



TWO WORSHIP SERVICE ON SUNDAYS

8:00 a.m. Rite I; 10:00 a.m. Rite II

CONTACT

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF SAINT JOHN'S PARISH – February 2012

*Vision Statement: Saint John's Episcopal Parish - A Welcoming Community for All:
Seeking God's Word • Responding to God's Call • Working for Love & Justice*

Be Here on February 5th to Sign Valentines for Soldiers, Shut-Ins and Former Members



Each Sunday, we pray for a long list of members of the military known to our church. For the last several years, we've made it a point to send each a Valentine's Day card, letting them know they are remembered. Last year, we received a commendation from Central Command in Afghanistan for this small effort on our part.

We also send Valentine's to our members unable to worship with us, and even to a few long-time members who've moved away but remain in our hearts. Each year, we hear how much this touches these members of our extended family.

This coming Sunday, February 5th, we'll have cards in the Parish Hall after both services. Please take a few minutes to sign them so we can put them in the mail on Monday. Have someone who'd appreciate a Valentine? We'll have extra cards available!

January 29th Annual Meeting a Success Inviting... Welcoming... Rooting...

Almost 50 members of Saint John's were present at our Annual Parish Meeting. Energetic and positive were adjectives used to describe the atmosphere. A tremendous amount of business was conducted in 1 1/2 hours. If you were unable to be present, extra copies of the Annual Report Booklet are available on the table by main door in the sanctuary.

Appointed Senior Warden:

Sherrie Hidalgo

Vestry Elections:

Rosemary Francis

Derrick Smith

Sher Widger

Deanery Representatives / Convention Delegates

Ann Ferrante

Barbara Fogerson

Helen Hilbourn

Barbara Fester (Alternate)

Sherrie Hidalgo (Alternate)

Lent Begins on February 22nd Ways to Keep a "Holy Lent"



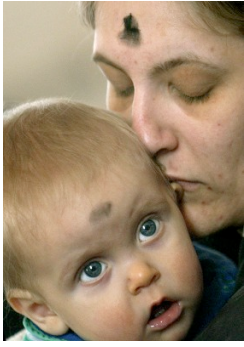
It's Saint John's
50th Anniversary

SAVE THE DATE...
Saturday evening, April 28th

**Saint John's 50th Anniversary Celebration with
Bishop Marc and Dr. Sheila Andrus will be
Saturday Evening, April 28th (more details later).**

Begin Your Lent with Ash Wednesday Worship on February 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

We begin the season of Lent with the ashes from which this holy day takes its name. In the Bible, sprinkling with ashes is a sign of mourning for our sins and the desire to begin our spiritual journey afresh. As such, it is a reminder of God's great mercy and should remind us that God's forgiveness is greater than our sinfulness.



**New in 2012—
Children’s Ash
Wednesday Service
at 5:00 p.m.**

Last year we introduced a Children’s’ Good Friday service which got positive feedback from children and adults alike. This year we’re adding an Ash Wednesday service for our children.

Our service will be brief and designed for children ages 3-12. Like the “grown up service” it will include simple music, a reading from the Bible, sharing of ashes, and communion. It will also help children understand what it means to be forgiven even when we do bad things, and it will challenge the children to pick a project for Lent. All in 45 minutes...

Parents and grandparents, make sure the children in your life can be present for this service. And all—please think to invite extended family (nieces and nephews, cousins, etc.) and friends and neighbors.



Women of Olney, Buckinghamshire, UK have held annual pancake races since 1445! The First Annual Saint John’s Pancake Race will take place on February 22nd.

**Join Us on Shrove Tuesday,
February 21st, for Holy Pancakes
Stay for the Pancake Race!**

“Holy pancakes?” OK, now that we have your attention... How did Christians in former times prepare for the penitential season of Lent? In the days of more rigorous fasting, folks gave up eggs, butter, sugar and other similar luxury items. To avoid temptation, they’d make pancakes the night before Ash Wednesday to empty the cupboards. Hence the term “Mardi Gras” or Fat Tuesday.

Join us on Tuesday, February 21st from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. for one last blast before Lent.

Pancake races are an English tradition going back centuries, and this year we’ll hold our own race at 6:45 p.m. Bring your own frying pan to flip your pancakes as you navigate the race course! We’ll have kids’ and adults’ categories. The winner of each category will receive a bottle of real maple syrup!

We take donations to offset the costs; anything above and beyond that will go to support the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which Saint John’s has supported for many years.



**Devotional Booklets Offer Spiritual
Nourishment for Lent**

If you’d like to take a few minutes every day for some spiritual reading, we’ll have three booklets which will help you do just that.

Renewed for Life is drawn from the writings of the 20th century spiritual master, Henri Nouwen. It is appropriate for adults and mature youth.

With God All Things Are Possible is written for families with school age children and youth,

All Around Jerusalem is a combination devotional and sticker book perfect for families with children ages 6 and under.

These devotionals will be available in time for Ash Wednesday; you’ll find them on the table near the entry to the sanctuary. We request a \$1.00 donation for each booklet to cover their cost.



**Confirmation
Preparation**

Several high school aged youth have expressed an interest in being confirmed, so we’ll be starting confirmation preparation during Lent. Adults are most welcome too, as are mature middle school aged youth. Please speak to Fr. Peter.



From Your Rector...
February 2012

"Keeping a Holy Lent"

Beloved in Christ,

I find that the older I get, the more I am grateful for the cycle of the Church Year. No matter what else is going on in my life and my ministry, no matter how many changes are buffeting our lives, the church seasons have a way of drawing my heart and mind back into the proper focus. I realized this as I became aware of how much I was looking forward to the upcoming Lent.

It may sound strange that I am looking forward to a penitential season, so a bit of an explanation seems in order. Susan and I are in the midst of another attempt to declutter our lives. Too many papers cover too many surfaces in our house. Our freezer is overflowing with food that is past its prime edibility. Our bookshelves are out of space. The basement and the garage are... Well, let's say that they're not pretty. The work of bringing order out of chaos sounds unpleasant, but I'm finding that it has many positive aspects to it. We'll discover things we forgot we have. We'll have a neater home. We'll dispose of papers we haven't needed in years and clothes we'll never wear again. And, at least temporarily, we'll have "a place for everything and everything in its place."

My sense of Lent this year is that it is our annual opportunity to work at putting our spiritual houses in order. We can dispose of accumulated spiritual junk like anger and resentments, unnecessary guilt, and self-loathing. In doing so, we rediscover spiritual treasures we've forgotten we have. We create time and energy we can apply to activities which bring spiritual growth—prayer, scripture reading, meditation, almsgiving, more regular worship. We can see more clearly the things or behaviors we might "give up for Lent," and also the activities we might "take on for Lent."

Thank God that we don't have to have our homes and our lives perfectly neat and tidy all the time! Thank God for the annual opportunity Lent offers to create space and time to give God the chance to grow us a bit more into the divine image.

A blessed, holy and life-giving Lent,

Fr. Peter+



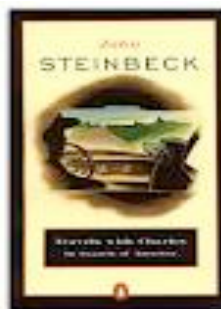
The Future of the 8 a.m. Coffee Hour...

Inviting a guest to Saint John's to stay for a cup of coffee or tea after worship is a basic act of hospitality. Even if they choose not to stay the first time, the memory of the invitation makes them more likely to want to return. Many long-time members find Coffee Hour an easy way to catch up with friends and enjoy a few minutes of unhurried enjoyment.

That said, it has become increasingly difficult to find hosts for the Coffee Hour after our 8:00 a.m. service on Sundays. Several loyal families or individuals often pick up the slack, but if the 8:00 a.m. Coffee Hours are to continue on a regular basis, we need more folks willing to host. **A sign up list has been posted in the Parish Hall. We have a roster through the month, but after March 1st, we'll only have coffee when an 8 o'clocker signs up...** ☺ 8 o'clockers, step up and do the right thing!

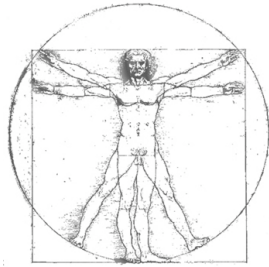
Not sure how to set up? Don't make coffee at home? Intimidated by the coffee urns? Don't worry--we gladly provide training and support. Don't bake? **This need not be an elaborate affair.** Coffee and hot water for tea are all that is really necessary, and we provide the makings for them. Nibbles are nice but optional. Bring a pint of half and half, and if so inclined, something to munch on. Show up 20 minutes early and you'll have plenty of time to set up everything. And you can easily be on your way by 9:45 at the latest.

Saint John's Book Club Next Meeting: Sunday, April 15th.



Saint John's Book Club's next meeting will be Sunday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the Fogerson home. They will be discussing *Travels with Charley* by John Steinbeck. All are welcome. Contact the parish office for more information.

February 12th Will be Evolution Sunday



Once again this year, we will celebrate Evolution Sunday, observed on the Sunday closest to February 12th. (February 12th was Charles Darwin's birthday.) Now called Evolution Weekend, the movement began in 2004 as a response to the perception that faithful Christians don't believe in evolution. The movement has grown to include Christian and Jewish communities across the globe.

The website of the movement states that the purpose of the observance is to "provide opportunity for serious discussion and reflection on the relationship between religion and science" and in an effort "to elevate the quality of the discussion on this critical topic, and to show that religion and science are not adversaries."

This is a good opportunity to invite scientifically minded friends or family members who may be unaware that not all Christians espouse "creationism" or "intelligent design."



We're Looking for Photos, Newsletters, Bulletins and Memorabilia... Help Make Our 50th Anniversary Celebration a Success

In preparation for our 50th anniversary celebration in April, we're looking for photos of Saint John's and its members from days of old. Have photos of worshipping in the school? Former clergy? Barbeques or the Vicar's Banquet? The Italian Dinner? Baptisms, weddings, confirmations? Printed material also provides "a blast from the past."

Photos can be scanned and emailed as JPEGs to Fr. Peter or Matt Chamberlain, head of our planning committee. Don't scan? If you bring them to us, we'll scan them and get them safely back to you.

The Rector's Report 2012 Annual Meeting

Inviting... Welcoming... Rooting...

I usually begin with a review of the past year, but our parish leaders have done so admirably in their reports. Be sure to read the rest of this Annual Meeting booklet. That said, let's look at 2012...

Addressing the perennial concern first... Finances
What more can I say that has not been said before? Our finances are the single biggest challenge—not only to what we're able to do now, but to our future viability. At the present rate, we have two years to turn our finances around before we have to radically restructure our life.

Please don't get me wrong. Financial stability alone is not an end in itself. However, financial stability allows us the time and resources to focus on what is truly important—living and sharing the Good News. We've done well with fundraising, but it is only treading water. Fundraising takes a lot of energy better used elsewhere.

Over the years, I've learned that even very small increases in giving, over time, make a tremendous difference. If each of our pledging members increased their by \$5.00/month (\$1.25/week!), our income would be over \$3000.00 higher for the year. \$10.00/month would give us \$6000.00 more in 2012.

Of course, some of us really aren't able to do that. But I suspect that most of us are able to give more than an additional \$5.00 or \$10.00/month without any real impact on our lifestyle. I can do without a few cups of coffee or that extra book and my life will be no less fulfilling. Please consider what you can do to ensure the future of Saint John's, and take a step of faith and gratitude.

Now for the opportunities ahead...

Over the course of the last year, many signs have made it clear to me that we have some very specific objectives to accomplish in 2012. These objectives build on and complement the work Saint John's has done in the years since I arrived; they will also pave the way into the future.

- **Inviting:** We are called to be an inviting community.

Dictionary.com defines the verb invite: "to request the presence or participation of in a kindly, courteous, or complimentary way, especially to request to come or go to some place, gathering, entertainment, etc., or to do something." Synonyms include "call", "summon" and "bid."

We have a relationship with God because God invited us into relationship. We chose to answer the invitation and to follow Jesus.

We have a relationship with Saint John's because we were invited to become part of this faith community. We may not have been asked to attend by another,

but once we were here we felt the invitation to remain. Our call as followers of Jesus and members of Saint John's is to invite others to "come and see" what Jesus and Saint John's have to offer.

This year, we will spend time and energy learning how to invite, and we will become brave and sensitive enough to know when and who to invite others to check us and Jesus out.

- **Welcoming:** We are called to welcome those who come here seeking God and community.

Dictionary.com defines the adjective welcome: "gladly received, as one whose arrival gives pleasure."

We all appreciate being welcomed gladly into a new or familiar setting or situation. Conversely, receiving the cold shoulder or being ignored are less than pleasant experiences.

Our Vision Statement reminds us that we are called to be "a welcoming community for all." Each of us is called to be a welcomer, and every person who comes into our circle deserves a warm welcome. It is not enough to leave the job of welcoming to our greeters and to me.

This year, we will spend time and energy on reacquainting ourselves with our community and the needs and challenges our neighbors face, learning how to welcome all our neighbors. We will take a look at our structures, our worship and our visibility to determine how we can become a more welcoming community to all.

- **Rooting:** We are called to help those who join our community to become firmly established in the faith and our faith community.

Once more, I call on Dictionary.com, which defines rooting: "to implant or establish deeply." As a gardener, I know that unless a sprout develops and sets root in good soil, it cannot survive. People are just like sprouts. A rootless person may survive, but seldom will s/he thrive.

Those of you who've been at Saint John's a long time have told me how good it feels to have spiritual roots here, and how much nourishment your relationships here provide. It is time for us to help a new crop of sprouts take root and grow here.

This year, we'll take a look at how we incorporate people into our congregational family, life and ministry. We'll learn about how other churches successfully do so. We'll develop specific paths we can follow to incorporate those who wish to become part of our community, and we'll figure out what resources we need to make it happen.

We are not in this alone. Other Episcopal congregations in our diocese and around the country are looking at similar needs, as are churches from other denominations. I participated in a web-based redevelopment cohort in 2011 and learned a good deal. The leader, Tom Brackett, is on our national church staff and will be a great resource. Susan's church is

participating in a beta test in a program called *Missio Engage*, which is all about engaging with the community; I hope to be able to glean from her experience and learnings. There are many, many other resources and many skilled teachers we can also look to for guidance.

Our diocese is engaged in a year-long period of study and prayer about just these sorts of issues, and several of us are participating regularly in monthly web-based study and discussion. We will only benefit by having more of you participating via internet. In our annual report, you'll find a copy of Bishop Marc's Convention Address from the 2011 Diocesan Convention, which sets out his vision for this revitalization process in the diocese. If you have not already read it, I strongly encourage you to do so.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary as a congregation, I can think of no better time than now to be about the process of revitalizing our congregation and sharing the Good News of God in Christ with a whole new generation or two of people.

I invite you to be a part of the journey.



Plan Now to Attend our 2012 Soup, Study and Prayer Offering-- "Many Neighbors, Many Faiths: Being Faithful in the 21st Century"

**Sunday Evenings During Lent,
February 26th-March 25th**

5:30-6:30 p.m.	Soup, Salad, and Bread in the Parish Hall
6:30-8:00 p.m.	Programs, Question & Answer Sessions in the Church Childcare provided
8:00-8:30 p.m.	Simple Closing Worship

Feel free to come for any combination of supper, study and worship. We want what's best for you and your family.

It is time for a new way of doing "Lenten House Church." In the 30 years since the program was started here, lots of social changes have happened, and the old model just isn't meeting the needs of many folks.

Details will be forthcoming very soon!