



The Signs of St. John's

March, 2010

Dear Friends,

Today was the first day I ventured into the back yard in what feels like a long time. There is still a lot of snow, but I needed to fill the bird feeders. Also, I wanted a closer view of the damage caused by the three storms. Since the December snow, I have looked, with dread, at a downed tree covering one of my garden plots.

Many limbs were spread around. I am concerned that a great many plants are still buried. The plots I had at both sides of the entrance to our driveway are gone. A snowplow took the plants and the boundaries away. I am hopeful I will be able to find the rocks I used as edging as the snow continues to melt.

My thoughts turned to digesting the fact that I am looking at a busy spring of repair and cleaning. As I was making a mental list of how I might want to tackle the clean-up and repair, my eye caught a small patch of bluish-purple. Walking across the yard, I discovered several flowering plants where the snow had melted. I am not good with names, so I can not identify the species; however, right there in the back yard I have a small group of flowers. Wow! I was reminded of a quote from Elizabeth Barrett Browning,

*Earth is crammed with heaven
And every common bush afire with God,
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes.*

I could not have asked for a better image for my Lenten journey. Here was a sign of life where none was expected. Here was a reminder to hope. As I continue to take stock of my life in this Lenten season, reflect on the places where I sense a distance from God and listen for the small still voice of God in my life, these few plants are reminders that God can and does show Godself in the most unexpected place. I have to be willing to look and notice.

Lent invites use to take the time to look. The disciplines of Lent are tools we can use to clear away the emotional, physical and spiritual clutter of our lives and notice that God has been present all along!

Elsewhere in this edition of *Signs*, you will find a list of the services of Holy Week. I am excited that St. John's will again celebrate the Easter Vigil. The Church understands this liturgy as the celebration of Easter. It is not something to be missed. The liturgies of Holy Week are parts of one continuous celebration. It is not possible to fully embrace the realities of the empty tomb if we have not witnessed the Passion and Cross. The pain of the Cross is more deeply understood seen through the fear, abandonment and misunderstanding that is expressed in the days before the Crucifixion. These liturgies work in union to prepare us for the experience of living the Resurrected Life given to us at the empty tomb.

Please know of my continued prayers for a holy Lent; may it be a time of finding many unexpected flowers!

*Your brother in Christ,
Dale+*

March Highlights

- 2 *"Faithful to the Fleet"*
- 3 *Lenten Supper—Prayer as enjoying God.*
- 7 *Celtic Vespers*
- 10 *Lenten Supper—Prayer as listening.*
- 17 *Lenten Supper—Prayer as honesty.*
- 24 *Lenten Supper—Prayer as care.*
- 28–31 *Holy Week begins*



Notes from the Vestry Meeting

February 18, 2010

- ✠ Father Dale presented the annual Parochial Report which was reviewed and approved by the Vestry.
- ✠ Thanks was extended to the Property Committee for recent snow removal from the parking lot and sidewalks.
- ✠ Minor repairs were made to the rental property, commonly referred to as the Sibley House.
- ✠ Members of the Vestry will attend Bishop's Day for Vestry and Leaders at Powhatan High School on Saturday, March 6.
- ✠ The Vestry will participate in a Mutual Ministry Review on March 11. It will be facilitated by Caroline Black from the Diocese of Southern Virginia.
- ✠ The Annual Convention of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, recently held in Williamsburg, was informative and enjoyed by the delegates who attended.

*Teresa Duncan
Junior Warden*

From Debbie's Desk:

The Lenten Coin Cards have been placed in the front vestibule. If you can't find one feel free to call the office at 748-2182. The proceeds from the Lenten Coin Cards are designated for the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund. They need to be turned in by April 11.

Our Prayer List: Many of those added have recovered and we are thankful. Please review the prayer list in the bulletin and if someone you've added needs to remain or be removed please write that name on a slip of paper and place in the offertory plate. The prayer list will be updated after Palm Sunday. Thanks for your help!

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.



A Special Presentation at St. John's

Faithful To the Fleet!, a new 1930's musical, with book and lyrics by Donald R. Flynn and music by Paul R. Bartsch will be presented on Tuesday evening, March 2, at 8:00 p.m. in a staged reading format.

The presentation stars Lindsay Billmeyer, John Howsmon, Bethany Finnegan, Marc Tomczak, David Harrison, Tyler Houchins and Mike Randell, and features the talents of Bob Armstrong, Travis Poole, Derby Sale, Kim Courington, Jessica Burgess, Katie Longo, Susan Keophila and Mary Greenwood.

The evening will feature a wonderful story and memorable melodies. Under the direction of Una Harrison, the company will take us back to the 1930's with a fresh story of what might have happened just before World War II, in old New York. Bernie and Arlene Lotti, Jeff Courington, and Matthew Burgess will form the technical staff under the supervision of Betty White, long time stage manager at Swift Creek Mill. Don and Geri Raybould will help the audience find seats.

Admission is free, and a free-will offering will be accepted to benefit the Music Ministry Scholarship Fund. Please plan to attend.

Paul R. Bartsch

March Birthdays

2—Joey Krzyston, Joe Frazer; 5—Kristin Johnson, Chris Smith; 8—Judi Heggie; 9—Rusty Phoenix; 10—Jean Dotson, Berkeley Galstan; 11—Stephon Harwell; 12—Andrea Englert; 15—Hazel Sloane; 16—John Nichols; 19—Jeff Higgins; 21—Joe Lotti; 22—Sue Whiteman; 23—Tommy Harrell, Sarah Eckman; 25—Steven Fornash; 30—Abigail Courington

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

New Contact Information for Dale+

New email address: rdalecuster@gmail.com

New home number: 804-399-4655

Times to Pause and Begin Again

Evening Prayer is read on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. Evening Prayer allows one to pause and give thanks for the day that has passed and to hand to God for God's safe keeping, our worries and concerns. At the end of the Office, those who wish to stay keep a time of quiet for meditative prayer until 6:50 p.m.

Thursdays at noon, St. John's celebrates the Holy Eucharist with prayers for healing for God's people. With a lengthened time of intercessory prayer at the Prayers of the People, this is an opportunity to hold before God those who have asked for the parish's prayers.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study

The Tuesday Evening Bible Study meets in Dale's office from 7:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. and is studying the Book of Genesis. From the stories of creation, to the establishment of covenants, to the birth of the Hebrew people, Genesis is a deeply rich and challenging work. As we work through Genesis we will gain knowledge of the Jewish understanding of a relationship with God and will wrestle with its worth to Christians.

Wednesday Lenten Suppers

This year's Wednesday Lenten Suppers focus on prayer. While exploring the practice of prayer, these evenings are hoped to provide refreshment in our prayer lives and a new-found joy and delight in our relationship with God. Our evenings begin at 5:30 p.m. for those who would like to gather in the nave to pray the Stations of the Cross. Supper is at 6:00 with the program starting at 6:30 p.m. followed by Compline. We end at 7:30 p.m.

March 3—*Prayer as enjoying God.* Prayer involves stepping outside ourselves to pay attention to God, through thanksgiving, praise, and adoration.

March 10—*Prayer as listening.* A real knowing of God takes us beyond the familiar realms of worship and intercession, to listening to God through Scripture.

March 17—*Prayer as honesty.* How can we listen to God in the whole of life, and face the truth about ourselves and our broken world?

March 24—*Prayer as care.* This session explores how, through prayer, we can give expression to God's love for us and all creation.

Used Books

To date, \$16 has been collected from the sale of used books for Elderhomes (ramps project.) This will continue through April 18. The goal is to send at least \$50.00 to Elderhomes.

Money from the sale of used books goes to several nonprofit organizations during the year. Please continue to donate books to sell and purchase books from the case outside the kitchen at a very reasonable price. Thanks for your support of this project, enabling the continued support of our nonprofit organizations. If you have any questions, see or call Joan Carter.

Parish Life

Lent has started and Parish Life is looking for people to prepare soup for the Lenten supper each Wednesday night. The first Lenten supper was held on February 24 and will continue on March 3, 10, 17 and 24. A sign-up sheet is posted on the parish hall bulletin board for anyone willing to prepare and share a pot of soup. Please sign up! Parish life will provide the bread, tea and coffee.

As always, people are needed to host coffee hour. If you would like to host a Sunday coffee hour, please contact Fontaine Gibbons at (804)530-3867.

Fontaine M. Gibbons

ECW

I hope everyone has enjoyed the snow and cold weather. The ECW will be meeting on March 4, in the Armstrong room at 7:30 p.m. There is much to prepare for the fashion show planned for May 6. Pebbles in Colonial Heights will be providing the fashions. There are a lot of positions to fill, so if there is something you would prefer to do, please contact Fontaine Gibbons at 804-530-3867. Please put March 4 on your calendar and support your ECW.

Fontaine Gibbons

Looking Ahead

April	
4	Easter Day
24	St. John's Yard Sale
May	
6	ECW Fashion Show
June	
20-25	EYC Mission Trip

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 Daughters of the King will meet on Tuesday, March 2 at 4:00 p.m. in the Armstrong Room at St. John's. Our February meeting was cancelled because of snow. We will continue our study for those interested in becoming a Daughter. Our study for March is *What Does Christ Expect of His Daughters?*

If you are interested in learning more about the Daughters, please contact us (Pat Robinson at 768-6717, or email at pmr427@comcast.net; or Jackie Colonna at 748-5987, or email at colonnajl@yahoo.com). We will be happy to talk with you about becoming a Daughter. Peace.

Jackie Colonna

New Hymn For March

On Sunday, March 14, parishioners at the 11:00 a.m. service will learn hymn #480, "When Jesus Left His Father's Throne" from the hymnal. The text to this hymn was written by James Montgomery for the Hallam Sunday School, near Sheffield, England.

The music was written by Ralph Vaughan Williams, who wrote so many of the wonderful melodies we sing in the Episcopal Church.

James Montgomery (1771-1854) was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland where his father was a minister in the Moravian Church. At the age of seven, he attended Fulneck Seminary, Yorkshire, where secular poetry and fiction were banned. He was scholastically unsuccessful and was imprisoned for commemorating the fall of the Bastille with a poem, and for reporting on a riot in Sheffield. Away from the church as a youth, at the age of forty-three, he was readmitted into the Moravian Church.

We have reported on the life of Ralph Vaughan Williams so many times that to do so here would be redundant. We need only recall his many contributions to our hymn repertoire to include: "O Little Town of Bethlehem;" "Hail Thee Festival Day!;" "For All the Saints;" and many others.

Paul R. Bartsch

Outreach Committee

CARITAS and The Healing Place

As the Signs is going to press, the Outreach Committee is planning to have Karen Stanley, Executive Director of CARITAS and The Healing Place, give a presentation to St John's on February 28 after the 9:00 service in the Parish Hall. Karen will show a video on The Healing Place as well as talk about CARITAS' new project, the Furniture Bank.

Outreach Network

St. John's Outreach Committee is attempting to create an Outreach Network with several local churches. The idea behind the network is to share projects each church is involved in for community ministry and investigate the potential for sharing resources on different projects. The initial network meeting was held on February 25 in the St John's Parish Hall.

Ramps Project

Anyone interested in working on these projects should contact Joan Carter. The first project for 2010 is scheduled for March 6.

Annual Yard Sale

The annual yard sale is scheduled for April 24 from 8:00a.m.-12:00 noon. As usual, the Men's Bible Study group will be cooking breakfast and lunch delicacies for sale.

If you or any of your neighbors are interested in renting a table please contact Chris Day. The cost of renting a table is only \$15.

In the coming weeks, contributions from the congregation for everything, except clothes and textbooks, will be accepted. Items will be sold at the yard sale by the Outreach Committee. Proceeds will benefit CARITAS and CCHASM.

Perpetual Food Drive

Thanks to all who have made contributions. There are collection containers in the Narthex and outside Debbie's office. Your continued participation is appreciated. Contributions are being donated to Martha for the Homeless and St. Matthew's Food Pantry.

Monthly meetings

Please consider joining the Outreach Committee. The committee meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month and all are welcome to attend and participate. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact Dorna Clark (dwclark@hotmail.com) or Chris Day (cday161293@comcast.net).

Chris Day

Youth News

The Cooking Crew cooks . . .



St. John's Shrove Tuesday EYC Pancake Supper



. . . and the Eating Crew eats!



St. John's invites all youth in grades 6-12 to join in any of our activities. If you plan on attending, please let Doris know by calling (804-378-7553 home/804-928-4487 cell) or emailing (DorisN2Lf2@aol.com.)

Mark Your Calendars:

- March 5-6..... EYC Lock-in on the Eastern Shore
- March 16.....Bingo at Lucy Corr
- March 26-28.....EYC Retreat at Blackstone
- April 13Bingo at Lucy Corr
- June 20-25Mission Trip

As you read this, the youth are beginning to pack for their trip to Virginia Beach for a Diocesan youth lock in (or lock up, as some of us like to think of it.) Susan Keophila and Doris Custer will be the adults undertaking this adventure. We need one more adult to chaperone, so if there are any brave souls out there, please contact Doris as soon as possible!

A Diocesan Youth Retreat is scheduled for the weekend of March 26-28 in Blackstone and our youth are excited . . . particularly those who have gone in previous years. Stay tuned for the details which will come from the diocese soon.

The group is gearing up for **Mission Trip 2010** to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. There are 11 youth signed up, plus Dale+ and Doris. One more adult is needed to help chaperone. If you are interested, please contact Fr. Dale+ at 748-2182 or 399-4655 or by email at rdalecuster@gmail.com. The trip is through an organization called Youth-Works; activities will include working in soup kitchens, thrift stores, daycare centers and elder care centers which are all sponsored by the Department of Social Services

in Harrisburg.

You will be hearing more about fund raising opportunities to help support the **Mission Trip 2010** in the coming

weeks and months. The first fundraiser, the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, was enjoyed by both the youth group and those who were served. There was an abundance of pancakes, sausage, bacon and fruit cocktail and enthusiasm, all under the guidance of the EYC fund raising coordinator, Kim Courington. Thank you, Kim!

The youth will once again host an Easter Egg hunt for the younger members of St. John's. The youth will be putting together plastic egg treats during the weekend of March 26-28.

Finally, the youth continue their ministry to Lucy Corr Assisted Living and Nursing Care with monthly games of Bingo. Donations for prizes are needed for those participating in this exciting sport! Donations may be dropped off in Fr. Dale's office. The list can be found below.

Stay tuned . . . the youth are always up to something!

Suggested items for bingo prizes for lucy corr village: kleenex (cube boxes,) hand lotion (plastic bottles: medium and large,) men's cologne (plastic bottles,) ladies cologne, deodorant, men's t shirts (large and x-large,) ladies gowns, costume jewelry, make up (blush/lipstick—new,) small bags of sugar free candy (not hard,) small and medium stuffed animals (new or washed,) trinkets to sit on bedside tables, small packages of cookies, \$1.00 bills (they can purchase snacks in gift shop,) shower caps, large print (paper back) devotional books.

Doris Custer

Donations For Relief In Haiti

St. John's parishioners have donated, through checks to St. John's, \$1,155.00 for assistance to the victims of the January 12 earthquake in Haiti. Moreover, the Outreach Committee has donated \$1,000.00 from Outreach funds. These donations have been sent to Episcopal Relief and Development for payment to the Diocese of Haiti.

Several parishioners have donated directly to Episcopal Relief and Development and other charities for the same purpose. Thank you all for your generosity to a country devastated in almost every possible way.

St. John's continues to accept gifts for Haiti. If you wish to contribute, make checks payable to St. John's Episcopal Church with "Haiti Relief" in the memo line. Checks may be mailed to the church, delivered to the church office or placed in the alms bason during services.

You may also send your donation directly to Episcopal Relief and Development, P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, Virginia 22116-7058. Checks should be payable to Episcopal Relief and Development with "Haiti Fund" in the memo line.

Jim Cook

Lenten Coin Folders

The Lenten coin folders were placed in the narthex on Sunday, February 7. If you have not already done so, please obtain one. The Vestry has selected Episcopal Relief and Development to receive these funds. Episcopal Relief and Development is the agency of the Church which responds to disasters and other human suffering

Jim Cook

Men's Bible Study Group

Scripture – Service – Social

In March our meetings will be on the 6th and the 20th in the Parish Hall at 8:00 a.m. We will continue our study of the book of Romans.

All men of St. John's are welcome to participate with us on the first and third Saturdays of each month when we meet for breakfast followed by lively discussion of selected scripture.



The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible.

George Burns

Lectionary for March

March 7–3rd Lent

Exodus 3:1–15

Psalms 63:1–8

1 Corinthians 10:1–13

Luke 13:1–9

March 14–4th Lent

Joshua 5:9–12

Psalms 32

2 Corinthians 5:16–21

Luke 15:1–3, 11b–32

March 21–5th Lent

Isaiah 43:16–21

Psalms 126

Philippians 3:4b–14

John 12:1–8

March 28–Palm Sunday

Luke 19:28–40/Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalms 31:9–16

Philippians 2:5–11

Luke 22:14–23:56

March 29–Monday of Holy Week

Isaiah 42:1–9

Psalms 36:5–11

Hebrews 9:11–15

John 12:1–11

March 30 Tuesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 49:1–7

Psalms 71:1–14

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

John 12:20–36

March 31 Wednesday of Holy Week

Isaiah 50:4–9a

Psalms 70

Hebrews 12:1–3

John 13:21–32

Resurrected to New Life in Christ:

Henry G. Alley, Jr.

William L. Chidester

Robert Nelson Pulley

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.