

A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness
Copake Falls, New York
July 2012



Under the Big Tent St. John in the Wilderness Country Fair and Auction Saturday July 14

It's almost here! Our annual Country Fair and Auction will be held on Saturday, July 14, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, followed on Sunday by our Pig Barbecue at 1:00 pm. These events have for many years been the biggest fund raisers of the year. And they are fun for all concerned and bring many members of the community to our church.

Is it easy? No. The Country Fair and Auction and the Sunday Barbecue takes lots of planning and physical work. It's a great time for all members and friends of St. John in the Wilderness to pitch and contribute to our success.

The preview of auction items starts at 10:00 am Saturday, and the auction, led by

auctioneer Walter Jutkowski, begins at 11:00 am. As always, there will be a wide variety of furniture, tools, antiques & collectibles on the auction block. The country fair features food, baked goods, books and a special garden store, and an opportunity the tour our historic church, built in 1852.



What can you do to help? Bring your truly valuable items to the church for the auction. Call Elen Freeston at 518 329-1401 and ask how you can help on auction day. And encourage your friends and neighbors to come on Saturday for the Auction and Fair and on Sunday for the Barbecue.

See you under the Big Tent!

Thoughts from the Wilderness

As I've said to some, my heartfelt thanks to everyone who came and to each of you who worked hard and creatively together to make our 160th anniversary as a church June 24th (which is the feast day of our patron, St. John the Baptist) a great celebration for all! We started the morning with coffee and treats at the Copake Iron Works historic site. Then we had a wonderful parade with beautiful banners and an excellent bagpiper to the church (St. John in the Wilderness is also a nationally registered historic site). The Rev. Jack Moody led prayers at the graveyard. The celebration continued with a festive Eucharist. The music was wonderful and the church looked beautiful. We were delighted to have as honored guests descendents and relatives of founders and owners of the church and of the iron works. The church was full, with members and friends as well as members of the community joining in the grand celebration! And the weather was great. We have received much feedback on this day -- all of it positive and enthusiastic. Thank you again to everyone for making this day so special. We're blessed, and we celebrated and shared that blessing. Let's remember the joy we shared as we go forward building on a good foundation and excited about the future.

We also had another excellent service of Jazz Vespers on a Saturday evening in June. The music was great! Thank you to all who participated and supported the service, which is a ministry to and of our parish, and to the wider community.

I and our lay delegates attended the



Convention of the Diocese of Albany in June. I want to highlight some positives. There was some good worship with enthusiastic music, as well as healing prayer. And there were some good talks or sermons. For example, the Right Rev. William Godfrey (Bishop of Peru for the past 14 years) gave a good talk on evangelism. The Diocese of Peru has grown from 2 to 40+ churches under his tenure. Bishop Godfrey has a holistic view of the gospel which includes prayer, Christian formation and socially conscious ministries. The Right Rev. Grant LeMarquand, the new Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa (which includes the economically poor countries of Ethiopia and Somalia), and his wife Wendy, a physician (both originally from Canada) spoke with enthusiasm of their very challenging ministry. They are brave souls who will be spending a third of their time traveling to remote outposts and living in tents. They spend the majority of their time in Ethiopia. Somalia has been called the most dangerous country in the world, known for its pirates, and as a place al-Qaeda decided was too dangerous to focus on! +Grant and Wendy are essentially missionaries, sharing the gospel, training priests, and bringing medical and practical care to this area. Please keep them and their good work in your prayers.

The majority of resolutions at the convention (e.g., term limits on a disciplinary board; a parish transferring to its original deanery) were noncontroversial. The Diocese of Albany does have a Canon against clergy officiating at or participating in a, "Celebration or Blessing of a Marriage or any other union except between one man and one woman." There was a resolution which would have allowed clergy to at least attend

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Please send submissions including news of church members to peterstonlouise@gmail.com

Upcoming issues:

2012: *September 16, November 18.*

2013: *January 27.*

Please submit reports, articles and news items two weeks prior to the issue date. Thanks!

such a service for pastoral reasons (the bishop has given permission verbally to individual clergy to attend such services for pastoral reasons). The resolution would have put this in writing. Unfortunately it did not pass. Bob Dodd comments on the other controversial resolutions in his article in this issue. The two that passed (which I voted against) were only nonbinding recommendations or suggestions.

My friends I want you to know that I care for each of you and pray for you daily. Know that

I appreciate the love, warmth, respect, and support that I receive from you.

In peace, John+

P.S.: Our Country Fair and Auction and Pork Barbecue are coming up this July 14th and 15th. As usual, we count on your help and participation so that the work is shared and the weekend is enjoyable for the parish and the wider community. This is our major fund-raising effort of the year. Thank you!

In our September issue we will have a full report on the 160th Anniversary celebration and on the Country Fair, complete with photos. Now as we celebrate our 160 years in Copake Falls, here is a poem from the church archives. It's recent

history – only five decades ago – but is a reminder of our church's place in the Copake Falls community and in the lives of our members and friends.

I Came to A Place

I came to a place, a place in the wood
And there St. John in the Wilderness stood.
Erect and stately amid the trees
She called me inside to fall on my knees.
I wanted to go, since God brought me here,
I wanted to thank Him, while He was near.
In the candle-lit church, I knew one thing,
The word "Wilderness" could have a new ring.

Before it meant "Barren", "Hostile", "Wild",
New it would mean "Fertile", "Friendly", "Mild",
For in the church and all around
Reminder of God's presence and power abound.
Here massive hills all seem to say
My strength is for you, to protect you all day,
And one thinks of Jesus who once allayed fear
By telling Disciples, Fear Not, I am near!

Then there are trees growing out of the sod,
Suggesting the presence and love of God,

As arms from the hemlocks reach out to be kind,
Arms from the Cross come quickly to mind.
And great falls themselves from a rock careen
To fill a deep pool of water so clean
We're reminded Holy Baptism washes away
Guild from our souls that would otherwise stay!

As we walk from the falls toward the Church once
again
The wilderness is not hostile, but kindly to men.
It's the kindness of God coming out of the wood
Which people here share as Christians should!
So, when at God's altar in common we kneel
His presence is unmistakably real,
And he tells us a wilderness is a friendly place,
It even abounds with My glory and grace.
I am so thankful I came to a place in the wood,
For there St. John in the Wilderness stood.

Stanley P. Gladfelter, August 1964

Beyond Copake Falls: A Typical Diocesan Convention

Father John Thompson, Wendy Langlois, Marya, and I attended Albany's 144th Diocesan Convention in Speculator on 8 to 10 June. We Dodds left after the Saturday morning business session, but we enjoyed Bishop David Ball's brief sermon, a fine address on evangelism in Peru by The Right Rev. H. William Godfrey, Bishop of Peru, and a very lively presentation on youth ministry by Rev. Tyler Slade. (We were very sorry to learn that Bp. Ball fell ill thereafter and was hospitalized. We have heard nothing further about his condition.) John+ and Wendy, who stayed for the whole weekend, will say more about other aspects of the Convention. I'll focus on business here.

Although the Diocese advertised this Convention and its focus – evangelism – heavily, only 800 people attended. Thirty of Albany's 138 parishes and missions sent no deputies and were thus voiceless at the business meeting. But the turnout by members and friends of Albany Via Media, most of whom are progressive or moderate, was far worse. Of about 200 whom I e-mailed about their Convention plans, only four responded and two of those said "not going."

The reasons why many mainstream Episcopalians shun Albany's "family reunion" (Bishop Love's term) include its length (three days, including Sunday morning), high cost, a remote location, and workshops and guest speakers (almost never Episcopalians!) that rarely touch on issues important to them. But I believe a major reason why so many avoid Convention is long experience of the frustration of preparing resolutions for the business meeting and seeing them either rewritten by other hands, quashed by means of legislative maneuvers, or simply defeated. Losing to a brick wall year after year, or watching friends do so, shrinks the soul!

We thought 2012 might be different. When *two* resolutions advanced by Albany Via Media supporters were accepted for this summer's Convention, a new Board member chortled, "A first!" Battle-scarred old timers were more cautious, but we too hoped that we had a winner in a modest proposal by The Rev. Ann Gaillard and Michele Raville of St. Luke's, Saranac Lake.

Ann+ and Michele proposed a revision of Albany's Canon 16.1, "Celebration or Blessing of Marriages by Clergy." The canon states that clergy "shall neither officiate at, nor facilitate, *nor participate*" in same sex marriages at any time or in any place. (Italics mine.) When the canon was proposed during the 2008 Convention, one conservative priest, a diocesan insider, commented with obvious pain that the words "nor participate" forbid him from even attending his brother's wedding; he left the Diocese of Albany shortly thereafter. Another priest, a moderate, criticized the canon for continuing Albany's 25-year drift toward "exclusivity and legalism." He too left the Diocese, though he later returned.

Ann+ and Michele proposed to add "in any clerical capacity" after "participate." They recognized that although Bishop Love had waived Canon 16.1 on request for clergy who promised to appear at services in lay clothes and play no clerical role, he is not obliged to grant such exceptions and might choose not to. Another Albany bishop might take the canon at its word and prohibit *all* participation. It seemed obvious that clarification was needed.

Although +Love said at pre-Convention meetings that he feels the revision is unnecessary, he did not indicate that he would oppose it. Albany's Canon Theologian, Archdeacon Christopher Brown+, supported the resolution at first and predicted that it would pass.

Ann+ and Michele were optimistic as Convention began, but they came down to Earth quickly. Bishop Love devoted the last few minutes of his hour-long Friday night address to a forceful, detailed assault on their resolution. He, parliamentarian Charles King+, and Archdeacon Brown+ -- who had changed his mind -- spoke against it at the Saturday business meeting. Despite spirited defense by Rev. Gaillard, Ms. Raville, and several other members of St. Luke's, the resolution was defeated by a show of hands that struck many of us as a close call. The count was swift, its results not reported.



Bp. Love based his opposition to the resolution largely on his perception that “clerical capacity” is hard to define. He argued that a priest or deacon is such “24/7,” whether in costume or not and whether performing clerical functions or not. Thus just being present at a same sex wedding is serving in a “clerical capacity,” unless Bishop Love declares that it isn’t for one cleric at one time. Talk about ambiguity! Unless bishops are not bound by diocesan canons, Bishop Love violates Canon 16.1 when he grants a waiver, and the grantee violates it when he attends.

There is another way to look at Bishop Love’s argument. Clergy *may be* clergy 24/7, as he claims, but they *are* United States citizens 24/7. Does ordination strip them of their right to freedom of assembly and association? In my opinion, even requiring that they *ask* for a waiver of Canon 16.1 implies magisterial power that an Episcopal bishop does not have. I suspect that many priests will bypass the “May I attend?” step and, in the words of the Nike commercial, “Just do it.”

Bishop Love would have been wise to let the resolution pass or even endorse it. Reverend Gaillard and Ms. Raville represent one of four parishes that are now under DEPO, a vehicle that tries to promote reconciliation between parish and bishop. Instead of bending slightly in the interest of

good will, the Bishop responded harshly, displaying just the rigidity and narrow focus that made St. Luke’s, Saranac Lake, and three other parishes seek pastoral support elsewhere.

Two members of the Albany Via Media Board submitted another resolution that almost made it to the floor for discussion. It would have modified Canon 11.8A (Standards for Ordination and Consecration) to acknowledge the Diocese’s obligation to adhere to the Episcopal Church’s anti-discrimination canon when evaluating candidates for ordination. Bishop Love, supported by Charles King+, declared this resolution out of order.

Resolutions to support the Catholic Church’s resistance to elements of the Affordable Care Act and to urge parishes not to support “organizations whose primary function is abortions” were passed on Saturday afternoon. Marya and I would have opposed them, but our votes would have made no difference. We take comfort from the fact that such resolutions have no practical effect beyond the Diocese of Albany and not much influence here.

Robert T. Dodd

ECW

The June meeting of ECW was attended by 5 women and Fr. John. We made tentative plans for the Fall. Our September meeting will be on the 4th at 6:00 pm and is an open house for all Church women. We will have tea sandwiches and coffee and tea. The idea is to introduce ourselves to each other and inspire new attendance, etc. We hope the time will be agreeable to the working women. The women have decided to continue with our support for Samaritans Purse, a Shoebox project for children all over the World and for Christmas Friends our local project for children in the Roe Jan Ecumenical area. The women decided to hold their own Christmas party this year.

Thanks to Betsy Garrett for a successful Bakeless Sale held on June 17th.

Our thanks to Fr. John for his prayers and support.

We would like to hear suggestions from some of the women or all as to time and place of meetings. All suggestions are welcome.

Babs Croteau, President
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851-9040

Events in the Wilderness

Saturday, July 14. Our annual Country Fair and Auction from 10:00 to 3:00 pm

Sunday, July 15, 1:00 pm. Pork Barbecue.

Weekly events

Please check with Father John for changes during the summer.

Tuesday, 7:00 pm. Lectionary Bible Study.

Wednesday, 3:00 pm. Contemplative Prayer Group.

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

The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Elen Freeston, Sr. Warden
Karen Flynn, Jr. Warden

Vestry

Marilyn Kay, Clerk of the Vestry
Jane Peck, Treasurer

Robert Callahan	Dale Peterson
Rebecca Garrard	Jeanne Van Hoesen
Regina Shea	Milbrey Zelle

Eucharists

Sunday, 8:00 AM (spoken)
Sunday, 10:00 AM (choral)

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