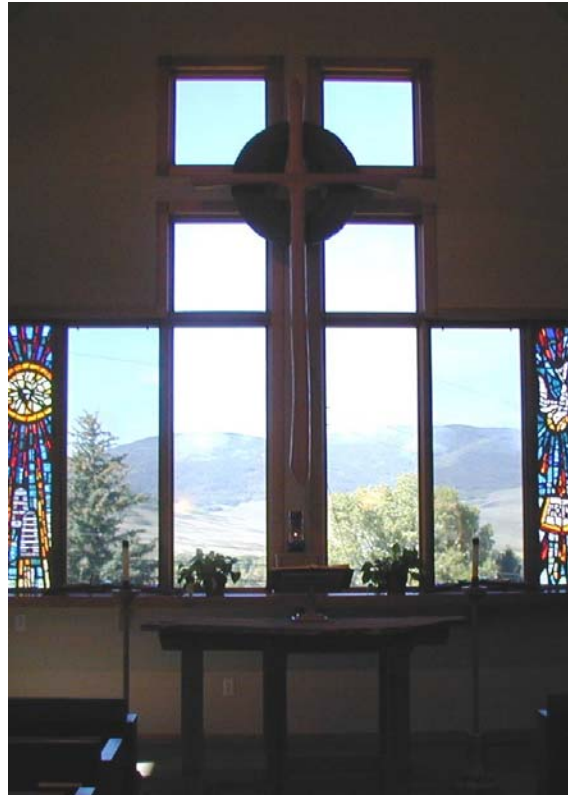


# A Voice in the Wilderness

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



## FEBRUARY 2009

Brrrr! Where's global warming when you really need it? We have had a lot of cold weather lately, but every cold, windy, and damp day brings us closer to spring. In the meantime, we hardy souls at St. John's stay as active as we can, if only for warmth. And you can stay active by attending as many of the following February events as possible!

Sunday the **8<sup>th</sup>** please join us after service for an outreach committee potluck and fundraiser for our own Cyndi Karnoscak's mission work in Europe.

Tuesday the **24<sup>th</sup>** we hold our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper from 5PM to 7PM in the Parish Hall. Invite—or bring—your friends to this fundraiser for those in need here in Grand County.

Wednesday the **25<sup>th</sup>** we observe Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent with a service at 6PM.

Friday the **27<sup>th</sup>**, the first Friday of Lent is an opportunity to walk the Stations of the Cross at noon at St. John's.

Saturday the **28<sup>th</sup>** is our annual mid-winter potluck dinner and movie night from 6PM at the home of Ken and Joan Von der Heiden. And see inside for details on a special "quilting" program being offered during the day, at a time to be announced.

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## A Word from the Rector

The month of January is named for the Roman god Janus, who for some reason had two heads facing in different directions. The month of January was named for him because, even then, it seemed like the new year was a good time both for looking back over the previous year and for looking ahead to the new one.

Perhaps we should call our annual meeting the “Janus” meeting, for what we do at this meeting is to review and report on the previous year and to take the necessary steps to initiate the new one. And that’s what we did on Sunday, January 25. We looked back on a very successful year that included significant upgrades to the building and furnishings at Cranmer Chapel, the initiation of important new ministries, the addition of an active and talented new deacon, and dramatic growth in membership. That is a lot to be grateful for.

But there was more. We added music to the services at the chapel, and we also added guitar and mandolin accompaniment to the music program at St. John’s. We had a wonderful Lenten program on the environment that featured several expert guest teachers. We established new ministry teams under (mostly) lay leadership, including “the green team,” (Brad Orr), centering prayer team (Sharry Erzinger), off-site worship team (Cyndi Karnoscak), and school volunteer team (Deacon Diane). The outreach program has been re-vitalized under Deacon Diane. We have made many boring improvements to administration and to our financial reporting. We came into compliance with diocesan requirements for our children’s program. We have a new and much needed sexton for Cranmer Chapel. (Thank you, Jim Magill!) We instituted a very well received July 4<sup>th</sup> “Celebration of God and Country.” We offered a women’s retreat under Deacon Diane’s leadership. We had our first “sock hop” and a very successful series of movie nights. We got our website up and running.

We have made these additions and improvements while maintaining our usual ongoing activities reflecting our core values: regular giving and giving for special needs (caring for others); children’s Sunday School and pastoral care (nurturing our own); regular services (worshiping with quality); teaching programs (inquiring into meaning and truth); and fellowship opportunities (celebrating all of life).

Perhaps one of the best things about annual meetings is that it reminds us of what a dynamic and active parish we enjoy here at St. John’s. Looking back at this year was very gratifying. The “appreciation” portion of the meeting seemed to go on forever, and that reminded us of all the many contributions made to our life together by so many people.

Looking forward, however, was a bit harder. We had a shortfall in financial pledging for the coming year, and so for the first time in four years we were not able to present a balanced budget. Despite vestry’s making as many cuts as it could bring itself to make, we are looking at a deficit of about \$9,000 for the upcoming year.

Fortunately, we are looking at another year with very strong lay leadership. Fr. Spencer announced the appointment of Kathe Morck as Senior Warden, and the meeting elected by acclamation Stu Findley as Junior Warden, Eric Mowrey as Treasurer, Walter McLaughlin as Clerk of vestry, and Beth Collins and Dan Zacek-Smith as new members of vestry. It is a team with a lot of talent, as well a blend of experienced hands and newer members. Your new vestry will meet for the annual vestry retreat over February 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> to organize and to plan for the upcoming year.

Considering the national economic troubles and the difficulties they may pose for us, we have the financial wherewithal, the personal commitment, and—spiritually—the faithfulness to come through. I am willing to predict that at this time next year, we will be able to look back with satisfaction on another productive year. Wanna bet?

God bless each and every one of you for all that you do for God and for neighbor at St. John's.

Fr. Spencer+

# Notes about Ministries

## Safe at home---or church!

At our recent workshop, *Safeguarding God's Children*, we decided that the diocesan guidelines for expressing affection to children should be more widely promulgated. We reproduce those guidelines here, and a copy is posted on the bulletin board outside the kitchen. Copies are available in the church office. Any questions about these guidelines may be addressed to Fr. Spencer.

### **Guidelines for Appropriate Affection in Ministry with Children or Youth**

The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all Church Workers working around or with children or youth.

1. Love and affection are part of church life and ministry. There are many ways to demonstrate affection while maintaining positive and safe boundaries with children and youth. Some **positive** and **appropriate** forms of affection are listed below:

- Brief hugs.
- Pats on the shoulder or back.
- Handshakes.
- “High-fives” and hand slapping.
- Verbal praise.
- Touching hands, faces, shoulders and arms of children or youth.
- Arms around shoulders.
- Holding hands while walking with small children.
- Sitting beside small children.
- Kneeling or bending down for hugs with small children.
- Holding hands during prayer.
- Pats on the head when culturally appropriate. (For example, this gesture should typically be avoided in some Asian communities).

2. The following forms of affection are considered **inappropriate** with children and youth in ministry setting because many of them are the behaviors that child molesters use to groom children or youth and their parents for later molestation or can be, in and of themselves, sexual abuse.

- Inappropriate or lengthy embraces.
- Kisses on the mouth.
- Holding children over three years old on the lap.
- Touching bottoms, chests or genital areas other than for appropriate diapering or toileting of infants and toddlers.
- Showing affection in isolated areas such as bedrooms, closets, staff only areas or other private rooms.
- Occupying a bed with a child or youth
- Touching knees or legs of children or youth.
- Wrestling with children or youth.
- Tickling children or youth.
- Piggyback rides.
- Any type of massage given by a child or youth to an adult.
- Any type of massage given by an adult to a child or youth.
- Any form of unwanted affection.
- Comments or compliments (spoken, written, or electronic) that relate to physique or body development. Examples would be, “You sure are developing,” or “You look really hot in those jeans.”
- Snapping bras or giving wedgies or similar touch of underwear

whether or not it is covered by other clothing.

- Giving gifts or money to individual children or youth.
- Private meals with individual children or youth.

To Europe With Love--In March Cyndi Karnoscak will be returning to Europe to continue her work with CrossLink Ministries. There will be a brunch potluck fundraiser for her at St. John's on Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> after the service. Consider bringing one of your favorite brunch foods to share as we gather to break bread with our church family, spend time with Cyndi, and learn more about her ministry with CrossLink!

The Underground Railroad Quilt---February is Black History Month and we are making plans to welcome a visit by Yvette Matthews, a member of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Parker. Years ago Yvette was bitten by the Quilt Bug and is a member of "Prayers and Squares", a ministry of making quilts for people with chronic illness. In her spare time she sewed the Underground Railroad Quilt which is displayed in the parish hall at St. Matthew's. Both Yvette and her quilt are tentatively scheduled to be at St. John's sometime on Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, so please mark your calendar and wait for a future announcement.

You say you like Rite I?---One of the bigger decisions our worship committee has had to make each Lent is whether to stay with Rite II or to switch to Rite I. This year we have decided to switch the decision back to the worshiper. For the Sundays of Lent (not counting Palm Sunday), we will offer two services. We will offer a Rite I service at 7:45, a full service with Eucharist but without music, as well as the regular service using Rite II at 9AM. We'll find out just how committed to Rite I some folks are!

A Big Thank You! – The Harry Lietzke Family would like to express their appreciation & gratitude for the St. John's congregation's support of the FVE student holiday fundraiser

## Sermon of the Month

Sermon preached Sunday, January 25

Repent! Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand! If I were more of a ham, I could really have fun with this. I could take Bible in hand, pound it with a fist, and positively scream it out. Repent!!!! Repent!!!!

I am going to ask you to do a little honest introspection now. When you hear those words, how do you respond? Do these words resonate with you even a little? Do you welcome these words, and try to respond positively? Or do you resist? Perhaps you even find them offensive. Who is this guy—who is anybody, for that matter—to tell me that I need to repent? I am not such a bad person. Or, perhaps, I used to be a real sinner, but I have already repented. So this message is not for me. I suspect that for most of us, when we are told to repent, we respond in a negative, perhaps defensive way.

Now, please note your reaction and put it to one side for a moment. We'll get back to it, but I want to look at something else for a minute. Many of us, probably most of us, know individuals who have struggled with alcohol abuse. And most of those individuals struggling with alcohol have been told, likely over and over, by friends, family, even preachers, to give up alcohol. Repent, change your ways, and stop drinking. And what is the likely reaction of someone to being told that they should stop or cut way back on their drinking? Typically, in my experience, the response is denial and

defensiveness. "I am not an alcoholic; I am fine; I don't need to cut back on my drinking."

In my reading about problem drinking, I came across a book by a philosopher, entitled *Heavy Drinking*. The author of this book argues that the biggest problem in trying to get problem drinkers to stop is the very concept of alcoholism and the image of the alcoholic. For what is the image of the alcoholic, one who is ill with alcoholism? For my father, it was the image of the bum sitting on the curb with a bottle of cheap wine in a paper sack. For others it is of the person, perhaps drawn from real life or perhaps from a movie, who makes a terrific scene and embarrasses everyone at a party, or who becomes violent. Or it is a scene in "Lost Weekend" when Ray Milland goes on a bender and loses several days from his life. Or, and this is a big one, it is the image of the person who through drinking too much loses job and family and may even come to live on the street. This is the popular image of someone suffering from alcoholism, of the alcoholic.

And think of what this means. With this image in mind, most people who drink too much find it easy to deny their problem. I don't have a problem. I don't fit this image. I don't become violent when I drink; I get up every morning and go to work. I still function OK. What's the problem?

The problem is that the image of the alcoholic as a fully dysfunctional person blocks people from seeing that their heavy drinking is a problem, that they

lead lives that are less than they could be if they were sober. It blocks people from seeing that just because they are not in the gutter, it doesn't mean that their drinking isn't causing problems and shouldn't be dealt with. For most people who drink more than just occasionally and socially, the term 'alcoholic' should just be put away. The issue should be addressed not in terms of whether one is or is not alcoholic; it is a matter of whether the amount of drinking one is doing getting in the way of living life in a healthy and full way, whether it makes one less productive, less loving, less of service to those around us. .

And now think back to how it is we respond when we are urged to repent. Are you one of those who reacts defensively, denying the need for repentance? If so, then you—then we—are perhaps a lot more like the defensive heavy drinker than we might like to think. For what is our image of the sinner who needs to repent? We likely have the image of a person who leads a mean or dissolute life a nasty person who uses and abuses others, and likely a lot more. And we don't fit that image. That's not us, so we resist or we deny the need for repentance.

But once again the question is not whether we are leading lives that are dissolute or whether we are terrible people. Of course we are not, anymore than the typical heavy drinker is sitting in the gutter or has lost job and family. The question is not whether we are terrible people, or whether our lives are less than they could be if we were to lay our sins before God, repent of them, and

seek to live lives more holy than we now do.

And if the question is whether we could live lives more holy than we do, then the answer is perfectly clear. Of course, for any of us who have not obtained the level of sainthood, our lives can be more holy, lived more closely to God, lived more in obedience to God's will that we love him and our neighbor more fully.

And this means that repentance, properly understood, is not a once and for all decision—made perhaps at a revival meeting. It is not that we repent once and are wholly God's after that.

Repentance is better seen as a way of living; we live in a state of continuous repentance, in an attitude of repentance. We recognize that we live in a spiritually imperfect state; we accept that we need to repent of our failures, and we move ahead to live ever more fulfilled lives.

I invite you into this state of repentance; not to beat yourself up; not to pretend that you are a worse person than you are; but to accept that we remain on a journey that involves continually rejecting whatever sins there are that tempt us; and to accept that the Christian journey involves us in a continual process of holiness and growing into God.

So—Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!

# Updates from the Church Family

## Family updates

### God has fun when we have fun!

For two years now we have formed “activity groups,” groups of three or four families, couples, or individuals, who commit to meet three times during the year for various “fun” activities. Other churches call them “dinner groups,” but we leave open that some groups may prefer other activities. This year we have five groups, as listed below. It is the responsibility of the first listed in each group to initiate the first gathering. We have held the groups to three (mostly) in order to make it easier for groups to invite some who have not signed up to join them. We hope many of you will take advantage of this to include newcomers or simply people you would like to come to know better. Enjoy!

Group A	Group H	Group C	Group CA	Group M
Ackley	Hicks	Clark	Carr/Allen	McLaughlin
Magill/Collins	Papa/VonderHeiden	Zacek-Smith	Wilson	McFee
Mowrey	Wheeler	Orr	Holley	Harper
			Erzinger	

### An update on our South African friend

Many of you know Mandisa Ngobese, a young South African man who came here to work on the hill during ski season and who has worshiped several times with us over the last couple of months. He has also played piano during coffee hours as well as his accordion for one of our services. Because of an error in his paperwork, not of his doing, his visa was revoked. When he turned himself in so that he could return home, he was interned by the INS and deportation proceedings were initiated. Despite the fact that there is nothing that he wants more than to go home, he is being interned at an Aurora facility. He has been detained—i.e. jailed—for three weeks, and his deportation officer predicts that it will be two more weeks before they will be able to send him home. All of us close to the situation are outraged at his treatment, and several parishioners have been visiting him so that he continues to receive support. Please keep Mandisa in your prayers, and if you would like to visit him, please contact Terry McFee.

### Bag it!

The Green Team has designed and purchased carry bags, appropriate for groceries as well as many other uses, with the Episcopal shield and St. John’s name on it. They are available for \$5. This is a good way both to be green and to get St. John’s name out in the community. Check out the sample attached to the bulletin board and then place your order with Brad Orr.

### Through the woods we go . . .

Another activity sponsored by the Green Team was the first ever St. John’s snow shoe trek in Rocky Mountain National Park under the guidance of park personnel. About 14 of us took part and really enjoyed the beautiful weather, grand scenery, and educational presentations by the park people. Thanks to Gene Ackley for arranging this.

## February 2009

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST					5:30 PM VESTRY RETREAT @ FR. SPENCER'S	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 8:30 AM VESTRY RETREAT @ FR. SPENCER'S * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST * 10:30 AM POTLUCK MISSION FUNDRAISER				2 PM BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST			7 PM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT MEETING	2 PM BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST		5PM — 7PM SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER	6 PM ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE	2 PM BIBLE STUDY	8AM WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING * NOON STATIONS OF THE CROSS	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL * 6PM MUSIC NIGHT @ THE VON DER HEIDEN'S