



THE MESSENGER



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

Volume 26, Issue 1

January 2009

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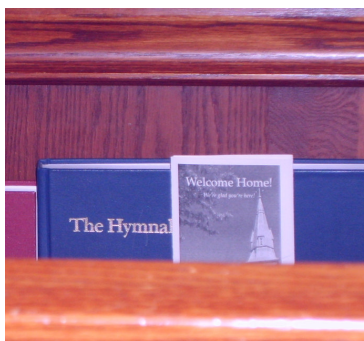
Christmas and Beyond...

In this blessed holy season, I write to you to not only to express my best wishes to you and your family, but also to express my deep gratitude for all that you continue to offer in Christ's Name! I am proud to share with you that we have already heard from enough people who have made their commitment to St. John's for 2009 that we have reached over 65% of our goal of \$200,000. While this is news of a great start, there remains a challenge of the remaining 35% or \$68,000 that is needed for next year's budget.

I have shared recently that for over 125 years now, our building has stood as a symbol of hope and service to our community, and yet it is hardly news to any of us that 2008 was challenging to say the least. No different than most likely your own home, this House of God has been affected by the dramatic shifts of the financial markets. Our parish, like so much of Michigan, has become quite adept at serving more need and even being a greater witness to our community with less resources. One need only to look around St. John's to realize that God continues to move in this Church and that great things are happening...thanks to you! Our ministry continues to be possible because of your continued commitment to our mission and the message of the Gospel to which we are entrusted, according to our abilities, our time, talents and yes, treasure. It takes all of us to make what we offer happen. But is this really news?



I ask you to consider what God actually does in the *Incarnation* – God's love is directly experienced as God came into the world as we are – "God with us." Inasmuch as this is affirming and comforting, it is also inspiring us to do and be something more. We, as Christians in the Anglican tradition, have always placed a high degree of importance on the message of the Incarnation, because there is something in the message and mystery of God coming down among humanity that touches the essence of how we see ourselves and relate to God that our liturgy affirms and the Word of God proclaims: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." All that we do leading up to Christmas points to this truth, and it is how we live our life, both individually and collectively, that makes the Gospel powerful, tangible, *incarnational* for us and the community we serve. Please realize that however you and your family have been able to be a part of living-out this message in this past month helps to make the message of the Incarnation and of the Gospel itself all more real and accessible for the wider world. The great part of the "Good News" that we proclaim is that it is not isolated to one day or even season of the calendar. While the store and malls will probably have every piece of Christmas display removed by the time you're reading this, our message that is the real story of Christmas will only be getting clearer and bolder, all by what we live out.



One example that comes to mind is with our new "Welcome Home!" brochure. Amy Simons, our Communications Coordinator, was able to create this in time for "Holidays in the Heart of the City" this year and it has been on display, both in our pews and in brochure racks since. While this is a great way to introduce someone to St. John's for Advent and Christmas, its message is one that is needed yearlong: "You are welcome here!" If you haven't done so already, pick one of these up this next Sunday. "This is your community here at St. John's" is how our message unfolds and indeed we are living it out. Worship, formation, community and involvement are all de-

scribed in a way that is both inviting and encouraging. More than simply a welcome card, this is designed so that you can have something to give your friends and family members that begins to describe who we are and how there's a place for them at the Lord's Table. Most importantly, the story is made complete by your adding your story – why our parish is an important and special place that continues to touch the hearts and lives of so many. Long after Christmas is but a distant memory for shoppers, our message is clear: Come find your home here at St. John's!

Daven Clinton



Happy Birthday

1	Barbara	Jones
1	Ian Marc	Baillargeon
2	Alex	Becker
2	Ben	Becker
2	Alyssa	Conesco
4	Kerrie	Blackney
9	Jack	Luxton
10	Marie	Blake
10	Sara	Oravitz
11	Sue	Brigham
12	Owen	Baillie
14	Eleanor	Wood
15	David	Winters
16	Jacob	Stuber
18	Jacob	Winters
19	Andrew	Hoag
20	Alexandra	Vlassis
21	Diane	Grigg
22	Tom	Grantham
27	John	Emond
28	Katie	Wilson
29	Jan	Young
31	Bill	Frederick
31	Helen	Leach

Happy Anniversary!

6	Katie & Fred	Sunderman
22	Nancy & Keith	Birdsall
30	Wendy & Ed	Majask

Thank You

A Big THANK YOU to everyone who helped with the Advent Celebration either by bringing a dish to pass, working in the kitchen, or helping with crafts including but not limited to: Sue & Jack Luxton, Marsha Hoffman, Sharon Kaylor, Sarah Elin, Liz Stuber, and Lou Smith.

Thank you to those who helped make our service of Lessons & Carols one of the best yet... in spite of the terrible cold, including: Gary & Melanie Hollman, Derek & Stephanie Peters, Tom Donaghy, Kevin & Amy Simons, and Virginia Lane.

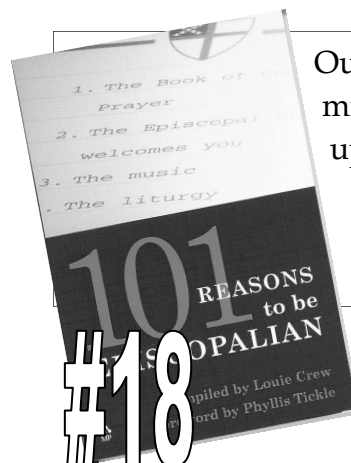
Thank you still to all of those who have an extra effort with our Outreach projects: Burris & Kathy Smith, Jim & Marsha Braun, Josh Daugherty, Susan Daugherty, Sperry Garber, Barb, Ray, and Paul Ilkka, Berney Jones, Cyndy Lange, Pat Lynes, Karen Parr, Kathrine Rose, Jim Shannon, Ida Smith, Herb & Mary Spence, Carl Spradlin, Chuck Stuart, Jill & Ned Wetmore, and Jan & Jerry Young.

Also, thanks to all of the extra Christmas bulletin/Messenger folders: Sue Brigham, Bill Fredrick, Barb & John Roberts, and Pat Lynes.

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:

Dec. 28 - Jan. 10	Sue Luxton	684-9169
Jan. 11 - Jan. 24	Marcia Hoffman	793-8354
Jan. 25 - Feb. 7	Ellen Redfield	799-4401



Ours is not just a checkbook ministry. Episcopalians roll up their sleeves and help.

*Agnes L. Haviland-Moore
Diocese of Connecticut*

Cf. 101 Reasons to be Episcopalian, compiled by Louie Crew. © 2003 by Louie Crew/Morehouse
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Presiding Bishop's Christmas Message for 2008



The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (John 1:5).

The world settles into winter, at least in the northern hemisphere, and life to many seems increasingly bleak. Foreclosures, layoffs, government bailouts and financial failures, continuing war on two fronts, terrorist attacks, murders of some identified only by their faith – this world is in abundant need of light. We know light that is not overcome by darkness, for God has come among us in human flesh. Born in poverty to a homeless couple, to a people long under occupation, Jesus is human and divine evidence that God is with us in the midst of the world's darkness. Emmanuel, Prince of Peace, Divine Counselor is come among us to re-mind, re-member, and re-create. A new mind and heart is birthed in us as we turn to follow Jesus on the way. The body of God's creation is re-membered and put back together in ways intended from the beginning. And a new creation becomes reality through Jesus' healing work. Christians tell the story again each Christmastide, and the telling and remembering invites us once again into being made whole. Our task in every year is to hear the story with new ears, and seeing light in the darkness of this season's woes, then to tell it abroad with gladsome hearts to those who wait in darkness. Where will you share the joyous tale of light in the darkness?

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
The Episcopal Church

Inново

Please join us for a contemplative, meditative, and innovative service filled with prayer and time for reflection. A perfect way to start the new year! **Sunday, January 18th at 4:00pm** followed by a simple supper and fellowship.

Advent Celebration & Potluck

This year, St. John's brought in the season of Advent in it's traditional fashion... with terrific food and smiling faces. Thanks to everyone who helped this season with dishes to pass and family crafts!



ST. JOHN'S IS A CHURCH CALLED TO CARE, SHARE, WORSHIP, CELEBRATE AND LOVE.

Candidates for Vestry

Thank You!! You asked and they've answered...These are our candidates to serve on our incoming Vestry class for a three-year term. Each of these individuals has been asked and prayerfully considered a call to serve in this important role. At our Annual Meeting and Breakfast on January 25th, all members are eligible to vote for our Vestry candidates as well as elect our Parish Delegate for Convocation and at-large Delegate to Convention.



Janet Cosenza – currently serves in the Altar Guild and continues to be an active part of our community life, often assisting with fellowship events.



Bill Frederick – has been a dedicated part of St. John's for years. Bill is a faithful part of our Wednesday evening Eucharist where he serves as both greeter and acolyte. In addition to worship, Bill often volunteers with our office team to assist with *The Messenger* and other mailings.



Burris Smith – a long-time member of St. John's, Burris continues to serve as an usher, Eucharistic minister and lector, and lunch bag outreach volunteer in addition to various parish activities. Most recently, Burris coordinated this past Giving Tree & Gift Basket Project benefiting the residents of Rosein Towers.

Candidate for Parish Delegate to Convocation and At-Large Delegate to Convention



Karen Parr – In addition to completing her current term as a member of the Vestry, Karen has been serving as a Parish Ministry Intern, which has afforded her opportunities to work with many of our parishioners with just about every aspect of parish life. Karen continues to enjoy her own participation with choir.

2009 Annual Parish Meeting & Breakfast To be held Sunday, January 25, 2009

All members of St. John's Episcopal church are encouraged to come and be active participants in the 2009 Annual Parish Meeting. Take advantage of this opportunity to hear the issues that touch our parish and come together around our common goals. Save room for a continental breakfast and plan to stay for the following service.



- **Parish Breakfast at 9a.m.**
- *Activities for children (PreK-3 – 5th grade) / nursery care (1–36 mos.) available*
- **Annual Meeting at 9:15a.m.**
Items to Include:
 - Financial Report & Presentation of the Budget for 2009
 - Election of New Vestry Members & Parish Delegate
 - Address by the Rector
 - Appreciation for Retiring Vestry Members:
Kim Burau, Karen Parr, Paul Schaub, and Bill Vlassis
- **Celebration of the Holy Eucharist**

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To Care & Share: Seeing the faces of our Outreach

Thank you! Since 2005, we have evolved our Annual Outreach Giving Tree / Gift Basket Project into one concentrated effort in the hopes of making a bigger difference for those in need and part of our greater community, working with the residents of Rosein Towers, which is a subsidized housing community for adults which is right around the corner from the parish.

Once again, so many people from St. John’s were able to step-up and joyfully meet the challenge to help over one hundred people in our community! Each resident of Rosein Towers received a number of personal needs, non-perishable food items, and a number of small gifts, including Christmas cards from our youth and several craft items made by parishioners. It’s safe to say that just about everyone at church has taken part in some aspect of the project this year, including our “Boxing Day” on December 21st (despite the horrible weather) and all boxes were delivered by a team of St. John’s “elves” personally delivering each basket to the residents the following day. What a thrill it was to bring people the hope, love and joy that Christmas is. All this was possible only by your support of time, talent, treasure, and dedication!

A special thanks to everyone on this year’s team, and especially Burris Smith, Pat Lynes, Sharon Kaylor and Sperry Garber who led an incredible team of dedicated volunteers in coordinating all the aspects of this year’s project! We had a number of new faces on this year’s project and would love to have you join us in future outreach efforts. As you can see simply by some of our pictures, all of us can have great fun and make a difference!



Thank you, my friend and colleague!



I’d like to convey a special note of thanks to the Rev. Dr. Virginia Lane. While it was great to have the chance to visit with her and share Christmas with us, Virginia was gracious enough to assist with all of services that St. John’s hosted for Christmas. I know that I speak for a great many when I say that we have missed her presence as well as her voice, and so hearing her preach on the 22nd was a great gift for us all! It’s safe to say that Virginia+ returned to her new home in Iowa City, filled with our good wishes, wonderful food & fellowship shared, and no doubt POOPED from all the great worship she helped with. Thank you Virginia!

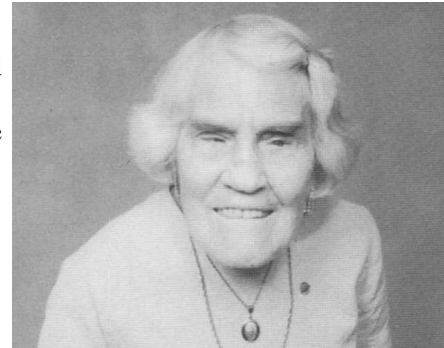
Darren+

ST. JOHN’S IS A CHURCH CALLED TO CARE, SHARE, WORSHIP, CELEBRATE AND LOVE.

St. John's Stories...

Our articles about the people of St. John's have been fascinating for me (and others, I hope.) I've learned so much about the diversity, the many people both in the church and out of the church, and the work that has been done in the service of our Lord. I often have wished that I could go back in time and met these wonderful people. And this month is no different, after talking with Ruth Joswiak, about her friend Isabella Peterson.

Ruth was born in Bessemer, Michigan, so anything under a couple of feet of snow is just a dusting. She and her husband have been involved in the glass business for years. Eventually she and her husband came below the Bridge, landing first in Flint and then in Saginaw. When she started attending St. John's, she found a circle of friends in Alice Morrison, Betty Donaghy, and Clara Vlassis, and she joined the St. Agnes Guild. Ruth was involved with the church choirs, and played for the children's choir.



Isabella was blind since her early childhood, but that definitely did not keep her down at all. If she wanted to do something, she found a way to it. Isabella was involved in many activities, including selling Stanley products (somewhat like Tupperware parties, with cleaning products instead) Isabelle was a choir member under Sandy Echan, and by all accounts had a lovely voice. Ruth would go to Isabelle's home, and reading her note for note the choir music, as Isabella used her stylus to convert the music to Braille. Although her circle of friends helped her a lot, Ruth recalls with a laugh that the only thing she refused to do was take Isabelle on her tandem bike. She also loved storytelling, worrying that it was an art form that was disappearing, and joined a story club.

Tragically, Isabelle was murdered in her home. Obviously a huge loss to the community, for her friends at St. John's it was a horrible end for a wonderful friend. Ruth said the church community tried to deal with her death as best as possible, but that she had a lot of trouble coming to terms with this. Then, Ruth said, one evening, she heard Isabelle's voice, clear as could be, saying, "From the time they came in my house, I knew I was going to be killed. But don't let people feel sad for me—I'm with my Lord." Ruth then could start to heal. She says the word that best describes Isabelle is "courageous." To that, I would have to add, may we all have such strength of faith in Christ Jesus.

A Parting Gift

Often when someone who has served long and well "retires," he or she is given a parting gift. The Endeans have turned the tables on us. Jeff has been a life-long member of St. John's, serving in ways too numerous to count -- most recently as Senior Warden in 2007. Myrna's talents as a gracious host have ranged from organizing receptions to handing out bag lunches.

With Jeff's retirement from the practice of law, the Endeans will be dividing their time among residences in Saginaw, Florida and Peru. As a parting gift, the Endeans have very generously given St. John's an income property in the form of a group home in Bay City. Operated by the state, the home on Candlestick Lane provides supervised care for 5 disabled individuals. For the time being, St. John's will receive rental income from this property. When it is sold, we will receive the proceeds of the sale.

St. John's is deeply grateful to the Endeans for their generous gift, and pleased to know that they will continue to be part of our church family when they are in Saginaw. We wish them God's blessing as they begin this new chapter in their lives.

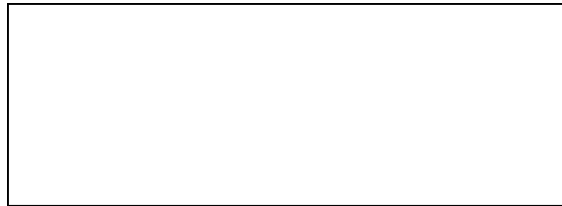


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ANNUAL MEETING & PARISH BREAKFAST...

The St. John's
Annual Meeting and Breakfast
will be January 25th at 9:00am.
Come and catch up on the latest
news about St. John's. Save room for
continental breakfast and parish fellowship!