

The Eagle's Wings



February 2012 A monthly newsletter of St. John's Episcopal Church, 628 Main St., Stamford, CT 06901 Vol. 5 No. 2

The Presentation in the Temple

February 2, the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, is one of the great feast days of the Christian Year, but also one widely ignored in the Episcopal Church as it usually falls mid-week. The icon shown here (George the Cretan, [Presentation in the Temple](#), Holy Dionysiou Monastery on the Holy Mount Athos, Greece, 16th Century, image compliments of St. Isaac of Syria Skete) is a traditional Byzantine icon representing the spiritual meaning of the feast day. Those seeing the icon online will appreciate the rich colors in the icon, but even those seeing the black and white print version of the newsletter will be able to pick out the details. From right to left the characters represented in the icon are Simeon holding the baby Jesus, Mary the God bearer, Anna a prophetess and Joseph holding the doves for sacrifice. The Biblical story is found in *Luke 2:22-38*. Mary and Joseph come to the Temple to fulfill the law's requirements to offer one or two doves as a sacrifice to God for the birth of their first-born son. It had been revealed to Simeon, an ancient prophet, that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Simeon eagerly scanned the parents presenting their children in the Temple. When he saw Jesus and his parents the Holy Spirit told him this was the one. Simeon



took the 5-week old baby Jesus in his arms and proclaimed,
*Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the
Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the
world to see;
A light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people, Israel*
(Song of Simeon, BCP, p. 120)

We find all the participants within the holy Temple. Simeon in his eagerness is often portrayed on tiptoes. He holds the baby Jesus as God's offering of his own Son for the life of the world. Mary, the God bearer, is the one who makes this offering. Anna, the prophetess, is holding a scroll representing the Biblical narrative.

Joseph's offering of the two doves fulfills the laws but is overshadowed by the far greater offering of God's Son for the life of the world. The ancient temple presented in the icon prefigures the worship space of the early Byzantine Church.

The icon is an invitation to prayer and worship. The Savior, who even at 5-weeks of age is already the light of the world, is being presented in the Temple. As the infant Jesus is offered in the Temple, his life is offered for us each time the Holy Eucharist is celebrated at our altar. The icon invites us to contemplate its inner meaning. God who is omnipresent and cannot be contained has shared his living presence by coming among us in this child. The gifts we offer at the altar of God as represented by Joseph's offering of the two doves, pale in comparison of God the Father's and Mary his mother's offering of their Son. In the icon we are in the Temple, but the Temple itself pales in comparison with the life of this tiny child who is the light of the world. Old Testament prophecy as well as you and I are represented as the gift of God – a gift both human and divine – is offered. May our lives no less be offered to God's service and his love as we make our offerings and presentations in his Church.

Epiphany blessings, Jim+

Parish News

Stirring up our worship!

St. John's Worship Committee recently met to wrestle with the question of how to stir up our worship services so we bring some new life and vitality while keeping the beauty and pageantry of our Anglican liturgy. The idea we came up with was sermon themes. This year we are going to break sometimes from the cycle of the lectionary and emphasize some timely themes.

On Sunday, February 5, we will join other parishes in Connecticut in focusing on Recovery Sunday. Addiction to alcohol and other drugs affects the lives of just about everyone in our society, from the addict to family members to business associates and friends. Blessedly, many people in our parish and beyond are addicted but in recovery. AA and other 12 step groups offer tremendous support and hope for people affected by alcohol and other substances. Their very foundation is based on biblical principles of God's help for broken people. On this special Sunday, we want to focus on those 12 principles and the hope they offer for recovery and new life.

We have designated 3 Sundays in Lent, March 11, 18 and 25, for the broad theme of having faith and courage to go through tough economic times. Mother Kathleen and Fr. Jim wish to get your ideas and thoughts about what you'd like us to talk about in relating to this broad theme about living through these perilous economic times with home and endurance. We will post an idea box for you to share scripture passages, ideas, concerns, questions, etc. that would be helpful to you to explore in this theme.

This Summer we will institute a sermon box, where once a month the priest preaching on the following week draws from the box one of the sermon topics suggested by you, reads it aloud and preaches on that theme the following Sunday.

Appreciative Inquiry

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 17**. On this day, St. John's parishioners are invited to gather together to reflect on our parish life and share with one another what we see as our core values, strengths and hopes for our future. We will gather for **breakfast at 8:00 a.m.** and then **begin our Appreciative Inquiry Conference at 9:00 a.m. and conclude no later than 11:30 a.m.** The purpose of this process is to help the Vestry and all of us as a parish to examine our life, look at our strengths and determine the goals and directions of our mission for the future. The Vestry has endorsed Fr. Wheeler's recommendation of this process and the Rev. Mac Barnum, Deacon, who has long been a friend of St. John's as well as a professional management and parish consultant, will lead us through it. Stay tuned for more details about this important upcoming event.

Thanks and Congratulations!

A special thank you to retiring Vestry members John Svagr, Scott Vezina and Chris Weekes who have served on St. John's Vestry for the past 3 years. Congratulations to our new Junior Warden Lynne Muth and new Vestry members: Linda Clapp, Annalisa DiNucci and Jiannethe Grajales elected to 3-year terms and Terrence Green and Eugene Zacharewicz elected to 2-year terms. Congratulations also to Sally Kao Jackson and Scott Vezina elected to 3-year terms on St. John's Foundation.

PARISH REGISTRY

BAPTIZED

Alicia Evonna Rowe

Our Mission / Vision

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.

**Need more
information?
Visit our website!**

www.stjohns-stamford.org

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:00 A.M.

Holy Eucharist with
Healing - Rite I
With Organ

10:00 A.M.

Children's Program
and Nursery

10:15 A.M.

Holy Eucharist with
Healing - Rite II
with Organ and Choir

11:30 A.M.

Coffee Hour

6:15 P.M.

L'Eglise de L'Epiphanie
Holy Eucharist in French

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

Children's Christian Education Corner

He has called us to minister to His Children

There is a famous prayer written by Roger Fields that has gone around the world. More recently, a version of it has been created for those who work in children's ministry.

I minister. I minister to the largest mission field in the world. I minister to children.

My calling is sure. My challenge is big. My vision is clear. My desire is strong. My influence is eternal. My impact is critical. My values are solid. My faith is tough. My mission is urgent. My purpose is unmistakable. My direction is forward. My heart is genuine. My strength is supernatural. My reward is promised. And my God is real.

In a world of cynicism, I offer hope. In a world of confusion, I offer truth. In a world of immorality, I offer values. In a world of neglect, I offer attention. In a world of abuse, I offer safety. In a world of ridicule, I offer affirmation. In a world of division, I offer reconciliation. In a world of bitterness, I offer forgiveness. In a world of sin, I offer salvation. In a world of hate, I offer God's love.

I refuse to be dismayed, disengaged, disgruntled, discouraged or distracted. Neither will I look back, stand back, fall back, go back or sit back. I do not need applause, flattery, adulation, prestige, stature or veneration. I do not have time for business as usual, mediocre standards, small thinking, outdated methods, normal expectations, average results, ordinary ideas, petty disputes or low vision. I will not give up, give in, bail out, lie down, turn over, quit or surrender.

I will pray when things look bad. I will pray when things look good. I will move forward when others stand still. I will trust God when obstacles arise. I will work when the task is overwhelming. I will get up when I fall down.

My calling is to reach boys and girls for God. It is too serious to be taken lightly, too urgent to be postponed, too vital to be ignored, too relevant to be overlooked, too significant to be trivialized, too eternal to be fleeting and too passionate to be quenched.

I know my mission. I know my challenge. I also know my limitations, my weaknesses, my fears and my problems. And I know my God. Let others get the praise. Let the church get the blessing. Let God get the glory.

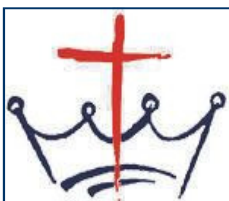
I minister to children. This is who I am. This is what I do.

When people tried to prevent children from coming to Jesus, he said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 19:14 ESV) In saying this, Jesus made it known that he wanted to be close to the children. He elevated their significance.

Please take some time to remember those who devote time to working with children. We are so blessed here at St. John's to have such wonderful children's volunteers. Please thank God for them and make them feel appreciated.

Patricia Chery, Children's Christian Education Director

February Scripture



Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit... And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you-- not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God. *1 Peter 3:18,21-22*



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

Contributors:

J. Holt & St. John's Staff

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

The deadline for the next issue is February 14th.

St John's

Episcopal Church

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Clergy and Staff

Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs.

9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Friday 9:00 A.M. - Noon

Rector

The Rev. Dr. James R. Wheeler

Assistant to the Rector

The Rev. Kathleen Berkowe

Associate Clergy

The Rev. Elizabeth H. Skaleski,
Deacon

L'Eglise de l'Epiphanie

The Rev. Judith Alexis

Director of Music

Christopher Shepard

Organist

Dr. Sean Jackson

Parish Administrator

Sandie DeFilippis

Children's Ministries

Patricia Chery

Seminarian Intern

Leigh Mackintosh

Communications

Bronice P. Gage

Sexton

Owen Brissett

Volunteer for the Administration

George Howard

New Member Ministry

Phyllis Wilson

Save the Date!

Thursday Morning Bible Study, ~ Exploration of *A Grief Observed*, by C.S. Lewis ~ 10:30 a.m. Led by Fr. Wheeler through February 9.

Participants will explore C.S. Lewis' short and poignant work, *A Grief Observed*, make comparisons to an earlier philosophical work, *The Problem of Pain*, share our own experiences of loss and turn to the scriptures to see how different people in the Bible dealt with their grief and loss. Copies of *A Grief Observed* are available from Fr. Jim for \$10.00. Please join us. A new study will begin on February 16.

Sunday Mornings ~ Adult Bible Study ~ 9:00 - 9:45 a.m.

All are welcome to join us in the Library on Sunday mornings. We follow the "Creating God's Community in Scripture Study" guidelines and use the resource, "Feasting on the Word": www.feastingontheword.net

Wednesday Evenings ~ Quilting Group ~ 6:30 p.m.

The quilting group meets in the Conference Room every Wednesday evening, call the parish office for details.

Sunday, February 5 ~ Recovery Sunday ~

Recovery Sunday will celebrate the vital ministries of Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12 step fellowships assisting people caught in the web of addiction. We will also recognize the seriousness of the problem of alcohol, substance abuse and other addictive behaviors within our society. Fr. Wheeler will preach on the subject and invites anyone with a story on the positive impact of AA, N.A., Al Anon or other 12 step groups in their lives to share it with him.

Sunday, February 5 ~ Cricket Club Coffee Hour Fundraiser and Bake Sale ~ 11:30 a.m.

The 10:15 a.m. Coffee Hour will be sponsored by St. John's Cricket Team and will also include a bake sale in the dining room. Come one- come all – buy a delicious sweet or an authentic island plate of food! Proceeds will go to the St. John's Cricket Club.

Sunday, February 19 ~ Family Worship Service ~ 10:15 a.m.

There will be no Children's Christian Education classes today. We will all worship together as a church family at the 10:15 a.m. worship service. (Nursery care will be provided.)

Tuesday, February 21 ~ Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (Volunteers needed) ~ 6:00 p.m.

Join us for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. It's a St. John's tradition and fun for the whole family! Many hands will be needed to set tables, pour syrup, and clean up! RSVP with Sandie in the Parish Office (203-348-2619 ext 10) or sign-up in the dining room.

Ash Wednesday, February 22 ~ Services of Holy Eucharist at ~ 7:00 a.m. ~ 12:00 Noon ~ 7:00 p.m.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on February 22. We have three worship services with Holy Communion and the sign of the cross from ashes on the forehead, at 7:00 a.m. in the chapel and 12 Noon and 7:00 p.m. in the church. Observing Ash Wednesday is a powerful and important way to mark the beginning of the Holy Season of Lent.

Sunday, February 26 ~ Growing Deeper in Communion Potluck Supper ~ Noon

Led by Fr. Jim, this program is for families with children in the 1st and 2nd grades to help children better understand and celebrate their participation in Holy Communion. There will be two other class sessions: 1) an instructed Eucharist, and 2) a bread making session. The program will conclude with celebration of Communion at the Easter Vigil, 6:00 p.m. Saturday, April 8. to register your child, speak to Fr. Jim, call Patricia Chery: 203-348-2619, ext 15 or email: pchery@stjohns-stamford.org.

Saturday, March 3 ~ Annual Diocesan Mission Conference ~ 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

St. John's is proud to host this year's Annual Diocesan Missions Conference. Upwards to 200 participants are expected to arrive at St. John's on Saturday, March 3 (snow date – March 10) to share tips, stories and ideas about fulfilling God's call to us to be mission oriented churches. We are proud to offer our newly renovated facilities for this important gathering. We are also proud of our own mission focus through the many social service agencies we support in the Stamford area and our partnership with The Good Samaritan School and Health Clinic in L'Acul, Haiti. In addition to this invitation to attend and participate, we will also need a number of St. John's volunteers to welcome people, help them find their way, and distribute lunch (catered sandwiches). If you can help, please email Fr. Wheeler: jwheeler@stjohns-stamford.org. For workshop details and poster, see our back cover. Registration is free and open, go to: <http://missionconf2012.eventbrite.com/>

Saturday Volunteer Opportunities at Neighbors Link - Sit Down & Speak English!!- 10:30 a.m. to Noon

Deacon Liz will be taking volunteers to Neighbors Link, the city's newest community center. Neighbors Link provides services to educate, empower, employ, and integrate recent immigrants into our community. Volunteers are needed to speak English in small conversation groups. This is a lot of fun, and very rewarding! Try something new! Please Contact Deacon Liz at: deaconliz624@gmail.com, or call her, 203-856-4944.



Aslan on the Move ~ A Musical Theater Workshop based on C.S. Lewis' *Tales of Narnia*

Join St. Luke's, Darien for a fun workshop based on, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Session 1 runs from February 17-19 and session 2; February 19 -21. Children are welcome to attend one day or all five days; (the fee per day is \$90.) For more information, contact Pat Chery at 203-348-2619 ext 15; pchery@stjohns-stamford.org.

Parish Calendar and Important Dates

Monday, January 30

6:00 p.m. Community Foundation Meeting

Tuesday, January 31

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, February 1

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

Thursday, February 2

10:30 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study

2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

Sunday, February 5 - Recovery Sunday

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (*Library*)

11:30 a.m. Cricket Club Fundraiser & Bake Sale

12:15 p.m. Outreach Committee Meeting

5:00 p.m. L'Epiphanie Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, February 8

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

Thursday, February 9

10:30 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study

2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 12

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (*Library*)

Tuesday, February 14 - March Newsletter Deadline!

7:00 p.m. Vestry

Wednesday, February 15

12:00 p.m. Clergy Meeting

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

Thursday, February 16

10:30 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study

2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, February 19

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (*Library*)

10:15 a.m. Family Worship Sunday

5:00 p.m. L'Epiphanie Choir Rehearsal

Monday, February 20 - President's Day

Parish Office Closed

Tuesday, February 21 - Shrove Tuesday

6:00 p.m. Pancake Supper

Wednesday, February 22 - Ash Wednesday

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

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with ashes

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist with ashes and full choir

8:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, February 23

10:30 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study

2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting

Friday, February 24

5:30 p.m. Cooking at St. Luke's

Sunday, February 26

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (*Library*)

12:00 p.m. Growing Deeper in Communion Potluck

5:00 p.m. L'Epiphanie Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, February 29

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

Thursday, March 1

10:30 a.m. Thursday Morning Bible Study

2:00 p.m. Staff Meeting

7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Friday, March 2

Mission Conference Rehearsal

Saturday, March 3

9:00 a.m. Diocesan Mission Conference (until 3:00 p.m.)

Sunday, March 4

9:00 a.m. Adult Bible Study (*Library*)

5:00 p.m. L'Epiphanie Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, March 7

6:30 p.m. Lenten Potluck & Presentation Evening

6:30 p.m. Quilting Group Meeting

Lent begins on February 22

Lent is traditionally a time for paying attention to the spiritual life. We invite you to observe this season of spiritual renewal with St. John's. Here are a few suggestions.

Parents Corner at Shrove Tuesday Dinner February 21 - Join us for Parents' discussion at Shrove Tuesday dinner! Often it's in teaching and dealing with our children (of any age) that we realize our own spiritual needs. Join other parents to support one another and to discuss ways to refresh our own spirits and continue their own spiritual journeys! Mother Kathleen will convene the group.

Potluck Dinner and Presentations Wednesdays during Lent March 7, 14 and 21 ~ 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Jesus - The Antidote for Anxiety in a Stress-Filled World. More detail of presentations to come. To attend, sign-up in the dining room or call Sandie in the Church office at (203) 348-2619 x10.

Here are two other ways to observe Lent in personal devotions.

- Say prayers every day in Lent! Pick up one of our Lenten devotionals that have prayers for each of the 40 days –
- Attend a service during the week! Attending a weekday service whether Eucharist or another type of service – can open your heart to Christ's presence in the world.
- Don't forget to start Lent with an Ash Wednesday Service at St. John's 7:00 a.m., Noon or 7:00 p.m.!

May you grow in faith in this time of Lent!

Blessings, Mother Kathleen+

Annual Diocesan Mission Conference

Saturday, March 3rd, 2012

Saint John's Episcopal Church, Stamford



**God's Mission: Many Faces,
Many Voices, Many Ways
to Serve**

Conference Registration at

<http://missionconf2012.eventbrite.com>

Keynote Speakers

The Rev. Fernande Pierre-Louis,
Principal of Holy Trinity School
Port-au-Prince, Haiti

The Rev. Tracy Johnson-Russell, Rector
Saint Andrews Episcopal Church
New Haven, CT

Workshops

- 1. Getting Started In Mission**
Martha Hoffman, Don Ghostlaw
- 2. Connecting Local Churches to Neighbors**
Tracy Johnson-Russell, Ally Brundige, Robert Hendrickson
- 3. Developing Multi-lingual Congregations**
Geoff Hahneman
- 4. Poverty and Hunger Eradication Through Empowering Rural Women**
Dr. Diane Eynon
- 5. Hispanic Cursillo Evangelism**
Jorge Rosa, Jose Diaz
- 6. Colonialism, Power and the Contemporary Anglican Communion**
The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Bishop of Connecticut
- 7. Intercultural Summer Camp Ministry**
Marc-Yves Regis, Alan McCollom

Workshops (Cont'd)

- 8. Disaster Relief Ministry**
Katie Mears, David Desmarais
- 9. Haiti: How You Can Make A Difference**
Fernande Pierre-Louis and the Haiti network
- 10. Financial Accountability between Mission Partners**
The Rt. Rev. James Curry, Bob Chagnon

Driving Directions and Free Parking
Visit www.stjohns-stamford.org

Bring your parking ticket to the conference

Mission Project Display Tables
For reservations, please call
Kate Heichler
Phone: 203-415-1962

Nursery care available



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Your Name Here!
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