

THE MESSENGER

St. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH | SAGINAW, MI



The Messenger is published monthly by St. John's Episcopal Church, 123 N. Michigan Ave., Saginaw, MI 48602. This publication is also mailed electronically to our parishioners.

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Praise is due you, O God... You crown the year with your bounty (Ps 65:1&11).
This month in the Church Calendar we celebrate that the bountiful gifts of God are for all peoples. This begins with the Epiphany, the visit of the Three Wise Men, who represent all the gentile nations coming to God. We also celebrate the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan River. These two events in Jesus' life take us from his infancy to the time when he began his public ministry. Traditionally this time of year was one for baptisms and house blessings. We don't have any scheduled baptisms this year, but I am going to do house blessings, upon request, starting after January 6th. If you would like to arrange to have your house blessed, please contact the church office to schedule a visit. The holy water that we sprinkle in the blessing service is to remind us of the cleansing waters of baptism that free us from sin and death. For it is by baptism that all people can be brought into the one family of God's Church and receive the promised Holy Spirit. This is a special time of year for sharing our faith with others and finding ways to thank God for the gifts we have been given. I pray that you all have a blessed new year!

In Christ,
Fr. Daniel+ | Priest & Rector



Did you Know?



The aspergillum, pictured here, is the vessel used to carry and sprinkle Holy Water when doing a special blessing.

Happy Birthday!

- 1 Barbara Jones
- 1 Ian Marc Baillargeon
- 4 Kerrie Blackney
- 9 Jack Luxton
- 9 Mary Jane Scott
- 10 Marie Blake
- 11 Sue Brigham
- 16 Jacob Stuber
- 19 Andrew Hoag
- 20 Alexandra Vlassis
- 21 Diane Grigg
- 22 Tom Grantham
- 27 John Emond
- 28 Janice Jayner
- 28 Katie Wilson
- 29 Jan Young
- 31 Bill Frederick

Happy Anniversary!

- 9 Katie & Fred Sunderman
- 16 Tara & Matthew Gerhardt
- 22 Nancy & Keith Birdsall
- 30 Wendy & Ed Majask

Thank You

Thank you **Melanie Hollman** for your wonderful work organizing and hosting the Lessons & Carols reception.

Thank you to members of the **Worship Servers, Altar Guild and Choir** for your heroic efforts supporting services during the Advent and Christmas seasons!

Thanks to **Sonni Magyar, The Rev. Don Tepe** and all of the **parents** and **children** that participated in the Christmas pageant.

Is there someone in our parish who has gone above and beyond? If you would like to offer thanks, please call the office at 793-9575.

Good Samaritans:

Jan. 6 - Jan. 19	Marcia Hoffman	274-0423
Jan. 20 - Feb. 2	Ellen Redfield	799-4401

Vestry Members:

Keith Birdsall	652-6768	quilter37@charter.net
Drew Christiansen	392-0109	drewchristiansen78@gmail.com
Jane Girdham	790-8712	jgirdham@svsu.edu
Connie Grantham	695-2088	grantham@hotmail.com
Marcia Hoffman	793-8354	hoffman1982@sbcglobal.net
Mark Mahlberg	793-0801	mark-mahlberg@yahoo.com
Sue Marquardt	790-0656	r-s-keyofc@sbcglobal.net
Duncan Redfield	799-7893	redsailor7@yahoo.com
Dennis Thom	793-9562	dennisthom@sbcglobal.net



"The Messenger" Completes 30 Years!

Our parish newsletter strives to connect our members and friends with each other, our neighboring parishes and the Anglican communion at large. Staff and members alike work to contribute articles that touch us as individuals and as a community through news, devotions and more. Today, "The Messenger" delivers the most relevant information that our website, Facebook page and Parish Life have to offer.

As "The Messenger" celebrates 30 years of communication, it is appropriate to thank Helen Needham for launching it. The idea was born in the car on the way home from a Vestry retreat. Helen saw the need and Rector Charles Stuart asked her to do it. For several years Helen wrote it at home on her manual typewriter and brought it to church to be mimeographed and mailed. For many years, a dedicated crew met in the Guild Room to fold, staple and sort the copies to go to the post office. The Messenger has gone through a number of changes over the years, reaching the electronic version many of us receive today.

Helen Needham has been a dedicated member of St. John's for more than 74 years. She served as Vestry member, Senior Warden and was one of the first Lay Readers. Until recently she lived in the home she and her husband bought many years ago. Early last year, she moved to Luther Manor. As we do, she still follows the happenings at St. John's through "The Messenger" which she founded!

On this special 30th anniversary, we thank Helen as well as all who have contributed over the years. May these beginnings continue to connect St. John's faithful for decades to come!

Submitted by Ellen Redfield



Helen Needham, 1999

A New Year Brings New Opportunity for a Better Quality of Life

Last year, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, announced that he would retire from his position as Archbishop. He is a well established academic, poet and historian who has a talent for taking complex issues and expressing them simply. These qualities will, no doubt, serve him well as he finishes his career as Master of Magdalene College at Cambridge University. In his New Year's Message, one of his last official addresses as Archbishop, Dr. Williams chooses not to say "Goodbye" but rather highlights how we can all use our talents to make the world a better place in this new year.

"Whenever I make a broadcast like this one, I'm acutely aware of the gap between what I'm seeing here and what you're looking at, at home. You see me now sitting quietly in my study. What I'm seeing is a small crowd of wonderfully expert and efficient technicians doing the filming, meticulously checking the pictures and the sound. What we see happening is only a small part of what's going on in order to make it happen.

And this last year we had a chance to notice this, for once, in a very vivid way. The extraordinary events of the Olympics and Paralympics last summer provided an unforgettable spectacle. But everyone who visited the Olympic site or watched the broadcasts will have been made aware of the army of volunteers who cheerfully gave up their free time and worked away, without complaint, all hours of the day and night to make these great events happen. They were the key people who translated the Olympic vision into reality for the rest of us.

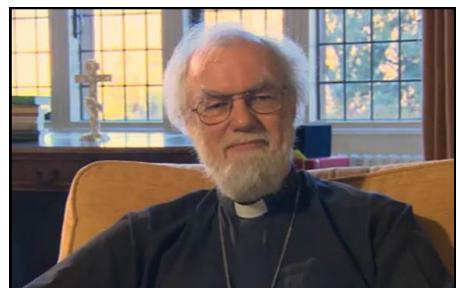
It ought to make us think a bit harder about all the other folk who quietly, often invisibly, turn vision into reality and just make things happen – especially volunteers. Here at the Robes project, over twenty local churches are combining to offer food and shelter to homeless people in London. Religion here isn't a social problem or an old-fashioned embarrassment; it's a wellspring of energy and a source of life-giving vision for how people should be regarded and treated. So let's recognize this steady current of generosity that underlies so much of our life together in this country and indeed worldwide.

It's all based on one vision – to make our society, our whole world, work for everyone, not just the comfortable and well off. And it's a vision that sometimes seems to need Olympic levels of patient hard work and dedication. If you have the good fortune to live in a community where things seem to be working well the chances are that if you slip backstage you'll find an army of cheerful people making the wheels go round – and don't forget just what a huge percentage of them come from the churches and other faith groups.

How very good that people like that are there for us, we can say – but as soon as we've said that, we should be prompted to ask the tougher question: what can I do to join this silent conspiracy of generous dedication? There'll be those who have time and skill and strength to offer; there'll be those who have less of these, but can support in prayer and goodwill.

And as we think about this silent groundswell, perhaps our minds can begin to open up to the deepest secret of all – the trust that the entire universe is held together by the quiet, unfailing generosity of God. What we see and grasp isn't the whole story – but just occasionally we can get a glimpse. I hope there will be lots of joyful glimpses like that for you in the year ahead.

Every blessing and happiness for the coming year."



See the video:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9774035/Archbishop-of-Canterburys-New-Years-message.html>

Learn About Bishop Justin Welby, Archbishop-Designate:
<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2778/when-will-justin-welby-officially-become-archbishop-of-canterbury>

Attending to the Business of the Church

Annual Meeting & Breakfast - January 27th, 2013 @ 9:00am

Each January the leadership, staff and members of St. John's gather together to review the previous year and set the pace for the year ahead. We also elect three new members to our vestry, review the annual budget, hear ministry reports and more. This year those in attendance will also be able to pick up the first copies of a revised parish directory!



Schedule of Events:

- 8:00am - Holy Eucharist
- 9:00am - Parish Breakfast
- 9:15am - Annual Meeting
- 10:30am - Holy Eucharist

What does it mean to be on the Vestry?

Being a vestry member is an important role in the Episcopal Church. The vestry is an elected group of parish members who oversee the church and its operations. These members are responsible for:

- The maintenance of church property
- Advocating for the church to guests and members
- Overseeing the annual budget
- Leading by example within the church by volunteering and attending worship services.



This seems like a big task and, in truth it is. **But vestry members are not expected to accept this responsibility alone.** The vestry at St. John's consists of 9 members, of which only 3 are "new" at any given time. Newly elected members will have guidance and mentorship while they take on their new leadership role. Having a balanced and active vestry is critical to the health of St. John's. These leaders among us represent the voice of our membership. There is typically one meeting a month which is supplemented by committee meetings as necessary.

Who is Eligible to be a Vestry member?

A member who is:

- 16 or older
- Attends worship regularly
- Participates in ministry or formation opportunities
- Is a good steward of time, talent and treasure
- Not on or related to someone presently on the staff or vestry

If you would like to nominate someone to be on the vestry please submit the name to the parish office or fill in a form found in the community room and place it in the offering plate by Sunday, January 13th.

Seeking God

A few weeks ago I came across a poem on a CD about a person seeking God and struggling as we all do with our own human failings. I have taken this poem, originally in French, and translated it into English. I was deeply inspired by the simplicity and the honesty of the person's conversation with God. I think that this "conversation" shows how we can simply accept God into our lives and be close to Him through our prayers. I was also very moved by the original conversation which is spoken in French by a bishop, Monseigneur Di Falco. If you want to listen to this in its original form, here is the website: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G905Vib65KU&feature=player_detailpage

Enjoy the sounds of this beautiful language and the intensely spiritual prayer.

A Conversation with God

So God? Are you really in my life? How do you feel about me? Do you have enough space? Do I give you the attention you deserve? Often, I cannot deny it. I know that my minor concerns and I take up all the room. I live comfortably in my daily routine even to the point of forgetting that you are here with me. I must confess that in these moments of which I am not too proud, I prefer to ignore you and to pretend that I never knew you. Oh yes, I admit it! In these moments you really bother me. You can get in my way!

But what I worry about the most is when I doubt you and when I think that you are absent, silent. At those times I feel so alone. The emptiness actually makes me dizzy. I look for you everywhere and can't find you. I call out to you and you do not answer. Oh, how painful and solitary are these times!

But strangely enough I do not actually regret these agonizing moments. On the contrary, once my pain has passed, I am doubly happy to find you again. I must say that it is at this time when I realize that you did not leave me. It is I who walked away from you. How wonderful when we find each other again, when you welcome me home. You do not expect a big apology or an explanation....just my returning to you, just my acceptance of you in my life. That is enough for you.

My God, I beg you to teach me to love myself as you alone know how to love me.

I am so happy when we can just chat together like old friends, like two people who love each other unconditionally and who share the same home. I feel so intensely this comfort that your presence brings me. Oh, how wonderful the power of prayer, the marvel of these intimate conversations.

How magnificent the realization that I can turn to you and that you will always be with me. You will always have enough space in my life. You will always occupy the most important place.



Submitted by The Rev. Pam Renna