

# The Messenger

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

Summer 2008

## Father Walt's "In the Wilderness Musings"

This will be the last of "Father Walt's Wilderness Musings" in "The Messenger" because I'm ready and anxious to pass the torch to our new Rector, Father John P. Thompson, who, God and the moving company willing, will be celebrating his first Sunday with us on August 10<sup>th</sup>. As you continue to check out this issue of "The Messenger" you will find a letter from our Senior Warden, Karen Flynn, introducing Fr. John to all the members of the parish family. I know that you, like the Search Committee, the Vestry, and this Supply Priest are excited about his coming to share Christ's ministry with us in the Church of St. John in the Wilderness. His coming means among other things, that the next issue of "The Messenger" will begin with "Fr. John's Wilderness Musings" or whatever he may choose to call it.

I am thankful, however, for the opportunity to complete my historical survey of the Anglican Church, the Episcopal Church, and the Anglican Communion in the hope of shedding some light on the current controversies within the Anglican Communion in general, and the Episcopal Church in particular. We ended part 1 of this account with the development of the "Elizabethan Settlement", which sought to bring together the Puritans and the Papists through the adoption of a "middle way" ("via media") drawing on the best resources of the Roman Catholic tradition out of which we came: (the primacy of the Eucharist; the Sacramental Life; the three-fold ministry of

Bishops, Priests and Deacons, etc.) And the influence of the Protestant Reformation (worship in the language of the people, the Bible in the hands of the laity, married clergy, the freedom of the pulpit, the rejection of papal claims, and the emphasis of faith over works in the Christian life.). As the centuries progressed there were other influences on the Church, though the "Via Media" remained the centerpiece. Oliver Cromwell tried to install a radical version of Protestantism, which succeeded, among other crimes, in the demolition of much of sacred art in stained glass and statuary in the churches of England. Then there was the Wesleyan movement, which sought to change the Church of England from a class-bound church of the privileged (often referred to as the "Tory Party at Prayer") to a more inclusive church that welcomed workers and farmers into the church - Wesley declaring that the "world was his parish". There was the Evangelical movement which gave rise to a vibrant missionary outreach throughout the Empire where the Gospel had never been heard, and the organization of missionary societies to spread the Christian Faith, especially in places like Africa and India. Finally there was the "Oxford Movement" which called the Church to a renewed emphasis on its Catholic heritage, enriching the church's worship, and calling it to a passion for social action among the poor and the dispossessed



in England and in the world. Early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Anglicanism came to America which is where our historical survey resumes.

On April 10, 1606, a royal charter was granted for a settlement in Virginia, and on April 26<sup>th</sup> of that year three ships sailed from England to the settlement of Jamestown on the Chesapeake, with the first settlers on board. Included among them was a Church of England priest, Robert Hunt, who, on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1607, conducted the first service of Holy Communion according to the Book of Common Prayer in the American colonies. A parish was organized. Services were held every day (Morning and Evening Prayer) and soon a church building was constructed, in which the Indian princess, Pocahontas, was baptized and married to John Rolfe. Soon Church of England parishes were being established throughout the colonies, especially in the southern and middle Atlantic states, though after the landing of the Mayflower, the Puritans on board, who were Calvinist Protestants, began organizing churches which began to predominate in the New England colonies (Congregational and later Unitarian churches). For the time being, the Anglicans in the colonies were comfortably settled in their Church of England parishes, with their beloved Prayer Book enjoying a “little bit of England” in their worship and parish life.

In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, American colonists were becoming more than a little bit fed up with what they considered to be the undue and oppressive influence of the British Crown and its soldiers and bureaucrats. Some barrels of tea were “deep sixed”, accompanied by the mantra “no taxation without representation.” In 1776 a “Declaration of Independence” was issued, finally resulting in the waging of a Revolutionary War in which the colonial minutemen defeated the British “red coats”

and American began the process of freeing itself from English rule. With the development of the Articles of Confederation and the Constitutional Convention which drew up a Constitution for the new nation, the United States of America was born. Needless to say if you were an Anglican Christian at the time, it was probably not a good plan to refer to your places of worship as the Church of England. In 1780 a conference of clergy and laity was convened in Chestertown, Maryland, to find a less “loaded” name for our church. They came up with the title, “The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America”. Their choice was deliberate. They wanted to say that we remained a church governed by Bishops (Episcopal comes from the Greek word “episcopus” meaning “bishop”), but they also wanted to distinguish our church from the only other ecclesiastical body in America which was governed by bishops, the Roman Catholic Church, so they inserted the qualifier “Protestant” and they wanted it to be crystal clear that we saw ourselves as loyal citizens of the United States of America, who in our Sunday worship would be praying for the “President of the United States, and all in authority”, not “our gracious sovereign George”. It all got off to a rather shaky start, because there remained some clergy and laity who remained loyal to the Crown (Tories). Most of them, however, returned to England or headed up to Canada, and the Episcopal Church became a distinctly American denomination. In 1789 the first “General Convention” of the newly reorganized church was held, which drew up the Constitution and Canons for the Episcopal Church, elected William White, the Bishop of Pennsylvania as the first “Presiding Bishop” of the church and

**(Continued on Page 5 )**

# Welcome, Father John!

July 14, 2008

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

We wanted to write to inform you that the Rev. John P. Thompson has accepted Vestry's call to be the new rector of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness. In addition, we are pleased that there were several very talented and well qualified candidates who were part of the discernment process for rector at St. John's.

Early in June, four members of the search committee traveled to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, to visit Father John in Fayette, where he is currently a supply priest at St. Michael's Episcopal Church. We then, in turn, invited him to come to Copake Falls to visit with members of the search committee and the Vestry and to be interviewed by Bishop William Love. During these visits, we were impressed with many of his fine qualities, including his sermon at St. Michael's Episcopal in Fayette, his quiet and focused demeanor, his listening abilities, his prayerful and playful presence with all of us, and his generosity of spirit which is accompanied by a keen sense of humor.

Father John grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and is the eldest of five. He was born with a short left arm and leg; his spiritual autobiography says that "in spite of this, I attended regular schools, had many friends, and was very active - even in sports - while growing up." Before becoming a priest, Father John's career included working as an Employment Specialist, a Substance Abuse Counselor, Behavior Specialist Consultant/Mobile Therapist, and Supported Housing Counselor, from 1988 to 2002. He then received the call to become a priest and, in 2005, he received a Master of Divinity from the University of the South, School of Theology. Previously he received a Masters in Theology from the University of Steubenville in 1987, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with a minor in Religious Studies from Cardinal Stritch College (1982). In 2005 he began his ministry by serving as Rector at Christ the Redeemer Episcopal Church in Montgomery and then as interim Rector at St. Matthias in Tuscaloosa.

One of his e-mails after he had accepted the call to St. John's included the remark that "I am very happy and excited about coming!" We share in that happiness and excitement and hope that all of you do as well.

In peace,

Karen Flynn  
Senior Warden of the Vestry

## A Special Thank You from CAN:

We would like to thank you for your support of Roe Jan C.A.N.'s (Churches Assisting Neighbors) Super Smorgasbord which was held on June 22 as part of the Copake Community Day celebration. The afternoon thunderstorms did not deter the 50 people who shared up to dine on delicious entrees and desserts prepared by members of our local churches. Your generosity helped raise over \$800 for this worthy project!

Donations are welcomed to support CAN which helps people in our community in need of food or clothing or to offset utility bill payments. Donations are tax deductible and may be sent to  
CAN c/o Bill VonArcken  
292 Yonderview Road  
Hillsdale, NY 12529

Thanks again for your support. A special thanks to the set-up and clean-up crew!

Susan Mollo

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### The 2008 Convention: Another Perspective

While other Episcopal dioceses struggle with complex issues related to human sexuality, the Diocese of Albany has found the key to clarity: ***Just pass laws.*** With Bishop Love's vocal support, the 2008 Diocesan Convention created two new canons. One prohibits Albany clergy from participating in or blessing same sex unions and forbids the use of diocesan property for such ceremonies. The other denies discernment for ordination to anyone who is not conventionally married or celibate and abstinent. Both resolutions passed by wide

margins. So did a resolution to explore instituting a diocesan tithe.

Several other resolutions had unexpected trouble getting to the floor. On Friday night, using a procedure said to be "common at General Convention," the Bishop referred them to subsets of the Diocesan Council and Standing Committee, the former including Marya. Albany Via Media-supported resolutions to do away with "parish choice" and to remove Albany from the Anglican Communion Network were altered without consultation with their authors, then sent to the floor with strong (11-1 and 12-0) recommendations that they be defeated. One conservative priest objected to the last minute changes, but to no avail. Time was short – the Eucharist loomed – and debate was restricted. Both resolutions failed, again by very wide margins.

That the new canons passed was no surprise, given Bp. Love's strong support for them. Their human implications, which some speakers noted and which include a very dark message for youngsters struggling with their sexuality, seemed to be less important to the Convention than "clarity."

That the AVM-supported resolutions were defeated was also no surprise. We were startled that the Diocese felt obliged to insure that result by tampering with them at the eleventh hour and subjecting them to a pre-vote. However, the parliamentary maneuver is oddly flattering. Evidently, Albany Via Media and its constituents are too vocal to ignore.

In summary, then:

1. The 2008 Convention removed all doubts about Albany's very strong conservative - evangelical bias. In that sense, the diocese "came out" after years of pretending to be "Network-Lite." Do the

lopsided votes by priests, deacons, and laity accurately reflect sentiment in the pews? That's not clear, but many of our moderate to progressive friends stayed away from Speculator, citing reasons that ranged from family or work commitments to "I wouldn't be caught dead..."

2. The Diocese voted to continue parish choice, which allows churches to redirect funds that would otherwise go to the national Church. Those parishes that oppose the national Church can continue to stiff it, and those that are at odds with the Diocese of Albany can stiff it too. Is this immoral? Of course it is. A conservative priest said to Bob at a recent deanery meeting, "It's God's money. We shouldn't use it to fight each other." She then voted against our resolution to end parish choice and commit everyone to pay his/her fair share.

3. Albany reaffirmed its affiliation with the Anglican Communion Network, which, though repackaged as the Common Cause Partnership, continues to undermine our Church and seeks to replace it in the Worldwide Anglican Communion. "No one can serve two masters..." says Matthew 6:24. Peter Akinola, the fiery, homophobic Archbishop of Nigeria, said the same thing when he asked a recent gathering in the secessionist Diocese of Pittsburgh, "Are you Episcopal or are you Network?"

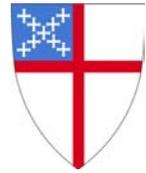
Akinola saw no middle ground for people of integrity. Neither do we.

Bob and Marya Dodd

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**Father Walt's Musings,  
cont'd :**

authorized an Americanized version of the Book of Common Prayer. (Please note that in any other provinces of the Anglican Communion, Bishop White would have been named an "Archbishop", but the term "Presiding Bishop" seemed to have a more democratically American ring, and was free of English overtones, which were sour notes in the U.S.A.) The primary consideration for our "fathers in the faith" in this country was that at every level of our church's organizational life, democracy, in its peculiarly American expression, would hold sway. Let's see how that worked out beginning at the local (parish) level and extending to the national level.



We begin where we are, in a local parish, the Church of St. John in the Wilderness, Copake Falls, which like every Episcopal Church, is a Corporation, duly incorporated under state law. The "Board of Directors" of this corporation is called the vestry, comprised of parishioners who have been elected to their positions at our Annual Parish Meeting. The "Chairman of the Board" is the Rector, a priest who has been elected to his or her position by the vestry of the parish, upon the recommendation of a search committee. The Vestry, among others things, passes budgets, maintains the property, draws up by-laws for the governance of the parish, supports Christian Education programs, and fosters activities that promote the welfare of the church and the establishment of a sense of community and mutual care.

Parishes in a given region, in turn, are organized into deaneries who meet together to discuss and address regional concerns. St. Johns belongs to the "Hudson Valley Deanery", one of six deaneries in the Diocese of Albany. This deanery comprises all the parishes and missions in Columbia

and Greene Counties. Deanery delegates are elected at the Annual Meetings of the parishes involved and are presided over by a "Dean", who, in the Diocese of Albany is appointed by the Bishop. The president of the deanery is elected by deanery delegates - a position which our own Harry Koeppel has held for many years, with distinction. Our present Dean is the Very Rev. Susan Baker-Burleson, Rector of Christ Church, Coxsackie. The deanery is sort of like the county in civil government.

The next higher level of church government is the diocese, which roughly corresponds to the state level in civil government, though there can be as few as one or as many as eight dioceses in any one state of the union. In the State of New York there are six dioceses. St. John's is located in the Diocese of Albany and we are the southernmost parish in the diocese, a diocese which is bounded on the south by the Diocese of New York, to the west by the Diocese of Central New York and extends along the north-eastern boundary of the state all the way up to the Canadian border. A diocese is presided over by a bishop who shares the governance of the diocese with a legislative body that meets annually called the diocesan convention, composed of all the clergy of the diocese and three lay delegates from elected at the annual meetings of all the parishes in the diocese. The present Bishop of Albany is the Rt. Rev. William Love (nice name for a bishop, isn't it?) who, like all Episcopal Bishops, was elected by a special convention comprised of the delegates elected to the last regular session of the diocesan convention. The delegates to the diocesan convention pass the budget, elect persons to various diocesan offices and commissions, pass diocesan canons, and resolutions, and receive reports from various diocesan commissions and boards.

During the year the work of the diocese is

administered by two committees, the diocesan council which supervises the programs and budget of the diocese, and the standing committee, which rules on legal matters. In addition there is a paid staff which carries out the work of the diocese and committees the members of which are elected by delegates to the convention.

Just as parishes in a given area are organized into deaneries, so dioceses are organized into "provinces". There are nine provinces in the Episcopal Church: Province 1 is composed of all the dioceses in the new England states. The Diocese of Albany belongs to Province 2, which is composed of all the dioceses in New York and New Jersey, Haiti and the Virgin Islands. Delegates to the annual Provincial synod are elected by each of the constituent dioceses at their diocesan conventions, and again, they meet to discuss and address regional concerns.

Finally we come to the national level. Like our federal government, the Episcopal Church has a bicameral legislature corresponding to the Senate and House of Representatives, but in the case of the Church, called the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. The House of Bishops is composed of all the bishops of the Episcopal Church, active and retired, all of whom, you will remember had been democratically elected to their positions. The presiding officer of the House of Bishops is the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church who is elected by his or her brother and sister bishops in the House of Bishops. The present Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is the Most Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori, who functions in our church government much like the President of the United States functions in our federal government. The House of Deputies is composed of delegations of four clergy and four lay people elected by each of the

dioceses of the Episcopal Church at their Annual Conventions. The meeting of the two chambers, once every three years is called the General Convention. Like the diocesan conventions General Convention passes changes to the constitution and canons, elects people to various offices at the national level, passes budgets, approves resolutions, and, in general, carries out the business of the church. Any action which the General Convention proposes must pass with a concurrent majority in both houses. The programs between General Conventions are administered by what is called the Executive Council which the Presiding Bishop chairs, and carried out by various commissions of elected and appointed members.

The most important thing to be observed in this historical survey is how our church, at every level, is democratically governed and laity play a very influential role. This, I believe, is a very positive thing, but it is not without its problems, some of which have been recently emerging. The first problem is that the ultra conservative members have always been a very small minority in our denomination. Thus when they attempt to propose legislation that would give voice to their firmly held positions opposing canonical changes, for example, that have allowed women to be ordained priests and bishops in the Church; revised the Book of Common Prayer, involved the church in programs of social action that they see as being politically, not biblically, based; and now have approved the election of an openly gay bishop and are considering the development of rites for the blessing of same-sex unions, their proposals, put up to a majority vote are almost always soundly defeated. Thus these church members who usually like to be known as “orthodox” or “bible believing” or “traditionalist” Episcopalians have increasingly felt alienated and dismissed by

the Church which they consider to have been taken over by a bunch of ultra liberals who have sacrificed Biblical truth to the latest sociological trends. Though these “traditionalist Episcopalians are a bare minority in the Episcopal Church, they are not in the minority in the Anglican Communion as a whole. In this century, the vast majority of Anglicans are located in dioceses south of the equator - especially in Africa. American “traditionalist” Episcopalians are seeking to forge alliances with African and South American Bishops who share their views, but who also represent churches that have no democratic form of church government whatsoever. When Archbishop Akinola of Nigeria, one of the leaders of this movement to forge new alliances and perhaps form another expression of the Anglican Communion parallel to the present one, speaks, for example, his word is law. And now some Episcopal parishes and at least one diocese have voted to leave the Episcopal Church and put themselves under the authority of Bishop Akinola and other African and South American bishops, seeing them as champions of biblical orthodoxy who share their deeply held convictions. The Diocese of Albany is a fairly conservative diocese which has voted 2/3 and 1/3 roughly to be in conversation with like-minded “orthodox” Anglicans, but it is not yet prepared to secede from the Episcopal Church.

Peace,

Father Walt

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## August and September Birthdays

August 15	Jane Kay
August 25	Emily Louise Kay
September 4	Beverly Mitchell
	Jane Peck
September 8	Virginia Boughton
September 9	Jessica Kay
September 23	Gabrielle Marie Kay
	Genevieve Annette Kay
September 27	Rebecca Briggs



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## Lay Ministries - July and August 2008

Date	Altar	Ushers	Lector	Prayers	LEM
7/27 8 am	Mibs	Croteau			Koeppel
10 am		S. Mollo J. Peck	P. Royal	K. Kay	M. Dodd
8/3 8 am	Lucy	Garrett			Koeppel
10 am		D. Baker J. Baker	Freeston	M. Kay	M. Dodd
8/10 8 am	Elen	Croteau			Koeppel
10am		S. Mollo L. Eldridge	D. Baker	P. Royal	J. Peck
8/17 8am	Jane	Garrett			Koeppel
10am		R. Dodd C. Fox	K. Kay	M. Kay	P. Royal
8/24 8am	Wendy	Croteau			Koeppel
10am		D. Baker J. Baker	Freeston	Eldridge	J. Peck
8/31 8am	Mibs	Garrett			Koeppel
10 am		S. Mollo C. Fox	Lucy E.	K. Kay	P. Royal

Please take note of the Lay Ministry assignments in this table. If you cannot fulfill your 'job', please get a substitute. We need more volunteers for these jobs. If you would like to usher occasionally, or read the lessons or the prayers, please let us know at [maryadodd@hotmail.com](mailto:maryadodd@hotmail.com)



Figure 4

## Country Fair and Auction & Barbecue

It was hard work while we were doing it, but as I look back on the past weekend I smile and say to myself “This family of St. John’s(with some very good friends) is really something!” As the years go by, the CF&A and BBQ seem more and more impossible for so few to assume, but then everyone steps forward and takes on a part (or many parts) and everything falls into place. There were new faces and many long time faithful workers, and we certainly lucked out on the weather. The crowd was smaller than in the past, perhaps because of the poor state of the economy, but those who did come went away happy.

Our treasurer anticipates that we will realize a profit of about \$5000.00. This is less than we made last year, but it will still help balance the budget. I would like to thank my co-chairperson Kathy Haight, Auction chairperson Harry Koeppel, Karen Flynn as chairperson of the BBQ, and Treasurer Jane Peck. We could not have done it without all those who helped to set up; picked up donations; worked the Snack Bar, Trash ‘n Treasures, Boutique, Gourmet table, Toys, and Books & Records; greeted visitors to the church; provided activities for the children; the auctioneer and those who helped with the auction; provided music and electricity; parked cars; sold raffle tickets; took care of publicity; prepared the BBQ’ and finally cleaned up and placed everything back in storage. Some of you did far more than your fair share, but almost everyone did *something*, and that’s the secret of our success.

Thank you all!

Marilyn Kay, Co-Chairperson