
News from St John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls

St John in the Wilderness Newsletter <newsletter@stjohnw.org>
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Thu, Feb 2, 2017 at 3:37 PM

Welcome!

Hello Dale Peterson. This is the new email edition of A Voice in the Wilderness, the newsletter of the Church of St John in the Wilderness in Copake Falls, New York. We hope you'll enjoy it. Please forward to your friends who care about the church and the Roe Jan area. Here's a [signup](#) link for new subscribers.

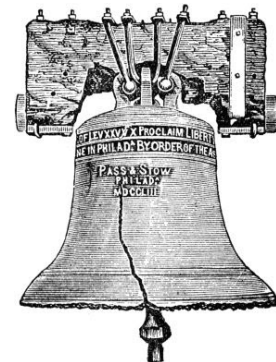
A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls NY
February 2017

Thoughts from the Wilderness

The Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states: *Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.* The phrase *separation of church and state* comes from Thomas Jefferson and we associate it with this clause in the first amendment. I think the vast majority of US citizens including Christians agree with this clause which we may refer to as freedom of religion.

More controversial is the much later Johnson Amendment (a 1954 amendment to the federal tax code not an amendment to the Constitution). The Johnson Amendment states that entities who are exempt from federal income tax cannot: Participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of – or in opposition to – any candidate for public office. (Daily Kos, July 17, 2016). Or they can lose their tax exempt status. It is named after Senator Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, who proposed the bill. Ironically Johnson wasn't even thinking about churches but about tax exempt organizations who politically opposed him in his Senate race. But as churches are tax exempt, it applies to them too.



I understand some (mostly conservative) pastors purposefully violate this amendment by basically endorsing or opposing political candidates from the pulpit and sending their sermons to the IRS. I also understand that they are rarely prosecuted.

But of course if a liberal pastor endorsed or opposed a political candidate from the pulpit he or she would be in violation of this statute as well. I'm open to correction from constitutional lawyers or historians, but it seems to me we need a balance. If this Johnson amendment is done away with completely churches could be fundraising centers for political candidates. On the other hand political candidates are involved with moral and ethical issues which are important to people including Christians. So perhaps it could be amended. I leave this possibility to those more qualified than I.

I bring up these issues because they are hotly debated today by some on the right and the left.

It's background for my concern as a socially conscious Christian leader to respect the law and not endorse or oppose a political candidate and at the same time speak out on issues of justice, peace and love. I will continue to do so based on the Scriptures (and Christian as well as other wisdom through the ages) which are full of not only admonitions to love people personally, but from the Old Testament prophets through Jesus through more recent and contemporary prophets like Martin Luther King Jr. -- we are admonished to promote justice and equality, honesty and peace at every level of society – including, if not especially, in the political powers that be – for they have more power to do good or to do evil in this world.

In peace, John+





Sunday School children participated in the Epiphany pageant on January 8.

From the Desk of the Senior Warden

As many members of our parish know, Church of St. John in the Wilderness, designed by renowned ecclesiastical architect Richard Upjohn, and consecrated in 1852, was [listed](#) on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1995. Twelve years later, St. John was included in an 18-acre National/New York State-designated zone: The Copake Iron Works Historic District.

We know Copake Iron Works and St. John shared an entwined history during the time the Iron Works functioned. A relationship continues to the present day, as evidenced by several of us, currently or in the recent past, serving both on the Vestry of St. John and the Board of Friends of Taconic State Park.



Why this history lesson? Well, there's a new chapter to this story that you might not have heard about. I am speaking of the designation this past autumn of [Copake Iron Works Historic Site as a Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Site](#). This news was covered in *The Columbia Paper* (December 7, 2016) and other media outlets. With this designation and resulting publicity, we can expect more people to visit our beautiful church to learn about its history, and maybe to experience the peace of this sacred place.

St. John's historical context is very much on the Vestry's collective mind in 2017 because this year our church celebrates its 165th anniversary. We believe this year is an appropriate time to stake stock of the stewardship of our remarkable church and parsonage buildings, and to undertake a capital campaign to ensure the future of these structures for ourselves and future generations of parishioners.

The first step in designing a capital campaign is to get an assessment of what building components need attention and to prioritize those items. Towards that end, the Vestry voted unanimously at its January meeting to commission an independent firm, Berkshire Engineering of Lee, MA, to undertake this assessment in partnership with our Building Committee. Marjorie Hoog has taken the lead on this initiative, together with Dale Peterson, Chair of the Building Committee, and in the coming months we should have a

professionally executed engineering assessment of St. John's two historic buildings that should inform St. John's capital campaign decisions for the coming decades. Many thanks to Marjorie, Dale, and others on the Building Committee for leading this effort! Stay tuned for the results....

I first came to St. John at the Christmas Eve service on December 24, 2012. I did not then know anything at all about the Episcopal Church, having grown up Presbyterian. For some reason, that Holy evening, I was powerfully drawn to the beauty and grace of this historic church nestled in the wilderness. I was deeply moved by the service, felt welcomed by the congregation, and knew that night I wanted to make St. John my spiritual home. The point of telling my personal story here is that it was the visual appeal of St. John – the buildings and the site – that first drew me to it. This experience reinforces for me the solid rationale for developing a capital campaign that will sustain our church's property into the future.

I am very humbled to be serving as Senior Warden at St. John this year. If anyone has any suggestions or questions that I might help to answer, please do not hesitate to contact me at brianboom@aol.com or leave a note for me in the Parish Office business mail box.

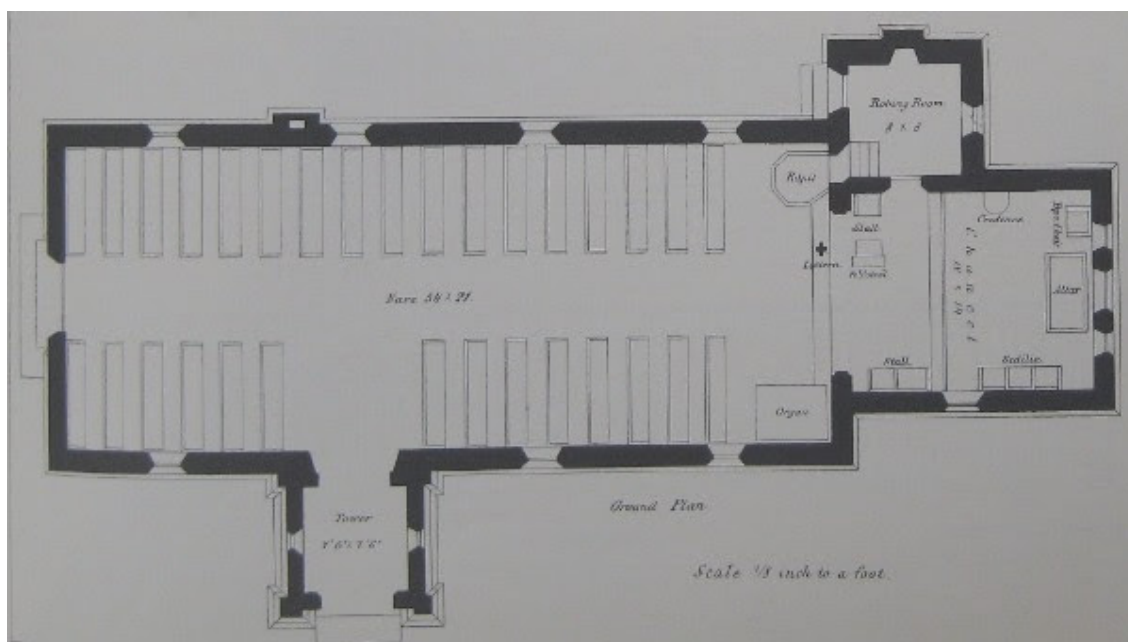
Brian Boom

165th Anniversary News

To begin this article on St. John's 165th Anniversary year of 2017, I thought it might be appropriate to publish again our mission statement; it provides a context for all we strive to do.

Mission Statement of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness

Church of St. John in the Wilderness seeks to live into our Baptismal Covenant by being an inclusive, welcoming and supportive house of worship; a community that ministers to and with children and youth; a church whose doors are open to all our neighbors and which reaches out to serve Christ in all persons; a community that advocates for justice and peace for all, and respects the dignity and worth of every individual; a church which celebrates creation and shows reverence for the beauty that God has given us.



As discussed at Vestry meetings in the fall of 2016 and in the 2016 Annual Report, plans are afoot to celebrate St. John's 165th anniversary in 2017. Commemoration Sunday, June 25th will be the official opening celebration of the anniversary. A summer gala to fund the operating support of the church on Saturday, July 29th, will continue the celebrations for our 165th anniversary.

Along with the above anniversary events (detailed plans to be sent to all this spring), a major capital campaign will be started in 2017 with a public launch on Commemoration Sunday, June 25. A building assessment study of the church campus, begun in 2016, has been led by Marjorie Hoog. The Vestry has retained the services of an engineering firm, Berkshire Engineering, Inc, Lee, Massachusetts, to study the engineering aspects of the church buildings. The entire findings of the building assessment study for the church campus will be reported in a publication this spring; this study will help tell our story to the parish, the community and to granting agencies.

It will no doubt, be a great year full of exciting activities, endeavors, challenges, and lots of hard work! We have many church events already planned as seen on the church calendar. The 165th Anniversary Committee will make further anniversary plans for 2017. St. John's has a compelling mission; to provide a safe, welcoming and beautiful spiritual home for all and at the same time, to forthrightly reach out in significant ways to the community and beyond.

Lucy Eldridge

Church Annual Meeting held on January 15

The church's Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, January 15 in Burke Hall. The [2016 Annual Report](#) was presented and discussed. Catherine Kaputa and Susan Mollo were elected to three year terms on the Vestry, Karen Flynn is the Junior Warden.



Committee to Consider the Country Fair and Auction

For over 50 years St. John's has held its country fair and auction which has traditionally been the major fund raiser for the church. In 2016 many people worked on the event for months and while we had amazing contributions, the results in terms of revenue were disappointing. Some have questioned whether or not to hold the auction and if so, do we make changes. And as of this writing, no one has stepped forward to chair the event.

Additionally 2017 is St. John's 165th anniversary and a committee has been formed to plan and organize events to celebrate this achievement. There will likely be a number of events aimed at both celebration and fund raising.

The vestry has asked me to chair a committee to decide if we should have the Country Fair & Auction this year. And if so, we will need a chair person or persons. If you are interested in being on the committee, please let me know. There is a sign up sheet in the narthex or you can call or text me at [917.608.2165](tel:917.608.2165) or send me an email at mjglantz@earthlink.net

Martha Glantz

Calendar through Easter 2017

February 11, Saturday, "Whole Lot of Love" Valentine's Day Dinner, 4:30-7:00PM, Copake Community Center

February 17, (First Sunday in Lent), Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

February 26, Sunday, Winds in the Wilderness concert, 3PM

March 1, Ash Wednesday, 10AM and 7:30PM services

March (Date TBD), Wednesday, Ecumenical Lenten Soup and Bread Supper and Worship Service, at St. John's, 6:30PM

April 9, Palm Sunday, 8AM and 10AM services

April 13, Maundy Thursday, Eucharist, 7:30PM

April 14, Good Friday, 10AM and 7:30PM services

April 16, Easter Sunday, 8AM and 10AM services

A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness (Episcopal)
Copake Falls, New York 112517
The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Brian Boom (1/18) Warden

Karen Flynn (1/19) Warden

Vestry

Tonya Carter (1/18)

Rebecca Garrard (1/19)

Catherine Kaputa (1/20)

Susan Mollo (1/20)

Jane Shannon (1/19)

Madeleine Tramm (1/18)

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

Louise Peterson, Treasurer (1/19)

Eucharists

Sunday, 8:00 AM (spoken)

Sunday, 10:00 AM (choral)

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