

A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness
Copake Falls, New York
January 2012

Thoughts from the Wilderness

We've had another good year at The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness. It was again filled with new blessings, new opportunities, and new challenges. We have made significant progress in raising funds for and organizing the repair of our beautiful bell tower. Thank you to our Building and Grounds Committee led by Hank Croteau for their diligence and hard work.

Thank you to our *new* Stewardship Committee for their creative, hard work in organizing multiple successful events involving both our congregation and the wider community. These events (e.g., the enjoyable and successful Bell Tower Benefit Dinner at the rectory and the tasty salad bar along with sausage & peppers on Copake Falls Day) were enjoyable and they also raised funds for the church, particularly the bell tower. Committee member Lucy Eldridge, with assistance from Bob Callahan (also on the Stewardship Committee), completed multiple successful grant proposals for our bell tower. Thank you to Dale and Louise Peterson, Bob Callahan, Wendy Langlois, Lucy Eldridge, Mary Ellen Baker, and Susan Mollo.

Thank you to the whole parish and many in the wider community for great generosity to St. John's bell tower fund.

Thank you to Elen Freeston for chairing our *revamped* Country Fair and Auction so successfully. And thank you to Bob and Karen Flynn for another absolutely delicious BBQ on

CF&A Sunday. Thank you to Harry Koeppel for chairing the Auction this year.

Thank you to Ellen Freeston and Wendy Langlois for organizing our Community Pot-Luck Supper in November at the Copake Town Park Community Building. It was a well attended, fun time of fellowship for St. John's and many in the wider community.

I want to thank those in our Greeters Ministry, *begun this year*, for making St. John in the Wilderness even more warm and welcoming to both members and visitors.

Thank you to Dale and Louise Peterson, Lucy Eldridge, Wendy Langlois and others for making our gardens beautiful.

Thank you to our Building and Grounds Committee for continued maintenance of our beautiful buildings and grounds. Most recently, with Senior Warden Wendy Langlois' help, they have addressed a serious flooding/mold problem in and around Burke Hall. Major renovation was needed and is in process. Thank you to Henry Croteau, Bob Callahan, Charles Fox, Jane Peck, Harry Garrett, and Bob Flynn. And also thank you to Harry Koeppel for creative interior design work. Their skill and hard work are greatly appreciated.

Thank you to our Senior Warden Wendy Langlois for her work including her excellent and dedicated ministry of Children's Christian Formation. Thank you to Madeline Nicholson of the Discipleship/Growth Committee for creating Welcome Bags, and getting *new* St. John in the



Wilderness pens—which are now available in the back of the church. We've again welcomed wonderful new members to St. John in the Wilderness this year to join our wonderful existing membership in the body of Christ.

Thank you to those on our *new* Communications Google Group for their great work in the area of parish communications: bulletin, newsletter, website, posters, media, publicity, etc. This group is further integrating, coordinating, and streamlining their already excellent work of spreading the good news of the life and many activities in and around St. John in the Wilderness. Thanks to Dale Peterson for assuming the leadership of this group. Thank you to members Dale, John Thompson, Charley Musselman, Elen Freeston, Jane Peck, Lucy Eldridge, Louise Peterson, Milbrey Zelley, Wendy Langlois, and Robert Callahan.

Thank you to Dale and Louise Peterson for taking on the significant ministry of editing our parish newsletter, *A Voice in the Wilderness*. It's looking great.

Thank you to Lucy Eldridge and Mibs Zelley for continuing to help bring us the wonderful Winds in the Wilderness concert series. We also *began* a very successful, popular Jazz Vespers series this past year where we combined great jazz music with creative worship. Thanks to all who have helped with this.

Just last month we hosted a wonderful hand bell concert which benefited our bell tower fund. We also had a very well attended "Blue Christmas" service for the first time, which received excellent feedback.

We've continued our well attended and spiritually fruitful Centering Prayer/Divine Reading

Group Wednesdays at 3 p.m. And we've added to that our Lectionary Bible Study, Tuesdays at 7 p.m. This has also been well received, particularly in the warmer months.

I want to thank our Vestry and Wardens for their dedication and hard work throughout 2011. Thank you Wendy Langlois (Senior Warden), Elen Freeston (Junior Warden), Rebecca Garrard, Karen Flynn, Henry Croteau, Charles Fox, Robert Callahan, and Steve Savarese. Thank you also for the diligent work of our treasurer and Vestry clerk, Jane Peck and Marilyn Kay. Thank you to all who participate in our other committees: Graveyard, Finance, Birthday and Memorial Candle Fund.

Thank you to members of ECW and all the other parishioners who again this year worked generously in the work of Outreach to the wider community. Thanksgiving Baskets (with leadership from Edie Froggatt—with help, as she was ill), 'Shoobox' ministry and Christmas Baskets (both with leadership from Susan Mollo), and Christmas Friends ministry (with leadership from Babs Croteau) each, with the support of this parish and our ecumenical partners made a significant difference in the lives of many in this community and beyond.

Thank you all for your ministry to each other in the liturgy – from the beautiful music made by our choir (and all who make a joyful noise) with the ever talented leadership of our organist/choir director Edie Hedrick, to the dedicated ministry of our lectors, prayers (POP), Eucharistic ministers, servers, ushers, and crucifers. For example, David Chittick and Harry Koeppel serve/acolyte at the vast majority of our 10 a.m. and 8 a.m. services. Thank you to our Altar Guild led by Elen Freeston, for consistently making our beautiful church even more beautiful.

A Voice in the Wilderness

Editors: Louise and Dale Peterson

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

Upcoming issues:

2012: March 18, May 20, July 1 (Country Fair), September 16, November 18.

2013: January 27.

Please submit reports, articles and news items two weeks prior to the issue date. Thanks!

Thank you to Jane Peck and Mibs Zelle for their tireless and good work in the ministry of creating our weekly bulletin. Thank you to the Rev. Walt Zelle for most ably filling in at the Eucharist and in pastoral care when I've been gone. And of course thanks to all who make our coffee hours times of friendly fellowship and delicious food for body and soul. Gary & Cathy Reinard have again graciously hosted bake sales for the benefit of St. John in the Wilderness at their KOA campground in 2011. Thank you to them and to all the bakers and supporters of this ministry.

However you participate in the ministries at St. John in the Wilderness, we thank you. Because of you we again have not had to utilize (to date) any of our endowment funds for parish expenses in 2011—even with these tough economic times. Thank you all for giving your time, talent, treasure, and prayers.

There are so many people to be grateful for at St. John in the Wilderness; please consider yourself thanked if the committee you are on has been mentioned. If I've forgotten to thank anyone for anything please tell me so I can do so.

What we do together is fruitful because we are the body of Christ. Let's continue to pray and

meditate on Scripture together. Again, I would love to see more of you at both our Contemplative Prayer/Divine Reading Group and our Lectionary Bible Study. Of course we can pray, read and study Scripture (and other inspired sources of wisdom) in our own homes—but it's good to be together.

We will continue with many of our great events from 2011, like our Hike and Bike Day. New things are also being planned such as a Blessing of Animals on St. Francis Day weekend.

2012 is the 160th anniversary of the beginning of St. John in the Wilderness. We will plan to commemorate/celebrate this.

We will again celebrate ERD Sunday the First Sunday in Lent, February 26th. Episcopal Relief and Development is a premiere relief and development organization. It is an international ministry of our own church. They (and we as we support them) alleviate hunger, create economic opportunity, fight disease, bring disaster relief and more.

Finally, the bishop's visitation is scheduled for September 30th of this year. Please put this on your calendar.

In peace, John

2012 Pledge Update

If you have not made your pledge to the Church for 2012, it is still not too late. New pledges will certainly help to offset our deficit budget. You may just write your pledge on a piece

of paper if you do not have a pledge card, put in envelope and with mail or drop in the collection plate on Sunday. Mail to: Church of St. John in the Wilderness, c/o Jane Peck, PO Box 82, Copake Falls, NY 12517

Jane Peck

Valentine's Day Dinner planned for Saturday February 11

Celebrate Valentine's Day with your sweetie at St. John in the Wilderness on Saturday, February 11, from 5:00 to 6:30 pm. The theme is "Dishes we love" -- favorite dishes prepared by members of the congregation. The menu will include outstanding appetizers, dinner dishes and



desserts from some the best cooks in the area. Flowers and special music are planned. The cost is only \$12, and children five and under are free. Beat that bargain at a restaurant! There will be a donation basket for wine which will also be served.

Beyond Copake Falls

“In the bleak midwinter...” things are quiet in The Episcopal Church as it gears up for this summer’s General Convention in Indianapolis. With decisions on the Covenant and blessing of same gender marriages high on its agenda, this Convention promises to be exciting, its implications profound.

While we await this big event in the life of our Church, here are a few news items of interest:

When members of several conservative-evangelical Episcopal dioceses (Pittsburgh, San Joaquin, Quincy, and Fort Worth)

left the Church, they sparked a struggle over property that continues today. Just who owns a parish: Its members, its diocese, or the Episcopal Church? The Church’s position – that parish and diocesan properties are held in trust for the diocese within the national Church – has been upheld in courts across the land. In only one case – Pawley’s Island, South Carolina -- did courts find for seceding parishioners and even that special case is still under review. The prevalent view, expressed in a blog comment is, “Go with God, but leave the silver behind.”

Bob Dodd

Good Winter Reads

Although you might need to be told after our sultry December, it’s winter: a good time to curl up by the fire and read. Here are some books that we Dodds have enjoyed recently.

Marcus J. Borg (Harper One, 2011) *Speaking Christian: Why Christian Words Have Lost Their Meaning and Power and How They Can Be Restored*. Marcus Borg is Professor and Chairman of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

This very readable book is a follow-on to Dr. Borg’s popular *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time* (2001). It is well organized and clearly written, a pleasure to read and full of valuable insights for thinking Christians. Appropriate for small group study, it includes a discussion guide with questions for each chapter.

So many words that we Christians use in worship and discussion are actually confusing and are stumbling blocks to understanding. Even after several university courses on the Bible and world religions as well as years of church activities and 4 years of EFM (Education for Ministry) training Marya found herself wanting to know just what we mean when we talk about concepts like “Salvation,” “Sin,” “The Rapture,” “Heaven and Hell,” and “Atonement.” As the author points out, one part of Christianity relates to these words very literally while a great many other Christians have other

understandings, producing virtually two religions. This book points out the problem and compares more recent meaning of Christian language with more traditional and biblical meanings. Bringing our way of “speaking Christian” into the 21st century, Borg reinvigorates the words and helps the confused believer and the “turned off” seeker read with clarity.

Another book that we have enjoyed and recommend highly is:

Bart D. Ehrman (Harper One, 2010) *Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible* .. Bart Ehrman is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at Oregon State University and a leader of the Jesus Seminar. Dr. Borg is now Canon Theologian at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Portland..

Ehrman, whose *Misquoting Jesus* was reviewed in an earlier St. John newsletter, combines deep knowledge of early Christian sources with an engaging writing style that makes his many books fun to read. In *Jesus, Interrupted*, he uses careful comparison of the Gospels, Acts, Paul’s letters, and other early writings – what he calls “reading horizontally” – to highlight their different takes on such events as Jesus’s baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection. These differences show in turn how early Christians, reacting to their own times and circumstances, gradually transformed the historical

Christmas Pageant, January 8, 2012



Upper left photo: Jeff Shea, Kaitlyn Platt, Ralph Platt, Corey Carter (front)

Lower left photo: Summer Shea

Photo above: Kaitlyn Platt, Corey Carter, Wendy Langlois



Jesus into the figure whom we know and revere as Christ.

The Borg and Ehrman books are thoughtful and thought-provoking. Marya recommends, just for fun, a series of books by Mark Schweizer called *The Liturgical Mysteries*. These, include *The Christmas Cantata* and *The Soprano Wore*

Falsettos. These zany stories about a police detective who is also the organist of his Episcopal church are good for snorts and laughs.

All of the books reviewed here are available from Amazon.com in both print and e-book formats.

Marya and Bob Dodd

Freddie Boughton – A Priest’s fond memories

It was almost thirty-four years ago that this “Jersey Boy” and his family chanced upon this “paradise in the Taconic Hills” known as Copake Falls. It took one night camping in the Taconic State Park for the Zelleys to decide that this was the place where we wanted to relax and vacation for the twenty years remaining before Milbrey and I were planning to retire, and where we would want to settle permanently after retirement.

We had never heard of Copake Falls. We had never heard of Columbia County. And our acquaintance with the State of New York was pretty much confined to Manhattan, the Finger Lakes, and Niagara Falls. How could we be sure that Copake Falls would turn out to be the paradise it first appeared to us to be? Would the winters be brutal? Would there be activities and cultural opportunities that we had become accustomed to enjoying living in a suburb of New York City? But most of all, would we Jersey “carpetbaggers” be accepted and welcomed by the “old timers” especially during the time we were only “weekenders?” And would we be able to find skilled people who could come to our rescue if we had problems with electricity, heating, plumbing, and auto repair? We had a wide circle of friends in Metuchen, having ministered and taught there for 28 years. How easy would it be for us to make friends there? All of these fears were quickly put to rest.

One of the first people to make us feel right at home in Copake Falls was a skilled mechanic who was the proprietor of what was then a gas station as well as an auto repair shop just around the corner from us on Route 22. He was a man of few words but many acts of kindness and was always there when we needed him. He always showed interest in our family and how we were adjusting to

life in the hamlet where he was a certified “old timer.” He went out of his way to make us feel welcome. His answers to my questions might often have been confined to a “yup,” but the twinkle in his eye was always there, and he treated us when we visited his repair shop in a way that brought to my mind the “Olive Garden Restaurant’s” motto, “When you’re here, you’re family.”

He was a man of great strength of character. Nobody ever doubted Freddie when he told them that a possibly expensive repair needed to be done, it really did. Ginny and his children and grandchildren never doubted that Freddie loved them, they knew he did. Freddie’s moral compass was always set right. There was a real inner strength in the man. There was an unbelievable outer strength as well. In his last years on this earth Freddie had a continuing battle with heart disease. If he were a lesser man it would have claimed him long before it did. I often joked with Ginny that Freddie reminded me of the inflated character that I had as a child that had sand in its lower extremities and when you punched it and it went down to the floor, it immediately always bounced back again. If I had given him the sacrament of anointing each time the doctors thought we might have lost him, Freddie would have slid into heaven. But I didn’t and he didn’t. His inner strength and his will to live and enjoy his family and his chosen vocation sustained him for a long, long time. Freddie wasn’t much of a “church-goer” as they say, but he was very much a “church liver” and was always a generous supporter of our beloved church of St. John in the Wilderness, which he knew had always played such an important role in the life of his family. And it was very important, it seems to me, that Fr. John was able to officiate at the celebration of Freddie’s life (while “keeping it simple” as Freddie had

stipulated) and that he was buried in St. John's cemetery. And I feel pretty comfortable in saying that when Freddie arrived at the Heavenly gates, our loving God was there to welcome him into that "paradise" in the heavenly heights, as Freddie

Boughton once welcomed the Zelleys into this "paradise in the Taconic Hills" so many years ago. May our beloved Freddie rest in peace.

Fr. Walton Zelle

Bell Tower Fund Update

Generous support continues to help the Bell Tower Fund grow. The hand bell concert by the Salisbury Congregational Church, under the direction of Mary Davidson, held on December 11th 2011 was deemed a wonderful success. It was a beautiful concert with festive greens decorating the church along with an appreciative and full audience who, from all accounts, had a great time. The Fund has reached \$47,500 as of January 20th.

Donations from members of the parish and community, granting agencies and local community groups, namely the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society and Copake Falls Day, have been received. Recently many gifts have been made to the Bell Tower Fund in memory of Fred Boughton and Bea Baxter. It is interesting to note that one third of our donations have come from the wider community underscoring the area's commitment to historic preservation and to our church and its activities. We are very grateful for all this support.

The architectural renovation firm, Landmarks Consulting, Inc. LLC, has been retained to assist in the preservation project of stabilizing the Bell Tower. Jack and Kim Alvarez of Landmarks Consulting have now supplied the church with a review set of drawings. Soon to follow will be a narrative from Landmark Consulting to accompany the drawings. We are looking forward to the project's implementation phase in the very near future. Plans are to have a celebratory event on Saturday May 19th to thank the parish and the community for their extraordinary efforts to assist with this important preservation project. The bell ringers from Salisbury Congregational Church have

offered to come back to St. John's to celebrate the bell tower completion and we are happy that the Bell Choir will be such an important part of our celebration on May 19th. So, please, save the date of May 19th to join the parish and community in helping us celebrate the completion of the Bell Tower Project with the ringing of the Salisbury Congregational Church's handbells, the ringing of St. John's own bell, and finally, to receive our heartfelt thanks.

Lucy Eldridge, Stewardship Committee

News from the Wilderness

Annual meeting. The church's annual meeting was held on January 15. Written reports were presented by committees and groups representing all aspects of the church's mission and operations. The annual report booklet was prepared by Hank Croteau, and copies are available for anyone who is interested in reviewing the many activities of the church during 2011. An election was held for new members of the Vestry. Dale Peterson and Jeanne Van Hoesen were elected as members of the Vestry and Karen Flynn was elected as Warden. A list of all Vestry members is on the back page of the Voice.

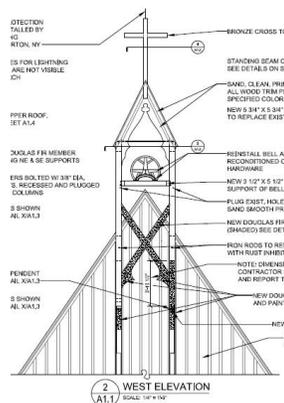
Condolences go out to Babs and Hank Croteau as well as extended family and friends on the passing of Babs' mother Bea Baxter on January 8.

Baptism. Rosanne Persico and Rebecca Garrard's daughter Emerson was baptised and welcomed into the church community during the service on Sunday, November 13.



Rebecca and Emerson

Wedding. Dale and Louise's daughter Alice was married to Mark Driscoll in New York City on November 12.



Travel. Marilyn and Kent Kay are now travelling in New Zealand, and Marion Henneman is leaving soon for the same destination. Perhaps they'll meet in the Southern hemisphere!

Linens. Lucy Eldridge has had great success selling many beautiful older linens that have been donated to the church. Check your closet: if you have linens please discuss a donation with Lucy.



Events in the Wilderness

Friday, February 10, 7:30 pm. Vestry meeting.

Saturday, February 11, 5:00 pm. Valentine's Dinner.

Sunday, February 19, 2:00 pm. Winds in the Wilderness concert.

Wednesday, February 22. Ash Wednesday.

Friday, March 9, 7:30 pm. Vestry meeting.

Sunday, April 1. Palm Sunday.

Friday, April 6. Good Friday.

Sunday, April 8. Easter.

Weekly events:

Tuesday, 7:00 pm. Lectionary Bible Study.

Wednesday, 3:00 pm. Contemplative Prayer Group.

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

The Rev. John Thompson, Rector

Elen Freeston, Sr. Warden
Karen Flynn, Jr. Warden

Vestry

Marilyn Kay, Clerk of the Vestry

Jane Peck, Treasurer

Robert Callahan Dale Peterson
Rebecca Garrard Jeanne Van Hoesen
Steve Savarese

Eucharists

Sunday, 8:00 AM (spoken)

Sunday, 10:00 AM (choral)

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