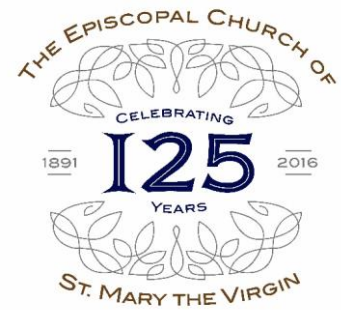


## *Notes from the Archives*

### **August: Feasting (August 15, Feast of St. Mary the Virgin)**

*As part of our celebration of the 125th anniversary of St. Mary's, we are featuring "Notes from the Archives" on the third Sunday of each month throughout 2016. These fascinating and delightful snippets from history have been thoughtfully prepared by Mary Morganti, our Parish Archivist.*



Visions of Mary can be found everywhere here: depicted in paintings, illuminated in stained glass, stitched & screened onto seasonal banners, and carved & formed into the statues and plaques that adorn our exterior walls. But more than anywhere else, Mary may be found in our gardens: from the statue of the Madonna & Child that greets shoppers and Muni riders alike at the corner of Union & Steiner Streets, to the courtyard mural visible to walkers in our neighborhood, to the interior garden now screened behind iron security gates: Mary is there.

The corner signboard that names us *The Episcopal Church of St. Mary the Virgin* was designed, carved and gilded by architect and parishioner Warren Perry in 1951, and restored in 1994. Conservation work on the embedded Italian terra cotta statue of Madonna & Child and its mounting board was completed in 1996.

The original gardens facing Union Street were described by Perry as designed "to hide existing architectural defects." The gardens spanning the Lych Gate, also designed by Perry (who had suggested carving the words "Enter, Rest and Pray" on the cross-beam facing the street), was hidden behind a fence and dense hedges until replanting in 1979. Later, in the mid-to-late 1990s the Union Street gardens were again redesigned by the Garden Committee, chaired by Cynthia MacKay. Working in consultation with professional arborists and landscape designers, the project was funded by a bequest from the late Thomas Ramsey, who first envisioned the possibilities for that narrow strip of ground. It is graced by a cherry tree donated in memory of the late David Simmons, beloved former parish administrator.

There are no images or information about the design of the garden behind Pixley House, but photographs taken in 1947, during groundbreaking for the expansion of the church and construction of the south chapel, reveal a thicket of briars beyond the fence of the original Atrium (now the courtyard). In December 1976, the Pixley House garden was refurbished and renamed the St. Mary's Garden, given "To the Glory of God and in thanksgiving for His many blessings by Miss Beatrice Gay, to be enjoyed by children, old people, visitors who are weary, and the people of St. Mary's in their life together."

Today this private space, renamed the Mary Meditation Garden, is a shady and contemplative setting, bounded on one side by a statue of Mary and Child and the Columbarium on the other. The free-standing bronze Mary sculpture dedicated in 2005, was designed and cast by artist Margaret Adams Parker, the mother of parishioner, Margaret Stafford. St. Mary's sculpture of Mary is one among several cast; others are located at the College of Preachers on the grounds of Washington's National Cathedral, at Iglesia Santa Maria in Arlington, Virginia, and at St. John's Church, West Hartford, Connecticut. On the far wall, the Columbarium designed by architect and parishioner Bruce Prescott, was completed in November 2008, and provides 145 niches to subscribers for the repose of ashes.