



A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St John in the Wilderness
Copake Falls NY
November 2020

Covid update for Sunday services

At the vestry meeting on November 13 it was decided to again suspend in-person services due to the current surge in Covid cases in Columbia County. For information on future services, watch for emails from Fr. John Thompson, email him at stjohn@fairpoint.net or call the church at 518-329-3674.

Thoughts from the Wilderness

Sermon for November 8, 2020

Scriptures:

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Psalm 78:1-7

Matthew 25:1-13

Wisdom and knowledge. They are similar but also different. Wisdom involves knowing what knowledge to focus on and how to use it. It often involves knowing something about history and knowing something about human nature.

In the first reading, Joshua, who led the people into the promised land, has the people renew their covenant with God by reviewing the history of God's faithfulness in leading them out of slavery and into the promised land. Knowing their history inspires continued faithfulness to God and wisdom *and* continued resistance to false gods and foolishness.

Or as verse 7 of today's Psalm says, "So that they might put their trust in God, and not forget the deeds of God, but keep his commandments."

Wisdom is also a theme of today's gospel. Jesus tells the parable of 10 bridesmaids – 5 of them wise and 5 of them foolish. The wise ones prepared

by bringing flasks of oil along with their lamps. Wise ones today might be those who prepare for the future by shifting the focus *away* from oil and toward clean energy.

Wisdom: reviews the past and also considers human nature and its capacity for good and evil. First of all we look at ourselves and try to grow in self-awareness, goodness, love and wisdom – with God’s help. And wisdom also looks at these qualities, or the lack thereof, in leaders. By wisely using these criteria we are more likely to choose wise leaders.

Wisdom discerns the difference between propaganda and lies on the one hand and credible sources and reality on the other.

And here is a word from the wisdom book of Ecclesiastes on wisdom:

*The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded
than the shouting of a ruler among fools.
Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
but one bungler destroys much good.*
Eccl. 9:17-18

*In peace,
John+*

Wendy Langlois, Senior Warden

Our Stewardship Drive here at St. John in the Wilderness is underway. This is a “first” for us and for many parishes in our community, that is, having a Stewardship Drive in the midst of a Pandemic. The Covid-19 virus has changed how we go about our everyday lives. I believe things will get better; it looks like there will be an effective vaccine in the not- too- distant future. With caution we’ll be able to return to our new, but normal lives. I’m praying that day comes sooner than later for us all.

Several weeks ago we mailed out our annual Stewardship Letter along with a Pledge Card. We asked for your help by returning that card so that we’d be able to form our 2021 Church Budget. We understand that the Covid-19 Pandemic has caused so much personal & financial hardships in folks’ lives; we are here to help in any way we can. For those who are able to, we ask that you keep our Church of St. John in the Wilderness in your thoughts & prayers and Tithe generously. We’re very appreciative of your gifts.

Even though income may have been down, we have been blessed in so many ways this past year. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank some folks. As many of you know, we’ve been Zooming our Sunday Service. I’d like to thank Charlie Musselman, Elen Freeston, Father John Thompson and Father Walt & Mibs Zellely for bringing the Zoom Sunday Services to us. They navigated & perfected the Zoom experience with both grace & style. I believe

the remote Sunday Services began on Palm Sunday and still continue with the 9 AM Sunday service. Now many of our meetings – Vestry, Wednesday Centering Prayer Group, Book Groups and more – are all Zoomed. Thank you Father John for introducing us to some awesome music during our outdoor Sunday Services. While we longed to hear Edie Hedrick on our church organ, the new music helped lift our spirits. Thank you to the folks who set up chairs, lectern and the sound system for our services out on the lawn behind the Rectory. Since we have come back into the church building, we are blessed to have Edie back with us too! Thank you to Dale & Louise Peterson for their 10 years of service producing our Voice in the Wilderness newsletter. Thank you to the folks who called, shopped and provided emotional support to those staying safe at home.

Thanks to all of our parishioners & friends of St. John in the Wilderness who give of their Time, Talents & Treasure.

When we get towards the end of our Stewardship Drive we usually have a wonderful dinner in Burke Hall. This year will be a little different. We'll be having a Zoom Toast! We are still working on the details but once it's set you all will be the first to know.

“As we remember the blessings we have received and give thanks for them, we must renew our promise to sustain each other and the earth so that the blessings will continue to flow.” (from the book “Holy Currencies” by Eric H.F. Law)

*Peace & Love,
Wendy Langlois*

Stewardship 2021 Pledge Campaign Update

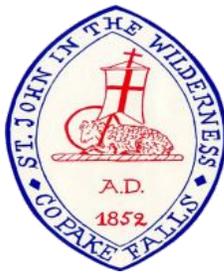
The Stewardship Committee thanks you for your continuing generosity towards the yearly budget of St. John in the Wilderness.

Get out your glass and celebrate a Harvest Toast with us by Zoom on Saturday, November 21 at 5PM to honor the 2021 Pledge Campaign. Fr. John Thompson will lead an opening prayer, followed by a pledge update and a toast to Pledge Campaign 2021.

Lucy Eldridge

Why I pledge

Opening pledge talk by Fr. John Thompson on November 1



I've been asked to say why I pledge to St. John the Wilderness. I've been the rector here for exactly 12 years and 3 months. And it's All Saints Day, which is a good time to remember that we've said our earthly goodbyes to quite a number of saints from St. John in the Wilderness. These are people we hope to see again when we pass on.

We've also had others come and join us, and yet others move away or move on.

But we're still here! Since I've been here St. John's has been a vibrant, active, creative and resilient congregation! We've had to be resilient and creative in new ways this very challenging year of 2020. And we're doing it! *This congregation is inspiring and I'm delighted to be a part of it!*

We're also a socially conscious congregation as manifested in the mission statement – which was part of what drew me here. And it's more important than ever these days to be socially conscious, focused on justice and truth.

Besides all this, this is a beautiful church in a beautiful setting. It's a good place to pray and worship and get close to God.

We all work together with our various talents and gifts to keep St. John's healthy – spiritually, physically and financially.

All of these things and more brought me here and keep me here. As the ordained leader it only makes sense that I pledge in order to contribute to the continued vitality and health of this community. So I pledge.

And I encourage everyone to pledge, and if you have not been harmed in the economic fallout of the pandemic – I encourage you to increase your pledge for 2021.

Thank you all for being part of this community!

Editor Change at A Voice in the Wilderness

Thank you to Dale and Louise Peterson for editing *A Voice in the Wilderness*, this parish newsletter. They will retire as editors after 10 years of good work. They have done a great job! The Petersons will edit the newsletter for one more issue. Welcome and thank you to Jim and Patricia Wann, the new editors of *A Voice in the Wilderness* beginning in 2021! Dale and Louise will assist with the transition.

Happenings in Difficult Times at St. John's

Parishioners continue to move forward in these difficult times with helping hands. This summer saw the creation of "Dinners for Dorothy." Every three days, dinners are cooked and delivered to this longtime member of St. John's who has reached the age of 94. Not only are delicious dinners made for her but also a little social time is created for both the receiver and the giver. Mibs Zelley is spearheading the effort which has included both parishioners and the Copake Falls walking group.

In August, the church was host yet again to the music group, Winds in the Wilderness. The concert, under the direction of Sharon Powers, was held out on the driveway with the church office as a back drop for the musicians. A reservation limit of 50 concert goers was put in place, so that social distancing could be maintained. The concert was quickly sold out! Hats off to Sharon Powers and her musicians for a wonderful outdoor concert.

Throughout the summer, helping hands (literally) brought out chairs for our outdoor Sunday services in the glen behind the Rectory and carried them back to Burke Hall at the end of service. Now that we have moved inside, the altar guild helps out, Jane Peck inserts fresh candles in the chandeliers, Art Eppler lights the chandeliers, Edie Herrick continues as organist, Wendy Langlois, senior warden, prepares the church for new Covid protocols prior to services, Elen Freeston does the technical work for 9AM Sunday Zoom services, etc. Fr. John continues to be our parish priest, celebrating his 12th year with us, helping parishioners and community members in many ways

Lucy Eldridge

Capital Campaign Update

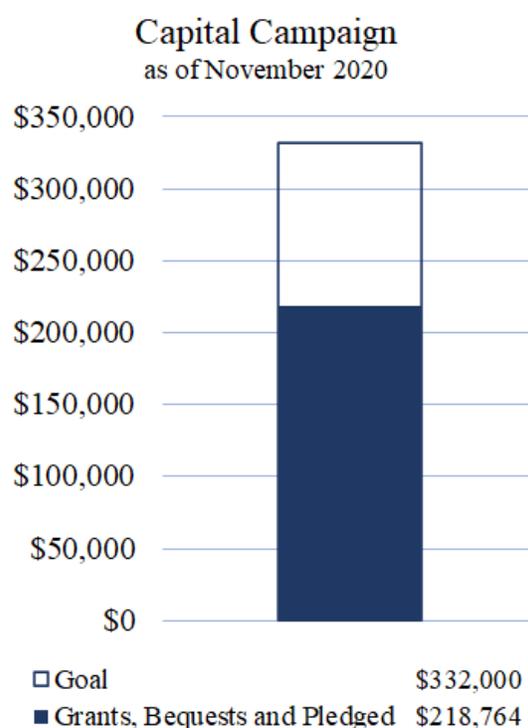
In the May 2020 issue of *A Voice in the Wilderness*, we reported that St. John's Capital Campaign had raised \$212,720, or 64 percent of its goal of \$332,000. We are delighted to let you know that as of November 2020, the total funds raised has climbed to \$218,764 or 66 percent of the goal!

The work of the Capital Campaign Committee proceeds, either virtually or in-person, socially-distanced and masked, in the era of COVID-19. The most recent meeting of the Committee was on Saturday, October 3, 2020. We are pleased to announce that St. John's Vestry member Virginia ("Ginny") Johnson has joined the Capital Campaign Committee as its newest member; welcome aboard, Ginny!

News on foundation funding for the Capital Campaign includes that we have a grant request in to the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation and also that we are in

the process of applying to the William G. Pomeroy Foundation for the renovation of the early 1900s iron and steel fence surrounding the Pomeroy graveyard, and for shoring up the embankment along one side of the fence.

In related news, we are pleased to report that Jack Alvarez, preservation architect of Landmark Consulting, Jamie Purinton, landscape architect, and Chris Knox of Crawford Engineering have made site visits this fall to address and coordinate Campaign projects including Sacristy renovation, accessibility revisions to the church entrance, structural foundation work, and heating systems. Much of this work will be underway in summer 2021.



In the coming days, St. John’s members who have already pledged to the Capital Campaign will be receiving reminders about their pledges for 2020. On behalf of the Committee, we offer our deepest appreciation for the generosity of people who have pledged to the Capital Campaign. For those who have not yet pledged to the [Capital Campaign](#), we invite you to consider doing so, and join with other individuals, local businesses, and not-for-profit organizations that have made investments in the *Capital Campaign for St. John in the Wilderness: Sustaining People, Place, and Peace, 2019 – 2022*.

Brian Boom and Lucy Eldridge, Co-Chairs

Calendar

Times for all events may change due to the current pandemic.

Saturday, November 21, 5:00 pm. Stewardship toast by Zoom.

Sunday, December 6, 12:00 noon - 3:00 pm. Holiday sale. 🎄 Rectory porch.

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Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness (Episcopal)
Copake Falls, New York 12517
The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Wendy Langlois (1/21) Warden
Elen Freeston (1/22) Warden

Vestry

Charley Musselman (1/21)
Peggy Anderson (1/21)
Lucy Eldridge (1/22)
Jane Peck (1/22)
Virginia Johnson (1/23)
Milbrey Zelle (1/23)

Richard Peck, Clerk of the Vestry (1/21)
Karen Flynn, Treasurer

Eucharists

Email stjohnw@fairpoint.net for details of services at this time.

stjohnw.org

518 329-3674

[261 State Route 344](#), PO Box 180, Copake Falls, NY 12517



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