

A Voice in the Wilderness

Summer, 2010

Thoughts from the Wilderness

Greetings to members and friends of St. John in the Wilderness,

Summer is in full bloom. In fact it has seemed a bit tropical lately for these parts, with at least a couple of weeks in a row of mostly heat and humidity. Let's enjoy it as best we can, because in January we'd probably love to splice in one of these summer days. In spite of some rain and some heat our Country Fair went on. I again want to thank everyone who worked so hard to make our Country Fair and Auction another success! I want to thank especially the chairs Lucy Eldridge and Susan Mollo, and also Bob Callahan who was instrumental. I could go on but I don't want to leave anyone out. So thank you to everyone who helped. Thanks also to Bob and Karen Flynn, and others, who helped make our pork BBQ a reality. Bob, that was the best pork BBQ I've ever had!

It's amazing what we can do when we pray and work together. This makes sense though, as it's the way we're designed. We are all God's children, and as Christians we are all part of the body of Christ. That means we need each other. We're not called to be codependent and we're not called to be rugged individualists. We are created by God to be interdependent. That means we can be both leaders and followers, talkative and quiet, physically active or sedentary -- it depends on what role we're in at the moment. And yet we are all unique with different strengths and weaknesses, different gifts. Let's pray then to discern what our gifts are -- many times people's gifts are obvious, but not always. Even when obvious, we all need to pray for grace and guidance about how best to use, to deploy, our gifts for the building up of the body of Christ.

We have to pray for guidance regarding the use of our gifts because we are not the head of the body; Christ is. We are gifted with reason and intelligence to make decisions and to use our gifts -- but we are not God. Without prayer, we are unlikely to make the best choices either in the use of our gifts, or in general. God does not take our gifts away, but without prayer we're likely to be using them ineffectively half the time. An apropos quotation from one of the wisdom books: *The quiet words of the wise are more to be heeded than the shouting of a ruler among fools. Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one bungler destroys much good* (Ecclesiastes 9: 17, 18). Ecclesiastes is the most pessimistic book in the Bible, yet sometimes

we need its wisdom. It is often the case that the most gifted people cause the most damage. Because people recognize their gifts and grant them authority, these arrogant yet gifted ones use their gifts not to help others, but to feed their own egos or supply their greed. That's bad in itself, but they end up by doing things like bullying and wounding others and stealing from the poor.

It is a wonderful thing that we are gifted by God! But we are not God; so again, we need to pray for guidance, for discernment in the use of our gifts. I heard a good quotation at our diocesan convention in June attributed to the previous Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey: *The Church is one generation away from extinction. We need to be Good News people! Without Christ the body has no head -- and believe me, you won't survive without your head.* Well, we might survive for a while without relying on the head (Christ), but without his strength and guidance, we can end up being like the bungler mentioned above in the Ecclesiastes quotation. The Good News is that in Christ we do have the head of the body -- our body, the body of Christ. And he (and the Spirit and Our Father/Mother -- God) **will** guide us and strengthen us in the development and deployment of our gifts for building up the body in love. And if we are in a position of leadership, it's all the more important to humbly rely on the head, and be healthfully interdependent with each other -- because the more power one has, the more good or the more evil one can do. So let's continue to celebrate our connections to each other and to God as we reach out as Christ's hands and feet in love to each other, and beyond. St. John in the Wilderness is already good at this, by the way -- but there's always room for growth.

Another thing I heard at convention was a reminder of the importance of smiling. Yes that's simple -- but not always easy. Smiling is important as a witness to others that God does make a difference in our lives, and a positive joyful difference. Smiling is important because we all need to receive the love and encouragement that a smile can express. It's also important for us to be the givers of the smiles, even when we don't feel like it -- smiles can be intentional acts of Christian discipline (discipleship). And smiles can express or show appreciation for good humor-- something we all need.

Here are a couple other bits of wisdom from a diocesan convention workshop. From one entitled *What Does Starbucks Have to Teach the Church* came this: "You can't offer better hospitality to a guest than you offer to one another." So brothers and sisters, let's keep giving our beautiful smiles to each other, or we won't be as able to give them to visitors or newcomers to St. John in the Wilderness.

Now a few words about the recent Episcopal Diocese of Albany Convention resolutions. As I mentioned at church, four of the five resolutions were completely without controversy having not one opposing vote in their passage. These involved a parish changing its deanery, a small increase in minimum clergy stipends, passage of the diocesan operations budget, and one regarding the formula for parish assessments. The one controversial resolution was #2 in which

the diocese by a large majority voted to endorse the Anglican Communion Covenant (as distributed on December 18, 2009). I think the covenant is largely good in that it advocates that the Anglican Communion stick together as the body of Christ. I am concerned however in particular with Section Four, as for example in article 4.2 .5 which refers to "relational consequences" for a member church of the Anglican Communion for not "defer[ring] a controversial action." This could be problematic for the Episcopal Church. Even now, before the Anglican Communion Covenant has been officially voted on by the Episcopal Church in General Convention, relational consequences are occurring for the Episcopal Church vis-à-vis the Anglican Communion in that Episcopalians have been removed from the Anglican Communion's ecumenical dialogues (the committees involved). For our province (the Episcopal Church) this removal is directly connected to, "The May 15 consecration of Los Angeles Bishop Suffragan Mary Douglas Glasspool. She is the Episcopal Church's second openly gay, partnered bishop" (*Episcopal Life Online, June 7, 2010*). So the controversy continues. Yet here our mission remains clear as, "Church of St. John in the Wilderness seeks to live into our Baptismal Covenant by being an inclusive, welcoming and supportive house of worship" (the beginning of our SJITW Mission Statement).

Let's, as Bishop Dean Wolf of the Diocese of Kansas writes in our July 25 bulletin insert, "Maintain an attitude of gratitude." He says it's still "an exciting time to be an Episcopalian!" He adds, "The Episcopal Church holds open one of the widest doors in Christendom while working tirelessly to care for those in the greatest need." I'll end with that.

In peace,
John+

From the Senior Warden

This summer report could be entitled "Porch Happenings around St. John's." One such happening was at Kathy and Gary Reinard's Copake KOA camping resort where we held our second Bake Sale on Saturday July 3rd in support of the Bridge the Gap Campaign 2010. As before, many hungry campers came to the porch of the KOA store to buy our delicious goodies (we raised \$ 268.00). We also had lots of our parishioners come to the resort to bring their baked goods; then we all stood around talking, having fun, and generally participating in off campus fellowship. As of this writing, the Campaign has raised a total of \$8,774.00 including outright gifts, the 2 bake sales, and the very successful golf tournament at the Copake Country Club, sponsored by the Roe-Jan Clericus. Two more bake sales at the resort are planned on Saturday, September 4 and Saturday, October 9 from 11-1PM.

Closer to home, our contemplative prayer group continues to meet, this summer often holding it on the rectory porch. We now have 5-6 people coming every Wednesday afternoon at

3PM; it is a time of scripture reading, reflection, and prayerful meditation. St. John's is fortunate to be in such a lovely natural setting; our contemplative prayer group, sitting on the rectory porch, benefits from these beautiful surroundings.

Of course, our biggest happening of the year is the Country Fair and Auction. This is indeed a community event...a heavy downpour at the beginning of the fair this year did not deter our attenders in the slightest; they simply put on their raincoats, pulled out their umbrellas and seemed to enjoy themselves as always. The next day we held the Pork Barbecue which was also a big success as in the past. Many, many people help out with the Fair and Barbecue and we thank them all for their efforts on behalf of St. John's.

We will have many events at St. John's this summer including a *Winds in the Wilderness* concert of chamber music at 3PM on August 15th followed by a reception. Also, we will be hosting a play directed by Carl Ritchie on August 21, August 22, August 28, August 29, Sept 4 and Sept 5 at 4PM, as well as having a community concert in the church on Copake Falls Day on August 21 with an art exhibition held in Burke Hall.

Plans are afoot to hold Jazz Vespers at St. John's this fall. We will begin this new program as a series of 6 Jazz Vespers on Saturdays at 5:30PM to be held in late September and October. We will also have a Fall Festival in late October with a hiker/biker event for the community on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail in the morning followed by a potluck lunch and a tag sale in the afternoon. We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Lucy Eldridge

Country Fair and Auction 2010

Morning rain couldn't dampen the enthusiasm of parishioners and customers of St. John's annual Country Fair and Auction. People started arriving early on Saturday, and we were busy all day, seeing lots of old friends and making new ones.

Because we had received major donations of furniture, glassware, and linens, the auction was larger than usual. (Walter, our auctioneer, really enjoyed himself!) Our new linen shop attracted a lot of attention, and the snack bar was as busy as ever.

At this writing, the profit for our Country Fair and Auction stands at \$8000. As always, we owe our success to St. John's parishioners. Everyone stepped up and did a wonderful job, cleaning, sorting, and pricing countless items during the weeks before the fair, and setting up tables and working them on Saturday. Our special thanks go to those who helped us take down the sale tables to prepare for Sunday's barbecue and to those who cleaned up thereafter.

CF&A 2010 is not quite finished. We will have a wrap up meeting after the 10 AM service on August 29. Please bring your ideas on what went well and how we can make CF&A 2011 even better. Your thoughts on other ways to raise funds for St. John's will also be welcome.

Thank you, one and all!

Susan Mollo

Building and Grounds

In keeping everyone up to date on our activities, we wanted to let you know that the entire committee conducted a "walk through" of our entire church properties making note of items that we thought were in need of some degree of repair/replacement. A list of these items has been generated and will be posted in the Narthex for your review. Please note they are not in any particular order regarding priorities. However, a couple of items are marked with a red star indicating they need our immediate attention as funding becomes available. Two items are the bell tower and the front porch of the rectory with the bell tower being number one on the list. If anyone has questions on items listed or want an explanation, we will do our best to address them.

We also went "green" in the undercroft replacing 25 incandescent light bulbs with energy savers. The units we installed were equivalent to a 60 watt bulb utilizing 13 watts of energy, which is less than one quarter of total consumption. We also tried out energy saving bulbs in the church area of which there are 23 -100 watt bulbs. Unfortunately the physical shape of an energy saver for those fixtures does not fit within the bulb housing and we were unable to close the "egg crate grill" light diffuser. So, until we can come up with something that would work in these fixtures, that project is on hold.

Two other projects approved by the vestry are the replacement and relocation of the coach light that was in the flower garden area in front of the church and the flag pole light by the graveyard. The coach light was rotted off at the bottom and leaning over very bad. The new one will be located on the right side of the Iseli memorial, only a little more to the front. The flag pole light was continually being damaged and had to be replaced several times. This time we will remove it from its ground installation and reinstall it on the steel gate post as you enter the graveyard. Both of these items have been funded and will be installed by committee members. And just to give you a "heads up" several of the items on our "LIST" will be addressed by members of the committee with little or no labor cost to the church.

It has become apparent that deterioration is occurring on the supporting structure of the bell tower of which the Vestry and Building Committee are aware. However, in the interest of safety, the rope for ringing the bell has been raised out of reach. Until we can have a professional inspection of the structure it will unfortunately have to remain as such. Thank you for understanding.

Recently, the portable ramp was utilized at the church entrance for walk-in traffic and to accommodate Peck and Peck. It became evident very quickly that this ramp is not desirable for walk-ins and should only be used for handicap access for wheel chairs and the like and to accommodate Funeral services when required..

Respectfully submitted,

Hank Croteau, Chair
Building and Grounds

ECW Doings

July has been a very busy month for all of St. John's and ECW feels it too. We do have good news to report with the winners of our raffle held at the Country Fair. First Prize of the Log Cabin Quilt made by Pauline Royal was won by Florence Evers. Second Prize was a hand made Log Cabin made by Ralph Platt and won by Robert Callahan who in turn put this beauty in the auction. Third Prize was a hand made Grannie Square Afghan made by Edie Froggatt and won by Peggy Anderson. I want to thank all of you (women and men) for your help and support.

Saturday, September 4th St. John's will be holding a Bake Sale at the West Copake KOA Camp grounds. We all thank the Reinard's for allowing us to do this fund raiser for our "Bridge the Gap" campaign.

ECW will hold their September meeting on Monday the 13th, please note date and time change.

Monday September 13th at Noon we will host a joint meeting /Luncheon with the women of the West Copake Reformed Church. They will provide the dessert and we will supply the main course for our Luncheon. Jean Peck is arranging for a speaker from Hospice so please plan on attending.

Please let Susan Mollo (329-0395) know what delicious food you will bring.

Thank you all!

Babs Croteau, President

Albany Endorses the Covenant

Albany's 142nd Diocesan Convention has come and gone, its most important accomplishment endorsing the Anglican Communion Covenant. Bishop Love and the Standing Committee had endorsed it last October, two months before the final version was published. The Convention's vote simply confirmed that step, adding Albany to a very short list of Network dioceses (South Carolina, Dallas, and Central Florida) that have done so. To date, only one

Anglican province, Mexico, has adopted the Covenant. Another, New Zealand, has endorsed three parts of it but deferred action on the controversial fourth section.

Bishop Love attached so much importance to approving the Covenant, that he imported ++Drexel Gomez, the head of the Covenant Design Group, and the Archbishop of Canterbury (via DVD) to add their support to his. No one had an opportunity to speak at length against the Covenant. Discussion was limited to a half hour of two minute statements without follow-ups, and even that was cut off when a priest called the question.

To no one's great surprise, the vote to endorse was lopsided: 314 to 76, with a few conservatives joining progressives and moderates in dissent.

Discussion of the Covenant before Convention was belated and inadequate, and the parade of bishops was coercive, as one priest observed at the time. However, the very wide margin of the vote makes it clear that *the result represents the will of those present in that place and at that time.*

How accurately it represents sentiment in the pews is another question. The high cost of two and a half days in Speculator¹, evangelically-oriented worship and workshops, and a parade of TEC-averse visiting speakers (of whom ++Gomez is a very good example) make Albany's Convention unattractive for progressives and moderate Episcopalians. It is hard to fault them for staying home, but their absence gives the electorate a strong rightward tilt.

Albany has been and remains a conservative diocese, but arguably less so than recent Convention votes suggest.

Bob Dodd

The Church of England: Another Crack in the Glass Ceiling

Progress toward full equality for women in Anglican orders has been slow and uneven. Fifteen of the 38 provinces have agreed to ordain female bishops, but just four provinces – our Episcopal Church; the Anglican Church of Canada; the Anglican Church of Australia; and the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia -- and the extra-provincial Episcopal Church of Cuba have done so.

The Church of England, 40% of whose priests are women, may soon join that club. Its

¹

Sending a priest and three lay deputies costs about \$1000, more than many parishes – ours included – can afford in hard times. Not every church has deputies who will pay their own way, so it is not surprising that some 30 parishes were not represented at the 2010 Convention.

General Synod, which met in York between July 9 and July 13, approved legislation to open the episcopate to women. The first of the measure's 11 clauses, which expresses Synod's will to ordain women, passed easily. Debate focused instead on its second clause, which outlines concessions to be made for those who oppose female bishops. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York tried to amend that clause by adding a scheme of "coordinate bishops," but their resolution failed narrowly. Disappointed traditionalists must now pin their hopes on a not yet written Code of Practice, which will spell out implementation of the new law.

The failure of the Archbishops's amendments illustrates a difference between the English polity and ours. In our General Convention, clergy and laity are represented by one House of Deputies. The Church of England has separate episcopal, clerical, and lay houses. To be approved by the General Synod, a measure must first obtain simple majorities in all three. The amendments offered by Canterbury and York on July 10 passed in the episcopal and lay houses but failed by a handful of clergy votes.

Without minimizing the importance of General Synod's support for women bishops, its draft legislation still faces important hurdles before it can become law:

1) The Archbishops of Canterbury and York will send the draft bill to the Church's 43 diocesan synods.

2) If the bill receives majority approval in a majority of diocesan synods, it will return to General Synod in 2012 for a second vote. If it fails in the dioceses, the effort to ordain female bishops will go back to legislative square one.

3) Final approval by General Synod requires a two-thirds majority in each of the three houses. If it succeeds, it will move on to parliament. Failing that, it is again back to square one.

4) If parliament approves the bill (very likely, for it is extremely popular), it will go to the Queen for final approval.

Because each step in this process takes time, it is unlikely that the Church of England will seat its first female bishop before 2014. That would still represent swift progress by Anglican standards: Until 1987, even the English diaconate was closed to women!

Bob Dodd

Lay Ministry Schedule – August 1 – October 31, 2010

8/1	8 AM	M. Zelle				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		C. Fox L. Eldridge	D. Baker	P. Royal	Jean Peck
8/8	8 AM	L. Eldridge / J. VanHoesen				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		J. & D. Baker	K. Kay	Jean Peck	M. Anderson
8/15	8 AM	E. Freeston	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel
	10 AM		S. Mollo L. Eldridge	R. Dodd	E. Freeston	M. Dodd
8/22	8 AM	J. Knox				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		S. Mollo Jean Peck	M. Kay	L. Eldridge	P. Royal
8/29	8 AM	W. Langlois	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel
	10 AM		R. Dodd L. Eldridge	P.Royal	K. Kay	Jean Peck
9/5	8 AM	M. Zelle				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		J. & D. Baker	E. Freeston	M. Kay	M. Anderson
9/12	8 AM	L. Eldridge / J. VanHoesen				
	10 AM		S. Mollo L. Eldridge	M. Zelle	M. Kay	M. Dodd
9/19	8 AM	E. Freeston	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel
	10 AM		S. Mollo Jean Peck	L. Eldridge	M. Dodd	P. Royal
9/26	8 AM	J. Knox				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		R. Dodd C. Fox	D. Baker	P. Royal	Jean Peck
10/3	8 AM	W. Langlois	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel

	10 AM		J. & D. Baker	K. Kay	Jean Peck	M. Anderson
10/10	8 AM	M. Zelle				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		Jean Peck L. Eldridge	R. Dodd	E. Freeston	M. Dodd
10/17	8 AM	L. Eldridge / J. VanHoesen	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel
	10 AM		S. Mollo R. Dodd	M. Kay	L. Eldridge	P. Royal
10/24	8 AM	E. Freeston				H. Koepfel
	10 AM		C. Fox L. Eldridge	P.Royal	K. Kay	Jean Peck
10/31	8 AM	J. Knox	H.Croteau			H. Koepfel
	10 AM		J. & D. Baker	E. Freeston	M. Kay	M. Anderson