

The Messenger

The Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY
A Non-Network Parish in the Diocese of Albany

February 2009

Walt's Wilderness Musings

Well, as Freddie Krueger put it so well in “Friday the Thirteenth”, “I’m Back!!” This time it is only to bring you up to date on something that has been a matter of great concern and a subject of heartfelt prayer for all the members of our parish family - the health issues of our new Rector, Father John. For almost a month, as most of you know, Fr. John was experiencing a debilitating state of exhaustion, anemia, nausea, and a host of other symptoms which made it impossible for him to exercise his pastoral ministry at St. John’s. It was clear to Fr. John, and to all who had contact with him that he was seriously ill. The biggest problem was that nobody knew why, and the test that might have shed some light on the reason could not be scheduled for three weeks at the earliest.

So Fr. John was left in a state of limbo getting sicker and sicker with every passing day, but unable to receive treatment for his health problems because nobody would know what they were until the long postponed medical test results were known. To complicate matters even further and to make Fr. John’s life even more miserable, he lifted a case of “Gatorade” with his one good arm and pulled some tendons, leaving his hand painfully tender and unable to perform the basic functions which it always had. So it was Milbrey’s and my privilege to have Father John as our houseguest so we could help him with the everyday tasks he could no longer perform on his own.

It was clear to us that he was not getting any better. Finally our “tell it like it is and take no nonsense” nurse and former Senior Warden, Karen Flynn said, “Enough is enough”, and she and Milbrey got Fr. John down to the emergency room at Columbia Memorial Hospital. He was admitted. Tests were performed and a diagnosis of bacterial endocarditis was made. This is a bacterial infection of one or more valves of the heart - a condition which would cause all the symptoms he was experiencing. This disease is treated in two stages. The first is a course of IV antibiotics four times a day for at least 5 weeks, and the second is a determination, after the antibiotics have cleared up the infection, whether there has been damage to the heart valves. If there is no damage then all is well. If there is damage Father John might be a candidate for valve replacement surgery.. He has been in the hospital for over a week now and every time I see him he looks better and better. He tells me that he is feeling better with each passing day. The antibiotics seem to be doing their thing and the healing process has begun, aided in no small part by the prayers, the visits, the cards, and the telephone calls from all of you. Father John has been overwhelmed with your care, your concern and your love for your priest.

It looks like he will be transferred in the next few days to a nursing home/rehab center for at least three or four weeks of continued IV therapy by the on-site trained professionals. In the meantime I will be on call for any pastoral emergencies that might come up, and the vestry is looking for a supply priest for Sundays until Father John returns in the pink of health to resume his duties. Unfortunately, way before Fr. John’s health issues emerged, I contracted to serve as an Interim Priest at St. John’s, Salisbury, CT., until the middle of May while the rector is on a

sabbatical so I cannot help at our parish on Sundays.

I hope this brings you up-to-date. Please be assured that the Parish Wardens will continue to keep you posted at the announcement time on Sundays. Thank you for your love and concern for a courageous and dedicated priest who wishes for nothing more fulfilling than joining once again in mutual ministry with you all.

All best wishes,

Father Walt

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A New Province in North America?

This article has been excerpted from “The Apostle”, the newsletter of the Diocese of Alabama. The author is The Right Reverend Henry Nutt Parsley, Bishop of Alabama.

There has been much in the press recently about the proposal by some groups that have left the Episcopal Church to establish another Anglican Province in North America. Presumably this would parallel the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada, the recognized provinces of the Anglican Communion in North America.

There is an Anglican process for establishing a new province. It involves a recommendation by the Primates’ Meeting and approval by the Anglican Consultative Council. Those pushing for a new province speak of it as requiring only a normal process of application and approval. Some seem to assume that it is practically a fait accompli. What they are not saying is that what is being proposed would constitute a non-geographical province. This has never happened in the history of Anglican Christianity.

To my mind this is a very troublesome idea. One of the distinguishing aspects of the Anglican Communion as it has historically existed has been gracious unity in the midst of diversity. By the grace of God we have been able to embrace a diversity of theological views and ministries in one holy

fellowship centered in God the Holy Trinity, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the book of Common Prayer. To be sure there are corporate boundaries to the spectrum, such as the theology and worship of the prayer Book. But within provinces we have contained a diversity of dioceses, with differing contexts and traditions. Within dioceses we have contained a healthy variety of parishes, with a diversity of liturgical contexts and emphasis. Within parishes we have contained “all sorts and conditions” of people.

The idea of parallel provinces of the Communion sharing the same geography threatens this healthy variety. I believe that it would change Anglican polity at its core. To my knowledge, there has never been an officially recognized parallel provincial jurisdiction. We have been trenchantly faithful to the teaching of the Council of Nicea that dioceses must have geographical integrity with one bishop ordinary for each diocese.

To depart from this ancient practice would badly damage the catholicity of this church. It would undermine the scriptural teaching that “there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all.” It would separate what God has joined together in this remarkable tradition of Anglican Christianity.

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I am the first to say that this Church must contain a full spectrum of views and voices. It is a crying shame that we have allowed some current issues to divide us from one another. Pardon the labels, but conservative voices need liberal and moderate voices and liberal voices need conservative

ones in order to discern the full truth on important matters. As Paul said to the fissionary Corinthians, "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you." All belong to the Body, all are needed.

This is part of the genius of Anglicanism. We pray together. We meet. We follow Christ and receive the same sacraments. We share our stewardship and ministry as one Church. We claim the Book of Common Prayer to be our focus of unity, in prayer, in doctrine, in worship. We are not all alike, but we share in one Lord by whose grace we are saved and made whole.

Yes, we need to respect our differences and guard our unity more effectively. Yes, we need to value all voices more than we have of late. Yes, we need to act together not unilaterally. But we must not allow the division of viewpoints today be institutionalized by the creation of a new, parallel province in this country and Canada. We must learn again to live together with inevitable diversities, making room for one another for the sake of the Gospel.

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We do not need a new province. What we need is a new attitude. Let it be one of mutual respect, patience, and loving-kindness to one another. Let it be one of focusing more on God and less on ourselves. This will glorify Christ and build us into the Church that God needs us to be.

- The Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley

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BIRTHDAY AND MEMORIAL CANDLE FUND

The Birthday Candle Fund was started in 1952 by the late Isabelle Kirkpatrick, who instituted this fund to give members of the congregation an opportunity

to make a gift of thanksgiving to the Church in recognition of God's continuing love and blessings to us. Each of us is invited to add their name to the Birthday List and to make an annual gift. If you wish to be on the Birthday List, please call either Babs Croteau or Bea Baxter and give them your mailing address and the month and date only of your birth (no years please). In return, you will receive a birthday card on your birthday with a donation envelope enclosed, which can either be put in the offering plate or mailed to Beatrice Croteau. If, after two years we have not heard from you we will drop you from the list.

The Memorial Candle Fund was started later so that members could make donations for candles on the Altar and in the Sanctuary in memory of loved ones. On April 7, 1974 Helen Pateman donated a brass Memorial Candlestick in memory of her husband, which was to be lit whenever someone made a donation to the Memorial Candle Fund. On June 15, 1975 the second Memorial Candlestick was given by William Pateman in honor of his mother, Helen. Sometime after this the community expressed a desire to donate to our Candle Fund — we have been known for years as the Church with the Candles. Now anyone who wishes to honor friends or relatives on birthdays or anniversaries, give thanks for special events, or make memorial contributions are welcome to do so. The Memorials or Honors, are printed in the Sunday Leaflet, providing we have received them one week prior to the date wanted. Otherwise the Rector will announce from the Altar. Memorials can be requested for the entire year ahead if you wish - - we aim to please. The Sanctuary Candle was started November 1, 1990 and there is a set charge of \$10.00 for this as the candle is lit for one week, Sunday thru Saturday. Only one person may have this at a time.

The birthdays have been printed in the monthly Messenger for several years now with name, month and date. We continue to send to the former members who are now living in

nursing homes, etc. We do not include the envelope for them, but some donate anyway.

After Mrs. Kirkpatrick retired as chairperson, Carolyn Benton held the title, then Frances Jordan and your present chairperson took over in 1974. Mrs. Kirkpatrick loved her candles and many of the original birthday members were her own friends and family and they still belong. Those of us who have belonged to the Birthday Candle fund since 1952 are very honored to have new members join us in helping to keep our beautiful St. Johns in candles! All donations are accepted with gratitude. If you have any special requests we will try to accommodate you. We will be glad to answer any questions you may have. We thank you for the time you have taken to read this article and look forward to signing up new members.

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Birthday s in
February and March

- February 1 - Clinton Kay, Susan Mollo
- February 2 - Marya Dodd
- February 6 - Harry Koepfel
- February 11 - Melanie Kay
- February 15 - Katelyn Miller
- February 19 - Marilyn Kay
- March 8 - Margaret McClurg Miller

- March 11 - Dora Van Tassel
- March 18 - Kathy Tureck Kay
- March 20 - Jessica Platt

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“The More Things Change...”

At a time when our Episcopal Church and other mainline Christian denominations are under assault from within and without over issues of theology, authority, and sexual morality, it is comforting to recall that such struggles are nothing new. In her compact, readable book, *The Great Emergence* (Baker Books, 2008, 172pp.) Phyllis Tickle puts our present situation in the context of other major eruptions - “rummage sales” - which have swept through the Church every 500 years or so. Each of these, of which the Great Reformation and the Great Schism are the most obvious, produced new variations on Christendom even while forcing older versions to regroup and reform.

Like earlier transformations, the Great Emergence, which began in the 19th Century and accelerated throughout the 10th, was fueled by new technology and political events. Tickle shows how such varied influences as the automobile, contraception, television, and wartime employment of women strained old views of the Church’s authority, leading many toward a broad gauge Christianity that plays up mission and plays down doctrinal distinctions. Tickle sees “the gathering center” as a force that Church leaders must reckon with. “What once was an engaging but innocuous phenomenon no longer is,” she says in conclusion. “The cub has grown into the young lion, and now is the hour of his roaring.”

Western Christians, and Episcopalians in particular, have had a rough ride of later. It was so in Nicea, Chalcedon, and Luther’s Wittenberg and will be so again this summer in Anaheim at General Convention. But Christianity has survived and, Tickle argues,

grown and prospered. It and we will do so again.

- Robert Dodd

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Mark Your Calendars!

Sunday, March 1st, at 2 PM at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany

Albany Via Media and St. Paul's are sponsoring a performance of Ned Rorem's song cycle, **"Evidence of Things Unseen"**, performed by the Washington, D.C. based vocal quartet, WordsandMusic. This afternoon of song features the poetry of writers like Walt Whitman, Carl Sandberg, and Stephen Crane. It is a moving and spiritual celebration of the flow of our lives in all their moods and stages.

The work has been performed by this group to acclaim in several large churches in Washington, D.C. The singers are especially happy to bring the performance to Albany in support of the Via Media movement. The alto is a native of Albany. The soprano, Melissa Coombs, is Marya and Bob Dodd's daughter. Melissa and her family were part of the St. John ITW family for most of 2001.

If you wish to attend this performance contact the Dodds for more information and directions to St. Paul's.



*"Let them ever sing for joy...
that those who love
Thy name may exult in Thee"*

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Lectionary Readings

February - March

- February 15 - **Sixth Sunday After Epiphany**
Psalm 30
2 Kings 5:1-14
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
Mark 1: 40-45
- February 22 - **Last Sunday After Epiphany**
Psalm 50:1-6
2 Kings 2:1-6
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
Mark 9:2-9
- February 25 - **Ash Wednesday**
Psalm 103
Joel 2:1-2,12-17
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
Matthew 6:1-6,16-21
- March 1- **First Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 25:1-9
Genesis 9:8-17
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:9-15
- March 8 - **Second Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 22:22-30
Genesis 17:1-7,15-16
Romans 4:13-25
Mark 8:31-38
- March 15 - **Third Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 19
Exodus 20:1-17
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22
- March 22 - **Fourth Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 107:1-3,17-22
Numbers 21:4-9
Ephesians 2:1-10
John 3: 14-21
- March 29 - **Fifth Sunday in Lent**
Psalm 51:1-13
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Hebrews 5:5-10
John 12:20-33