

The Messenger

A newsletter of

St. John's Episcopal Church **Randolph, Vermont**

February 2010

Building for the future with thanksgiving and praise

Rector's message

Dear People of St. John's,

Among many constants of my some thirty-three years in the priesthood is the fact that we Episcopalians seem to shiver with fright at and scurry away from the word evangelism. I know, I know, it's because soapbox and TV preachers have given it such a bad name, and it's just not our style. We witness (there's another word that we shrink from) the commitment of our faith through our worship, the spirit of our volunteerism or ministries around town, the times when we invite someone to join us at Church, but must we use that word (even when we are the Church of St John the Evangelist)? And besides, we're not sending missionaries to Africa and China anymore and we're not going around town two by two knocking on doors. A few years ago we did try putting catchy ads in the Herald, but we really saw no fruits from that except maybe a kind of healthy pride in ourselves.

Evangelism or spreading the good news of God in Jesus Christ is a slippery concept. ("I'm going to come up with a better word for us to use" said a Vestry member. But I, Tim, don't think that we can.) So how do we get used to a term like this when it is after all one of the chief callings of our baptismal covenant?

When indeed the Vestry tried to brainstorm around the basic categories of our ministry together as a Church (thanks to the leadership of Steve Eubanks and his work in helping us form a "narrative budget"), one of the categories had to be evangelism.

One place I notice especially is with our funerals. People from all walks tell me how deeply moved they are by the uplifting spirit of the liturgy, how welcoming it all is, and they honor our Easter affirmation of life with God through the resurrection faith which pours forth in so many ways. Whether these people ever come back or not is not the question.

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It's more about creating a space where they can meet Christ and funerals are sure that kind of place in an age where the opportunities are getting more sparse. And evangelism is not about winning souls for Christ. We must instead open the door and stand aside. It's not about getting more members, but whether people sense that the faith is alive and well here and they are welcomed.

Evangelism is a very slippery word, not I hope because it has been so tarnished by shallow, hidden-agenda sideshows, but because it encompasses everything we are called to be about. Thanks to exercises like that brainstorming we get to meet the work and walk with it, and the more we think about it and discuss it, the more its Holy Spirit energy can challenge us. And note, I don't use the word "comfortable". We should never be comfortable or at ease with evangelism. Just a little more excited about the opportunities God sets before us at every turn.

Rejoicing in Christ

Lent Begins February 17

Our Ash Wednesday liturgy with the imposition of Ashes and the Holy Eucharist will begin Lent on February 17 at 5:30 PM. Among numerous offerings, Bethany Church will hold its community breakfasts at 7:00 AM each Wednesday thereafter. Here at St. John's it has been suggested that a half hour Bible reflection be offered each Sunday after coffee hour on "today's Gospel and what I didn't hear in the sermon". Are there other suggestions? Thoughts about outreach offerings? Household disciplines?

St. John's Episcopal Church 15 Summer Street Randolph, Vermont 05060

The Rev. Timothy C. Eberhardt, Rector

Vestry of St. John's

Steven Eubanks, Senior Warden
Ray Mayer, Junior Warden
Pat Mayer, Clerk
William Arnold, Treasurer
Jane Eubanks, Receipts Treasurer

Nancy Wright
Susan O'Malley
Linda Nagy
Charles Scribner

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Our website <http://stjohnsrandolphvt.org>

Pastoral Care Annual Report – 2009

The Pastoral Care committee endeavors to keep abreast of our parishioner's concerns – their joys, sorrows, birthdays, anniversaries, etc.. We aim to meet the first Tuesday of each month in the Canterbury Room and are in contact with one another throughout the year.

We welcomed Gary Crothers, Mickie and Neil Richardson, Joe and Beth Pelletier and family to St, John's. All of whom have involved themselves in the parish. Friendship bread was given to the new members.

It has been a year of several parishioners with serious health problems and we continue to be in touch. A Sunshine basket was given to one ill parishioner.

The committee initiates hospitality events such as the Baptisms of Jonathan and Benjamin Osha and Cameron and Maeve Kennedy, a pot luck lunch at the start of the Sunday School year, the funeral reception for the family of Ernie Wright, a brunch for Bishop Ely's visit. These were accomplished with much aid and support from all.

It is a delight to see the growth and enthusiasm of the Sunday School. We applaud the efforts of Jennifer, Kate, Beth and Adele.

Betsy Arnold
Margaret Egerton

Tim Eberhardt
Mary Ellen Bean
Pat Mayer

Ginny Cantlin
Ellie Streeter

Pastoral Care committee report – January 2010

The Pastoral Care committee met on January 5th with Margaret reading our prayer. We made a few written contacts and many phone contacts this past month. It was a fairly quiet month.

We assisted with the funeral of Edna Braun on January 7th.

As Mary Ellen Bean will be leaving us in August it was suggested that we invite Mickie Richardson to join us. Mickie agreed and will join our committee in April

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 2, 2010.

St Margaret's Guild (all the women who attend St. John's)

THE GUILD WILL MEET SUNDAY *FEBRUARY 14* AFTER CHURCH IN THE CANTERBURY ROOM. PLEASE GET YOUR COFFEE AND TREAT "TO GO" AND COME RIGHT BACK, SO WE CAN START RIGHT AWAY.

An agenda/budget will be in your mailbox soon. If you don't get one, speak to Pat Lawrence.

ELECTIONS FOR PRESIDENT AND TREASURER WILL BE HELD. The President sets the agendas, calls the meetings, works with the Treasurer on the budget and runs the meetings. The Treasurer keeps the books, pays the bills, and consults with the President on the budget.

We only meet 2 or 3 times a year, so they are not time consuming jobs, but they are important if we are to continue!

Pat Lawrence

Special message from Nancy Wright.

To all my friends at St. John's

A belated but heartfelt thank you to all my friends at St. John's Church. Thank you for your kind messages and prayers and comforting words as well as the generous spread and warm reception you all gave my family and myself after Ernie's memorial service. The beautiful St. John's Christmas wreath came with the simple "From your friends at St. John's" It greets me every day and I am warmed all over again. From the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU.

Nancy

Donations for Haiti

Our drive for donations for Haiti through the Diocese began Sunday January 17, 2010. On that Sunday \$475 was raised. The drive is on-going. Please consider contributing to help relieve the terrible tragedy that took place in Haiti as the result of the earthquake.

Anniversaries February 2010

Birthday

Feb 1 **Phil Plumb**
Feb 5 **Jane Eubanks**

Feb 13 **Ginny Cantlin**
Feb 18 **Nancy Wright**

Baptism

Feb 11 **Anna Sease**

Marriage

Feb 17 **Jim and Judy Gardner**

Sunday ministries

	Epiphany 5 Sun – Feb 7 8 and 10 am	Last Epiphany Sun – Feb 14 10 am only	Ash Wednesday Wed – Feb 17 5:30 pm	Lent 1 Sun – Feb 21 8 and 10 am	Lent 2 Sun – Feb 28 10 am only
Eucharistic Minister	Pat Mayer	Ray Mayer	NA	Gay Gaston	Steve Eubanks
Readers	Ellen Baker	Jane Eubanks	NA	Joan Sax	Nancy Wright
Ushers	Ellen Baker	Pat Lawrence	NA	Sue O'Malley	Carol & Ken Merrill
Intercessions	Linda Runnion	Lee Sease	NA	Nancy Wright	Neil Richardson
Oblations	Betsy and Bill Arnold	Beth and Joe Pelletier	NA	Betsy and Bill Arnold	Linda Nagy Sue O'Malley
Coffee Hour	Anna Sease	Linda Runnion	NA	Pat Mayer	Mickie Richardson