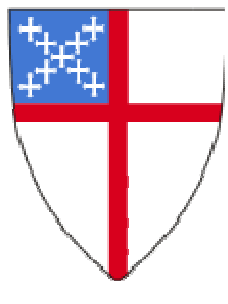


The Fabric of St. John's



Parish News of
St. John's Episcopal Church
Alma, Michigan



December 2009

Pastor's Corner

We are entering a time of new beginnings and celebration. It is a unique time of looking back and looking forward; in this frame of mind I ran across a poem from one of my favorite poets, John O'Donohue:

CELEBRATION

Now is the time to free the heart,
Let all intentions and worries stop,
Free the joy inside the self,
Awaken to the wonder of your life.

Open your eyes and see the friends
Whose hearts recognize your face as kin,
Those whose kindness watchful and near,
Encourages you to live everything here.

See the gifts the years have given,
Things your effort could never earn,
The health to enjoy who you want to be
And the mind to mirror mystery.

“To Bless the Space between us (2008).”

God's Blessings for a joyful Christmas.
Mary+

What's Going on at St. John's?

Vestry Highlights

The Vestry met on Sunday, November 1st, following the 10:00 a.m. service.

Vestry members were asked if we might change our Sunday morning service from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. It was suggested we could try it for the winter months. A motion was made and approved that we change the hours of service for December, January and February. Sunday School would change from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. The motion was approved and this will go into effect the first Sunday in December so please make a note of the change of time.

Nothing has been heard from Mick Bowerman about the property.

Gus and Julie Cratcha will be leaving us. They are moving back to Cleveland and will be closer to their son and daughter who live there.

Pledge cards are coming in, but we need to be sure they will all get in soon. Time and talent sheets will be distributed.

Jake Hamilton has been working on the sale of the Plaid Door building. He has checked recent sales in the downtown area and they range from \$28,500 to \$134,000. Putting up a sign in the Plaid Door was discussed, but nothing was decided.

Jake Hamilton and Mike Bethka were able to patch portions of the roof on the south and north side. Hopefully no more bad leaks!

The snow blower has been repaired and is stored in the back of the church by the kitchen. Gasoline will be stored in the shed.

Please notice that one pew has been removed from the center of the church. This is to accommodate wheel chair users. The pew has been moved to the back of the church against the wall with the stained glass pictures.

Angie Ballard checked with Signs of the Times in Ithaca about the purchase of a sign letting trail walkers and rides that they can park in the church parking lot. The sign will say "Trail Parking Compliments of St. John's

Church" with an arrow. It will be a white aluminum sign with brown lettering. The cost is \$49.95. It was decided to "pass the hat" to pay for the sign, asking each parishioner to contribute \$1.00. If not enough is collected, the balance will be paid from designated funds of by a generous parishioner.

Monthly potlucks will begin on December 6th and continued on the first Sunday of each month. Bring a dish to pass, your table service, and join us for fellowship and good food.

The Annual Meeting will be coming up in January and we will need to elect new Vestry members. There are four expiring terms—Wendy Brown, Vickie Bethka, Jake Hamilton and Angie Ballard. If you are interested and willing to serve on the Vestry, please let a Vestry member know as soon as possible.

Episcopal Church Women

Episcopal Church Women met on Saturday, November 14th.

The Adopt-a-family to be helped at Christmas is an Alma family with three children. Gifts were wanted for the children who range in age from seven to ten. Tags were prepared to be put on the Christmas tree in the narthex so people can choose and purchase gifts. A senior couple from St. Louis will be helped. They wanted food, a four-slice toaster, and boots. It was approved to purchase two \$25 Walmart gift certificates for two children at church.

We want to participate in the St. Paul's, Saginaw, feeding program next summer. We have August 15th on hold, but we decided not to commit ourselves until we have a chairperson for the event.

Large coffee filters are needed for the coffee pot in the kitchen. If you find some, ECW would be glad to have them.

On Sunday, December 20th, we will have the hanging of the greens and our Christmas finger food brunch. Come to help hang the greens and bring something edible for the brunch.

We will be having potlucks on the first Sunday of each month. We hope a lot of people

will be interested in joining together for fellowship and always good food.

The next ECW meeting will be Saturday, December 12th, at 10:00 a.m. Shirley Hamilton will be the chairperson.

Saginaw Valley Convocation Council Meeting

November 16, 2009

Meeting began with prayer at 7:00 PM at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Bay City. Various excused absences resulted in not enough for a quorum, so no final decisions could be made, however...

Bible Study began with a passage from John 18:33-37. Convocation Dean, The Rev. Elsa Presentin, asked two questions:

1. How had Jesus Christ turned your life upside down?
2. Where is the Kingdom of God?

These questions resulted in a lively discussion. One man's answer to No.1 was "Jesus Christ turned his life right side up! And several shared incidences in their lives of God making a difference. There was general agreement that the Kingdom of God is here and now and includes the whole created universe.

Treasurer's report was reviewed and adjustments for the remainder of 2009 explained, e.g., one grant was not used because the event did not happen. Projection is good for 2010; however, fewer funds will be available in 2011 and 2012. Grant requests for 2010 need to be submitted ASAP and will be dealt with on a first come first serve basis. Correct paper work must accompany requests. Congregations have a copy of the grant request guidelines. Grants are primarily for programs to promote ministries rather than bricks and mortar projects. Some handicap changes have been given help.

Support for Camp Chickagami was discussed and Convocation President, Charles Leibrand reported that each of the four convocations in the

Diocese would contribute \$500.00 towards their general budget and any special needs would be considered when a grant request is submitted.

The Rev. Judy Boli, Rector, St. Paul's. Saginaw, reminded everyone of the increased need for food donations this year.

An explanation of financial help for students attending Gordon-Coppage School was given: Three partners: Congregation, Diocese, and self – not necessarily equal thirds.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM.

Shirley Hamilton and Barb Gladding represented St. John's at this meeting.

A Christmas Treat with St. John's Choir at the Gratiot County Players

The St John's Choir will be performing during the upcoming Gratiot County Players production of "The Gathering", written and directed by Kevin Fitzgibbon. This is a Christmas production which is sure to warm your hearts. The choir will be performing on Friday, December 5th and Saturday, December 6th during the set changes. There are other area church choirs who will be performing on the other evenings. So come kick off the holidays with a story about a family and their holiday celebrations through the years. It will bring a smile to your face.

Have You Seen the Trail Sign?

The church has purchased a trail sign which will be erected on our property on the north side of the church, to let people who ride the trail that we offer our church parking lot to those who wish to use it. The trail sign says "Trail Parking Compliments of St Johns Church" with an arrow pointing to the parking lot. We will be "passing the hat" and asking every parishioner to put in \$1.00 -- and only \$1.00. We hope to collect enough money to cover the cost, but if short, the balance will either be donated by a parishioner, or from one of the designated funds. Please put in your dollar when asked.

A Welcome to Bill Harris

William (Bill) Harris grew up just outside of Grosse Pointe Park city limits on the Detroit River. As a youngster he served as an altar boy at an Episcopal church in Detroit. From grades 5 through 9 he attended Ridley College (Branch of Eton School of England), a private boys' school in St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada. Since the school was of the Anglican Church, students there attended chapel daily and church on Sunday. Tenth through twelfth grade years were spent at Southeastern High School in Detroit.

Then Bill was attending St. Columba Episcopal Church in Detroit. In high school Bill took ROTC training. After high school he joined the Navy, wherein his ROTC training was a great advantage to him.

Bill served six years on active duty and is a veteran of the U.S. Navy. He sailed around the world on Amphibious Forces' ships (Gator Navy). He was attached to the Atlantic Theater Operation (1959-65), served in Cuba during the Cuban Blockade, and served in Vietnam for one year. During his last years he served as a Personnelman 2nd Class Petty Officer, and was transferred to the Great Lakes Naval Base in North Chicago where he was assigned to RTC (Recruit Training Command) handling recruit records.

After the naval years, Bill attended the University of Michigan and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration. He worked for Chrysler Corporation and the MI Inspection Bureau.

Then Bill turned his attention to a long-time enjoyment of food management. Through work experience and classes he earned a degree in Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Food Management (HRI) and became a certified restaurant manager. Early in the almost 40 years working in that field, Bill was General Manager of River Boat Restaurant in the Empire State Building. He held general management and food and beverage management positions in many

hotels and restaurants in Connecticut for over 20 years.

Upon returning to Detroit to care for aging parents, Bill's work in HRI management continued, including the Land's Down Restaurant in a converted ferry boat on the Detroit River. In other Michigan locations Bill operated several restaurants and hotels, as well as ran his own consulting business. He opened his own restaurant in Ann Arbor across from the Diag at U of M in 1992. In 1993 Bill had health problems and retired. He continued his consulting business until 1998. During that time he taught HRI classes for MSU at their extension school.

In that first retirement year Bill became Worshipful Master of Acacia Lodge # 477 F. and A. M. in Grosse Pointe Woods. He presided over its merger with another lodge in 1993. It became Laurel of Acacia Lodge #477 F. and A. M. Bill suffered a heart attack that year. Bill became a Mason in 1963 when he joined the Acacia Lodge with the help of the Great Lakes Naval Degree Team, of which he also became a member. He remained an Acacia Lodge member for 46 years. Bill is also a life member of Demolay, Acacia Chapter, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI, where he served until majority in April 1963.

More severe health problems developed for Bill in 1998-99. He had back surgery in 2000. Six months later it was apparent the surgery had failed. Major health complications continued, including his heart and blood pressure. In 2008, seriously in need of medical help, Bill was moved by his lodge into the Masonic Home. There has been good improvement in his health since.

In addition to attending weekly Bible Study at Masonic Home, Bill attends our Christian Ed Study as well as church service here at St. John's. In warmer fall weather he has traveled to church on his POV (power operated vehicle, aka "Amigo") using the rail-trail. For the last year his POV has enabled him to become familiarized with his new home town—Alma.

You may see him at a downtown business or even at Rite Aid or Glen's when he is out on it.

Bill is a registered voter here, has obtained a driver's license here, and is now a member of the Alma Lodge # 244 F. and A. M. Be sure you find time to get to know Bill!

Shirley Hamilton
ECW Outreach

December Birthdays

- 2 Hayley McCreery
- 2 Nate Fishburn
- 3 Gerald Hamilton
- 4 Basil Anderson
- 12 Beth Davison
- 13 Barbara Gladding
- 14 Ray Anspach
- 19 Fran Parcher
- 19 Lilly Schweri
- 20 Royce Clark
- 21 John Jerry
- 21 Julie Cratcha
- 26 Vlesta Alexander
- 30 Simi VanCise

Please pray for healing and guidance:

- Karl Rushman (Alex Radzibon's grandson in the military)
- Karl Wakeman (Member who is homeless and jobless)
- Kay Crispin (Member and Jerry Crispin's wife)
- John Smith (Member and Lurleen's husband)
- Steven Alexander (Vlesta Alexander's son)
- Tony Dill (Military and Jake and Shirley Hamilton's relative)
- Brett Lacy (Karl Wakeman's son in Juvenile Detention)

Come Home to Alma

The Come Home to Alma Christmas Celebration will be Friday, December 11th. All

downtown stores will be open until 9:00 p.m. The Plaid Door will be having their Christmas cookie giveaway again this year, and we are asking our parishioners to bake cookies and have them at the Church or store on December 9th. The bags of cookies will be assembled that evening at the Church.

The St. John's Episcopal Church choir will be singing at the store starting at 6:30 p.m.

Blanket making Workshop

On Saturday, December 11th, we will gather at 11:00 a.m. and work on blankets until 2:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to help make these tied blanket for the dialysis patients at Gratio t Community Hospital. Bring your sharp scissors and blanket floss if you wish to donate. Large blankets take 2 yards of printed material for the top and 2 yards of plain material for the bottom. Regular sized blankets take 1½ yards of material for the top and for the bottom.

Please join us. Bring a sandwich for lunch and tea and coffee will be provided. We have lots of fun together.

United Thank Offering

How's your Blue Box coming? Is it full already? Pick up another Box at church. We have so much to be thankful for—the beautiful fall weather we have had, our Thanksgiving feast, getting ready for the Celebration of Christ's birth, and all the gifts from God that we have.

Remember that every coin you put in the Blue Box goes to help someone in need. Perhaps they need a new church or building to live in. Perhaps they need a program to teach them about the love of God for their lives. We have so much! We need to give generously! Even if you only put in pennies of thankfulness, your coins will help someone.

Daughters of the King Prayer

Merciful Father, help us to gather together and pray for your mercy. Forgive us for

pushing you out of our lives only to fill them with meaningless pursuits. Forgive us for allowing evil to penetrate our hearts and minds. Open the eyes of our nation to our desperate need for you. Thank you for giving us not what we deserve but what we need to find our way back to you. Amen.

Daughter of the King News

Thanks everyone for helping with the coat drive we are winding up and hope to get them delivered before the real cold sets in. Yet again we have received about 80 coats. Last year they were all used, and this year should be no different.

Please come help make blankets for the dialysis unit on the 12th. Having spoken to someone who was given one, they are greatly appreciated. Thanks to all who helped in the past.

Daughters will not be meeting in December. We are all too busy, but will get back together again in January. May everyone have a Blessed and Merry Christmas. For His Sake.

Youth Group News

We are slowly growing with two new teens attending when they can. Welcome to Breanne and Brett. All 7-9th graders are invited to meet Saturday, December 5 from 2-4pm to make cookies, some for us, some for the Plaid Door to give away during the Welcome Home Days. We will meet at Sue Young's place. See Wendy Brown or Sue Young for directions. Also the kids are being challenged to design a t-shirt for the youth group. Winning design to be picked mid December. The winner gets to see their design on the other youth group members.



Wendy

Handy Little Chart

God has a positive answer:

YOU SAY

GOD SAYS

BIBLE VERSES

You say: "It's impossible"

God says: All things are possible
(Luke 18:27)

You say: "I'm too tired"

God says: I will give you rest
(Matthew 11:28-30)

You say: "Nobody really loves me"

God says: I love you
(John 3:16 and John 3:34)

You say: "I can't go on"

God says: My grace is sufficient
(11Corinthians 12:9 and Psalm 91:15)

You say: "I can't figure things out"

God says: I will direct your steps
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

You say: "I can't do it"

God says: You can do all things
(Philippians 4:13)

You say: "I'm not able"

God says: I am able
(11 Corinthians 9:8)

You say: "It's not worth it"

God says: It will be worth it
(Romans 8:28)

You say: "I can't forgive myself"

God says: I forgive you
(1 John 1:9 and Romans 8:1)

You say: "I can't manage"

God says: I will supply all your needs
(Philippians 4:19)

You say: "I'm afraid"

God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear
(11Timothy 1:7)

December Schedule

Tuesday, December 1

Office Open

7:00 p.m. Choir Practicess

Wednesday, December 2

Office Open

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 3

Office Open

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Clericus at

St. Alban's, Bay City

Friday, December 4

Saturday, December 5

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast at the

Big Boy

Sunday, December 6

10:00 a.m. Christian Education

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Monday, December 7

Office Open

Tuesday, December 8

Office Open

9:00 a.m. Plaid Door Check Writing

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, December 9

Office Open

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 10

Office Open

Friday, December 11

Saturday, December 12

10:00 a.m. Episcopal Church Women

11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tied Blanket

Making Workshop

Sunday, December 13

10:00 a.m. Christian Education

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

12:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting

Delivery of Adopt-a-Family Gifts

Monday, December 14

Office Open

Tuesday, December 15

Office Open

12:00 p.m. Commission on Ministry at

Diocesan Office

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, December 16

Office Open

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 17

Office Open

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, December 18

Saturday, December 19

Sunday, December 20

10:00 a.m. Christian Education

11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Monday, December 21

Office Open

7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Convocation

Meeting at St. Alban's, Bay City

Tuesday, December 22

Office Open

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, December 23

Office Open

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE

9:00 p.m. Carols

9:30 p.m. 1st Mass of Christmas

Friday, December 25

NO SERVICE SCHEDULED

Saturday, December 26

Sunday, December 27

10:00 a.m. Christian Education

11:00 a.m. Lessons and Carols with

Eucharist

Monday, December 28

Office Open

Tuesday, December 29

Office Open

Wednesday, December 30

Office Open

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 31

Office Open