



the evangelist

NEWS & EVENTS OF THE CHURCH OF S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

December 2008

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CALENDAR

DATES TO NOTE

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Service of Advent
Lessons & Carols

December 6th
St. John's Women's
Guild Christmas
Bazaar

December 9th:
Vestry Meeting

December 13th &
20th: Confession

December 21st:
Greening of the
Church

Church of S. John the Evangelist

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Dear Friends in Christ:

While reading the newsletter of another church recently, I came across an assertion about church communities that caught my interest. I found it particularly relevant to us here at S. John's, especially given the last two tumultuous years, and I offer it for your consideration.

The statement is: The two most critical elements necessary to ensure growth within a community are charity and compassion.

The charity referred to here is, of course, the biblical caritas, or love—a type of love vastly more encompassing than simply affection. Compassion includes forgiveness, mercy, tenderness, and kindness, to name just a few attributes. Both charity and compassion grow out of God's grace, given to us in Christ Jesus. I believe that all of us at S. John's understand the broad meaning of these words. In fact, over the struggles of the past two years of our common life together, it has become clear that both charity and compassion abound in this place.

That having been said, it is equally clear that our giving to God and to the community — of our time, of our treasure, and ultimately of ourselves — grows out of the same charity and compassion.

The reverse is also clearly true; in a community that lacks charity and compassion, giving becomes onerous, a tax-like obligation rather than a joy. When viewed in this light, giving becomes begrudging, and little by little it drops rather than grows. Indeed, the absence of charity and compassion creates a vacuum into which the Evil One can enter and begin to chip away at the very foundations that support a community.

Over the past two years, as indeed over the past century and a half, S. John's has flourished through God's grace and the generosity of members and friends who have both practiced and experienced charity and compassion in this community. Now as we close the current Stewardship Campaign for S. John's, I put the following question to you: Are we, as individuals, continuing to practice charity and compassion within this community?

This question is particularly germane in light of the current economic climate. In such times there is a real danger of our hoarding the gifts that have been given to us — the very gifts offered to us through God's boundless grace. This hoarding is, in fact, a type of greed — a desire for wealth or possessions. It is the antithesis of caritas, and as such, leaves no room for compassion.

I know that each of us will give prayerful consideration to our giving for 2009, not as our obligation, but rather as our opportunity to grow in God's grace. We will indeed, as God's people, continue to practice charity and compassion within this community.

*In Christ's Peace,
Jono Babbitt*

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

The Men's Club would like to thank everyone for supporting our Harvest Dinner on November 8th. It was very successful. Thanks to all those who helped with cooking the dinner, setting up the hall and cleaning up afterwards. It was a great job and as always, well done!

The Advent Season which started on November 30th is now in full swing. With a full schedule of services and masses in December, we hope to see more parishioners and friends at these important events, especially Christmas Eve as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Now is the time to fulfill our pledges for the 2008 calendar year in order that we can begin to prepare a budget for 2009. Please return your pledge card for 2009, giving what you can for the continued support of S. John's.

The Search Committee has selected 5 candidates from the applications received and forwarded them to the Diocese for review and consideration. One of the selected applicants has been interviewed by the Search Committee via telephone with positive results.

As another year is coming to a close, I wish to thank everyone for their support and trust in me, the Junior Warden and the Vestry. Thanks also to those who work to keep the office running, the parish hall clean, the Altar Guild, our acolytes and choir as well as those who work to keep the grounds mowed and cleaned up and assist in the beauty of the garden. Thank you all.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

God Bless,

Charles White, Senior White

What Number is GOD?

Our lives are full of lists . . . lists of bills, of obligations, of social contacts. At any given moment, we have to decide what's at the top of the list – do we pick up the dry cleaning, go to the gym, or stop at the market first? Get a card for our mother, get dinner started, read the paper, check e-mail . . . Where in our lists does God fall? On any given day, at any given hour - - how may moments do we apportion to prayer, to worship, to contemplation, to praise, to thanks?

As we journey through this Advent Season, let us all re-evaluate our lists and rediscover that the care of our spiritual soul is above all earthly lists. That true accomplishment and wholeness is granted by God alone and placing Him and His Only Son, Our Saviour Jesus Christ first, accomplishes so much more than any check mark on any list.

The liturgical life offered by St. John's is both full and fulfilling. Worship is God's gift to us, a glimpse of the pure unstained beauty that is Him – is there room on your list?

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The Women's Guild held their annual Christmas Bazaar on Saturday, December 6th. There are still many items available in the Guild Hall - please stop by and peruse.

ADVENT CONFESSION SCHEDULE

Fr. Spencer will be on hand in the church to hear confessions after the 9 AM Mass on both Saturday, December 13th and December 20th.

MASS SCHEDULE FOR THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY

Family Crèche Service ~ Dec 24th, 5 PM

Carol Service & Vigil Mass ~ Dec 24th, 10:30 / 11 PM

Feast of the Nativity ~ Dec 25th, 10 AM

S. JOHN'S 2009 PLEDGE DRIVE

Pledge Cards will be accepted throughout the Advent Season as S. John's looks forward to both a new liturgical as well as calendar year. Your "estimate of giving" is vital to the preparation of a realistic budget for the church, which will be presented at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 25th.

SAINT MICHAEL'S CONFERENCE ALUMNI

Calling all Saint Michael's Conference Alumni – If you ever attended Saint Michael's Conference for young people, we are trying to get in touch with you! Saint Michael's Conference is celebrating its Fiftieth Anniversary and we want you to be there to celebrate with us. So we can send you an invitation to **The Fiftieth Anniversary Alumni Reunion**.

Please go to www.saintmichaelsconference.com/cgi/alumni_form.html and fill in the information on the form. We hope you will plan to join us on Friday, July 31, 2009 at the Church of the Advent in Boston and Saturday, August 1, for a boat trip to Thompson's Island in Boston harbour where the Conference began. To make plans, we really need to know how to contact you, so please complete the form at the website listed above and we hope to see you at the 50th Anniversary Alumni Reunion. May Saint Michael and all the Angels of God watch over you.

From Woody Needham:

(member of S. Francis Anglican Parish, Spartanburg, SC, and the Fellowship of Concerned Christians (FCC)):

The FCC is placing the Directory of Traditional Anglican & Episcopal Parishes on its own domain and website to be operational by the end of December. The website will also information on the FCC, membership forms, ads appropriate to the environment, and "want ad" section for use by other parishes. Other function might be added in future years. Towards construction of the website, please communicate your ideas to calendar@charter.net in the now time frame for presentation to the FCC Board of Directors. {FCC membership dues are \$40 per person/\$50 per family.}

DECEMBER SOUNDS

We are blessed at S. John's with a truly magnificent space in which to worship – both visually with beautiful architectural details, woodwork, and artwork; and acoustically as the spoken and sung word echoes remarkably within these stone walls. And after eighteen months, we also once again have the majestic sounds of our historic Hook & Hastings organ. A beautiful Lessons & Carols Service for Advent was offered by the S. John's Schola Cantorum to a congregation of over 75 people. A glorious Sung Mass is planned for the 11 PM Vigil of the Nativity. Choral Evensong will be offered throughout January on Wednesday evenings at 6 PM as will the traditional Sung Mass every Sunday morning.

Newport's 16th Annual "Messiah and Carol Sing: The Christmas Story", hosted by Swanhurst Chorus, is Saturday, December 20th at 7 PM at Emmanuel Church. Bring your own score and sing along or just sit and be immersed in the glorious sounds of this masterwork. Scores available for rent. A festive Wassail Reception will follow.

HABEMUS ORGANUM!

After more than fifteen months of silence, and then four months of installation trial and error, the contracted work on the new console and windchests for our beloved Hook and Hastings organ is 99 percent complete. Finally, after more than 35 years, we are able to hear the sounds of the pedal Cello, Bourdon, and Open Wood stops, as well as the Vox Humana in the Swell and Melodia and Dulciana on the Great. O'Dell Organs of Southampton, Connecticut, have worked assiduously with us to reach this state of completion, and we are delighted with the result.

Plans are for the rededication of the instrument to be held in January, with one musical event to be held in each month of calendar 2009. It is our hope that the rededication will involve members of the Maynard family, as well as other contributors to the project, and representatives from O'Dell Organs. Final plans will be announced early in the new year.

Thank you to everyone for their support, patience, encouragement, and voices during the "long silence"!



A SAINT FOR THE TWELFTH MONTH



Saint Lucy ~ Lucy's name means "light", with the same root as "lucid". Unfortunately, Lucy's history does not match her name. Shrouded in the darkness of time, all we really know for certain is that this brave woman who lived in Syracuse lost her life in the persecution of Christians in the early fourth century. Her veneration spread to Rome so that by the 6th century the whole Church recognized her courage in defense of the faith.

Because people wanted to shed light on Lucy's bravery, legends grew up. The one that is passed down to us tells the story of a young Christian woman who had vowed her life to the service of Christ. Her mother tried to arrange a marriage for her with a pagan. Lucy apparently knew that her mother would not be convinced by a young girl's vow, so she devised a plan to convince her mother that Christ was a much more powerful partner for life. Through prayers at the tomb of Saint Agatha, her mother's long illness was cured miraculously. The grateful mother was now ready to listen to Lucy's desire to give her money to the poor and commit her life to God.

Unfortunately, legend has it, the rejected bridegroom did not see the same light and he betrayed Lucy to the governor as a Christian. This governor tried to send her into prostitution but the guards who came to take her way found her stiff and heavy as a mountain. Finally she was killed. As much as the facts of Lucy's specific case are unknown, we know that many Christians suffered incredible torture and a painful death for their faith during Diocletian's reign. Lucy may not have been burned or had a sword thrust through her throat but many Christians did and we can be sure her faith withstood tests we can barely imagine.

Lucy's name is probably also connected to statues of Lucy holding a dish with two eyes on it. This refers to another legend in which Lucy's eyes were put out by Diocletian as part of his torture. The legend concludes with God restoring Lucy's eyes. Lucy's name also played a large part in naming Lucy as a patron saint of the blind and those with eye-trouble.

Whatever the fact to the legends surrounding Lucy, the truth is that her courage to stand up and be counted a Christian in spite of torture and death is the light that should lead us on our own journeys through life. Her feast day is **December 13th**.