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ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Newsletter for May & June, 2017

A Message from the Priest in Charge, Reverend Diane C. Wong

Someone thanked me recently saying that it is because of me that our parish is flourishing; thank you from the bottom of my heart. I also strongly believe that the positive fruits we see at St. John's are the efforts of three parties collaborating together - the Holy Spirit, the clergy, and the people - the Holy Spirit, me, and all of you. Minus the effort of any one party, it is more difficult to accomplish God's mission for us. In every aspect and ministry of our parish, the efforts you put in, the time you give, the prayers you say, and the occasions when you show up are more important than you can imagine.

For example, in growing and attracting others to the parish, your role is actually crucial and profound. The word "liturgy" means work of the people. Very often the first impression that visitors have of St. John's is from walking into our parish for the Sunday Eucharist. Can you imagine what it feels like walking into an empty church? The Sunday Eucharist is an occasion of celebration. Every one of you makes a big difference to the tone and feel of the liturgy. The more people there are in the church, the more celebratory the Eucharist would be.

Many of you expressed how wonderful the Easter Sunday service was. The music was great, the singing was wonderful, the church looked beautiful, there were 90 people and 4 dogs in attendance, and most of them arrived before the start of the service. The energy level was high, and everyone was focused. That certainly was the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the clergy, and the people. Of course Easter Sunday was special, but a Eucharist with 30 people is more celebratory than one with 20 people, and a Eucharist with 40 people is more celebratory than when there are 30. The more people there are, the more celebratory our Eucharist is.

Presence speaks louder than words. It sends a message, whether we are aware of it or not. It says how important we feel about thanking God on this day; it says how important this faith community is to us. People who feel being at church on Sunday is important would probably like their potential companions of their faith journey to feel the same way. Last year, I ran into a woman I know who lives on Pleasant Street. She told me that she came to our church one Sunday, but seeing very few people there, she eventually left.

I feel torn about saying what I said here because I understand that other obligations and commitments get in the way of being at the Sunday Eucharist. I also know that having more people in the church will attract still more people. It is the same with our ministries. When we have more, and more varied, people involved in our ministries, it will encourage more people to exercise their gifts as well. People attract people.

Everyone who has visited St. John's says something similar about us - there is great spirit in the church and everyone is so friendly. That is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, you, and me all working together; and your role is crucial. Let's have more people experience the great spirit and energy that we have.

Thank you.

Diane+

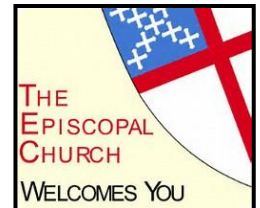
A Crossroads and a Spiritual Home by Joe Curro

The year 2017 will always be remembered as the time of the most significant Lenten season of my 51 years. Raised as a “cradle Catholic,” this was the year that I decided to embark on a journey of faith with my daughters and to explore the Episcopal Church. I have long been a spiritual seeker, a drifter even, but -- up until recently -- I had always come back to the same place, my Roman Catholic upbringing. The past few months at St. John’s -- supplemented by regular visits to St. Anne’s Chapel in Arlington Heights and a great deal of reading -- have caused me to wonder if I have spent the first five decades of my life confusing magnetic north with “true north.”

I grew up in a South Shore town where attendance at the local Roman Catholic parish was as ordinary and prevalent as attending (and walking to!!!) the neighborhood public school, joining the Cub Scouts, or playing Farm League baseball. Protestants were exotic, and my Italian father and Irish/French-Canadian/Swedish mother were considered to have a “mixed” marriage. Their common heritage was their shared faith tradition, the high school from which they graduated together, and the shipyard where both of their fathers had worked, helping to win World War Two. Leaving my hometown for college, I also drifted away from the Church, despite a teenage flirtation with pursuit of the priesthood. I traveled widely, and I opened my eyes to see the world as others did, valuing service to my fellow members of the human family and developing firm progressive values.

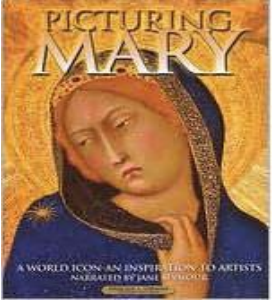
Alas! Faith took a backseat, until a period of extreme job stress found me seeking retreat at a Benedictine monastery in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico. There, I discovered an enduring tradition of Christian spirituality, which was completely new to me. I engaged in silence, meditation, prayer, spiritual reading, and recitation of the Psalms with my fellow retreat members, among them several Episcopal priests and their spouses. My renewed Christian faith practice led me back to more active parish life, with some detours -- particularly after 9/11 -- into the Christian peace movement, the World Community for Christian Meditation, and a study of Christian-Buddhist dialogue. This period of exploration was fueled after reading *The Raft is Not the Shore*, a series of conversations between Father Daniel Berrigan and famed Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

I am so grateful that my wife, Lisa, agreed to baptize our two daughters into the Christian faith. Our older daughter, Savannah, has truly embraced the rich history and traditions of Christianity, and she aspires to pursue a life in music ministry. Our younger daughter, Sierra, is a living example of Christian compassion and teaches me on a daily basis the value of continually examining one’s conscience.



As our daughters have grown closer to adulthood, I have yearned to share with them a modern expression of Christianity within a traditional liturgical form of worship. This yearning is what has brought us to St. John’s and the Episcopal Church. We made the conscious decision to coordinate our trial period with the commemoration of Jesus’ wanderings in the desert. Just as He emerged from His retreat to be welcomed into Jerusalem, we feel that we have been welcomed by St. John’s and the greater Episcopal community. The signs that adorn so many churches, “The Episcopal Church Welcomes You,” has proven to be more than a mere slogan. The Episcopal Church describes itself as, “Protestant, Yet Catholic.” It is at this crossroads that we have found a spiritual home, and we give great thanksgiving for this.

Film Recommendation – “Picturing Mary” by Jacqueline Barnard



I saw this 2007 film on Wednesday, April 19th at the Museum of Russian Icons, and would like to recommend it to you.

Jane Seymour narrates “Picturing Mary,” a documentary that offers images of numerous artistic renderings of Jesus' mother.

The film surveys masterpieces of art including pieces by Rembrandt, Caravaggio, and Michelangelo that are an enduring testament to Mary as the sublime embodiment of the virtues, joys, and sorrows of the human race. “Picturing Mary” is available on DVD from the Minuteman Library Network.

A New Deep Joy for Easter by Frank Foster

Right now we are in Resurrection season. From Easter to Pentecost we celebrate the Great Fifty Days. No abstinence and Alleluias are required. During this season of Resurrection, I am in the midst of a new learning experience. I am mailing a small book to my cousin's first daughter, Aya, who turns one on May 9th. The book is titled "That is not my Kitten". It is a short story about finding a lost kitten using the sense of touch. Each page has different textures on it. The owner finds the kitten on the last page when he discovers her fluffy, fuzzy tummy by touch. I hope Aya will read and enjoy the book many, many times. It will help her in that most important learning experience: understanding the world. It was not easy to select a gift for such a very young child. There were so many different toys, dolls, books, games - even an 18-piece tea set. But those may be for later. For this first birthday, I hope Aya learns that she has a dotting relative on the East Coast in addition to her West Coast family. Love and joy are not hindered by distance. Happy Easter.

Manoj Gautam, Founder & Executive Director of the Jane Goodall Institute in Nepal **by Charlotte Pierce**

Manoj Gautam will be giving a public presentation at St. John's at 10 a.m. on Saturday, May 20th. Fifteen years ago, as a teenager growing up in Nepal, our friend Manoj Gautam wrote his first-ever email to his idol, famed chimpanzee researcher and environmental activist Dr. Jane Goodall. She wrote back, inviting him to join her international Roots & Shoots youth program, where he eventually assumed a leadership role. Now 32 and the father of two, Manoj is the executive director of the Jane Goodall Institute/Nepal, working closely with “Dr. Jane” on wildlife conservation and youth programs on environmental sustainability. On May 2, 2017, Manoj made St. John's part of his current US speaking tour, stopping by the English at Large class facilitated by Vicki Ford, who was also kind enough to host him in her and Larry's home.



Pictured above: Dr. Jane Goodall and Manoj Gautam

Manoj returns to the Boston area from May 17-22 for appearances here at St. John's, at Arlington High School, and at Harvard, and will be hosted by the Pierce/Wilcox family. We met Manoj on his first trip to the US in 2008, where he spoke to our daughter's Roots & Shoots group at the Bishop School and stayed at our house. After hearing his mesmerizing tales of red panda tracking, river dolphin habitat restoration, vulture restaurants, snow leopard research, and treks to remote mountain villages, our kids may actually follow Manoj back to Nepal this time. I know their parents want to!

Manoj would be happy to speak to other regional groups while he's here, about topics like wildlife conservation, indigenous peoples' relationships to wildlife, sustainable tourism, and his work with "Dr. Jane" in Nepal. He is also eager to field inquiries about high school and college internships or semesters-abroad with JGI in Nepal. Contact Charlotte Pierce at charlotte.pierce@gmail.com or 781-258-9608 if you're interested in either of these options.

The CityReach Experience – Reports from Two Parishioners

A Meaningful Growth Experience by Laura Manion

On the last weekend in April, I was fortunate to attend my second CityReach event with some wonderful friends here at St. John's: Christine Carney, Charlotte and Lillian Pierce, as well as Lillian's friend Lizzy and myself collected many donations from this parish, hauled them into St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston, listened to and got to know homeless CityReach workers who shared their stories of how they became homeless, and in doing so reminding us that anyone could be homeless. It was a sobering experience; especially when we walked through the streets of Boston and saw more homeless people asleep in doorways, trying to get comfortable for their long night outside. That evening we all uncomfortably slept on the new marble floors in the gorgeously renovated cathedral. The next morning, there was a line outside the door with homeless people waiting to come in for the event we were a part of; and I was reminded that even though I slept on a marble floor uncomfortably, I at least had a roof over my head. After we were served coffee and breakfast, we got to work preparing sandwiches, cleaning the dining area, setting up clothing and toiletries and gearing up for the guests. Upon their arrival the place came to life with people in need, people so grateful, and people who wanted company, community, and kindness. All the volunteers played a meaningful role in our common goal to give back.

After the guests left, we all sat down with relief and reflected. We praised God, we thanked him for the strength he gave us all, and we committed ourselves to understanding what it's like to be homeless, without judgment, fear, or shame.

I went into this experience thinking that I was helping the homeless, and came out with the understanding that they helped me grow as a person. It was a wonderful experience and one I recommend. Please feel free to reach out to me if you'd like to hear more. And I thank God and Rev. Diane for arranging this experience.

Reaching Boston's Homeless at CityReach by Charlotte Pierce

Did you know that there are more than 8,000 of our fellow Bostonians who don't have beds to sleep in at night? That some of them are current or former college students, married couples, teachers, restaurant workers, and parents? On April 28th and 29th, Lillian Wilcox of St. John's and her friend Lizzie Clackson from the Cambridge School of Weston joined other teens from churches around the region at the Common Cathedral in Boston for CityReach (commoncathedral.org/cityreach). The participants had raised funds and gathered essentials like clothing, toiletries, rolling suitcases, shoes & socks, sleeping pads, and blankets to distribute to the homeless. Friday evening started off with an orientation and a walk with CityReach staff around the Boston streets. Then Common Cathedral pastor Mary Eaton led participants in an open-air service on Boston Common near the fountain. That night the teens, together with chaperones Laura Manion, Christine Carney, and Charlotte Pierce, slept on the stone floor of the common cathedral at St. Paul's. We won't guarantee there was no snoring!

In the morning, we divided up into groups to welcome people and to distribute our contributions to the hundreds of homeless who had lined up at the cathedral door.

The kids made some great new friends from the staff, including JR, Anthony, Patrick, Katie, Mike, Susan, and John, and forged a few more nodes in the network of acceptance, respect, and support for those who are homeless in Boston. Kudos to our teens for their commitment to this project, and thanks to St. John's for sponsoring us! The St. John's group, adults and teens alike, came away deeply moved and informed by their experience, and motivated to make a difference.

Ministry Opportunities

Neighbors Eating All Together – NEAT by Laura Manion

For the very first time, St John's will be hosting a free community dinner for Arlington residents. The dinner will take place from 5-6 pm on Saturday, May 20th. This outreach event is a town-wide collaboration between the Arlington Food Pantry, Food Link, the Calvary Methodist Church, the Park Avenue Congregational Church, Whole Foods Market, and our own St. John's member, Joe Curro. We are excited to be serving a full meal to up to 80 guests including pasta, bread, salad, coffee/tea and desserts. Please look out for our poster; and please, if you're available, we are looking for volunteers to help send out flyers, get the word out and maybe even serve the guests. A sign up sheet is up in the parish hall. Please see Christine Carney, Cate Barr, Rev. Wong or myself for further questions or ideas. We are hoping that this will become a regular event here at St. John's where by our mission of being Jesus' stewards can be fulfilled. Thank you for any help you can offer.

Garden Committee Update by Jan Ford

Many thanks to Jacqueline Barnard, Cate Barr, Lyca Blume, Jeanne Danton, and Sarah Phillips who are serving on the garden committee. We are the folks who will be looking at the space beside the church on Lombard Rd. and developing a plan. We are considering the creation of a memory garden, with native plantings and memorial stones forming a path through the space. Our hope is that it will provide a quiet and beautiful space for contemplation. It will probably be fall before we can begin, and we will be meeting before then to finalize the plans before presenting them to the parish. There will be opportunities to donate plants and memorial stones as the garden takes shape.

Attic Archaeology by Vicki Ford

Do you ever feel buried by all those papers, and the memorabilia, that are on your desk, or in boxes around you? Come learn about St. John's rich history, how we have worked together on fairs, dinners, church school, and community projects, and supported members of our armed forces, by making an inventory of the attic documents and memorabilia. We have about 24 drawers and boxes to be inventoried. Please sign up on the clipboard downstairs in the parish hall, or email Vicki Ford (vpford@gmail.com) to indicate the times that you can come. Frank and Vicki, with Billy Towle's help, have already done several boxes, and will work a box alongside you to teach you how on weekdays or weekends, whatever works for you. Team members so far are Vesna Gronosky and the Gillises. Mary Jo Larson, Jan Ford, and others will help us decide what to keep or toss. Although the kickoff for this project is Sunday, May 21 after coffee hour, feel free to pitch in beforehand. We'd like to get as much done as we can before it gets too hot. For questions, please email Vicki Ford at vpford@gmail.com.

Guest Speaker on Mission and Refugee Ministry, Sunday, May 21st

Please welcome Laura Walta to St. John's on Sunday, May 21st. Laura is the project director for global missions of the diocese. She will be sharing her passion for mission and refugee ministry with us at both services. You will enjoy – and be inspired by – hearing her speak.



Food Pantry: We encourage people to continue to drop off food for the Food Pantry. We collect and donate food throughout the year – donation baskets are at the rear of the Sanctuary. Additionally, the Food Pantry is always in need of volunteers. Visit the website <http://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/health-human-services/food-pantry> or see the posters on the downstairs bulletin board for more information.

Conversation Practice for English Language Learners (ELL's): We are pleased to announce that St. John's will continue to host an intermediate-level conversation group for ELL's as part of our outreach program over the summer. The group will meet on Thursdays 7-8:30 pm, June 22nd to August 11th in the Memorial Room. Our classes are facilitated and administered by English at Large, a nonprofit organization founded in the early 1970's to provide free classes to help refugees and immigrants learn English and become accustomed to and integrated into American life more easily. Facilitators are trained in a free, 3-hr session by English at Large. English at Large is also looking for tutors to teach English one-on-one, and will give them the required 12-hr training for free. If you would like to observe a class and see if the format is interesting to you, please email Vicki Ford at vpford@gmail.com.

Outreach Committee: Our Outreach Committee is energized and gearing up for activities into the Fall of 2017. We hope to offer more Community Dinners with Neighbors Eating All Together (NEAT). And please see the Coffeehouse Concert flyer on the last page, highlighting the amazingly talented musicians who will be performing in our gorgeous sanctuary this Summer and Fall. Please feel free to reach out to Laura Manion or Cate Barr, co-chairs, if you wish to get involved! We have much to offer here at St. John's, and we're excited about sharing our talents and blessings with our community. Laura: manion63@verizon.net or 617-852-1380 Cate: cate.barr@cengage.com or 781-999-0518

Congratulations to the Nyamekye-Blankson Household

Their daughter, Andrea, graduated from UMASS Amherst on May 12th, 2017. In addition, unbeknownst to many of us, Emelia received her Master of Science in Applied Nutrition on the same weekend. Cheers to both Andrea and Emelia.

Worship




**On most Sundays, we hold worship services at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.
Church school (for children ages 4-11 years), and nursery care (for children
ages 6 months to 3 years) are available on Sundays during the 10 a.m. service.
Choir rehearsal is Sunday at 9 a.m. – Come lend your voice to the choir !**

Altar Flowers: We invite people to use Altar Flowers to remember, celebrate, or give thanks for special occasions or people. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Miriam Davison 781-643-1679.

St. John's "Financial Snapshot" for April 2017
Submitted by Vernon Brown, Chairman, Finance Committee

- Collections (plate and pledge) for April were \$11,204.75; \$884 over budget.
- Year to Date collections were \$36,708.75; \$494 under budget.
- Expenses for April were \$16,024.92; \$4,159.25 under budget.
- Expenses Year to Date were \$54,758.69; \$13,345.75 under budget.
- For the year to date, excluding capital items of revenue and expense, net funds flow was positive at \$5,823.14. Total Expenses exceed pledge and plate collections because of rents and special gifts.




**River of Life:
Connecticut River
Pilgrimage
May 31 - July 9,
2017**

40 days of Pilgrimage
Join us for a day, a week, or the entire journey!!

Rejoice in and give thanks for the miracle of all life that is made possible by the grace of God through water.

Come on a spiritual journey of renewal, restoration, and reconciliation, shaped by the Christian tradition, along the Connecticut River, from the Source to the Sea.

The River of Life pilgrimage is sponsored by the Episcopal Dioceses of New Hampshire, Vermont, Western Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Maine, in partnership with Province I of the Episcopal Church, the New England Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and Kairos Earth.



Weekly schedule

May 31 - June 10:
4th Connecticut Lake to Littleton, NH

June 10 - June 17:
Littleton, NH to Hanover, NH

June 17 - June 25:
Hanover, NH to Brattleboro, VT

June 25 - July 2:
Brattleboro, VT to Springfield, MA

July 2 - July 9:
Springfield, MA to Long Island Sound

For more info and to register
kairosearth.org/river
river@kairosearth.org



St. John's Coffeehouse

74 Pleasant St., Arlington MA 02476

781-648-4819 + stjohns02476@gmail.com

Concerts benefit the Arlington Food Pantry, Affordable Housing (HCA) & other community outreach missions.

Sat May 13
7:30p



Lori Diamond & Fred Abatelli

*magical, inspirational americana
with local opener*

TICKETS: DiamondFred.bpt.me

Sat Jun 10
7:30p



Goodnight Moonshine w/Molly Venter

award-winning New England favorite; local opener

TICKETS: GoodMoon.bpt.me

Sat Jul 8
7:30p



Shizue Sano, pianist

annual classical recital incl. Liszt

TICKETS: ShizueSano.bpt.me

Sat Sep 9
7:30p



Reggie Harris, inspirational folk

with local opener

TICKETS: ReggieHarris.bpt.me

Sat Oct 14
7:30p



August Watters & Virginia Eskin

*"Beethoven's Mandolin"
piano & mandolin*

TICKETS: WattersEskin.bpt.me



Rev. Diane Wong's office hours - Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at St. John's.

Please feel free to arrange with Rev. Diane for other times to meet.

Her cell phone number is 617-417-8102.

Her email is: dianeckwong@gmail.com

Church Office is open M, W, Th 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Please call to see if the office is open at other times.

Church Office Phone: 781-648-4819 Email: st.johns_arlington@verizon.net