

St. John's Good News

From Rev. Wagner....

Out of "The Bewilderness" and into Resurrection

The gospel reading for the first Sunday of Lent is the same every year. Lent begins with Jesus being led (or driven, depending on which gospel we're reading) by the Spirit into the wilderness, and with the story of what happens to Jesus there. This year, I was discussing the readings for the beginning of Lent with a friend and colleague with whom I sometimes collaborate as we prepare our respective sermons. He said to me, "I love that term you coined." I must have looked a little confused because he explained that as I was talking about the gospel reading, I kept referring to Jesus as being not in "the wilderness," but rather in "The Bewilderness." It was only then that I realized that I was really talking not about the gospel lesson at all, but about where I was spiritually as Lent began. I was in "The Bewilderness." And so, I want to share with you, as we are about to move from Lent into Holy Week, a little bit of what I learned in The Bewilderness.

We usually refer to what happened during those forty days in the desert as "Jesus being tempted in the wilderness." During our Eucharist, in fact, one of the prefaces specifically refers to Jesus "who was tempted as we are, yet did not sin." This year, we finish Lent with the story of Lazarus being raised from the dead, a story that I always read as foreshadowing Easter, a resurrection before the resurrection and a demonstration of Jesus's power. But what if Jesus's time in the wilderness was not so much about temptation, but rather about discernment? What if the key character in this story isn't some devil personified, tempting Jesus, but the Spirit leading Jesus into a lonely place, where he could claim for himself what he had been told by God at baptism: "You are my Beloved, my [child], in whom I am well-pleased." Jesus spent those long forty days and those seemingly endless forty nights deciding what being God's beloved child would mean in terms of the way Jesus would live the rest of his life, and the way he would be in the world.

After all, while Jesus rebuked the devil and refused his invitations, Jesus actually went out and did a lot of what the devil invited—it's just that Jesus did those things on his own, and more importantly, on God's terms. Jesus didn't turn those stones to bread, but he multiplied bread to feed thousands, turned water into wine, and proved God's abundance and generosity. Jesus didn't hurl himself off the pinnacle of the temple, but he did stand resolutely and bravely in the temple and testified to God's love in the face of fear and hate. Jesus didn't seek power or dominion, at least not in human terms, but he did show God's power, and he demonstrated a love that is more powerful than death.

(cont.)



April 2017

Worship Schedule

Sundays
8am ~ Rite I
10am ~ Rite II

Easter Worship
Schedule
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This isn't just a story about Jesus being tempted and besting even the devil; it's about how Jesus chose to live and about how he would respond to his own baptism and God's anointing—and it is an invitation to each of us to do the same. Each of us is baptized into Christ Jesus, and like Jesus himself, each of us is God's own beloved child.

The truth is, sometimes we can find ourselves in a place that feels like a spiritual desert, a kind of wilderness. We are human, and life deals us suffering; pain is real, and none of us is spared. We all hit rough patches, places where we feel alone, frightened, desolate even. Quite honestly, I have found myself at times in a state I can only describe as bewildered grief—that is to say, The Bewilderness. When we find ourselves in The Bewilderness, sometimes all we can do is to allow ourselves to feel those feelings, to face the situation and not to try to run from the pain or grief, or worse, to yield to the darkness. Sometimes all we can do is remember that we are not alone, and we are loved. While God may not fix everything, God never leaves us. (That's one of the lessons of Holy Week. God doesn't always fix everything the way we want, and even Jesus had to face that fact.)

In those dark, scary, arid places, where we're tired and spent, spiritually hungry and thirsty, bewildered, grieving, even angry, we are not alone. God's Spirit is within us, and is leading—or even driving—us to face whatever our own "Bewilderness" may be. As beloved ones, children of God, children (as scripture repeatedly reminds us) of the light, we can choose love and hope. We can allow God's love to cast out fear and replace it with faith. We can remember that even when we feel broken, as the poet and songwriter Leonard Cohen put it, "It's in the broken places that the light shines through."

We end Lent with a resurrection story, of Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead. I love the line in which Martha, Lazarus's sister, asks Jesus not to remove the stone covering the tomb, since it has been four days since her brother's death, and surely, she tells Jesus (in the King James Version), "he stinketh." As I read that story this year, I remembered that there is such a thing as feeling spiritually dead, feeling stuck and, well, stinky. Just as Lazarus was brought from death to life in the physical realm, so we can move from spiritual death into life and health. The way out of The Bewilderness is, alas, through it. And on the other side, we can claim our place as God's beloved sons and daughters. When Lazarus emerged from the tomb, still wrapped literally in the trappings of death, Jesus commanded the startled crowd to "unbind him and let him go."

As we journey into Easter, remember that even if you are in The Bewilderness, you are loved, longed for, called, claimed. Love is more powerful even than death, and God wants us to be whole and brave and free. Let the Spirit lead you into the light. Let the crucified and risen Christ unbind you and set you free.

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### Early June Confirmation Opportunity

Confirmation students and mentors: Our deanery confirmation is in September, however, you have the option to attend a confirmation service at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul's in Boston, on June 17th from 10:30-12:30. Bishop Gayle Harris will be the celebrant. Please contact Rev. Wagner if you plan to attend.

From the Senior Warden...

After more than 10 years of running our lobster roll sales, Bill and Sandy are stepping down. We cannot thank them enough for all of their contributions to these events - from taking orders, to negotiating with the lobster supplier, to shopping for supplies, to making the rolls, coordinating brownie bakers, and deliveries - Bill & Sandy ran it with efficiency and love for the St. John's family.

We would like to think we could continue to have lobster roll sales, for which St. John's is known within the community, and ask others to prayerfully consider volunteering to take over from Bill & Sandy. Please reach out to myself, or anyone on the vestry if you are interested.

~ T.J. Martin

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From the Jr. Warden...

Creative Care Feasibility Group

As St John's continues our journey, it will be important to take stock of our resources and determine how to best use them in God's mission to provide for the needs of our community. One such resource is our rectory. While there have been many great ideas of what we can do with it to support our mission, many of the ideas will require careful research and planning to achieve. To accomplish this, the Vestry has authorized the creation of a Creative Care Feasibility Group to be headed by the Jr Warden. The goal of this group is to research opportunities, make recommendations for the Vestry and to develop a business plan to move forward if warranted. Jean Phelps has volunteered to help and I am looking for at least two more people to share in this opportunity. Please see me on Sunday during coffee hour or contact the office to express your interest in joining or if you want to know more.

In Faith,  
Fritz, Jr. Warden

St John's is Growing by Leaps and Bounds!

Spring is here! (Even it though it is only 30 degrees out as I write this.) And this summer we will be looking to do some replanting of several of the larger shrubs and trees in the Memorial Garden. Over the years several plantings have outgrown their space in the garden and are beginning to either die off or cause moisture damage to the buildings. We are looking to raise \$2,500 to help offset the costs of replanting. Donations may be made by check, with "Memorial Garden" written in the memo line, or using the 'Donate' button on the Church's website. If using the 'Donate' button, please click on 'Donation to go towards:' link and type "Memorial Garden" prior to completing your transaction.

In Faith,  
Fritz, Jr. Warden

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday ~ Worship at 8am for Rite I, and 10am for Rite II

Agape Meal / Maundy Thursday ~ Meal at 6pm and worship immediately follows.

Good Friday ~ Worship at 12pm and 7pm

Easter Vigil ~ Worship begins at 7pm

Easter Day ~ Worship at 8am for Rite I, and 10am for Rite II

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Every Child Deserves to Smile

Many thanks to our friends at New Hope Assembly who have volunteered to prepare and deliver the April 2nd meal!



During April and May, we will continue to collect gift cards and donations to purchase gift cards to Stop & Shop and Market Basket. For those wishing to contribute, envelopes are available in the pews and may placed in the offertory.

Contact Jeanne Seaboyer with any questions or comments: jmseaboyer@gmail.com or 781-662-4342

~ Jeanne Seaboyer

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Easter Prayer List

Please forward names for the Easter Prayer List to the parish office no later than Tuesday, April 10th. Gifts can be made by check, or through Paypal on our website. If your donation should be directed toward a specific fund, kindly email or leave a note for the office, or indicate as Fritz mentioned in the Jr. Warden's section here. Thank you!

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Lobster roll sale results!



In case you didn't hear: Our March lobster roll sale earned over \$1,100!

Again, many thanks to all who pitched in to take and assemble the orders, make deliveries, and bake brownies—your efforts are greatly appreciated!

Bits of history and a few famous birthdays in April...

In 1513: Ponce de Leon discovered Florida; he landed at what is now St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States.

1775: Militia and the British faced off at Lexington Green (“the shot heard around the world”), which ignited the American Revolution.

1792: Congress established the first U.S. Mint in Philadelphia.

1828: The first American-English dictionary was published by Noah Webster.

1949: Twelve nations signed the treaty to create NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to defend against Soviet Union expansion in Western Europe.

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Birthdays: U.S. President, Thomas Jefferson ~ Educator, Booker T. Washington  
Actor, Charlie Chaplin ~ Financier, J.P. Morgan ~ Attorney, Clarence Darrow  
Writer, William Shakespeare ~ Radio Inventor, Guglielmo Marconi

(Info courtesy of historyplace.com)

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**St. John's 2nd Annual Plant Sale
Saturday, May 13th—8am-2pm**

Our plant sale last year was a huge success--join us as we do it again! All plants are locally grown and provided by Kane's in Danvers. Pre-order forms may be found in Ashworth Hall. To repeat our success, volunteers are needed Friday, May 12th and Saturday May 13th. Check out the sign-up sheet in Ashworth Hall to see where you can lend a hand. Let's make St. John's buzz with activity on the 13th!



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*Have a Happy and Blessed Easter!*

# Word Search

S A G A P E J E H W G O G S L B K S  
 Q M W T A B Y C H A L I C E X K E F  
 F N X D O I V I N S P I R A T I O N  
 I R I S E N P A N S I E S B L C D F  
 E L F B Z U J Z H U G C U I R V C L  
 A I A E A G A J Y V A U L Z E T R O  
 S K U M B R E L L A R M O I P B G U  
 T A J F B Z C W L F D E X C M J J R  
 E A R V F J P T X G E N D R K P V I  
 R J G C U R F V N Q N I S U U R Z S  
 M R T X O E E I H E I C P C I P A H  
 K O L Z T M T X N C N A T I I L M M  
 Y V S E F U M I G N G L R F O U I A  
 R D F Z O K H U P R U N O I M F Z U  
 I S Q R U S F L N F H F M X P L H N  
 E O P G N B F A I I V I G I L E V D  
 L S M U B U M B P N O V A O G T V Y  
 Z Q S X C W F N R W F N N N D A F J

Agape ~ Chalice ~ Communion ~ Crucifixion ~ Easter ~ Ecumenical  
 Flourish ~ Gardening ~ Inspiration ~ Kyrie ~ Lamb ~ Lilies ~ Maundy  
 Pansies ~ Risen ~ Sunshine ~ Sprouting ~ Umbrella ~ Vigil

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Clergy & Officers: The Rev. Mary Scott Wagner, Priest ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Fritz White, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Janet Lancaster, Asst. Treasurer ~ Sandy Mears, Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry: Nancy Belyea (2019) ~ Alison Coppola (2018) ~ Armand Couture (2018) ~ Paul Felci (2020) ~ Cheryl Miller (2019) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2019) ~ Jeanne Seaboyer (2020) ~ Jenna Sharwood (2020) ~ Nick White (2018)