
The Outrider

January 2006

The View from Above the Close stepping out into the darkness . . .

"I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied, "Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light, and safer than a known way." - King George VI, Christmas Day Broadcast 1939

King George spoke those words over the BBC just three months after Britain and France had declared war on Germany. It was a time of uncertainty, risk, danger and possibility. He was calling for the people of Britain to show hope, courage and faith as they stepped into the unknown.

Each new year brings new darkness and new unknowing. The advice to take God's Hand and go out boldly is well worth hearing, over and over, no matter what the circumstances that assail us.

At the Annual Meeting of St. John's in January 2004, after months of work by Vestry, the parish adopted "Sharing the Vision", a five-year plan for progress and growth for St. John's. That plan included five broad "Faith Goals". There was no evidence and no certainty that we could live into these goals. They were made "In faith" and put our money where our mouths are, committing to use more of our endowment funds than would be prudent in order to "go out into the darkness" and trusting God to lead us over the next five years.

Other parts of this Outrider, share my reflections on where we are, two years into the Five Year Plan. The Annual Meeting on January 22 will provide more detail and present the budget the Vestry has prepared for year three of Sharing the Vision. It is vital to the Future we are seeking to create (with God's Hand leading us) that more and more of St. John's members embrace and support the truly courageous and faith-filled goals.

The budget for 2006 holds the 2005 level of capital withdrawals - a remarkable feat considering that we have added a 4th service, two new staff members and expanded our financial support of the Hispanic mission. Yet it is a "faith budget" - stepping out into the darkness, reaching for the Hand of God.

I am personally profoundly moved and deeply humbled by the courage, faith and commitment of St. John's as we continue our five year plan. In a time when many faith communities are seeking ways to "cut back", St John's proclaims Christ's call to expand, reach out to those in need, find new ways to be "good news" people and minister to those not yet with us.

That vision for future that won't happen unless we and God create it" is better than a light and safer than a known way"

Shalom and Happy New Year

Jim

FIVE YEAR PLAN UPDATE

40% is less than half, but a lot..

At the Annual Meeting we will review and acknowledge the progress made on "Sharing the Vision"—in the first two years of the five year plan for St. John's mission and ministry. I want to give you a preview of that work, goal by goal.

1. Growing our Congregation

*Due to the remarkable growth of our **Third Service (in Spanish)** our Sunday attendance has increased by 20+% in the last two years. That includes growth in the other two services and the fact that the **Fourth Service on Saturday** (due mostly to Michael Spencer's work) —after only a month—is averaging 30 worshippers. We had 23 baptisms in 2003 compared to 57 in 2004 and 35 in 2005. Confirmations: 2003=14; 2004=43; 2005=30.

*St. John's **Chorister Academy** did not exist two years ago and today it is one of the most successful of our programs. Maria Coffin wasn't part of our staff two years ago and today she is providing astonishing ministry no one imagined prior to the Five Year Plan.

*St. John's **Youth Group** is only a few months old—yet it is averaging nearly 20 kids per meeting and they are developing a program which will continue to grow. Maner and Rhonie Tyson are our new staff members for Youth Group. How diverse do you think a church can be? Southern Baptists leading an Episcopal Youth Group—how's that?

2. Deepening the Spiritual and Social Life of the Congregation

Mostly through the work of the Assistant Rector, Malinda Johnson, we have increased our budget for "celebrations" and celebrated! The last two Mardi Gras have been remarkable and this year we'll have a "winter blues" party before Lent. The September lawn party in the Close brought together members of all the services. The third service hosted a Halloween Party that enhanced our parish's commitment to reclaiming All Hallows Eve and raised money for the church. Members of the parish are now organizing church breakfasts. Wine and Cheese at the Mattatuck and parish groups hosting coffee hour are ways we've deepened the social life of the parish. The Prayer Shawl ministry has brought folks together to pray and work. Fr. Jack Parker has reformed the Centering Prayer group. The Flower Group, led by Pinkie Chillemi, has enhanced our worship with beauty through their gifts and innovations. Michael Spencer has added his teaching gifts to our Adult Education offerings. St. John's Center obtained funding and oversaw the construction of the Labyrinth in the Close to make that area a place of spiritual journeying. The Epiphany bi-lingual service and party and the Epiphany Home Communion this month will both deepen the social and spiritual life of St. John's.

3. Serving the needs of our neighbors in downtown Waterbury

All the services offered by the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministry are now housed at St. John's. The 200+ who eat lunch here each day, the 700 families served each month by the food closet and the hundreds who are counseled and guided by the Resource Center—as well as the hundreds of volunteers involved—are all part of our service to the needs of the city. St. John's is open and hospitable space to several dozen groups for meetings, services for the poor, medical screening and liturgical celebrations. The remarkably successful Social Services/Arts Fair in the summer of 2004 will be repeated this summer. Fr. Armando Gonzalez and Deacon Mike Carroll provide far more than worship to the large Spanish speaking population of Waterbury. The establishment of Church Street Ministries as a free standing,

non-profit during 2006—after much work by the vestry—will continue to enhance and support the social services ministry of our buildings and staff. In addition, the work of St. John's Outreach Committee in providing financial support, donations and volunteer opportunities for a wide variety of service projects from Americares to Chapman House continues to make the parish the most active church in ministry to the city's needs. In addition, the Waterbury Deanery is looking for ways to support the ministry that occurs here in new and valuable ways.

4. Building Partnerships with the Community of the Green

St. John's is deeply involved in the Arts community of our city. Our two Artists in Residence (Unique Vibe, a dance group sponsored by the Litchfield Jazz festival and The Everyman Guild) are but two of over a dozen groups that utilize St. John's open space—The Governor's Foot Guard Band, the Waterbury Chorale and Chorus Angelicus, to name a few. The Friends of St. John's (soon to become a second non-profit group) have overseen the April 2006 appearance of Billy Collins, former poet laureate of the US, by working with the Board of Education, book clubs, the Silas Bronson Library and the Mattatuck Museum. Our Summer Lunch Arts Series has drawn people who work downtown to our Close and Sanctuary. Broadway on the Green, under the direction of Jeanne Luedke, has entered its second decade of performances that draw audiences from many in the community. In addition, Broadway's inclusion of more of our children—especially from the third service—has reached deeper into the community than before. Even the Fourth Service on Saturday, by featuring musical talent from within and outside the parish has deepened our commitment to providing the space for Arts. In addition, the Rector and members of the parish have been involved in the work of Main Street, a group committed to bringing new life to the city.

5. Preserving our Sacred Spaces and enhancing them

The House Committee has, through a sub-committee, been working on an upgrade and enhancement of St. John's electrical system. With the Vestry's approval we are bringing more electrical services into the buildings to enable us to continue the project. The Five Year Plan owes much to Lorene Castle, Steve Minkler and Harriet Fotter, who attended a Sacred Spaces Workshop in Washington, DC four years ago. Out of their experience and contributions, the Vestry began to develop the Sharing the Vision program. In 2006, the Diocese of Connecticut will be sponsoring a year-long "Sacred Spaces" program for 12 parishes—one of which will be St. John's. It was primarily input from St. John's that brought that possibility into being. Our inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places is now acknowledged by a plaque near the front doors on Church Street. St. John's is a remarkable "exception to the rule" for inner city churches in that our sacred spaces are so well cared for and so lovingly preserved. There is a project to highlight the stained-glass windows and the architecture of the church building.

I often drive staff and vestry members crazy with my mantra about "creating a future that wouldn't happen anyway". Yet, I believe that is what the five year plan and Sharing the Vision is about. There is a future for St. John's waiting out there that would involve cutting back on expenses and staff and programs in order to "balance the budget". What the Vestry and Parish have chosen instead is to move boldly into the unknown and trust in God's guidance and expand our program and ministry to "create" a future that is different from the one waiting, if we do nothing.

I am so proud of this parish—and I urge you to involve yourself in "Sharing the Vision" in the next three years in a way that will make a difference and create a whole new future for our mission and ministry as a church. The first 40% has been remarkable! No one could have imagined how far we have come in just two years. The best is yet to come as we enter year three of the Five Year Plan.

Join your hands with the Hand of God. Step out. Be not afraid. Create the Future we were meant to have and share....

Shalom, JLM

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

January 3, 2006

THIS IS TO SERVE NOTICE THAT ST. JOHN'S PARISH WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL MEETING AT 10:15AM SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2006, IN THE CHURCH. AT THAT TIME THE PARISH WILL ELECT A SENIOR WARDEN AND VESTRY MEMBERS, RECEIVE THE ANNUAL BUDGET, AND RECEIVE REPORTS FROM ITS OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES.

Hollis Hart

HOLLIS HART
PARISH CLERK

Service Schedule for January 22, 2006

8:00am Holy Eucharist Rite I
9:00am Holy Eucharist Rite II
10:15am Annual Meeting
12:00 noon La Misa en Español

BROADWAY ON THE GREEN 2006

Another successful presentation of Broadway on the Green took place this past spring at St. John's church. Rehearsals are underway for the 12th year of Broadway on the Green. Music from the following shows will be presented: Bye Bye Birdie, Music Man, and Songs of Faith.

The 2006 show will be presented Friday March 24th at 8:00 pm and Saturday March 25th at 2:00 pm (matinee) and 8:00 pm. Please put these dates on your calendar and join us for the 2006 production of Broadway on the Green.

Anyone wanting to participate in the show should contact either Jeanne Luedke (203-754-8445) or Kerri Eannariono (203-775-1050) now as the first rehearsal is set for Saturday January 7th and we need to get music and recordings to everyone who is wanting to participate. Most of the rehearsals are on Saturday (10:00-2:00) and Sunday (1:30-4:00) and not everyone comes every time. This year, when the children are not on the stage they will be having music theory class and watch some music history videos.

Our current goal, for the money we raise from the show, is to replace all of the pew cushions and ultimately the kneelers at St. John's. We were able to raise enough from the 2005 show to provide about half of the pews with new cushions. Anyone wanting to help with the pew cushion project by selling tickets or making an outright donation should contact Steve Jones (203-591-8181) or Rich Piel (203-263-0283).

If you are a performer or want to try performing for the first time, please join us.

-Jeanne Luedke, Director

Chickens, Tchouk and Love in Tayacou, Benin

So the other night I was just sitting in bed, reading Newsweek by lantern and then there was this horrible scratching sound on the corner of my tin roof, right above my bed. Those darned chickens! So I tumble out of my mosquito net and start throwing things at the ceiling to make them fly away. No luck. If I had a gun, I would have shot them, but I don't so I went outside to inspect.

The way my three room house is built it is impossible to look on the roof without going out into the field of corn surrounding it, which I didn't want to do for fear of snakes and other critters. So I started haphazardly launching rocks at the offending corner. That'll teach 'em.

I go back inside and there it is again. I can't even concentrate on my reading, never mind sleep. So I go out a second time, this time with a chair to stand on, to brave the cornfield so I can get better aim with the rocks. So I climb up on the chair, but oops, I'm not far back enough. So I climb down, move the chair back and surprise! No birds. Nothing. It is only when I was dragging my chair back inside that I heard the noise again, looked up and discovered that the nasty flock of offending chickens that I had imagined was actually the wind blowing the corn and millet stalks against my roof. I'm glad it is harvest time.

Yesterday was the weekly Saturday market in my village. Now when I talk about market you need to understand that by no means do I mean anything resembling a supermarket. I mean something closer to a farmer's market. Next to the school in the middle of my town there is a parcel of land, about the size of half of a football field, shaded by trees and filled with little stalls made of wood supports and straw roofs. The other present and up and coming structures in "town" are a mayor's office, a health center, a meeting hall, a bar and bank both under construction and no stores, but we do have a men's hair cutter.

Tayacou social life centers around the Saturday market. That is where you go to chat with just about anyone and everyone and to enjoy the local brew. Half of the stalls in the market serve tchouk, which is the local beer made from millet. Each tchouk lady camps out on her foot stool in the middle of her stall while her customers sit on logs around the outside. As customers arrive she expertly swoops her plastic cup into the tub of chocolate milk colored beer and gracefully pours it into a calabash, a type of gourd bowl. The first taste is free and then you can buy a single serving for 25 CFA, equivalent to 5 cents, or a double for 50 CFA. The double serving however, is a rip-off. It is better to get two 25 CFA servings, you get more that way. The beer takes about a week to make, the whole process involving soaking the millet, allowing it to sprout and germinate, bringing it to the mill to crush it into a powder, cooking it for a few hours over the course of two days and then the market. You can find the non alcoholic kind as late as 3PM, but after that only fermented.

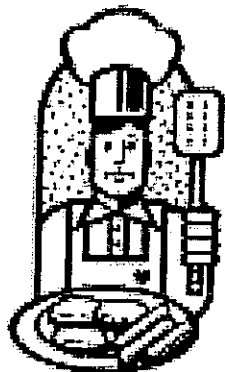
So just as half of my market is made of tchouk stalls, so has half of my market discussion been about tchouk. The rest of the market is made of stalls selling cans of tomato paste, tiny bags of salt and sugar, flip flops, matches, batteries, soap and shots of a hard clear liquor called Sodabé. Then there are two big trees at the edge of the market where the women sit and sell produce. There are beans, sacks of corn, straw hand brooms, shea butter for cooking, ground nuts and sweet potatoes. The only vegetable in my village right now is some weird green pepper looking thing that everyone calls "sauce" so I guess they mash it up in their sauce. I haven't decided what I'm going to do with my stack of 5 for 25 CFA that I bought yesterday.

I decided to buy a sweet potato. So I went to sweet potato lady and asked her how much they were, af-

ter the standard greetings about health and family and such of course. At first I thought I misunderstood her response and then she untied the corner of her wrap where women keep their money and held out two faded gold 10 CFA coins and pointed to the yam. Four cents for a yam. I felt like I was stealing. I pull out my 25 CFA piece and the woman looks but doesn't have change for five cents. I motion to her not to worry about it, but she insists upon asking the other nearby market mamas for change. No one has a 5 CFA piece. So to help her out I buy two yams and she does have 10 CFA change for a 50 CFA piece. Another woman smiles and scoops up a pile of ground nuts to give me. She could have sold it to someone else for 25 CFA but she gave it to me. These are people that don't often have the money to buy even a few tablets of aspirin for fevers. Smiles on old weathered faces and calls of Nambié, my local language name, abound and I think to myself that I don't deserve all of this, and to live in this beautiful place with such beautiful and generous people. People who have almost nothing and yet would gladly give it all away to a guest. People who suffer so much, through drought, famine, children lost to easily preventable childhood illnesses and salaries or cotton money that never comes in.

Of course things could be better, but these are subsistence farmers and they are doing just that, subsisting, just getting by. They are always ready for a song, for dance or drink and always a smile and a wave. This is where I will spend my second holiday season and although far from home I feel the love both here and from home and for that I am grateful and I wish you all the same. I could not ask for anything more.

Katherine Haines
PCV Benin, West Africa



Recipes from the Parish

Broccoli Casserole

- 2 packages (16 oz each) Frozen Broccoli Florets
- 1 can (10 3/4 oz) Condensed Cream of Mushroom Soup—Undiluted
- 1 cup (8 oz) Sour Cream (or, optionally, plain yogurt)
- 1 1/2 cups (6 oz) Shredded Sharp Cheddar Cheese, divided
- 1 can (6 oz) French Fried Onions, divided

Cook broccoli according to package directions. In a large sauce pan combine the soup, sour cream (or yogurt), 1 cup cheese and 1 1/4 cups onions. Cook over medium heat for 4-5 minutes or until heated through. Stir in the broccoli and pour into a greased 2-qt baking dish. Bake uncovered at 325° for 25-30 minutes or until bubbly. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and onions. Bake an additional 10-15 minutes longer or until cheese is melted.

Yield 6-8 servings.

-Sarah Haines



LOOKING TO EPIPHANY

EPIPHANY PARTY

Friday, January 6

6:30 - Parish Pot Luck with King Cake and Crowns

7:30 - Bilingual Eucharist

Join the parish family to celebrate The King's Day in fine fashion! Bring food to share - St. John's will provide drinks and King's Cake, gifts for the coming year, blessing of the doors and greeting the Magi in Spanish and English.

Sign up for what you're bringing in the hallway or call the church office (203-754-3116) to let us know.

EPIPHANY PAGEANT

Sunday, January 8, 10:15am

Come celebrate "the whole story" of Christmas. Shepherds, Angels, Magi, Mary and Joseph, Adam and Eve - everyone is coming! Baptism by the manger - song and dance and glitter. Be there! (Bring local shepherds and angels...)

Want to help Diane Platt with costumes and details? See her on Sunday or leave message with the church office (203-754-3116).

EPIPHANY HOME COMMUNIONS

Wednesday, February 1, 2006

The Epiphany Home communions will take place on Wednesday, February 1 (snow date—2/15) at 7 p.m. in four locations around the parish. Save the dates and be looking for a letter with all the details, including the locations and directions. Join us for this special night when St. John's will be "one", though scattered.

Shoveling Snow With Buddha

In the usual iconography of the temple or the local Wok
you would never see him doing such a thing,
tossing the dry snow over a mountain
of his bare, round shoulder,
his hair tied in a knot,
a model of concentration.

Sitting is more his speed, if that is the word
for what he does, or does not do.

Even the season is wrong for him.
In all his manifestations, is it not warm or slightly humid?
Is this not implied by his serene expression,
that smile so wide it wraps itself around the waist of the universe?

But here we are, working our way down the driveway,
one shovelful at a time.
We toss the light powder into the clear air.
We feel the cold mist on our faces.
And with every heave we disappear
and become lost to each other
in these sudden clouds of our own making,
these fountain-bursts of snow.

This is so much better than a sermon in church,
I say out loud, but Buddha keeps on shoveling.
This is the true religion, the religion of snow,
and sunlight and winter geese barking in the sky,
I say, but he is too busy to hear me.

He has thrown himself into shoveling snow
as if it were the purpose of existence,
as if the sign of a perfect life were a clear driveway
you could back the car down easily
and drive off into the vanities of the world
with a broken heater fan and a song on the radio.

All morning long we work side by side,
me with my commentary
and he inside his generous pocket of silence,
until the hour is nearly noon
and the snow is piled high all around us;
then, I hear him speak.

After this, he asks,
can we go inside and play cards?

Certainly, I reply, and I will heat some milk
and bring cups of hot chocolate to the table
while you shuffle the deck.
and our boots stand dripping by the door.

Aaah, says the Buddha, lifting his eyes
and leaning for a moment on his shovel
before he drives the thin blade again
deep into the glittering white snow.

from *Picnic, Lightning* by Billy Collins, copyright ©1998 by Billy Collins

What I know about Buddha wouldn't fill his tea cup. But I can identify with the concept of losing oneself in a task, particularly on a cold winter's day when the act of shoveling is warming and satisfyingly repetitive. In a PBS production of a wonderful short story, "The Jilting of Granny Weatherell," by Katherine Anne Porter, Granny Weatherell is on her death bed and remembers making the cake for her wedding - the wedding that didn't happen. The camera focuses on her hands, the sunlight on the pottery mixing bowl, the beautiful white eggs. For that moment, for Granny, the making of the wedding cake was "the purpose of existence...the sign of a perfect life." I am reminded of the beauty of work, of doing, and the need to participate fully in what life throws at us.

Harriet Fotter



**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!

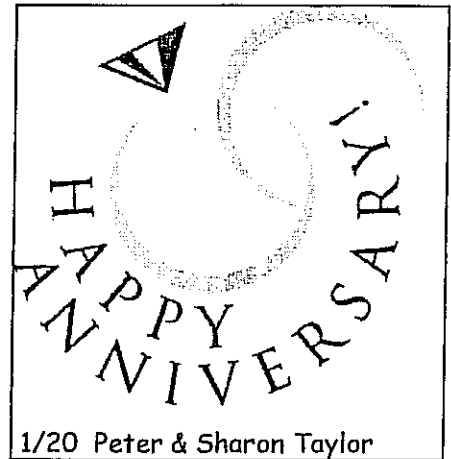
My hope is that this will be a pretty simple get together from 6:00-10:00pm in the auditorium. "Come as you are" (i.e. no costumes, no dress up!); invite everyone you know, friends and strangers alike; and bring something delicious, if not nutritious, to share.

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



Happy Birthday!

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1/1 Rosemary Minkler | 1/12 Angela White | 1/22 Ryan White |
| 1/2 Jeffrey Jones | 1/12 Laura Varrone | 1/23 Daniel Rodriguez |
| 1/3 Claudine Vaccarelli | 1/12 Samantha Bowman | 1/24 Cassandra Bequary |
| 1/3 Mary Terrell | 1/13 Richard Clark | 1/24 Wyatt Shea-Levandoski |
| 1/6 James Benson | 1/13 William Breslin | 1/25 W. Jeanne Luedke |
| 1/6 Pam Behrman | 1/13 Justin Feliciano | 1/25 Gerard McDonald |
| 1/7 Sharon Taylor | 1/14 Paula Saverino | 1/25 Elizabeth Manners |
| 1/7 Jennifer Marques | 1/14 Jocelyn Grant | 1/26 Mary Ann Logue |
| 1/8 Margaret Worden | 1/15 Gertrude Payne | 1/27 Tracy Longo |
| 1/8 Melissa Torrance | 1/16 Heidi Langlais | 1/28 Sean Huard |
| 1/8 Dara Woiszwilllo | 1/16 Francine Smith | 1/28 Alec Blaszczyk |
| 1/8 Ricky Torres | 1/16 Jason Sevas | |
| 1/8 Lauren Jeannin | 1/16 Erik Inkster | |
| 1/8 Azannah Levett | 1/17 Kenneth Velazquez | |
| 1/9 Alan Greggis | 1/18 Eugene Knight | |
| 1/9 Russell Foti | 1/18 Susan Friez | |
| 1/10 Joanne Frazine | 1/19 Richard Rose | |
| 1/11 Diana Hernandez | 1/19 Gina Tartaglia | |
| 1/11 Ernest Savoy | 1/20 Joshua Kloc | |
| 1/11 Ann Mantzaris | 1/20 Cerridwen Budin | |
| 1/12 Brian Vaugh | 1/21 Nicole Dover | |



FEBRUARY OUTRIDER

The deadline for submitting articles for the February 2006 Outrider is January 6, 2006. 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.

Prayer Lists for December

January 1, 2006

Alan & Christine Greggis, Lisa Greider & Family, Efron & Jacqueline Grullon, Beverly Guevin, Leslie Guevin & Edwin Monteiro, David & Janet Gurniak, Frank & Debra Hadder, Wendy & Bill Hager, Eric & Franca Hahn, The Haines Family, Nina Hallock

January 8, 2006

Eileen Hamilton, Thomas & Gale Hamilton, The Hankey Family, Kim Hansen & Ernie Field, Richard & Sally Harris, Richard B Harris and Family, Greg & Chris Harrison, Holly Hart & Dorothy Raleigh, Bob & Bonnie Havery, Greg Hawes and Family, Dorothy Hegherington, Gary & Traci Hill

January 15, 2006

Cynthia Hill-Hall, Pamela & William Hinman, Craig & Kristie Holderbach, Doris Hollenstein, Marcia Holroyd, Hanne Howard, Barbara Howe, Sean Huard & Alycia Martel, Paul & Joan Huggins, The Hunt Family, Ronnie Hurdle and Family, Amelia Iorio

January 22, 2006

Hamsa Jayarai, Marcel & Alison Jeannin, Darren & Jasmine Jeffrey, Norman & Sandra Jellinghaus, Malinda Johnson, Jannice Johnston, Juan Jorge, Joan Kachergis, Michael & Susan Kather, Heather Kay & Family, Cindy & Robert Kee, Charles & Martha Kellogg, Joyce Kenworthy

January 29, 2006

Kenneth & Gloria Kerns, Joseph & Nancy Kinsella, Gil & Thecla Kirby, Edith Klein, Patricia & Michael Klein, Robert Klein, Barbara Klobedanz, David Klock, Bill Knapp & Christine Jewell, Eugene Knight, Marvin & Charlene Knighton, Matthew & Holly Kosky

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. The schedule for January and February, 2006 is:

January 1 & 8: All parishioners are invited to bring snacks to share

January 15: Altar Guild

January 22: Annual Meeting

January 29: Altar Guild

February 5 & 12: Ushers

February 19 & 26: Staff

Celebrations

by Lorene Castle

Today, I celebrate St. John's Episcopal Church in Waterbury, the most exciting church I have ever experienced. St. John's Annual Meeting is January 22, 2006. Mark your calendar now. You will hear about the progress we have made on our **FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH**. The Goals come from our **VISION STATEMENT**, which follows:

St. John's Episcopal Church is an open, inclusive, God-centered Parish:

Recognizing Christ in every person

Supporting each individual's spiritual journey

Nurturing all God's children in the Peace of the Lord

Creating a community of sacramental worship, hospitality, and compassion

Empowering people to serve and minister

Reaching out to heal and make new the broken world

Proclaiming God's promise in truth with courage

The Vestry created big, bold, audacious five-year goals a little over two years ago. We will have completed year two of our five-year plan at the time of our next annual meeting.

Goal 1: Growing our congregation

Our goal was to increase our Sunday attendance from 188 in 2003 to 300 in 2008. Do you know how we are doing? Come to the Annual Meeting to find out.

Another goal was to start a youth choir. Did you see the article in the Waterbury Republican about our Chorister's Academy?

Start a youth group. It started this fall. Come to the Annual Meeting to hear more.

Start a fourth service. We now have SNL at St. John's. That is Saturday Night Liturgy - Eucharist with jazz at 5:00 PM.

GOAL 2: Deepening the Spiritual and Social life of our Congregation

Jazz and "close" games on September 11 in our Close

Sunday morning adult education poetry classes

Our annual soft ball game

That's not all - come to the annual meeting to learn more

GOAL 3: Serving the needs of our neighbors in downtown Waterbury

300 hungry people are fed each day in the GWIM Soup Kitchen. The ministry of our sacred spaces is a blessing to our community

St. John's AmeriCares project made their 7th house Safe, Warm, and Dry this year.

Come to the Annual Meeting to learn about other Outreach projects

GOAL 4: Building Partnerships with the community of the Green

Billy Collins, former Poet Laureate of the United States will read poetry for Waterbury schoolchildren and for us. April 4, 2006. Come to the Annual Meeting to learn more.

Goal 5: Preserving our historic Sacred Spaces and enhancing them for the future

Come to the annual meeting to learn more about the work we have begun to upgrade the electrical power to our church.

LENTEN MEDITATION BOOKS

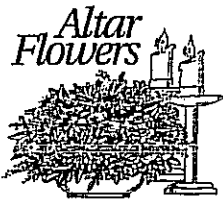
For the past three years, St. John's parishioners and staff have contributed to a meditation booklet for Lent and Holy Week. The contributors are assigned scripture and asked to write a very brief (100 words or less) meditation on the verse. We print up all the meditations and the resulting booklet can be picked up at St. John's in the weeks preceding Lent. If you are interested in participating, please let the office know before January 15, 2006.

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: _____