

# A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness  
Copake Falls, New York  
November 2013

## Advent Thoughts from the Wilderness

In Advent we await the coming of a child. The Divine Son is born into a human family -- the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of Jesus, human and divine. An amazing aspect of God's love for us in Jesus is his vulnerability. It's there from the beginning in the Christ child, as all babies are vulnerable. And the adult Jesus not only loved with power -- doing healings and speaking uncomfortable truths, he also allowed his love to be misinterpreted and in the end resisted to the point of being tortured and killed. In other words, he made himself vulnerable.

We all know babies and children are vulnerable to the power of adults. Luke's gospel tells us that Jesus' parents loved him even if they didn't always understand him. Their love no doubt was empowering to Jesus. It's obvious that all children are vulnerable and need love. It's unfortunately equally obvious that some children are abused and neglected. Let's then continue to be part of the solution and love all the children we encounter -- in our families, in our parish, or anywhere -- for we are all God's children, so from a Christian or spiritual perspective we are all part of the same family.

But we can do more even than love children. We can teach them right from wrong. To be precise, a part of our love for children can include a willingness not only to listen but to learn from them! Jesus tells us to become as children. Some scientists say a sense of right and wrong has been biologically hardwired into us over eons. Others emphasize the importance of nurture in developing

a sense of right and wrong. I suspect nature and nurture are both involved in human moral development. And that even when we know right from wrong, we also need the grace of God to have the strength to do the right.

## Await the celebration

Regardless of how it got there (e.g. wisdom), if we're humble, we can learn from children. To quote Matthew 18, "At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.'" Jesus tells us to change and become like children. Then he repeats this using one adjective in particular -- humble. We're to be humble like a child.

If we are to *be* like children, then we can, and are called to, *learn* from children. That means we are to pay attention to children. It takes humility to believe that we can learn from children, but that makes perfect sense since Jesus calls us to become humble like children.

It's true that children are by definition immature and can be childish or selfish. But many adults are childish or selfish. In addition to being humble like a child, what other qualities that come naturally to children can we observe, learn from and emulate? Two wise women have written

anonymously (read: humbly) of additional childlike qualities for adults to embrace: “simple trust... joy in life, ready laughter, their lack of criticism, their desire [often] to share, and their friendliness.” And how about a sense of wonder!

As we await the celebration of the child Jesus, let’s follow his advice and learn from and then become like children (with God’s help).

Thank you and peace,

*In peace,  
John+*

## Notes from the Senior Warden

Who can believe that the holiday season is nearly upon us and we are about to enter the busiest time of the year. I actually saw a few Christmas decorations on my way into Hudson today!! Egads, I am still picking up the leaves of a maple tree that procrastinated in dropping its bounty into my juniper bushes!

Before we get into the full swing of all our personal and church celebrations, I’d like to pause and thank everyone for another successful year at St. John’s. We are a community of people who just “get things done”. I am always amazed that with “seemingly” little organization, activities come together with relative ease with a group of people who pitch in to meet needs, fill in the gaps, and work together. Our accomplishments for 2013 are too many to innumerate in this article, and at the risk of forgetting some, I won’t even try.

Thanks to those who work in the background making sure that things run smoothly. The unsung heroes of the altar guild and to those who make sure we have supplies, bulletins and posters when we need them. Thank you to the fixers, fund raisers, flower planters, rakers, mowers, bakers, cleaners, garbage collectors,

readers, lectors, altar servers, Sunday school teachers, ushers, singers, computer specialists, bankers, and organizers.

Special thanks and congratulations to Jane Peck who has served as our stalwart treasurer and guided us through financial thick and thin for over 30 years. Jane is taking a much deserved retirement from her unpaid role. Thanks also to Louise Peterson, Mibs Zelle and David Webb who have accepted new roles sharing the treasurer’s duties. Each will be overseeing different aspects of accounts payable, accounts receivable and investment over site. Please welcome them and give them your full support. Another special thanks to Dale and Louise Peterson for keeping the *Voice* an ongoing project.

As I approach my last vestry meeting as Senior Warden, I want to thank Father John, the vestry and the congregation for the honor of letting me serve this year. I appreciate the support and guidance you have afforded me. God bless and Merry Christmas! (My decorations will be going up after I get those pesky leaves cleared and eat my Thanksgiving turkey!)

*Karen Flynn*

## The Episcopal Church of Cuba

Since the victory of the Cuban Revolution in 1959, and the subsequent formation of the Communist Party on the island in 1965, Cuba has not been known for promoting religious freedom. To the contrary, initially the state promoted a policy

encouraging atheism, as evidenced in this quote from the Committees for Defense of the Revolution: “It is not good for your children to go to church.” While it is fair to say that religion was never banned in Cuba, its practice was certainly not encouraged,

### *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 to be announced in 2014

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

and people of faith were not rewarded by the government.

Yet Cuba's discouragement of religious and other freedoms has been loosened in recent years, as evidenced by the visits of Pope John Paul II in 1998 and Pope Benedict XVI in 2011. The Roman Catholic Church estimates that sixty percent of Cubans are Catholic, but that many fewer than five percent of them attend mass regularly. In far fewer numbers, most of all the world's major religions, including Episcopal, are represented on the island to some degree, and visits to Cuba by members of many faith groups are actively taking place now and have been for decades.

Because I travel to Cuba rather frequently for my work as a botanist, I decided on my latest trip, which took place late last month, to make a side trip to look into the situation with The Episcopal Church of Cuba, or the Iglesia Episcopal de Cuba (IEC), as it is known there. Because my visit was in August, when church officials, as most all other Cubans, were on annual holiday, I did not get to meet with any priests associated with the IEC. I did visit the diocese headquarters, talked with the watchman, and took some pictures. I was very impressed with what I saw and learned, and I hope my next trip to Cuba will include a Sunday so I can go to a Eucharist in Havana.

The Episcopal Church of Cuba was established in 1901, and currently has 22 priests, nine parishes, 28 churches, 43 missions, and an estimated 10,000 members. The Episcopal Church in Cuba has a long and complex history, and the current situation is summarized in an article from the Episcopal News Service<sup>1</sup>. The Episcopal Church

of Cuba is led by the Rt. Rev. Griselda Delgado Del Carpio, who has been Bishop since 2010, and picture of her can be found in this ENS article.

The Episcopal Church of Cuba, as with virtually all organizations on the island, has a desperate need for money to repair a decaying infrastructure of its buildings, for supplies for its programs, and Spanish editions of the Bible and The Book of Common Prayer. One great example of a parish that has been helping for years is the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Gainesville, Florida<sup>2</sup>. Efforts to help ameliorate the situation are ongoing through this and other parishes in Florida, and also notably in Canada, but I can say from even my brief visit to Havana last month, they are not enough.

Even simple items are needed; for example, I routinely take ball point pens, printer cartridges, copy paper, computer memory drives, and other miscellaneous office supplies and toiletries to my botanical colleagues at several institutions with which I am collaborating. I would like to do the same for The Episcopal Church of Cuba on my next visit, which will be in late March 2014. In case any parishioners of St. John in the Wilderness would like to contribute office supplies or toiletries that I can deliver to help our fellow Episcopalians in Cuba. I will put a small box for donations in the narthex of our church, which I will collect at noon on March 23.

*Brian Boom, brianboom@aol.com*

1. <http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2012/02/22/new-era-of-freedom-and-expansion-for-cuban-church/>
2. <http://www.holytrinitygnv.org/ministries/justice-compassion/cuba/>

## **Mary Ann Byers**

We were delighted to have Mary Ann Byers, widow of our former rector John R.B. Byers, Jr., and their son Bruce, attend our 10 am service and coffee hour on Sunday, October 20th. Mary Ann had a chance to meet some of our present parishioners, including a number from the time she and Fr. Byers were here. Afterward, a group of us went out for lunch at Four Brothers in Hillsdale where she was able to catch up with old friends.

When Kent and I first came to Church of St. John in the Wilderness in January of 1965, Fr. Byers, was rector, and he served here for 22 years until his retirement in 1985. We have wonderful memories of that time when the rectory was filled to overflowing with the activities of John and Mary Ann, and their three sons and two daughters. In those days, the present parish office did not exist, and the front room of the rectory was Fr. Byer's office as well as the parish office. It, too, was filled to overflowing... and the door was always

open. I marveled that Mary Ann could make order out of what could have been chaos, but she always seem cool, calm and collected.

MA was not what I thought of as the “typical” rector's wife – one who always sat in the first pew, or played the organ, or sang in the choir, or taught Sunday School, or all of the above. She did her own thing, but she was always involved in the church and community. Most notably she was part of the Altar guild where her superior needle point and sewing skills were well utilized. She took an active role in the ECW, helped with Sunday School Christmas pageants. I believe it was she who came up with the idea for our Thanksgiving pie sale where, for a number of years, all the women would meet in Burke Hall to make pies which were sold the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Mary Ann was an avid horsewoman and kept several horses at the Tudge's barn on Rt. 344 right here in Copake Falls. For years she competed in the National Horse Show at Madison Square Garden, and Jean Peck recalls the fun of being all “gussied” up, riding as Mary Ann's passenger in one of the carriage driving competitions in which she participated. She was known to occasionally drive the carriage to shop at the general store in Copake, and on New Years Eve, when there was enough snow on the ground, she would bring out the horse drawn sleigh. Mary Ann and Clare Carmen formed the El Caballo 4H Horse club and taught local children riding skills and horsemanship using their own horses as well as some borrowed from neighboring farms for children who did not own one. Together with some help from the park service they cleared

riding trails in the park and nearby farms. They set up a ring on the grounds of Our Lady of Hope (formerly St. Bridget's) where each year the 4Hrs competed in a horse show. One year she organized a community horse show at a friend's farm in Philmont as a fundraiser for St. John's.

Even those of us who are not “horse people” had great fun helping to run the event. She skied and played tennis, found time to do volunteer work at Columbia Memorial Hospital, and during the Vietnam War she even made candles and collected blankets for our soldiers. There were other things too numerous to list, but mainly she was Fr. Byers' steadfast help mate, a valued member of the community of St. John's, and most important of all was her family, and their time shared together.

This past August, Kent and I enjoyed spending a few days with Mary Ann at her home in Orchard Park, NY. She is a great hostess and showed us many of the historic and interesting sites in her home town of Buffalo where her father and grandfather were prominent businessmen in the grain shipping industry. I was impressed that a gal who had had a rather privileged upbringing in a thriving city could have squeezed her whole family and everything that comes with having five active kids into a comparatively small house in a quiet little town – where she genuinely embraced being a part of this community. But that's Mary Ann. And, we are the richer for having known her.

*Marilyn Kay*



John and Mary Ann Byers

## Portrait of Karen Flynn

Karen Flynn, Senior Warden, hails from Albany, New York. She attended St. Patrick's School straight through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Karen grew up in a big family with eight siblings. After graduation from St. Patrick's, she went to Albany

Medical School of Nursing, and with great good luck, she had a “wrong blind date,” who happened to be Robby Flynn—they married 6 months later in 1977. The Flynns raised two sons, Gavin, 28, (who lives in Chicago and is Human Resource

Manager for Nestle Distribution,) and Kyle, 27 (a Dallas-based pilot at American Airlines who was married this past summer).

Karen began her nursing career at Albany Medical Center, becoming assistant head nurse of the infectious disease unit. In 1979, she began working at Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington where she became head nurse of the Intensive Care Unit, followed by supervisor of the Intensive Care Unit of the Coronary Care Unit until 1986. Then she went part-time when she raised Gavin and Kyle. During the 1980's, she returned to school at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where she received a Bachelors in Nursing, with certification in critical care, and a Masters in Nursing. In 2000, she began to work full time as a staff nurse at Fairview Hospital and five years ago went into nursing administration. Karen is now director of critical care and cardio pulmonary services at Fairview, which is part of Berkshire Medical Systems.

Furthering her nursing education, Karen is now studying for a Masters in Clinical Nurse Leadership (concerning performance improvement) with a goal of earning a doctorate before retirement.



The Flynns moved to Copake Falls in 1978, and began attending St. John's in 1985, when the boys were baptized by Fr. Byers. (Karen remarked that son Gavin was the last baby Fr. Byers and Jane Peck, our treasurer, the first to be baptized).

Active at St. John's, Karen has been Senior Warden four times and has been a member of the choir for many years. In addition, she was co-head with Carol Tschudi of the search committee to bring us Rev. Barbara Morgan and also served on the search committee for Fr. John. Asked about other interests and hobbies, Karen said that she "loves to garden." She also enjoys singing, and enjoyed being a member of a vocal drama society, Fairview Auxiliary Players, participating in summer theatre. She performed the role of Mame in a production of *Mame* at the Mahaiwe Theatre. Both Flynns like to have their large extended family over for fun and good family dinners.

Karen is famous in many ways at St. John's, and notably and happily, for the organization of the parish, she "likes to throw things away." As you can tell by her long career of excellence in nursing, she has earned the reputation, often remarked upon by parishioners, "if I end up in the intensive care unit, I hope Karen will be there for me."

*Lucy Eldridge*

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## **Building Committee notes**

On Saturday, November 9, members of the Building Committee and other church members met to walk through our church and rectory. The group started a needs assessment – what works needs to be done, what is the highest priority and what will the work cost. The committee will be reporting after the holidays on their findings.

## **Pledge drive**

As of November 19, a total of 32 pledges for 2014 have been received for a total of \$53,945.00. Last year we had 44 pledges for a total of \$59,759.00. The Vestry sets the coming year's budget based on pledges received, so it's important to make your pledge now. A pledge card is enclosed and should be sent to the Treasurer at the church or placed in the Sunday offering plate.

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## **Beyond Copake Falls**

In the last *Voice*, I announced two programs of potential interest to parishioners. One, Bruce Chilton's series of talks on the evolution of Christianity from Constantine to Elizabeth I, went

off as scheduled. Like all of Bruce's theological series, this one, held on Fridays from noon to 2 p.m., was fascinating and fun, made more so by a large, lively ecumenical audience. Marya and I can

hardly wait for the Lenten series, which will carry the Christian story forward from Elizabeth's time. We'll let you know when its dates are announced and hope you will join us for five exciting Fridays at St. John the Evangelist in Barrytown.

Another program announced in the September *Voice* misfired. Sponsored by Albany Via Media, it was to be a day long gathering with Father Ken Howard, whose book, *Paradoxy*, sets out a new way to reconcile conservative and progressive streams in modern Christianity. One of several reasons for its postponement is ironic: When Father Howard tried to recruit someone from Albany's diocesan leadership to participate in his program on reaching out to others, he was rebuffed. His experience shows both how badly reconciliation is needed in this diocese and why it remains elusive.

#### Other news:

**DEPO.** A fifth parish, Christ Church, Hudson, has obtained Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight, bringing the number of DEPO parishes to five. Like St. Andrews, Albany, and St. George's, Schenectady, the Hudson parish is affiliated with the Diocese of Central New York and pastored by its bishop, Gladstone (Skip) Adams. Bishop Adams will preach at Hudson's 10:30 service on November 24, helping the parish dedicate a new altar and organ pipes.

A sixth progressive parish, St. Paul's, Albany, has decided after much discussion to forego DEPO for now.

Established in 2004 for conservative parishes in progressive dioceses, DEPO is still used chiefly for that purpose. For example, Bishop Love serves two such parishes in the Diocese of Connecticut. The use of DEPO by progressive parishes is one of two initiatives that sprang from "Wishes and Ways," an Albany Via Media gathering in Saranac Lake, in 2011.

As practiced in the Diocese of Albany, DEPO benefits the bishop as well as congregants

and priests. DEPO parishes agree to pay their full diocesan assessments and to do so monthly. The latter commitment is unique to those five parishes, which account for about 11% of Albany's assessment income. Their full payment helps compensate for underpayment by many other parishes for reasons of need or conscience.

Will more parishes request DEPO in the Diocese of Albany? I doubt it. The commitment to pay in full and up front will stop many parishes. Lack of a common point of view -- the sticking point at St. Paul's, Albany -- will discourage others.

**Albany Via Media.** AVM held its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting at St. Paul's Albany on November 9. Attendees were few because of little and late advertising and the absence of an announced program or agenda. However a dozen of us spent almost three hours in a wide-ranging discussion of AVM's future.

DEPO has changed the political landscape in the Diocese of Albany. Because the DEPO parishes get episcopal support from elsewhere, they have little motivation to press for it from Bp. Love. Hence, there is a risk that those who are in the DEPO lifeboat will ignore other progressive and moderate Episcopalians who are not. How to serve those people, who include many of us in St. John's, will be a challenge for AVM going forward.

A new leadership team will face that challenge and others as AVM continues to inform and support mainstream Episcopalians in the conservative Diocese of Albany. After the Annual Meeting on the 9th, the Board of Directors met briefly to elect officers for 2014. They are Claire "Toby" Touby, President (St. Luke's, Saranac Lake); Jeremy Feedore, Vice President (St. Paul's, Albany); and Keith St. John, Secretary (Cathedral of All Saints). John White (St. Andrew's, Albany) will continue to serve as Treasurer.

*Bob Dodd*

## Condolences

We express condolences to Christine Parker, Peter Krane and Christine's mother Ruth on the death of Gordon Parker, Christine's father.

We express condolences to Lucy Eldridge and family on the death of Susan (Reeder) Meyers, Lucy's sister.

*Rest eternal grant unto them O Lord; let light perpetual shine upon them. Almighty God, Father of all mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who mourn; that, casting all their care on you, they may know the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP pg. 505)*

## Events in the Wilderness

### Thanksgiving Baskets:

The Roe Jan congregations (we're one) request volunteers Friday, November 22, 6 pm for sorting food, and Saturday, November 23 9 am to make Thanksgiving Baskets. Both of these take place at the Hillsdale Firehouse. You may also bring non-perishable food items to donate either day or drop them off in advance at the Hillsdale United Methodist Church. This is a great opportunity to help those in need! Questions? Call Betty Gallup at 325-4986.

### Thanksgiving Day Service:

All are invited to a Thanksgiving morning (November 28, 10:00 am) worship service at Church of Christ, Mt. Washington (116 East Street South Egremont, MA 01258-0000). The Rev. Philip Newell and the Rev. John Thompson will be sharing the officiating. We'll be joyfully thanking God in words and music for his many blessings! Music will be by Rachel Cole.

### Thanksgiving Dinner:

November 28, Noon-2:00 pm at the Copake Town Park Building. Cost: FREE. If you wish to donate to this event or volunteer, please call: John at 329-7533. Sponsored by West Copake Reformed Church with support from area churches.

### Christmas Friends:

Meeting on Monday Dec. 2nd at 7 pm at the Hillsdale Methodist Church. At this meeting we will arrange for 'adoption' of Christmas Friends children. Last year Christmas Friends provided gifts to 216 children in 82 households. Distribution will be on Dec 21st at 11 a.m. at Hillsdale Methodist Church in conjunction with the **Annual Christmas Baskets** being distributed from Our Lady of Hope. For more information please contact Charlotte Shutts: 325-3637 or email [cshutts@taconic.net](mailto:cshutts@taconic.net)

### Hope in the Face of Climate Change: Videos from the May 2013 Conference:

On Saturday, December 7 at 2:00 pm in Burke Hall a follow-up is planned with Dr. Brian Boom on his recent address to the congregation on the important topic of Sustaining Hope in the Face of Climate Change. It will be about an hour of videos and discussion. There will be snacks. Come and learn more!

**Winter Walk** sponsored by the Copake Falls Day Committee, Sunday December 8

#### Events at St. John's:

**Holiday Bazaar**, 1:00 – 4:00

**Camphill Village Ensemble concert** 3:30 – 4:30

**Christmas caroling** 4:30 – 5:30

### Parish Christmas Luncheon:

The Episcopal Church Women will host an All Adult Parish Luncheon Sunday, December 15, 1:00 pm at the Pond Restaurant in Ancramdale.

### Blue Christmas Service:

Wednesday December 18, 5:30 pm. Parishioners and members of the community are invited to this low-key service designed for those who may be grieving a loss or who for whatever reason find Christmas a difficult season, and anyone seeking a quiet respite from the hustle and bustle. Come, and bring your friends.

### Christmas Eve Candlelight Service:

Tuesday December 24, 7:00 pm Carols, 7:30 pm Service.

**Christmas Day Service:** 10:00 am

**Winds in the Wilderness**, Sunday December 28, 3:00 pm

**Parish Annual Meeting.** January 19, 2014. There will be one service on this date, followed by the annual meeting.

## 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

Karen Flynn, Sr. Warden  
Rebecca Garrard, Jr. Warden

#### *Vestry*

Robert Dodd Dale Peterson  
Martha Glantz Regina Shea  
Kent Kay Jeanne Van Hoesen  
Marilyn Kay, Clerk of the Vestry  
Jane Peck, Treasurer

#### *Eucharists*

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

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518 329-3674

261 State Route 344, P.O. Box 180  
Copake Falls, NY 12517-0180

