

# St. John's Good News

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## From Reverend Sarah...

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:7)*

Dear Friends,

On my pilgrimage to the Holy Land I had the amazing blessing of attending an early morning Eucharist at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The Church of the Nativity has two main sanctuaries: one that is very ornate with a mosaic floor and ancient stone walls with clusters of lit candles hanging from the ceiling; the other has a more modern plain tile floor and bright white walls. But we were there to worship in a small cave where it is believed Jesus was born.

The cave was dark, crowded and generally uncomfortable. I was relieved when the Latin mass was over and I could climb the stairs back up to the main floor. After the service the tour guide explained to us that there were no inns in Bethlehem and so Mary and Joseph would have been dependent on the hospitality of the community. Fortunately, providing hospitality to traveling strangers was an established expectation of all Jewish households.

During this past Advent I prayed with my discomfort in that dark, crowded cave in Bethlehem. My own cultural understanding of personal space makes it hard to accept this image as closer to the truth than the image of the stable. The cave felt so primitive and plain. But it has served as a reminder that the emotions we attach to certain spaces hold deep and often unseen power over us. I was so attached to the image of Mary giving birth in a wooden stable that to picture it happening in a cave seemed blasphemous. Suddenly all the pictures on Advent calendars and Christmas cards were turned into lies and my memories of them were denied.

This was a lesson that was repeatedly taught during my studies at the Episcopal Divinity School. My liturgics (worship) professor often repeated the statement "the building always wins" by which he meant that maintaining the perceived sacredness of the traditional physical space outweighed overruled innovations in worship or programs. As I learned in Bethlehem there is a kernel of truth in this statement; humans are attached memories of space and see any change of the space as a denial of those memories.

*Cont'd.*

## January 2019

### Winter Worship Schedule

**Sunday Morning  
8am Rite II  
10am Rite II**

Phone: 781-233-1242

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As the world moves along our church building needs to move along as well. St. John's is blessed with renters and church sharers to ensure that our building isn't empty during the week. But what are the other ways that we can open our building and ourselves to welcome friends and strangers? New lights? Computer work stations? Free coffee during the week?

Is it scary to change how we envision and use our building? Absolutely. It touches on our emotional attachments that aren't easily ignored. But what is even scarier is that if we don't continually re-envision how we use our building we could potentially deny hospitality to angels and even to the Christ child.

Peace,

Sarah

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**THANK YOU FOR A GREAT ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION!** Thank you to all who gave their time and energy to help St. John's celebrate the birth of Christ through the Pageant, Vigil and Christmas morning services. Over the 3 services St. John's welcomed almost 150 people to experience the joyful mystery of the Christmas story. Thank you!

**EPIPHANY BIBLE STUDY: THE PSALMS.** During the 8 weeks of Epiphany our weekly Bible Study, which meets Tuesdays 10:30-noon, will read and discuss the Book of Psalms. Gathered over decades Psalms are songs that express the different aspects of the human relationship with God: thanksgiving, praise, lament etc. While the Bible Study won't cover all the 150 Psalms we will read a wide variety focusing especially on the psalms used in our worship. Please note Bible Study will not meet on January 1, but on Wednesday, January 2, Noon-1:30.

**PACKING FOOD FOR HUNGRY KIDS IN SAUGUS.** This month we will pack bags for Healthy Students, Healthy Saugus on Thursday, January 3 at 7pm. The food and bags are provided by the public schools while we sort and pack the food for 55 children who otherwise would not have enough food over the weekend. In December St. John's collected over 60 cans of tuna (!) and in January will be collecting boxes of macaroni and cheese. Boxes can be left in the Hurl Room. Financial donations can be made out to "Saugus Faith Community" with "HS2" in the memo line.

**EPIPHANY PARTY WITH THE THREE KINGS!** On Epiphany Sunday, January 6, we will welcome the three Kings who arrived on this day to worship the infant Jesus with gifts of frankincense, gold and myrrh. After the 10am worship we will enjoy a King's Cake and games to celebrate Epiphany which is also known as "Little Christmas."

**YOUTH GROUP MEETS SUNDAY, JANUARY 6.** It's to start planning the 30-Hour Famine! The famine will be February 22-23 (Friday-Saturday) and fundraising will begin in late January. All youth in grades 6-12 are encouraged to take part in this amazing opportunity to raise money to fight hunger and learn more about the global and local effects of hunger. For more info please speak with Rev. Sarah.

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**Every Child Deserves to Smile**



During the month of January we will be collecting non-refrigerated items to put together a fruit and snack basket: Fruit cups, fruit/yogurt tubes, raisins, granola bars, juice boxes, Goldfish crackers, graham crackers, hot chocolate packets, and individual cereal cups.

We continue to collect non-perishable food items and everyday needs (paper plates, napkins, plastic utensils, baggies, etc.). Donations may be left in the Every Child Deserves to Smile collection container in the vestibule.

Karen Riccio is the motel liaison until March 31, 2019. If you have any questions, please contact Karen at [kriccio1@gmail.com](mailto:kriccio1@gmail.com).

**Community Outreach**

**Thank You** to all who opened your hearts with generous donations to the Fire Department's annual toy drive! We delivered 18 movie gift cards, 9 food establishment gift cards and 2 Visa cards totaling \$505 to Retired Captain Bill O'Malley to be distributed by the Saugus Fire Department.



Your donations made the season so much brighter for families in need. Thank You!

~ Jeanne Seaboyer

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**January is Soup Month!**

Be it a hearty stew or satisfying crock of chowder, few foods are comforting like a bowl soup. Please consider a contribution for the Saugus Food Pantry this month ~ canned or packaged soup donations may be left in the vestibule. Thank you!!

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**Save the date -> ANNUAL MEETING**

St. John's Annual Meeting will convene after worship on **Sunday, February 3rd**. We will review the Annual Report, including our budget for 2019 and discuss specific items afterward. All are welcome to attend.

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*We wish you a healthy, peaceful, and very blessed New Year!*



WORD SEARCH

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

Arctic ~ Blustery ~ Draft ~ Firewood ~ Frostbite ~ Epiphany  
Gust ~ Hibernate ~ Magi ~ Overcast ~ Sacred ~ Sparkling ~ Squall  
Testaments ~ Whiteout ~ Wintry

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**Officers:** The Reverend Sarah van Gulden, Priest-in-Charge ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Fritz White, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Janet Lancaster, Asst. Treasurer ~ Sandy Mears, Clerk of the Vestry

**Vestry:** Brenda Caggiano (2019) ~ Dale Coogan (2021) ~ Al Coppola (2019) ~ Paul Felci (2020) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2019) ~ William 'Bill' St. Clair (2021) ~ Jeanne Seaboyer (2020) ~ Jenna Sharwood (2020) ~ Diana White (2021)