

February 2017

St. John's Eagle

The Newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church

A Lenten Invitation

By The Rev. Barb Schmitz, Interim Rector


Originally, the season of Lent provided a time during which converts to the Christian faith were prepared for holy baptism. It also became a time when those who had fallen away from the faith, perhaps by serious sin or neglect of worship, underwent a time of repentance before being restored to the congregation. In our day, Lent is a time focusing on prayer, fasting, and self-denial.

I probably said this at some point last year, but I think it cannot be said enough: do not think that you can observe a Holy Lent by simply "taking on" something. Lent is primarily about "giving up," not "taking on." Sometimes I hear parishioners say that they are more oriented toward "doing more" than giving something up. This is not about doing whatever suits your personality type or spiritual gifts.

What prayer, fasting, and self-denial all have in common is "letting go." In prayer, we let go of "chasing cars" round and

round in our minds. In fasting, we let go of something our body does not need (in the short term). In self-denial, we let go of our egos, which tell us that we can do what we want, the way we want to. This is hard, as anyone who has tried to pray for five minutes, or give up a meal, or let go of some small pleasure, will readily attest.

Masters of the spiritual life tell us that letting go is the way we grow in faith; not to the exclusion of "taking on" good things, but we cannot grow spiritually without engaging in the process of letting go. That is what the Lenten invitation is about. No one ever said it would be easy - just that it's the way of Jesus, whose self-denial led him to give his life on the cross.

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a Holy Lent. Ash Wednesday services will be held March 1, at 7:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. 

Save These Dates!

LENT

March 1, 2017 Ash Wednesday service at 7:30 a.m., choral service at 7:00 p.m.

HOLY WEEK

April 9, 2017	Palm Sunday
April 12, 2017	Holy Wednesday
April 13, 2017	Maundy Thursday
April 14, 2017	Good Friday
April 16, 2017	Easter Sunday!

The service schedule for Holy Week will be posted on the parish website at <http://stjohnsithaca.org/> as it becomes known.

"The Peaceful Transition of Power"

By The Rev. Barb Schmitz, Interim Rector

Just as our country has witnessed the transition of leadership to a new president, and our diocese has been involved this past year in the transition to a new bishop for Central New York, St. John's will soon be in the midst of a peaceful transition to a new rector.

As I outlined at the annual meeting in January, once the vestry calls a priest to be the rector, the call is accepted, and a letter of agreement is negotiated, the Sr. Warden will announce the new rector to the parish. A start date will also be negotiated. Various factors are involved in setting the start date.

My last Sunday with you will be about a month or so after the announcement of the new rector, and about a month or so before the start date of the new rector. This will give us time to say goodbye and do good closure. Fr. Strauss is available during the gap time (after I leave and before the new rector arrives) for Sunday services and pastoral needs. Other supply clergy may also help out as needed.

There are many moving parts in the process, and we want to do it well, so it all takes time. Your continuing prayers for the parish are much appreciated. 🏴

The St. John's Vestry During a Time of Transitions

By Michael Roman, Junior Warden

At the St. John's Annual Meeting this past January 22, Susan Backstrom was elected to continue as Senior Warden, and Michael Roman was elected Junior Warden. Susie intends to serve as Senior Warden until the work of the Search Committee is done; at that time, Stephanie Nevels (a member of the Search Committee) is expected to serve for the remainder of the Senior Warden term, until January 2018.

The following Vestry Members continue their terms: Russell Bourne, Muriel Everhart, Lloyd Hall, Stephanie Nevels, Matthew Sanaker, Lisa Tatusko, and Sara VanLooy. Jamie Parris and Mitch Youngling are new members of the Vestry, replacing the two members transitioning off the Vestry: Aaron Wagner and Brett Oakes.

The Vestry Retreat takes place a little more than a month after the Annual Meeting (February 25). The first part of the retreat is a refresher for continuing members of the Vestry, an orientation for the new members of the Vestry, and an opportunity for members of the Vestry to get to know each other a little better as they start working together. The last part of the retreat is a regular vestry meeting.

The 2017 Vestry looks forward with anticipation to accepting the recommendations of the Search Committee, issuing a call to one of rector candidates, and if the call is accepted, making sure the relationship between St. John's and its next full-time rector gets off to a good start. 🏴

National Church News



The Episcopal Church has [released a new video](#) from the Revival in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Episcopal News Service also has a [report](#) and a [photo gallery](#) from the event.

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry has announced a series of revival events throughout The Episcopal Church in 2016 and 2017. 🏴

Video: <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/video/new-revival>

Report: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2017/02/06/dont-be-afraid-to-be-people-of-love-presiding-bishop-tells-pittsburgh-revival/>

Photo Gallery: <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2017/02/06/scenes-from-michael-currys-pilgrimage-for-reconciliation-healing-and-evangelism-in-southwestern-pennsylvania/>


Diocesan News

By Michael Roman

In *The Messenger* (our diocesan newsletter) for February 2, 2017, Bishop Dede Duncan-Probe's lead article points to statements and resources from the Episcopal Church and our partners encouraging your support of refugees and immigrants, who are among the most vulnerable members of our human family.

The February 2 issue of *The Messenger* is available on the diocesan website at <http://eepurl.com/czMCC5>. You can view other issues of The Messenger at cnyepiscopal.org/news-events/messenger/.

Bishop DeDe visited St. John's Church in Ithaca Sunday, January 29, and confirmed Matthew Ryan, KC Ryan, Stephanie Nevels, Jamie Parris, and Matthew Sanaker.

Read more about Bishop Dede on the diocese website at <https://cnyepiscopal.org/our-diocese/leadership/bishop-xi/>. 




Back row, left to right: Jamie Parris, The Reverend Barb Schmitz (Interim Rector), Stephanie Nevels.


Front row, left to right: Matthew Ryan, KC Ryan, Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe, and Matthew Sanaker.

A Shared Christmas Dinner

The Christmas Dinner in the St. John's Parish Hall following the 10:30 service on Christmas Day was a great success. Volunteers from Loaves and Fishes prepared the meal, and St. John's parishioners donated some of the food, stayed and shared a meal with Loaves and Fishes staff members and clients, and helped serve the meal to over 200 people who shared a Christmas meal together. Thank you to Jenny Reeves, who coordinated the meal, and to all who donated food supplies, time to volunteer, and those who stayed and shared the meal. The leftovers fed everyone at two of the local homeless shelters in town.

What a wonderful sharing of the Spirit of Christmas! 

Christmas Generosity

Pictured right, St. John's Christmas giving tree is adorned with tags containing gift requests from those in need. St. John's adopts several families each year at Christmas. Parishoners choose a gift tag from the tree, buy the gifts, and deliver them before the holiday. 



Musical Notes

By Karen A. Hindenlang, Director of Music/Organist

The two questions below have come to me a few times, in response to small innovations introduced since I arrived at St. John's Church.


1. Why does our choir stop in the center aisle to sing a verse of the processional hymn?

Weekly, our choir comes forward from the congregation to serve in the chancel, to represent and support our parish in song before God. Just as Lay Eucharistic Ministers pray on our behalf and lead our petitions, the choir sings on behalf of the congregation in anthems and helps lead the congregation in service music and hymns.

Remaining for a time in the aisle during the procession reminds us all that the choir is a part of our congregation, and the pause enriches our combined efforts in singing God's praise. Likewise, toward the end of the recessional hymn, the choir spreads across the back of the nave and turns to face the altar, joining fully with the congregation once again to sing our final verses in worship.

2. What are the odd words listed in parenthesis after the titles of hymns in the bulletin?

Our hymns are identified by their lyrics, the first line of the poetic text that will be sung. They are also identified by their tune names, a word or phrase given to represent the melody that will be sung.

The poem "O Little Town of Bethlehem," for example, can be sung to the American tune St. Louis or the British tune Forest Green; both are offered in our hymnal (#78 and 79). And one tune can be set with different poems, such as Rockingham sung with the words "When I survey the wondrous cross" (#474) or the text "My God, thy table now is spread" (#321). Often, the organ music in a service is based the day's hymn tunes, and so a Prelude or Postlude might be listed as Meditation on Rockingham or Variations on Forest Green. 



Contributing to the Eagle

The St. Johns' Communications Committee welcomes articles and ideas for articles from the St. John's community, especially those regarding parish events, programs and services, achievements or volunteer activities, and other news of interest to our parish. Parishioners with ideas for articles they wish to write or an event or topic they would like covered, or who would like to write regularly for the newsletter are invited to contact any Communications Committee member. The committee reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, length and content.

Communications Committee Members:

Russell Bourne, Libby Hedrick (photo credit), Margaret Johnson, Jamie Parris (chair), Michael Roman, Matthew Sanaker, and Lisa Tatusko.

Parishioner Profile: John Allison

The Rev. John Allison was ordained February 2 by Bishop Stephen Lane at the Chapel of St. Mary, Northeast Harbor, Maine, in the parish of St. Mary and St. Jude, where John served as deacon. He now serves as priest associate until he is called to another parish as rector. Fr. Christopher Szarke attended the ordination.

Rev. John was a seminarian sponsored by St. John's Episcopal Church, Ithaca, New York, when Fr. Christopher served as associate priest. Fr. Christopher is the rector at St. Margaret's Episcopal Church in Belfast, Maine.



Above: Fr. Christopher Szarke (left) and The Rev, John Allison.



Right (left to right): The Rev. Kathleen Killian (John's spouse), the Rev. John Allison, Bishop Stephen Lane, and the Rev. Jane Haugh Cornman, Rector of the Parish of St. Mary and St. Jude.



Photo taken December 23, 2016.

Christmas Cheer at Loaves and Fishes

By Libby Hedrick

St. John's, Ithaca, hosts a program of feeding called Loaves and Fishes. I heard that the folks who come to the meals had hoped that they could have their photos taken (some never have had), so I volunteered (have camera will travel). Yesterday at dinner and again today at lunch, I snapped photos of everyone who wanted a portrait of him/herself. Today we were wrapping up and in marched Santa Clause with a furry companion. It caused quite a stir. Someone wanted her photo taken with Santa, then other people, then the group grew until I nearly had to take the picture from the parking lot! But it was terrific spontaneous fun, and here is the happy result. ✚