

# A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls NY

Fall 2019

## Thoughts from the Wilderness September 2019

*Adapted from August 18, 2019 sermon.*

We hear Jesus say in [Luke 12: 49-56](#), “Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three.” Why does Jesus say this? What’s going on here?



Jesus, God – is the source of peace in our hearts. God does want us to experience joy and peace in worship and in our lives. Prayer and meditation can increase the experience of joy and peace. But prayer and meditation also increase the ability to discern good from evil, justice from injustice. Study and life experience can also increase wisdom and discernment.



God brings joy and peace through prayer, meditation and worship. God also brings wisdom and discernment about right and wrong, justice and injustice, love and hate through the same channels of prayer, meditation and worship.

People vary widely in spiritual maturity. In the most important and most basic areas, Jesus seems to say that it is relatively easy to discern right from wrong, good from evil. He says “You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?” Today we rely on meteorologists. People in Jesus’ time, especially farmers or sailors needed to predict the weather.

Jesus is saying, if you know how to interpret clouds or a wind from the south – the weather, then why can’t you interpret the all-important signs of the present time?

He is also admonishing us today to interpret and understand what is going on in the present time. God is not calling us only to pray and be nice to each other in church. Praying and being nice to each other is good – but not at the expense of the truth. Not at the expense of justice.

God calls us to be prayerful channels of true peace and real justice. But when we do that, it can make people uncomfortable. As when God inspires us to speak and act in ways that encourage and promote equality and respect for all – including those who are different from us – those who may not be white or middle or upper

class. People who are African-American or LGBTQ or who have a disability or who are at the southern border desperately seeking asylum. Fellow human beings who would no more want to be separated from their children and put in concentration camps than we would want that for ourselves.

When we refuse to put ourselves in other people's shoes and have compassion for them, then we will have divided households and divided countries. Jesus knows there will be division when spiritually mature people call for truth and justice and others resist the call sometimes with hatred and violence.

The worst thing is when those who are supposed to lead us on the road to justice do the opposite.

When we put this gospel in context, we know the division Jesus talks about he himself experienced – he met repeated opposition and then was tortured and killed. Yet the division Jesus is talking about is temporary. It lasts until his mission is completed – as he says in the gospel (Luke 12:50).

Division is temporary because of the victory of Jesus, who rises to show us that good is stronger than evil; that we can grow in spiritual maturity, in goodness, in kindness. And that even those who are very misguided can change.

None of us are perfect – but we can all be growing and going in the right direction – even if it's two steps forward and one step backward. When Jesus suggests division, part of what he means is we cannot deny or minimize injustice; we cannot be comfortable with the false peace of a status quo which may be comfortable for us – but only if we are ignoring the suffering of others.

We have to pray and work for true peace – which is Jesus' goal and promise for us. A true peace based on honesty, justice, and love for all – not denial, not minimizing injustice, but real love. With real love, real equality, then we have real peace. The peace embodied in Jesus' most common words to people after his resurrection – Peace be with you.

Let's receive God's gift of genuine peace. Then we can channel God's peace to others in the forms of justice, hope and love.

*In peace,  
John+*

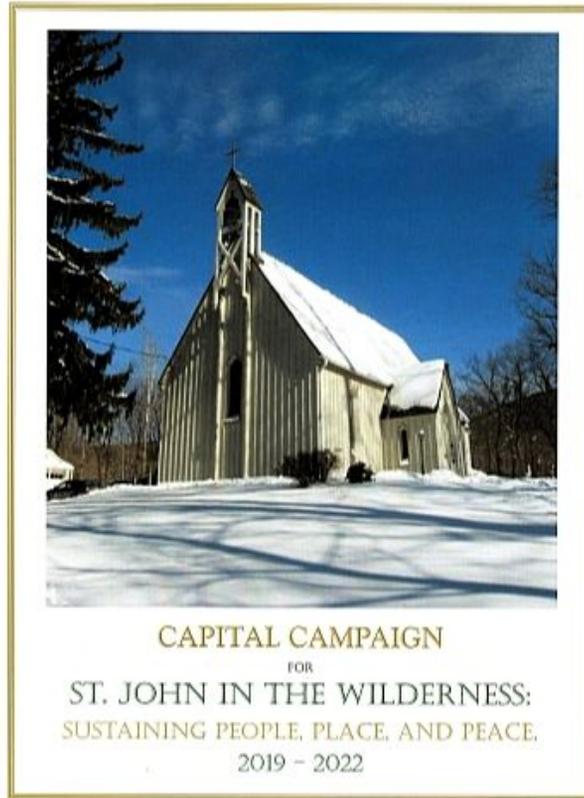
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## **St. John's Capital Campaign Launches**

In 2017, a Capital Campaign Committee was formed at St. John's to lay the groundwork for a plan to raise the funds to secure the church's infrastructure into the future. We have reported on the progress of this committee in several issues of *The Voice*. The major components of the Committee's efforts were to commission a MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) Assessment Report from Crawford & Associates Engineering, PC; to commission a current architectural conditions survey of the buildings and church campus by two parishioner architects, Marjorie Hoog and Dale Peterson, and Crawford engineers; to commission a Preliminary Landscape Plan from Jamie Purinton, RLA; and to conduct a survey of St. John's parishioners as to their priorities for capital projects.

In addition, along the way, we secured two grants from the Rheinstrom Hill Community Foundation in support of two obvious capital needs that were identified early on: a grant in 2018 toward the repair of the Rectory Porch Project, now beautifully completed, and a grant in 2019 toward the Sacristy Project, which begins this Fall. This latest grant will help to install new lighting, cabinets, sinks, walls, insulation, ceilings, floors, and the entire room will be re-painted.

Earlier this summer, we announced the publication of the brochure *Capital Campaign for St. John in the Wilderness: Sustaining People, Place, and Peace, 2019-2022*, and that the Capital Campaign has officially begun. If you have not already received a copy, you may obtain one by contacting us or viewing and downloading one [here](#). In the brochure, you will see that we envision a three-year Campaign with the total goal of \$332,000.



The Committee has also been busy quietly soliciting pledges and gifts towards the anticipated financial goals of the Capital Campaign. We are pleased to report that 100% of members of the Committee have pledged. Along with the award of the two grants from the Rheinstrom Hill Community Foundation, a bequest, and funds pledged by parishioners currently amount to 50% of the campaign goal of \$332,000!

We hope you enjoy reading *Capital Campaign for St. John in the Wilderness* and will find initiatives described within it that resonate with your interests in securing the sustainability of St. John's people, place, and peace into the future. We look forward to discussing with you how you might wish to help in this goal. Pledges to the Capital Campaign can be spread out over a 3-year period, 2019-2022, and we will be distributing Campaign pledge cards soon. While your participation in the Capital Campaign is more important than the actual amount you are able to pledge, please be as generous as you can.

In conclusion, we would like to thank our fellow Capital Campaign Committee members for their generosity in giving of their time, energy, and resources in behalf of St. John's future: Karen Flynn, Martha Glantz, Marjorie Hoog, Marilyn Kay, Dale Peterson, Louise Peterson, and John Thompson.

Brian Boom and Lucy Eldridge  
Co-Chairs, Capital Campaign Committee

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## From the desk of the Senior Warden

I was recently challenged in my role as Senior Warden of a very small parish. Here are a few of the questions that have been running through my head.

1. What is more important: harmony or passion; truth or humility?
2. Democracy is messy, at best. Our little church operates on good-will, cooperation, volunteer spirit and some amount of good manners. This usually does the trick. But what happens when it doesn't? How do we deal with conflict and disagreement?
3. Who is in charge, the Vestry or the Rector?

Last January, I attended a service in Merida, Mexico, where I'm renovating a second home. The rector introduced himself and immediately cautioned that "we don't discuss politics here". I was taken aback. In France, where I'm from, separation of church and state is ingrained. Here in the US, it's very confusing and muddled. And this is the essence of my current concern: how do we allow different political points of view in our midst? I have strong political beliefs, but I understand that there are other opinions out there. As Senior Warden and moderator, I cannot say "I am right and they are wrong".

How do we, as a small group of people, find a way to get past these very divisive and negative postures, allow people to express their viewpoints and move forward? Are there not areas where we can find common ground, such as human rights, the environment or animal rights?

Can we establish a conciliatory tone, make everyone feel they belong, while not sweeping under the rug the fact that we are living through very dangerous times? I'm open to all suggestions.

*In community, Marjorie Hoog*

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## Into the Wilderness: Our 2019 Soiree

Into the Wilderness, our 2019 gala Soirée, was held on July 13, a hot summer evening in Copake Falls. Inspired by the landscape plan developed by Jamie Purinton RLA for our Capital Campaign, we took the party "Into the Wilderness." Jim Wann and his friends Tom Miller and John Myers started the evening with an outdoor concert behind the church graveyard. The party continued under a tent with a silent auction. A great team of parish volunteers managed parking, prepared and served the food and drink, then stayed late to clean up. It was a successful evening with great results.



Jane Peck and Martha Glantz checked in guests.



Jim Wann, John Myers and Tom Miller performed great music on a hot summer evening. John Mooney holds the raffle basket that he won.



The tent was ready for a great evening.



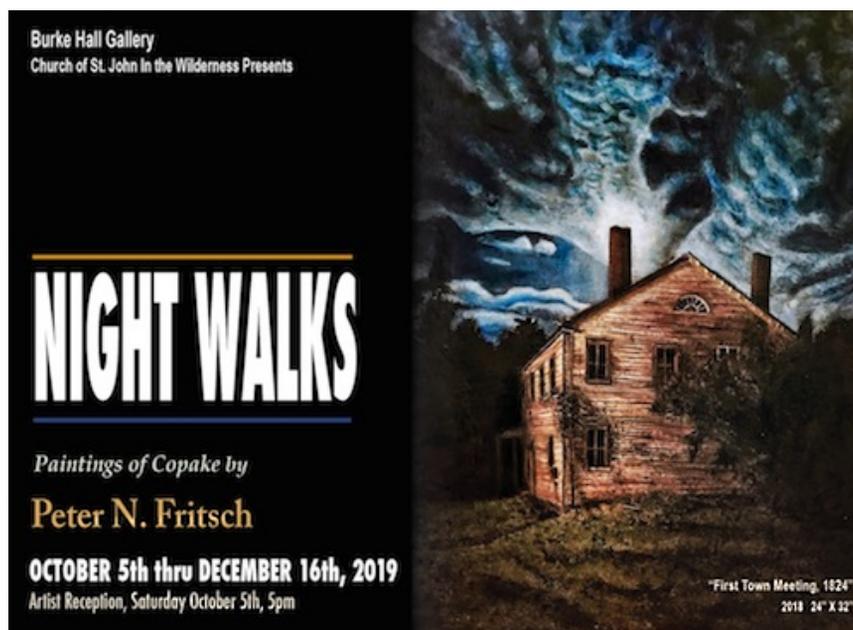
Lucy Eldridge used flowers from local gardens to make beautiful table decorations.

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### Paintings by Nick Fritsch in Burke Hall

An exhibition of landscape paintings by Peter Nicholas Fritsch will be held from October 5 – December 16, 2019, in Burke Hall. Nick Fritsch studied painting at the School of Visual Arts. His paintings, in the tradition of American realism, reflect an interest in the mystical qualities of night evoking a quiet sense of place right here in the center of Copake.

An artist reception will be held on Saturday October 5th at 5PM in Burke Hall. The show will be open 11-1PM Sundays and by appointment. with Lucy Eldridge, 518-329-0530



## Richard Peck's Art in Pittsfield

Richard's *100 Days of Art* will be displayed at the NU Arts Gallery & Studio, 311 North St. Pittsfield, for the October First Night Out – Friday, October 4 from 5–8 pm. Some of these pieces were displayed at a show last year in Burke Hall. Richard's inspiration for this work came from the sun and sky.

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### Calendar Fall Events at the Church September and October

NIGHT WALKS, Paintings by Peter N. Fritsch. Exhibition in Burke Hall.  
Opening. Saturday, October 5, 5:00 pm  
Exhibition continues October 5 – December 16. Contact Lucy Eldridge for hours

October 26, Saturday, Stewardship Harvest Dinner, 6PM

### **A Voice in the Wilderness**

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness (Episcopal)  
Copake Falls, New York 12517  
The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Marjorie Hoog (1/20) Warden  
Wendy Langlois (1/21) Warden

### *Vestry*

Susan Massarella (1/20)  
Zita Kobos (1/20)  
Elen Freeston (1/21)  
Peggy Anderson (1/21)  
Lucy Eldridge (1/22)  
Jane Peck (1/22)

Richard Peck, Clerk of the Vestry (1/21)  
Karen Flynn, Treasurer Liaison

### *Eucharists*

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

[stjohnw.org](http://stjohnw.org)

518 329-3674

[261 State Route 344](#), PO Box 180, Copake Falls, NY 12517



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