

THE HERALD

...A NEWSLETTER FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD OF ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
BELLEFONTE, PENNSYLVANIA

Volume 14, Issue 12

December 2011

RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends in Christ:

With the Second Sunday of Advent just past, it is hard to believe that in a week's time, the season will be half over. While the dominant theme of Advent is "watch and wait", it is difficult to do that while feeling like Christmas will be here before we know it. The decorations and music we've seen and heard in stores since before Thanksgiving don't help. Perhaps that's a special discipline for us to master in Advent: forcing ourselves to slow down; to watch and wait; to systematically prepare for the extraordinary event of Christ coming into our lives – the greatest demonstration ever of God's love for us.

November was a good month for the parish. After a record-setting bazaar, we added a new member to the Body of Christ through baptism on Christ the King Sunday. On Thanksgiving Eve, we welcomed some friends from St. John Lutheran and elsewhere for our annual service, followed by a suitably festive reception in the fellowship hall. Whenever the Sunday after Thanksgiving is the First Sunday of Advent, it always seems like an abrupt transition from celebratory to somber. That said, it felt right to start looking ahead to the next great festival in the Church with a secular one just behind us.

In keeping with that, a group of us recently attended an Advent seminar on the Eucharist in the fellowship hall. Led by an Episcopal layman from a parish in Washington, D.C., it made sense to talk about this topic during the season when we anticipate the Feast of the Incarnation – God becoming flesh. While the subject matter isn't what any of us might describe as "light", those of us who attended agreed it was worth the effort to come to a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, such a central component of our faith.

Looking ahead to next year, you will recall reading in the *Herald* that we had an increase of \$2,000 in pledges for 2012. This is a fact of which we can be proud. However, we are only beginning to fully appreciate our financial picture for next year. As you know, a large portion of our annual income is derived from a number of Trusts. Given the utterly chaotic character of the stock market this year, we will not know until early January exactly what our income from the largest Trust will be. It seems very likely at this point that our income will drop, probably significantly. Your Vestry and I will work hard to create a budget that is in line with this economic reality, while being sensitive to the parish's long-term financial health. It will be a difficult task, and not one accomplished without your help. You will be hearing more about this in the weeks ahead.

In the pages below, you will read about a variety of events happening at St. John's in the next month. I urge you to mark your calendar and plan to be here and be a part of them as much as you are able.

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. Christopher V. Pyles, Rector

GOING ONCE...GOING TWICE...SOLD! We are trying a new kind of fundraiser on Rose Sunday, December 11: an auction. With the generous help of the Lykens family and Lykens Market, a hot dog & hamburger lunch will be provided at coffee hour; members of the parish are invited to bring side dishes. Then, we will have a fundraising auction. Everyone will be able to participate: bring a dramatically wrapped gift of any value (\$5 on up), and it will be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Chris Lykens has volunteered to serve as auctioneer. Here's how it will work: no one will know what's inside your smartly wrapped package. It might be a \$50 Weis gift card, disguised in a huge box, or maybe a beautiful, home-made Christmas wreath for your front door, or maybe a big, delicious fruit tart or chocolate torte from Wegman's. That's the rub: you're bidding on an item that might be worth \$25, \$50, or maybe more...but you won't know until after the bidding is over! Maybe you'll be lucky and get a more expensive item for \$25, but maybe you'll bid \$75 on an item worth somewhat less than that. Five-dollar items will be marked as such, and whoever raises their hand first once the auction begins will win it. The important thing to remember is that the church will reap *all* the profits – this is a fundraiser. So bring your spectacularly wrapped item on Sunday, December 11, and plan to bid big. You might walk away with something wonderful, and the church will be the better for it. Kacie Lykens is coordinating the auction; speak to her if you have any questions. Bid boldly and with confidence!

PRAYER BREAKFAST ON JANUARY 7. The Rev. Dr. Stuart Hoke, former Vicar of St. Paul's Chapel and Assistant to the Rector of Trinity, Wall Street, will be with us on Saturday, January 7, to present "Shelter from the Stormy Blast: Theological Reflections on the Events of 9/11." Father Hoke was leading a service in Trinity Church, Wall Street, while the World Trade Center was crumbling just a few hundred yards away. After helping evacuate the Trinity pre-school and the staff from the Trinity office building, he was forcibly evacuated to Staten Island. Hear in depth what it was like to be caught up in the extraordinary events of that day from someone who lived it, and who was able to find grace in the midst of so much horror. Father Hoke served as rector of parishes in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. He received his Th.D. from General Seminary in 2000, where he later served as interim Chaplain. Now retired, he lives in North Carolina. On Saturday, January 7, we will have a light breakfast in the fellowship hall followed by Morning Prayer, after which Father Hoke will give his address. He will be our preacher the next day in church. Watch the table in the back for a sign-up sheet to indicate your intention to attend what is sure to be an edifying and unforgettable presentation.

CONFESSION IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH. For Episcopalians, the saying regarding Sacramental Confession goes, "All may, none must, some should." You might not be aware that the Prayer Book provides two forms for private Confession (as opposed to the General Confession we say during Mass) on pages 446-452. While a priest or bishop may hear someone's Confession anytime, anywhere, for some people it is especially meaningful to conduct an Examination of Conscience and make their Confession before Christmas (and/or before Easter). While this is not a required spiritual exercise or discipline, it can be a valuable and edifying experience for those who avail themselves of it. This year, Confessions will be heard in the Church from 4-5 p.m. on Christmas Eve, and from 8-8:30 a.m. on Christmas Day. The priest will be seated inside the communion rail facing the altar; those wishing to make their Confession will kneel at the communion rail. A Prayer Book turned to the relevant pages will be provided. Alternatively, face-to-face Confessions can be arranged at any time by appointment. My understanding is that this is not a new practice at St. John's, and it is a tradition I am happy to continue. – *Father Chris*

CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICES. Solemn Mass Christmas Eve at 11 p.m., preceded by music of the season at 10:30 p.m. Christmas Day, Sunday, there will be Morning Prayer at 8:45 a.m. and ONE MASS ONLY at 9.

ADOPT AN OFFICE SUPPLY. Many people occasionally bring a ream of paper or a pack of glue sticks to church to donate to the parish office. Reams of paper, both 8 ½ x 11 and 8 ½ x 14 are always welcome; generally, most supplies are welcome, but if you're unsure about what's needed at a given time, call or stop by the office to see. Thanks in advance!

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE. We are always looking for individuals who might feel called to participate more fully in the liturgy by reading a lesson, serving at the altar, or becoming a Eucharistic Minister. While all of these involve education, commitment and training, many people find serving in these ways edifying. If you think you one of these opportunities to serve God and your parish might be for you, please speak to Father Chris.

WHILE THE FORMAL STAGE OF OUR 2012 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN IS OVER, THAT DOES NOT MEAN THAT NEW PLEDGES ARE NOT WELCOME. Pledge cards and envelopes are found in every pew in the church. Simply fill one out – remembering to write your name on it – and, using the envelope provided, drop it into the collection plate.

WE WILL SOON BID A FOND FAREWELL TO CARL MEEKER, who, upon receiving his second Associate's Degree in a few days, will be moving to Kentucky. Carl has served with distinction at the altar for many years and his commitment to the church is remarkable. His last Sunday with us for a while will be December 11; please be sure to take a moment after church to say goodbye and wish him well. Carl, we will miss you!

VESTRY NOTES:

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Vestry will be held **Dec. 14, 2011** in the **Fellowship Hall** at **7:30 P.M.**

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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PARISH CLERGY

The Rev. Christopher V. Pyles, Rector

cvpyles@aol.com 215.870.4809 (cell) (Off Tuesdays)

The Rev. Alex Dyakiw, Deacon

deaconalex@gmail.com 814.883.0430 (cell)

PARISH STAFF

Sara Witmer, Secretary

E. Kay Putnam, Organist/Choir Director

Barbara Roberson, Treasurer

Terence Riley, Sexton

LAY LEADERS

Dr. Karen Harvey, Senior Warden Mike Fitzgerald, Junior Warden

Charles E. Maurukas, Acolyte Director

SERVICE SCHEDULE

Sundays: Morning Prayer at 7:45; Low Mass at 8; Sung Mass at 10

Wednesdays: Low Mass at 9:30 in St. Michael's Chapel

Thursdays: Low Mass at 12 noon at the Lady Altar

The Parish Office is open Monday through Thursday from 9 A.M. to 12 NOON. For after-hours emergencies, or whenever the services of a priest are needed, please phone the rector at the cell phone number listed above.

DECEMBER 2011

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Noon – Mass followed by brown bag lunch and Bible Study	2 10 am – Community Lunch	3 9 am-2:30 pm Seminar on the Eucharist
4 Advent II 7:45 am – Morning Prayer 8 am – Mass – Rite I 10 am – Sung Mass Rite II Coffee Hour	5 7 pm – Men’s Group	6	7 9:30 am – Mass/Healing	8 Noon – Mass followed by brown bag lunch and Bible Study	9	10
11 Advent III Rose Sunday 7:45 am – Morning Prayer 8 am – Mass – Rite I 10 am – Sung Mass Rite II Pot-Luck Lunch & Auction	12 Delivery of Christmas Candy 7 pm – Men’s Group	13 6:30 pm – Altar Guild Cleaning	14 9:30 am – Mass/Healing 7:30 pm-Vestry Meeting	15 Noon – Mass followed by brown bag lunch and Bible Study 7 pm-Choir Rehearsal	16	17
18 Advent IV 7:45 am – Morning Prayer 8 am – Mass – Rite I 10 am – Sung Mass Rite II Hanging of the Greens Coffee served in Working Sacristy	19 7 pm – Men’s Group	20	21 St. Thomas the Apostle 9:30 am – Mass/Healing	22 Noon – Mass; no Bible study today	23	24 Christmas Eve 4-5 p.m. - Confessions heard in the Church 10:30 pm-Music of the Season 11 pm-Solemn High Mass
25 Christmas 8-8:30 a.m. – Confessions heard in the Church 8:45 a.m. – Morning Prayer 9 am – Mass	26 St. Stephen, Deacon & Martyr	27 St. John, Apostle & Evangelist	28 The Holy Innocents 9:30 am – Mass/Healing	29 No Mass or Bible Study today	30	31

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

December	2	-	Lillian North
December	6	-	Kathryn Grossman
December	10	-	Pamela Strouse
December	11	-	Thomas Quigley
December	17	-	Carl Meeker Deacon Obourn Jackson Obourn
December	18	-	Jacob David-Scott Lucas
December	19	-	Joanna Lyons
December	23	-	Stuart Hough
December	24	-	David Hilderbrand
December	27	-	Thomas Fitzgerald Ellen Dyakiw
December	30	-	Harrison Holland
December	31	-	Melanie Andrews

St. John's Volunteers:

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

December 2011

	8 AM	10:00 AM
December 4, 2011, Advent II	Dn. Dyakiw	NT & Chalice Dn. Dyakiw Jason Dench
December 11, Advent III	Dn. Dyakiw	Dn. Dyakiw Kathryn Grossman
December 18, 2011, Advent IV	Dn. Dyakiw	Dn. Dyakiw Mark E. Scott
December 24, 2011, Christmas Eve	Dn. Dyakiw	Dn. Dyakiw Judy Hilderbrand
December 25, 2011, Christmas Day		Dn. Dyakiw Jason Dench

ALTAR GUILD SCHEDULE

December 2011

December 3 through December 9	Leigh Meeker
December 10 through December 16	Jim & Peggy Jackson
December 17 through December 23	Jim & Peggy Jackson
December 24 through December 31	Karen Harvey, Jason Dench, Sally Witmer, Cathy Fetters

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

December 2011

December 4, 2011	Kathryn Grossman & Ellen Dyakiw
December 11, 2011	Lunch & Auction
December 18, 2011	Blanche Raymond & Sally Witmer
December 25, 2011	Merry Christmas – No Coffee Hour
January 1, 2012	Happy New Year – No Coffee Hour

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

December 2011

Sunday December 4, 2011	Crucifer	- Steve Dillon
10:00 AM – Mass	Torchbearer	- Bryan Hough
Advent II	Torchbearer	- Sean Hough
	Bookbearer/Server	- Carl Meeker

Sunday, December 11, 2011	Crucifer	- Jason Dench
10:00 AM – Mass	Torchbearer	- Bryan Hough
Advent III	Torchbearer	- Carl Meeker
	Bookbearer/Server	- Steve Dillon

Sunday, December 18, 2011	Crucifer	- Sean Hough
10:00 AM – Mass	Torchbearer	- Charles Maurukas
Advent IV	Torchbearer	- Jason Dench
	Bookbearer/Server	- Bryan Hough

Saturday, December 24, 2011	Crucifer	- Jason Dench
11:00 PM – Mass	Torchbearer	- Steve Dillon
Christmas Eve	Torchbearer	- Bryan Hough
	Bookbearer/Server	- Sean Hough
	Thurifer	- Charles Maurukas

Sunday, December 25, 2011	Crucifer	- Charles Maurukas
9:00 AM – Mass	Torchbearer	-
Christmas Day	Torchbearer	-
	Bookbearer/Server	- Jason Dench

