



The Signs of St. John's

February, 2012

Dear Friends,

People think it is strange to like Lent. It is, after all, a time of penitence! "Penitence" brings to mind images of starved sinners crawling on their knees in hopes of being made worthy of God's forgiveness. For me, liking Lent does not involve combing through my past, naming every misdeed, and making amends by rolling around in guilt.

I like Lent because it is a time of cleaning house. Lent invites me to take my relationship with God seriously. It invites me to work at recognizing those things that I have allowed to become barriers to the ongoing development of that relationship. It invites me to see that my life needs to be an ongoing Lent.

St. Benedict instructs from his *Rule* that monks' lives should be a continual Lent. He is not encouraging his readers to remain cloistered in dark monasteries wearing hair shirts. He asks, "Should the seriousness in which we undertake our spiritual lives in Lent, be the model for every day of the year?"

The answer to the question is, of course, "Yes!" Unfortunately, we have treated Lent like we do a visit to the dentist or our yearly check-up. After six months of not flossing, we floss the day of our appointment with the dentist. After a year of dieting on bacon cheeseburgers, we add a few salads in hope of it aiding our cholesterol levels.

Ash Wednesday, the start of the Season of Lent, is February 22 and St. John's will have two opportunities, noon and 7:00 p.m., to mark the beginning of this time of fasting. At these liturgies, I will invite the people gathered to the observance of "a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (BCP: 265). The Eucharistic Prayer for the day also reminds us that the Season is also a time of renewal. We will pray that we "may come to the fullness of grace" which God has prepared for us (BCP: 379).

It is important to pause and remember that "fast" means "to observe". How are we going to observe this time Mother Church has given us to pay close attention to our relationship with God? What would most benefit us and make us better prepared to stand before the empty tomb with awe, wonder, and great joy?

The hope in keeping a Holy Lent is that we recognize that living a life marked "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" is a life that is truly worth living! And once we have celebrated Easter we do not shelve our bibles, our quiet time with God, or our need to be reminded daily of our need to examine our push against God in our lives.

Sisters and Brothers, I invite you to a Holy Lent!

Dale+

February Highlights

- 5 *EYC Sub Sale*
- 5 *Boy Scout Bake Sale*
- 8 *Supper Seminar*
- 21 *Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper*
- 22 *Ash Wednesday*
- 25 *Lenten Supper, Program—Exploring the Wilderness*



Notes from the Vestry Meeting

January 19, 2012

- ✚ The Treasurer reported that St. John's ended the year in solid financial condition. Funds were added to the Building and Capital Reserve fund and to the Memorial Garden Fund.
- ✚ The Rector, Deacon, and vestry members participated in a retreat on January 14 at Richmond Hill, which was led by Judith Carlson. It was an enlightening day of reflection, during which time the Mutual Ministry Review was conducted.
- ✚ The waste management contract is under review.
- ✚ The church is now connected by Wi-Fi to the outside world (prayer is the original wireless connection).
- ✚ Lenten suppers will begin February 29 (yes, 2012 is a leap year).

Llewellyn Slayton
Junior Warden

Christine Richardson Sings for January's Young At Heart Luncheon

Christine Richardson, one of our newest St. John's Sanctuary Choir members, serenaded the attendees at our January **Young At Heart** Luncheon on January 24. With Paul at the piano, she sang some show tunes and show medleys and the big band favorite, "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." She invited the audience to join her in a sing-a-long of Songs of Winter: "Winter Wonderland," "Let It Snow," and "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Christine has studied voice with Paul for several years to increase her repertoire of songs and her enjoyment of singing. She travels to St. John's each week for a rehearsal and service from Petersburg, where she lives with her husband, Jack. She is a valued addition to our music ministry.

Paul R. Bartsch

Articles and information for *The Signs of St. John's* should be submitted by the 19th of each month. Submissions may be made in email format or as an email attachment in any word processing format directly to Alex Heggie, aheggie@comcast.net. Photographs or other illustrations may also be submitted. Digital images are preferred but not mandatory. Typed articles and photos may be left in the "Newsletter" folder in the Armstrong Room.

Mark your February Calendars

Keeping a Holy Lent—Ash Wednesday and the Lenten Suppers

The Season of Lent begins this year on February 22. St. John's will keep **Ash Wednesday** with services at noon and 7:00 p.m. The liturgies of Ash Wednesday are full of powerful reminders of not only our distance from God created by us, but also of God's closeness to us because of God's incredible love. If we take our relationship with God seriously, we cannot ignore this self-made separation from God. The magnitude of our awe and wonder of Easter is directly proportional to our awareness of the gap we create. Attending Ash Wednesday services is a great start to keeping a Holy Lent.

The Lenten Wednesday Night Suppers will offer time for bible study, worship and reflection.

5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer in the Nave

6:00 p.m. Supper of bread and soup

6:30 p.m. *Personal Answers to Critical Questions*

7:15 p.m. Compline

Lent is about preparing our soul, as gardeners prepare the soil for seeds, for the new life we are offered in the Resurrected Life. This year's Lenten Suppers will allow us time to clean out our spiritual gardens, trim away and prune the spiritual disciplines of our past, and allow room for fresh growth and blossoms.

February 29 – Exploring the Wilderness

March 7 – First Clearings

March 14 – Natural Rhythms and New Growth

March 21 – Weathering Storms

March 28 - Consecration

ECW

As all of you know the ECW is planning a fashion show for 2012. It will be held May 5 at 12 noon. We are in need of help to make this happen, so if you are interested in participating, please call Fontaine.

Our next meeting will be February 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Armstrong room. Hope to see you there.

Fontaine Gibbons

February Birthdays

1–Nancy Marshall; 3–Jim Cook, Andrew Catherman; 6–Pam Shultz; 7–Kori Lyn Fideli; 8–Michelle Nichols; 13–David Peat; 16–Colin Catherman; 17–Kathy Youell; 19–Jeff Johnson; 21–Guy Smith; 22–Bob Johnson; 23–Abby Englert; 26–Betty Ann Messerly; 27–David Duncan, Sam Galstan, Mattie Arnold; 28–Richard Greenwood, Luran Johnson; 29–Sarah Day

If your name should be included here but is not, please call Debbie at the Church Office so your record can be updated.

More Info from the Rector

Rector's and Deacon's Discretionary Fund

The Discretionary Funds at St. John's allow the clergy to meet many of the pastoral needs of members of the parish and in the community. A new pair of shoes, so a person can start a new job, a light bill, a prescription—the needs are many and varied. In the last several months, St. John's has received many requests for assistance, and while good stewardship of the funds is being practiced, monies are low. Please prayerfully consider a gift to this important ministry of St. John's. Any gifts should be made to St. John's with notation that they are designated to the discretionary funds. Clergy are not allowed to receive these funds directly. Thank you!

February's Supper Seminar

February 8, *The Reformed Church and Mary the Mother of God*—Beginning with broad strokes, we will attempt to paint a picture of the Church's ideas surrounding Saint Mary up to the Reformation. We will point out the reformers' concerns of some of the Church's teaching on Saint Mary and lastly, we will speak to the joint statement between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church on Saint Mary's role in salvation history.

A free supper is served at 6:00 p.m. and the evening ends at 7:30 p.m. All are welcomed; please let us know you are attending by placing your name on one of the sign-up sheets, or registering by way of the *eSigns*. This allows a proper amount of materials and dinner to be prepared.

Tuesday Evening Prayer

Jesus demonstrates the need to pause from the work of our lives and spend time focused on God. Time and time again, he would travel apart from the disciples and take time to simply be with his Father in prayer. St. John's offers a weekly time apart. Each Tuesday at 6:00 p.m., Evening Prayer with its prayers, saying of psalms and readings from Scripture allow for a time to pause and refocus on God's presence in our lives. If Jesus needed to stop and pray, we certainly do!

At the conclusion of the service a time for quiet and reflection, for those who wish to remain, is held until 6:50 p.m. There will be not be Evening Prayer on February 14.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

The Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group attempts to take a slow prayerful reading of Scriptures. If you are interested in attending and want more information and/or you would like to receive the study notes please email Dale+ at rdalecuster@gmail.com. The group meets in Dale's office at 7:00 p.m.

February 7—*The Letter of Paul to Philemon*—Paul is in jail. However, his imprisonment does not deaden his concern for the Church. At its core *Philemon* demonstrates that without justice there is no peace, and without peace between members of the Church there is no ministry. However, Paul's solution can surprise us! *Philemon* is only 25 verses long. If you are not attending a bible study, this would be a great start.

February 14—No Bible Study

February 21—*The Acts of the Apostles*—*Acts* should be thought of in terms of being the second volume in a two volume set *Luke-Acts*. *Acts* takes up the narrative from the events in Luke's Gospel and gives accounts of the early Church living into her role as an instrument of God's love and care as she attempts to reconcile her own internal struggles and differences. We will see that disagreements and personality conflicts are new to the modern Church. The group will be reflecting on *Acts* for the next several months.

Assistance To Seminarian

The Vestry has designated the loose offering received at all services in February for assistance to a student at Virginia Theological Seminary to be selected by the Rector. Our congregation has previously provided assistance to Charles Smith, who graduated from the Seminary last spring and is now serving a parish in South Carolina.

Jim Cook

Christian Formation:

Although it's only January, July will be here before you know it and July means it's time for Vacation Bible School (VBS)! Stacy Chisholm and Kate Nobsch would like to invite the Youth Group and any willing and able adults to consider volunteering to assist with VBS. In addition to volunteers, we will be looking for lots of children to participate in VBS. VBS isn't only open to the children of St. John's, but children in the community at large. Stay tuned for the dates and the theme for this year! We are excited and hope you are too! If you are interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities for VBS, please call Kate at 768-8129 or Stacy at 796-2994. Your support, time, and talent are what make the programs at St. John's a success!

Stacy and Kate

Looking Ahead

March

Lenten Suppers each Wednesday

April

Parish Yard Sale

Daughters Of The King

The Motto of the Order

For His Sake...

I am but one, but I am one.

I cannot do everything, but I can do something.

What I can do, I ought to do.

What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.

Lord, what will you have me do?

The St. Veronica's Chapter of The Order of The Daughters of the King will meet on Tuesday, February 7, 2012, at 4:15 p.m. in the Armstrong Room at St. John's. We will continue our study of *Saint Benedict's Toolbox*, by Jane Tomaine. At this meeting, we will be discussing Chapter 7, *Benedictine Hospitality, Hearts Overflowing with Love*. St. Benedict describes hospitality as "honoring and adoring the Christ within each person." *Romans 15:7* says, "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." There are 6 Tools given to help us practice hospitality. Each one chooses her own path toward that goal. This book is available in our St. John's library.

The Daughters of the King is a prayer and service group, so if you have a prayer need, we will be happy to add your need to our prayer list. If you are interested in learning more about the Daughters, you can visit the DOK website, www.dok-national.org, or feel free to contact us (Pat Robinson at 768-6717, or Jackie Colonna at 748-5987). We will be happy to talk with you about becoming a Daughter.

Jackie Colonna

Carters Host St. John's Choir Social

Sunday, January 22, brought the members of our St. John's music ministry to the Carters for an afternoon of conversation and snacks. With December so busy with Advent, Christmas, and New Year's Eve activity, mid January is the time that our St. John's music ministers look forward to for socializing with each other.

I was very pleased with the sound of our Sanctuary and Praise Choirs on Christmas Eve, and was delighted to have the sound of some of our Praise Choir and Ensemble musicians added to the musical texture of our 10:00 p.m. service. The choirs and soloists sang artistically and spiritually, adding significantly to the quality of our St. John's services.

We are always looking for new members, so please call me 804 732-6879 (cell: 804 536-2368), or contact me by email, prbarts@aol.com, if you would like any information relevant to joining with us. We rehearse on Wednesday evening from 7:30-9:00 p.m.

Paul R. Bartsch

From the Deacon's Desk

Part of my daily devotions includes reading *Praying Our Days, A Guide and Companion* by former presiding bishop Frank Griswold. This is not a book to just sit down and read. It is full of prayers and commentary on prayer that is meant to give one things upon which to ponder and reflect. Today I was reading a prayer to use prior to receiving communion. It is attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas and spoke very deeply to my soul. While it talks of meeting Christ in the eucharist, I use it anytime I want to feel Christ's presence.

All loving God, just as I am, and with all that I am, I come to meet Christ (in the eucharist.) I come sick in spirit to the doctor of my soul; and sinful and soiled to the fountain of mercy; blind to the world's true light; poor and needy to the One in whom You have revealed the riches of Your grace. Heal me, cleanse me, enlighten me. Enrich my poverty and clothe me in the bright garment of Your righteousness. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the true bread who gives life to the world. Amen.

Sherry

Evangelism

While Teresa Duncan's term on the Vestry has expired, she is still hard at work creating a new and improved web site for St John's. So far, her labor rate (\$) has been reasonable.

The Evangelism committee requests parishioners consider signing up to take a turn ushering at either the 9 o'clock or 11 o'clock service. It's much easier on everyone when we all share in this responsibility. I will be glad to usher at 9 o'clock with anyone unsure of the requirements. Please contact Chris Day if you would like help. Herb Marsh (herbertmarsh@comcast.net) is the contact for the 11 o'clock service.

We are in the process of "refreshing" the Wiggler Bags and would appreciate any suggestions for items to include in the bags.

Chris Day

Congratulations

Avery and Chasity Miller would like to let our church family know that our daughter, Finley Avery Miller, was born at 8:52 a.m. on December 26. She weighed 6 pounds 13.5 ounces and measured 19.5 inches long. Please include us in your prayers. We look forward to seeing everyone again soon.

Avery Miller

Outreach

The Outreach Committee has an ongoing food drive to help the needy in our community. The committee is promoting themes this year; in January we were especially looking for canned meat (tuna, chicken, salmon, vienna sausages, etc). February's theme is "Spaghetti stuff," which means the ingredients for making spaghetti: the noodles, spaghetti sauce, tomato sauce, Parmesan cheese, etc. Please continue your wonderful support of this worthwhile project and pick up an extra spaghetti ingredient and deliver it to the church any Sunday in February.

We are a couple months away from our annual yard sale. Please start setting aside your small appliances, household goods, tools, novelties, yard equipment, toys, sports equipment, baby stuff, and cookbooks to donate. Many thanks.

Pat Robinson

End Of The Year Financial Report

St. John's ended the 2011 year in a strong financial position with a net income of \$11,186.49. Of that amount, \$9,063.91 was transferred to the Building and Capital Reserve in the event of a major capital repair. Also \$348.58 was transferred to the Memorial Garden Fund.

A notable result in 2011 was that pledge payments exceeded the budgeted amount and the total amount pledged. For 2011, our parishioners pledged \$223,894, of which \$216,394 was budgeted. The actual amount received was \$227,685

Income	2011 Budget	Actual
Pledges, Current Year	\$216,394	\$227,685
Other	37,743	23,857
Total Income	\$254,137	\$255,542
Expenses		
Rector Expense	\$ 3,600	\$ 3,082
Christian Education	1,000	1,707
Office	13,200	11,896
Diocesan Pledge	23,404	23,404
Property	52,710	55,418
Salaries and Benefits	144,488	143,954
Special Funds	15,735	14,245
Total Expenses	\$254,137	\$253,788
Net Income	\$ 0	\$ 1,774

Jim Cook

Parish Life

Parish Life started off the New Year with a reception following the Epiphany Service on Sunday, January 8. The reception was well attended and everyone enjoyed the good food and fellowship.

Mark your calendars for the Lenten Suppers beginning Wednesday, February 29. We are asking for three volunteers to bring soup/or stew. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Parish Hall. Parish Life will provide bread and drinks.

Please welcome Llewellyn Slayton as our new Parish Life co-chair for the 2012 year. Llewellyn and I are looking forward to a great year with a couple of new exciting events. More details to follow.

If you have any ideas for Parish Life events or would like to help, please contact Llewellyn Slayton, 796-9485, slslayton1@verizon.net or Mary Smith, 748-9718, maryg_smith@comcast.net.

Mary Smith

Reception following the Epiphany Pageant



"Really, Llewellyn, it's just my second cookie!"

St. John's Budget For 2012

Our stewardship effort for 2012 resulted in 82 pledges for \$198,290 as of January 5, 2012. That figure includes several new pledges. This is a significant decrease from the 90 pledges for \$223,894 received for 2011.

The Vestry on December 15, 2011, adopted a budget for 2012. A summary of the 2012 budget appears below, with the 2011 budget listed for comparison.

<u>Income</u>	<u>2011 Budget</u>	<u>2012 Budget</u>
Williams Property Rental	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000.
Other	3,743	1,000
Plate Offering	4,500	4,000
Pledges, Current Year	216,394	198,290*
Additional Income to be identified	0	27,831*
Through Envelopes, No Pledge	18,500	9,000
Total Income	\$254,137	\$252,121
<u>Expenses</u>		
Rector Expense	\$3,600	\$3,800
Christian Education	1,000	2,000
Office	13,200	10,875
Diocesan Pledge	23,404	23,980
Property	52,710	46,630
Salaries and Benefits	144,463	152,176
Special Funds	15,740	12,660
Total Expenses	\$254,137	\$252,121

*Adjusted for pledges received after December 15.

Highlights for 2012:

1. No pay increase for the staff
2. Reductions in Office and Property
3. Health insurance premium for the Parish Office Coordinator, required by the national church (a new expense item of \$7,944).

Jim Cook

EYC

Special thanks to those who came to help with BINGO on January 24.

The EYC is in need of prizes for BINGO: candy, tissues, socks, lotion, hand sanitizer, stuffed animals, or anything you would like to donate.

The EYC will sell sub sandwiches on February 5 for Super Bowl Sunday! Please place your order by emailing or calling Fontaine Gibbons by February 2 (wgibb97@aol.com).

If you are going on the mission trip your \$100 deposit is due February 1. If you need financial assistance please contact Dale+.

The EYC will be having a pancake super on February 21. Meet at the church at 5 o'clock. We are in need of 100% participation by all EYC members.

Fontaine Gibbons

Lectionary Readings for February

February 5—5th Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-31

Psalms 147:1-12, 21c

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Mark 1:29-39

February 12—6th Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalms 30

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Mark 1:40-45

February 19—Last Epiphany

2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalms 50:1-6

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Mark 9:2-9

February 22—Ash Wednesday

Joel 2:1-2, 12-17

Psalms 103

2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 26—1st Lent

Genesis 9:8-17

Psalms 25:1-9

1 Peter 3:18-22

Mark 1:9-15

Men's Bible Study Group

Scripture – Service – Social

The Men's Bible Study will meet in the Parish Hall at 8:00 a.m. on February 4 and February 18. On February 4 the topic is "An Unknown God" with Acts 17 being the source for the discussion. The topic for February 18 will be "Companions in Ministry" and Acts 18 the scripture.

All men of St. John's are invited to participate on the first and third Saturdays of each month for breakfast and lively discussion of selected scripture.

Alex Heggie

Resurrected to New Life in Christ:

Mildred Daffron

Bob Kerner

Gordon Moncure

Jim Wood

Bedford D. Woodard

Rest eternal grant to these, O Lord: let light; perpetual shine upon them. May their soul, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.