

# A Voice in the Wilderness

The Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY

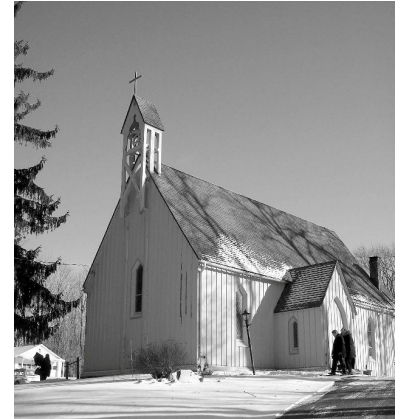
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## Easter, 2010

### Thoughts from the Wilderness

Greetings to members and friends of St. John in the Wilderness, and a blessed Holy Week to everyone.

Let's always remember that God is bigger than any problem we have. The world, our world, the world loved and created by God, continues to have problems of poverty, and injustice, violence and war. These things of course tend to predominate in the news each day. And of course everyone on this earth, even if we're mostly spared from the acute problems just mentioned, has personal issues and problems to deal with.



But when we know that God really is bigger than any problem in the world or in our personal lives, this can be a source of consolation and peace. We don't deny problems. Rather, God helps us put them in perspective and gives us the strength to overcome them and work through them. How? By listening to God in Scripture and in prayer we are encouraged to believe these things and to experience them. Jesus tells us not to be afraid, that he has overcome the world -- meaning he is overcoming what is negative in the world -- often through us. Saint Paul says that when we pray we can be given a peace that passes understanding. So let's spend time with God in these ways -- as I believe many of us do. We're not those who believe that baptism or conversion is all we need. We're all called to a lifetime of growth, and ongoing conversion.

As we pray, read Scripture, worship together, and put our love into action in countless ways, we indeed continue to grow. That growth takes many forms. We grow in trust in God, we grow in wisdom, we grow in inner strength, we grow in peace and freedom from fear, and we grow in joy. In short, we grow in experiencing and manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. That is in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. So let's practice these spiritual disciplines. In a word, let's seek first the reign of God and his righteousness, remembering that what we need will be given to us by God.

As a help in continuing our transformation, I recommend that we each meditate this Holy Week (and beyond) on some few words of our choosing that we find particularly stirring (e.g., a scripture passage, a poem, a short story). Words such as this prayer from the letter to the Ephesians. Ask for God to inspire you as you read it:

“I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21

And so, with a growing awareness of God's love for each of us, we know that God really wants us to enjoy life each day. This week, one concrete way we can do just that is by coming together for our Holy Week commemorations. We will remember and experience God's love in these ways:

On **Maundy Thursday, April 1** we will start at 6 P.M. with a **Seder Meal** led by Jim Hedrick. This meal commemorates the Passover and the Jewish Exodus from slavery in Egypt to freedom and the journey to the Promised Land. This will be followed at 7:30 p.m. with a **Maundy Thursday Eucharist** commemorating the Last Supper when we will eat the bread and drink the cup given to us by Jesus.

On **Good Friday, April 2** at 7 p.m. we will commemorate Jesus's overcoming the brutality of unjust execution and laying down his life in love for us.

On **Easter Sunday, April 4 at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.** we will celebrate our Lord's Resurrection from the dead and God's promise that we too will be raised and even now can begin living in the joy of the Resurrection.

I look forward to seeing you at these commemorations and celebrations of life!

And if that weren't enough, on **Wednesday of Holy Week, March 31 at 3 p.m.** we will continue our **Contemplative Prayer/Divine Reading Group** in Burke Hall. This opportunity for spiritual change is facilitated by me and Lucy Eldridge. It is a meditative approach to scripture and prayer and will continue on Wednesdays beyond Holy Week.

Thank you to all for your efforts to support me and each other, using our God-given gifts for extending the reign of God's love at St. John in the Wilderness and beyond. God and good will win in the end, in our hearts and in the world. So be glad.

In peace,  
John+

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### **Mark Your Calendars!**

Father John has outlined our Holy Week services in his report. In addition, please note the following events, which will occur during the spring and early summer:

- + **March 28 (Palm Sunday)** – St. John's returns to a two-service schedule, with a spoken Eucharist at 8 AM and a choral Eucharist at 10 AM.
- + **April 3 (Saturday)** – **Easter Egg Hunt** starting at 11 AM with pizza at noon. Community welcome!
- + **April 10 (Saturday, 2 PM)** – Fr. Frank Wade, Chaplain to the Episcopal Church's House of Deputies and former rector of St. Alban's Church, Washington, DC, will speak at St. Paul's Church, Albany, on the topic "Communion, Covenant, and Conversation: Being Episcopalian *and* Anglican." This great opportunity to learn about the proposed Anglican covenant is sponsored by St. Paul's and Albany Via Media. For details, speak to Bob or Marya Dodd.

- + **April 17 (Saturday, 8 PM)** – Albany Pro Musica will present Mozart’s *Requiem* and Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms* at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall. Soloists will include soprano Melissa Dodd Coombs. Speak to Marya or Bob Dodd for details.
- + **April 25 (Sunday, 6:30 PM)** – “Sunday Night at the Movies,” in Burke Hall, title to be announced. Dessert at 6:30, film starts at 7 PM.
- + **June 11-13 (Friday to Sunday)** – Diocesan Convention, Camp of the Woods, Speculator, NY  
(Lay Deputies: Marya and Bob Dodd, Madeline Nicholson. Alternates: Kathy and John Haight, Wendy Langlois)
- + **July 10 (Saturday)** – Country Fair and Auction (Chairs: Susan Mollo, Lucy Eldridge), and...
- + **July 11 (Sunday)** – Pork Barbecue.

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### ***Welcome Home!***

Welcome home. What a wonderful phrase to hear as we enter a home after a long absence. Marya Dodd recently led us in Morning Prayer when Fr. John was on retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY. In her homily Marya mentioned the idea of church as our spiritual home. For many of us, Church of St. John in the Wilderness is our spiritual home. We welcome others to this home by conducting our usual church services, opening our church to outside groups as Alcoholics Anonymous, holding church meetings, conducting weddings, memorial services, musical and movie events, presenting dinners to the community such as the recent Valentine’s Day Dinner, and organizing and holding the annual Country Fair and Auction. An added dimension to that sense of home is the newly formed Contemplative Prayer Group, held on Wednesdays at 3PM. Contemplative Prayer or Centering Prayer has been practiced for a long time and has been made popular by such Benedictine monks as Fr. John Main and Fr. John Keating. Perhaps the following quote *Awakening to the Divine Presence* from Keating’s book, The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living, helps describe the essential nature of centering prayer:

*“The ideal disposition for the divine encounter is the gathering together of one’s whole being*

*in silent and alert attentiveness. The practice of interior silence produces gradually what the voice in the vision produced instantly: the capacity to listen. It withdraws the false self from the self-centeredness and allows the true self to emerge into our awareness...the awakening to the divine Presence emerges from what Meister Eckhardt called “the ground of being” –that level of being which in Christ is divine by nature and which in us is divine by participation.”*

Centering Prayer is yet another spiritual practice calling us to our interior spiritual home as well as our physical church, the Church of St. John in the Wilderness. So, for those who come to our church occasionally, come more often, those who rarely come, come more often, and those who come regularly, continue to come! We will heartily welcome home all of you.

Lucy Eldridge, Senior Warden

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### ***Let’s Bridge the Gap***

Our hats off to the contributors to St. John’s **Bridge the Gap Campaign 2010!** We are very

grateful for this support and we thank all the individual donors for their gifts. We continue to work on closing the deficit gap for 2010 (the full 2010 budget deficit totaled \$14,814.; this includes the \$9,000 drop in our investment income). Church of St. John in the Wilderness has received as of March 12<sup>th</sup>, \$5,536 for the campaign. In addition, several parishioners have increased their annual pledges. We have had 18 generous donors to the Campaign. The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) donated to the Campaign a check for \$255; a portion of the money raised from the recent successful Valentine's Day Dinner held at the church.

The **Campaign** continues. In order to bridge the total deficit gap for 2010, we still need to raise \$9,278 to balance the budget. The Vestry is asking for broad participation among the parish with new or additional gifts. We continue to be reluctant to dip into our investment principal in order to meet our financial commitments. Your gifts, large or small, will help pay our expenses including the rector's salary and benefits, church programs, and maintenance of our historic buildings. There are several ways to raise this money;

1. New or additional outright gifts,
  2. End of month household budget surplus donations earmarked for favorite church activities, such as the music program, buildings and grounds, etc. and
  3. Money raised from additional special events.
- The new owners of the Copake Camping Resort in West Copake, Kathy and Gary Reinard (they are also new members of St. John's!) have kindly offered space in their camp store for four Church of St. John holiday weekend bake sales (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day and Columbus Day).

The Vestry is heartened by the increased participation of parish members and friends in our fund raising efforts. We ask you to keep on giving.

We will appreciate your continued financial support to the **Bridge the Gap Campaign 2010**. Your generous gifts will be gratefully received. Help us to walk across our budget bridge to keep our financial house in good order, by **Bridging the Budget Gap**. Our many thanks.

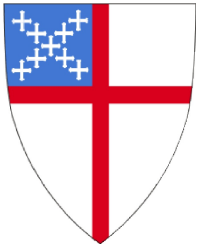
*The Vestry*

**Wilderness Lite!** (Submitted for our enjoyment by Betty Stevens, "World's Greatest Collection of Church Jokes")

Pastor Dixon had a problem, he had to ask the congregation to pledge more money for church repairs than they had anticipated. On his way to the chancel, he asked the organist to be ready to play something suitable for the pledging. At the appropriate time, Pastor Dixon announced, "Brothers and sisters, we are in great difficulty. Our roof repairs have run five thousand dollars over the estimated cost. That means we must raise that amount this morning. Any of you who are willing to increase your pledge, please stand up,"

At that very moment the organist tore into "The Star Spangled Banner." And the whole congregation stood.





## Beyond Copake Falls: News from the Wider Church

As I write this, Bishop Love is on his way to Camp Allen, Texas, for the spring retreat of the House of Bishops (March 19-24). The meeting's theme, "The Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," will focus on contemporary ministerial challenges and opportunities such as the emergent church movement, the "Around One Table" report on Episcopal identity, and the proposed Anglican covenant.

An important item on the House's agenda is a discussion of same gender relationships, based on two papers that express conservative and progressive theological perspectives. The papers come from "Same Sex Relationships in the Life of the Church," a soon to be published study that drew together eight theologians with widely varied backgrounds and views. Bp. Henry Parsley of Alabama, Chair of the House's Theology Committee says of the participants, "We think all voices are included, inasmuch as eight people can include all voices."

This discussion, part of the national Church's ongoing listening program, is timely. On March 17, the Diocese of Los Angeles announced that two women who were elected bishops suffragan in December, 2009, have received consents from majorities of diocesan standing committees and bishops with jurisdiction. The Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce and The Rev. Mary Douglas Glasspool will be consecrated on May 15, with the Presiding Bishop serving as chief consecrator. Not only will they be the first female bishops to serve in the Diocese of Los Angeles, but Bp. Glasspool will be the first openly partnered lesbian bishop in the Episcopal Church.

The Church's endorsement of Bp. Glasspool has delighted LGBTs and their supporters, who see it as the culmination of several decades of halting progress toward full inclusion of "all baptized persons" at every level in the Episcopal Church. It has disappointed the Archbishop of Canterbury, who foresees that it will further complicate already strained relationships within the Anglican Communion. How it will play out within the

Episcopal Church remains to be seen, but there are angry posts on many conservative blogs. One diocese -- South Carolina -- has already made constitutional changes that distance it from the Episcopal Church. Will the consecration of a second homosexual bishop push it to the point of separation?

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For those who have not followed the development of the Anglican covenant, a brief explanation is in order. The 2004 Windsor report, which was inspired by the election and consecration of Bp. V. Gene Robinson in 2003, proposed a covenant as the best way to normalize policies and practices across the Anglican Communion. In its third and final version, published last fall, the covenant consists of three descriptive sections that summarize Anglican beliefs and a proscriptive section that deals with enforcement of what is, in effect, a contract. Section Four outlines how a province that fails to sign the covenant may be demoted within the Communion or even expelled from it. Although Archbishop Williams has insisted that the covenant is not punitive, its fourth section clearly has that potential. It is not surprising that the more democratic and progressive provinces -- Ireland, Scotland, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand among them -- have already expressed misgivings about a document that is clearly intended to restrain them.

*It is interesting to ask how a covenant would have influenced the histories of our Church and the Anglican Communion. Would the Episcopal Church's 1979 Prayer Book and its ordination of women have been impeded or blocked because of disapproval by other provinces? Would provinces like ours have balked at the Communion's admission, in the late 1970's, of several African provinces that accepted polygamy?*

The Anglican covenant is now in the process of adoption. The Episcopal Church will not -- indeed cannot -- either accept or reject it until the next General Convention, but the House of Bishops meeting may provide clues to our Church's posture. Because GC2012's decision may determine whether we remain in the Anglican Communion, leave it, or stay in but with a reduced status, it is

important that all Episcopalians become familiar with the issues that a covenant raises.

Bishop Love and Albany’s Standing Committee have already endorsed the Anglican covenant and will ask this summer’s Diocesan Convention to concur. Acknowledging a need to educate parishioners before then, the Rev. Christopher Brown, Albany’s Canon Theologian, has prepared, and the Diocese of Albany has distributed, a 70 minute DVD about the covenant. This should be a useful starting point for past due discussions in parishes and deaneries.

Albany Via Media will host a discussion of the covenant at St. Paul’s Church, Albany, on April 10, with Father Francis H. Wade as our keynote speaker. Father Frank, who retired after 20 years as Rector of St. Albans, one of the largest parishes in Washington, D.C., is Chaplain to the House of Deputies and just returned from the troubled Diocese of South Carolina, where he addressed AVM’s sister organization, the Episcopal Forum. Please watch St. John’s website for detailed information about what promises to be an exciting, informative meeting.

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The agenda for this spring’s House of Bishops meeting reminds us that the Episcopal Church, like all other mainline churches, is experiencing a period of intense self-examination – a phenomenon that, according to Phyllis Tickle, takes place at roughly 500 year intervals and results in rebirth. It is not a restful time to be Episcopalian and Anglican, but – oh, my! – is it interesting!

Robert T. Dodd

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**St. John’s Annual Green Event: The Country Fair & Auction and Pork Barbecue**

Do good smells from grilled hamburgers, wonderful bargains at the Hidden

Treasures table, luscious goodies at the Gourmet Baked Goods table, fun toys for kids from the Babes in the Wilderness table, cozy items from the The Gift Shop table, handsome artifacts from the Auction, lazy summer reading from the Book table, plants and garden items from the Garden Party table, delicious tasting pork from the Pork Barbecue remind you of summer? Well, summer is right around the corner and that means the Country Fair and Auction on July 10<sup>th</sup> and the Pork Barbecue on July 11<sup>th</sup> are right around the corner as well.

We will need lots of volunteers to help out as always. We will also need lots of your “green” treasures, whether it be furniture, household linens, plants, books, toys, tools, sports equipment, etc., etc. Help us mount a truly “Green Event” by recycling all of these items and contributing them to our Fair. We will begin receiving donations (please, in good condition!) in early June, and sorting will begin soon thereafter. If you need items picked up, please call Susan Mollo (329-0395) or Lucy Eldridge (329-0530) for arrangements.

There will be a raffle again this year. First prize will be a quilt, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize a bird house and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize a granny afghan. We will need to sell lots of raffle tickets.

Fr. John helped out with good weather last year, and he promises to help again this year. The Country Fair and Auction is always lots of fun and lots of hard work: a great summer community event for the Church of St. John’s in the Wilderness!

Susan Mollo, Chair  
Lucy Eldridge, Assistant Chair

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**Building Committee Report - March 2010**

As you are no doubt aware, we recently experienced a failure in the heating system in the church and the 10:00 O’clock service moved to Burke Hall. The failure being “we ran out of oil”! And since there were no activities in the Church for a couple of days, this problem didn’t become apparent until that Sunday. To offset reoccurrence

of this problem, the Vestry agreed to purchase a warning device to alert us of any failures in the church, whether it is a heating problem or power failure, whereas a power failure would also trigger a loss of heat as well. This device is hooked up to our telephone system and if the heat falls below 45 degrees Fahrenheit or if there is a power failure, it will automatically call 3 telephone numbers that would be programmed into this alarm system. It would keep calling these 3 numbers until one of the three acknowledged the call to facilitate whatever action was needed to correct the problem. The alarm system does not come with a monthly fee, the only cost being the initial purchase. Hopefully by the time you are reading this message, it will have been installed.

There are probably several parishioners that never knew the Iseli family (Emil and Lillian) and the important role they played in monetary improvements and additions to our church. The most obvious being our Pipe Organ. Beyond that, they contributed "tens of thousands of dollars" to numerous items needing repairs or improvements. Within the past ten years, a Bronze Plaque mounted on a stone was installed near the small yard lamp just to the left of the church entrance, honoring the Iseli's for all their generous donations. It is now the intent of the Building Committee to relocate this memorial to the spot formerly occupied by a large Oak Tree. In this new location, it can be more readily seen as you enter the church and as a reminder to all how very fortunate we were to break bread with such a generous family.

It was brought to our attention that the portable Handicap ramp was used at the Church with some walk-in traffic experiencing difficulties at the threshold. I would like to point out that the primary purpose/function for which the portable ramp was purchased was to facilitate access to the Church for those who were non-ambulatory in wheelchair, electric carts, etc. or in the case where someone could not navigate steps and in that sense with assistance. It was never intended to take the place of a permanent Handicap ramp, nor should it be

Respectfully,  
Hank Croteau.

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## Episcopal Church Women

Our March 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was attended by 12 members. Rev. Barbara Morgan was able to join us. Jane Peck showed the women a sample of the raffle tickets she will be able to make for us. A;; were very agreeable. We have 3 prizes for the raffle. The first is a Log Cabin Quilt hand made and donated by Pauline Royal. Second is a bird house, hand made and donated by Ralph Platt, and third is a crocheted Grannie Square afghan made and donated by Edie Froggatt.

Dorothy Baker will again be our United Thank Offering (UTO) Chariman. Please bring your UTO boxes and envelopes to the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Those unable to attend the meeting, please bring your box and/or envelope to the church on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

Our next meeting will be by April 6<sup>th</sup>. Future meetings will be May 4 and June 1. All meetings are at 1 PM in Burke Hall.

The women donated \$255.00 to the Bridge the Budget Gap 2010 Campaign.

There are tentative plans for bake sales on Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day and Columbus Day at Copake Camping Resort. The hours would be Saturday from 11 AM to 1 PM. Kathy and Gary Renard, new members of St. John's, are the owners of the campground. Lucy Eldridge is coordinating this project. Please thank Kathy and Gary.

Looking forward to seeing you on April 6<sup>th</sup>! All women are welcome.

Babs Croteau 851-9040,  
babsc@fairpoint.net

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