

A Voice in the Wilderness

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



Thoughts from the Wilderness

To be sure, kindness is a positive quality. We don't have to be Christian to be kind. But we do need to be kind to be Christian, by any reasonable definition. Kindness is essential to being a decent human being. It is utterly essential to being a Christian since God is love. And since kindness is dead center in Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, *kindness*, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22, 23). And "love is *kind*" (1 Corinthians 13:4). The American Heritage Dictionary defines *kind* as, "Of a friendly, generous, or warm-hearted nature... humane; considerate... forbearing; tolerant."

Kind comes from an Old English word meaning *natural*. This makes sense from a Christian perspective as we're made in God's image and God is kind. So it can be natural for us to be kind. But it also may take a great effort to be kind. Still, whether kindness comes easily ('naturally', e.g., in response to another's warmth) or is hard (requiring effort, e.g., in the face of meanness), God's grace is at its root. It's a paradox that kindness may come naturally and yet requires God's grace. But it's not a contradiction, as "grace builds on nature" in the words of Thomas Aquinas.

We may take kindness for granted (i.e. its importance or our understanding of it). But that can be a problem, for in this world kindness is often not granted or even understood. Kindness is not weakness, though is often mistaken for it. Genuine kindness does not ignore or deny difficulties nor does it enable other's bad or unhealthy behaviors. Though each of these negatives is often mistaken

for kindness. Avoidance may be easier in the short run, but then problems tend to get bigger. Truthfulness must go with kindness.

Besides mistaken ideas of kindness, there are many ways to be overtly (or subtly) *unkind*. Physical violence is obvious. But there is also verbal abuse, which, sadly, is common, and often denied by both the abuser and the (traumatized) abused. And tragically verbal abuse can go on for years because there are no witnesses, or the witnesses are powerless (children, who are traumatized themselves by witnessing or experiencing abuse), or the witnesses are either afraid or *agree* with the abuse.

Another sadly common form of unkindness is simply to ignore or be cold toward someone deserving or in need of our kindness. This also can go on with impunity because ignoring and coldness are unspoken and so less obvious. But they are part of "what we have left undone" (ignoring) or "what we have done" (coldness), according to the Confession in The Book of Common Prayer.

Ethicist Christine Pohl says, "Our strong task orientation stands behind many of our justifications for ruthless behavior and speech. We who value getting things done as quickly as possible and are willing to do whatever it takes are at risk of trampling anyone and anything that gets in our way." This seems a particular risk with us 'can do' Americans. People of faith can also be goal oriented (which of course is good *in combination* with kindness). But in the heat of a disagreement

Christians can “quickly forget that the [good] goals for which we strive must be present in the means we use to achieve them, or else we are likely to miss the goals entirely.” (Pohl, *Recovering Kindness*, p. 10, “The Christian Century,” October 31, 2012). The way we achieve things is at least as important as what we achieve. And indeed many good goals are achieved and good work done at St. John in the Wilderness by gracious and kind members and friends.

Let’s have as a primary goal continued growth in kindness. Let’s slow down, listen to God and be kind. Kindness pays attention to others, respects others, and is helpful to others. And kindness is ‘*warm-hearted*.’ We aren’t going to be perfect and we can’t do it alone. But we don’t have to as kindness is a “fruit of the Spirit” – thus God’s Spirit in us strengthens us to grow in kindness. Thank God.

*In peace,
John+*

Senior Warden’s Report

It has been a very busy and exciting year at St. John’s. The upcoming holiday season will continue to be one of activity and community. We have several events coming up. Thanksgiving activities to support our community, the Copake Falls Winter Walk, the ECW luncheon, a Blue Christmas Service and our Christmas eve choral sing and candlelight service. It is hard to believe that another year is coming to a close.

The pledge cards have gone out and their rapid return will be very helpful to our treasurer’s preparation of the 2013 budget. We will also be convening our annual meeting before we know it, so it would be a good idea for all of us who have to submit annual reports to start that process. We will need two new vestry members and I would encourage all parishioners to consider taking a turn. It is very interesting to learn the inner workings of a parish community. The Vestry meets monthly on

the second Friday at 7:30 pm.

Lest anyone think that I have forgotten that we have not had a Country Fair and Auction wrap up meeting, I have not. The purpose of this particular gathering is the discussion of what worked, what did not, and what additions or suggestions that have come to mind. There will be a meeting sometime in February during coffee hour so “stay tuned”.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support during my tenure as Senior Warden. Every year provides challenges but we are graced to have a community that stays focused on the welfare of the entire community. Happy Holiday Season.

*Elen J. Freeston
Senior Warden*

Portrait of Bob and Marya Dodd

Recently, Marya and Bob Dodd came to lunch at my home, giving me the opportunity to gather information for this portrait. We ended up having a good time conversing about when they first met to what they are up to now. I learned all kinds of things starting with their first meeting (as first graders in an elementary school in Teaneck, NJ; they have known each other ever since) to their current interests and pursuits (active participants in Episcopal church life to studies in Celtic spirituality).

Bob was born in Fordham, NY and Marya in Cincinnati, OH; her parents moved from Ohio to

Spartanburg, SC and then on to Teaneck, NJ. Bob’s family eventually moved to Teaneck as well. Bob pursued an academic life beginning at Cornell as an undergraduate and then at Princeton for a masters and doctorate in geology. Marya attended Douglass College (women’s college of Rutgers University) with a major in microbiology. They were married in 1958. While Bob was a graduate student at Princeton, Marya worked in Princeton’s biology department. After graduation Bob spent 3 ½ years in the Air Force, researching the moon and meteorites at Hanscom Field, Bedford, MA. He then began his teaching career at Stony Brook University where he taught geology and planetary

science from 1965-2000.

Marya worked as church secretary for 20 years at the Presbyterian Church in Port Jefferson where she taught church school, and was a deacon and elder and chair of the building and grounds committee. She then served as Administrative Assistant for the Mt. Sinai Congregational Church. Along the way, they had children, Robert Taylor Dodd III, Melissa Lyn Coombs and Amy Elizabeth Scagtenato. They have 8 grand-children, Robert Joseph, Christopher James, Anthony John, Ryan Jason, Ian Scott, Nathaniel James, Luke Rocco, and Molly Gwen.



both have been very active in Albany Via Media, an organization begun in 2003 to bring progressive ideas and policies to the diocese of Albany.

They both like to travel. Their best trip was a tour with good friends of the “Four Corners” of New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Arizona. Both Dodds love music and were indeed drawn to this area by Tanglewood and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC). Bob likes to garden, read, and write (fiction and non-fiction). Marya too reads a lot, pursuing an interest in theological studies. In fact, Marya is especially interested in Celtic spirituality and would like to present a series at church on that subject. So, perhaps it is fitting to end this portrait with the following Celtic prayer:

*I am bending my knee,
In the eye of the Father who
created me,
In the eye of the Son who
purchased me,
In the eye of the Spirit who
cleansed me,
In Friendship and affection.*

Lucy Eldridge

Retiring in 2000, Bob and Marya moved up to Hillsdale, NY purchasing a home on Deer Track Lane next to on the same road as another Robert Dodd(s)! They soon found St. John’s and have been active members ever since. Both have served on the vestry, sponsored Movie Night at the church, and were editors of the church newsletter *The Voice*, among other activities. Marya was a member of the search committee for a new rector for St. John’s, and traveled out to Tuscaloosa, AL with committee members to meet Fr. John. They

Bells Ring in the Holiday



December 9 will be full of holiday activity in Copake Falls. The Copake Falls Day Committee is holding a Winter Walk, including a Christmas Market at the Roe Jan Historical Society’s museum in the old Methodist Church

At St John in the Wilderness, the Bell Choir from the Congregational Church of Salisbury, CT returns to present its third candlelight concert to benefit the Bell Tower Fund campaign. St. John’s is raising funds to repair the church’s historic Bell Tower designed by famed architect Richard Upjohn in 1852. Many generous individual donors and institutions (including the Roeliff Jansen Historical

Society, Copake Falls Day Committee), and granting agencies (Sacred Sites of the New York State Landmarks Conservancy, the Hudson River Bank & Trust Co. Foundation, the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, and Trinity Church Wall Street) have generously supported the Bell Tower Fund.

Mary Davidson, director of the Salisbury Bell Choir, said that “our bell choir was happy to help out last December and last May and we are delighted to return for our third concert! Our choir members feel very much at home at St.

John's and we are pleased to present this concert to benefit the Bell Tower Fund."

Tickets are suggested donation of \$10 at the door with children 12 and under free. A candlelight reception will follow the concert. Holiday cookies, housed in festive tins and boxes, will be for sale as part of the event.

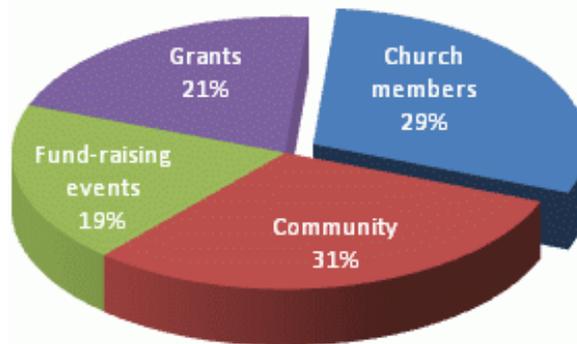
We are also happy that this year our December 9 concert will be a part of the Copake Falls Winter Walk, a community wide celebration in the historic village of Copake Falls..

Bell Tower Report

Progress continues on our Bell Tower project. A contract has now been signed with Aaron Gaylord, the contractor who will execute the preservation plans developed by architect Jack Alvarez of Landmark Consulting. Work will be done in the spring.

The Building Committee under chairman Hank Croteau has met recently to evaluate the condition of our roof. A small piece of plaster recently fell from the ceiling, suggesting some water is leaking through the roof. And several asphalt shingles have become loose and fallen to the ground. As this roof is the fourth roof in almost sixty years, the committee is considering replacement with a more

permanent material. If possible, this work should be done at the same time as the tower restoration. The committee will report its recommendations and the cost of replacement to the Vestry and will work closely with the Stewardship Committee to raise the needed funds for this work.



Bell Tower Fund income sources

To date, an impressive total of \$50,711.62 has been raised for the bell tower project. Of this amount \$14,930.46 has come from members of the church, \$15,555 from members of the community, \$9,726.16 from several fund-raising events (including handbell concerts) and \$10,500 in foundation and state grants.

Beyond Copake Falls: South Carolina Folds Its Hand

When most of South Carolina's delegation, its diocesan included, walked out of General Convention, many of us expected that a Sumter-like eruption would soon follow. Follow it did, but the shot did not come from South Carolina. It came from the Episcopal Church.

On October 10, the Church's 18-member Disciplinary Board for Bishops advised Presiding Bishop Jefferts Schori that it had found South Carolina's Bishop Mark Lawrence had abandoned the Episcopal Church "by an open renunciation of the Discipline of the Church." The Presiding Bishop called + Lawrence on October 15 to tell him that he is *inhibited*: forbidden to act as an ordained person.

Bishop Lawrence has 60 days to answer the charges against him, which include encouraging his diocese to change its canons and constitution to deny its accession to the Episcopal Church and taking legal steps to void the Church's trust relationship with parishes. However, it is most unlikely that he will try to defend his actions. On October 2, the diocesan Standing Committee resolved to disaffiliate from the Episcopal Church at once in the event of any action against Bishop Lawrence or the Diocese. It did so on October 17 and will hold a special diocesan convention at St. Philip's Church, Charleston (pictured), on November 17.

South Carolina was quick to cry foul at the Church’s action against +Lawrence. In an October 20 statement on its website, Kendall Harmon+, its Canon Theologian, wrote, “The Episcopal Church (TEC) has made an attack against our Bishop and Diocese, in the midst of efforts for a negotiated settlement.” He charged that the Church’s leaders have “moved away from the claim of Jesus’ uniqueness, the authority of Holy Scripture, the meaning of marriage and the nature of what it means to be human,” compelling South Carolina “to be more steadfast in our defense of these truths, and more vocal and strong in our opposition to TEC’s disavowal of them.”



against them if their actions are deemed to threaten or challenge the majority view, particularly in regard to polity issues and the control of Church property and assets.”

The views of Canon Harmon and Bishop Love notwithstanding, the mantle of victimhood is a tight fit for +Mark Lawrence. He was not brought to book for his conservative theological views but for *specific actions that violated his vows as a priest and bishop*. He was convicted by his peers. More such -- the House of Bishops -- will almost certainly depose him at its next meeting, in March.

Another conservative-evangelical defender of +Lawrence is Albany’s Bishop William Love, who describes him as “one of the finest and most capable bishops to serve in the House of Bishops in recent history.” (Diocesan Update, October 23) Bp. Love sees the Presiding Bishop’s inhibition of +Lawrence as part of a pattern: “Any action taken by a conservative bishop or diocese to uphold their understanding of Holy Scripture and the traditional teaching, polity and Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, risks having charges brought

Bp. Lawrence, Harmon+, and other leaders of breakaway South Carolina still call themselves “the Diocese,” but they are that no longer.

The *Episcopal* Diocese of South Carolina survives in six to ten strong progressive parishes and in the many individual Episcopalians who will choose to remain in *their* Church. Like loyal members of the continuing dioceses of San Joaquin, Pittsburgh, and Fort Worth, they face the daunting but ennobling task of rebuilding a shattered diocese that a departing bishop has left behind. They deserve our prayers.

Robert Dodd

Book Review

Bart Ehrman (2008): *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend* (Oxford University Press, 304 pp.)

Professor Ehrman, Chairman of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, has written many books on the Bible and early Christian history, including *Jesus: Apocalyptic Prophet of the New Millennium* (1999, Oxford, 273 pp) and *Misquoting Jesus: The Story behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (2005, Harper San Francisco, 242 pp). In the first, he argued that Jesus stood in the line of Old Testament apocalyptic prophets who foresaw an imminent end of history, though they differed on the how and why thereof. In the second,

he showed that “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3) was not “once delivered” but rather passed along after the fashion of the child’s game of telephone, with similarly variable results.

In *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene*, Ehrman uses the New Testament and early Christian documents outside it to sketch the lives, careers, and interactions of three of the most influential figures in the early Church. He shows that although legendary sources vastly outweigh history, they have great value as evidence of the ways that recollections of the first apostles influenced the development of the early Church.

Peter has a starring role in the four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. Although he was almost

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News from the Wilderness

Bishop Love's triannual visit

Our diocesan bishop, William Love, was the celebrant on September 23. Under his hands, Amy Bahr was baptized, Jeanie Van Hoesen was confirmed, and Martha Glantz, Janet Doherty, and Mary Ellen Baker were received into the Episcopal Church. Following the service Bishop Love met with the Vestry.



Harvest Fest

Thanks to the work of Regina Shea and many other volunteers, the Harvest Fest on October 7 was a great success. The event featured many activities including a pumpkin hunt, a magician, games and a special blessing for bikers, hikers and pets.



Wedding. Our new members Peter Krane and Christine Parker were married at St. John in the Wilderness on October 11 at 3:00 in the afternoon. We congratulate them and welcome them to our parish family.

Youth Group. St. John in the Wilderness has joined with Our Lady of Hope in developing a new youth group for local teens. The first event was held at Copake Town Hall on November 4. Contact Mary at 518 329-4711 if you want to help or if you know teens who would like to learn more.

certainly illiterate, he is credited with writing 1 and 2 Peter and several non-canonical documents. Using these sources judiciously, Ehrman pictures Peter as “fickle, impetuous, and vacillating,” more “shifting sand” than rock. Only in his later years, when he co-founded the Church in Jerusalem and became its principal missionary to the Jews, did Peter show

the strength implied by his nickname. Ehrman argues that Peter’s human foibles account for the saint’s great appeal for Christians, most of whom are, like him, well-intentioned but fallible.

Marya and Bob Dodd

Copake Falls Winter Walk Schedule, Sunday December 9

Noon to 2:00	Hot Soup and Gift Shop at the Copake Iron Works
1:00 - 3:00	Holiday Bazaar, Church of St. John in the Wilderness
2:00 – 4:00	Holiday Open House at the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society Gifts, Raffle, Music, Cookies and Santa Claus
3:30 - 4:30	Salisbury Congregational Church Hand Bell Choir Church of St. John in the Wilderness
1:00 - 5:00	Local Artists Exhibit at the Taconic Wayside Inn
1:00 - 4:00	Bicycle Sale at Bash Bish Bicycle
4:30 - 5:00	Christmas Caroling in the Hamlet. Starts at St. John's, Finishes at the RJHS Museum
All Day	Stocking Gifts, Hot Chocolate, and Copake Falls Day t-shirts at the Depot Deli



A Voice in the Wilderness

Editors: Louise and Dale Peterson

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

Upcoming issues:

2013: January 27

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

Events in the Wilderness

Sunday, December 2. 12:30 pm. Episcopal Church Women invite the St John community to a Christmas luncheon at the Pond restaurant in Ancramdale on Route 3.

Sunday, December 9. Copake Falls Winter Walk 3:30 Handbell concert at St. John in the Wilderness See page 7 for full Winter Walk Schedule

Wednesday, December 19. Blue Christmas. 7:00 pm. Parishioners and members of the community are invited for this low-key service

designed for those who may be grieving a loss of some kind or who for whatever reason find Christmas a difficult season.

Monday, December 24. Christmas Eve
7:00 pm. Carols
7:30 pm. Candlelight Eucharist

Tuesday, December 25. Christmas.
10:00 am Eucharist

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.

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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

Robert Callahan Dale Peterson
Rebecca Garrard Jeanne Van Hoesen
Regina Shea Milbrey Zellely
Marilyn Kay, Clerk of the Vestry
Jane Peck, Treasurer

Eucharists

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

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