

The Eagle's Wings



February 2009 A monthly newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church, 628 Main St, Stamford, CT 06901 Vol. 2 No. 2

A New Vision for St. John's Church

Following three months work on the ideas and wording, on December 9, 2008 St. John's Vestry unanimously approved the following vision-mission statement and recommended it at the January, 2009 Annual Parish Meeting for approval.

St. John's is a wonderfully diverse community of faith rooted in the heart of downtown Stamford, where the Holy Spirit is leading us toward a new humanity in Christ.

We embrace this vision by welcoming all people to:

- ✧ Celebrate God in the beauty of holiness through the richness of Anglican worship and glorious music;
- ✧ Strengthen their spiritual journeys through prayer, study and scripture; and
- ✧ Serve as instruments of God's peace, justice and love in the world.

Stewardship of the Earth

Each month we are reflecting on a different aspect of our stewardship. All the world, all plants and living things were put in human keeping in the Genesis story of creation and the Garden of Eden (Genesis 1:28 & 2:15-17). The humans God made were to till the garden and enjoy all the abundance God had placed in it. So often throughout history and no less today we have exploited God's abundance rather than enjoying it and sharing it freely. When God rested from creation, he saw that everything he made was very good. When we pollute the land, the water and the air; when we use more than our fair share of God's resources; when we let poor people and poor countries struggle and starve with meager resources as we, in this country, use far more than our fair share, we are denying the very goodness of God's creation.

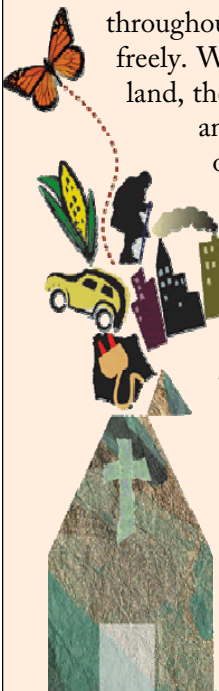
Sister Miriam MacGillis, preacher at the opening Eucharist at the *Radical Abundance a Theology of Sustainability* Trinity Conference, took Jesus' parable of the final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46) and extended its basic principal to all creation. In Jesus' parable the righteous and unrighteous are judged on the basis of how they treated the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and imprisoned; so, as we treat the forest, as we treat the land, the water, the air, so we treat our Lord.

The collect for *Stewardship of Creation* asks:

O merciful Creator, your hand is open wide to satisfy the needs of every living creature: Make us always thankful for your loving providence; and grant that we, remembering the account that we must one day give, may be faithful stewards of your good gifts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Can we at St. John's begin to improve our own stewardship of energy (heating, air conditioning, lighting), become more effective recyclers, and decrease the amount of disposable items we waste (plastic plates, cups and cutlery instead of washing and re-using our dishes, cups and silverware)?

Fr. Jim+



SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Holy Eucharist with
Healing – Rite I
With Organ

9:10 A.M.

Adult Christian
Formation

10:00 A.M.

Children's Program
and Nursery

10:15 A.M.

Holy Eucharist with
Healing – Rite II
with Organ

11:30 A.M.

Coffee Hour

6:00 P.M.

L'Eglise de L'Epiphanie
Holy Eucharist in French

Contemporary Worship
every 2nd Sunday of the
month at 5:00 p.m.

SATURDAY SERVICE

5:00 P.M.

Holy Eucharist –
with healing

WEEKLY SERVICE SCHEDULE

WEDNESDAY 7:00 A.M.

Holy Eucharist – with
healing and light breakfast

THURSDAY 12:10 P.M.

Holy Eucharist –
with healing and music

**Need more
information?**

Visit our website!

**There are always
Updates, and additional
information**

at:

www.stjohns-stamford.org

A Message from Our Rector

January 19-25 was an amazing week in the life of St. John's Church. Tuesday morning the staff gathered to see the inauguration of our new president Barack Obama projected on the big screen (the newly painted north wall of our dining room). We all worked hard to prepare for Mother Julia's ordination to the priesthood on Saturday and our annual parish meeting the following day. The Church and gathering spaces were scrubbed and cleaned. The office staff was hard at work on our normal 6 page Sunday bulletins, a 24 page ordination bulletin and a 33 page Annual Report. Special thanks to George Howard, our Volunteer for Parish Administration, who did all that printing! Joan Burke, Bruce Kittredge and Alison Chaltas were doing fittings and final completion of the beautiful stole and chasuble given to Mother Julia.

Meanwhile the Trinity Institute, a live web cast of an important national conference on sustainability, *Radical Abundance*, was transmitted live from Trinity Church, Wall Street, onto the big screen of St. John's dining room. Thursday and Friday nights the Building Committee met to receive cost estimates on the ambitious project of parish renovations. All day Saturday folk were busy with preparations. Special flowers were arranged, the dining room transformed, food delivered, decorations laid out, and soon people started arriving from near and far.

Mother Julia's ordination was an amazing worship experience. I will always remember the powerful sense of waiting on the Holy Spirit as the congregation sang the Taize chant, *Veni Sancte Spiritus* (come Holy Spirit). Soloists sang verses in different languages, each asking God's Spirit to come among us in a unique way. When the chant died down we all waited in a hushed silence. Bishop Smith prayed that God's Spirit would fill Julia and make her a priest in Christ's Church as all the priests joined him in laying their hands on her head. The expression of peace and joy on Julia's face made it clear to me that she was experiencing the Spirit's presence and power. Clergy and Julia's friends and family from near and far joined a full congregation of St. John's parishioners in celebrating her ordination. Someone remarked to me that "*St. John's, our sanctuary, organ and choir, were made for this kind of glorious worship.*"

Following the 10:15 a.m. service and coffee hour people quickly took their seats and we began our annual Parish Meeting. There was lots to talk about. We heard short, helpful reports from Children and Family Ministries, our Director of Music, the clergy, wardens and treasurer. Sr. Warden Alison Chaltas shared all that went into the creation of our new vision and mission for St. John's Church (front page of the newsletter). The Building Committee then presented drawings of our anticipated *St. John's Rising* building project and a timeline for completion. Treasurer Al Atherton went over the details of our 2009 budget. Until the ground rent increase (due in August, 2008) is finalized the budget will be in deficit. After, we stood and reconvened as the Episcopal Missionary Society of Stamford (EMSS) Peter Stroili reported on the negotiations with RFR over the ground rent. The distribution of funds both to St. John's for the operating budget and to St. John's Foundation for community outreach grants will be reduced proportionately by the legal and other fees incurred in those negotiations. There was a positive tone and emphasis on transparency of our building plans and finances. Several people remarked to me that the meeting seemed short even though we covered a lot of ground during an hour and a half. Whenever a meeting *feels* short it is a sign of a very positive meeting.

This third week of January, 2009 was quite a week in the life of St. John's. We have much to look forward to as we gather each week to celebrate God's love and be strengthened in our journeys to work as instruments of Christ's love for this broken world. I thank God for the blessed community we are privileged to share together in this place.

In Christ's love, Jim+

St. John's Rising

The behind-the-scenes activity in preparation for our buildings' renovation now centers on questions:

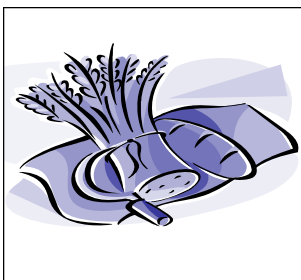
- 1) What is the most efficient, least costly sequencing of the three renovation components (middle building, dining room basement, dining room and kitchen)?
- 2) What temporary provisions need to be made for the activities of the parish, L'Eglise and the International Institute while existing facilities are unavailable (classrooms, restrooms, nursery, walkways from garage to church, other activities that we haven't yet foreseen)?
- 3) How can we assure that flooding in the Dining Room basement from all causes will be prevented?
- 4) When will construction disruption begin and when will it end?
- 5) How can heavy construction equipment be moved without causing serious damage to grounds and sub-structures?

Can you think of other questions that should be considered?

Numerous parishioners came to breakfast in January to hear everything that was known up to that moment, and to raise questions, concerns and ideas which may be incorporated into the development of the architect's next activity--Construction Design (CD) drawings. No changes to plans can be made after early February without incurring added expense.

During the next month, a first version of estimated costs will be closely examined to assure that all aspects are as efficient as possible, to eliminate unnecessary expense. This period will involve the Building Group in many hours of meetings with Petra, our pre-construction consultant, and Dennis Dowd, architect. Information from these meetings will be incorporated in the CD drawings.

Building questions? Contact Stephen Clapp at: sclapp@juilliard.edu. Window questions? Contact Garry Higgins at: phiggins176@aol.com.



"...For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world.....I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." They said to him, "Lord, give us this bread always." *John 6:33-35*

PARISH REGISTRY

NEW PARISHIONER

David Johnson

BIRTH

Kimberlee Jade Curran

BAPTISMS

Zoe Elizabeth Bernard

Sarah Jane West

DEATH

Louise Aubrey



The Eagle's Wings

February 2009

The Eagle's Wings is a monthly publication of St. John's Episcopal Church, Stamford, CT

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Your comments, suggestions and offers to contribute on future issues are encouraged. Please contact Bronice Pikul at: 203-348-2619 ext 14 or bpikul@stjohns-stamford.org.

The deadline for the next issue is February 15th.

St John's Episcopal Church

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www.stjohns-stamford.org

Clergy and Staff

Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs.
9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Rector

The Rev. Dr. James R. Wheeler

Assoc. Rector

The Rev. Julia A. Fritts

Associated Clergy

The Rev. Richard Schuster

L'Eglise de L'Epiphanie

The Rev. Wectnick Paul

Organist

Dr. Sean Jackson

Parish Administrator

Sandie DeFilippis

Children & Families

Linda Clapp

Communications

Bronice Pikul

Sexton

Owen Brissett

Volunteer for Administration

George Howard

New Member Ministry

Phyllis Wilson

Parish Historian

Polly

Save The Dates:

Sunday, February. 8th ~ Guest Preacher

Please welcome guest preacher The Rev. Dr. John Moulton at the 8:00 & 10:15 a.m. services on Sunday. Rev. Moulton will speak about a ministry providing direct relief to the poor throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and will share what he has witnessed about Food For The Poor's mission to care for the destitute as a means of living out the Gospel's mandate to love one another.

Saturday, February. 14th ~ Men's Lenten Study and Breakfast ~ 8:00 a.m.

The men of the parish will begin a six week study of Henri Nouwen's book, *Life of the Beloved, Spiritual Living in a Secular World*. Fr. Wheeler will lead the discussions. We will meet on Feb. 14 and then weekly from March 7 – April 4 at 9:00 a.m. for a hearty breakfast for the body and helpful reflection for our souls. Please sign up for the series and pick up your copy of Henri Nouwen's book in the dining room. You will be doubly blessed if you invite a friend!

Saturday, February. 14th ~ Potluck Luncheon for Men & Women~ 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Please join us (bring your sweetheart) in welcoming special guest Elizabeth Sherrill, author of many best selling articles and books including *The Hiding Place*, the story of Corrie ten Boom and *Born Again* the story of Charles Colson. Her own memoir, *All the Way to Heaven* is written with "honesty, humor and insight."

For reservations, call Sandie DeFilippis 348-2619 ext 10, and tell her whether you will bring finger sandwiches, salad, fruit, or finger desserts.

Sunday, February 15th ~ Art of Song Series Concert ~ 4:00 p.m.

featuring sopranos Kristina Borgioli & Laurel Jameson, Prescott Breeden, Baritone & Alex Hahn, Bass with Yi Ling Ding, piano

Sunday, February 22nd ~ Adult Education Summit - 11:30 a.m.

The clergy of St. John's are excited to offer a special **Adult Education Summit**, open to all after the 10:15 service. We will gather to brainstorm new ideas on Adult Christian Education and Formation for the new year. Lunch will be served, and child care will be available. RSVP to Mother Julia at extension 18, or jfritts@stjohns-stamford.org. We look forward to hearing your ideas!

Tuesday, February. 24th ~ Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper ~ 6:00 p.m.

Come to our Pancake Supper to enjoy delicious food and conversation with friends. Watch for sign-up sheets in the Dining Room in mid February. Many hands will be needed to set tables, pour syrup, and clean up!

Wednesday, February 25th ~ Ash Wednesday ~ 7:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., and 7:00 p.m.

Holy Eucharist and ashes.

Thursday, March 5th ~ Episcopal Bridge Builders Steering Committee Meeting~ 7:00 p.m.

St. John's parishioners are cordially invited to attend and learn more about this upcoming Stamford Habitat for Humanity project. Our guest speaker will be Tim Beeble, Stamford's Community Development Director.

Christian Meditation Group ~ Tuesday Evenings ~ 6:00 p.m.

Our Christian mediation group now includes a hearty soup supper, courtesy of Chef Gordon Batiste, every Tuesday evening - nourishment for body, mind and soul!

Adult Formation Forum ~ Sunday Mornings ~ through Feb. 22

Father Jim and Mother Julia will alternate leading two special offerings, both at 9:10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Pick and choose, as you wish!

***Bible Study** [on that Sunday's Gospel]: in the dining room

***Christian Meditation and Centering Prayer**: in the conference room

Parish Calendar

February and March Calendar of Events

Sunday, February 1

10:15 a.m. Bishop Smith visits

Monday, February 2

5:30 p.m. Stewardship Committee Meeting

7:30 p.m. Building Committee Meeting

7:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, February 3

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

6:00 p.m. Christian Meditation

Wednesday, February 4

7:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Rev. Norris

Thursday, February 5

10:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study

12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Rev. Norris

3:00 p.m. Godly Play Workshop (until 7:00p.m.)

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, February 6

9:00 a.m. Godly Play Workshop (until 5:00p.m.)

Saturday, February 7

9:00 a.m. Godly Play Workshop (until 4:00p.m.)

Sunday, February 8

**Please welcome guest preacher The Rev.

Dr. John Moulton at the 8:00 & 10:15 a.m. Services

5:00 p.m. Contemporary Worship Service

Monday, February 9

7:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, February 10

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

6:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, February 11

10:00 a.m. Blindbrook High School Student Tour

7:00 p.m. New Ministry Committee Meeting

Thursday, February 12

9:30 a.m. Ordinance Training Program (*'til 3:00 p.m.*)

10:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study

6:00 p.m. Building Group Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Saturday, February 14

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast (see page 4)

12:00 p.m. Potluck Luncheon (see page 4)

Sunday, February 15

12:00 p.m. Worship Committee Meeting

4:00 p.m. Concert (see back page)

Monday, February 16 President's Day

Parish Office Closed

7:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, February 17

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

6:00 p.m. Christian Meditation

Thursday, February 19

10:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 22

11:45 a.m. Adult Education Summit (see page 4)

Monday, February 23

7:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, February 24 - Shrove Tuesday

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

6:00 p.m. Parish Pancake Supper

Wednesday, February 25 - Ash Wednesday

7:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with ashes
and light breakfast

12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist with ashes

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with ashes

Thursday, February 26

10:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Monday, March 2

7:30 p.m. Adult Bible Study

Tuesday, March 3

10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting

Thursday, March 5

10:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study

7:00 p.m. Episcopal Bridge Builders
Steering Committee Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

February Historical Note

February 26, 2007. The Rector Search Committee finalized the parish goals as they would appear in the parish profile. The Committee had been meeting since June 2006 and had held focus group meetings as well as surveying the members of the parish before defining the parish goals. The parish profile was part of the package of materials that was sent to each applicant for the position of eleventh Rector of St. John's.

Drums and Strings and Blinky Rings??



Photo by Gordon Baptiste

Who would think these words would set the tone for one of the most sacred and sacramental rights of passage that was to happen at St. John's on that day, January 24, 2009? It was the Ordination of Julia Anne Fritts to the Sacred Order of Priests. It was a long anticipated day, full of angst and wonder and excitement and aggravation, and all emotions rolled up in a ball, not only for Julia, but for all involved. It was the epitome of planning, work and energy by all, and micromanaged by Julia, down to the very last detail. Or so she thought anyway. ☺

Never in my lifetime at St. John's have I seen or experienced a ceremony such as this. There have been Ordinations and Installations and all kinds of celebrations over the last 50+ years, but none like this. It was an eclectic mix of traditional,

contemporary and everything in between from chanting and singing the gospel, to reciting the "new" Lord's Prayer. These, we are not necessarily used to, but it didn't seem to matter on this day. Why? Because everyone had their blinky rings! There were strings and drums and glorious voices. There were friends and family and our church family all waiting in anticipation of three things: one, to see the beautiful handmade chasuble, given by the parish, placed upon Julia's shoulders; two, when the last hymn was coming so we could turn on our blinky rings; three, to experience the examination and consecration of our new priest. We were there to see what she had struggled so long for, to commit herself to Christ in a way most of us will never experience, to "marry" God, so to speak. It was a truly moving and emotional experience for her and for us as we saw the joy and emotion on her face through it all.

From the first beat of the drum, I felt my heart beating with it. Leading the procession as first crucifer was such an honor and gave me such a sense of joy and satisfaction, that I did not feel the weight of the cross. I could feel this power, not only within, but in the room. I could sense something in the sanctuary, an aura I had never felt before. It was strange. It was powerful. It was real. Was it the power of the Holy Spirit? You tell me. Did you feel it? Chanting *Veni Sancte Spiritus, Veni Sancte Spiritus*, over and over; *Come Holy Spirit, Come Holy Spirit*. Priests gathered round Julia as though awaiting another Pentecost. The Bishop seemed to be diminished in the midst of what was going on. He was only the medium, the one to carry out the plan that had been set in motion for Julia since she was a little girl. It wasn't just the church that was filled with the spirit, it was the people. I could see it all over - the emotion, the joy, the tears, seeming like we were going through it all with Julia. We were. Even the voices of the soloists were different, more clear and sharp like a change from analog to high definition. The church WAS filled with the Holy Spirit that day.

"Praise to the Lord the Almighty" ... as the final hymn began, the streamers were waving; the blinky rings were turned on and illuminated the pews. It was a sight to behold. Everyone was smiling. The room was filled with joy. It was as though the child within each of us was released and there were no worries in that moment. The sparrow not only found a home, but blessed us all with the Holy Spirit, brought joy to our hearts and put smiles on our faces. I thought to myself, "Good job, Mother! Look what you have done for your children."

Whether it was Julia, the service, the music, the drums, the strings, the choir, the rings, or you were just happy because it was over, only you know. What I know is, it was the glory of God, the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit that were in that church and within us on that day. We were together as one, celebrating our love and support for Julia as she begins a new chapter. How wonderful it is that she has us, and how wonderful it is that we have her. I know she wants us to feel that joy in our hearts always. As it says in her favorite Psalm 84, "Happy are they who dwell in your house! They will always be praising you."

Written by Jane Holt, from her perspective

(To view more photos by Bruce Kittredge of this and other events at St. John's go to: <http://www.stjohns.asktechie.com/>)



Photo by Bruce Kittredge

Thank you

How can I thank you? Let me count the ways...

There are simply no words to express adequately how grateful I am to each of you for the gifts you gave to make my ordination day the most beautiful day of my life. I am utterly moved to feel your support, and love, and generosity in every way, and I thank God for bringing me to you. I pray that you, too, were moved by the sheer power of the Holy Spirit that day, and that you felt the power and the mystery of God, alive and at work among us, in a new and wonderful way!

~ your new priest, Mother Julia+

Diocesan News

Great opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Connecticut

Bishop James Curry will host a day of “**Inquiry and Affirmation in the Episcopal Church**” on Saturday, February 14, at the Diocesan House in Hartford from 9:00 a.m - 3:00 p.m. This workshop and worship time is for adults exploring confirmation or reception in the Episcopal Church and is presented by the diocesan Office of Christian Formation. Framed by scripture, we will explore together the faith, mission and ministry of the church. .

This retreat with Bishop Jim Curry offers an opportunity to reflect on your personal faith journey and who God has been and can be for you. There will be lots of opportunity for prayer and conversation. We will also explore the archives of the diocese. The workshop is free and lunch will be provided. (Donations to defray costs will be accepted). We will end our time together in the celebration of Holy Eucharist in All Saints Chapel.

News from Boy Scout Troop 5

Boy Scouting began in the United States in 1910, Troop 5, sponsored by St. John's began in 1912. Our troop meets on Thursday evenings at 7:15 PM.

The troop currently has 15 boys from Stamford and Norwalk enrolled. If your son is 11 to 18 years old and enjoys the outdoors, please come and check us out. I can also be reached by phone: 203-425-9607 or email: newhall123@aol.com.

Recent events:

- December our troop assisted with the annual Christmas show collecting the food and toy donations and then delivering them to Saint Luke's Life Works.

Upcoming events:

January 2009:

- Martin Luther King weekend six members of Troop 5 will attend the annual United States Naval Academy Merit Badge Jamboree. This event will have 300 scouts from across the East Coast in attendance.

April 2009

- Troop 5 will be participating in a weekend long orienteering competition at the United States Military Academy – West Point.

We are trying to develop a Troop 5 history album and also locate individuals that earned the rank of Eagle Scout in Troop 5.

Please check the “Boy Scout” section of the bulletin board for more information.

On behalf of the members of Troop 5, we would like to thank St. John's for its continued support of our Troop and its activities. We are happy to give back to St. John's in any way we can.

Yours in Scouting,

Nathan P. Newhall

Scoutmaster Troop 5

St. John's Episcopal Church

(at Canterbury Green on the Corner of Main and Grove)

presents
"The Art of Song Series"

*Love songs from the French, German,
English and Russian repertoire*



*Sunday, February 15, 2009 ~
4:00 p.m.*

featuring sopranos

*Kristina Borgioli & Laurel Jameson,
Prescott Breeden, Baritone & Alex Hahn,
Bass with Yi Ling Ding, piano*

**St. John's Episcopal Church, 628 Main Street
Stamford, CT 06901 Tel: (203) 348-2619**

**Free Will Offering ~ For details visit:
www.stjohns-stamford.org**

Park free in the Canterbury Green Garage, Suburban Avenue

**Saint John's Episcopal Church
628 Main Street
Stamford, CT 06901**

