Sapon, Program Director, Antigua Kids Club for Jesus

On Saturday, November 30, was our Christmas party. We had so much fun celebrating the birth of Christ, singing Happy Birthday Jesus, decorating cookies, and playing games. Each child was given a backpack for the new school year that starts in January and the special treat of a McDonald's happy meal!

Thank you all who contributed to making this a special celebration. Kurt and Sally even came to celebrate.





Sally & Kurt Jackson

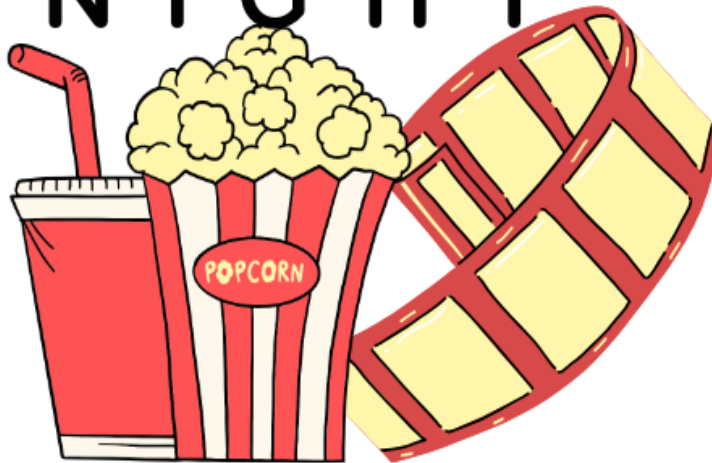


Mario & Sarah (Jackson) Sapon with Goddaughter, Esther



Kids' Club Christmas Party

OUTDOOR
MOVIE
NIGHT



Friday December 6, at 6:30pm

POLAR EXPRESS

at St. Peter's Church
(5042 Timuquana Road)

Bring your blankets and lawn chairs
and join our outdoor movie night!

FREE POPCORN

Other snacks available for purchase.

St. Peter's Episcopal
Children's Ministry
**Bilingual
Christmas Play**

This will be a bilingual retelling
of the Christmas nativity.

**Saturday December 14th at 2pm
in the Sanctuary**

Bring cookies to share after the performance

**Rakad
Christmas
Camp**

FOR ALL GIRLS AGES 5+

\$30 PER CAMPER
(scholarships are available)

SATURDAY
DECEMBER 21ST
9AM-3PM

*With optional performance on
Sunday December 22nd*

Registration opening soon
www.RakadDanceCamp.com



Would you like to purchase Altar Flowers in Honor of a birthday, anniversary, or in Memory of a loved one?

COST: \$45

To place an order, call the Church Office 904-778-1434, ext. 100 or fill out an Altar Flower order form available from the Church Office or Church Library, along with your payment.

Make your check payable to **ST. PETER'S CHURCH** and note for Altar Flowers.

NOTE: Be sure to mention your color and/or flower choice. Specific flower requests like roses or a larger arrangement will have an additional charge.

On Sunday, you may place your order form, along with your payment, in the offering plate, otherwise bring your order and payment to the Church Office during normal business hours:

Monday thru Thursday
9:15 AM to 2:00 PM

Meet CHO's New Clinic Coordinator

By Eustachius Roberts, CHO Board Member

Say hello to Dr. Andres Ramirez, our new Clinic Coordinator!



He will be responsible for patient/provider scheduling and eligibility in our Healing Hands Medical/Dental clinic.

Dr. Ramirez is a foreign-trained medical graduate with experience in clinical practice and a current MPH student. He is passionate about community health and is excited to join the team.

His goal is to ensure that all community members receive the medical and dental care that they deserve. Dr. Ramirez believes in the power of primary care to improve health outcomes and reduce preventable emergency room visits.

Update from the Church Office

By JoAnne Rodriguez, Church Administrator

Starting in 2025, we will publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis, as follows:

MARCH
JUNE
SEPTEMBER
DECEMBER

The deadline will still be the same meaning that information is due by the 15th of the prior month. In other words, the MARCH issue is DUE FEBRUARY 15.

Did you know that St. Peter's accepts submissions from all Area of Ministries (AOM) and any member of the church?

The newsletter is only as good as the content it receives, and that depends on the members. Don't be shy – it's easy, it's good exposure and it's FREE!

Email your information to:
newsletter@stpetersjax.org

Thank-You-Notes

To Mother Natalie and Tony for all of the behind the scenes things that they do to make sure that everything runs smoothly at St. Peter's.

Thanks to JoAnne for her faithfulness in keeping us organized and on track in ways that no one is aware of.

Thanks to all who donated groceries to the Timucuan Elementary families for Thanksgiving.

Thanks to all who help with our third Sunday potluck lunches! In addition to Margie and David Mena for providing the birthday cakes!

Thanks to Michael and Nicholas Mena for their help with the November movie night.

Thank you to the Altar Guild for taking such great care with all of their weekly duties.

Thank you to Larry Hamblin for his time and hard work with pressure washing our courtyard.

Thank you to Jayne Bickerstaff and Laverne O'Hara for all that they do in the back office and sharing the responsibilities on a weekly basis.

Sincerely,

Virginia Pillsbury, Sr. Warden

A huge THANK YOU to both Edna Richardson and Jeanne Wright for their dedication, time, and effort with volunteering on a weekly basis in the Church Office. A special thank you to Jeanne for covering for me while I was on vacation and managing the last minute matters and needs for the precinct setup. Your willingness is impeccable!

I am honored and humbled by those that gave me birthday cards and gifts. In addition, thank you to Leslie Oxford for the delicious cake pops!

*With sincere gratitude,
JoAnne Rodriguez,
Church Administrator*

DECEMBER Birthdays & Anniversaries

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- Andy & Marilyn Whiddon..... 1
- Larry & Carolyn Tipping.. 3
- Delrose & Tracy Francis. 18

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- Delrose Francis 2
- Betty Padgett..... 4
- Marilyn Whiddon 18



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

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Email: stpetersjax@gmail.com

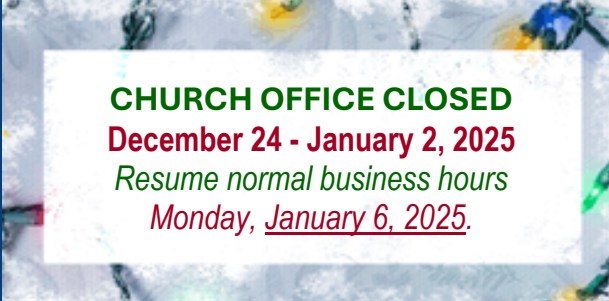


A Chosen Generation



CHRISTMAS EVE
December 24
Candlelight
Service
7:00PM

CHRISTMAS DAY
December 25
Morning Service
10:00AM



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED
December 24 - January 2, 2025
Resume normal business hours
Monday, January 6, 2025.

St. Peter's Service Schedule

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES:

† 9:30AM English Service
3rd Sunday Bilingual Service

† 12:00PM Spanish Service

Children's Ministry available.

MID-WEEK BIBLE STUDY

1st & 3rd Wednesday each month.

Starting with dinner at 6:00PM.

St. Peter's Business Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday | 9:15AM to 2:00PM

Closed Weekends/Federal Holidays

904.778.1434

Website: stpetersbytheriver.org

