

# A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness  
Copake Falls, New York  
February 2014

## Thoughts from the Wilderness

Sara Miles, a writer, began a food pantry at her Episcopal Church when they just started giving groceries away as part of a worship service to anyone who came for it, without looking at IDs or income records. She wrote a book about this called, *Take This Bread*. I saw her speak recently and she has a new book just out about taking Ash Wednesday ashes out into the streets and offering them to people – offering to bless people with them. She’s an interesting person. I recently spoke of her in a sermon.

An excerpt from this new book, *City of God: Faith in the Streets* appears in the latest issue of *The Christian Century*. It’s interesting to read Sara’s description of her experience of taking ashes out into the streets of the Mission District in San Francisco (which I visited for the first time this past May) on Ash Wednesday. Sara was a journalist (and an atheist raised by atheists) before she had a conversion at St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco. She is a layperson and now director of ministry at this congregation. The Mission District is an interesting neighborhood. With deep Catholic Christian roots in the Franciscan mission church itself – the oldest building in San Francisco. It is a neighborhood that is “hip” yet also has a lot of poverty. It’s a diverse neighborhood. Perhaps gentrifying in some ways. San Francisco is expensive.

So they had the first outdoor Ash Wednesday procession from Holy Innocents Episcopal Church to a Mission District plaza where they offered ashes in the street. “Hey, did you know today is Ash

Wednesday?” a white hipster shouted into his phone, staring at our procession and trying to snap a picture. ‘No sh\*t!’” (*City of God*). Sara planned this event with a young Episcopal priest from the diocese, Bertie, who is high church and “a former DJ and drummer in the Mission music scene” (*ibid.*). Both Sara and Bertie are serious about their faith and were excited about taking Ash Wednesday to the streets. But they were also somewhat uncomfortable. This was a new thing for both of them. They both lived and worked in the Mission District and were socially conscious and often interacted with nonreligious people. The Christians they were used to seeing out in the street Bertie described this way: “Every day I walk past these fundamentalists screaming: ‘The blood of Jesus is real, you must repent, Jesus loves you.’ All of which I agree with, you know, but...” ‘I know,’ replied Sara” (*ibid.*). Trying to re-

claim what was true in this language was difficult for Sara and Bertie. People who had felt condemned by various denominations for being different didn’t want to hear, “a lot more about wretchedness or Jesus’ blood” (*ibid.*).

Ambivalent they were about so public a display, being out on the streets offering ashes on Ash Wednesday. And yet a message of Ash Wednesday is repentance. Still, there is a perspective and a way of offering the ashes and the gift of repentance that can even be joyful. “I preached about sin because I believed in mercy” writes Sara (*ibid.*). She says repentance is not about feeling bad but about changing. “I experienced Jesus’ unexpected lifting of a burden, the freedom that could flood into my sorry heart



from a larger, sacred heart. It was calling me to get out of myself and into the holy city, into actual relationships with other people and with God” (*ibid.*).

When an apparently homeless man on drugs

came up and urgently asked for a blessing, it “seemed silly” to Sara to worry about how others might see her.

Thank you and peace,

*John+*

## From the desk of the Senior Warden

Greetings parishioners and friends of St. John in the Wilderness. I am excited, honored, and (truth be told) a little intimidated by this new role. I pledge to do my very best to make our church family proud!

As I write my first article for the Voice, I want to take the opportunity to detail some of the important committees which operate within our church community. We are blessed to have so many people who volunteer their time to St. John’s in a variety of ways. Here is a brief description of a few of these committees:

**Stewardship:** Members of the Stewardship Committee are St. John parishioners. We serve primarily on the committee to supplement operating funds for the church and to raise funds for special projects such as the recently completed Bell Tower Project. Annual pledges to the church are a significant part of the operating budget and the committee helps to organize the pledge campaign. All of these needed funds support the church’s mission which is to be “an inclusive, welcoming and supportive house of worship.” Committee members are active in church activities which may or may not raise funds, but which are part of the larger effort of community outreach. The contact person for the Stewardship Committee is Lucy Eldridge at [lucyeldridge@fairpoint.net](mailto:lucyeldridge@fairpoint.net).

**Episcopal Church Women:** ECW is a program of worship, service, and fellowship which deepens the spiritual lives of its members and

provides service through the Church in the parish and the community. All Episcopal women are automatically members of the ECW. The contact person for the ECW is Peggy Anderson.

**Outreach:** The mission of the outreach committee is to provide volunteer support to create partnerships to address a variety of community needs. The committee seeks to inform, inspire and involve everyone within St. John’s and the surrounding communities to be involved in both charity and worship. The contact people are Regina Shea at [soxgr179@gmail.com](mailto:soxgr179@gmail.com) and Rebecca Garrard at [garrar26@gmail.com](mailto:garrar26@gmail.com).

**Building and Grounds:** The buildings and grounds committee strives to make St. John’s an appealing and inviting place for all. This committee is made up of volunteers with a variety of skill sets and backgrounds. Responsibilities include both regular and non-regular maintenance and repair needs of the church properties and occupants. The contact person is Dale Peterson at [petersondale@gmail.com](mailto:petersondale@gmail.com).

These committees survive and thrive due to the hard work and efforts of the members. If you have any interest in serving St. John in the Wilderness by becoming a member of any of these committees, please speak with any of the contacts listed above. I am also happy to field any questions at [garrar26@gmail.com](mailto:garrar26@gmail.com) or (518) 325-1466. May God’s love be with us all!

*Rebecca Garrard*

### A Voice in the Wilderness

Editors: Louise and Dale Peterson

Please send submissions including news of church members to [peterlouise@gmail.com](mailto:peterlouise@gmail.com)

Upcoming issue dates for 2014: April 6, June 29, September 7, November 23

*Please submit reports, articles and news items at least one week prior to the issue date. Thanks!*

## Reflections on Service by Harry Garrett

*To Serve*  
*God – heart, mind, body, and soul*  
*Country – state, city, and township*  
*Family – spouse and children, etc.*  
*Serve with an open loving heart*  
*Serve with your mind on others*  
*Not yourself*

*Serve by bringing joy and peace*  
*From within your soul to others*  
*To serve is better than to receive*  
*Serve by lending a helping hand to others*  
*Serve by praying for comfort and healing to others*  
*There is a multitude of ways to serve*  
*It will bring you Joy and Peace*

Harry Garrett was raised in Philadelphia, hailing from a Quaker family. Harry spent summers in Mt. Washington with his family (his brother Cope and sister in law Anne are members of St. John's along with son Orville). Fortuitously, he met and eventually married Betsy, a native of Mt. Washington. The family stayed on in Mt. Washington where Harry has done tree work for 50+ years. He has served on the Vestry, the Building and Grounds Committee and has sung in the choir. Harry sends out a Motto Calendar every year and the following are fitting messages from this



year's calendar:

“God has broken into revelation through a person who made love and tenderness the supreme qualities of life both in man and God” Rufus M. Jones (1863-1948), founding member of the American Friends Service Committee, and “Just as a flower gives out its fragrance to whomsoever approaches or uses it, so love from within us radiates towards everybody and manifests as spontaneous service,” Swami Ramdas (1884-1963) India.

*Lucy Eldridge*

## Pledge Report

St. John's began its annual pledge campaign for the 2014 budget cycle in mid-fall of 2013 with a pledge letter to the parish written by senior warden Karen Flynn. A stewardship dinner was then held in November. Dinner attendees learned of the progress of the campaign at that point and heard comments by Regina Shea concerning her realization, as a new vestry member, of the importance of pledging. A brief talk by various parishioners at the end of Sunday services featured the ongoing pledge drive. The theme of the drive was that we are doing so well now, think what we could do with more pledged funds! In addition, a 10% increase in the dollar amount was the overall goal of the campaign.

The results of this campaign are very positive with increases in both numbers of pledge units and total dollar amounts. We exceeded the 10% goal increase in the dollar amount, and in fact, increased the pledge amount by 17.8% with an

increase of \$10,617. There were 6 new pledgers amounting to a 13.6% increase. A comparison of the 2013 pledges and 2014 pledges illustrates the positive effect of the campaign:

<b>2013</b>	
Total pledge amount:	\$59,759
Number of pledge units	44
<b>2014</b>	
Total pledge amount	\$70,376
Number of pledge units	50

Our many thanks to all parish members who have so generously contributed to the pledge drive!

*Lucy Eldridge*  
*Chair, Stewardship Committee*

## **Churches Assisting Neighbors (C.A.N.):The Food Pantry**

Most of us have dropped donations of food in the basket next to the Narthex door. These are given to the Roe Jan Food Pantry, which is managed by volunteers from C.A.N. Having worked with several food pantries on Long Island, I wanted to see how things are done in our area. I spoke with Bette Gallup, one of the Pantry's coordinators, and was very impressed by the way this outreach project functions. Your donations are greatly appreciated!

Many of us give generously during the holidays, when the need is most obvious. But whereas holiday giving is tidal, hunger is a constant problem. If each of us brought a small food donation each time we came to church, it would help C.A.N. provide help the year around. Non-perishable items that are always in demand include, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauce, Progresso soups (They can make a meal!), canned fruits and juices (but please, no soda), pasta, rice, toilet paper, and paper towels. We will stay in touch with the Food Pantry and inform you of particular needs as they arise.

Each week, the ushers will bring the St. John food basket to the altar with the offering. Please help us make the ushers' job hard, the good work of the Food Pantry easier!

Thank you.

*Marya Dodd*

## **Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the parish was held on January 19. Elections were held. Lucy Eldridge was elected as Junior Warden. Rebecca Garrard will serve as Senior Warden this year. Brian Boom and Regina Shea were elected to three year terms on the Vestry. Jane Peck was honored for her many years of faithful work as Treasurer. Louise Peterson has agreed to serve as Treasurer and is working with Jane on the transition.

## **Thanks from Jane Peck**

Many thanks to everyone in the parish for your kind words and the lovely plaque given to me at the Annual Meeting. Also, I thank each and everyone of you for all of support through so many years, without your support I would not have been able to serve as your treasurer for 30 plus years. While I may not miss all the hours I have spent at this "job" I am going to miss working with you.

I have every confidence that as I step down as treasurer the new team will be able to carry forward. You are fortunate to have such qualified and dedicated people to proceed forward. Louise Peterson as the new treasurer, Mibs Zellely will assist with depositing all and recording all of the pledges and all income, and David Webb and Martha Glantz will be responsible for the various investments of the Church.

## **Join the choir!**

Our choir director and organist Edie Hedrick invites new members to join the choir. All are welcome. Practice before church begins around 9:15 and then after coffee hour ending by 12:30. Add your voice to the choir!

## **Jack Moody**

Our parishioner Jack Moody recently celebrated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as an Episcopal priest. Here's Jack response to John Thompson's greetings:

*Dear John,*

*Thank you and the people of St. John for your welcome and heartening message. In looking back over the past 60 years of many blessings I am so fortunate that 30 of these years have been graced by being in some way a part of the family of St. John. This family relationship centered in the altar of our parish continues to strengthen and nurture me and warms my heart.*

*With prayers of thanks,*

*Jack*

## Book Review

Aslan, Reza (2013) *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*. New York, Random House.

Reza Aslan came to the study of Jesus by a most unusual route. His “motley family of lukewarm Muslims and exuberant atheists” fled Iran for America in 1979, leaving Islam behind. At age 15, Reza “found Jesus” at an evangelical summer camp in California. Fired with the spirit, he at first tried to convert friends, family and strangers. Then, confronted in college by inconsistencies in the gospel accounts of Jesus, he “angrily discarded [his] faith as if it were a costly forgery.” Today, after two decades of New Testament research, he describes himself as “a more genuinely committed disciple of Jesus of Nazareth than I ever was of Jesus Christ.”

Most of us, used to thinking of “Jesus” and “Christ” as synonyms, may blink at Aslan’s self-description. However, he argues in *Zealot* that it is possible, using the oldest gospels (Mark and Q) and contemporary Hebrew and Roman sources, to describe Jesus and place him in his first century Palestinian context, a time and place of unceasing strife as the Jews struggled against their religious leaders and Roman masters. The Jesus who emerges is very different from the Christ of the creeds. He is a political and social zealot and healer who, perhaps inspired by John the Baptist, took on the religious and political authorities. Like other dissidents, he was charged with sedition, found guilty, and executed. Unlike them, he went beyond death to become the cornerstone of a religion.

Or, arguably, two religions. The most interesting part of *Zealot* is Aslan’s description of the struggle between two early views of Jesus. One, promoted by his brother, James, and the other apostles, was firmly Jewish. Centered on Jerusalem, it emphasized adherence to the Jewish law, practical compassion for the poor, and condemnation of the rich. The other view, preached by the convert Paul, was held by largely gentile, urban communities scattered throughout the Jewish

Diaspora. It posited that salvation requires only belief in Jesus rather than good works or obedience to the Jewish law.

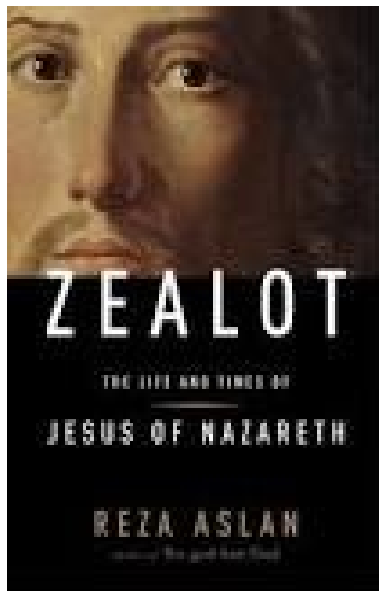
In *Acts of the Apostles*, Luke downplays the tension between James and Paul, but it is obvious in some of Paul’s letters and led to an epic confrontation in Jerusalem in 57 C.E. At that time, Paul was forced to repent of his views and accept James’s authority in a ritual of purification. He left for Rome thereafter, possibly hoping to escape from Jerusalem’s influence. He was frustrated to find that James’s views were well defended by Peter, who had already become established in the Imperial City.

The apostles’ version of Jesus’s life and message was dominant in the middle of the First Century. Although James, the first bishop of Jerusalem, was executed in 62 C.E., his successor bishops, one of them Jesus’s cousin, Simeon, maintained control of the Jerusalem church until 70 C.E.. Then the church, the temple, and the entire city were destroyed by the Romans as revenge for their expulsion in 66 C.E.

After the Jerusalem was destroyed, it fell to Christian groups elsewhere, largely gentiles sympathetic to Paul, to carry Jesus’s message forward, elaborated and packaged more to Paul’s taste than to James’s. How Jesus would view the result, expressed for example in the Nicene Creed, is an intriguing question. Aslan suggests that the Epistle of James offers a glimpse of Jesus’s own view of his life and message. Unfortunately, that book is not included in the standard lectionary and is thus unfamiliar to most Christians.

At the end of *Zealot*, Aslan says that “Jesus of Nazareth – Jesus the *man* – is every bit as compelling, charismatic, and praiseworthy as Jesus the Christ. He is, in short, someone worth believing in.” The author builds a strong case for that opinion in a very readable, provocative book that would make for an exciting book study.

*Bob Dodd*



## Chilton Lenten Series

The Rev. Dr. Bruce Chilton will continue his overview of Christian history during Lent with a series of midday Friday lectures at St. John the Evangelist Church in Barrytown. Hosted by Bard's Institute of Advanced Theology, the series, titled "Christianity in Today's World," will trace the evolution of the Church from the Enlightenment to the period called Post-modern.



Dr. Chilton will speak at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, March 14, 21, and 28, and on April 4 and 11. Each presentation will be preceded by lunch at noon (Optional: Soup, bread, dessert, and beverage for \$6.00) and followed by discussion.

Marya and I have enjoyed Bruce's presentations very much in the past, not least because they draw a very interesting ecumenical audience. If you wish more information about the series and/or would like to ride to St. John's with us, let us know at 325-1492, or "We'll see you in church."

*Bob Dodd*

## Correction

In an article by Bob Dodd in the November 2013 Voice it was incorrectly stated that Bishop Love of the Diocese of Albany is a DEPO Bishop for parishes outside of the Diocese. He is not. Canon Jerry Carroll of the Diocese has requested this correction.

## Events in the Wilderness 2014 Calendar

**February 15**, Saturday,  
“Whole Lot of Love,” Valentine’s Day Dinner  
(ECW) at Copake Community Center, 4:30-7pm

**March 5**, Wednesday  
Ash Wednesday, 10 am and 7:30pm services

**March 9**, Sunday  
1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Lent, ERD (Episcopal Relief and  
Development) Sunday

**April 2**, Wednesday  
Soup and Bread Supper with program, 6:30pm,  
hosted by St. John in the Wilderness

**April 13**, Palm Sunday

**April 17**, Thursday  
Maundy Thursday Eucharist, 7:30pm, preceded  
by a Seder Meal

**April 18**, Friday, Good Friday, 10am and  
7:30pm services

**April 19**, Saturday, Easter Egg Hunt, 10am

**April 20**, Easter, 8am and 10am services

**May 10**, Weedless Gardening Lecture, Friends of  
Taconic State Park & Margaret Roach

**May 17-18**, Sacred Sites Open House Weekend,  
Jazz Vespers, Saturday, 5pm & Community Seed  
Swap, 1-4pm

**May 24**, Saturday  
Driveway Bake Sale, Memorial Day Weekend ,  
St. John’s, 9-11am

**May 25**, Sunday  
Winds in the Wilderness Concert, 3pm

**June 6-8**, Friday – Sunday  
Diocese of Albany Convention, Speculator, NY

**June 7** – Saturday, Wildflower Lecture, Friends of  
Taconic State Park, & Margaret Roach

**June 22** – Sunday, Church Picnic, 11am (celebrating  
Sunday School)

**July 12**, Saturday  
Country Fair & Auction, 10am

**July 13**, Saturday  
Pork Barbecue, 1pm

**July 19**, Saturday  
Fund-raiser, with Winds in the Wilderness  
Concert (complimentary) benefit for Upjohn  
Preservation Fund

**August 9**, Saturday. Taconic Hills Backpack  
fundraiser

**August 16**, Saturday  
Driveway Salad Bar, Copake Falls Day, St.  
John’s, 12 noon  
Jazz Vespers, 4:30pm, Copake Falls Day

**August 20**, Wednesday  
Winds in the Wilderness Concert, 4pm

**August 30**, Saturday  
Driveway Bake Sale, Labor Day Weekend, St.  
John’s, 10am

**October 12**, Sunday  
Harvest Festival, Columbus Day Weekend, 1pm

**November 8**, Saturday  
Stewardship Dinner, Burke Hall, 6pm

**December 7**, Sunday  
Winter Walk, Holiday Bazaar 1-4pm & Salis-  
bury Congregational Handbell Concert, 3:30pm

**December 17**, Wednesday  
Blue Christmas Service, 6pm

**December 24**, Wednesday  
Christmas Eve Service

**December 25**, Thursday  
Christmas Service

**December 28**, Sunday  
Winds in the Wilderness Concert, 3pm

## Weekly events

### Sunday.

8:00 am Spoken Eucharist.  
10:00 am Choral Eucharist.  
Sunday school at 10:00 am.

### Wednesday,

3:00 pm Divine Reading / Contemplative  
Prayer Group.

### **A Voice in the Wilderness**

Newsletter of the  
Church of St. John in the Wilderness  
(Episcopal)  
Copake Falls, New York

The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Rebecca Garrard (2015), Warden

Lucy Eldridge, (16) Warden

#### *Vestry*

Robert Dodd (16) Dale Peterson (15)

Brian Boom (17) Regina Shea (17)

Martha Glantz (16) Jeanne Van Hoesen (15)

Marilyn Kay, Clerk of the Vestry

Louise Peterson, Treasurer

#### *Eucharists*

Sunday, 8:00 AM (spoken)

Sunday, 10:00 AM (choral)

[www.stjohnw.org](http://www.stjohnw.org)

[www.facebook.com/stjohnwilderness](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnwilderness)

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