

A Voice in the Wilderness

Newsletter of the Church of St John in the Wilderness
Copake Falls NY
March 2020

During the Covid-19 crisis please confirm all events you plan to attend by checking the church [website](#) or emails from John+.

Thoughts from the Wilderness

Don't give up brothers and sisters. You might reply, well, I'm not giving up. And I'd respond, that's good. But we all know it's a very difficult time in this world. Many are stressed or anxious and some are ill with coronavirus. Karl Rahner, brilliant, hopeful theologian, and person of prayer mentions a "daily temptation to despair." Which I have found to be paradoxically helpful. It normalizes this temptation as real - at least for some of us some of the time. And now for more of us more of the time. But a temptation to despair or a temptation to give up, is not the same as despair or giving up. And these temptations are quite understandable right now. This worldwide pandemic is unprecedented in our lifetimes.

It's good to accept the reality of what one is feeling and thinking. It's better than to deny it or to project the fear, anger, frustration or despair on others. But the stress is very real. As we know, it's not only the illness but its effect on the economy worldwide. And specifically, its effect on the livelihood and income of millions. Not only that, loneliness has been noted to be a rampant problem in today's society, and the forced isolation for the health of all, increases loneliness for many. Illness, income and isolation – these realities directly and indirectly are a triple whammy.

But... we're all in this together and God cares for us and for all of God's creation. So don't give up. Made in God's image and still blessed by God, we have new opportunities to receive and creatively channel God's love and healing to others. We can reach out to others, in this time of social distancing, by video chat or phone or email. We can pray or meditate quietly with, for

example, wise and hopeful words from scripture and from other wisdom literature. We can quietly “center” as in centering prayer or contemplative prayer or Quaker prayer. We can pray for those on the front lines like medical personnel and other people in essential work who may not be able to socially distance. We can pray for their safety and for the safety and protection of all. We can check in on and offer to buy groceries for the elderly and vulnerable who are homebound. I have been calling people in the parish to check in and check up. Members of the Vestry are about to start reaching out to people in the parish as well.

During this time when we cannot worship together in person, I’ve been emailing for Sunday mornings the option of praying morning prayer for that day including music and also several options to stream live Eucharists Sunday morning from large parishes that do this. I may have found an option for us to do live worship on Sunday morning with an online conferencing app that can include everyone who wishes, in that you can connect through your computer or smart phone and use video or you can call in on a landline for audio only.

It’s time for not one but two hopeful blessings from Scripture. They are also ways to conclude both morning and evening prayer in the prayer book. *May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13. Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20, 21*

*In peace,
John+*

Senior Warden Report

When asked to write something for the Voice I wondered what I could say; with our church services put on hold and no gatherings allowed in the immediate future - what is there to “report” on. But, of course, there is a lot going on both within our Parish and within our personal lives. In reality, we are busy finding safe & updated ways to get groceries, to work from home, to educate our children, etc. I heard a radio voice say, “be kind, and remember we are alone in this together.” So true. It really lifts my spirits to see and hear about all the different ways folks are reaching out to help each other. How some restaurants are trying to keep business alive by offering take-out service on the one hand and how on the other hand, we are ordering “take-out” meals more times than we ever have before to help them too. We are including bigger tips with those orders for the food servers. Many are

asking neighbors if they need help with getting groceries. We are all reaching out by phone or email to each other. It gives me hope and lifts my spirits.

This leads me to some Parish news - our Vestry, under the guidance of Father John, is putting together a "calling tree." Members of the Vestry will be checking in with our Parish family through telephoning and emailing. So you'll be hearing from someone soon. It's a good opportunity to reach out and see how we are all doing and find out what's happening in each of our lives. It's like a virtual Coffee Hour.

We've all been looking for ways to calm & de-stress ourselves. After finding out that insurance is on the "essential" list, I find myself still commuting to my office. Thankfully our doors are locked, only telephone communications. By the time I get home, I'm ready to shut out the news of the pandemic. I've come to appreciate Hulu and Prime Video as an escape tool! I hike and walk the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. I hope you all are finding ways to cope with the isolation and daunting daily news reports. My love and prayers go out to my Parish Family always

One last item. This past Sunday I clicked on the St. James NYC link Father John included in one of his weekly emails. It was a live feed of a church service; it included Holy Communion. It was great. It felt comforting to hear the very familiar words and the hymns and watch Holy Communion distributed. I especially loved the sermon given by Rev. Eva Suarez. Father John sends his "Pray Sunday Morning Prayer or Live Stream" email usually on Saturdays.

Please call me if you feel the need to talk or if you have questions for the Vestry. Also let me know if you have suggestions about ways we (the Vestry) could be helping our parishioners and our community. Take care of yourselves, stay well and God Bless.

Wendy Langlois

Food Pantry Thanks

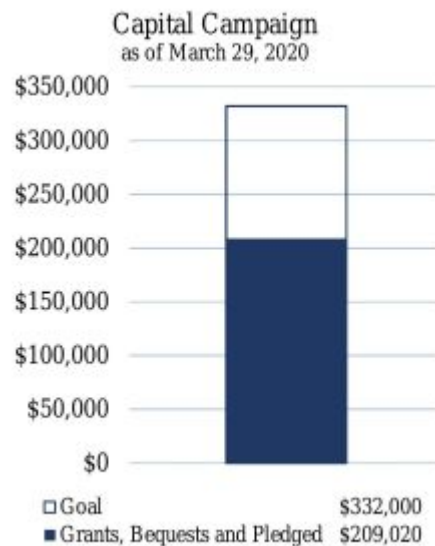
Thanks to those members of St. John's who have left food at the church for the food pantry. It means a lot to those in the wider community who are unusually stressed by side effects of the virus pandemic. In kindness to the 'porters,' please bag your donations to minimize contact with individual items.

Thank you again. Be well!

Marya and Bob

Capital Campaign Update

In the February 2020 issue of *A Voice in the Wilderness*, we reported that St. John's Capital Campaign had achieved 60 percent, or \$198,920, of its goal of \$332,000. We are delighted to report that progress continues, and as of March 2020 the Capital Campaign has raised \$209,020 or 63 percent of the goal.



There has been increased interest in making gifts of securities to St. John's Capital Campaign, and to facilitate this form of donation, we have created a document that explains the specifics of the simple procedure, and it is available as a PDF download [here](#). A form to facilitate the pledging of a donation of securities, or cash, to the Capital Campaign is also available for download [here](#).

Since the last report from this committee, we have made available, through the fantastic Web skills of Charley Musselman, on St. John's home Web page <https://www.stjohnw.org/> a link to the essential documents for understanding the rationale and background of the Capital Campaign. These documents are found by clicking the link [Capital Campaign](#) under the Site Resources section in the right navigation panel of the home page. There, the following five documents may be viewed and downloaded:

- [Summary Brochure](#)
- [Current Architectural Survey of Buildings and Campus](#)
- [Landscape Design Goals and Proposals](#)
- [Mechanical, Electrical, & Plumbing Report](#)
- [Results of Parishioners' Priorities for Capital Projects](#)
- [Survey of Parishioners' Priorities for Capital Projects](#)
- [Preliminary Landscape Plan](#)

In the February issue of *A Voice*, we mentioned the submission of a proposal to the Sacred Sites program of The New York Landmarks Conservancy, requesting a grant for architectural and engineering fees for the first phase of the Capital Campaign's implementation. Colleen Heemeyer, grants manager of the Sacred Sites program, made a site visit to St. John's in early March and

indicated to us that our application was in good order and that we would receive a grant to help with funding of the consultants' fees. Both engineer and architect have been contacted; architectural site visits will be made in the coming months. Drawings and engineering consultations will also occur in the coming months, followed by implementation of these projects. The timing of these next steps of the project will, of course, be determined by how and when the course of the COVID-19 pandemic plays out.

Brian Boom and Lucy Eldridge

Music at St. John in the Wilderness

St. John's is fortunate to have many wonderful musical programs as part of its offerings to the parish and to its friends in the larger community. Whether it is the musical offerings of the church choir, the Winds in the Wilderness concerts, parishioner Jim Wann and Friends' performances during the annual gala, blue grass music by Jamie Purinton and Friends, the Bell Choir of the Salisbury Congregational Church, Jazz Vespers, all contribute to a vibrant celebration of music. The Book of Common Prayer refers to such beautiful musical sounds, "therefore, we praise you, joining our voices with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, who for ever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your Name."

Our choir, under the direction of Edee Hedrick, brings lovely anthems, and joyous hymn singing on a weekly basis during the 10AM Sung Eucharist and during special services throughout the church calendar. The annual Christmas Eve program of carols and service is a beloved event for the entire community. The choir is comprised of sopranos, Karen Flynn, Marilyn Kay, Zita Kobos, Altos, Elen Freeston, Mibs Zelle, tenors Pauline Royal and Jim Hedrick, basses Michael Citrin, Harry Garrett and Kent Kay. All together, the choir members have logged 320 years as faithful choir members. Harry Garrett is the longest member, serving for 35 years; Edee celebrates her 35th year as choir director. Several of the choir members bring their musical talents to the wider community by singing in performances of the Philmont Choir.

The Winds in the Wilderness concerts, with its faithful audience of concert goers, produces innovative programming under the direction of Sharon Powers. The Board of Directors of Winds in the Wilderness is made up of parishioners, Lucy Eldridge, Elen Freeston, Mibs Zelle, and community members May Paddock and Leslie Wood. Many members of the wider

community support the concerts. Significant grants from the Decentralization Program of the New York State Council on the Arts have been gratefully received.

Sharon Powers, often has spoken of the brilliant acoustics of the church created in 1852 by Richard Upjohn, architect of the church, in 1852. Sharon says “As a performing musician, my first contact with the acoustics of the Church of St. John in the Wilderness was on Copake Falls Day, 2009, when I played ‘Syrinx’ for solo flute by Debussy and a sonata by Handel for flute and organ with Edee, church choir director. As I played, the acoustics of the church gave me feedback that was warm, honest, articulate and sincere; a receptivity to live music that I experienced as a new friend who appreciated exactly what I was trying to communicate. I didn’t want to let go of this embrace! And so, I didn’t. Several members of the audience and the church felt the same way and within a month we established a Board of Directors and a concert series of chamber music. Winds in the Wilderness Concerts is now celebrating its tenth anniversary, giving four joyful concerts a year and each time we play, all the musicians appreciate, again and again, the exquisite and hospitable acoustics.”

Jim Wann, Broadway composer and singer, has contributed greatly to the musical scene at St. John’s with performances at the church’s annual gala. Last summer the INTO THE WILDERNESS gala was held completely outdoors with Jim and Friends performing in the picturesque wooded glen adjacent to Taconic State Park. Jamie Purinton’s group of blue grass performers, Bash Bish Bluegrass Band, has enlivened the outdoor barbecues held during the annual Copake Falls Day.

Our hymns come from two Episcopal Church hymnals, The Hymnal 1982, and from Lift Every Voice and Sing II, which includes 280 musical pieces from both the African American and Gospel traditions. The latter hymnals were donated to the church with funds provided by parishioners, Patricia and Jim Wann and Nancy and David Webb. The title of the hymnal refers to the poem by James Weldon Johnson, writer and poet of the Harlem Renaissance and civil rights activist. Set to music by his brother John Rosamon Johnson, it is best known today as the Black national anthem:

*Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,*

*Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.*

We look forward to another year of great musical offerings at St. John in the Wilderness!

Lucy Eldridge

Quilt Show Postponed

The exhibition *The Art of Appliqué* has been postponed due to the Covid-19 epidemic. New dates will be announced.



For [detailed information on the quilt exhibition click here.](#)

Church Calendar March - July

Please confirm all services and other events you plan to attend by checking the church [website](#) or emails from John+.

TBD. Opening of *The Art of Appliqué*, quilt exhibition, Burke Hall, 5PM,
March 21 – May 25

April 5, Sunday, Palm Sunday

April 9, Thursday, Maundy Thursday, Seder Meal, 6PM, Eucharist, 7:30PM

April 10, Friday, Good Friday, 10AM and 7:30PM services

April 12, Sunday, Easter

April 22, Wednesday, Earth Day

May 9, Saturday, Garden Lecture, 9:30AM, (Margaret Roach)

May 16 and May 17. Sacred Sites Open House Weekend,

Open house. Saturday 1-3PM,

Sunday, 12-3PM, *Art of Applique* Quilt Exhibition to be featured.

May 23, Sunday, Talk by Dale Peterson at Roe Jan Historical Society.
“St John in the Wilderness, Richard Upjohn’s Rural Masterpiece
in American Architectural History.”

June 6, 9:30AM, Saturday, Garden Lecture, (Margaret Roach)

July 11, Saturday, 5:30PM, Gala, Into the Wilderness

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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

Wendy Langlois (1/21) Warden
Elen Freeston (/22) Warden

Vestry

Charley Musselman (1/21)
Peggy Anderson (1/21)
Lucy Eldridge (1/22)
Jane Peck (1/22)
Virginia Johnson (1/23)
Milbrey Zelle (1/23)

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

Eucharists

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

stjohnw.org

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