

A Voice in the Wilderness

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

June 2016

The wrath of God. The love of God.

It's Tuesday after the horrific early Sunday morning mass shooting (the worst in US history) in Orlando. I wrote to the congregation yesterday, Let us pray for the dead and wounded in the terrible mass shooting in Orlando. Let us pray also for their families, relatives and friends. Let us continue to pray, as we have been, for an end to terrorism and also for an end to hatred and bigotry. Finally, let us pray for the wisdom, grace and courage to overcome evil with good. I hope we are continuing to pray for wisdom, grace and courage to overcome evil with good. It's what God would have us do. It's St. Paul's God inspired idea in his letter to the Romans: Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This admonition is the last verse of Romans chapter 12. What precedes it in chapter 12 contextualizes and gives us a deeper understanding: 4 For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. 6 We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us... 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. 18 If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink..." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Yet even these beautiful words are problematic. I'm thinking particularly of verse 19 about the wrath of God. How does the wrath of God fit into an understanding of God as love (I John 4:8)? Maybe we can get some idea what wrath means when we think about the outrage many of us feel in response to the senseless and brutal terrorist attack in Orlando. The attack was utterly unjust and God is passionate about justice, God is passionate about what is right and fair. And many are understandably grief stricken and very angry. Yet the above scripture asks us to leave vengeance to God – an ancient way of saying leave ultimate justice to God. So we ourselves are called to avoid vengeance! (Of course we have a criminal justice system which is called to protect society from dangerous criminals – though this criminal justice system itself is in serious need of reform to make it more just as Brother Scott pointed out in the meditation I asked to be read at church last Sunday). The criminal justice system is supposed to provide safety and order, and prevent vigilante justice (vengeance) by meting out considered justice in our name. Most of us agree with the ideal of a criminal justice system organized by the state. Our lax gun laws however, make it too easy for criminals to get weapons including terribly destructive automatic weapons. And they also can encourage for some, vigilante justice by armed civilians.

But even if most of us agree with leaving criminal justice to the state, that doesn't resolve the grief and rage experienced if one has been a surviving victim or the loved one of a victim of criminal or terrorist violence. Victims and their loved ones have to deal with a range of things from posttraumatic stress to unresolved anger. Therapy and other kinds of treatment can help. God works

through these things as well as through prayer and the healing love of others.

Most of us are spared the direct effects of terrorism or criminal violence, though we're all more or less affected by it. Most all of us however have to deal with being hurt and hurting others and have to deal with the temptations to seek revenge against those who hurt us. So the scriptures above are relevant and valid for all of us. And Romans 12 says, we're called to weep with those who weep (as well as rejoice with those who rejoice). There is of course a great deal of both weeping and rejoicing in this world. We are called to solidarity with those who weep (and with those who rejoice).

What we are not called to do in Romans 12 is, repay evil for evil, we are never to avenge ourselves and we are not to be overcome by evil. This is all easier said than done. How do we resist seeking revenge against those who hurt us, how do we resist harming ourselves with resentment even if we don't directly seek revenge, and how do we overcome evil with good? A clue is in verse six of Romans (and in other places in Scripture) where it

says, We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us. We learn that our gifts and our talents as well as the grace to use them well, all come from God. This tells us that the grace to resist revenge, the grace to heal our anger, resentment and grief, and the grace to overcome evil with good all also come from God. This healing grace can come directly from God and can come through other people. And that makes sense, for as it also says in Romans above, we are members one of another.

May it be a relief, an encouragement and a great source of hope that God is the one who will help us with our temptations to revenge, and God is the one who will heal us of our anger, resentment and grief and God is the one who will help us overcome evil with good. And the fact that we are members of one another can help us to be who we are – deeply interdependent people. This knowledge can motivate us to forgive rather than seek revenge, for we are called to be in supportive relationship with each other whenever we can.

*In peace,
John+*

From the Desk of the Senior Warden

As I sit down to write this article today I am being bombarded with the sad news of the latest mass shooting in America. It seems that not a week goes by that we don't learn of another person who decides to take the life or lives of others because.....there is no reasonable because. We can only hope and pray that this hate and terror will one day be a thing of the past.

Here at St. John's we have been busy with spring activities like the 5K walk/run for the Backpack program. We had a great turnout and raised a record amount and big thanks goes to Rebecca Garrard for organizing the event. The Apogee Center started a program in Burke Hall and while it had a few attendees has gone on hiatus for awhile but hasn't given up on finding an event here

at St John's.

Lucy Eldridge and Jane Peck as co-chairs of the Country Fair and Auction are hard at work. With the help of many including Louise and Dale Peterson and Elen Freeston we have already gotten many fine donations. Dale, Louise and Lucy have the on-line catalogue on our website if you want to see what we have. And there is still time to donate so keep checking your attics and houses for auction items. The cut off date for donations is July 2.

As I think back on my years at St. John's I recall my first Easter in Columbia County in the spring of 2001. We had bought a house in Ancramdale that fall and as was my habit, I looked around for a church for Easter services. I did an internet search and found a few that appealed to me

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Editors: Louise and Dale Peterson

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

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Please submit reports, articles and news items at least one week prior to the issue date. Thanks!

and after doing a little more research decided to attend services at St. John's.

On a personal note, I am learning more about unconditional love. As it is written in 1 John 4:8 (AMP) "He who does not love has not become acquainted with God [does not and never did know Him], for God is love." I have had the great luck of loving and being loved by my parents, brother, family and friends and God. With the addition of our adopted dog, Cora, I am seeing first hand what unconditional love is about. We decided to foster Cora (a stray picked up on the street) and it didn't take long to fall in love with her. Even though she must have had a tough life to have been abandoned, she quickly learned that her new family was going to love and take care of her. It

brightens my day to come home and see her wagging tail as she greets me.

The passage above also brings me full circle to how this article opened. I believe that if everyone were really acquainted with God and his love, these horrific acts would stop. We can only hope and pray.

As the Senior Warden I am enjoying my time helping Father John and the vestry continue to make St. John's a viable and welcoming center for its parishioners and the community. Please let me know if you have questions or something that you believe we should be addressing. My email address is mjglantz@earthlink.net.

Martha Glantz



2016 Country Fair & Auction and Sunday Barbecue

Plans and implementation for this year's Country Fair & Auction are proceeding well! The auction catalog is available on St. John's website at stjohnw.org/auction. Visitors to the site will get a taste of the great items that will be on sale at the auction, Saturday, July 9th, 11am. Please share the online auction catalog with your friends and neighbors.

We look forward, as always, to the Pork Barbecue the following day at 1PM and it will be wonderful! This year the bluegrass band, Two Dollar Goat, a local Hudson Valley group will be providing music during the barbecue.

At the Country Fair tables will be filled with items to entice you and our visitors at the Garden Shop, Bake Shop, Linens, Boutique, and Book Shop. This year we will have two raffles; a delightful bird-house, a replica of the church, constructed by Victor McClurg, and a wheelbarrow filled with garden related items. Expanded fun activities for the children will be available throughout the event and the Snack Bar and Salad Bar will be open with delicious items for all.

Many parishioners have already signed up to help on the day of the Fair; a signup sheet is posted in the entrance to the Church. Donations of household items in good condition, garden tools, jewelry, books, etc., can be brought to Burke Hall, Monday-Wednesday, 11am-2pm, Thursdays 4pm-7pm and Sundays until 1pm. July 2 is the last day to bring donations allowing us time to adequately prepare for the Country Fair & Auction on the 9th. We thank all who have helped us so far with the event, including our business partners in the community who have generously helped to underwrite the event, those offering their garages and barns for storage of donated furniture, those who help with truck pickups, and repairers/restorers of items, and help with publicity for the July 9-10th weekend.

New this year is the Country Fair and Auction listing on AuctionZip.com, an online auction website guiding auction lovers to auctions throughout the U.S. Walter Jutkofsky, St. John's professional auctioneer, will return once again to help.

Also new this year: we will take credit cards for auction items.

The Country Fair and Auction and Barbecue will be posted on Facebook; please share with your friends. We appreciate all who will participate the weekend of the Country Fair & Auction and Barbecue; your generous gift of volunteer efforts spur us all on. We look forward to the event this year beginning at 10AM, July 9th. And we know our most important operating budget fund-raiser will be, as it has been for more than 50 years, a great success!

Lucy Eldridge and Jane Peck, co-chair

Episcopal Church Women

We had our last quarterly meeting on June 5th. The meeting was well attended. We are happy to announce we donated \$500 to go towards new, lighter weight tables for the church. We also discussed the Country Fair and Auction and some options for a raffle. Regina Shea will be the new president of the E.C.W. starting in September of this year.

The next meeting will be held on September 4th. Please make time for this meeting as we will be voting to fill some positions. Thank you.

Jeanne Van Hoesen

Amazon Smile

If you're already an Amazon customer, consider signing up for Amazon Smile. When you do, one half of one percent of your purchases will be rebated to the church. Here's how:

- Go to smile.amazon.com
- Under "pick your own organization" type in "St John in the Wilderness"
- Select the church. Make sure you see "Copak Falls." There are other churches with the same name!
- Each time you shop, start at smile.amazon.com and the church will benefit.

Julian's poem wins prize

Julian Thomas Perez, grandson of Susan Mollo, was a winner in the Elementary and Junior High School Students category of the City College of New York's 44th Annual Spring Poetry Festival. He read his poem entitled, "Rain" at a ceremony at

the College on Friday, May 13. Susan's father, John Massarella, was employed by City College in the 1970's and Susan says she was sure her dad was looking down and saying, "That's my Great Grandson!"



Rain

Rain is God crying because when people get killed in the war,
He is sad for them.
Rain looks like little bits of snow about to turn into sweet candy.
Rain is a baby snowflake.
Then it grows up to be snow.
Rain is very good for plants and water supply.
Rain is awesome, sweet like brown sugar.
Rain helps us so much, it is very special for nature and for us too

Submitted by Mibs Zelley

In the dawn
You walk toward me
When I am confused
You shower me in Love.

In sickness
You are by my side
When I am suffering
You offer me the Cure

In darkness
You bestow light
When I am hesitant
You show me Your Words

In conflicts
You increase my strength
When I am in pain
You grace me with Peace

In my days
You grant a mission
When I am weak
You lend me Your Power

In all my life
You leave your footprints
When I am empty
You give me Your all

Dongxia Shi, China
Gifts in Open Hands

Events – Church of St. John in the Wilderness

June 26, Sunday, Last day of Sunday School
July 2, Last day for donations to the Country Fair
July 7-8, Set up for Country Fair
July 9, Country Fair & Auction, Saturday, 10AM –
Auction, 11AM
Sunday, July 10, Community Pork Barbecue, 1PM,
with bluegrass band, Two Dollar Goat
August 20, Copake Falls Day, Saturday, St. John
Salad Bar, 11:30AM, Margaret Roach lecture, Carl
Ritchie Play, 3PM

August 21, Sunday, Carl Ritchie Play, 3PM
August 26, Friday, Carl Ritchie Play, 8PM
August 27, Saturday, Carl Ritchie Play, 8PM
August 28, Sunday, Carl Ritchie Play, 3PM
September 3, Saturday, Bake Sale, KOA, West
Copake, 10AM-12 noon
September 11, First Day of Church School, 10AM
September 24, Saturday, 10AM, 5k Run & Walk,
benefit local childhood cancer organizations
September 25, Sunday, Parish Picnic, 11AM

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

Martha Glantz (1/17) Warden

Brian Boom (1/18)

Vestry

Tonya Carter (1/18) Jane Shannon (1/19)

Karen Flynn (1/19) Regina Shea (1/17)

Rebecca Garrard (1/19) Madeleine Tramm (1/18)

Richard Peck, Clerk of the Vestry (1/21)

Louise Peterson, Treasurer (1/19)

Eucharists

Sunday, 8:00 AM (spoken)

Sunday, 10:00 AM (choral)

www.stjohnw.org

www.facebook.com/stjohnwilderness

518 329-3674

261 State Route 344, PO Box 180
Copake Falls, NY 12517

A rectangular stamp with the word "AUCTION" written in a bold, hand-drawn, slightly slanted font. The stamp has a textured, grey background and is tilted slightly to the right.