
The Outrider

December 2002-January 2003

The View From The Beginning Of The Year....

*"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved."
--Psalm 46.2*

It's most likely an occupational hazard, but I tend to get caught up in the rhythm and movement of the church year much more than in the regular calendar. The seasons of Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost form my thinking and life more vitally than summer/fall/winter/spring. Since I've always liked being a tad *counter-cultural*, following the church seasons puts me just enough out of whack with what's going on around me to please me!

So, here I am writing to you as the old year wears itself out in 26th week of Pentecost and the New Year edges ever nearer. This year, New Year's Day in the church calendar is December 1—the first Sunday of Advent. The year begins where it always does—in a time of waiting and preparation. Unlike the secular New Year's loud and raucous observance, Advent is a time of quiet, of reflection, of gathering ourselves for the coming Promise.

"Happy New Year!" Open yourselves to the "possibilities" that wait ahead—the coming of the Christ Child, the advent of Emmanuel...*God with us...* Turn inward during these weeks leading up to the Feast of the Incarnation. Listen to the whispers of your soul's song rather than the Christmas jingles piped into the malls. God uses "a still small voice" in these weeks of chill and gathering darkness. Find some silence deep inside and train your heart's ear to listen...to listen....

You and I won't—perhaps *can't*—escape from the hurry and worry of this time of year. And perhaps we *shouldn't* slip totally away from the culture. Christ was born, after all, into the crowds and confusion of a Roman census, a time of movement and travel and sold out motels. It is "this world"—the world of real life, of war and the rumors of war, of pain and suffering and loss...it is precisely "this world" that Christ comes to redeem and make whole. We are not called in Advent to *escape* from the world—but to encounter the world with the strength and courage that comes from our deeper selves.

The radio and TV will count down the days to Christmas as dwindling opportunities to shop and buy. In Advent, we do not "count the days" so much as be fully present to them. Gather yourselves; make room in your heart and mind for the Child of Promise. Let the year begin in awe and wonder. There is nothing to fear—Christ already dwells within us....

Shalom,

Jim

IN THIS "OUTRIDER"

Every once in a while, it is helpful to remind ourselves about the origin and meaning of St. John's Newsletter. An "outrider" is, according to my dictionary: *a mounted attendant; one who escorts or clears the way for a vehicle or person; FORERUNNER, HARBINGER.*

So, an "outrider" isn't the same as a "circuit rider"—a clergy person who traveled around visiting missions and churches without a resident ordained minister. An "outrider" came even before that. It was a preacher who rode out into areas where there were no churches to prepare the way for the gospel to be preached. As Advent approaches, we meet an "outrider" in John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus.

St. John's "Outrider" takes the news of the parish and the announcement of upcoming events into the byways and out posts of the parish. It is a way we have to "be in touch" with the far-flung members of St. John's and keep them connected to the ongoing community we share.

This Outrider is a double issue—December 2002 and January 2003. The crush of work for the office this time of year—preparing for Christmas, producing the Annual Report and accomplishing the multitude of year-end and year-beginning tasks—makes it necessary to combine the two months into one newsletter. So, hold on to this edition...you'll need it to stay informed about two months of events.

Pay special attention to the information regarding Christmas services, the 2003 Annual Meeting, and the report on the Sacred Trusts Conference. Note the special events: ordination, piano recital, Waterbury Chorale, Companion Evenings, church "greening" and caroling, and notices of other meetings and opportunities for worship, community building and service.

Jim

Some December Opportunities for Prayer, Celebration, and Community...

COMPANION EVENING - DECEMBER 3rd



December's Companion Evening is of vital interest to the entire parish. On that night Steve Minkler, Lorene Castle and Harriet Fotter will discuss some of the ideas and insights they got at the Sacred Trusts Conference last month at the National Cathedral in Washington D.C. There is an article in this issue about that conference. It is an exciting time in our parish's life—and what we do with the information Steve, Lorene and Harriet have to share will shape us as a church into the future. Come at 6:30 p.m. for potluck. Those with last names beginning with A-M can bring a main dish or vegetable dish. Last names N-Z should bring salads, fruit dishes and desserts.

ADVENT QUIET DAY



St. John's Seminiarian Stephen Arbogast will be leading a morning of quiet reflection and prayer on December 7th. Start your Advent time of preparing for the coming of the Christ-child with reflection and prayer. The day will begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon. A sign up sheet will be in the hallway. Bring a brown bag lunch if you would like to stay together afterwards for lunch and conversation about the theme and morning's reflections.

THE BUS IS FILLING UP!



St. John's has arranged for a bus to go to Malinda Johnson's ordination to the priesthood on Saturday, December 14 at 10:30 a.m. at Christ Church Cathedral. As of November 8, about half the 47 seats are taken. Sign up in the library or call the church office to make sure you have a seat. The cost per person will be \$10. Taking the bus together is the most convenient and entertaining way to make the journey. We'll be dropped off and picked up right in front of the cathedral. The bus will leave at 9:15 from the church parking lot. We'll leave Hartford after the reception.

THE FUN DOESN'T STOP THERE...MAKE A DAY OF IT...

Holiday Solo Piano Recital
Saturday, December 14th at 4:00 p.m.



When I took piano lessons as a kid, my teachers didn't stage recitals for their students. So even though I performed with several bands and have played for Church services, this is my first "official recital" in nearly 30 years of making music. What better season than Christmas to give thanks to God for this gift!

Please join me for a program of jazz-influenced holiday standards and Christmas carols, and music from the Academy Award winning animated short film, "The Snowman". I've had a lot of fun practicing these tunes and I hope you'll enjoy hearing them.

Steve Minkler

GREENING OF THE CHURCH - SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21ST



The Christmas season has a way of eating into our emotional energy. Most of us find ourselves running around madly in the days leading up to the celebration of Christ's birth doing worldly things. St. John's is offering an opportunity to end that "tradition" and begin a new one with others in our parish community. Join us at 2:00 p.m. to help decorate the church for Christmas. Many hands make that work light! At the same time, Diane Platt and the church school children will be creating decorations for St. John's Jesse Tree and practicing it for the Jesse Tree Pageant at the 10:15 Eucharist on December 22 - Advent IV. In addition, children and adults will take the opportunity to go caroling around the Green and to a nearby nursing home. We'll conclude with a chili supper at 5:00 p.m.

So get your shopping done early in the month and spend this last Saturday before Christmas with your St. John's family. Many thanks to Lorene Castle, Barbara Curry, and the Outreach Council for coming up with this idea. It's a great chance to invite a friend along to experience St. John's community. We'll need to know how many to cook for, so sign up or call the church office to give us a count. **The only cost is an item of packaged or canned food for the Interfaith Ministry Food Bank.**

CELEBRATING THE INCARNATION AT ST. JOHN'S

The 2002 Christmas Eucharists provide three different times to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child into our lives and hearts.



Tuesday, December 24th — 4:00 p.m. Family Eucharist

A service of Carols and Eucharist timed to allow families with young children and others who have evening commitments to celebrate Christ's birth.

Tuesday, December 24th — 10:00 p.m. The Christ Mass

A traditional and solemn Eucharist with choir and instruments.



Wednesday, December 25th — 10:00 a.m. The Feast of the Incarnation

Carols and Eucharist to welcome Emmanuel. Please join our parish community at this holy time. Invite friends to celebrate with us.

**ANNUAL MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 2003**

- 8:00 a.m. Community Breakfast & Open House**
There will be a sign up sheet to bring fruit, bagels, juice, etc. The Rector is looking for volunteers to cook bacon and eggs with him. There will be displays and other things of interest to see.
- 9:00 a.m. Combined Eucharist & Shortened Church School**
This is a combined service for both 8:00 and 10:15 regulars.
- 10:00 a.m. Annual Meeting & Activities For Children**
We will have an engaging, interactive meeting guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish is a time to receive reports from various groups and committees, to elect the Officers and Vestry, to receive the 2003 Budget, to celebrate our common life and dreams regarding the future of St. John's.

***Vestry nominations:** to be eligible to serve on the vestry a candidate must be at least 18 years old, regular in attendance and willing to serve. Nominations may be submitted to the nominating committee in writing through the church office or Committee chairperson Kay Bergin. The deadline for nominations is January 5, 2003.

***Voting list:** all members of St. John's who are at least 18 years old, baptized and regular in attendance for at least six months prior to the Annual Meeting are eligible to vote at the meeting. You must sign an application to be put on the voting list prior to the annual meeting. For your convenience, an application appears below. Fill it out and return it to the church office or put it in the offering plate prior to the January Vestry Meeting on Monday, January 13.

***Annual Reports:** to be included in the printed 2002 Annual Report, your reports must be in the church office no later than Monday, January 13. Please try to complete your reports as soon as possible. The preferred way to submit your report is as a Word Document attached to an email or on a floppy disc.

Date: _____

I hereby declare my desire to become a voting member of St. John's Episcopal Church, Waterbury, Connecticut, according to the provisions of Canon I, Section 6, of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Connecticut. And I also hereby express my attachment to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church in the United States.

Signed:

(Please print your name.)

SACRED TRUSTS: THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE
Renewing Sacred Places Across America

Three members of St. John's Parish, Steve Minkler (Treasurer), Lorene Castle (Chairman of Outreach Committee) and Harriet Fotter (Parish Administrator), attended Sacred Trusts: The National Conference, October 24-26. On December 2 at Companion Evening, they will speak briefly about their different experiences, answer any questions and lead some "brain storming" small group sessions. Please read their comments below and try to attend this Companion Evening.

The Sacred Trust Conference was organized by Partners for Sacred Places, "the only national, non-sectarian, non-profit organization dedicated to the sound stewardship and active community use of America's older religious properties." The 3-day event was held at the Washington National Cathedral. Of the 23 workshops offered the three of us were able to attend 15 in the areas of Repair & Maintenance, Fund Raising and Outreach. What follows is a very abbreviated recounting of our different experiences. We hope every one of you takes the opportunity to ask us about our "Great Adventure."

HARRIET

My track was repair and maintenance and dealt in large part with the nuts and bolts of preserving an historic building. Although at times it seemed that all we talked about was ways to spend money, the emphasis was on enhancement of programs and worship as well as preservation and conservation of the building.

My first session was Building Conditions Survey: What Is It and Why Do I Need One?

A Building Conditions Survey is an inspection and study of a building by a qualified preservation professional that includes a written and visual report with prioritized recommendations and cost estimates and is considered a starting point for any building project or long-term maintenance program. It can be incorporated into an Historic Structures Report that adds historical research and analysis and can contain a Maintenance Plan. A Building Conditions Survey can help balance a congregation's programmatic goals with the needs of keeping the building sound, watertight, and safe in ways that preserve its historic character. Planning can prevent a parish from feeling that too much time and effort is being spent on the wrong things. A conditions survey adds credibility to capital campaigns and funding proposals. In fact, some funding organizations require a Building Conditions Survey to be completed before applying for funds.

The second session was entitled: Conflict and Change: Working with Congregations on Building Projects. The topic was how a professional can work effectively with an all-volunteer, religious organization. They discussed Committees: the importance of the make-up of the committee; what power does it have; and how to keep the committee involved in the process of design and construction. The speakers talked about how change is the orchestration of conflict. Most large building projects call for the congregation to define itself in a new way. Conflict is often the result. Yet conflict is good and is needed for change. Managing the risk involved in conflict is an important part of the professional's role.

The third session, Getting it in Writing: Working with Architects, Contractors & Craftspeople, was just what it sounds like from the title. We were given many helpful tips and guidelines.

I came away from this experience with a renewed sense of the importance of historic, sacred places and a strengthened desire to preserve St. John's past, enliven its present and create its future. There was such excitement at the conference - a sense of a great task before us. We found out that we are not alone. There are other congregations facing the same problems (or worse) that we face and there are people and institutions that want to help us.

LORENE

Those who spoke about Outreach reminded us frequently that we did not get where we are by concentrating on our deficiencies. We got where we are by concentrating on our strengths and our gifts. One speaker said we have to get out of the W Factory of wondering, worrying, and whining about not living in "the good old days." We need to get into A Factory of assessing, affirming and acting. One strategy for getting into the A factory mode is to do a systematic survey of our congregation to discover each other's gifts and untapped talents.

It was suggested that we also survey our community to determine what people would ideally like from St. John's. We will have more success with our programs as well as fund raising if the skills and gifts we have at our disposal are compatible with what the community really wants.

We learned that most inner city churches serve 4 people from the community for every person that attends worships services. This ratio generally equates to \$144,000 in services for the community. However, St. John's serves about 10 people from the community for every person who worships on Sunday. We were encouraged to determine as well as we can what we give to the community because this information will help us when we request additional funding from our own members, the community and also foundations.

Most inner city churches form a separate non-profit corporation for some of the programs that meet in their space. St. John's has one program (St. John's Center) with 501(c)3 status. Perhaps we might consider applying for 501(c)3 status for some of the art/music programs and for the soup kitchen as well. The benefit of having this sort of non-profit status for certain ministries is that we can then solicit funds from organizations and individuals that are not inclined to give to churches. In addition, some inner city churches receive about 30% of their operating budget from community organizations that use their space. We are currently asking some of the groups who use our space if they can contribute more.

STEVE

When Karen and I first came to St. John's, sometime in late 1990 or early 1991, we were struck by the beauty of our surroundings. The wonderful stained glass, the intricately carved oak, and the decorative flags. We were also incredibly moved by the rich sounds of the organ, and (conversely) by Ray Nole's signing of the service for the hearing impaired. By taking a deep breath and looking around, we could tell immediately that this was an exciting, inclusive, and warm place that would soon embrace us as a community and as a family. I felt privileged to share a brief journey to Washington, DC, with two of my "extended family" members.

The Friday keynote speaker, Fr. Doyle, talked about sacred spaces as places that physically reach up to God by their height and their architecture, and which stand as testaments to what humankind can do to build a place of worship. It's no accident that Cathedrals and large churches like St. John's take teams of builders, craftsmen, designers, liturgists, and financiers to build. They say: God is here. We are here to do God's work. Come in.

The Capital Campaign/Fundraising seminars were deeply rooted in a sense of spirituality and community. Of course, some of the subject matter was practical in nature (the "how to's"). But the overwhelming message was to focus on the reasons why sacred spaces need to be maintained and preserved. Speaker after speaker talked about their congregation's mission to the larger community, and how their programs and services had made so much of a difference in so many lives. They spoke about how their sacred places were safe havens for people, and how they have become irreplaceable institutions in their neighborhoods, cities, and region.

I learned that we have most of the puzzle pieces at St. John's. Now it's just a matter of putting the pieces together and moving forward, keeping an eye on good worship and good works in the community. We have an ample pool of active members, a decent funding base, and an endowment that keeps us going. Our physical plant is in very good shape. Most of what we are talking about in terms of building projects are what we "want" to do, not what we "need" to do. The only real exception to this is the electrical system. Otherwise, the place is unlikely to fall apart by itself anytime soon.

A few practical suggestions we might find helpful:

- Master facilities plan
- A "case statement" (places SJ's in a historical and contemporary context, quantifies our "public value" and discusses how a capital campaign will expand or improve our ministries, not simply keep them as they are)
- An updated vision statement.

Finally, I gathered many ideas and specific guidelines should we ever decide to undertake a capital campaign.

CLOSING

It was a privilege to attend this conference and the three of us are grateful to the vestry for approving funding. We only wish everyone from St. John's could have been there with us. We want to share the experience with each and every one of you, so ASK US ABOUT IT!!

DECEMBER PARISH PRAYER CYCLE

December 1: Gary Payne, Bill & Gert Payne, The Rev. William Penny, Kim Pernerewski, The Perreault Family, Bryan & Stacy Petrosky, Gertrude Pettinicchi, and Tyler & Jessica Plaster and Family.

December 8: Donna Ploski & Donald Anderson, Jo-Ann Plunske, Michael Plunske, Donald & Linda Pomeroy, Agnes Pracny, David & Helen Pritchard, The Punter Family, and the Quirici Family.

December 15: Louise Raleigh, Moe & Sandra Redzep, Jeanne Reed, The Regan Family, Ola Regan, Loretta Rey, and Dorothy Reymond.

December 22: Daniel Richardson, James & Alicia Roach, Karen Rodgers and Family, The Rosado Family, Judy & Philip Rowley, and Clair & Kirk Rundhaug.

December 29: The Ruocco Family, The Russo Family, The Sabol Family, Michel & Cindy Saindon, The Salzer Family, Arlene Santa Maria & Family, David & Elizabeth Santa Maria and Family, and Salvatore & Roberta Santa Maria and Family.

JANUARY PARISH PRAYER CYCLE

January 5: Thomas Santopietro, Elizabeth & Paul Santoro, Margaret Sauvageau, Susan Sauvageau, Victor & Paula Saverino, Ernest & Linnea Savoy, and Edna Schneider.

January 12: The Schuster Family, Mabel Schuster, The Scott Family, Jeffrey Scott, William & Gina Serrell, Jason & Donna Sevas, and Tiffany Sevas.

January 19: Roseanna Shea & Wayne Levandoski, Lydia Shearer, Virginia Sheehan, The Sherman Family, Roberta Sherman, Ackley & Anne Shove, and Michael & Judy Sims.

January 26: Helen Sinnott, Andrew Skipp & Jill Stevenson, The Rev. & Mrs. Warren Skipp, The Smith Family, James Smith, The Snyder Family, and Ray & Audrey Sperring.



DECEMBER

12/2 Francis and Kay Bergin
12/26 Howard and Nina Hallock
12/29 Ackley and Anne Shove, Sr.

JANUARY

1/6 Ralph and Molly Sherman
1/20 Peter and Sharon Taylor



Come One, Come All!

To The First Ever

Messiah and Carol Sing-In

At St. John's on Sunday, December 22nd

At 4:00 p.m.

The Waterbury Choral invites you to join us and sing together the Christmas portions of the Messiah, the Hallelujah Chorus, and favorite Christmas carols.

Bring friends and family!

Tickets are \$10; \$5 for children under 12

At the door

Please bring canned goods or a cash donation to benefit the Soup Kitchen.



TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED TO MAKE THE HOLIDAY FAIR A SUCCESS! LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR... Virginia Cole



DECEMBER

12/2 Louis Warren
12/3 Molly Sherman
12/3 Matthew Weiler
12/4 Flora Young
12/5 Stephen Arbogast
12/5 Matthew Aubrie
12/5 Catherine Gannon
12/5 Albert Gambino, Jr.
12/5 Dorothy Wineglass
12/5 Mary Gates
12/7 Richard Grandpre
12/7 Daniel Lafferty
12/8 Santino Ciarlo
12/9 Ray Sperring, Jr.
12/10 William Knapp
12/12 David Pritchard
12/13 James Costello
12/13 Alice Mancinone
12/13 Jacob Gambino
12/14 Natalia Loomis
12/14 Nicole Carrillo
12/14 Alycia Martel
12/15 Jason Caggiano
12/15 Elaine Garretson
12/16 Delmar Nelson
12/16 Norma Connor
12/16 Jill Matteis
12/16 Marvin Knighton
12/17 Lucille Ryczer
12/17 Carol Bequary
12/17 Lisa Ruocco
12/17 Wendy Thomas
12/18 Thomas Landry-Mickett
12/19 Marcia Holroyd
12/19 James DeCarolis
12/20 Bryeanna Lewis
12/20 Salvatore Spinella
12/21 Frank Candal
12/22 Gale Hamilton
12/22 Alice Rosado
12/24 Desrine Wineglass
12/25 Evanson Dover
12/25 Edna Dumschatt
12/25 George MacDonald
12/26 Christopher Adomavicia

12/27 Tom Nelson
12/27 Cassie Salzer
12/28 Nicole Jones
12/29 Christian Daniels
12/29 Janet Mitchell
12/30 Ryan White, Jr.
12/30 Emily Gates
12/31 Diane Caggiano
12/31 William Mullahy

JANUARY

1/1 Rosemary Minkler
1/2 Howard Hallock
1/2 Jeffrey Jones
1/3 Mary Terrell
1/3 Claudine Vaccarelli
1/6 James Benson
1/7 Jennifer Marques
1/7 Sharon Taylor
1/8 Margaret Worden
1/8 Melissa Torrance
1/9 Russell Foti
1/9 Alan Greggis, Jr.
1/10 Joanne Frazine
1/11 Ann Mantzaris
1/11 Ernest Savoy
1/11 Kylee McIntosh
1/12 Brian Vaugh
1/12 Laura Varrone
1/12 Angela White
1/13 William Breslin
1/13 Justin Feliciano
1/14 Paula Saverino
1/15 Gert Payne
1/16 Erik Inkster
1/16 Francine Smith
1/16 Jason Sevas
1/18 Susan Friez
1/18 Eugene Knight
1/19 Gina Tartaglia
1/21 Nicole Dover
1/22 Ryan White
1/24 Cassandra Bequary
1/24 Marie DeRiso
1/24 Wyatt Shea-Levandoski
1/25 Jeanne Luedke
1/25 Gerard McDonald
1/26 Maryann Chesnas
1/27 Tracy Longo
1/28 Sean Huard
1/28 Alec Blaszczyk
10



Altar Flowers
In Memory Of...

December 1: Evelyn Conda and Nancy Parker Santopietro.

December 8: Mary & Henry Vollers.

December 15: Helen Sarah Norton Parker.

December 22: Ethel Chase Hurlbut and Gordon Buckland Hurlbut.

January 5: Annie Gorham Callan & William Herriot Callan, Harry Everett & Loraine Allen, C. Chatfield Cole, Star W. & Sue M. Oldershaw.

January 12: John T. Monzani.

January 19: Rev. Samuel A. & Dorothy Budde, and Francine Tartaglia.

January 26: Emily Dexter and Martin L. & Agnus L. Martus.

CARD MINISTRY



Hello, welcome to St. John's Parish. I'm Sarah Haines and my pastoral care is in the card ministry. If you or someone you love within the parish would like encouragement,

cheer, love, or prayers, the doors to my card ministry are always open. Feel free to contact me at (203) 755-7590 or after the 10:15 service.



TOY SALE-DECEMBER 12TH

The day of the toy sale - sandwiches, cookies, pastry, cider, or whatever you can provide for the toy sale luncheon will be greatly appreciated. Bring the

items to church the day before, mark the items "toy sale luncheon" or bring the morning of the toy sale before noon. Any questions, please call Sarah Haines at (203) 755-7590.



PLEDGE CARDS AND OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you haven't returned your 2003 pledge card and envelope request, please do so as soon as possible. Pledge cards are available at the church office

or with the ushers on Sundays if you've mislaid yours. That card is the only way we have of

knowing whether you want envelopes and which ones: weekly, monthly or special offerings only. Envelope requests are processed and the envelopes put out with your name on them in the library each week. You can also request that we mail your offering envelopes, but it's a great help and saves a lot of postage if you pick them up in person.



Creative Church School Calendar

December 1st - No Church School. Advent Wreaths - members will meet from 9-10:00 a.m. in the Auditorium. Pre-registration is required. A \$5.00 donation to cover the cost of supplies would be appreciated. Please sign up on the table in the hallway or call the church office.

Also the start of the Bishop Fund Offering for church school. The children will take home mite boxes to fill for the next four weeks of Advent and return them on December 22nd. The Fund benefits children who are at risk in our diocese and supports programs to meet those needs.

December 8th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

December 15th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

December 21st: The Greening of the Church 2-5:00 p.m. Church School families will help with the greening of the Church. We will also make Jesse Tree ornaments and rehearse our Christmas Pageant. All families are encouraged to sign up and be part of the fun.

December 22nd: Church School 9-10:00 a.m. - rehearsal for the Christmas Pageant.

January 5th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

January 12th: Epiphany Sunday; Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

January 19th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m. We will remember Dr. Martin Luther King.

January 26th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.



Have you ever wanted to experience meditation? Thought it was too far-out and strange for you? Well, it is something that has been with us for centuries, in all religions. Nowadays, you will even hear doctors talk about all sorts of health benefits from meditation. My take on meditation has to do with my relationship to God, my spirituality.

Meditation has many characteristics. It makes us aware of the presence of God within us. It will transform us. It is reflective. It is communal. Our lives are gradually changed and a new life emerges. A life that begins to be focused on God. We remember God more. We are able to see the face of Christ in a stranger...in our loved ones. Our experience of the liturgy deepens. We discover that we are not the source of the transformation, God is. We can stop trying to be "Master of the Universe" and let God take over. The transformation is not like the transformation a tornado leaves in its wake, but it is a gradual thing that many times is noticed by friends and loved ones before we notice it. The regularity of our meditation moves us into the flow of life. The sun rises and we sit in God's presence awhile. The sun sets and we sit in God's presence awhile. Our lives begin to be lived in God's presence.

I invite you to learn to sit in the silence of God's presence, 20 minutes in the morning and 20 minutes in the evening. Join us for Centering Prayer, an ancient form of Christian meditation brought to the modern world by Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington in the 1970's. It is simple to learn, easy to practice, and the benefits, well they're Divine!

Come and join us on any Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. that you are free. Gail Szantyr

PRE-MARRIAGE CLASSES



Classes for couples planning to be married in 2003 (and for the couples who were married in 2002 but missed the classes) will be held on the Sundays in February at 12:15 p.m. in the Guild Hall on the third floor of the parish house. The clergy are seeking married couples to serve as mentors for the couples in the class. Let Jim or Malinda know if you'd like to be a "mentor couple". You would be asked to attend the first class—February 2—and develop a relationship with the couple you mentor. This is a great opportunity to support folks beginning their married life.



BAPTISM

The last 2002 Baptism date is Sunday, December 29th at 10:15 a.m. If you or your child desires baptism, please contact one of the clergy. There will be a class for parents and godparents and older candidates at 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 28th.



MEATLOAF MINISTRY

A 2-lb. cooked, frozen meatloaf or 2 lb. raw hamburger or \$5.00 to have a meatloaf made in your name, is needed for the GWIM Dining Hall. Meatloaf Sunday is the third Sunday of the month. Please wrap meatloaves in aluminum foil and bring them to church. Thank you.

Sarah Haines



CASSEROLE MINISTRY

The first Sunday of the month in January is Casserole Sunday. Any size or type of casserole that you can provide will be greatly appreciated. Please bring them to St. John's kitchen. The other casserole months are March, May, July, September and November.

Sarah Haines



St. John's Library

I am back from summer/fall vacation. Books and shelves have been cleaned and sorted

and new books added. The top shelves have been washed and now give the library extra space for the oversized reference books.

The library welcomes new books. Books on issues such as: ecology/environment, aging, gender issues, church year and prayer, are especially needed. Donated books should be in good condition. Damaged or very old, yellow paged, outdated books cannot be accepted.

On the table near the piano will be a few books selected for your Advent reading. To keep track of borrowed books, please sign your name in the log. When you have finished reading your borrowed book, return it to the bin on the lower shelf of the library cart, NOT to the shelves. It is often hard to find books that have been miss-shelved.

Marcia Holroyd, St. John's Librarian



In late October, two parishioners, Doris Hollenstein and Marcia Holroyd, attended two stimulating conferences. Dr. Marcus Borg, the Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at Oregon State University, gave four lectures at

Round Hill Community Church in Greenwich. A brilliant mind and brisk lecturer (and an Episcopalian), he captivated the "over-flowing" audience.

The lectures explored "what is most central to living the Christian life; faith, a relationship to God, and personal and social transformation". Borg believes there is a paradigm shift in the way the church sees the whole. The Earlier Paradigm is one of believing: seeing God as theistic, and faith as believing the right things in the right way with rewards. The Emerging Paradigm is one of a relational God. Faith is our journey with God with fidelity and trust to this relationship and seeing the whole as life giving and transforming.

Borg talked about the many metaphors for the reality of God, he calls "The More". God loves us from the beginning and life is seeing what is already true, living in that relationship. Jesus, to Borg, is the most perfect relationship with God; the light of the world: the example of justice and love.

A book worth reading by Marcus Borg is *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time*. There is a copy in the library for anyone who wishes to borrow it.

The second conference was "A Sacred Trust", presented by the Inter-religious Eco Justice Network in Hartford. This forum on religion and the environment brought leaders from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Native American religions together to affirm environmental ministries. Bishop Stephen Charleston, Dean of the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, gave two inspiring and empowering talks. Workshops were held all day ending with a worship service. Doris and Marcia were introduced to a Navajo Coyoteway Blessing Ceremony led by John Cook, a Presbyterian minister and Navajo spiritual leader. The ceremony (which is no longer practiced) demonstrates how people can unravel the knots that bind them in unbalance and violence, and move toward the true path to happiness.

Bishop Charleston described environmental ministries as one of Justice, Compassion, and Reconciliation. The religious community can shape, and influence how we think about our faith in relation to the environment. "If only one person can be named as the parish Earth Ministry, then the parish doesn't get it", says Bishop Charleston. The entire community must see faith as total commitment to caring for ALL that God has created and become responsible stewards.

At St. John's, Earth Ministry is not a committee or council with a chair. Is it the way we think about our faith, our spirituality; how we care for creation. Next time you pray the Earth Prayer at worship, renew your pledge to do all you can to preserve the earth's resources.

Marcia Holroyd & Doris Hollenstein

Annual Team 2000 List



One toothbrush or one tube toothpaste.



One stuffed teddy bear or one small baby blanket or a package of disposable diapers.



One baby bath or baby powder or baby lotion or baby shampoo.



One new bath towel or one bottle of shampoo or conditioner.



One new pair of women's or children's socks.



One new package of women's or children's (all sizes) underwear.



One dish detergent or one laundry detergent.



One bottle of shampoo or conditioner or one new bath towel.



One new hair brush or one new pillow or one new package of pillow cases or twin sheets.



One baby bath or one baby powder or baby shampoo or baby lotion.



One bottle of shampoo or one bottle of conditioner.



One new pair of women's or children's mittens (all sizes) or one new winter hat.

All of the above items are needed throughout the year and are appreciated at any time.

Jan and I would like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to participate in the Team 2000 Project. If you're not already doing so, please join us in this ministry. On the second Sunday of each month, we bring one small item from the shelter's wish list to church, and place it in the basket in front of the altar table. Please mark your items "Team 2000".

If you can not leave them on the second Sunday, you may leave them in the office or give them to Diane on any Sunday. Again, thank you. It is a blessing to be able to work on this ministry and to be a part of this wonderful community.

Thank you for your continuing kindness and generosity.

Jan Gurniak & Diane Caggiano

OUTREACH - TEAM 2000

SAFE HAVEN NEWS



December brings us to the close of St. John's 2002 monthly commitment to Safe Haven's Women's Shelter located in the heart of Waterbury. This parish outreach project is a shining example of the reaching out by the many people who have

regularly brought suggested small, "token" gifts to support the women and their children who have had to take temporary residency at Safe Haven. Over the last few years, all of these "littles" have made many "lots" for these women. Each of you who continue to join us in this commitment, can be assured that your contributions make a difference each month! With this combined December/January Outrider, we offer the following suggestions:

December 2002 - One pair women's or one pair children's mittens.

As a reminder, if you have traveled and collected soaps, shampoo, moisturizers, hand lotions, sewing kits, shower caps, etc., or find you have extra new make-up supplies, you can wrap them or put them in small packages for extra surprise Christmas sharing...that new color lipstick that wasn't quite right for a special outfit might be perfect to brighten the holidays for someone at Safe Haven.

January 2003 - One toothbrush or one tube of toothpaste.

Diane and I once again give special thanksgivings for each of you who join us in this St. John's mission - to give a "lift" to show we "care" for all who find safety at Safe Haven. Many blessings for this holiday season, and with our deepest appreciation,

Diane C. & Jan G.

AMERICARES HOMEFRONT

AmeriCares Homefront is currently taking applications for next year's AmeriCares Projects.

Volunteers from St. John's have worked on five AmeriCares Homefront houses. The goal is to make the homes safe, warm, and dry. Recipients must intend to stay in their homes for five years, have incomes of less than \$35,000, and no significant savings. You can call AmeriCares for more information, e-mail them at www.americares.org/homefront, or call the church office for an application. Applications should be sent in by December 31, 2002 for projects on May 3, 2003.

Lorene Castle, Co-Chair Outreach Committee
(203) 756-1733



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to donate \$25 towards Christmas Poinsettias or for "Greening of the Church", please send in payment of \$25 to the

church office by Sunday, December 15th to guarantee placement of your name in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM	
NAME	_____
ADDRESS	_____
PHONE	_____
IN MEMORY OF:	

