

The Women of St. Mary's Annual Report to the Parish For 2008

January 25, 2009

The Women of St. Mary's follows a program of prayer, education, work and giving in order to fulfill the mission of the church. Organized in 1835, the Women of St. Mary's functions under the guidance of board members who meet on an almost monthly basis from September through May. The board meetings are preceded by a service of Holy Eucharist led by the Rector. All the women, in the parish, are automatically members.

Monetary gifts and outreach are made possible by our major fund-raising event: the Foods 'n Fancies Bazaar. Alicia Bowman served as the WSM Liaison with Foods 'n Fancies.

In May, 2008, the Women were able to give a total of \$10,500.00 to 43 organizations and/or funds as outreach through five categories of recipients: our Parish, the Diocese, the Community, the Nation and the World.

PARISH: St Mary's Discretionary Fund, Special Music Fund and Altar Guild

DIOCESE: Epiphany School, Episcopal City Mission, Esperanza Academy, Episcopal Peace Fellowship (Rev. P. Jacobs), Massachusetts Council of Churches, Rev. Edward Rodman, EDS and St. Stephen's, South End.

COMMUNITY: Andover Newton (Valerie Dixon), Bristol Lodge in Waltham, Can Do, Charles River Watershed, Committee to End Elderly Homelessness, Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries, Crittenton Hastings House, Habitat For Humanity, Lazarus House (Lawrence), Massachusetts Audubon Society, MUSE, New Falls Fire Fund, One Family Scholar, Partners Home Care (Newton/Wellesley), Project Bread, REACH (Support Committee for Battered Women), Rosie's Place, Second Step, Transition House, United Parish Brookline, West River Hospice, William Joiner Center and Women's Lunch Plate.

NATION: Church Women United, National Council of Churches and Tim Green (Katrina)

WORLD: Church World Service, Episcopal Relief and Development, Grassroots International, The Nature Conservancy, Sister Parish in San Salvador via Paul Pyzowski, Women for Women and World Council of Churches.

The Women of St. Mary's fund raising event was strengthened by the fellowship shared through our educational and social activities.

Craft Workshops were held to make handcrafted items for the Foods 'n Fancies sale. Evening workshops took the place of the Stitch 'n Chat evenings. Other workshops were held during the day.

During our Lenten studies, a series of guest speakers spoke on the theme "Search for Peace". We had a series of guest speakers. The Rev. Philip Jacobs from Trinity Church, Canton spoke on the history of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship. Rev Ed Rodman spoke on Restorative Justice. Valerie Dixon from Andover Newton spoke and we had a member from United Parish in Brookline speak about the moving, memorial display of thousands of ribbons hung from the ceiling of their sanctuary. Each ribbon had the name of a fallen serviceman or woman who gave his/her life during the Iraq/Afghanistan War.

The Fretless Musicians were scheduled for the February Pot Luck Supper. We learned about our own church gardens at the May Annual meeting. Our Spring Outing took us to Pickity Place in June. The October Welcoming Dinner featured a speaker from Birthday Wishes. The year concluded with the Christmas dinner party, Carols and a Yankee Swap. Donations of Gift Certificates for stores, accessible to the women at Rosie's Place, plus unwrapped gifts for their children, age 10 – 14, were collected at the supper. The gifts were accompanied by wrapping paper and ribbon so the mothers could wrap their own children's gifts themselves.

Many thanks are due to the women who do so much to make this organization a successful, important, and caring component of our parish life.

B. Howell, Recording Secretary