
The Outrider

February 2003

The View from above the Close

In the bleak midwinter...

*"O ye frost and cold, bless ye the Lord;
O ye ice and snow, bless ye the Lord;
praise him and magnify him forever."
--A Song of Creation (BCP p. 48)*

(i)

The snow plowing company has created the Matterhorn in St. John's parking lot. We've lost four parking places to a 12-foot high mountain of ice. It probably won't melt until May. Most likely, we'll have to pay to have it trucked away soon.

(ii)

Funny, I don't hear anyone complaining lately that "we just don't have winters like we used to...."

In the middle of Christmas dinner, I looked out the dining room window to see snow blowing by almost parallel to the ground. I pointed, speechless, and we all just stared at it for a while.

"I'm glad we brought the Land Rover," my friend John Anderson said.

The horrible thing is this: John and Jennie actually own a Land Rover!

(iii)

The other morning, standing on our little back porch, drinking a cup of coffee, I noticed cat tracks through the new snow on our deck. (We've lost the battle though we fought the good fight—the snow doesn't get shoveled off the deck any more.) I crunched across the deck to see how the tracks of one of our girl cats led down the steps and across the whole back yard, disappearing into some bushes.

Later, our neighbor, Mark, and I shoveled the driveway we share and cleaned off cars for two hours. When we started, I was planning to go to the YMCA and exercise. When we finished, I didn't need to....

(iv)

During Epiphany each year, I try to remind myself that God is revealed in the ordinary, commonplace, every-day moments and events of life. God leaves tiny tracks across the snowfields of our mornings. It's often hard for me to recognize God's tracks because all I see is the snow.

Working with a neighbor half my age can be a blessing. Mark shovels faster, but I'm in for the long haul and together we clear the asphalt, reflecting quietly together about how insignificant we humans are in the face of Nature's power.

Eating a meal lovingly prepared with family and dear friends—people I know as well as I know my heart who, nevertheless, always surprise and delight me—another blessing. Even the whimsy of a mountain range of ice in a parking lot is a quirky blessing.

Cat-track blessings are everywhere, even in the bleak mid-winter. God grant me the eyes to see the deep-down meaning of things in what is ordinary...or even annoying....

(v)

This year I took two Epiphany crowns from the basketful we always have to choose from. One was **tenderness** and the other **prosperity**.

I've been noticing the profound tenderness in other people's day-by-day simple kindnesses. I've been noticing over and over how rich and full my life is. Epiphanies are all around me.

All around you as well....

God grant us eyes to *see*, minds to *comprehend* and hearts to *ponder* how near, how dear Christ is.

Shalom,

Jim

GETTING READY FOR LENT



The 40 days of Lent lead us through a desert of reflection to the experience of Holy Week and Easter—the high holy days of our faith.

This year St. John's will be offering two opportunities to feast and celebrate before Lent. Saturday, March 1 will be the first annual Mardi Gras party and Tuesday, March 4 will be the traditional Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. As usual, there will be multiple opportunities on Ash Wednesday to begin a holy Lent.

LENTEN MEDITATIONS



The Rector has invited 40+ members of the parish to write short meditations on the daily gospel readings from Ash Wednesday through Easter. These meditations will be gathered into a booklet that will be available on March 1st.

It would be too costly to mail the booklet to each member of the parish—however; if you can't get by the church to pick one up, please call the office and we'll mail you a copy.

This project will be a way for some of our members to share in your Lenten journey and devotion. Most of the meditations will be on the gospel of John. I hope you'll make every effort to be a part of this exciting opportunity to learn and grow during Lent through the ministry of those members of the parish who will be writing the meditations.

THE RITE OF RECONCILIATION-BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER pp. 447 ff

□

**□ You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves...(Wild Geese by Mary Oliver)**



Be that as it may, occasionally some of us long for a ritual expression of God's loving and forgiving presence in our lives. □ A formal confession (referred to by Anglicans as the Rite of Reconciliation) provides an answer to this need. □ Many Episcopalians make use of this rite as a special form of discipline and devotion, particularly □ during Lent. □ If this is something you would like to explore further, please contact one of the clergy at 754-3116. □ And if you would be more comfortable receiving this sacrament from someone outside the parish, a referral can be easily made.

NEWCOMER COFFEE HOUR - MARCH 2ND - FOLLOWING THE 10:15 A.M. SERVICE



Please come out in force and warmly welcome all of the fantastic new people who have joined us in the past year or so. □ This □ is such an exciting time to be a part of St. John's - lots of new faces, new ideas and great energy! □ Come help us celebrate all this, and make some new friends while you're at it! □

ANNUAL MEETING NEWS



The deadline for this *Outrider* is too early to allow for a full report on the Annual Meeting on January 26. However, the Annual Reports of the parish will be available in the church office after the meeting. The report of the nominating committee is complete. The following folks were nominated for offices:

Senior Warden: Lorene Castle

Junior Warden: Bill Garretson

Treasurer: Steve Minkler

Clerk: Patti Daniels

Vestry: Don Pomeroy, Bob Toffey, Dorothy Raleigh, Virginia Cole, Karen Minkler and Pam Behrman.

Delegates to Diocesan Convention: Marcia Holroyd and Doris Hollenstein.

Co-chairs of House Committee: Dick Harris and Ted Bojarski.

Delegates to Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministry: Sarah Haines and Ted Bojarski.

Our Continuing Vestry Members are: Donna Gervickas, Jay Anthony, Brian Ladden, Edgar Young, George Zucca and Renee Baril.

MANY THANKS....AND MUCH LOVE...



New Members of the Vestry and Officers mean that some who have served on the vestry have finished their terms or decided to step aside. Lorene Castle, Richard Lee, Verdell Bush and Stan Chesnas rotated off the Vestry at the 2003 Annual Meeting. Sue Jefferson and Frank Daddona have resigned leaving unexpired 2-year terms. The parish owes those six folks gratitude for their commitment and service. Thank God for your work and prayers during your time on the Vestry.

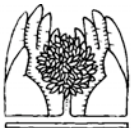
Senior Warden Pam Toffey also completed her three year term in that office. Pam has served as a Vestry member, Clerk of the Vestry, Assistant Treasurer and now Senior Warden. Her contributions and leadership have been invaluable. We will miss her insights and great good humor on those second Monday nights....Bless you, Pam, for all you do.

INQUIRY 2003

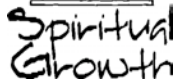


Our Sunday morning Adult Education for winter and spring will be an inquiry into the Christian faith and Anglican tradition. All are welcome and we will be providing information on what the class will be covering so you can come to sessions of special interest to you. Anyone who wishes to be confirmed or received on Saturday, June 7th should attend the classes. Let the church office know if you're planning on attending. Schedule (all classes are at 9 a.m.): **SCHEDULE:** 2/2, 2/16, 2/23, 3/2, 3/16, 3/23, 3/30, 4/6, 4/27, 5/4, and 5/18. There will be a retreat on Saturday, May 31st beginning at 9:00 a.m. Confirmation/Reception is on Saturday, June 7, 2003 at St. John's. (time TBA). June 8 - Feast of Pentecost and honoring of those confirmed/received/reaffirmed.

FEBRUARY COMPANION EVENING



The monthly companion evening on February 4 begins with pot luck at 6:30 p.m. in the Library. Sign up to bring a main dish, vegetable, salad or dessert in the hallway outside the church office.



The February program will be led by Seminarian Intern, Stephen Arbogast. Steve will introduce us to the history and practice of Ignatian Spirituality—those spiritual exercises developed by Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. Frank Griswold, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is a follower of Ignatian practices. Through Bp. Griswold's ministry, a great deal of interest has sprung up in our church about the spirituality of Ignatius. Prior to coming to the Episcopal Church, Stephen studied with the Jesuits. Join us to learn about this valuable spiritual tool.

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.



CREATIVE CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR

February 2nd: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

February 9th: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

February 16th: No Church School - winter break.

February 23rd: Church School 9-10:00 a.m.

Church School meets each Sunday morning from 9-10:00 a.m. on the third floor. Enrollment is open all year. The children learn bible stories, enjoy crafts and music. The fifth and sixth grade are journeying through the Bible and the seventh grade prepares for confirmation class. Please join us on Sunday morning.

There are adult education classes during this hour, offered by Jim, Malinda or Stephen.



MARDI GRAS AT ST. JOHN'S!!



A real, New Orleans style celebration with Cajun food, lots of beads and masks, singing and feasting will be held on Saturday, March 1st.

This is a “costume” party—come dressed and ready to celebrate. There will be activities for children as well as adults.

To cover costs we'll be asking for a \$7 donation for adults and \$2 for children. We want to make this into a special night—invite your friends and neighbors. Look for details in the Sunday bulletins.





FROM ASHES TO ALLELUIAS

The Lenten Journey and Holy Week Liturgies at St. John's

Shrove Tuesday (March 4) —On the day before the beginning of Lent it is a tradition of the Church to indulge the senses. In some cultures, this period prior to the severity of the Lenten discipline has expanded into an extended period of “Carnival”. At St. John's, we gather on Shrove Tuesday (“shrove” is from “shriven” which means “having confessed sins and been forgiven”) for pancakes and sausage and hash. **5 p.m.—7 p.m. Pancake Supper** (\$3/adults; \$1/children and elders)



Ash Wednesday (March 5)—The day we begin our Lenten Journey with the imposition of ashes and the celebration of the Eucharist. (*Ashes and communion from the reserved Sacrament will be available on the hour and half-hour if you are unable to make the scheduled services....*)

8 a.m.—Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes (Chapel)

12 noon—Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes

7:30 p.m.—Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes



Fridays in Lent—March 7, 14, 21, 28, April 4 and 11

The Stations of the Cross—5:30 p.m.

Follow the Steps of Jesus from his Trial to his Crucifixion in the Ancient Liturgy.



LENTEN QUIET DAY

Saturday March 22—9 a.m.-noon

Beginning with Morning Prayer and ending with Noonday Prayer



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 13—PALM SUNDAY

8 and 10:15 a.m. Palms, the Passion and Holy Eucharist

Monday, April 14—HOLY MONDAY

12 noon—Noonday Prayers

7:30 p.m.—Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, April 15—HOLY TUESDAY

12 noon—Noonday Prayers

7:30 p.m.—Holy Eucharist

Wednesday, April 16—HOLY WEDNESDAY

12 noon and 7:30 p.m.—Holy Eucharist and Healing

Thursday, April 17—MAUNDY THURSDAY

12 noon—Noonday Prayers

6:30 p.m.—Soup and Salad Pot Luck

7:30 p.m.—Holy Eucharist and Stripping of the Altar

Thursday, April 17-9 p.m.—Friday, April 18-11:30 a.m.

The Vigil at the Altar of Repose

Friday, April 18—GOOD FRIDAY

12 noon-3 p.m.—The Good Friday Liturgy

7:30 p.m.—The Stations of the Cross

Saturday, April 19—EASTER EVE

7:30 p.m.—The Great Vigil and first mass of Easter

Sunday, April 20—THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION

8 a.m.—Holy Eucharist with Choir

10:15 a.m.—Festive Holy Eucharist with Choir and Instruments



REPORT ON DISCERNMENT

*"You see, there is a **future** for St. John's that will happen anyway unless we decide to get out of the boat and lose our life so we can find it new. **That** future that will happen anyway would be pleasant enough for many of us. **That** future would be 'safe' and 'comfortable' and wouldn't involve much risk or trouble. But it simply isn't good enough for us. We need to live into the call Jesus gave his new disciples when they stepped out of their boats and followed him into the Unknown. If those first disciples had stayed in their boats, their future would have been easy to predict. By following Jesus they created a **future that wouldn't have happened otherwise**.*

*"I've asked Bill Garretson, the new Junior Warden you will elect today, to work with me and Mary Gates and a small number of others to create a process of discernment and visioning for St. John's that will lead us to create a **future that wouldn't have happened otherwise**. We will seek God's help in 'starting something' that we aren't sure where it's going..."*

--from the Rector's 2002 Annual Report

We are nearly a year into St. John's "discernment process". Group Five is meeting on Wednesday nights through February 12. When that group is completed there will be over 60 graduates of the *conversation* we call St. John's Discernment Process.

What happens in the process? Ask one of the graduates if you want details. Suffice it to say here that what happens is that we create a future that wouldn't have happened anyway. We take a group of people who often have little in common beyond attending St. John's and before we've finished the six sessions, a "community" has been formed that wasn't there before and wouldn't have happened without the conversation we shared and the time we spent together. And, if the participants can be believed, that sense of "community" spills over and colors how they relate to the rest of the parish, how they relate to our larger community, how they relate to God.

Something else that happens is that the process creates new process leaders. Bill Garretson, Jim Bradley and Mary Gates, our former Curate, led the first group. Since then, Pam Toffey, Marilyn Mitchell, Richard Lee, L.B. Young, Elaine Garretson and Pam Behrman have helped lead the process. That model for organically creating leadership is one that is spilling over into the way the parish does its business and ministry. Three of the six Vestry nominees were in Group One, one was in Group Three and the Senior Warden designate was in Group Two. Two of the sitting Vestry members were in Group Two. After Group Five is complete, three-quarters of our elected leaders will have participated in the discernment process.

But, however that sounds, the process is not designed to create two groups within the parish. The Rector's call for this process in his 2002 Annual Report said, "the goal is to involve every member of the parish eventually." That "involvement" happens naturally, organically—like leaven in the dough. **Community** is not a "thing"—it is a process, a conversation, a living thing. Those who have been a part of Discernment and those who haven't are all involved and caught up in that process and conversation that creates "community" in a way that wouldn't have happened otherwise.

The most frequently asked question about the discernment process is this: "where is this all leading?" The answer is, in one way, profoundly complex and in quite another way, sublimely simple. The answer is this: "God knows!" We still don't have a "goal" or "direction" that we seek to foster with the process. We remain open and receptive to the Spirit's movement and guidance. But we do acknowledge this much—we are creating a future that wouldn't have happened anyway....

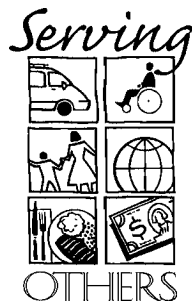
A second question—one that comes from the participants early in the process itself—is this: "when are we going to **do something?**" The question usually comes when the games we play seem rather juvenile and the conversations we have haven't coalesced into something "real" yet. And the only answer is this—"we're doing it already." It's like asking "when is the flower going to grow and bloom?" Obviously, the flower is always growing and moving toward bloom—the growth and blooming are already within what the poet Dylan Thomas called "*the Force that through the green fuse drives the flower....*" What the Discernment Process seeks to foster is awareness of "the Force" that is always present, always working, always alive and moving wherever and whenever the people of God gather together. "Community" is organic—it grows, not like human construction, but the way things of nature grow.

We believe we can report to you that "the green fuse" is being nurtured in and through our discernment. And, because of the way natural growth occurs, we are all—all of us—already caught up in the Force. And we are moving together—all of us, again—toward a future that we don't control even though we create it...a future that wouldn't happen otherwise.

If you want an invitation to Group Six or Seven or....Let Bill or Jim or Malinda know. Your name is on our list and we'll ask you sooner or later—but it would be great to know you'd like your invitation *sooner*....

--Jim Bradley and Bill Garretson

OUTREACH - TEAM 2000 SAFE HAVEN NEWS



Have you heard what special 100th Birthday the month of February 2003 celebrates? One hundred years ago teddy bears were created and used to comfort children, and children and adults are still in love with teddy bears of all sizes and in many outfits.

To join in this touching reminder of comfort supplied by a cuddly bear, we are requesting that Safe Haven's offerings on the 2nd Sunday of February be in the form of a bear - small or large, dressed or not, and offered for the children who may need much comforting while residents of the Women's Shelter.

As always, you may contribute any "basic needs", 6 mos.+ size diapers and/or baby food are particularly helpful. We are anxious to designate this month's collection to the comforting of the children as we periodically designate offerings for children throughout the year.

For those who are joining us in this special St. John's ministry for the first time, welcome! We know you will find these monthly opportunities to support the women compelling.

Once again, we thank each of you for continuing to provide a steady support for Safe Haven.

FEBRUARY PARISH PRAYER CYCLE

February 2: The Spinella Family, Hazel Sponza, The Stokes Family, Christine Stolfi, Marilou Stolfi, Pam Strassner, Barbara Sylvestro, Gail & Mark Szantyr, and Mark & Ann Tabaka.

February 9: The Tani Family, The Tapley Family, Montgomery & Renee Taylor, Peter & Sharon Taylor, Nelson Tchakirides, J. Peter Tchakirides, and The Tellerday Family.

February 16: Mary Terrell, Faye Thomas, The Thomas Family, Mary Beth Thompson, Monica Tiso, Bob & Pam Toffey, and John & Melissa Torrance.

February 23: Ruth Truelove, Elizabeth Trzcinski & Jenifer Moniello, Harvey Udell, Domnitsu Uilean, Anthony & Anne Vaccarelli, Claudine Vaccarelli, and Charlotte Vanasse.



In Memory Of...

February 2: Oscar and Augusta Espelin.

February 9: Victor Grey.

February 16: Christian Schumacher.

February 23: Victor and Frances Larsen.



Covenant to Care - Adopt a Social Worker Program

A huge thank you to all those who contributed gifts for our adopted social worker program at DCF, Corale Cyr. Corale works as the coordinator of foster placements for children removed from their homes. Several children received Christmas gifts thanks to the generosity of our parish members. I myself feel blessed to know and be amongst so many kind and giving individuals. Your response to those in need is greatly appreciated by the social workers who work with children. And I thank you for your ongoing support for this program.

--Patty Daniels



FEBRUARY

- 2/14 Michael and Judy Sims
- 2/18 Mark and Wendy Thomas
- 2/24 Albert and Theresa Gambino
- 2/27 David and Francine Smith



FEBRUARY

- 2/1 Michele Carrano
- 2/1 Liana Walker
- 2/2 Tyler Beaudoin
- 2/3 Abby Townsend
- 2/5 Bonnie Flanagan
- 2/5 Jason Russo
- 2/6 Michelle Mastropietro
- 2/6 Beverly Strassner
- 2/7 Nashana Cambigue
- 2/7 Lucylle Ladden
- 2/7 Pamela Strassner
- 2/7 Anthony Longo
- 2/8 Kenneth Greider
- 2/9 Jacqueline Quirici
- 2/10 Michael Gates
- 2/12 Jeanne Reed
- 2/13 David DeCarolis
- 2/13 Anthony DiZinno
- 2/15 Russell Marcy
- 2/16 Susan Jefferson
- 2/17 Robert Baranoski
- 2/18 Clara Bigelow
- 2/18 John Bozzuto
- 2/18 Pauline Levesque
- 2/20 Natasha Bush
- 2/20 Brian Ladden
- 2/21 Sarah Greider
- 2/21 Gail Szantyr
- 2/22 Sonja Osborn
- 2/23 Hector Echeandia
- 2/23 Lisa Echeandia
- 2/23 Gregory Mattson
- 2/24 Kylie Mirando
- 2/25 Agnes Pracny
- 2/25 Kyle Banisaied
- 2/27 Alexis Langlois
- 2/27 Alice Stack-Mullahy



Thank you to Pat & Ted Bojarski, Eleanor Crean, Willis & Gert Payne, Sandy Allard, and Dick Harris for your assistance in distributing poinsettia plants to our parishioners who are shut-in.

Henry Friez



EARTH MINISTRY

For the past several year, the Earth Prayer said at the offertory during Sunday's liturgy has been written by Earth Ministry advocates. This offering is unique to St. John's Church and is a way of constantly reminding us of the connections between God's creation and our responsibility to be good stewards of all God has created.

This is a call for your participation in writing this prayer. Any parishioner is welcome to write a brief prayer of praise for creation or a plea for forgiveness for what we, as humans, have done to upset the balance of nature. A sample selection of prayers is displayed on the Earth Ministry bulletin board. Please submit your prayer to Marcia Holroyd.

ST. JOHN'S LIBRARY



EPIPHANY READING

Unclench your fists
Hold out your hand
Take mine.
Let us hold each other.
Thus is his Glory
Manifest.

(a poem by Madeleine L'Engle)

A selection of books from St. John's Library collection featuring author Madeleine L'Engle is on display. Ms. L'Engle has written more than 40 books and dislikes being labeled as writing specifically for children. "She crosses genres by writing fiction, non-fiction, autobiography, science fiction fantasy, theology, poetry and drama. She writes for readers of all ages and persuasions. Whatever the literary genre, L'Engle upholds that a writer's responsibility is to radiate hope, to bring healing, to say yes to life." (quote: Suzanne St. Ives)

Walking On Water is about how faith and art influence one another. "L'Engle says "the purpose

of the work is to further the coming of the Kingdom, to make us aware of our status as children of God."

The Rock That Is Higher is about homecoming, family affair, affirmation of God's love, and the search for truth.

A Severed Wasp is a provocative story about a famous pianist: Katherine Forrester Vigneras. The setting is in New York revolving around the Cathedral of St. John the Devine.

The Weather of the Heart is a collection of L'Engle's poetry.

The Irrational Season A journey through the seasons of the year, these essays reflect on persecution, conflict, hope, and blessedness.

New additions to the library:

In January (at the request of Mary Marlak), the selection for the Wednesday Open Book Club was *The Secret Life of Bees*, a novel by Sue Monk Kidd. This lovely story has "a rare wisdom about life, about mothers and daughters and the women in our lies who become our true mothers. A remarkable story about the divine power of women and the transforming power of love." Lily, a white girl, running from a troubled life, seeks refuge with a trio of black beekeeping sisters. Maternal loss and betrayal, guilt and forgiveness entwine in a story that leads Lily to the single thing her heart longs for most. (paraphrased from the book jacket)

February is Black History Month. A new book entitled: *Hidden in Plain View* by Jacqueline L. Tobin and Raymond G. Dobard, "tells the fascinating story of a friendship, a lost tradition, and an incredible discovery, explaining for the first time how enslaved men and women encoded messages within quilt patterns that helped fugitives navigate their escape along the Underground Railroad". (quote from book jacket) Truly a remarkable story, well worth the read.

Reminder: When borrowing books, sign out in the log found on the library table or cart. When finished, place the book in the return bin on the cart.

Marcia Holroyd, St. John's Librarian