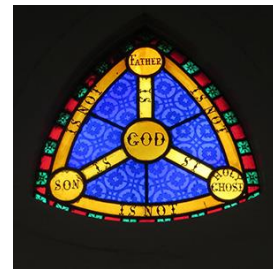




St. John's Episcopal Church

Ashfield, Massachusetts
Corner of Main and South Streets



January 2015

ANNUAL MEETING!

Lead Me, Guide Me

Do you have a new idea that you would like to see St. John's address? Is there a ministry you think we should add or change? Come on February 1st to share your ideas, visions, goals and concerns for the new year with the rest of the congregation. The more parishioners who are active in our parish life the better we can serve our church, our community, our country and our world.

Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain

Christmas has just passed; soon we should starting preparing for Easter! Choir rehearsals for the Easter service will be held during Lent, which starts on February 18th.

Rehearsals will probably start around the beginning of March. Everyone is welcome to come share their joy in the risen Lord.



celtic prayer for the new year

*Lord, You who live outside of time,
and reside in the imperishable moment,
we ask Your blessing this New Year's Day
upon Your gift to us of time*

*Bless our clocks and watches,
You who kindly direct us to observe the
passing of minutes and hours.
May they make us aware of the miracle
of each second of life we experience.*

*May these, our ticking servants
help us not to miss that which is important,
while You keep us from machine-like routine.
May we ever be free from being clock watchers
and instead become who journey through time.*

*Bless our calendars,
these ordered lists of days, weeks and
months, of holidays, holydays, fasts and feasts-
all our special days of remembering.*

*May these servants, our calendars,
once reserved for the royal few,
for magi and pyramid priests,
now grace our homes and our lives.*

*May they remind us of birthdays
and other gift-days, as they teach
us the secret that **all life**
is meant for celebration and contemplation.*

*Bless, Lord, this new year,
each of its 365 days and nights.
Bless us with new moons and full moons.
Bless us with happy seasons and a long life.*

*Grant to us, Lord, the new year's gift of a year of
love. Amen.*

<http://www.patmosabbey.org/a-celtic-new-year-blessing-and-prayer.html>

李添嫺

On January 25, 1944 Florence Li Tim-Oi (May 5, 1907 - February 26, 1992) of Hong Kong became the first woman in the Anglican Communion to be ordained as a priest. On Ascension Day in 1941, after attending 4 years of theological study at the theological college in Canton, she was ordained as a Deacon and served in Macau. In 1944, 30 years before any other woman, the Rev. Ronald Hall, the Bishop of Victoria, decided to ordain Tim-Oi as a priest in response to a shortage of clergy during Japanese invasion of China.



Her ordination caused a great deal of controversy in the Anglican Communion, causing her to resign her license for priesthood at the end of World War II, although not her Holy Orders, until female priests were officially recognized by the Anglican Communion. In 1947 Bishop Hall appointed her rector of St. Barnabas Church, Hepii, China; he instructed that she be continued to be called "priest."

In 1958 the Chinese Cultural Revolution closed all the churches, which weren't reopened until 1979, and Li Tim-Oi was accused of being a counter revolutionary and forced to undergo political re-education. She was then assigned to work first at a farm and then at a factory. Li Tim-Oi was allowed to retire from the factory work in 1974. She was allowed to visit family in Canada in 1981.

After the Anglican Communion supported the ordination of women, Florence was awarded Doctorates of Divinity by the General Theological Seminary in New York and Trinity College in Toronto. In Canada, Florence was first licensed as a priest in the Diocese of Montreal then in the Diocese of Toronto, where she was appointed as an assistant priest. She died on February 26, 1992 in Toronto at the age of 84.

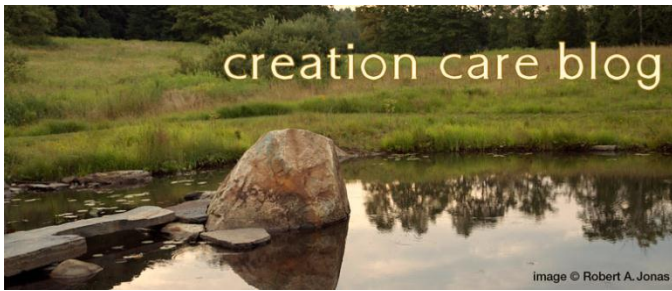
Florence Li Tim-Oi is commemorated at many places throughout the Anglican Communion. In St. George's Episcopal Church, Dayton, Ohio Li Tim-Oi is one of two 'saints' from the 20th century honored with a stain glass window. The window [right] represents how she kept the faith during the Cultural Revolution in China. On the 50th anniversary of her ordination in 1994 the Li Tim-Oi Foundation (which helps women who feel called to religious vocations) at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church, London was started by Archbishop Donald Coggan, he also dedicated a Prayer Board in her memory. At the General Convention in 2003 the Episcopal Church in the USA decided to honor Florence Li Tim-Oi by observing the anniversary of her priesting on January 25th in the book of Lesser Feasts and Fasts.



Gracious God, we thank you for calling Florence Li Tim-Oi, much-beloved daughter, to be the first woman to exercise the office of a priest in our Communion; By the grace of your Spirit inspire us to follow her example, serving your people with patience and happiness all our days, and witnessing in every circumstance to our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the same Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

This commemoration found in Lesser Feasts and Fasts, 2009





creation care blog

Image © Robert A. Jonas

-as posted by Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
December 15, 2015

There are countless reasons to lament and lose heart. Scan the headlines and take your pick: racism and torture; hunger and sickness; poverty and war; a web of life that is unraveling. I know a woman who heard one piece of bad news too many, and found herself walking around her house, howling.

I give thanks for her wails, for her willingness to be pierced by the suffering of the world and to let herself lament. It takes courage to lament. I dispute the injunction attributed to labor organizer Joe Hill, who reportedly said, "Don't mourn, organize." I advocate for both: let's mourn *and* organize. It seems to me that allowing ourselves to mourn is a good way to keep our hearts supple and soft, and a good way to resist the pressure to go numb. Shedding tears is a way to water the soul. And mourning can be an act of resistance too, a way of shaking off the dominant consumer culture, which prefers that we stay too busy, distracted, and anesthetized to feel a thing.

From within our grief, a Spirit is moving among us, inviting us to dream big dreams and imagine new possibilities. Especially in this Advent season, Christians look ahead with hope for Christ to be born afresh within us and among us. What can you do – what can I do – what can we do together – to help this birth take place and to heal a hurting world? How is the Spirit inviting us to join the movement for justice and renewal that is already in our midst, sprouting like tender, new leaves on a tree?

Here comes a list of four sightings of the Spirit by just one person in just one week – and an invitation for you to take part.

1 - In the hills of Western Massachusetts, a small group of people gathers outdoors on a December night. Under a dark sky, we light candles. Surrounded by quiet, we sing. We are only a



Candlelight Vigil at Congregational Church in Ashfield, MA

handful of intrepid souls as we stamp our feet and blow on our fingers to keep warm in the cold night air. But inwardly we are warmed by the knowledge that people all around the world tonight are doing just what we are doing: praying for the climate talks in Lima, Peru.

Our Light for Lima vigil on December 7 was one of scores of vigils that were carried out in more than 15 countries on four continents. For two weeks, world leaders met in Peru to lay the groundwork for the climate treaty that will be finalized in Paris in 2015. Coordinated by OurVoices.net, a multi-faith, global climate campaign, the global vigils responded to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's call to kindle "a light for Lima." Religious leaders and organizations were vocal at the Lima climate talks. Pope Francis directed a radio address to the President of the conference, calling climate change a serious ethical and moral responsibility. And Anglican bishops prayed and fasted for the climate.

Please commit to **pray for the success of the U.N. climate talks** as we approach the decisive Paris climate negotiations in December 2015. As it stands right now, the deal that negotiators worked out in Lima is not sufficient to prevent the atmosphere from warming more than 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit over the pre-industrial average, the point beyond which the world would tip into perilous, irreversible effects. In the months ahead we will need the sustained, urgent, openhearted, and full-bodied prayers and political pressure of millions of people.

To add your name as a person who will pray, please sign up with OurVoices.net.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me... [God] has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted...[and] to comfort all who mourn. (Isaiah 61:1-2)

2 - Leaning forward in a circle of chairs and listening intently, seven Christian leaders from across New England meet in a Framingham retreat house to pray, dream, and strategize. How can the larger group to which we belong, [New England Regional Environmental Ministries](http://NewEnglandRegionalEnvironmentalMinistries.org) (NEREM) become a catalyst for societal change and a transformed church? How can we inspire a spiritual awakening in the face of climate change?

We ponder the fact that hearing a trusted pastor preach about climate change is often what moves churchgoers to accept that climate change is real and to take action to slow it. Yet many parishioners have never heard anyone preach about climate change. In my travels from church to church, I often meet with groups of parishioners and I often ask who has heard a sermon about climate change. In most such gatherings, not a single hand goes up.

I won't disclose what NEREM envisions for next year, but now is the time to start preaching and hearing good sermons about climate change. One way for clergy to begin is to sign up to **join the National Preach-in on Global Warming**, sponsored by Interfaith Power & Light, which will be held on the weekend of Valentine's Day, **February 13-15, 2015**. The Website is full of

resources, with sermon ideas, prayers, discussion and activity ideas. Or pick another date. The date doesn't matter. What matters is conveying the urgency of the hour.

"...to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit." (Isaiah 61:3)

3 - On a Wednesday night in the city of Springfield, Massachusetts, a diverse group of concerned citizens – Hispanic and white, wealthy and low-income – meets to strategize how best to implement and fund a climate action plan for the city. The leaders of this effort – Arise for Social Justice, the North End Organizing Network and Climate Action NOW – have organized the Springfield Climate Justice Coalition.

Back in October we held a march through the city's streets, gathered 200 people for a rally on the steps of City Hall, and rejoiced when the City Council unanimously passed a resolution to adopt a Climate Justice Plan for the city and to establish a staff position to carry it out. Now comes the hard work of building a grassroots base to ensure that the mayor, Dominic J. Sarno, implements the resolution. Over pizza and oranges we exchange ideas, jot notes on newsprint, and start to divvy up tasks.

At the end of tonight's meeting, I invite everyone to stand up and take each other's hands. I feel awkward. This coalition seems so fragile and new. Can we, should we, pray together? I look around the circle of friends and strangers, take a breath, and speak briefly about the traditional Christian virtues of faith, hope and love. In fighting for this city, we express our faith that we can imagine a better future; we share our hope that we can build that future together; and we manifest the love that gives us strength. I ask God's blessing on our work, and pray that our work will be a blessing for the city.

If you would like to join the Springfield Climate Justice Coalition, please contact Michaelann Bewsee (michaelannb (at) gmail.com) of Arise for Social Justice, or Susan Theberge (susanthberge (at) comcast.net) of Climate Action Now.

"They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations." (Isaiah 61:4)

4 - Beside a busy intersection in downtown Northampton nearly a hundred people gather on Saturday for an emergency protest rally to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.

A creative spirit is at play among us: the rally features a tuba and an enormous black plastic pipeline, placards full of pointed messages ("There is No Planet B"), and opportunities for singing, chanting, and

banging pots and pans to make noise. We mark four-and-a-half minutes in silence, too, remembering that the body of Michael Brown, a black teenager, apparently lay on the ground for four and a half hours after he was shot by a white policeman in Ferguson, Missouri. The movement for climate justice is intimately linked to the quest for social and racial justice.



Pipeline protest in Northampton

The climate rally's most combative moments are provided by a loud-mouthed, fat-cat banker who wears a top hat and a suit festooned with fake money. She strides up and down the sidewalk, carrying a mini-pipeline on her shoulder, from which dangles a cloth doll, several small stuffed animals, and the placard "R.I.P." She launches into a rousing debate with a 7-foot-tall polar bear. Is the Keystone XL pipeline safe? Will it make us energy independent? Will it create lots of jobs? Will it protect the climate?

Despite the sneers of Mr. Money-Bags, the patient arguments of the polar bear win the day. The proposed Keystone XL pipeline, which would run from Alberta, Canada to the Gulf Coast, would carry toxic tar sands that would then be shipped for export overseas. The pipeline would allow the most polluting oil on earth to reach world markets. Mining this oil is already destroying the land, water, and health of the people and wildlife of Alberta. The new pipeline creates a risk of spills – the first Keystone pipeline spilled 14 times in its first year of operation. Experts estimate that the pipeline would provide only 50 permanent jobs. And according to NASA scientist James Hansen the pipeline would propel us into a catastrophic level of climate disruption.



Pipeline protest in Northampton

Thousands of citizens across the country have signed the **Keystone XL Pledge of**

Resistance. Please consider

adding your name and pledging to join in non-violent direct action to stop the pipeline.

If you wish **to participate in and to receive updates about events in western Massachusetts** tied to the national Pledge of Resistance campaign – including a training meeting on January 3 – **please email Dave Roitman** (droitman1(at)verizon.net). We expect to carry out an act of non-violent civil disobedience sometime between mid-January and March. It will be timed so that it happens on the same


day that 97,000 other people take action, as part of the national Keystone XL Pledge of Resistance. A short fact sheet about the pipeline by Friends of the Earth can be downloaded.

“For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.” (Isaiah 61:11)

In the face of the confusion, brutality, and violence of the world, we grieve and mourn. And we also mobilize, strategize, and organize. In our longing for a just and peaceful world, we trust that we share in God’s longing to bring forth “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 1:1). As Brian Swimme writes in his “Canticle of the Cosmos”:

*The longing that gave birth to the stars
The longing that gave birth to life
Who knows what this longing can give birth to now?*

Serving Schedule

Date	Sunday	Celebrant	Preacher	Lector	Altar Guild	Coffee Hour
January 4	1 st Sun. after Christmas	Jennifer Walters	Jennifer Walters	Hetty Startup	Bambi Phillips	Jane Wagener
January 11	Epiphany 	Jennifer Walters	Jennifer Walters	Kristen Wickline	Bambi Phillips	David Bruffee
January 18	2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	David Bruffee	Bambi Phillips	Herb Libby
January 25	3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Mary Snow	Bambi Phillips	Susan Todd
February 1	4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Jim Wagener	Jane Wagener	ANNUAL MEETING
February 8	5 th Sunday after Epiphany	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Susan Todd	Jane Wagener	Addison Hall
February 15	6 th Sunday after Epiphany	Eliot Moss	Eliot Moss	Arianna Burch	Jane Wagener	Burch-Monds
February 18	Ash Wednesday 			Mariel Kinsey	Jane Wagener	-----
February 22	1 st Sunday in Lent			Lynnette Sievert	Jane Wagener	Lynnette Sievert





Thomas Merton

By Bishop Douglas Fisher

as posted in "The Bishop's Blog" on December 10, 2014

Thomas Merton, monk, contemplative, writer, prophet of social justice. In another one of these video reflections I told you he is on my personal Mount Rushmore. This pectoral cross, given to me two years ago at my consecration, is modeled on a cross Merton drew in one of his notebooks.

In the Episcopal Church we honor Thomas Merton on December 10, the day he died while visiting Buddhist monks in Thailand. It was 27 years to the day that he entered the Trappist Monastery in Gethsemane, Kentucky. In those 27 years Merton wrote over seventy books, and even more essays and reviews. But Merton knew he could never exhaust the Mystery that is God because as he said "with God we are necessarily in over our head."

Merton's earliest books were filled with intense introspection. But that introspection broadened out to look at the world around us. Merton's life of prayer led him to passionate involvement in the civil rights movement, the protest of the Vietnam War and calling for an end to the insanity of the nuclear arms race. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was scheduled to make a retreat with Merton after his trip to Memphis – where he was assassinated on April 4, 1968.

Out of all those thousands of published pages, ranging in topics from the issues of the day to the insights that Zen has for Christians, there is one paragraph that I hear quoted over and over again in sermons and retreat talks. It seems to be a favorite prayer of so many:

"My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself. And the fact that I think I am following Your will, does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please You does in fact please You. And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, You will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will

trust You always, though I may be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for You are ever with me, And You will never leave me to face my struggles alone. Amen."

Why is that quote so popular? Because we all struggle sometimes. We have all said at some time, "I have no idea where I am going." But Merton does not merely describe human experience, he places it in a greater reality. With the God who is "ever with me." Merton took to heart the insights of Theresa of Avila who said the summit of life is to "find God in ourselves and ourselves in God." Our struggles are not apart from God. They are in God.

That prayer has been important to me often. But it is not my favorite Merton quote. It won't surprise you who know me as the bishop who is walking the diocese, inviting us to take our faith to the street, that my favorite Merton writing is his description of a mystical vision that overtakes him, not in the monastery (*continued on next page*) chapel, but on a street corner on March 19, 1958. "In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness. The illusion that by taking monastic vows we became a different species of being, 'pseudo angels'.

"I have the immense joy of being a man, a member of the race in which God became incarnate. Then it was as if I suddenly saw the beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts where neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach. The core of their reality, the person each one is in God's eyes. If only they could see themselves as they really are. If only we could see each other that way all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed."

The key spiritual moment in the complex and multi-faceted life of Thomas Merton happened on the corner of Fourth and Walnut. May we all have such an experience and find our God who already lives in us.

Let's end with the prayer the Church gives us for this day. "Gracious God, you called your monk Thomas Merton to proclaim your justice out of silence. Keep us, like him, steadfast in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever. Amen."

+Doug

Prayer for Epiphany

Father God, the star that led the Magi to the stable announced to the world that its Saviour was born. Today we live in a world that is still covered by darkness, and still needing to make that journey to the stable door. May our lives reflect your light day by day, as we seek to serve where you have placed us. That we might be the means through which others can encounter Jesus Christ. Amen

January Calendar

8	10:30 am	Senior Center Outreach	St. John's Corner
4	10:00 am	Eucharist Service - 2 nd Sunday after Christmas	
6	2:30 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Volunteers	
			Congregational Church
	3:00 - 6:00 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Distribution	
			Congregational Church
11	10:00 am	EPIPHANY Healing & Eucharist Service	
18	10:00 am	Eucharist Service - 2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	
	12:00 pm	Vestry Meeting	St. John's Corner
20	2:30 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Volunteers	
			Congregational Church
	3:00 - 6:00 pm	Hilltown Churches Food Pantry - Distribution	
			Congregational Church
25	10:00 am	Eucharist Service - 3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	
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	
		Ashfield Community Playgroup - 9:30 am	St. John's Corner
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

Another Year is Dawning

-Frances Ridley Havergal, 1874

Another year is dawning:
Dear Father let it be,
In working or in waiting,
another year with thee.
Another year of progress,
another year of praise,
Another year of proving
Thy presence all the days.

Another year of mercies,
of faithfulness and grace;
Another year of gladness
in the shining of thy face;
Another year of leaning
upon Thy loving breast;
Another year of trusting,
of quiet, happy rest

Another year of service,
of witness for Thy love.
Another year of training
for holier work above.
Another year is dawning:
Dear Father, let it be,
On earth or else in heaven,
another year for Thee

Another Year is Dawning was a popular hymn in most churches in the late 19th century. Frances wrote this poem at the end of 1873 and had it printed on greeting cards for friends. She considered every New Year's Day an opportunity for rededication to Christ. Many of her New Year's poems have been used for hymns.

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

Parish Nurse: Jane Wagener
(413) 625-2111 (home)

Vicar: The Reverend Eliot Moss
(413) 253-9242 (home)
(413) 695-4226 (cell)
moss@cs.umass.edu

Assisting Vicar:
The Rev. Dr. Jennifer Walters
(413)527-0652 (home)
(413)585-2797 (cell)
jwalters@smith.edu

Organist: Marilyn Berthelette
(413) 774-6748
myberthelette@gmail.com

Senior Warden: Sue Craft
(413) 628-0289 (home)



Epiphany



St. John's Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 253
Ashfield, MA 01330-0253

Everyone longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is let people know that they are loved and capable of loving.
-Fred Rogers, *You Are Special; Neighborly Wit and Wisdom from Mister Rogers*