

ALL SAINTS' BULLETIN
The Monthly Newsletter of All Saints'

November, 2019
228-9242
www.allsaintsthamasville.org

Dear Friends,

Two weeks ago, the Pew Research Foundation published the results of their most recent survey of American church affiliation and practice. The article that first alerted me to the survey was in the WSJ. It had the worrying title, "Religion is on the Decline as More Adults check 'None'." 'None' is an option when asked, 'what is your religious affiliation?'

This was largely an on-line poll and is thought to be less accurate than the major polls which Pew conducted in 2007 and 2014. Nevertheless, the data is, on the face of it, disturbing for those of us who care about America's churches. It suggests that the percentage of adults who describe themselves as Christian has declined by 12% over the last decade and the share of Americans who say they attend religious services at least once or twice a month has declined by 7% over the same period. The decline is across all age groups but is highest amongst millennials, those born between 1981 and 1996 (23-year-olds to 38-year-olds). The decline in the number of millennials who say they are Christian is 16% and less than a third of them say that they attend church once or twice a month.

Needless to say, my attention was piqued this week when I saw this week's article in the NYT by Ross Douthat entitled, 'The

Overstated Collapse of American Christianity'. I thought to myself, "maybe things are not so gloomy after all!"

Douthat's article allows for the fact that the trends are real but it raises three points that are specific to American Christianity which may suggest that America is not necessarily headed to the same level of secularism which defines Europe.

I will refer you to the article itself (<https://nyti.ms/2pq3rXo>) for Douthat's second and third points. I was particularly interested in his first point for which he used data from a similar, recent Gallup poll. This poll showed that what it called 'Lukewarm Christianity' is declining much more dramatically than 'Intense Religiosity', defined as attending church almost weekly. The Gallup poll showed that the decline in those who attend church almost weekly has only edged down slightly over the last ten years. Two sociologists that Douthat also cites have shown that the recent decline is almost entirely a function of those who have been weakly affiliated to churches. In the past, they and have attended Church only irregularly. Now they no longer attend at all. While I am not basing this on more than my awareness of who is in church on any given Sunday, I would guess that holds true at All Saints'.

Douthat also uses the Gallup poll data to show that today's churchgoing rate isn't that different from the rate in the 1930s and 1940s, before the postwar religious boom, and that the rate of decline in the 1960s was far steeper than we have experienced recently.

Before we feel too comforted by the Gallup Poll data, there are three things that should be challenging to us as a congregation.

First, All Saints' is not reaching millennials. It is too easy to say, 'but no-one is', even if the data bears that out. Even the evangelical community churches are experiencing the decline in

millennial attendance so trying to be, 'hip, casual, and accessible' is not the answer. Perhaps the model of Christians gathering on a Sunday morning for worship where success is measured by the size of the congregation will change altogether.

Second, all polls show that the most strongly affiliated generation is that which is called The Silent Generation, those born between 1925 and 1945, those who are currently between 74 and 94. The Boomers who came after the Silent Generation have never been nearly so committed to their Churches and are not replacing the Silent Generation as they die. At All Saints' we continue to benefit from the faithful attendance of many members of the Silent Generation. Without them our Sunday attendance, and our giving, would be significantly lower.

Third, while Douthat's point about the loosely affiliated being the primary cause of decline is well taken, all churches depend upon reaching those with whom they already have loose associations. Our efforts are far more likely to be rewarded if we can cement those associations rather than hope to reach those with whom we have absolutely no connection. We must be sure those on the periphery of our congregational life do not slip away altogether.

I do thank all of you who love All Saints'. Let's talk about the challenges that lie ahead of us and please pray that we may remain a healthy church in our service and witness.

Paul+

VESTRY

The November meeting will be held Sunday, November 17 at 8:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall Library.

BISHOP'S VISIT

Bishop Benhase will make his last visitation to All Saint's on Sunday November 10 and I do hope all of you will do your best to be with us for that service as a mark of respect for his ministry in the Diocese of Georgia. Bishop Benhase has been extremely supportive of our church. I am confident Fr. Buechner would echo me in saying that he has been well informed about the issues that we have faced and has always offered wise counsel.

At the service, the Bishop will baptize, receive into the Episcopal communion, and confirm young people. Christian initiation is by its very definition something that takes place in the presence of the communion of God's people so all of us have a part in the service. We will also all reaffirm our baptismal vows.

If there are members of our church who have been attending but have not yet been received or confirmed please let me know.

Following the service, there will be a reception outside the west doors of the Church.

There is no evening service on this day by request of the Bishop.

Paul+

OFFICE CLOSING

The office will be closed on Monday, November 11 in observance of Veteran's Day and at Noon on Wednesday, November 27th in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday and will reopen on Monday, December 2nd.

EPISCOPAL 101

We will offer 'Episcopal 101' in the Parish Hall on Saturday, November 9 from 10:00-3:00. This is a class which is designed to cover the basics of what it means to be an Episcopalian. It covers the history and essential teachings of our communion, but it also gets down to the 'nitty gritty' of the Christian life and some of the details of why All Saints' exists. ALL are welcome.

The material will be broken down into four sections and I will teach two of them and Fr. Brown will teach two also.

We will have a pizza lunch.

Paul+

VESTRY NOMINATIONS AND ANNUAL MEETING

The All Saints' Annual Meeting will take place at 10:30 on Sunday, November 17. At this time, we will receive reports and will elect three new members to the Vestry.

Anyone may nominate candidates for the vestry who must be active members of All Saints' and confirmed or received. The names are gathered and considered the Nominating Committee of the vestry and a slate is proposed. Additional names may be proposed at the Annual Meeting.

Please call the office or speak to me or Vann Middleton if you have a name to propose. The Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for noon on Friday, November 8.

Paul+

YOGA NEWS

Yoga at All Saints' is going strong with two classes a week: Mondays at 5:15 pm and Thursdays at 10:00 am in the nursery. All you need is a yoga mat, comfortable clothing and a water bottle. No previous yoga experience required!

EYC NEWS

Confirmation is soon upon us, and I have thoroughly enjoyed our time together. We'll meet one more time for confirmation on November 6 at 6:00pm. Confirmation Sunday is November 10. Make sure to check your emails for updates about when we'll meet that morning and any further instructions.

Our EYC time has been just as fun as our confirmation time! Our next EYC gathering will be on Sunday, November 17 at the church. We'll meet up with the Altar Guild to learn more about their ministry and history at All Saints. If you'd like to provide dinner for us that evening, we'd love to have you!

Peace and Blessings,
Liz Williams
(404)202-7284

POINSETTIAS

Those of you who would like to give (memorial or thanksgiving) poinsettias or wreaths, please call the church office no later than Friday, December 13. The cost for each plant is \$18.50 and \$75 for a wreath.

CHOIR NEWS

St. David's Children's Choir will sing November 10th during communion. Father Hancock suggests that those going through confirmation wear their vestments. Call time is 9:45 am.

Adult Choir will sing November 10th during Offertory. Adult rehearsal at 9am.

St. David's Choir will sing on December 24th for the 5:30 Pageant. Mark your calendars please.

Margit Miller

ECW NEWS

The October ECW meeting was really “out of this world”! We met at the Mitchell’s house and were treated to a very interesting program on the International Space Center! A delicious lunch followed.

The November meeting will be extremely interesting too! Alston and Philip Watt will share their impressions on Africa – then (1994) and now (2019). We will meet at 5:00 p.m. in the parish hall on Tuesday, November 12. Co-Ed!

GIVING TREE

All Saints’ Episcopal Church is sponsoring a parish-wide Giving Tree this Advent Season. Each ornament contains a wish from a child associated with CASA, so please take an ornament from our giving tree and add your name to the accompanying list. The tree will stand in the Parish Hall or the Narthex of the Church. All wrapped and labeled gifts should be returned to the Parish Hall by December 15th. Call the office (229-228-9242) for more information or to sign up.

BOOK CLUB NEWS

Attention Reading Enthusiasts:

If you were not at our October meeting, you missed a terrific, thought-provoking discussion with the author of our featured book, "The Synagogue Savant". Thanks to their friendship with a book club member, Lance Randall and his wife traveled to Thomasville from Florida to be with us. Everyone who had read this 1st volume of the trilogy were eager to hear the details of his inspiration as well as his advice on how to start writing your own novels! The meeting ended with an enthusiastic book signing and plans to get copies of the next volume of the trilogy

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 13th, when the discussion will be of "What Happens Matters" a novel by our own book club member, Jack Coppage. So if you have not started reading it, get a copy! Now's the time!

Hope to see you on the 13th of November. Be well, Maureen

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

<u>November 3</u>	<u>Holy Communion</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
All Saints' Sunday	Raleigh Rollins	

<u>November 10</u>	<u>Holy Communion</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
The Twenty-Second Sunday	Will Sheftall	
Bishop Benhase Visits	Mike Tanner	
Confirmation	James Tyson	

<u>November 17</u>	<u>Holy Communion</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost		
Annual Meeting	Mary Kathryn Sibley	
No Sermon	Ben Waddill	

<u>November 24</u>	<u>Morning Prayer</u>	<u>10:30 a.m.</u>
The Last Sunday after Pentecost	Charlie Whitney	
Christ the King	Bob Balfour	

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 3–ALL SAINTS SUNDAY–HOLY COMMUNION

Simms Ladson
Elise McPherson
Taylor Middleton
Parker McCollum

SUNDAY, NOV. 10–BISHOP’S VISIT–CONFIRMATION–HOLY COMM

Ethan Myers
Simms Ladson
Harris Jackson
Olivia Enright
Jack Boltja
Sam Bruhn
Sam Watts

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17–ANNUAL MEETING–HOLY COMMUNION

Sam Bruhn
Jack Boltja
Taylor Middleton
Parker McCollum

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24 – MORNING PRAYER – CHRIST THE KING

Olivia Enright
Elise McPherson
Sam Watts
Ben Watts

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

Saturday	November	2	Community Outreach Bazaar
Sunday	November	3	All Saints Sunday Parish Covered Dish
Wednesday	November	6	St. David Choir Rehearsal <i>Body & Soul – Topic: St. Lucius of Britain</i>
Saturday	November	9	Episcopal 101 10am – 3 pm
Sunday	November	10	Bishop' Visitation/Confirmation
Tuesday	November	12	ECW Meeting—5 pm in Parish Hall
Wednesday	November	13	Book Club St. David Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	November	17	Annual Meeting EYC Mtg 5-6:30pm
Wednesday	November	20	No St. David Choir Rehearsal <i>Body & Soul—Topic: Pope Leo the Great</i>
Wednesday	November	27	St. David Choir Rehearsal

DECEMBER

Sunday	December	1	Advent I – Parish Covered Dish
Wednesday	December	4	<i>Body & Soul – Topic: Charlemagne</i> St. David Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	December	8	Advent II EYC Meeting 5-6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	December	11	Book Club St. David Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	December	15	Advent III
Wednesday	December	18	St. David Choir Rehearsal
Sunday	December	22	Lessons & Carols/Pageant Rehearsal Greening of the Church No Evening Service
Tuesday	December	24	Christmas Eve—Evensong/Pageant Midnight Mass
Wednesday	December	25	Christmas—Holy Comm/No Evening Service
Sunday	December	29	Morning Prayer/No Evening Service

JANUARY

Sunday	January	5	Epiphany Sunday, Festival of Lights
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TRANSITIONS:**Happy birthday in November to:**

Harrison Jackson	11-7-04
Reid Myers	11-9-00
Wilson Young	11-14-05
Camille Cook	11-19-01
Ethan Myers	11-20-02
Hardy Davis	11-26-02
Bridger Middleton	11-26-00
Georgia Syfan Real Rieck	11-29-10

Happy birthday in December to:

Marley Davis	12-8-99
Bryce Cornell Rieck	12-12-07
Aleks Arwood	12-19-02
Madison Elizabeth Cook	12-25-99