

A Voice in the Wilderness



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

Thoughts from the Wilderness

As many of you know I was raised Roman Catholic. I attended a Jesuit high school at which I received a good education. The new Pope, Francis is a Jesuit. And I'm happy to show that I have a (Jesuit) connection with him. I'm grateful to have been called to make a home in the Episcopal Church. In my view the Episcopal Church is less authoritarian and has a more egalitarian understanding of women, for two positives. But no church is perfect, Episcopal or Catholic or any other. I'm delighted with an article about the Pope in the *New York Times* including an excerpt from the Jesuit magazine *America*. The Pope has so many good things to say in this recent interview that I'll refer to it extensively.

Pope Francis' humility is striking. He has moved into simpler quarters. He admits past mistakes. He says for example, that he was made superior of the Jesuit province of Argentina at the "crazy" young age of 36, and that, "my authoritarian and quick manner of making decisions led me to have serious problems and to be accused of being ultraconservative... But I've never been a right-winger. It was my authoritarian way of making decisions that created problems." He says when asked, Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio (his birth name)? "I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner."



Summer Shea rings the church bell

He recently, famously said regarding homosexuality, "Who am I to judge?" Some thought he was referring only to gay priests, but now he makes clear he's speaking of gays and lesbians generally. "A person once asked me, in a provocative manner, if I approved of homosexuality. I replied with another question: 'Tell me: when God looks at a gay person, does he endorse the existence of this person with love, or reject and condemn this person?' We must always consider the person."

In answer to the question, What kind of church do you dream of? He said, "We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage and the use of contraceptive methods. This is not possible. I have not spoken much about these things... But when we speak about these issues, we have to talk about them in a context... it is not necessary to talk about these issues all the time." (It's true he also said, "The teaching of the church, for that matter, is clear and I am a son of the church").

The Pope may not be on the cusp of changing Roman Catholic teaching on contraception, abortion, or women's ordination. However, regarding women *and their authority in top level church decisions(!)* he says this, "The feminine genius is needed wherever we make important decisions. The challenge today is this: to think about the specific place of women also in

those places where the authority of the church is exercised for various areas of the church.”

The interview also reveals that Francis, “loves Mozart and Dostoevsky and his grandmother, and [his] favorite film is Fellini’s ‘La Strada.’”

Regarding making mistakes he says, “If one has the answers to all the questions — that is the proof that God is not with him. It means that he is a false prophet using religion for himself. The great leaders of the people of God, like Moses, have always left room for doubt. You must leave room for the Lord, not for our certainties; we must be humble... if [a Christian] wants everything clear and safe, then he will find nothing. Tradition and memory of the past must help us to have the courage to open up new areas to God.”

I see a new Pope who is humble, open to human creativity and to diversity. He reminds me of words I read recently in the Episcopal daily meditation booklet, *Forward Day by Day*: Vincent van Gogh said, “Painting is faith.” Michelangelo said, “Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.” The writer adds, “Faith is not simply personal beliefs, but the ability – like an artist’s – to imagine new possibilities for ourselves and the world, and to trust that God is at work.” This is what I see the new Pope doing, and I am inspired.

Thank you and peace,

*In peace,
John+*

Notes from the Senior Warden

It’s hard to believe that the summer whirlwind is over and fall is truly just days away! We have certainly had an active and productive summer full of milestones and events. Topping our list of events is of course our successful country fair and auction. All hands were on deck to man the multiple tables and stations. Despite the amount of work and sheer exhaustion at the end of the weekend, I am always amazed at the spirit of cooperation and camaraderie that make the event work.

The bell tower project was completed on time and on budget. Kudos to building and stewardship committee members who were involved in multiple planning and informational meetings, grant writing and fund raising activities. As this project comes to a close the stewardship committee is already planning a fund to deal with many of the other maintenance needs of the church complex. We already know that the church roof is the next big project that needs to be addressed.

Congregation and church property were very involved in the festivities surrounding Copake Falls Day in August. This is of course very appropriate given the close links between our church history and the founding of Copake Falls. This event gives back to the community and also brings many people on to the church grounds. We always hope

that some of those visitors will decide to visit us and possibly consider joining the congregation.

The fall harvest festival is planned for Columbus Day weekend. Regina Shea and Tonya Carter are working with Rebecca Garrard and have a full schedule of family entertainment planned. The event was quite successful last year and they are hoping to build on that momentum to keep this festival on our annual event calendar. There are plenty of opportunities to support this event, so please check in with Regina if you would like to volunteer.

As we begin our usual fall routines it’s nice to see some of our usual parishioners back from vacations and travel. We wish our summer members a fond wish for a productive and healthy fall and winter and look forward to seeing them again in the spring if not sooner.

The vestry thanks each member of the congregation for their service throughout the year and especially during our busiest months. There are many unsung heroes that are continuously at work behind the scenes keeping our church community running smoothly. It takes a community to run a church and we do it well!

Karen Flynn

Sunday School News

Sunday School has officially started up again, very informally. I would love to hear from parents whose children will be attending on a regular basis. The curriculum will be Weaving God's Promises.

In the past, traditionally, there has been a different story or topic each Sunday. Because "the times, they are a changing" so will our format change a bit too. Rotation Lesson Planning lets you focus on one story for 3 weeks; each week it is taught differently – as a story, then a video, then a game or acting out a drama. By the third Sunday the children should be able to tell me about the story. Fr. John and I are also talking about trying a Children's Service at a 10 am service. This could be once a month or every couple of months.

We had a good summer. We continued Sunday School throughout the summer months trying to be out of doors as much as possible. We did get a few things to grow in the garden. We

learned a lot about what to do and what not to do next year. We knew there would be a learning curve. We did wage war with a little animal that kept eating our veggies. That is a very frustrating thing when you have nurtured the plants from seed!

Regina Shea did an outstanding job between caring for the garden and working at the Farmers Market in Copake every Saturday. Our thanks to Bob Callahan for the raised beds he built for us, for all the hard work and all the watering of our little plants. We appreciate everyone who lent a hand creating our garden space!

I am always grateful for all the support given to the Sunday School program and its children. Please spread the word to local friends, family and neighbors about our Sunday School because we would always love to see more children and their families.

Love, Wendy

Harvest Fest

On Sunday October 13 we will host the second annual Harvest Festival. The Harvest Fest starts at 1:00 pm with a blessing of hikers, bikers and pets – and also the Church's recently restored bell tower. All are welcome to help ring the bell at 1:00.

Throughout the afternoon there will be variety of fun things for the whole family, including hayrides, chinese auction, vendors and more. There will be pony rides and farm animals. Bee the Clown and singer Tom Hooker Hanford will provide entertainment. Children of all ages

are invited to participate in our fall-themed scavenger hunt, including prizes for every participant. If you work up a thirst or an appetite we will have great food and drinks available for purchase.

St John's Harvest Fest is free to attend and everyone is welcome – even your pets! Rain or shine it will be fun for all. All proceeds will benefit the Church's children's programs.

Regina Shea

Beyond Copake Falls

As cool nights and scattered orange-tipped maples announce that summer is yielding to fall, local religious organizations are announcing their cold season programs. Here are two events that may interest you.

IAT Lecture Series

Father Bruce Chilton of Bard College's Institute for Advanced Theology will present five lectures on "Christianity as World Religion, from Constantine the Great to Elizabeth I" on Friday, October 4, and four subsequent Fridays in October and early November. The ground to be covered by

Fr. Chilton is evident from a brief description provided by IAT:

“When the Roman Empire changed its view of Christianity, from persecuting it as a ‘superstitio’ to accepting that it was a ‘religio,’ the Church acclaimed Constantine as an agent of God. He returned the favor by a steady increase of privileges for Catholics, until the Empire became a Christian preserve. Once the connection between Church and State was forged, however, it provoked a series of unintended consequences that included the Reformation. That process saw the emergence of a Protestant empire at odds with Catholic claimants to the mantle of Constantine.”



Fr. Chilton’s lectures will be held in his parish, the Church of St. John Evangelist at 1114 River Road, Barrytown, NY. His presentation will begin at 12:30 p.m. and will be followed by discussion. Lunch of soup, bread, dessert, and beverage will be offered at noon for \$6.00.

If you have questions, please call Theresa Desmond at 845-758-7279.

Bruce Chilton, a noted scholar of early Christianity and Judaism, is Bernard Iddings Bell Professor of Religion at Bard and was previously Lillian Claus Professor of New Testament at Yale. He holds a degree in New Testament from St. John’s College, Cambridge, and has held other academic positions at the Universities of Cambridge, Sheffield, and Münster. His well received books include *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*.

Marya and I have attended earlier IAT lecture series. We have found Fr. Chilton to be a compelling speaker and have enjoyed meeting the diverse and interesting folk who gather to hear him. Highly recommended!

Albany Via Media to Host Fr. Ken Howard

On Saturday, 19 October, AVM will sponsor a day-long (9 to 4) meeting at St. George’s Episcopal Church, Schenectady, on the subject: *Paradoxy: Learning To Be In Community With Those With Whom We Differ*. The featured speaker and discussion leader will be Father Ken Howard, author of the well-received 2010 book, *Paradoxy: Creating Christian Community Beyond Us and Them*. The cost of the meeting is \$49.

Fr. Howard, of mixed Jewish and Christian background (as was St. Paul!), holds a Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Theological Seminary, with honors in Church History for his studies of the Jewish origins of early Christianity. He has been an ordained Episcopal priest since 1993 and has focused his ministry on church planting, congregational vitality, and conflict resolution. He founded St. Nicholas Church in



Germantown, MD, in 1995. As its first and present rector, he shepherded the parish through a period of explosive growth during which it purchased and broke ground for, and built, its own church.

Prior to Howard’s ordination, he was a consultant on team-building, organizational development, and strategic planning. He now speaks nationwide on subjects drawn from *Paradoxy* and advises congregations and dioceses on conflict resolution, vision, and direction. He leads the Paradoxy Center for Incarnational Christianity at St. Nicholas Church. In 2011, he co-founded The Spiritual Formation Centers of Greater Washington, a network of non-profit multi-church spiritual formation and training centers whose intent is "to provide consultation, coaching, and capacity building in individual, group, and organizational spiritual development for churches and other religious organizations."

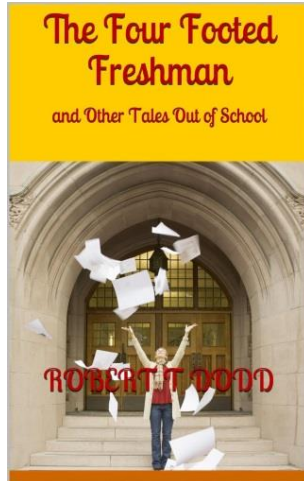
Fr. Howard’s reputation as a lively, persuasive speaker promises a rewarding day at St. George’s – a jewel-like historic church that is, itself, well worth a visit!

Bob Dodd

Briefly noted...

In July, I e-published a collection of short stories that poke fun at a mythical state university “west of the Alleghenies.” Three of them, written when my own state university – Stony Brook– seemed to need some humor, appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* quite a long time ago.

To find a description of the book and a sample chapter, go to amazon.com and search on “Robert T. Dodd.” Doing so will cost you nothing but a few



keystrokes. Buying the book will cost little more: \$1.99.

If you are interested but not e-Kindled, fear not: Searching amazon.com on “Kindle Apps” will direct you to a free download for your PC, i-pad, Nook, or whatever. With it, you’ll have access to *all* of Kindle’s offerings, many of which are even cheaper than mine!

Bob Dodd

Winds in the Wilderness

Mark the date for the upcoming Winds in the Wilderness concert on Sunday, October 20, 2013 at 3:00 pm.

The Faure 'Pavanne', here arranged beautifully for flute, oboe, guitar is a loving tune familiar to many. The Telemann Trio Sonata in E Minor, our selection from the Baroque period, is particularly well-suited for our instruments. The driving rhythms in two pieces from 'Cinco Piezas' will bring you close to the heartbeat and genius of Piazzolla.

As a trio we are playing the Adagio from Mozart's piano sonata K570, followed by a piece for solo guitar by the Spanish composer, Torroba. 'Suite for flute and oboe' is a duet by the modern American composer Ulysses Kay. We have the privilege of hearing John Myers as composer, as well a guitar player, in a piece for oboe and guitar and, as always, we conclude with an something noisy in your pocket- very noisy in fact- because 'Noites Cariocas' takes us right into the streets of Rio where anything goes.

Sharon Powers

Renowned Musicians - Exquisite Acoustics - Landmark Architecture


WINDS IN THE WILDERNESS CONCERTS

Performing at:
Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY

Sunday, October 20, 2013

3:00 pm


featuring:



Sharon Powers, flute



Judith Dansker, oboe



John Myers, guitar

Playing music by :

Faure, Telemann, Piazzolla, Mozart, Torroba, Kay, Myers

Sharon Powers, Artistic Director

The Church of St. John in the Wilderness, located at 261 Route 344, Copake Falls, NY, is a landmark church designed in the Gothic Revival style by the founder of the American Institute of Architects, Richard Upjohn in 1852. Suggested donation of \$15 at the door, children free. Join us for refreshments following the concert.

For information: (518) 329-1577, www.stjohnw.org

"This event is made possible (in part) with public funds from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts, administered through the Community Arts Grants Program by the Columbia County Council on the Arts."

Events in the Wilderness

Sunday, October 13. 1:00 – 5:00 pm. Harvest Fest.

Sunday, October 20, 3:00 pm. Winds in the Wilderness concert

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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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)

www.stjohnw.org
www.facebook.com/stjohnwilderness
518 329-3674

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