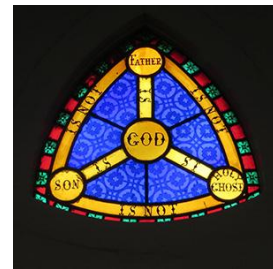




St. John's Episcopal Church

Ashfield, Massachusetts
Corner of Main and South Streets



December 2014

Christmas Eve Services

4:00 pm - Family service

9:30 pm - Musical Prelude

10:00 pm - Eucharist Service



Lessons & Carols for Christmas

December 28th at 10:00 a.m. Service

The regular 10:00 a.m. service on December 28th will be a service of Lessons and Carols. The Service of Lessons and Carols is composed of 9 different readings with accompanying hymns. We would love to find 9 volunteers to read. A sign-up sheet can be found at the back of the sanctuary.

- First Lesson - Genesis 3: 8-19
- Second Lesson - Genesis 22: 15-18
- Third Lesson - Isaiah 9: 2; 6-7
- Fourth Lesson - Isaiah 11: 1-3a; 4a; 6-9
- Fifth Lesson - the Gospel of Luke 1: 26-35; 38
- Sixth Lesson - Luke 2: 1; 3-7
- Seventh Lesson - Luke 2: 8-16
- Eighth Lesson - the Gospel of Matthew 2: 1-12
- Ninth Lesson - the Gospel of John 1: 1-14

This service is based on the traditional service of Lessons and Carols as held at King's College, Cambridge (England), with our own choice of music and minor changes to accommodate the addition of Holy Eucharist after the liturgy of the Word.



Calling All Singers

Christmas is on its way! That is a sign that choir rehearsals are here. Rehearsals for the Christmas Choir will be held after coffee hour starting December 7th. The choir will be singing on Christmas Eve at a 9:30 pm prelude and the 10:00 pm service. Everyone is welcome. Please come share your love of music and the joy of Christmas.



Sharing Christmas


Sharing Christmas is looking for people interested in sponsoring a family or making donations to help support the program. Sharing Christmas provides holiday gifts for children of the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry. Our goal is to provide each child with two articles of clothing and two toys/fun things. Children 16 and younger are eligible to participate. There are many families using the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry. You can help this holiday season by sponsoring a family or making a donation to "Sharing Christmas." Donations can be mailed to P. O. Box 68, Ashfield, MA 01330. If you are interested in sponsoring a family or would like more information contact the coordinator, Bonnie Coleman at (413)628-3230 or email her at crazylegscx@yahoo.com. If you are not able to sponsor a family there are many other ways to help and volunteer!



Blue Christmas: An Advent Service of Comfort and Hope

St. Philip's Episcopal Church, Easthampton
 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9TH at 7:00 P.M.

This special Advent service brings together music (flute, piano, and organ), readings, prayers of healing, and a Celtic liturgy for everyone (and their family and friends) experiencing grief, loss, worry, illness, injury, financial concerns, loneliness, or any other life experiences that make it difficult to join in the joy and hope of Christmas. Come! Bring others who might find solace and fellowship in a service that recognizes that the season of Advent may be one of distress as well as of hope. Refreshments will follow.







Crafted in the Village

On the weekend of December 6th and 7th the Town of Ashfield will be having the annual Crafted in the Village. This is an opportunity to visit open studios and craft booths all over Ashfield, enjoy visiting local artisans and shopping for locally made crafts. Visit the local churches, hardware store, general store and crafts/art studios throughout the town. Maps can be found at Elmer's, Neighbors. St. John's Corner will be full of crafts people. We are looking for those interested in selling their crafts; a portion of their sales goes to St. John's. We will be open from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm on Sat. and 10:00 am - 2:00 pm on Sunday. Set up is 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm on Friday, December 5th. Space is limited, so contact us soon. We are also looking for volunteers to help during the weekend. If you are interested in bringing crafts/art to St. John's or in volunteering; you can contact the church at 628-4402 or stjohnsashfield@verizon.net leave a message for Jane or Sue.



Serving Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Celebrant</i>	<i>Preacher</i>	<i>Lector</i>	<i>Altar Guild</i>	<i>Coffee Hour</i>
December 7 	2 nd Sunday of Advent	Jennifer Walters	Jennifer Walters	Arianna Monds-Burch	Arianna Monds-Burch	Artisan Showcase
December 14 	3 rd Sunday of Advent	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Susan Todd	Arianna Monds-Burch	Addison Hall
December 21 	4 th Sunday of Advent	Jennifer Walters	Jennifer Walters	Kristen Wickline	Arianna Monds-Burch	Bambi Phillips "Greening of the Church"
December 24 4:00 pm	Christmas Eve Family Service	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Sue Craft	Arianna Monds-Burch	-----
December 24 10:00 pm	Christmas Eve	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss			-----
December 28 	1 st Sunday after Christmas	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	9 Volunteers (see sign up at back of church)	Arianna Monds-Burch	Monds-Burch Family



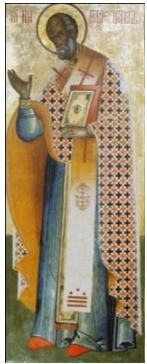
The Bishop of Myra

Myra is an ancient Greek town in Lycia situated in present day Turkey. It was located on the river Myros near the Aegean Sea. We celebrate the feast of its 4th century bishop, St. Nicholas, on December 6th. It is said he was a strong supporter of the Orthodox Christian beliefs and spent many years in prison. He was possibly at the First Council of Nicea in 325. His crypt in Myra became a popular destination of pilgrimage. In 1071 a Turkish sultan defeated Rome in battle and Myra became part of his empire, because of this the Italian cities of Venice and Bari took advantage of the confusion of war and each seized part of the remains of St. Nicholas from his original crypt in Myra. Recently it was scientifically proven that the bones are from the same body.



Original tomb in Myra of St. Nicholas

St. Nicholas was known as a generous man, part of his mythology is how he left gold coins in shoes of poor people or how he gave money a poor man to cover the dowries of his three daughters. Part of this story says that St. Nicholas threw coins down the family's chimney and they were found the next morning in the stockings hanging by the fireplace.



Another story states that Nicholas, then a young priest, was on board a ship and warned the sailors about an approaching storm. During the storm a sailor fell overboard. Nicholas prayed and the storm became calm. When the sailor's body was recovered Nicholas blessed the sailor and he awoke.

This generosity and many miracles attributed to him have made him possibly the only saint to be equally venerated by all Christian denominations. They are also the reason that he is the patron of many things: brides, brewers, children, dockworkers, Greece, merchants, Russia and travelers, name a few.

So, how does a bishop from a warm climate become a holiday figure that lives at the North Pole? Over the centuries after his death and proceeding the Protestant Reformation Nicholas took on some of the aspects of earlier European deities, such as Saturn and Odin, jovial deities who also meted out a bit of justice to those who misbehaved. After the Protestant Reformation saints, including Nicholas, were no longer celebrated. This meant there was no longer the generous yet just bringer of gifts to children. Some tried to portray the baby Jesus as the bringer of gifts, but did not think a baby should also punish those who misbehaved. But, the people of the Netherlands refused to give up St. Nicholas as a bringer of gifts; they brought their belief in Sinterklaas with them when they came to America.

In the early 1800s this figure was stripped of any religious characteristics and dressed in the shaggy furs of Germanic origin. Though these religious characteristics seemed to have disappeared there are some that might be traced back to St. Nicholas; such as children hanging out stockings for Santa to fill. Candy canes, also associated with Christmas, are said to represent a bishop's crosier. Under Communism the government of the U.S.S.R. discouraged their citizens from worshipping any religion, but some areas still venerated St. Nicholas. So, in order to strip his religious aspects St. Nicholas and change the images of the western Santa Claus he became Father Frost and dressed in blue.

In 1822 "The Night Before Christmas" was published and the image of the jolly Santa in his reindeer drawn flying sleigh was born. So:

You better watch out
Better not cry!
Better not pout!
I'm telling you why,
Santa Claus is comin' to town.
- Coats, J. Fred/Gillespie, Haven. "Santa Claus is Comin' to Town."



Almighty God, who in your love gave to your servant Nicholas of Myra a perpetual name for deeds of kindness on land and sea: Grant, we pray, that your Church may never cease to work for the happiness of children, the safety of sailors, the relief of the poor, and the help of those tossed by tempests of doubt or grief; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

-Holy Women, Holy Men, 2009

Eliminating Fossil Fuel Holdings and Investing in Clean Energy

The following resolution was submitted to the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts by the Social Justice Commission, and passed at the diocese's annual convention on October 25, 2014.

Resolved, that as a matter of moral and theological urgency, in obedience to God's command to "tend and keep the earth" and consistent with Jesus' injunction that we care for those who are most vulnerable, this 113th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on the Church Pension Fund, the Investment Committee of the Executive Council, and the Episcopal Church Foundation to adopt a policy to refrain from this time forward from purchasing any new holdings of public equities and corporate bonds of the world's leading 200 fossil fuel companies as identified by the Carbon Underground, and be it further

Resolved, that in obedience to God's call to be stewards of earth's diverse community of life, this 113th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on the Church Pension Fund, the Investment Committee of the Executive Council, and the Episcopal Church Foundation to develop and implement a plan to eliminate exposure within five years to direct ownership of public equities and corporate bonds of the world's leading 200 fossil fuel companies as identified by the Carbon Underground, and be it further

Resolved, that as an investment in the healthy future of humanity and the planet, this 113th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts calls on the Church Pension Fund, the Investment Committee of the Executive Council, and the Episcopal Church Foundation to develop and implement a strategy to invest 5% within two years and 10% within four years of their overall holdings in "impact investments" in the clean energy sector, and be it further

Resolved, that this 113th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, memorialize the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church to encourage all dioceses and the Consortium of Endowed Episcopal Parishes to engage within the coming year the topic of eliminating exposure to investment in fossil fuels and of reinvesting in clean energy.

Explanation

God calls us to be good stewards of God's good Creation (Gen. 1:31, 2:15). Jesus commands us to care for those who are vulnerable as if we were caring for Him (Mt. 25:40). The Fifth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion is "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth." The Episcopal Church has long been on record calling for action to address climate change, and environmental justice, most recently with resolutions in 2006 and 2009. The Episcopal Church, by its mission, is pledged to the protection and care of God's people and God's Creation.

Climate change represents a titanic threat to all life, and especially to the poor. The biblical mandate and our church's teachings could not be clearer that we must respond with faithful, prophetic action. For over two decades, the Episcopal Church and the wider faith community has utilized shareholder and legislative advocacy on climate change, to very little effect.

The scientific consensus is overwhelmingly clear that anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from the burning of fossil fuels have already caused and will continue to cause climate change. Without a swift, concerted, global shift away from the burning of fossil fuels, the effects of climate change will displace and impoverish hundreds of millions of people in the coming century and condemn many species to extinction. In recent years, superstorms and droughts have plagued our planet. We witness an unprecedented melting of Greenland's ice cap, the Arctic ice pack, Antarctic glaciers and ice shelves, and mountain glaciers worldwide. Rising, acidifying seas coupled with more violent storms are threatening communities at sea level worldwide. An estimated 400,000 people a year die from the effects of climate change. A far larger number of people lose their homes, livelihoods, and health from climate-related droughts and storms, the increased spread of infectious disease due to rising temperatures, and related stressors. Climate change is, in profound ways, a matter of justice. Jesus teaches that when we care for the poor, we care for Him (Mt. 25). As the climate crisis worsens, the church must increase the scope of its response.

Climate scientists inform us that if we are to limit global warming to just 2 degrees Celsius above the norm existing prior to the Industrial Revolution—a cap that is still fraught with risks but one that even the most conservative governments in the world have agreed to meet—then we can only emit approximately 565 more gigatons of carbon dioxide. The fossil fuel industry already possesses in its reserves enough carbon to emit approximately 2,795 gigatons of carbon dioxide if burned—five times the amount that could be 'safely' emitted into the atmosphere. At current rates of emission this 'ration' will be used by 2040.

The fossil fuel industry's value and future depend on burning these fuels. This industry has used its financial power to prevent legislation to reduce carbon emissions, spending over \$400,000 per day to lobby the US government alone. It secures unthinkable large government subsidies - \$1.5 billion globally per day, according to the International Energy Agency. In 2013, the industry spent over \$600 billion exploring for new fossil fuel reserves, far beyond the \$244 billion invested globally in renewable energy. This level of spending dwarfs the resources that can be mobilized by advocates for a sustainable future.

Given this reality, four factors require the church to address the issue of eliminating exposure to holdings in fossil fuel companies and reinvesting in clean energy. Two of these are moral factors, and two financial.

First, a growing number of religious and educational institutions are committing to eliminate their fossil fuel holdings, having concluded that it is immoral to profit from an industry whose core business creates climate change and whose financial and political influence has prevented climate change legislation. In the past, under circumstances of grave harm combined with intransigent resistance to change by the offending industry or regime, the church has debated and/or divested from certain industries (tobacco) or from certain companies which support repugnant regimes (apartheid South Africa). Such a time has arrived with the fossil fuel industry. Within the past two years, the United Church of Christ and the Unitarian Universalist Association have both voted to divest. The Presbyterian Church USA is studying divestment. The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, in May 2014, became the first Anglican body in the world to divest from fossil fuels. Union Theological Seminary and the University of Dayton, a Roman Catholic University, voted to divest in June 2014. The Diocese of Massachusetts has adopted a divestment resolution, and study of divestment is underway in our diocese, the Diocese of Oregon, and in hundreds of churches nationwide. The time has arrived for the Episcopal Church to take a leading role in the pre-eminent moral issue of our time.

Second, analyses have shown that eliminating fossil fuel industries from an investment portfolio over the past twenty-five years would have resulted in no reduction in returns. This suggests that concerns about the risk to

church investments posed by divestment may well be overblown.

Third, a growing number of investment professionals are now warning about the inevitability of a "carbon bubble," a term referring to the over-valuation of fossil fuel companies which currently depend on fossil fuel reserves as a substantial part of their market value. In the view of an overwhelming majority of scientists and policymakers, approximately two thirds of these reserves will not be able to be burned if the climate is to remain below two degrees Celsius. This creates the inevitability of the devaluation of these holdings; church investment managers and trustees are duty-bound to respond.

Fourth, the growing number of renewable energy and clean technology investment opportunities (with some of these referred to as "impact investments"), combined with the desperate need of the developing world for clean energy, establishes a moral obligation for the Episcopal Church to seek to utilize its investment resources in a manner that meets its investment objectives while supporting the emergence of clean energy systems in the developing world. According to the Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN): "Impact investments are investments made into companies, organizations, and funds with the intention to generate a measurable, beneficial social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. Impact investments can be made in both emerging and developed markets, and target a range of returns from below-market to above-market rates, depending upon the circumstances."

The time has come to bear our witness in this new, faithful, courageous manner. For the sake of life and of justice, the time has come for the church to eliminate its holdings in fossil fuels and to reinvest in clean energy.

— Sponsored by the Social Justice Commission



New Sign at the Corner

Some of you might have noticed that we have a new sign in front of St. John's Corner. We would like to thank Herb Livie for coordinating everything involved in getting the new sign and to have it in place before the Fall Festival. The sign looks great and makes it easier for people to find St. John's Corner.



Stewardship Ingathering

Have you remembered to send in your 2015 pledge? It is never too late to make a pledge to St. John's. Your pledges help support the mission of our church. If you haven't received a card they can be found at the back of the church.

December Calendar

4	10:30 am	Senior Center Outreach	St. John's Corner
7	10:00 am	Eucharist Service - 2 nd Sunday of Advent	
		Choir practice - after service	St. John's Church
9	2:30 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Volunteers	
			Congregational Church
	3:00 - 6:00 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Distribution	
			Congregational Church
14	10:00 am	Healing & Eucharist Service - 3 rd Sunday of Advent	
		Choir practice - after service	St. John's Church
	12:00 pm	Vestry Meeting	St. John's Corner
21	10:00 am	Eucharist Service	
		Choir practice - after service	St. John's Church
24	4:00 pm	CHRISTMAS EVE - Family Eucharist Service	
	9:30 pm	Musical Prelude	
	10:00 pm	CHRISTMAS EVE - Eucharist Service	
25		CHRISTMAS DAY - <u>NO SERVICE</u>	
28	10:00 am	Service of Lessons and Carols & Eucharist	
Sundays:		Eucharist - 10:00 am	St. John's Church
Mondays:		MotherWoman - 11:00 am	St. John's Corner
		Al Anon - 7:30 pm	St. John's Corner
Tuesdays:		Double Edge Theater Studying - 8:30 am - 10:00 am	
Wednesdays:		Centering Prayer - 5:30 pm	St. John's Corner
		Double Edge Theater Studying - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm	St. John's Corner
Thursdays:		Osteoporosis Class - 9:30 am	St. John's Corner
		Double Edge Theater Studying - 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm	St. John's Corner
Saturdays:		Double Edge Theater Studying - 10:00 am - 2:00 pm	St. John's Corner

Please note that there will only be **1 Food Pantry this month!**
There will be no meetings December 24th & 25th.

A Look Ahead - 2015

<i>January 18</i>	<i>Vestry Meeting</i>	<i>St. John's Corner</i>
<i>February 1</i>	<i>Annual Meeting</i>	<i>St. John's Corner</i>
<i>February 15</i>	<i>Vestry Retreat</i>	
<i>February 17</i>	<i>Pancake Breakfast</i>	<i>St. John's Corner</i>
<i>February 18</i>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i>	



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
 "CELEBRATING GOD'S ABUNDANCE"

DECEMBER

Diocesan Ministries

1. St. Andrew's Church, Longmeadow – The Revs. Derrick Fetz, Francis Howard, Robert Price
2. St. Mary's, Thorndike
3. The Ministry of Altar Guilds
4. The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, Canon to the Ordinary
5. Good Shepherd, West Springfield - The Rev. John DeBonville
6. Church of the Epiphany, Wilbraham - The Rev. William Coyne
7. All Saints', South Hadley - The Rev. Tanya Wallace
8. Christ Church/Trinity Lutheran, Sheffield - The Rev. Anne Ryder
9. For the Mission of the Church
10. St. Paul's, Stockbridge - The Rev. Tom Damrosch
11. For the repose of the soul of The Rt. Rev. Alexander Doig Stewart, V Bishop of Western Massachusetts
12. Trinity, Whitinsville – The Rev. Dr. John Derek Stubbs
13. For the Spiritual Life of our people and churches
14. Clergy Living Beyond the Diocese
15. St. Paul's, Gardner - The Rev. William Hobbs
16. Diocesan Missioner for Legacy Stewardship - E. John

Wider Mission

1. For Regional Ministry Strategy Development in the Diocese
2. Reconciliation Seminars
3. Anti-Racism Advancement
4. Safe Church Programs
5. Archbishop Daniel and Mary Sarfo, Diocese of Kumasi
6. The Alban Institute
7. Episcopal Migration Ministries
8. Episcopal Appalachian Ministries
9. Episcopal Booksellers Assn., Inc.
10. B.E.S.T. (Bishops' Executive Secretaries Together)
11. The Rev. Tanya Wallace, Safe Church Trainer
12. Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Inc.
13. The Prayer Shawl Ministry
14. Episcopal Healing Ministries
15. Episcopal Public Policy Network
16. Church Pension Group

White

17. Church Growth & Revitalization
18. St. Mark's, Leominster – The Rev James Craig
19. The Rev. Pamela Mott, Canon to the Ordinary
20. Church of the Atonement, Westfield - The Revs. Nancy Stroud and John Hooker
21. Diocesan Youth Ministry
22. The Rt. Rev. Andrew Wissemann, VI Bishop of Western Massachusetts
23. Assistant to the Bishop for Stewardship- Bruce Rockwell
24. Church of the Reconciliation, Webster - The Rev. Janice Ford
25. St. Luke's, Worcester - The Rev. Warren Hicks and Rev. Dcn. Jane Griesbach
26. Christ Memorial, North Brookfield, The Rev. Dr. Paula Winsor Sage
27. St. Michael's-on-the-Heights, Worcester
28. Holy Trinity, Southbridge
29. For stewardship in our churches and in our Diocese
30. Non-Parochial Priests & Deacons
17. The Living Church Foundation, Inc.
18. The Episcopal Church Foundation
19. Episcopal Church Missionary Community
20. Episcopal Communicators
21. Episcopal Peace Fellowship
22. Episcopal News Service (ENS)
23. Episcopal Church & Visual Arts
24. Episcopal Church Women (ECW) and United Thank Offering
25. Alter Guild
26. ELCA New England Synod
27. Faith Alive
28. Episcopal Relief & Development: - Ms. Molly Robinson ,Donna Sroka
29. Jubilee Ministries
30. Historical Society of the Episcopal Church



Contact Information

Phone: (413)628-4402

Mailing: PO Box 253

Ashfield, MA 01330

Email:

stjohnsashfield@verizon.net

Church Address: Corner of Main
and South Streets

St. John's Corner Address:
459 Main St.

Church Web Page:

www.stjohnsashfield.org

Secretary: Eleanor Dodson

Vicar: The Reverend Eliot Moss

(413) 253-9242 (home)

(413) 695-4226 (cell)

moss@cs.umass.edu

Assisting Vicar:

The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Walters

jwalters@smith.edu

Organist: Marilyn Berthelette

(413) 774-6748

myberthelette@gmail.com

Senior Warden: Sue Craft

(413) 628-0289 (home)

Parish Nurse: Jane Wagener

(413) 625-2111 (home)



St. John's Episcopal Church

P. O. Box 253

Ashfield, MA 01330-0253

Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.

- C. T. Studd (1890-1931)