
The Outrider

December 2005

The View from Above the Close
Saints and Souls and a Sudden Savior

November 2, 2005

We are in the midst of the octave (*a fancy church word for an eight day period*) between our liturgical celebration of Halloween and the coming Sunday's celebration of the combined feasts of All Saints and All Souls. The *thinness* of the time at this period of the year makes this "octave" especially important. It is, in the church calendar, a remarkable explosion between the long, seemingly endless season of Pentecost and the solemn, expectant time of the Christian "new year" of Advent. (I tend to live my life by the Church Calendar rather than the normal one because there is more drama there!)

Several years ago (mostly because the All Saints hanging behind the altar is so spectacular and deserves to be up for more than one Sunday) we declared that the Sundays between All Saints and Advent to be "All Saints Season", which you won't find on your church calendar. There just needs to be more time to reflect on the import of the Feast of Saints and Souls—it is too important to consign it to a single Sunday of the year.

Back in the Autumn of 1980, after I'd come to New Haven to be the Rector of St. Paul's in Wooster Square, I was driving around town, just trying to get the "lay of the land", with my 5 year old son, Josh. New Haven, if you're not familiar with the city, has lots and lots of burial grounds that were once, most likely, outside the city, but now are part of the sprawl of that urban center. Driving and driving with Josh, just trying to figure out where things were, he suddenly turned to me as we were passing yet another cemetery, and said: "lots of dead people live in New Haven."

"Out of the mouths of...." Well, you know the rest. Lots of dead people "live" all around us—which is what this remarkable octave is all about. And it comes at just the perfect time of year—as the days are shortening and the air is chilling and the world around is, by all available evidence, dying. We are living in the *death lands* of the Northern Hemisphere—dark and cold and dying. Just the time to start standing on tip-toe and longing for the Light....

Advent comes crashing into the death lands—Advent with its commandments to wait and watch and be patient. For the Light is coming, coming, coming—not yet...but coming.... Watch and wait, a sudden Savior is about to arrive in the most unlikely way and the most unexpected place. Sitting in the darkness gives us new eyes, vision we did not imagine. And the light is coming, coming, coming.... The Dark, Chill, Death-like things will melt away. A star will lead us—light in the darkness—a star, a star...a star...it will lead us to Bethlehem.

Lean away from death and toward the Light. It is coming, coming, coming....

Shalom, Jim

LOOKING TO EPIPHANY

Epiphany (mark your calendar now and be there....)

Parish wide pot luck
Friday, Jan. 6
6:30 pm
Epiphany, 3 Kings Day
Blessing of the doors
Bi-lingual Eucharist

Epiphany Pageant.....

On Sunday, January 8th there will be an Epiphany Pageant entitled "In the Beginning... the Word...." Again, mark your calendar and look for details in next month's Outrider.

EPIPHANY HOME COMMUNIONS

There will be four home communions during the Epiphany Season. All will be invited, especially those who live in the area around the home. Watch for details coming soon.

IN-REACH NEEDS FRESH INPUT AND ORGANIZATION (OR WHAT IF THE HOKEY-POKEY IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT?)

First of all, what's in-reach, you wonder? I'm using the term rather loosely to refer to all the social stuff we do together, deepening our connections within the parish with events like the Haunted House and pumpkin picking, Mardi Gras and wine tasting parties. Anything we do at St. John's for the pure fun of it.

I read somewhere recently that in the church two years makes a tradition. three years makes a rut! The social events we've had for the past few years - and Mardi Gras is a good example - have been successful by every measure. But it's time for new ideas and also some "new blood" so we don't get stuck in a rut. I have one more party up my sleeve (see page 9) but after that, I'm taking a "breather", at least in terms of being the major force and energy behind these events.

The only talent you need for this sort of thing is a fun-loving spirit!! Please let Jim or Malinda know if you are interested in being a part of in-reach at St. John's.

- Malinda Johnson

SNL - SATURDAY NIGHT LITURGY

Beginning this past November, St. John's is offering a new service of worship Saturday evenings at 5:00 PM. Saturday Night Liturgy (SNL) is "not your grandma's worship service," but rather a creative liturgical celebration of artistic talent and musical gifts. Though jazz will be the most common music each week, SNL also features other diverse musical offerings including acoustic guitar, percussion, and contemplative Taize. Local jazz musicians and vocalists will perform instrumental pieces and jazz settings of common hymns. Young musicians from local schools will also be featured throughout the year.

A uniquely American musical genre, which originated in New Orleans around 1900, jazz is ideally suited for liturgical worship. Featuring syncopated rhythms, strong meter, diverse tone colors, and improvisation, jazz allows for the diversity and creativity of artistic expression "in the moment." The audience is included in the spontaneous endeavor creativity. The jazz improvisation becomes the artistic expression of creative dialogue between audience, musician, and spirit. In the same way, worship invites the spontaneity, diversity, and creative improvisation of the Spirit within liturgy. The creative worship of SNL invites this same spontaneity in music and prayer, grounded in the Episcopal tradition.

As a center for liturgical and artistic expression within the city of Waterbury, St. John's is ideally poised for this creative liturgical initiative. With two artists-in-residence housed within the beautiful nineteenth century gothic space, and over fifty musical and artistic offerings held within the church throughout the year, St. John's is rapidly emerging as a center for diverse and creative expression, a house of prayer for all people grounded in the radical love and hospitality of the gospel.

Saturday Night Liturgy will feature other creative elements within the worship to complement the musical spontaneity and richness. Our hope is that those who are drawn to this musical diversity might also be nourished by the richness of the liturgy.

We invite you to join us for improvisation and creation: Candles, Jazz, and Jesus at 5:00 PM bathed in the vesper light.

Live from Waterbury... ***It's Saturday Night!!***

Library News

An anonymous donor has given to the library a group of books on the subject of grieving, death and dying. These are welcomed as the library has very few books on this subject. Please feel free to check out any of the titles which might be of interest to you.

Additional books have been given in the categories of Spirituality, Christian Life, Prayer and Theology. Because of the lack of shelf space for these subjects, the library cannot accept any additional donations. Until we acquire additional shelving, please donate your books to the tag sale.

Please remember to sign out books which you wish to read in the log which is on the library cart, near the piano. When you return the book, place it in the return bin at the bottom of the cart and the librarian will re-shelve it.

Holiday Worship



4:00 PM

The Family Service and Eucharist with music by the Chorister Academy

7:30 PM

Christmas Eve Service in Spanish

10:00 PM

Midnight Mass — The Feast of the Incarnation



Christmas Morning Service

10:15 am Holy Eucharist and Homily

12:00 noon La Misa en Español

New Year's Day

8:00 am Holy Eucharist and Homily

10:15 am Holy Eucharist and Healing

12:00 noon La Misa en Español

Days

Each one *is* a gift, no doubt,
mysteriously placed in your waking hand
or set upon your forehead
moments before you open your eyes.

Today begins cold and bright,
the ground heavy with snow
and the thick masonry of ice,
the sun glinting off the turrets of clouds.

Through the calm eye of the window
everything is in its place
but so precariously
this day might be resting somehow

on the one before it,
all the days of the past stacked high
like the impossible tower of dishes
entertainers used to build on stage.

No wonder you find yourself
perched on the top of a tall ladder
hoping to add one more.
Just another Wednesday,

you whisper,
then holding your breath,
place this cup on yesterday's saucer
without the slightest clink.

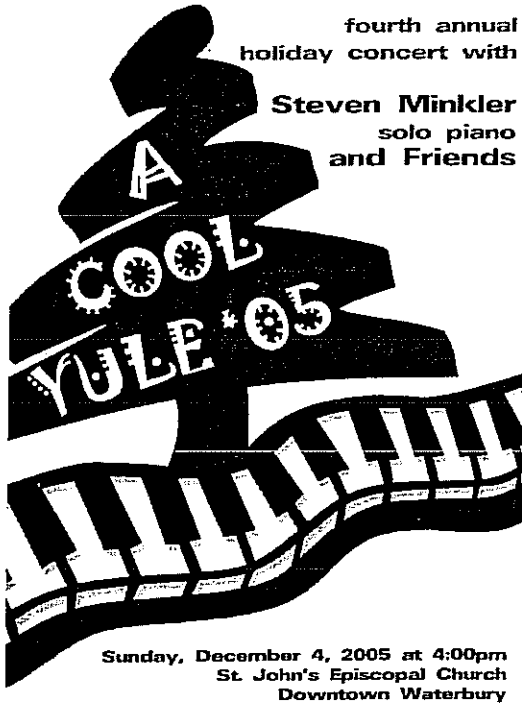
from *The Art of Drowning* by Billy Collins, copyright ©1995 by Billy Collins

It is hard for me to remember past Wednesdays, but I do remember past Christmases: as a child in Houston with my parents and brother and sister, in Woodbury when my boys were small, the first Christmas Hank and I shared with our four children. I love the image of the tower of days, precariously balanced. I find myself "perched on the top of a tall ladder hoping to add one more" Christmas.

If you are someone who loves poetry, who knows someone who loves poetry, or if you have spent your life wondering what other people love about poetry, consider giving yourself or someone you love a ticket to St. John's "Experiencing The Arts: Billy Collins" event on April 4, 2006. Billy Collins will be reading some of his poems and signing his books; there will be a lovely reception as well. All of this will be happening at the Mattatuck Museum beginning at 3:00pm. The cost of a ticket is \$40.00. (More info on page 18)

This is a preview offer for members of St. John's and their friends; tickets won't be going on sale to the public until after the New Year. Please send your check to the church, payable to St. John's Church, and note "Billy Collins tickets" on the memo line. We will send you a confirmation note right away and tickets at a later date.

-Harriet Fötter



After my first piano recital in 2002, I was deeply touched by how many people told me it was a warm, relaxing moment that captured the holiday sprit for them within such a busy time of year. On December 4 at 4:00pm, I'm pleased to present, by popular request -- the fourth annual "Cool Yule" concert featuring a blend of piano solos and duets with my family and friends from St. John's. You're invited to take a break from the hectic holiday season to enjoy an afternoon of light, contemporary arrangements of popular Christmas songs and hymns. I look forward to seeing you then.

-Steve Minkler

GWIM NEWS

Casserole Ministry

Casserole Sunday is the first Sunday of the month. Please bring your items in throw away containers, to the kitchen. Examples are: Stuffed Peppers, Macaroni and Cheese, Salads, Baked Goods. We appreciate all your help. Thank you.

Meatloaf Ministry

Meatloaf Sunday is the third Sunday of the month. A 2 pound cooked frozen meatloaf or 2 pounds of raw hamburger or \$5.00 to have a meatloaf made in your name is needed in the Dining Hall. Thank you.

Toy Sunday

Sunday December 11th is Toy Sunday. Please bring new, unwrapped toys with price tag attached to both services. Thank you.

Santa's Workshop ala GWIM

This event is Thursday, December 15th, 9 am to 1 pm. If you want to volunteer, see Sarah Haines by December 11th. Thank you!

Augmented Choir in Advent:

The Augmented choir will be revived on the 4th Sunday of Advent, December 18th to sing "And the Glory of the Lord" from Handel's "Messiah." We invite all singers to join us for this festive seasonal music. Come to rehearse at 9:30 that morning - we'll provide the sheet music and a warm welcome! It's the perfect way to celebrate the season.

The Music of Advent:

The Episcopal Church has the advantage of fully celebrating a season that is rich in music, the season of Advent. Some of the most vivid hymns in the hymnal were written for this season: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel", "Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People", "On Jordan's Banks", and "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus", just to name a few. The choir has music from Part I of Handel's "Messiah" to sing as well as other wonderful music written for Advent. For organ music there are beautiful settings of "Savior of the Nations, Come" by Bach, and one of his most beloved and famous works: "Sleepers, Wake!" ("Wachet auf" in German.) So while the commercial world is bombarding you with secular Christmas Carols and urging you to get "that perfect gift" weeks in advance of Christmas, come to enjoy the comfort of music of the Christian season of Advent, to reflect, to relax, to be renewed, to prepare to celebrate the greatest gift of all, the birth of the Lord on Christ's Birthday, Christmas.

-Bob Havery

ST. JOHN'S PARISH: A JOYFUL EXPERIENCE

In my work as missioner in different places, I have found that in every mission experience I had a problem: those missions were disenfranchised from the main church. The implication for my community has been isolation, frustration, and more spiritual poverty. In addition, those missions always were motive of conflict more than motive of joy for the diocese and for some missions.

On the other hand, I also understand the church longing for its growing, its love for the poor, and for disenfranchised people to bring them "in the way a bird gathers her chicks from under her wings..." Mat. 23:37. All of this made me look for a way or model to integrate two different spiritual environments.

At St. John's, Waterbury, one day, I found this possibility. The main focus in my mind was the numerical growing of the parish. A second target was the education of children under the supervision of the parish. This was started the last September. We now feel that we are part of a great family and that this parish is our home. This is a source of joy and we will celebrate it by doing the best for our parish.

A third target right now is to improve our stewardship. In this sense we plan to explore different ways. One has been a costume party that we had on Saturday evening, October 29. We had around 170 people, children included. We were honored by the presence of some members of second service and of Fr. Jim Bradley. We also had Aracely Moreno who was invited to sing tangos. Everybody enjoyed good food, beverages, music, dance and some prizes. In this event we collected for our parish \$997.17. Thanks to everybody who made this possible.

We plan to have periodic events to raise money for church programs. Our concern is to prepare more healthy, happy, and helpful events for our parish and city. Join us in this enthusiastic journey. All are welcome.

"Generosity?"

Sometimes I feel like I am counting down the days until I am leaving not because I miss home, which, of course I do miss it, but because I look forward to giving away my stuff.

It is amazing what I can accumulate in a small three room house in a small West African village. Four pairs of sneakers when few people have one, two big straw mats for myself alone and so many clothes that even my neighbor's son commented on the fact that "you have a lot of clothes" while laughing. Thank you for making me feel even more guilty and spoiled.

I feel like this is what this has been- a one year guilt trip. I may not be living like I was at home, but pretty darned close-especially in comparison to my neighbors. I mean, they are living, they seem happy but of course they hope for more— better crop production, better health care, the ability to afford health care, more water sources... when here I come rolling up on my fancy red and black 21 speed mountain bike, my bike bags filled with tomato sauce cans, bags of rice and Laughing Cow cheese, foods that people can only afford for holidays -if at all- but that I can afford to eat every day. Or the fact that in an area where people make their livelihoods as farmers and through livestock production I falsely assumed that they consumed lots of eggs as a protein source, but no. They need the money that the eggs bring more than the eggs, so they sell them to people who can afford them, like me.

I don't even let people in my house, not because I am afraid of theft, as people don't really steal things in my village. Ruin them, maybe, as farm workers aren't used to handling fragile things, but steal, no. One reason is that my house is my only "get away from it all" where I can go and close the door and hide. Sort of. Secondly, I am embarrassed about how they look around in awe at all of the wondrous things inside. They go pointing and talking about things in a local language that I have yet to completely understand. It is entirely uncomfortable.

People in my village are usually good- they don't usually ask me for things or money-but there are times-especially recently when people have asked and I always say NO. My neighbor wanted twenty cents to go to the health clinic with her sick son. NO. A tree nursery owner that I work with wanted a ten dollar loan to buy school uniforms, as everyone is waiting for the harvest to eat and have money but again, NO. No joke, a blind man in my tree planting project walked 2 miles, guided by his son, to my house after sunset to ask for ten dollars to fix his corn grinding mill, and I said, I am sorry, but NO.

Now before you go thinking that I am such a mean, heartless person or start opening your wallets, you need to understand my philosophy. First of all, I am a Peace Corps volunteer- the definition of our role is as a human resource to develop human capacity- to teach how to fish and not to give fish. Doing so would only be a short term fix to deeper problems. Giving money today to any of the afore mentioned people would not change the fact that healthcare is affordable but not something people save for, the time before revolt will always be difficult until people have year round as opposed to only seasonal income, and machines will always break down, there must be some other way to save money for repairs.

I make this sound like this is just a money management problem but it's not. These are for the most part, subsistence farmers, they really do live off of the land. It boggles my mind the fact that they have four months of rain during the year, and at the beginning of it they lay all of their chips, or seeds rather, and what they get at the end is what they will use to eat or trade or sell for whatever else they need to survive in the upcoming YEAR. Now that it is mid October, the harvest is starting to come in, but just before

that there is no Stop and Shop or Supermarket to go to and even if there was they wouldn't be able to afford it. One of the biggest problems is the fact that just after the harvest everyone sells their sacks of corn to vendors so they can pay off immediate debts and school contributions and good food for the end of the year holidays. However, this means that at the end of the farming year- near August and September, they run out of food and need to buy it back from those same now rich vendors at a price up to five times what they originally sold it for.

So although people don't usually ask me for much, I don't give when they do ask. Sometimes I give small presents of cheese or dried fish to my neighbors that live in my yard but it is more as a thank you to the women that bring me clean drinking, cooking and bathing water from the pump.

I feel like for the first year of my service I just ran around my village like a chicken with my head cut off, trying to call village meetings or give demonstrations for efficient stoves and yet I still don't know how my household papa cultivates his land. So now my focus is on individuals, not being generous with money, but with my time and outside perspective. I hope to start one on one interviews with my neighbors, to find out exactly how they live, what they cultivate, how much they earn and how we can help increase their income while safeguarding the environment which their livelihood and those of their children, depend upon. It is this the legacy that I hope to leave to my village, not small loans of money that will act as bandaids on a Titanic sized hole on the ship of society's problems. Oh yes, and I will probably leave a couple of pairs of running shoes too.

Katherine Haines
PCV Tayacou, Benin, West Africa



**SAVE THE DATE FEBRUARY 11TH - LET'S GIVE THE
WINTER BLUES NEW MEANING!**

The saying goes: if you can't beat 'em, join 'em! Maybe the same thing applies to the winter blues...

So let's get together and beat back the worst of winter with a pot-luck and some great music. The Carnegie Clapp Trio did an amazing job at our September Kick Off event. They played lots of "oldies" and fun, bluesy-jazzy (OK, I just made that description up) dancing music. By the way, they're featured at Diorio's, so check them out there, and once you're hooked, talk them up to all your friends!

My hope is that this will be a pretty simple get together from 6:00-10:00pm in the auditorium. "Come as you are" (i.e. no costumes, no dress up!); invite everyone you know, friends and strangers alike; and bring something delicious, if not nutritious, to share.

Let's huddle together come February and dance the winter blues away!



Happy Birthday!

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 12/1 Christopher LeBeau | 12/13 Alice Mancinone | 12/20 Salvatore Spinella |
| 12/2 Louis Warren | 12/13 Robert Trowbridge | 12/20 Bryeanna Lewis |
| 12/2 Patrick Barnes | 12/13 James Costello | 12/21 Mark Petrosky |
| 12/2 Christopher Bowman | 12/13 Jacob Gambino | 12/22 Gale Hamilton |
| 12/3 Matthew Weiler | 12/14 Alycia Martel | 12/22 Karen Koskey |
| 12/3 Hunter Bragg | 12/14 Natalia Loomis | 12/22 Alice Rosado |
| 12/4 Flora Young | 12/14 Nicole Carrillo | 12/24 Desrine Wineglass |
| 12/5 Mary Gates | 12/14 Austin Bartlett | 12/24 Sean McKinney |
| 12/5 Dorothy Wineglass | 12/15 Elaine Garretson | 12/25 Edna Dumschatt |
| 12/5 Albert Gambino | 12/15 Jason Caggiano | 12/25 George MacDonald |
| 12/5 Matthew Aubrie | 12/16 Norma Connor | 12/25 Evanson Dover |
| 12/6 Anthony Zasun | 12/16 Marvin Knighton | 12/25 Amanda Roscoe |
| 12/7 Richard Grandpre | 12/16 Delmar Nelson | 12/25 Christopher Adomavicia |
| 12/7 Andrew Mazzei | 12/17 Carol Bequary | 12/27 Thomas Nelson |
| 12/9 Ray Sperring | 12/17 Lisa Ruocco | 12/27 Cassie Salzer |
| 12/10 William Knapp | 12/18 Thomas Landry-Mickett | 12/28 Nicole Jones |
| 12/10 Scott Ginn | 12/18 Connor Holderbach | 12/29 Janet Mitchell |
| 12/12 David Pritchard | 12/19 Marcia Holroyd | 12/29 Christian Daniels |
| 12/12 Paquita Aloia | 12/19 Marc Butkevich | 12/30 Emily Gates |
| 12/12 Mitchell Langlais | 12/19 James Decarolis | 12/30 Ryan White |
| 12/12 JiaLiAn Stolfi | 12/19 Giovanna Oliver | 12/31 Diane Caggiano |
| | | 12/31 Jared Marques |



Prayer Lists for December

December 4

Christopher & Karen Donohue, Evanson & Ena Dover, Edna Dumschatt, Lowell & Al Dwyer, Peter & Laurie Eagan, M. Echeandia & C. Velazquez, The Echeandia Family, The Emanuel Family, Greg & Arlene Emmens, E. Encarnacion & N. Echeandia, Milagros Escobar

December 11

Lisa Farina & Family, Ruthann Feliciano, The Feola Family, John & Dorothy Ferguson, Paul & Jan Figlia, Madeline Figueroa and Family, Thomas & Bonnie Flanagan, Walter & Jennifer Foell, Gary Foran, Michael & Maria Forrester, Paul & Mitzi Foti, Joseph Foti & Shalin Bethke

December 18

Harriet Fotter & Family, Roger Fournier, Joyce Fournier, Donald & Deborah Frasier, Joanne Frazine & Family, Henry & Mary Friez, Susan Friez, Althea Gahan, Albert & Theresa Gambino, Catherine Gannon, The Garretson Family, The Gervickas Family, Melanie & Scott Ginn,

December 25

Dow & Jennifer Golden, The Rev. Armando Gonzalez, Lillian Gonzalez, Ann Goodson, The Gordon Family, Evelyn Graham, Richard Grandpre, Beth & Jeff Grant, Jocelyn Grant, Unita Gray, Sharon Gray, Judy Gray, Kathleen Greco and Family

Bread and Wine

12/25 Arthur Mraz and Mae Lauper Mraz



Coffee Hour

Starting in September, various groups and ministries within the Parish have begun to host the coffee hours after the first and second services. Each group is encouraged to bring photos or displays to educate folks about their various ministries. Members of each ministry are encouraged to be available to both serve at the coffee hour table and talk about their ministry within the parish.

This is a chance for all of us to be involved in the radical ministry that defines St. John's as a parish. And, beyond that, it will, week by week, give the congregation insight into the work and ministry of St. John's.

Here is the schedule through the end of the year:

- December 4—Choir
- December 11—Chorister Academy
- December 18—Chorister Academy
- December 25—Christmas Day

Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries

While raising money for the Slidell, Louisiana Relief Fund sponsored by the Outreach Committee, I got thinking about our local needs. We did very well in this fundraiser, buying over \$3200 worth of gift cards from Target and Wal-Mart, and delivering them directly to the heart of the hurricane devastation.

While I am very proud of the efforts by this congregation, I couldn't help but think about the daily struggle that our own soup kitchen and food pantry have meeting the daily needs of the poor and homeless folk right here in Waterbury.

The Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries runs the soup kitchen that shares our kitchen and parish hall. This soup kitchen provides hot meals six days a week at lunchtime. The numbers of meals provided has doubled since last year. The food pantry, which stores its food in our basement, is handing out double and triple the amount of food, and are always running low on vegetables and canned protein.

GWIM is really struggling. Last year, the food pantry served up the fixings for 125 Thanksgiving dinners. This year they are already committed to providing over 500 families the same dinner.

This is not about Thanksgiving. This is about the daily needs of the poor and homeless who live in this very community. The leap in numbers is indicated every single day by the masses of people who come for a hot lunch in our parish hall. The GWIM clients used to be primarily single men and women. That is simply not true today. There are more and more families being served on a daily basis.

Soup kitchens usually do pretty well with donations that provide for holiday feasts like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Where they struggle is with having enough food and enough resource to meet this ever increasing daily demand.

Two economic problems are converging on GWIM. Funding is drying up from private sources and government sources. Several major contributing organizations have cut their funding or stopped it all together. And the need is growing because the numbers of people in poverty are swelling. While many of us see an economy that has stopped growing, those on the other end of the spectrum are finding the cost of fuel, the cost of living is increasing while their menial jobs are disappearing. The unemployment rate for those living in the three downtown Waterbury zip codes is skyrocketing. Social service agencies in New Haven and Bridgeport are reducing their assistance, and many of their clients are coming to us here. **This is why GWIM is so strapped for cash!**

We at St. John's are already called upon to do a great deal to support these efforts. The Outreach Committee has already met the St. John's commitment for this year. We have donated \$1000.00 to the GWIM fuel bank. Our parish gives in kind donations of heat and water, and the entire facility is rent-free for GWIM. These are, however, institutional donations. GWIM still needs money to meet the daily expenses of meeting the needs of those folks who come through the door from our Close every day.

I would like to personally make an appeal. First, if you are not familiar with what happens at GWIM, come for a visit. Meet the Soup Kitchen Director Barbara Ann Dublin. Meet some of those that Barbara calls her "beautiful people." This is the best way to judge the size of the task of feeding the poor.

Secondly, if you know members of other parishes in the Waterbury area, educate them about the needs

of this organization. There are fifty-two member parishes, and only eight actually support GWIM with financial help. Encourage others to visit and report back to their flock about this growing local need.

Thirdly, consider a direct donation yourself if you are one of those who makes "end of the year" contributions. Frankly, GWIM is in much greater need of cash than it is in need of canned food.

I was struck by Jim Bradley's sermon on Halloween that spoke of the fear experienced by the poor. The fear of not being able to provide basic sustenance for your self and for your children must be absolutely paralyzing. It is evident in the faces of the clients at the soup kitchen. If GWIM is to do the work of this vital ministry, they need our help now.

Thank you.

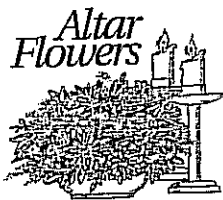
-James K. Morgan - Chair, St. John's Outreach Committee

Altar Flowers

St. John's Flower Ministry has modified the way altar flowers are dedicated on each Sunday. Altar flower offerings of nature's beauty are acts of worship that enhance the liturgical seasons, provide beauty to God's altar, and express our love of God's creation in all seasons.

The Flower Ministry has issued an "open call", if you will, for anyone to have altar flowers donated in memory of a loved one, regardless of the amount donated.

Attached to this Outsider are two forms to fill out: one form if you just want to make a general donation to the altar flower fund and a second form for those who wish their loved one(s) to be remembered



I wish to make a donation to the flower fund:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Communion Bread and Wine Offering

If you would like to have Communion Bread and Wine offered in memory of a loved one or in thanksgiving for someone or something, please fill out this form and drop it in the collection plate or mail into the Church Office (Donation is \$10):

Name: _____

Address: _____

In Memory Of: _____

In Thanksgiving For: _____

Sunday you wish Bread & Wine celebrated for: _____

Celebrations

I celebrate the way we share our sacred space, our church building, with our community. I attended the Safe Haven Candlelight Vigil, held yearly in our church for the first time, October 27, 2005.

The photo on the left is of the 98 pairs of children's shoes that lined the entire length of the center isle of our church during the vigil. The shoes represented the 98 children that Safe Haven served this year. The children were removed from their homes because of domestic violence.

During the vigil, thirty candles were snuffed out as the names were read of the thirty persons who were murdered this year in Connecticut because someone, who had pledged to take care of them forever, had instead ended their life. Their ages ranged from a few days to men and women in their 80's.

We heard the story of women who lived the good life with the education, the big house, and many worldly possessions that go with it. One day their life was saved because they came to Safe Haven. We learned their life was not as it appeared. It wasn't easy at first. Some women went back to abusive relationships several times before they left the relationship permanently. Yet there is hope. We heard how women had gone back to school, cared for their children, and gradually felt good about themselves again because of the help they received at Safe Haven.

Our Outreach Committee and many people at St. John's have actively supported the work of Safe Haven. Serving our neighbors in downtown Waterbury is Goal Three of our five-year plan for St. John's.

Please include the victims of domestic abuse in your prayers. Please pray for the work of Safe Haven in our community. Perhaps you would like to volunteer with Safe Haven or participate in our Outreach Committee.

You can make a difference.

I hope you are thankful, along with me, that we can offer our beautiful building for this event. Next year, I hope you will attend the service.

Lorene Castle, Senior Warden



Lorraine Barker,
St. John's Treasurer with
Peggy Panagrossi, Director
of Safe Haven of Greater
Waterbury

MALINDA'S LATEST BOOK RECOMMENDATION: DOUBTS AND LOVES, WHAT'S LEFT OF CHRISTIANITY BY RICHARD HOLLOWAY

What largely prompted Holloway to write this book was his experience at the Lambeth conference of 1998. The hot topic then, as now, was the status of homosexuals in the Church. Holloway went to the conference expecting a classic Anglican compromise to be crafted which would allow faithful people of differing opinions to continue working and worshipping together until some sort of creative consensus emerged. Instead, what he found was a mean and punitive spirit blowing through the gathering. He writes, "...the debate on the subject turned into an ugly rout, with the vast majority of bishops passing a resolution that condemned homosexuality as sinful. But it was the tone of the debate that was devastating. It was filled with a hateful glee that prompted one English Bishop to liken it to a Nuremberg rally." For Holloway, it's nothing less than tragic that the religion that grew out of the experience of Jesus Christ and his memory has become both a justification and a means of communicating so much hatred and intolerance in this world. Doubts and Loves tries to show not only how that happened but also why it's such a perversion of what Jesus was all about.

This is a provocative book and beautifully written, with many lovely anecdotes and poems that help illustrate the various points Holloway is seeking to make. One of my favorite pieces in the book is a letter that's supposed to have been written by a troubled Christian to Dr. Laura. It's worth sharing here in full as it points out, in a humorous way, just one of the problems Doubt and Loves explores, namely the problem of Biblical literalism:

"Dear Dr. Laura,

Thank you for doing so much to educate people regarding God's Law. I have learned a great deal from you, and I try to share that knowledge with as many people as I can. When someone tries to defend the homosexual lifestyle, for example, I simply remind him that Leviticus 18:22 clearly states it to be an abomination. End of debate. I do need some advice from you, however, regarding one or two specific laws and how best to follow them.

a. When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odour for the Lord (Lev.1.9). The problem is my neighbours. They claim the odour is not pleasing to them. How should I deal with this?

b. I would like to sell my daughters into slavery, as it suggests in Exodus 21.7. In this day and age, what do you think would be a fair price?

c. I know that I am allowed no contact with a woman while she is in her period of menstrual uncleanness (Lev.15.19-24). The problem is, how do I tell? I have tried asking but most women take offense.

d. Leviticus 25.44 states that I may buy slaves from the nations that are around us. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify?

e. I have a neighbour who insists on working on the Sabbath. Exodus 35.2 clearly states he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself?

f. A friend of mine feels that even though eating shellfish is an abomination (Lev.10.10), it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. I don't agree. Can you settle this?

g. Leviticus 20.20 states that I may not approach the altar of God if I have a defect in my sight. I have to admit that I wear reading glasses. Does my vision have to be 20/20 or is there some wiggle room here?

I know you have studied these things extensively, so I am confident you can help. Thank you for reminding us again that God's word is eternal and unchanging."

Though the increasingly ugly and painful debate about homosexuality may have given Holloway reason enough to write this book, there's more to it than that. In fact Holloway aims big, exploring the current state of religion, as well as the Church, with equanimity and great intelligence.

-Malinda Johnson

VNA Health Care Luminary Remembrance Service

There are some experiences which need to be put into words as soon as possible after the event so they are not lost in the daily routines which take over one's life. Although words are poor substitutes for the experience itself, I want to tell you about the VNA Health Care Luminary Remembrance Service on Sunday evening, November 6, in the Close at St. John's Church.

My invitation could not possibly have prepared me for over 500 luminaries aglow around the sides of the Close and for the hundreds of people who were quietly searching for the one with their loved-one's name carefully written on white paper. Although there were many children and their families, there was a hush which came over everyone as they found the memorial to the one person who was no longer a part of their lives. There were quiet tears, warm embraces, and memories exchanged in a place which was so perfect for this shared experience.

We were given tiny lights to wear when we arrived, and as evening dusk turned to dark, they were like fireflies which brought all the strangers among us together in common purpose. The music, the singing, and the simple verses touched all of us gathered together. And the reading of all the names of those who had been cared for in their last stages before death by those caregivers—and to the caregivers, themselves—was a beautiful tribute to those whose memories will live on in our lives.

The Close could not have been a better setting—as the crescent moon rose in the sky and the towering canopy of trees shed small yellow flowers on all below, it could only be described as "A Healing Place".

-Kay V. Bergin

EXPERIENCE THE ARTS: BILLY COLLINS APRIL 4, 2006

The Friends of St. John's has been working for the past year on a very special event: bringing the former poet laureate of the United States, Billy Collins, to Waterbury. Our goals are to expose as many students as possible to the wonderful, accessible, often humorous poetry of Mr. Collins, to increase awareness in the community of St. John's Arts Ministry and to raise funds for future "Experience The Arts" programs.

We have outlined the event below so you all will be aware of what is happening. The 400 students who will attend the noon reading, Q&A and small group discussion will be chosen by their teachers. The reading/book signing/reception at the Mattatuck Museum will be open to all ticket holders. If you wish to join the committee or can offer help in any way, please contact Harriet Fotter in the church office.

The committee needs to raise \$20,000.00 to cover the costs of the program. We are actively soliciting funding from foundations, banks, etc. and charging \$40.00 for tickets to the Mattatuck Museum event. We hope to receive donations from individuals as well and this is certainly one way all of you could help. (See page 5 for a poem by Billy Collins and more ticket information)

DESCRIPTION OF EVENT

Billy Collins, former Poet Laureate of the United States, will visit Waterbury from 12:00 - 5:00pm on Tuesday, April 4, 2006. While in Waterbury, Mr. Collins will:

- Deliver a one-hour poetry reading with commentary followed by 20-30 minutes of audience questions. This will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church and will be for Waterbury high school students.
- Spend one hour in an informal Q&A session with selected high school students, also held at St. John's Episcopal Church.
- Meet with a smaller audience (approximately 200) and deliver another 45 minute reading followed by book signing and reception held at the Mattatuck Museum.

OBJECTIVES

- To expose the students of Waterbury to an internationally known poet.
- To foster the arts in Waterbury and cooperation between downtown organizations: educational, retail, non-profit and religious.
- To raise awareness of the Arts Ministry at St. John's.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Steering Committee composed of representatives from St. John's Episcopal Church, Waterbury Public School System and members of various local arts organizations will coordinate the event.

Audience:

- Approximately 400 students will be able to attend the full reading. 30-40 selected students will stay for the informal Q&A. Selection of students, preparation of attendees through the curriculum, and transportation of students will be coordinated by a committee composed of representatives of the school system and the Steering Committee.
- Approximately 200 people will be able to attend the reading/book signing/reception. This event will be catered by Jordan's Catering at the Mattatuck Museum.

Members of the "Billy Collins Planning Committee:" Jay Anthony (Chairman of the Friends of St. John's), Lillian Brown, Mary Beth Thompson, Courtland Young, Lorene Castle, Charley Monagan, Jill Stevenson, Harriet Fotter



JANUARY OUTRIDER

The deadline for submitting articles for the January 2006 Outrider is December 9, 2005. Please submit all announcements and articles via e-mail to OUTRIDER@stjohnsonthegreen.org or mail them or deliver them to the church office, attention OUTRIDER. You can also give them to Pam Toffey.

I'd like to continue the "Recipes from the Parish" column, so if you have a recipe you'd like to share, please submit it. I'd like to put in one recipe every month. I'm also looking for pattern submissions for knitting and crocheting hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, ponchos and shawls.