

THE EVANGEL

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
408 S. LEE STREET AMERICUS, GA

November, 2021

229-924-3908
www.calvaryepiscopalamericus.org
calvaryamericus@gmail.com

The Three Biblical Principles of Giving

Late fall is traditionally the time when we ask you to consider your financial commitment to Calvary's life and ministries. You should have received a Stewardship Letter and Pledge Card in the mail several weeks ago. Some may be unfamiliar with or even uncomfortable with the notion of 'pledging' to a parish. A pledge is simply a statement of intention. In filling out and signing a pledge card you are not entering into a contract. If for compelling reasons you cannot fulfill your intention the 'pledge collector' will not show up at your doorstep! Our pledges are important as the Vestry discerns the operating budget for next year. Without pledges we are rather flying blind into the future. Imagine how difficult it would be to form a meaningful personal budget if your employer said, "We'll pay you something, but you won't know what it is until you've received it all at the end of the year." Pledging helps us put together an appropriate budget. Pledging also gives your intention a bit more reality. We can intend all sorts of things in our minds; it's a little more real to put down one's intention on paper and sign it.

Here are three Biblical principles of giving. The first is the tithe, giving ten percent for the work of God's kingdom. Its roots are in the Old Testament. Think about the tithe in this way: Everything I have is a gift from God. Can I/we live on 90%? Deciding to tithe, or work towards the tithe over time, will likely mean taking a look at what you spend money on. Tithing will likely entail a few lifestyle changes. In a consumerist society this is exactly what Christians need to do from time to time. One more tidbit about the tithe: in the Old Testament the expectation was that the 10% came from the 'first fruits.' That is, one's giving to God was the first item in the budget not what was left over when everything else was paid.

A second principle is giving everything. Think of when Jesus observed the poor widow giving two pennies to the Temple, ...all that she had to live on (Mark 12:41-44), or Jesus' challenge that the rich young man sell all his possessions, give the proceeds to the poor, and follow him (Matthew 19:16-22). I once heard a preacher say, "When it comes to giving there are two alternatives in the Bible: give 10% or give everything. The choice is yours!" That seems a bit extreme to me. There are people whom God has called and continues to call to give everything—St. Francis is a prime example, as are other monks, nuns, friars, and 'religious' through the centuries. Yet, nowhere in the Bible have I found a general expectation of 'sell all you have' giving.

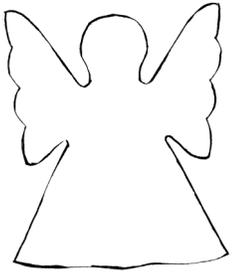
The third principle of Christian giving is admittedly more implicit than the first two principles. It is what I call "Sacramental Giving." Sacraments are "...outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace..." (Prayer Book, page 857). The giving of one's time, talents, and treasure for the maintenance and upbuilding of the Church is an 'outward, visible' sign of our thanksgiving to God for our salvation in Christ Jesus. The question at stewardship time, then, is 'is my giving to Calvary representative of my gratitude to God?' In my mind, this is the most important guide to giving.

Geri and I take the three Biblical giving principles seriously when discerning our financial support of our parish. I ask you to do the same prayerfully and thoughtfully.

In Christ,

Fr Richard

Angel Tree Ministry



Our Angel Tree Ministry is up and running and we need your help. Here is how you can help the teens of Sumter County receive a Christmas gift from our church.

This year, we will be helping 35 teenagers receive a Christmas gift that will delight any teenage... A \$25 gift card!! Please select a name from our Angel Tree and returned the \$25 gift card to the church office. There will be a box labeled Angel Tree Ministry where you can place your card. Deadline for gift cards to be returned to the church is December 10th. Please help us show our teenagers in Sumter County that we care about them. Thank you!!

A report from Diocesan Convention – briefly

What a blessing to gather in person with our Bishop and the parish delegations from our Diocese on Jekyll Island, November 4–6. The weather was terrible—constant rain, high winds, and bone-chilling temperatures—but the warmth of the Holy Spirit touched everyone.

A major overhaul of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese received preliminary approval, with final approval anticipated at next year's convention. The Honey Creek Conference Center bond debt has been paid off. The Diocese and Honey Creek are stable financially, despite the effects of Covid on parish attendance. Three individuals from the Albany Convocation were elected to Diocesan office, including two from Calvary: Deacon Geri will serve on the Church Disciplinary Board (3-year term), The Rev. Walter Hobgood (interim at St. Paul's, Albany) and Elise Miller will serve on the Standing Committee (4-year terms).



Covid-19 Restrictions

With Covid-19 numbers going down, we announce the following revisions:

- Beginning Sunday, December 5, mask wearing is optional during worship. Persons who are 'at risk' are encouraged to wear masks; those not fully vaccinated should continue to wear masks. The clergy, choir, and servers will continue to wear masks during Processions.
- Beginning Sunday, December 5, Holy Communion will be received at the Altar Rail.
- We will resume First Sunday Celebration luncheons on January 2, 2022. Main dish is provided by the parish, you are asked to bring sides and desserts. Hopefully we will also have First Sunday Celebration luncheons on February 6, March 6, April 3, and May 1.



"Our Outreach Committee has been very busy planning for our next event - "Shop With a Cop", scheduled for Tuesday, December 14th at 6:00pm in our church Parish Hall. This event is to serve our community through feeding the children and their families in the Sumter County foster care program. Every Christmas, The City Police Department provides a meal and then their staff take the children to Walmart to purchase Christmas gifts for their families. This year Calvary will provide & host the meal! If you'd be willing to help us carry out this ministry, please contact Ms. Elise Miller at EliseMiller523@gmail.com.

Through the "Beyond These Walls" ministry we have given away several thousand dollars in Food Lion Gift Cards to the needy, as well as help with rent and utilities.

The Mustard Seed thrift store is in the midst of giving away \$6,000.00 in grant money to worthy agencies who help others in our community.

If you're interested in participating in this vital and ongoing Outreach Ministry, our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7th at 5:00pm in the church parish hall."

Calvary's Online Ministry

Eight Hundred Ninety-One people 'follow' Calvary's Facebook page and automatically receive notification of our offerings (compared to about 100 pre-Covid).

Thanks to Sr. Warden, Sam Peavy and John-Michael Rowe, who serves on Vestry, we have obtained some better equipment to improve our Sunday livestream. It has become usual that 50 to 70 people watch our Sunday worship either live or subsequently.

Fr. Richard continues his Tuesday Noon meditations. Calvary in Community on Thursdays is on indefinite hiatus. Other such podcasts are being offered locally and there is no reason to duplicate efforts.



One of our newest members, Kenneth Taylor (coming to us from St. Gregory the Great Episcopal Church, Athens), offers an online Zoom Bible Study of the upcoming Sunday's readings on most Thursdays. Contact him at intj1973@hotmail.com for a link to join.

Thanks to our dedicated core of officiants, Compline continues to be offered every evening at 8:30pm.

Sunday Adult Forum

Fr Richard winds up his multi-week course on the Psalms November 21. There will not be an Adult Christian Education class on November 28. December 5, 12, and 19 Fr Richard and Deacon Geri will lead a three-part class on Prayer, with special emphasis on praying with beads. You will make your own "Anglican Rosary," and receive instruction on how to use it. Everyone 16 years and older is invited.



New Year Retreat



On Saturday, January 8th from 11:00 to 4:00, Karen Kinnamon will lead a New Year Retreat including mind-body-breath awareness, inspirational readings, guided mind mapping activities for the new year, and time for reflection and creative expression. For further information, please email Karen at: karen.kinnamon@gmail.com.

Advent Open House at the Rectory

Fr Richard, Deacon Geri, and the Princess Lucy invite everyone to an open house at the rectory, 724 S. Lee Street, 5:00pm – 7:00pm, Sunday, December 19th. You are asked to park your vehicle on Lee Street; we need the driveway clear for handicapped accessibility through the back porch. We look forward to seeing our Calvary family on the 19th!



For Online Giving



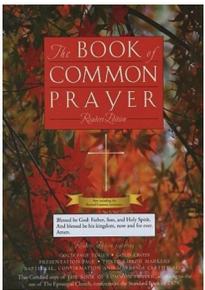
Online giving is a convenient way to make a donation to Calvary or pay your Stewardship or Capital Campaign Pledge. Our website can be located at www.calvaryepiscopalamericus.org. Click the “GIVE” button on the right side of the menu bar. Follow the instructions from there. Please call the church office if you experience any difficulties or need assistance.

Parish Phone Tree

A big ‘thank you’ to Charlotte Chambliss who coordinates this ministry and all who so faithfully pray for the needs of others. Our parish phone tree has been helpful and needed during the Covid crisis, and very much appreciated. Let’s carry on.



Daily Prayer Online



For those who wish to pray the Daily (Prayer) Offices from the Book of Common Prayer, there are numbers of online resources that provide everything needed with a couple of clicks. Check out: ForwardMovement.org; go to Forward Day by Day tab, go to Daily Prayer Anytime tab; select the prayer office. Or check out Mission St. Clare at missionstclare.com; click on ‘Morning and Evening Prayer;’ click on the picture.

Fr Richard and Deacon Geri will enjoy a short vacation with family, November 24 through November 29. The Rev. Tar Drazdowski will preach and celebrate on November 28.

Fr Richard will be away Saturday, January 29, attending a Diocesan Council meeting. As Dean of the Albany Convocation, he is an ex officio member of the Council. Diocesan Council functions in the Diocese similar to the way a Vestry functions in a parish.

Cursillo

Calvary's Friday morning Cursillo Reunion Group meets at 9:30am, at Fr. Richard and Deacon Geri's home, 724 S. Lee Street. Everyone is welcome, if you have attended a Cursillo weekend retreat or not. **The group will not meet November 26 or December 24.** What happens at reunion group? As is comfortable, we share our spiritual journeys using a format covering the areas of piety (spiritual practices), study, and action. See you there!



Wednesday Evening Contemplative Prayer and Worship



We begin each Wednesday at 5:30pm in the Church with 20-25 minutes of contemplative prayer. If you are unfamiliar with the practice, easy instructions are given. At the conclusion of contemplative prayer, we celebrate the Holy Eucharist (1st and 3rd Wednesdays) or offer Evening Prayer together (2nd, 4th, and 5th Wednesdays). Come pray with us.

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will convene after worship on Sunday, January 23, 2022. The main business will be discussing and approving the parish operating budget for 2022, electing three people to Vestry, and four people to serve as Diocesan Convention Delegates and Alternates (Convention will be in Savannah, November dates and place to be determined).

The Nominating Committee of the Vestry will put forward three nominees for Vestry: Bardin Hooks, Linda Kidd, and Carey Wooten. If you would like to nominate someone or yourself please speak with a member of the Nominating Committee: Linda Kidd (serving an unexpired term, eligible to be elected), Lee Kinnamon, and Elise Miller.

Blue Christmas at Calvary

For some the holidays are challenging, especially when a loved one has died around Christmastime or when other personal losses/traumas have occurred at the end of the year. It's tough when the rest of the world is seemingly making merry, as one struggles with loss, grief, depression, and anxiety. On Sunday, December 12, at 6:00pm, we will offer a service called "Blue Christmas." The service is solemnly celebratory, appropriately subdued.

We acknowledge the difficulties many face at this time of year, and provide an opportunity to offer such challenges to God in hope. We are also reminded of God's goodness and loving-kind mercy, even—and especially—when God may seem so far from us. Whether you experience such difficulties at Christmas time or not, you are invited to this special service.



Renovations and other work

Plaster work in the Nave, Chancel, and Sanctuary is complete. Painting cannot commence until at least 90 days after the most recent plaster has been applied to allow proper curing of the surface. We are hopeful painting of the Nave, Chancel, and Sanctuary, and Parish Hall and Library, can begin shortly after Christmas.

We are hopeful painting of other areas such as the hallways in the office area, Altar Guild sacristy, rector's office, and parish administrator's office can begin before the new year.

Woodwork—paneling behind the organ, repair on panel in the Chancel, cleaning and applying proper finish to the reredos (behind Altar), window frames inside and out, and soffit repair—will begin when a qualified company or companies has been secured through a bid process.

A landscape architect is preparing a draft plan for a wall along the outdoor walkway on the north side of the office area. This area receives runoff whenever it rains, turning the walkway into a muddy mess. This is another long-overdue project.

A new sign for outside the main Church door, and for the Mustard Seed Thrift Store will be contracted when the sign company that has done the other outdoor signs finally returns Fr. Richard's phone calls.

This fall tree trimming will occur. The problem of falling leaves piling up and rendering the gutter leaf guards ineffectual will continue so long as branches are growing too close to and over the new slate roofs. Many of our trees need necessary and careful trimming to alleviate the problem. There are also numbers of smaller trees, shrubs, and other items in need of trimming. We are contracting with a local person to clean the gutters and leaf guards twice a year, but the basic problem will persist without adequate trimming.

Your continued support of the renovations is invaluable. If you have previously pledged to the renovation capital campaign fund, please accept this gentle reminder if you have not yet submitted your donation for 2021. If you have not previously supported these efforts, your contribution will be most gratefully received. Make checks to: Calvary Episcopal Church, noting it is for the renovations. Thank you.



Looking ahead

Deadline for the Lent/Easter Evangel Newsletter is Wednesday, February 16, 2022
The Lent/Easter Evangel will be sent out Tuesday, February 22, 2022

March 2, 2022—Ash Wednesday

April 10, 2022—Palm Sunday, Holy Week begins

April 17, 2022—Easter Sunday