

# St John's News

The Episcopal Church of the Hilltowns

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[We are a Team Ministry](#)



Volume 3  
November ~ December 2009  
Join us for Sunday Service at 10 am

email: [stjohnsashfield@verizon.net](mailto:stjohnsashfield@verizon.net)  
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Words from Our Vicar, Eliot

News News News

A recent Sunday Gospel reading was the story of the blind beggar, Bartimaeus. He is at the side of the road, shouting, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" As do we all, from time to time. Though people try to shush Bartimaeus, Jesus stops for Bartimaeus to come to him. Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus replies, "Let me see again," and his faith heals him.

It became clear near the end of the previous century that the old model of "doing Church" was no longer working. What we need is vision of the Church in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Now this does not mean throwing away all our traditions and inventing Church from scratch, but it does mean that, like the good scribe, we must bring out of our treasure chest what is old and what is new. We go forward with the useable part of our past.

But the point about Bartimaeus is that while he had his vision restored, it was not old vision or reinstatement of what he was that he received. No, he received new vision, and had to start figuring who he was and

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The 2009 **Diocesan Convention** was held on Saturday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009, in Springfield, where we considered the Good News embedded in the change that current financial realities require. We celebrated and worshipped with powerful and uplifting music provided by Joel Martin, we used large screens for written materials instead of handouts, we watched several inspired video vignettes of churches within the diocese, and we talked face-to-face with our missionaries, the Culvers, in China via computer.

Bishop Scruton mentioned several changes in the Diocese: the closing of Bement, the closing of St. John's, Worcester, a reduction in the Diocesan apportionment to the National Church, reduction in grants for college ministry, and general belt-tightening in the diocesan offices among other economies. With a 2010 (almost) balanced diocesan budget, Bishop Scruton encouraged all parishes to look for and celebrate new opportunities.

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**Words from the Vicar (continued)**

what he would do, now that he was no longer a blind beggar. Likewise, we pray for vision, but we must realize that the vision God grants always has something new to it. We can never wind back the clock and inhabit some time of past glory. We can only build the new and glorious future. And to do that, there is always something we have to give up, not least some understanding of who we are, so that we can become that new people God wants us to be. And we won't know in advance what that is. We must trust that it will be good and abundant even though we cannot fully see it yet. And the call to new vision does not mean that we are doing anything bad or wrong now – it only means that God is always calling us farther on the journey into the Heart of God's own self.

There is a further call here: We must pray for this new vision. In that prayer, we commit to trying to receive it, even if there are things we are attached to that we must let go, habits that we must change. So I invite you all into prayer that God will grant us vision as a community, through the vision of each one of us. Without such prayer, we will lack vision, and, as the Proverbs say, without vision the people perish. Yours in Christ – **Eliot**

**Diocesan Convention (continued)**

The Bishop announced the following 2010 Ministry Plan:

\*Embrace our current reality with holy curiosity and courageous self-assessment as a healthy, mission focused diocese that values the wisdom of the Church through the ages and risks following the Holy Spirit into fresh and faithful expressions of Christ's Church.

\*Encourage congregations to explore new ways to reach out to the world and our neighbors spreading the good news of Jesus Christ inside and outside the walls of our buildings.

\*Create partnerships among congregations so they may learn from and support one another by facilitating regional ministry initiatives throughout the Diocese.

\*Collaborate with congregations to build strong and playful leadership teams, vibrant stewardship, and a responsible, realistic vision of their ministry in this new day rooted in Scripture, habitual prayer and deep spirituality.

*For those interested, the Bishop's Address can be found on the diocesan website: [www.diocesewma.org](http://www.diocesewma.org). The address points out, with a very clever surprise, that change is with us always. We will move forward in 2010, knowing that the eternal and immutable God is also with us always.*



The Blessing of the Animals was held in the church garden. Eliot blessed a variety of animals.

Above is Eric Meservey with his pet chicken.



On the left are Tamara Adkins and Casandra Moss feeling the L O V E.

**Attendance**

September		October	
6 <sup>th</sup>	26	4 <sup>th</sup>	35
13 <sup>th</sup>	30	11 <sup>th</sup>	20 fall festival
20 <sup>th</sup>	29	18 <sup>th</sup>	23
27 <sup>th</sup>	24	25 <sup>th</sup>	21

**Financial Update**

Pledges were budgeted for \$54,074.00. To date we have received \$42,501.00. We are on target. Fall Festival netted \$3,189.60 which was just above last year's profit.

ATTENTION ALL SINGERS! Christmas Eve choir rehearsals will be Sunday Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> after church and Saturday, Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. at 10 am. COME JOIN US!

### ***Blueberries To Your Health***

This suggestion for longevity comes from Prevention Magazine: **You Eat Purple Food**

Concord grapes, blueberries, red wine: They all get that deep, rich color from polyphenols – compounds that reduce heart disease risk and may also protect against Alzheimer’s disease, according to research. Polyphenols help keep blood vessels and arteries flexible and healthy.

“What’s good for your coronary arteries is also good for your brain’s blood vessels,” says Robert Krikorian, PhD, director of the Cognitive Disorders Center at the University of Cincinnati.

Preliminary animals studies suggest that adding dark grapes to your diet may improve brain function. What’s more, in a recent human study, researchers found that eating 1 or more cups of blueberries every day may improve communication between brain cells, enhancing your memory.

### **Parish Nursing for St John’s**

On November 1, I will be officially commissioned as your Parish Nurse. This is a new undertaking for me and for the parish as a whole. I ask for your prayers and patience as I begin this new ministry. In January I will be starting a 16 week course online to become certified in Parish Nursing.

So, what is a Parish Nurse anyway? I am borrowing the description from Kathryn Aubry-McAvoy, Parish Nurse at St. Andrews in Turners Falls:

*A Parish Nurse is a registered nurse whose ministry focuses on the care of the spirit as part of the process of promoting holistic health and preventing or minimizing illness in a faith community.*

- \* Health Educator
  - Health Counselor and referral agent
  - Member of pastoral care team
- (Continued next page)*

### **CHRISTMAS ARTISANS FESTIVE SHOWCASE**

Sat. Dec.5<sup>th</sup> & Sun. Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. 10 am - 5 pm  
For information contact Sue Craft or Dee Brochu

### ***Everything Blueberry a Success for St. John's at Fall Festival 2009***

*We did it! The annual Ashfield Fall Festival held over the Columbus Day Weekend was a great success for St John's. Our blueberry cobbler and muffins brought back regular customers and was praised by first-timers who vowed to come back again next year. Twice the jam was made this year and again it sold out. THANKS so much to all who supported the efforts: the shoppers, the planners, the jelly makers, the bakers, the sign makers, the workers in the tent and kitchen, the setter-uppers and the taker-downers, those who donated and all who participated in so many ways.*

*The Fall Festival Team Coordinators,  
Sue Craft, Jane Wagener and Dee Brochu*

### **About the Pastoral Care Team**

*The pastoral Care Team meets on a regular basis during the year. Our focus is to support those members of the parish who are having any kind of difficulty, medical or spiritual. We visit, prepare meals, call--depending on the need. And always we pray. If you are experiencing any change or difficulty in your life and would like to talk with someone from the Pastoral Care Team, please call the church and leave a message or call one of the team members directly.*

***~At this time~***

*We especially offer our prayers to  
Ann Browning, Willie Gray, and  
Molly Robinson.*

## Parish Nursing (continued)

- Embodies a vital theology of the body to enable care for the whole person in body, mind and spirit
- Participates fully in the healing heritage that we have in the Christian tradition in worship, sacraments, outreach, support groups and educational activities.
- All communications between the Parish Nurse and the client are treated in a confidential manner, consistent with Nurse Practice Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA)

*My nursing background is in Public Health. The focus of the majority of my career was in Maternal Child Health in the community – not something that is a big concern to most members of St. John's. I will be renewing my knowledge of adult medical concerns along the way. I look forward to learning what your needs may be and how you see the Parish Nurse working in St. John's parish. Please feel free to call me: 625-2111. Wishing you peace and good health. Jane Wagener*

### **November Birthdays**

*Robert Rogers-Manatt 22  
Marie Zenick 22  
Kyle Meservey 23  
Emily Todd 24*

### **December Birthdays**

*Julia Meservey 2  
Kevin Gallagher  
Sam Bullitt-Jonas 6  
Robert Sperry-Fromm 7  
Brian Dufresne 15  
Eric Meservey 20  
Peter Elenois 21  
Russell Williams 26  
Christi Anderson 31*

## Mark your Calendar



*On Sunday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 2 pm at the Belding Memorial Library in Ashfield, I will read from a recently-published book entitled "Affection and Estrangement: A Southern Family Memoir."*

*The heart of the book is a group of sketches of relatives I recall from my childhood and adolescence in the thirties and forties, some of them quite eccentric, as well as of my parents.*

*In one chapter I write about the most prominent features of southern society as I know it--race, religion and class--and about life in the Browning family and in the thoroughly segregated community of Culpeper, Virginia. In the final chapter, entitled "Legacy: The Land That Formed Me," I examine certain aspects of southern life, some quite pathological, asking questions about how those dimensions of the world I knew as a child and teenager affected me as I struggled through a very troubled and tumultuous adolescence, striving to achieve some psychological and spiritual wholeness. At the reading I will have copies to sign and following the reading there will be a party at Wellspring House to which all members of St. John's are invited.*

*Preston Browning [browning@wellspringhouse.net](mailto:browning@wellspringhouse.net)*

## Mission in Ghana

*On January 1, for one week, a small group from St. John's will travel to Mafi Dove, Ghana to help the village set up a computer lab for their middle school students. Mafi Dove is the town where Nell Todd was a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1997-1999. For the past 12 years St. John's has offered ongoing support for Mafi Dove's development projects, including providing pumps for their bore holes to ensure clean water, contributing to the building of household latrines, sending clothing to raise funds for the kindergarten, and purchasing educational texts and materials for their schools.*

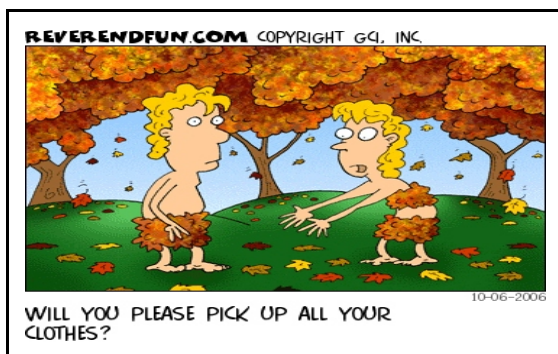
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## **Buildings and Grounds**

*Much has occurred to maintain our valued buildings this fall. The roof on the Corner was handsomely replaced by Art Lussier and his crew from Vermont in October. Art also repaired the damage caused to the roof of the church by last December's ice storm, as well as the rot in the tower. As an experienced builder with many years repairing churches Art was most interested in our bells, noticing that the smaller one was missing its rope. (Did you know we had a smaller one?!) He has now replaced that and we will be delighted by the new, gentle ring of the second bell.*

*On October 17 and 24, small groups of parishioners did some weatherizing and maintenance work around our property. The coffin door of the church is sealed and much of the rotted wood has been replaced near the front doors of both the church and the Corner, thanks to Jim Wagener, John Wood, and David Bruffee.*

*Future projects will include providing a handicap accessible toilet for the Corner, fixing the rotted floor boards in the bathroom, and attending to the sill under the front door of the church. We are most grateful to Dee Brochu who has been vigilant in noticing what needs to be done and mother hen-like in overseeing all those who have helped get the work accomplished.*



*(Mission in Ghana continued)*

*Over a year ago the village requested technology for their children. We are now ready to help them set off down this road. Those who will make this trip include: Eliot Moss, Robert Harris, Thomas Kreek, Susan Todd, and Nell Todd.*

*The group's Mission Statement for this trip follows:*

*"The mission of St. John's trip to Mafi Dove, Ghana in January 2010 is threefold. First, we plan to bring ten computers and a printer to the village to set up a computer lab for their middle school. Second, we plan to put into place a system to provide training and ongoing technical support for the villagers once the physical lab is established. Third, we will become observers of village life in Mafi Dove, to the best of our ability, and speak with the villagers about their current and future needs – particularly concerning their new health clinic, children's educational issues, and women's roles."*

*The Vestry voted unanimously to authorize this trip as a mission of St. John's. A grant has been submitted to One Laptop Per Child to provide the hardware and mentoring. The group will undergo training, immunizations, and additional preparation over the next two months. Any contributions from our friends and parishioners toward setting up the lab will be gratefully accepted. **Susan Todd***

*Deadline for the January - February Newsletter is December 10, 2009.*

*Send submissions to [stjohnsashfield@verizon.net](mailto:stjohnsashfield@verizon.net) or give to Jan Mahnken.*



*Tamara Adkins recently introduced us to Godly Play. In the picture at the left Tamara is demonstrating a Lesson from the Bible to the congregation using props to animate the story.*

*Eagerly participating are adults from the congregation and youngsters, Delia and Oliver.*

*Children can join in the fun upstairs at the Corner House on Sundays at 10 am.*

### ***Update: Partnership for Missional Church (PMC)***

*The St. John's Steering Team continues to gather facts and impressions to aid the whole congregation in discerning who we are as a congregation and what opportunities for ministry God wants us to accept. The PMC work so far has involved two realms: what can we learn about St. John's and what can we learn about the communities around us. With the help of parishioners, the Steering Team will be asking questions about how we use our physical buildings, what is our model of leadership, how has it evolved, how do we understand the communities around us and what symbols, metaphors and rituals are important to us.*

*While the Steering Team continues to collect information, we also are beginning to ask parishioners theological questions about who we are and where we are. For instance, **what do you think of when you see the name of our congregation? What Biblical images come to mind? What is our "community"?***

*In addition to asking questions about St. John's, we also want to ask questions about the world around us: **What other organizations are in the vicinity of St. John's? How does the St. John's location help us participate in God's work in the community?***

*The way we as a congregation answer the questions above will begin to shape our understanding of God's preferred future for us. We hope you will think about and answer these questions. Please email your responses to Lucinda Brown at [Lbrown1st@aol.com](mailto:Lbrown1st@aol.com) or give them in person to Susan Todd, Bob Harris, Tamara Adkins or Lucinda Brown.*

*We are on an exciting journey together!*

*Respectfully submitted, Lucinda Brown*

### ***Ingathering of Pledges for 2010***

*Please look for our annual pledge mailing which will be arriving at your door very soon. Our ingathering will occur on the third Sunday of Advent, December 13. Thank you to everyone for your continued generosity to this small parish, which reaches far and wide.*

### ***Farewell Dear Friends***

*On October 1, our beloved parishioners Audrey and George Strom of Goshen moved to Easthampton to be near their family. Audrey has been a faithful member of St. John's, serving on the Altar Guild and as a gifted caretaker of our garden. Her watercolor of the Church garden hangs in our Church bathroom! We will miss you and wish you Godspeed.*

*We also wish Georgette Vianni much happiness in California near your son and his family.*

## **November Calendar**

*Sunday, November 1: 10 AM Holy Eucharist, All Saints – Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost; Godly Play, 10 AM*

*Tuesday, November 3: Centering Prayer\* 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner*

*Sunday, November 8: 10 AM Holy Eucharist, the Rev. Brevard Williams, celebrant. The Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost; Godly Play. 10 AM.*

*Tuesday, November 10: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner*

*Sunday, November 15: 10 AM Holy Eucharist, the Rev. Brevard Williams, celebrant. The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost. Godly Play, 10 AM.*

*Monday, November 16: Trustees of Reservation Bullitt Committee, 5 PM at Corner House.*

*Tuesday, November 17: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner*

*Sunday, November 22: 10 AM Holy Eucharist: Christ the King. Godly Play, 10 AM.*

*Tuesday, November 24: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner*

*Sunday, November 29: 10 AM Holy Eucharist. Advent 1, Jesse Zink, student at Yale Divinity and former missionary in South Africa will be our preacher; Godly Play, 10 AM.*

## **December Calendar**

*Friday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> PMC Cluster Meeting, St David's Agawam*

*Saturday, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> and Sunday Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> ARTISANS FESTIVE SHOCASE 10am -5pm*

*Sunday, December 6: 10 AM Holy Eucharist and the annual visit of Bishop Nicholas. Advent 2. No Godly Play.*

*Tuesday December 8: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner.*

*Sunday, December 13: 10 AM Holy Eucharist, Advent 3. Godly Play 10 AM.*

*Tuesday, December 15: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner*

*Sunday, December 20: 10 AM Holy Eucharist, Advent 4. Godly Play 10 AM*

*Tuesday, December 22: Centering Prayer 5:30 PM at St. John's Corner.*

***Thursday, December 24: Children's Service is at 4 PM. Festive Eucharist, 10 PM***

*Sunday December 27: 10 AM Holy Eucharist. First Sunday after Christmas; Lessons and Carols. Godly Play 10 AM.*

*\*The Centering Prayer group is jointly sponsored by First Congregational Church and St. John's Episcopal Church. All are welcome.*

*\*Vestry/Team: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Corner (no NOV. meeting)*

*\*Al Anon meets at the Corner every Monday at 7:30 PM*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Celebrant</i>	<i>Preacher</i>	<i>Lector</i>	<i>Eucharistic Minister</i>	<i>Crucifer Torches</i>	<i>Coffee Hour</i>
<i>November 1</i>	<i>All Saints Godly Play</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Matt Marchese</i>	<i>Robert Harris</i>	<i>Peter E Bryan D Jan M</i>	<i>Bob &amp; Bambi Phillips</i>
<i>November 8</i>	<i>Pentecost 23 Godly Play</i>	<i>Brevard Williams</i>	<i>Brevard Williams</i>	<i>Clarence West</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Lucinda Brown</i>
<i>November 15</i>	<i>Pentecost 24 Godly Play</i>	<i>Brevard Williams</i>	<i>Brevard Williams</i>	<i>John Wood</i>	<i>Jan Mahnken</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Sue Craft</i>
<i>November 22</i>	<i>Christ the King Godly Play</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>David Bruffee</i>	<i>Robert Harris</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>
<i>November 29</i>	<i>First Sunday of Advent Godly Play</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Jim Wagener</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Herb Libby</i>
<i>December 6</i>	<i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Bishop Nicholas</i>	<i>Mary Snow</i>	<i>Jan Mahnken</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Jan Mahnken</i>
<i>December 13</i>	<i>Third Sunday of Advent Godly Play</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Mariel Kinsey</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>John Wood</i>
<i>December 20</i>	<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent Godly Play</i>	<i>TBA</i>	<i>TBA</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>	<i>Jan Mahnken</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Julia Meservey</i>
<i>December 24</i>	<i>Children's Service 4 PM Eucharist 10 PM</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Vicar</i>	<i>Susan Todd (10PM)</i>	<i>Robert Harris Thomas Kreek</i>	<i>Peter E Bryan D Jan M</i>	
<i>December 27</i>	<i>First Sunday after Christmas Lessons &amp; Carols Godly Play</i>	<i>Vicar</i>		<i>Special List</i>	<i>Peter Elenois</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>	<i>Mariel Kinsey</i>