

St. John's Good News

From Rev. John...

Dear Friends,

For many of us, 2021 has been a rough year. It has also been a time when we have been given cause to see those things that are truly precious to us. It has been hard to be separated from our families and friends and to face uncertainty about the behavior of this virus in the year to come. I am someone who takes comfort in making long range plans. Such plans give me (an often mistaken) belief that I am in control of my life and my future. This has been a year in which many of my plans have been discarded and I have been forced to be more flexible.

Sometimes God ushers us into a situation in which we are no longer able to demonstrably be in control. One of the blessings found in the story of the Nativity in Luke's Gospel is the realization that holiness comes to us when we lose control. It is in the fragility of a newborn that we become open to God's presence.

It is my hope and prayer that we will see the end of Covid in 2022. I have, however, come to the realization that this is by no means certain. I have come to see how much we need each other, particularly in our fragility. Perhaps this new year might be a time where we become able to let ourselves be ministered to by the kind souls in our lives that we tend to ignore.

We celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6th. This is a season in which we consider how the light of Christ has shown into the world and has revealed many surprising and wonderful things. I would like to share with you the Epiphany prayer composed by Walter Brueggemann.

John+



January
2022

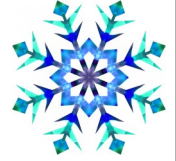
Sunday worship remains at 10am, in-person and virtually on Zoom. All are welcome to participate, and seating capacity is 75. Please note: we continue to monitor community Covid cases and will keep you updated about worship. The Zoom link is shared weekly via email.

Phone: 781-233-1242

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Hear us as we pray:

For those of us too much into obedience,

 birth us to the freedom of the Gospel.

For those of us too much into self-indulgence,

 birth us to discipleship in your ministry.

For those too much into cynicism.

 birth us to the innocence of the Christ child.

For those of us too much into cowardice,

 birth us to the courage to stand before principalities and powers.

For those of us too much into guilt,

 birth in us into forgiveness worked in your generosity.

For those of us too much into despair

 birth us into the promises you make to your people.

For those of us too much into control,

 birth us into the vulnerability of the cross.

For those of us too much into victimization,

 birth us into the power of Easter.

For those of us too much into fatigue,

 birth us into the energy of Pentecost.

We dare pray that you will do for us and among us and through us what is needful for newness.

Peace,

John+

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Feast of the Epiphany

By Frederick Buechner

The gifts that three Wise Men, or Kings, or Magi, brought to the manger in Bethlehem cost them plenty but seem hardly appropriate to the occasion. Maybe they were all they could think of for the child who had everything. In any case, they set them down on the straw the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh, worshiped briefly, and then returned to the East where they had come from. It gives you pause to consider how, for all their great wisdom, they overlooked the one gift that the child would have been genuinely pleased to have someday, and that was the gift of themselves and their love. The foolishness of the wise is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than by the way the three Magi went to Herod the Great, King of the Jews, to find out the whereabouts of the holy child who had just been born King of the Jews to supplant him. It did not even strike them as suspicious when Herod asked them to be sure to let him know when they found him so he could hurry on down to pay his respects. Luckily for the holy child, after the three Magi had followed their star to the manger and left him their presents, they were tipped off in a dream to

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avoid Herod like the plague on their way home. Herod was fit to be tied when he realized he'd been had and ordered the murder of every male child two years old and under in the district. For all his enormous power, he knew there was somebody in diapers more powerful still. The wisdom of the foolish is perhaps nowhere better illustrated.

~ originally published in Peculiar Treasures and Listening to Your Life

ANNUAL MEETING

St. John's Annual Meeting will convene **Sunday, February 6th** after worship at 11:30.

This important gathering of our church members will elect new officers and Vestry members, review 2021 accomplishments, finances, and New Year goals, as well as the budget for 2022. If you wish to participate in the meeting via Zoom, kindly contact us for the separate online link.

2022 Stewardship Ministry Update

This year the Stewardship Ministry Team mailed out 66 Stewardship Packages. As of December 29, 2021, St. John's has received 52 pledges for 2022 totaling \$83,106.00. The Finance Committee has budgeted \$90,000.00 in pledges for the new year, so we are very close to that goal! Reminder notes were sent out the week of 12/13/21. If you have not sent in a pledge card yet, we hope you will do so soon. Thank you for your support of St. John's Church!

~ Julia Aston - for Stewardship Ministry Team

Every Child Deserves to Smile

Thank you to all who have contributed to the grocery store gift cards during November and December and for the ongoing collection of non-perishable food items and everyday needs (paper plates, napkins, plastic utensils, baggies, etc.). Your generosity has allowed us to send four boxes of grocery items and ten \$10 grocery gift cards in the month of November. Your kindness is deeply appreciated by those receiving these gifts. Donations may be left in the *Every Child Deserves to Smile* collection container in the vestibule. Please contact Jeanne Seaboyer 781-662-4342 or [jmseaboyer\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:jmseaboyer(at)gmail(dot)com) if you have questions or would like to make a gift card donation.

Community Outreach

As in years past, we have again participated in the Saugus Fire Department's annual appeal to help make Christmas more enjoyable for families in need. This year we turned over \$875 in gift cards to Ret. Capt. Bill O'Malley to help make the holiday more enjoyable for the teens and tweens in Saugus. Thank you to those who contributed to this appeal.

Christmas Wreath & Poinsettia Sale

Kane's Flower World did not disappoint! Thank you to everyone who purchased the beautiful wreaths & poinsettia plants which were delivered December 3rd. Our profit for the fundraiser is \$354.



Archbishop of Canterbury's Christmas Message

**Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors! (Luke 2:14)**

At Christmas we lift our voices to join with the angels in heaven's song of praise. The account told by St. Luke fills us with the hope and joy of God's promise, now fulfilled in the incarnate Christ. However, for many Christian brothers and sisters around the world, particularly those who face persecution and oppression, much is against them finding peace amidst the encircling darkness. Many of us in good places sometimes may find it difficult to experience the presence of God in the course of our ordinary lives.

But at Christmas, God breaks into the ordinary. He does not come as an emperor or king – not as people would recognize, anyway – he comes born to ordinary parents, to live a “normal” life. He doesn't come as one with the trappings of power; he comes as one who saves and serves. He does not come as a warrior in this place of occupation in the Middle East; but as helpless child, wrapped in cloth by his mother. Yet, in the midst of this conflict and oppression, Jesus is the Prince of Peace. And in the middle of a humble stable, amongst shepherds – lowest of the low – who arrive empty-handed, whilst the world continued its rotation through the night, this child's face is the true glory and power of God. It is the foolishness of God to answer the power of darkness with a vulnerable baby in a war-torn country born to poor parents. Yet that answer is the true wisdom of God, for here God – invisible, incomprehensible, indescribable – is translated into a sign and a substantial reality that the simplest human being can grasp and before whom the wisest scholars find themselves falling in worship (I Corinthians 1:20).

The angels who proclaim this glory in Luke's Gospel overflow out of the heavens. The triumph of what God has done for us cannot be contained. Let us too, no matter our trials and our challenges, continue to proclaim joyously as we remember the birth of our savior: “Glory to God in heaven!” Let us too, in the face of trouble and conflict, declare peace upon all who he favors! Every tear brings the Messiah closer!

God's favor is offered to all, not forced upon some. There is nothing we can do to earn this boundless grace of God. We can merely open ourselves humbly to receive it. Christ breaks into this suffering, complicated, divided world, and unites all of heaven and earth in wonder at his birth. I pray we too might share the same wonder this year: for through him we have been given salvation, we who could not save ourselves. And through him we have hope, who once felt hopeless and lost. Through him we are renewed in love for one another and may ourselves be living translations of the mystery of the Trinitarian God. Through the Christ-child we see God's faithfulness. Through his Son, God has fulfilled his promise to us: we can trust in him and him alone.

The early church father, St. Augustine, writes:

“...let us be at peace with God: for justice and peace have embraced one another. Through our Lord Jesus Christ: for Truth has arisen from the earth. Through whom we have access to that grace in which we stand, and our boast is in our hope of God's glory.”

The glory is indeed God's, not ours, so we have no boast but Christ. But may we be illuminated by his glory this Christmas, so we can shine as lights for him, witnessing with joy to him who has brought justice and hope, glory and peace.

This Christmas, my prayer is that the joy of the extraordinary God may transform our ordinary lives. In his birth and life, suffering and death, resurrection and glorious ascension he calls us out of darkness together, and into his marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9).

In his peace and glory,

The Most Reverend and Right Honorable Justin Welby, archbishop of Canterbury

Word Search

Find the colors! :)

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

Amber ~ Beige ~ Crimson ~ Denim ~ Evergreen ~ Fuchsia ~ Gray ~ Ivory
 Jade ~ Lavender ~ Mahogany ~ Navy ~ Olive ~ Peach ~ Raspberry
 Sapphire ~ Teal ~ Violet ~ Yellow



Officers: The Rev. John T. Beach, Priest-in-Charge, Daniel Casey, Sr. Warden, William St. Clair, Jr. Warden, Phil Littlehale, Treasurer, Paul Felci, Assistant Treasurer, and Brenda Caggiano, Clerk of the Vestry

Vestry: Rose Holt (2022), Duana LeMay (2024), Donna Manoogian (2024), Samantha Martin (2023), Kristina Palazzo (2023), Sandy St. Clair (2022), and Kenneth Webber (2023)