

April 2019

St. John's Eagle

The Newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church

Mission of Miracles

By Pat Kinney

The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York has been sending a medical mission, the Mission of Miracles (MoM) to El Salvador for 16 years, bringing doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, optometrists, and dental hygienists. For six years, starting with Bishop Skip Adams, pastoral care has been offered, as well. Last year, I traveled with the MoM for the first time, joining my brother, Doug, and his wife Dr. Barb Connor, who is the medical director of the mission. This year, we were also joined by one pediatrician and a nephrologist. Two El Salvadoran dentists and three El Salvadoran doctors joined the team for the week, and El Salvadoran translators accompanied each of the medical teams. I provided pastoral care and had my own translator, Flor, who is a fourth-year psychology student.

Episcopal Relief and Development supports the work of Dr. Daniella, an El Salvadoran doctor who plans and organizes the work of the MoM. She has already established a practice in the five villages we visited and works closely with people she has trained as health providers to ensure the smooth operation and the safety of the mission.

An early crew set up the clinic, including an electrocardiogram machine, space for a pharmacy, a dark space to allow evaluation of vision, pastoral care, a room for dental care, and six or seven medical teams of a doctor, a nurse, and a translator. Two buses bring along the rest of the team about an hour later, arriving about 9:00 a.m.

Patients arrive, many having come from great distances (walking, bicycling, and taking the bus), to pay one dollar to be seen by the team. Patients are weighed and their height measured, and then, if they're established patients of Dr. Daniella, will be put in line to receive care. If they're a new patient, they will be assessed regarding their concerns and then placed in line.

Referrals are made to pastoral care based on the patient's situation and if they would like to talk with someone. Last year, I saw 26 patients over the five days of the MoM. This year, I saw 41 patients, including one patient who came just to receive pastoral care. This individual was already receiving medical care through another source, but knew he needed to talk to someone. I am touched by the El Salvadoran people's resilience, courage, and their love and loyalty for their families. They shared their stories, recognizing the healing power of talking about their burdens and concerns. I am blessed to have been able to witness and listen to them. Their faith in God and their trust that Jesus walks beside them affirms my faith and my trust!

I thank you, St. John's family, for your generous support – ointments, creams, readers, pain relievers, gently used braces and splints – it all helps! Please continue to save your empty prescription bottles (only child-proof caps, and labels removed, please) and if you would like to contribute to the 2020 MoM, please just leave your items in the office and I'll be glad to store them!

Holy Week Schedule

- **Palm Sunday, April 14** Rite I: 8:00, Rite II: 10:30 a.m.
- **Holy Wednesday, April 17** Tenebrae: 7:00 p.m.
- **Maundy Thursday, April 18** Dinner with Loaves & Fishes: 5:00 p.m., Service: 7:00 p.m.
- **Good Friday, April 19** Service of Holy Eucharist, Stations of the Cross: 7:00 p.m.
- **Holy Saturday, April 20** Easter Vigil with Holy Eucharist: 8:00 p.m.
- **Easter Sunday, April 21** Holy Eucharist, Rite I: 8:00 a.m., Festal Choral Eucharist, Rite II: 10:30 a.m.

On the Theology of Stewardship

By Daniel Ripperton

In the second chapter of St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, the Apostle presents a picture to the community of believers at Philippi where Jesus, who was God, "did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness" (Philippians 2:6-7). So, in this vision, Jesus, the Godman, is letting go of His divine glory, and allowing Himself to be born into a new situation and enter into the human community.

Similarly, human beings, while we are not God, are images of God, and weak as we are, we're given by divine grace a nature that confirms us as "a little lower than God" and "crowned with glory and honor." When as Christians we enter into our life's work we, like Jesus, are summoned into a new situation — incarnation for Him, worship, love and service for us — and we're asked to put ourselves totally at God's disposal.

The operative question is "What does God ask of me in this circumstance?" For Jesus, what God asked was that He should "humble Himself, and [become] obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8).

For us, the content of the request may be different, but the issue we face is the same: "What gifts do I have, and how do I use them generously for the good of others?" So, I would ask each member of St. John's to reflect on the gifts they've been given — whether those gifts are interpersonal, intellectual, organizational, financial, artistic or anything else — and prayerfully ask God how they might employ those gifts in the service of our church community as we strive together to embody Jesus' love in the world.

Online Giving is Now Available!

In case you missed it, you can now give to St. John's online! Fulfill your pledge, give to the capital campaign, send a memorial gift, a special offering, or give to the general fund with just a few clicks. You can set up your gift to occur immediately, or set up automated giving that fits your schedule and budget. There's even a mobile app! Look for Tithe.ly in your phone's app store.

Visit <https://tithe.ly/give?c=417610> to get started.

If you have questions, contact the office at office@stjohnsithaca.org or (607) 273-6532.

In the News

In case you missed it, St. John's was in the Ithaca Times in February, featuring information about the Laundry Love project and the new air conditioning being added in the Parish Hall. Read the full article at <http://bit.ly/2InUHbJ>.

Music Notes

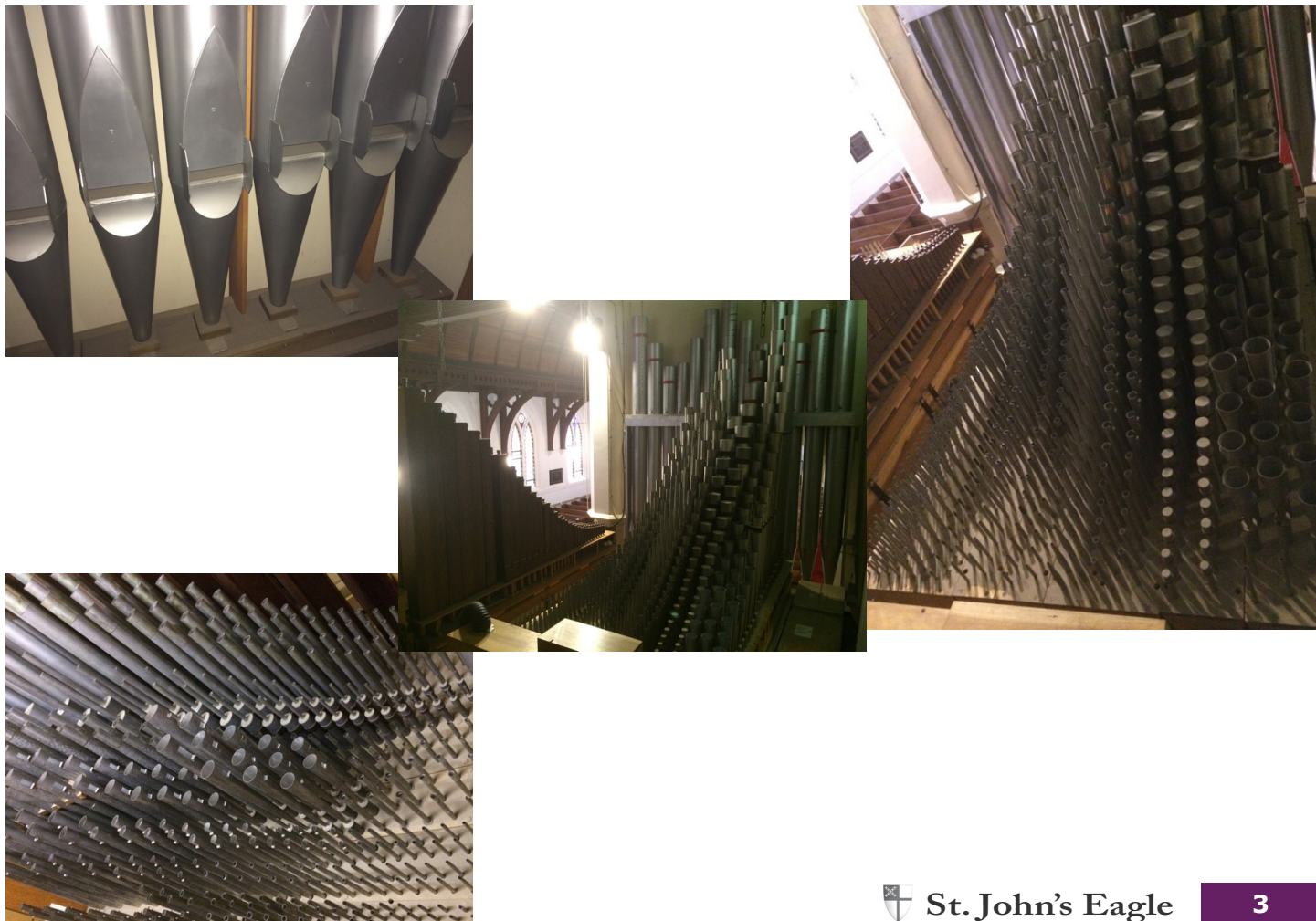
By Karen A. Hindenlang, Director of Music

Music this spring will include weekly anthems offered in our 10:30 services by the Chancel Choir through Trinity Sunday, June 16. The group has been rehearsing sacred choral literature by Purcell, Handel, Antonio Lotti, Kenneth Leighton, Sir Arthur Sullivan (yes, indeed, the theatrical partner of W. S. Gilbert), our own Crawford Thoburn, and the ever-popular John Rutter... with much more to come! Balcony Bells rang in worship twice in March and will do so again April 28. As always, both ensembles heartily welcome and actively need new participants; please see me for more information.

Have you noticed that hymns sung in our services often echo the language, imagery, and themes of the day's scripture lessons? This is no accident! Together we sing hymns each week that reflect The Word of God as appointed in our lectionary. In so doing, we may enrich our insight into scripture by approaching it not only through reading and hearing, but also in another way — through song! Hymns are not simply musical decorations in our liturgy. Singing helps us absorb scripture and reflect on its interpretation in a way that can move us towards an understanding beyond words.

Here's a fun fact: The Bible contains over 400 references to music. These include more than 50 direct commands to sing. Make no mistake, these are orders, issued in the imperative voice: "Sing! Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord all the earth!" We are not told to sing only if we feel like it, or if we have a nice voice, or when we think no one is listening (or maybe when we hope someone is). We are instructed to give God all honor and praise with a voice of song. This implicit duty underlies our choral worship. *And* it is a duty that can nurture God's people, because in the Creator's great design of all things, singing is good for us. Google "singing health" and see what you get!

Enjoy these photos from inside our organ!



All about Candles: The Aumbry Candle, the Eucharistic Candles, and the Gospel Candle

By Susie Backstrom

The Symbolism of Candles

Candles, not surprisingly, symbolize light. They have extensive ceremonial use in the Episcopal liturgical tradition. Lighted candles symbolize the light of Christ, the light of the Gospel, or simply to remind the congregation that the time and space for worship are sacred.

The Aumbry Candle

As we approach the altar at St. John's to receive Holy Communion (climbing the series of steps historically has meant to duplicate a climb to heaven), the Aumbry Candle is the large candle that hangs from the ceiling to the left of the high altar. It announces (by its being lit) that consecrated elements (oil, wine and/or bread) are present inside the aumbry. The aumbry is the cabinet hanging on the wall to the left of the high altar. Aumbries traditionally have been used to store items such as anointing oils, reliquaries, sacred books and consecrated wine and bread. The candle hanging before it is always lit when there are consecrated elements within.

A Brief History of Altar Candles

For centuries in the Anglican and Episcopal churches, altar candles were never used. One of the first written records of the use of altar candles was a twelfth-century report that two candles flanked an altar cross in a papal chapel. The earliest record of candles in an Anglican church is from the reign of King Edward VI. He called for two lights to be placed on the altar to symbolize that Christ is the light of the world. According to Don S. Armentrout, author of "An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church," altar candles have been common in Anglican churches since the 16th century. The use of candles at the Eucharist was a source of serious dispute within the Episcopal Church during the 19th century, however. Although using candles in worship was strongly favored by Episcopalians of the Catholic tradition, it was opposed by those of the evangelical tradition. In fact, the General Conventions of the Episcopal Church in 1868, 1871 and 1874 considered proposals to prohibit the use of altar candles. Ultimately, neither viewpoint was sanctioned by the church. Accordingly, the use of altar candles and other candles in the worship of the Episcopal church is now customary.

Eucharistic Service

Altar candles are lit during the Eucharistic service. They are not lit during Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer unless those services include the Eucharist. Before the service begins, acolytes light the candles. The candles are extinguished by the same people after the dismissal. Although it is primarily a utilitarian act, the ritual of lighting and extinguishing the candles has become for some Episcopalians the ritual beginning and the ending of the service.

Altar Candles and the Gospel Candle

The Altar candles at St. John's are tall, thin candles made of beeswax and stearine. Each is topped with a brass candle "follower," which helps keep wax from spilling on the altar linens. Altar candles are lit using a taper, which is a lit wick attached to a long handle.

At St. John's, we presently use six "Office Lights," three of which are placed on either side of the cross on the shelf of the high altar. The two Eucharistic Candles are placed on either corner of the altar on which the Eucharist is celebrated. Our Rector customarily celebrates the Eucharist from the free-standing altar just in front of the altar rail, so the two large Eucharistic candles are placed on the corners of that altars. However, if Mother Megan were to celebrate the Eucharist from the high altar, the two Eucharistic Candles would be placed on the corners of that altar.

The Office Lights always remain on the high altar shelf. In older photographs of St. John's, you will see that two candelabra holding three candles each held the Office Lights instead of the six separate candle sticks now in use.

Continued on page 5.

Continued from page 4.

If you attend the 8:00 a.m. Sunday service, you typically will see only the two Eucharistic candles lit. The Office Lights and the Eucharistic candles typically are all lit at the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday.

The Gospel Candle is the Eucharistic Candle which is on the left side of the altar as you face it from the congregation. The Epistle Candle is the Eucharistic Candle which is on the right side. These candles refer to an archaic term used for the sides of the church (the left, or Gospel side, since the Gospel was read from the left side of the altar as faced by the congregation; and the right side, or Epistle side, since the Epistle was read from the right side of the altar).

By the way, the Office Lights and the Eucharistic Candles are lit and extinguished in a particular order, so that the Gospel Candle never burns alone. Watch the acolyte at the beginning and end of the church service and you will see!

All parishioners may participate in illuminating the chancel with candles. If you are interested in donating candles Contact Susie Backstrom (sebackstrom@aol.com) or AnnMarie in the church office (office@stjohnsithaca.org). St. John's keeps a schedule of candle givers, so contact Susie or AnnMarie to find a month for which you wish to honor a loved one, and then either give AnnMarie in the church office cash or write a check for \$25 (either for Office Lights or the Eucharistic Candles) payable to the order of St. John's Episcopal Church or send a gift using our online giving system at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=417610> . If you wish, the name of the loved one remembered will appear in the Sunday bulletins during that month.

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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:

Libby Hedrick, Margaret Johnson, Jamie Parris (chair), Michael Roman, Susie Backstrom, and Sara VanLooy.

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Email the office: office@stjohnsithaca.org

Email the Communications Committee:
communications@stjohnsithaca.org

Around the Parish

Libby Hedrick stays busy taking photos at various events and sometimes just because. Enjoy this photo gallery.



