

# A Voice in the Wilderness

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

**Summer 2019**

**Into the Wilderness**

## Thoughts from the Wilderness June 2019

We all want to be safe, protected. If we are wise we also want to be courageous, that is we want to do the right thing, the truly loving thing even if there is some risk to us. So we need Jesus' prayers from his long prayer in John's gospel. Jesus says, "I ask you to protect them from evil" ([John 17:15](#)). Jesus also asks that we all may be one in love and that we will be strengthened and guided by God to do the right thing.

We need guidance and strength because it's not easy to know how to balance keeping ourselves safe and also doing the right thing when sometimes that is risky.

Preaching professor at Union Seminary in New York City, Barbara Lundblad says, "I remember talking to a woman whose son was in our youth group. This mother said, 'Every time my son goes out of the house, I say a prayer that he'll be safe because, you know, when there are more than two black boys walking down the street, people get suspicious. They attract attention from the police. It happens all the time,' she said. 'Even if they don't do anything, they're likely to get in trouble. So I keep praying until he comes back in the door.'"

This mother always prayed for her son's safety when he went out. She knew as an African-American that her son was at higher risk simply because of the color of his skin.

This mother is like Jesus in the full version of today's gospel prayer as Jesus prays for protection and safety for all of us from evil. Yet he also prays for our sanctification – that is that we would grow in righteousness, holiness and courage.

I pray that everyone in this country and the world is protected from the evils of violence – like gun violence.

There was another mass shooting in the US this weekend. So in addition to praying for protection and safety, I pray for courage in the leaders in this country to stand up against gun violence and against those who oppose sane gun laws.

I pray that the leaders of this country finally get the courage to stand up to lobbyists like the leadership of the NRA and some of the gun manufacturers – and that they do the right thing and pass sane gun laws even if they lose the financial backing of those who just don't understand.

Yes brothers and sisters we need to apply the wisdom of the Scriptures to today! We need to pray and be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance today about today's issues. We need to pray and act for safety and protection and also have the courage to stand up and speak the truth even though some don't like it.

The truth is might does not make right. The truth is as today's Psalm says, "Righteousness and justice are the foundations of God's throne" (Psalm 97:2). In other words God is not just powerful, God is righteous. That's what we're called to – righteousness, goodness, true peace. We're called to be peacemakers.

Psalm 97 also says, "Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in false Gods" ([vs. 7](#)). What are false gods today? There are many. Like overreliance on violence and the threat of violence – on the personal level which can lead to gun violence; on the national level, excessive reliance by the government on military might which can lead to unjust military action and wars like the war in Vietnam, like the war in Iraq based on lies about weapons of mass destruction or any connection to 9/11 – look what that's led to – look at the mess in the Middle East still.

Closer to home – you might say well I'm not about to engage in gun violence. But physical violence isn't the only kind of violence. Verbal violence is very common – even among those who call themselves Christian.

So we need God's strength in order to act wisely in ways that promote our own and others' safety and protection. We need God's strength to discern when to speak the truth in love even when people don't like it.

So let's pray and meditate. Because being depressed about our own faults or the violence and evil in the world – doesn't help. We need joy when things are going well. And we need joy even when things don't look good. Where does that kind of joy come from? Well – Scripture says the joy of the Lord is our strength (Nehemiah 8:10). So joy itself from God is our strength!

And we're getting that joy and strength this morning because worshiping God in our prayers and in our singing accesses God's joy, God's strength, God's protection, and God's courage! Like the rejoicing in today's Psalm 97 where it says, "The Lord is King; let the earth rejoice! Light has sprung up for the righteous, and joyful gladness for those who are true hearted!" And, "Rejoice in the Lord you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name!"

Jesus prays in the Gospel in an almost maternal way that we experience his and God the Father's love and protection. We pray then for God's love and protection for us and those we love, and for the whole world – and we pray that as we rejoice in this protection we then have the strength and courage to stand up and speak the truth in love and also act with justice and compassion. *Adapted from June 2, 2019 sermon.*

*In peace,  
John+*

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## From the Desk of the Senior Warden

I was recently challenged as to why, all else being equal, I always favor employing a woman professional or giving work to a woman-owned business. Let me try to explain.

When I was an architecture graduate student at Harvard in the early 1970's, 4% of the student body was female. It had been 2% just two years earlier. And the faculty was 100% white male. Women students would advise fellow women classmates to avoid certain professors, who had roving eyes or hands. I was asked to take my project down, on display for its excellence, because the eminent architect Philip Johnson "never reviewed" the work of a woman student. The only women bathrooms were on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (inconvenient for the secretarial staff too) and, oddly, student records were color coded: white for men and off-white for women. I could go on. In my professional life, in architecture, construction management and real estate development, I was almost always the only woman at decision-making meetings. At construction sites, I was the only woman, among a hundred men or so. At the end of my ten years of construction supervision, I did start to see a few women workers (painters and electricians). We all know that even if numbers have improved (Columbia University's architecture students are now gender equal), there is continued discrimination of women in the workplace, from salaries and promotions, to opportunities and glass ceilings.

So in my small way, when I can, I try to help women workers. Call it sexist: fine I call it reparations.

Reparations for African-Americans is going to be a hot and fascinating issue in this coming Democratic selection for a presidential candidate. We need to reflect on our privileges as white members of this society. I brought a friend to a service at St. John in the Wilderness the other day and she did comment on our racial homogeneity (she's Chinese-Philippine). The USA will be minority-majority within 20 or so years. We need to embrace these changes. We each have to do it our own way.

*In community,  
Marjorie Hoog*

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## Church Happenings, Old and New

*Flight: Birds of the Hudson Valley*, photographs by Heather Kitchen and Stephen Schumacher, Burke Hall Gallery, March 6 to May 19, 2019 was deemed a great success. An opening for the exhibition was held in Burke Hall, and was well attended. During subsequent Sundays, the two photographers attended coffee hour and spoke to parishioners about their work and their adventures as nature photographers.

Several of the photos were sold and two photographs will be part of the silent auction during the soiree, INTO THE WILDERNESS on July 13th. The fall exhibition, Night Walks, October 5-December 16, 2019 will feature the work of Peter N. Fritsch who paints naturalistic scenes of Copake, viewed at night.

The annual Easter Egg Hunt was held once again this year, and although rain descended on the participants, spirits were barely dampened. Many families have been coming for years to the event, with one family coming down from

Albany, just to enjoy the festivities.

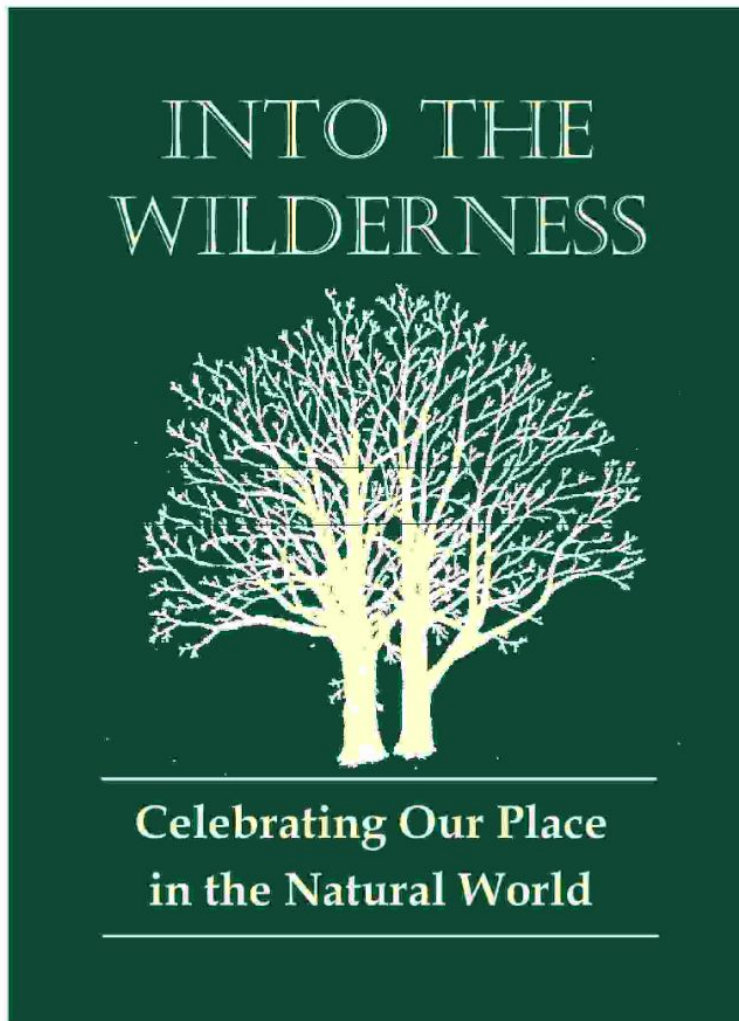
The church gardens this year look lovely, and with all the rain, the plants are flourishing. Several parish members were photographed next to the rhododendron in its full magnificent bloom.

A Hikers Raffle Basket in keeping with the soiree theme **INTO THE WILDERNESS** has been prepared for display and purchase of raffle tickets. Tickets can be purchased in Burke Hall in June and early July and then at the soiree, July 13<sup>th</sup>.

*Lucy Eldridge*



Come party in the great outdoors (under a tent if raining)  
with music by Jim Wann & Friends  
followed by fine food and drink



Saturday, July 13, 2019, 5:30 p.m.  
St. John in the Wilderness  
Copake Falls

Click [here](#) to purchase tickets online.

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Calendar  
Summer Events at the Church and the Roeliff Jansen Historical Society  
June through August 2019

June 7-9, Diocesan Convention

June 8, Saturday, Garden Lecture by Margaret Roach, 9AM-Noon

June 22, Saturday, The Letters and Literary Learnings of a Civil War Soldier:  
Major John B. Collin of Hillsdale, 2PM, Roeliff Jansen Community Library

July 5, Friday, Sneak Preview of Summer Exhibit, 6-8PM, Roeliff Jansen  
Historical Society, 8 Miles Road, Copake Falls

July 13, Saturday, Into the Wilderness, the 2019 Summer Soirée, 5:30PM

August 17, Saturday, Copake Falls Day, St. John's Salad Bar, 11AM

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July 6 through September 2. Weekends, Hidden Histories of the Roeliff  
Jansen Region, 2-4 PM, Roeliff Jansen Historical Society, 8 Miles Road,  
Copake Falls

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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)

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