

# A Voice in the Wilderness

NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS | MAY 2021

## Thoughts from the Wilderness

Let's be astounded. After all,

*"O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards you, that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire."*

– (6 Easter Opening Prayer)

Yes that's what it says, and it's scriptural. As we allow God's love to pour into our hearts we become more aware that God promises us good things which exceed all that we can comprehend or want!

And the more love in our hearts, the better the things we want, and the more likely they are to happen. Let's be astounded by God's good gifts. As Peter was "astounded" in Acts 10 "that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles." There are multiple reasons for astonishment here. One, the Holy Spirit is the best of God's many good gifts, because the Spirit is God himself – who is love, our source, the source of all good gifts and the power for all good. Another reason for astonishment



for Peter and the early Christians was that God's Spirit, God's great love is for everyone and for all of God's creation. Yet Peter and company immediately understood this as he says, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

We may still be astonished by this – that God loves everyone and all of creation. After all, people are very different and some seem much better or more deserving of God's love and gifts than others. Beside the fact that God loves the outrageous diversity of all of (his own) creation. But are we really in a position to judge who is more deserving of God's love or gifts?

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## CHURCH CALENDAR

*June–September  
2021*

### Father's Day Plant and Bake Sale

Sunday, June 20  
Noon–4:00pm

### Winds in the Wilderness Concert

Wednesday, June 30  
3:00pm, Outdoors

### Sacred Sites Open House

August 1–31  
10th Annual Event  
To be held virtually

### Copake Falls Day

Saturday, August 21  
11:00am–1:00pm  
Salad Bar

### Stewardship Pledge Campaign 2021 Begins

Sunday, September 5



# Thoughts from the Wilderness

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Jesus says no. Here though it gets very tricky. As two cardinal messages of the Bible come into direct tension. On the one hand, as Peter learned and as Jesus says, we are called to love everyone and not judge who does and does not deserve God's love. Especially over things like race (God creates and loves all races) or gender (God loves all genders). Alas, many have not learned even these things, and they act with bigotry.

And bigotry points to the other cardinal message in the Bible (that is held in tension with "do not judge"). And that message is, we are to speak for and act for justice and even prophetically denounce all forms of injustice – such as bigotry in its many forms.

The tension is (partly) resolved in discerning on the one hand, the humility and love to not judge others in ignorance. Examples of ignorant judgment include racism, sexism (bigotries) and classism (greed, idolizing money, wrongly deferring to wealth and power). And on the other hand discerning that we are to call out and act against or "judge" these same kinds of things (racism, sexism and classism) as unjust, harmful and wrong. It's not easy to call out injustice - especially among the powerful – because, well, they are powerful and people defer to that (instead of deferring to God) or don't want to make waves anyway.

Which brings us full circle to the love of God being poured into our hearts. God's love enables us to discern how and have the power to love others without judgment and at the same time enables us to call out injustice. It's tricky; it's a tight rope – and it makes life a really astounding adventure. Yes, even this tricky tight rope is one of God's many, many blessings and gifts and good things.

*- In peace, John+*



# CAPITAL CAMPAIGN *Update*

As we reflect in this issue of the newsletter upon the long green period on the Episcopal Church's Liturgical Calendar, it presents an excellent occasion to note and ponder the many green aspects of St. John's Capital Campaign goals. Both inside the church's buildings and across its campus, the Capital Campaign has elements that address issues related to the care for God's creation. The green components of the major projects are referenced in the Capital Campaign's Summary Brochure and Preliminary Landscape Plan, along with other documents available on St. John's website, but here will highlight a few examples.

Inside the church and rectory, the oil-burning boilers in each of the buildings are slated to be replaced with high-efficiency propane-fired ones; additional savings in energy use could be found by incorporating heat pumps in conjunction with new furnaces. In the sanctuary, new energy-efficient lighting and overhead fans will be installed, and the sacristy will be overhauled, with, new walls and ceiling, new flooring, cabinetry, sinks and energy efficient lighting, with new energy-saving insulation throughout.

Outside on the grounds, we will create new gathering places so that parishioners

and community members can gather to worship, pray, attend concerts or lectures, or just reflect on the beauty and vital importance of the nature that abounds on the church's property and in the surrounding Taconic State Park. The church's landscape will be improved in terms of sustainability by updating the storm water design, which is particularly important near the erosion-prone steep inclines, which are adjacent to a pristine stream that is a tributary of Bash Bish Creek. We are also planning on a new rain garden, capturing rain water from the roof gutters, replacing blacktop surfaces with surfaces that allow water penetration, minimizing lawn areas, and surrounding all buildings with native plant species, which will promote ecosystem health by providing food for animals such as birds and insects.

If you wish to learn more about how you can help support St. John's vital green efforts for its buildings and grounds through the Capital Campaign, please contact one of us. Abundant faith-based resources for understanding or learning more about the urgency of addressing the climate and related global environmental crises are available at the Episcopal Church's website Creation Care and the website of the organization Interfaith Power and Light.

*Brian Boom and Lucy Eldridge,  
Co-Chairs*



## *Father's Day* PLANT & BAKE SALE!

A Father's Day Plant and Bake Sale will be held outside at the church on June 20, Noon to 4PM. The spring growing season will be celebrated with colorful annuals, perennials, ferns, hanging baskets, seeds, and herbs. Perennials include Coneflowers, Hellebores, Dusty Miller, Ligularia, Daisies, Feverfew, Lobelia, Sedum, Yarrow, and Lupine. Shrubs for sale include Hydrangea, and Japanese Spirea. Delicious baked goods will also be featured.

**Come on June 20 and  
enjoy colorful plant  
offerings and yummy  
goodies!**

*- Lucy Eldridge*



# Yea Spring!

I have just spent the day in my garden. Things are going to be beautiful if I can keep up. I have managed over the years to naturalize my flower beds so that they kind of “do their own thing.” Definitely the way to go.

I would like to put on my Altar Guild hat and ask the parish to contribute garden abundance to the altar flower routine this year. It will save money and the church will be more beautiful than ever. If you have flowers available in your garden let me know on a Thurs or Friday and perhaps we can have them in the church on Sunday.

I generally do the flowers on Saturday and if I know that I have something coming in from another source I can plan accordingly. Let me know. My number is **518-329-1401**. Thank you.

We are back in Church and even though I’m on board for the 9 am zoom service, I come to the 10 am too so I can sing.

It feels great to be back and to see everyone. We saw our friends, Marilyn and Kent off on their new adventure in Minnitonka,



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Minnesota. They will be sorely missed. I propose that we, (those who wish to), set up a zoom meeting once a month or how ever often we think works, and get together to check in and catch up with one another. We could do it on a Wednesday evening or whatever proves convenient for people.

The details and logistics can be worked out. I’ll be asking whether anyone is interested. See you in church. Happy Spring!

*As ever,  
Elen J Freeston, Senior Warden*

