

The Messenger

The Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, NY
A Non-Network Parish in the Diocese of Albany

November 2008



Thoughts from the Wilderness

Hello again,

I continue to thank God for the blessing of being among the gracious people of St. John in the Wilderness in this beautiful area. Nature is one of the primary ways in which God reveals himself to us. Nature's beauty, its great power, and the abundant provision we derive from it, from the earth – each manifest something of God to us, As I write it's a gray November day, with fallen leaves and chilly breezes. Even this time of year, with the fall colors passed and the winter snows to come – a middle period where it seems not quite fall and not winter yet – even now, nature has gifts for us. A couple days ago I drove to the third trail head on Sunset Rock Road and took the .6 mile trail to Sunset Rock. It was windy and a bit cold, but what a view! The fact that most of the leaves were off the trees made the view even better. A blue jay squawked and flew very near to me and I saw what I think were hawks seemingly still in the wind.

Multiple scriptures celebrate the provision, beauty, and power of God's creation.

Three examples:

*So Israel lives in safety,
Untroubled is Jacob's abode
in a land of grain and wine,
where the heavens drop down dew.
(Deuteronomy 33:28)*

*The heavens are telling the glory of God;
And the firmament* proclaims his
handiwork.
(Psalm 19:1)*

*Ever since the creation of the world his eternal
power and divine nature, invisible though they
are, have been understood and seen through
the things he has made.
(Romans 1:20)*

All this means that God loves everything he has made; in fact God's love is the reason anything exists at all.

*What are human beings that you are
mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for
them? You have made them for a little while
lower than the angels; you have crowned them
with glory and honor, subjecting all things
under their feet.
(Hebrews 2:6-8, quoting Psalm 8)*

God especially loves human beings, having created us in his image and sending his Son to become one of us. Let's try to take this truth in as if we've never heard it before – and be amazed.

And then let's remember, as the previous Scripture quotations suggest, that God loves all of his creation. So as we see and develop our own God-given creative gifts, we

are to care for and use wisely God's creation. And then not only we, but our children and grandchildren will continue to be blessed and renewed by the power, provision, and beauty in God's creation. I realize I may be preaching to the choir, in that our mission statement also proclaims our appreciation and care for God's creation. But some important things bear review.

Let me back up a bit and say that if we are going to demonstrate concern for animals and plants, good farming and healthy food, etc. (creation and its healthy development and use), even more fundamentally, we need to care for each other, for (I repeat) we are that part of God's creation made in his own image. That includes loving our own selves – trying (and nobody's perfect) to eat healthy and get a good balance of work, rest, and recreation. Most importantly, we need to come together regularly for worship and socializing and we need to spend time quietly with God in prayer on a regular basis – where God will continue to renew and refresh us.

Thank you for living this 'care' out already in many ways; e.g., assisting at worship – serve3rs, choir, and pledging to our current stewardship campaign so that we can keep going strong as God's church. Thank you to Wendy Langlois for teaching and sharing God's love with our children. Thank you to members of ECW and others working on the Thanksgiving Baskets and 'Shoe-boxes' for those in need. I could name many others who make the Church of St. John in the Wilderness the wonderful place that it is.

Finally remember to check your bulletins and this Messenger for our many events and announcements such as our book study on "The Meaning of Jesus" Sunday nights at 7 p.m. and our benefit to help keep the church warm – the Soup and Bread

Supper on Sunday, November 23 (supper 5:30 to 6:30 and movie at 7, "Driving Miss Daisy").

Have a Happy Thanksgiving and a great Advent everyone.

Peace,

John+

PS, the Annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service is on Tuesday, November 25, at 7 pm at the Hillsdale United Methodist Church. The new preacher in town (yours truly) has been tapped to preach at this service.

And it looks like we will have a wonderful Ecumenical Lessons and Carols Service here at St. John in the Wilderness on Sunday, December 21 at 4:30 p.m..

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Episcopal Church Women

The women met on November 4, 2008 in Burke Hall. Discussion was held on various up coming activities.

Babs Croteau is collecting for Christmas Friends. Envelopes for donations are in the back of the Church.

Virginia Boughton will head up our telephone calling list. She will be assisted by Susan Massarella.

Susan Massarella is getting the Samaritans Purse Shoe Boxes ready to deliver. Peggy Anderson will help her finish them up.

Susan is also getting prices from several places for our Christmas Luncheon. Please watch your Sunday Leaflet for further information.

Natalie Acciavatti has offered to donate an unfinished quilt for our sale. Before she sends it to us we need to know if there are volunteers that would meet Pauline Royal in Burke Hall and help baste it. Then Pauline had volunteered to finish it during the winter. Please ladies, volunteer and let either Pauline Royal or Susan Massarella know so the details can be worked out!

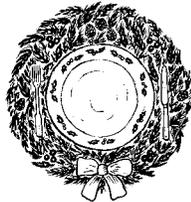
Thank you all for your help and advice.

Bea/Babs Croteau Vice President

Susan Mollo, ECW Secretary

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ECW Christmas Luncheon



Christmas Dinner

The Episcopal Church Women of St. John's will hold their annual Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 7, 2008, at 1:00 PM at The pond Restaurant, Route 3, Ancramdale. The menu and price will be similar to luncheons held at The hearthstone in the past. Check the Sunday bulletins for details. If you have any questions, please call Susan Mollo at 329-0395.

Susan Mollo, Secretary

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Birthday and Memorial Candle Fund

The Birthday Candle Fund was started in 1952 by the late Isabelle

Kirkpatrick, who instituted this fund to give members of the congregation an opportunity to make a gift of thanksgiving to the Church in recognition of God's continuing love and blessings to us. Each of us is invited to add their name to the Birthday List and to make an annual gift. If you wish to be on the Birthday List, please call either Babs Croteau or Bea Baxter and give them your mailing address and the month and date only of your birth (no years please). In return, you will receive a birthday card on your birthday with a donation envelope enclosed, which can either be put in the offering plate or mailed to Beatrice Croteau. If, after two years we have not heard from you we will drop you from the list.

The Memorial Candle Fund was started later so that members could make donations for candles on the Altar and in the Sanctuary in memory of loved ones. On April 7, 1974 Helen Pateman donated a brass Memorial Candlestick in memory of her husband, which was to be lit whenever someone made a donation to the Memorial Candle Fund. On June 15, 1975 the second Memorial Candlestick was given by William Pateman in honor of his mother, Helen. Sometime after this the community expressed a desire to donate to our Candle Fund — we have been known for years as the Church with the Candles. Now anyone who wishes to honor friends or relatives on birthdays or anniversaries, give thanks for special events, or make memorial contributions are welcome to do so. The Memorials or Honors, are printed in the Sunday Leaflet, providing we have received them one week prior to the date wanted. Otherwise the Rector will announce from the Altar. Memorials can be requested for the entire year ahead if you wish - - we

aim to please. The Sanctuary Candle was started November 1, 1990 and there is a set charge of \$10.00 for this as the candle is lit for one week, Sunday thru Saturday. Only one person may have this at a time.

The birthdays have been printed in the monthly Messenger for several years now with name, month and date. We continue to send to the former members who are now living in nursing homes, etc. We do not include the envelope for them, but some donate anyway.

After Mrs. Kirkpatrick retired as chairperson, Carolyn Benton held the title, then Frances Jordan and your present chairperson took over in 1974. Mrs. Kirkpatrick loved her candles and many of the original birthday members were her own friends and family and they still belong. Those of us who have belonged to the Birthday Candle fund since 1952 are very honored to have new members join us in helping to keep our beautiful St. Johns in candles! All donations are accepted with gratitude. If you have any special requests we will try to accommodate you. We will be glad to answer any questions you may have. We thank you for the time you have taken to read this article and look forward to signing up new members.

Beatrice (Babs) Croteau, Chairperson
 Beatrice Baxter, Co-Chairperson
 441 Route 23 Claverack, NY 12513-5145
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 (518) 851-9040
 (518) 329-2975

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Graveyard / Cemetery?

In the November/December 2008 issue of *American Spirit Magazine* an article entitled 'Stories Carved in Stone' by Gaylord Cooper there was a 'Did you Know?' The terms cemetery and graveyard are used interchangeably but there is a difference. Graveyards are burial places that have a connection to a church. Cemeteries are burial places that have no such connection. St. John's has a graveyard and sometimes it is hard to explain to outsiders what it means and why. Just thought this might help.

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November Birthdays:

November 7
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 November 12
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 November 17
 November 30



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 James Callahan

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A "Lambeth Reflections" Reflection

Bishops, clergy and lay people of Episcopal Province II gathered at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton, NJ, on Saturday, October 4, to hear the reactions of a dozen participants in the recent Lambeth Conference. Attendees from this diocese included Bishop Love, two other diocesan officers, and ten members of Albany Via Media.

A dozen bishops spoke at "Lambeth Reflections," but keynote speeches by Bishops Love (Albany) and V. Gene Robinson (New Hampshire) began the conference and were central to it. Bp. Love's speech included some

light moments, but its overall tone was pessimistic. He noted that about half of the world's 77 million Anglicans were not represented at Lambeth because their 220 bishops had chosen to boycott it. He disapproved of that decision – "I am a firm believer in listening to those we disagree with." – but admitted that "theologically irreconcilable differences" between liberals and the conservative majority in the Anglican Communion make him "doubt any chance of reconciliation."

"It's an honor to be on the program with Bill," Bishop Robinson said as he began a speech that was upbeat, even, at times, jaunty. He described his relationship with the Lambeth Conference, from which he was excluded, as "up close but outside." He went to Kent anyway to "witness to the power of God in [his] life" and to show that he was "unwilling to let those guys meet and pretend we [LGBT's] don't exist" -- to serve as an "incarnate reminder." Being excluded hurt, but Robinson gave it a humorous twist: "While the bishops were having tea with the Queen, I was having tea with a bunch of queens!" It was, in fact, an AIDS advocacy group.

In closing, Robinson asked just what is theologically at stake in the struggle over full inclusion of LGBT's? Christianity evolves over time: Jesus implied as much at its inception, when he told his disciples that there were things they could not yet bear to hear. "Is full inclusion [of LGBT's] of God or not?" Bp. Robinson's asked. His answer: "You can't decide in the middle of things whether you're prophetic or crazy."

Other speakers had different but generally optimistic views of Lambeth. Chilton Knudsen, Bishop of Maine and another keynoter, called the Conference "grueling" – "Showing up for it says

something!" -- but she and others found many opportunities to talk with people with different views. She described a growth of trust as the "enormous gift of the Conference," and concluded that, "Understanding is the goal, not mind change."

Bp. Love had praised an Anglican Covenant as the way to replace present confusion in the Communion with clarity. Prof. Gordon Graham of Princeton Seminary, the fourth keynoter, asked, "Do you want to be clear?" What matters most now, theology or rights? Are the prizes sought by left and right really worth such intense concern? "There is something to be said about being a little relaxed," Graham concluded.

Other bishops expressed generally positive views of their Lambeth experience. Pierre Whalon (Europe) sees the Communion entering a new, "post-introspection" period. He urges our Church "to stop looking at itself and asking if it's wrong."

Orris Walker (Long Island), fears the increasing power of the primates and says, "We need to bring the whole Church [i.e. all orders] together." Prof. Graham returned to this theme in his afternoon speech, noting that The Episcopal Church got off to an anti-hierarchical start when the Scots ordained Samuel Seabury, our first indigenous bishop.

Bp. Mark Beckwith (Newark) returned from Lambeth feeling that he had experienced *two* parallel conferences: One struggled to build interpersonal relationships while the other (represented by the Covenant Design and Windsor Continuation Groups) sought to make and enforce rules. Beckwith noted that although many British journalists seemed determined to discredit the Conference, he came away optimistic. He saw dread yielding at last to hope.

Because Bp. Robinson had to leave early "to get back to my day job," Bp. Love

was left alone to respond to the afternoon's comments by other speakers and the audience. As he repeated themes that are familiar to Albany Episcopalians – stressing the need for clarity, denying that he is a biblical literalist, blaming Satan for our failings, urging us to “focus on Christ” – it was obvious that he was preaching to someone else's choir. Tired after a long day, he no doubt looked forward to Ireland, to which he would fly that evening, and at which he'd get a warm greeting from the more theologically sympathetic Anglicans of Albany's sister diocese, Down and Dromore.

A more complete report on “Lambeth Reflections” will appear in the next issue of AVM's newsletter, *Open Minds*. For now, let me say what this Albany Episcopalian took away from Province II's Lambeth Reflections meeting.

It was encouraging to meet and hear a dozen remarkable Episcopal bishops: Men and one woman who can see past the Church's present storms to the sunshine beyond them; leaders whose proud belief in our Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion stands in sharp contrast to the impending doom preached and promoted by Bob Duncan, +Jack Iker, and their Network and Common Cause brethren. I found “Lambeth Reflections” uplifting.

It is to Bill Love's credit that he participated in “Lambeth Reflections, where his was obviously a minority voice.” That he attended this year's Province II Convocation is also a plus: Some of you may recall previous Convocations at which Albany's only representatives wore AVM badges!

Thank you, Bp. Bill, for opening a long closed window on the wider Church. May the light shine in!

- Robert Dodd



Bible
Sund Readings *for the* **Month** ay,
November **23**

Last Sunday after Pentecost
Christ the King

Ezekial 34: 11-16,20-24

Psalm 100

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25: 31-46

Sunday, November 30

First Sunday of Advent (Year B)

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7,16-18

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

Sunday, December 7

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-15

2 Peter 3: 1-8

Mark 1:1-8

Sunday, December 14

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8,19-28

Sunday, December 21

Fourth Sunday of Advent

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16

Psalm 89:1-4,19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1: 26-38