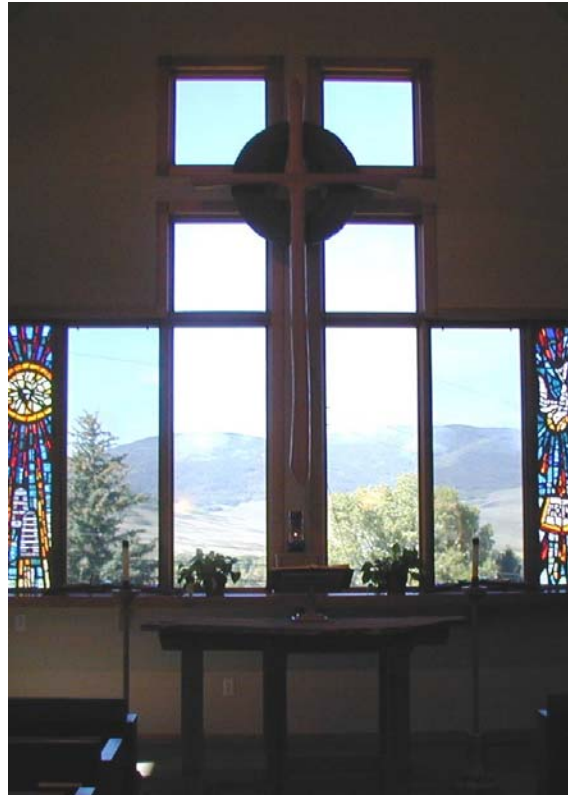


# A Voice in the Wilderness

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



## NOVEMBER 2009

We see November in on the heels of a big late October snow storm (so soon?). The cold and snow serve to remind us of the needs of others as our country struggles to emerge from recession. And the needs of others are in the fore front of our thoughts for November, as we look forward to our annual giving campaign (a.k.a. stewardship pledge drive) and also to the first of this winter's Cranmer dinners.

Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> is All Saints' Day, and we remember those who have died with a reading of their names.

Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> sees the kick off our annual giving to St. John's campaign with an after service presentation and Q and A session on St. John's' finances and budget outlook. In-gathering of pledges is on Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

This season's Cranmer Dinners open with a good old fashioned Thanksgiving Dinner on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday the 26<sup>th</sup>. Dinner is served from 5-7PM

Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> is Advent 1, opening the holiday season.

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## A Word from the Rector

Dear Friends,

We are coming up on everybody's favorite season—our annual giving campaign when we come together to pledge our financial support to St. John's for the next year. I have consulted with vestry about this year's program, and I have gotten a lot of good advice, such as: to keep it short (surprise!), to make any in-home canvassing optional ("opt-in"), and to emphasize information and proportional giving.

So our campaign will consist of just two weeks of sermons, information sharing, and mailings and an in-gathering Sunday. And there will be no in-home visiting unless a visit is requested. If you would like a visit either from clergy or from a vestry member to discuss stewardship or any other aspect of our life together, please contact Kathe Morck, Senior Warden.

As for information, on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> we will offer an informational meeting after the service. People occasionally ask me about St. John's budget and also about how the money we give to the diocese and our region is spent. At this meeting we will look at all three of these levels—diocese, region, St. John's—to see where our contributions go. We will take an overview of St. John's finances. We will also look at historical patterns of giving, as well as the kind of support we need in order to balance our budget at current levels of spending. Being a faithful, generous, and intelligent giver requires information, and I hope that we have a good turn-out for this meeting.

Finally, we will discuss proportional giving, as we have in previous years. To give proportionally simply means that one knows not just how much one gives, but also what proportion of one's disposable income one is giving. This makes us aware of whether the level of giving accurately reflects one's commitment to St. John's, as compared to the per cent of income one devotes to other goods or activities. It all gives us the information we need to move intelligently toward the ideal of the tithe. Your vestry has unanimously committed to proportional giving. Each vestry member pledges to give not just a particular amount, but to giving an appropriate per cent of income to St. John's.

There are, I believe, two fundamental ways of looking at financial stewardship. One is to look at the needs of the church. What must we (collectively) give in order that St. John's may be the kind of church we want it to be? What will it take so that we can powerfully support our core values of helping others, nurturing our own, worshiping with quality, inquiring into meaning and truth, celebrating all of life, and sharing this way of life with others? If we believe in these values, we will want to support them with our time, talent, *and* treasure.

The other way of looking at financial stewardship is to look at our own needs. What must we (individually) give in order that we may each be the kind of *person* we want to be? We want to be generous people, and we don't want the spiritual values that

we know here to be subsidized by others while we coast on their greater generosity. We all want to do our part, and much of the point of the informational program will be to help each of us understand just what our fair share is.

So what we are about is health: the health of St. John's collectively and the spiritual health of each of us individually. Please try to attend the services of November 8, 15, 22, as we work together to move toward this health. If you are one of our many seasonal members or otherwise unable to attend these services, we will share as much of this process as we can by mail, for we certainly need the financial support of all our members. I promise to make the process as painless as possible, and we should all learn a lot during this time.

God bless you all, and God bless St. John's.

Fr. Spencer+

## Notes about Ministries

### From your Outreach Team

1. Please try to support our friends at the Church of the Eternal Hills by attending their annual Soup and Chili Supper Tuesday, November 10, from 5-7PM. This is their big fundraiser for food banks and other local needs, just as the Pancake Supper, which they support, is ours.
2. The dedication of the newest Habitat home is set for 10AM, Saturday, November 21 in Hot Sulfur Springs on Grand Avenue between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Sts. St. John's has supported this work financially, and parishioners Jim Magill, Terry McFee, Sally Ackley, and Deacon Diane have time and talent.
3. Donations to the Colorado Haiti Project will help provide health kits for their next mission trip. Write your checks to St. John's (memo line: Jan. 2010 medical mission) for ingathering on Sunday, November 15. If you prefer to donate purchased items, see the shopping list on the parish hall bulletin board. See Sally Ackley for more details.
4. A new ministry for St. John's is Operation Gratitude, which provides care packages for our troops overseas at Christmas time. Write your own card or letter send a "warm" item (beanie baby, knit cap or scarf, warm socks, whatever), and make a donation to Operation Gratitude. Our project coordinator is Deacon Diane.

### "Conventional" St. John's folks

Many thanks to Stu Findley and to Walter Wilson for their time and work as your deputies to Diocesan Convention in Pueblo last month. Featuring worship and workshop opportunities with a minimum of business, the convention was a positive and uplifting experience for them and for Fr. Spencer. The biggest news was that the Diocese of Colorado has committed to purchasing a convention and camping facility near Woodland Park. We expect that we will all have opportunities over the next few years to take advantage of this exciting new tool for ministry and evangelism. If you would like to know more about the convention experience, ask any of your three deputies.

### From your spirituality team

"You have set my heart free." (Psalm 119.32)

The presence of God is going to accompany us into daily life whether in other forms of prayer, in our relationships, or in our workplace. Without trying to, but just by being in God as you go about your daily functions, you exercise a kind of apostolate. In your very joking you may be pouring grace into the atmosphere and into other people. All our activities need to come out of this center. Centering Prayer tends not only to access our spiritual nature, but to express the true self. We are coming from an inner freedom that more and more, without our thinking about it, expresses the mind of Christ in our particular daily lives through the welling up and flowing over of the fruits of the Spirit and the Beatitudes.

“We have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:16)

From *The Daily Reader for Contemplative Living*, by Thomas Keating  
(with thanks to Kaye Piper for contributing)

# Sermon of the Month

Sermon delivered Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>

Scholars who look at the story of the healing of the blind man Bartimaeus tell us that this is a story that fits two different “forms” of story. It can be read as a miracle story, intended to testify to Jesus’ ministry of healing and his power to heal.

But it can also read as a “call” story, along side other call narratives like the calling of the first apostles from their fishing boats on Galilee. On this reading we can take the restoration of sight to be a metaphor for understanding; Bartimaeus asks Jesus for insight, for understanding, to be able to “see” a deeper truth that he has hitherto been blind to. And Bartimaeus “sees” Jesus and follows him. To truly see Jesus is to understand that we are called to follow him.

First notice that the question Jesus asks Bartimaeus is one we have heard before. “What do you want me to do for you? Do you remember the question? We heard it way back . . . way back last week! Jesus asked James and John what they wanted him to do for them and they—the apostles, both of them key followers of Jesus and today honored saints of the church—showed how little they understood Jesus’ message. They responded—remember?—that they wanted to sit on either side of Jesus in his glory. They wanted the places of honor and glory. And Jesus had to deny them the request and to continue trying to help them “get it.” To help them see that the highest honor was in not in one’s place or in applause, but in service to others.

Bartimaeus—a blind beggar—does much better. To the question “What do you want me to do for you?” he responds that he wants to see. On this reading, he is also asking for wisdom and insight. He asks for the right thing and he asks in faith in Jesus’ power to provide it. And he responds rightly; upon receiving this sight, he follows Jesus on the way. He follows Jesus on the way. Notice that others—and I would assume some disciples among them—tried to discourage Bartimaeus, ordering him to be quiet. Presumably they were just setting out from Jericho, they had places to go and things to do and they didn’t want Jesus interrupting his work to stop to talk to a blind beggar. No, Jesus’ work is too important, and he is too busy for that.

I want to suggest to you an exercise that I find helpful in reading scripture, one that I have suggested before. I suggest that in reading stories or parables, it can be very useful to imagine yourself in the story as one of the characters, to see where and in what role you fit best. And here in this story, for example, one might imagine oneself in the Bartimaeus role. We are blind and poor and we ask Jesus for sight, we see, and we follow him. This is to read the story as a call narrative to become a follower of Jesus. And most of us have been in this situation at some time. I can, as I am sure many of you can, recall a time and place where I “saw” Jesus and made the decision to follow him.

But isn’t it funny how the same scriptural passage can say something different to us at different times? (That is why we say after each scripture reading here not “The Word of the Lord,” as if it were unchanging, but rather “Hear what the Spirit is saying to

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**The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist**

**Granby, Colorado**

God's people," recognizing that the Spirit may intend for different people to hear different things at different times.) And somehow in this story at this time I find myself in the role of those who are already following Jesus and who are urging Bartimaeus not to interrupt him. There are places to get to and work to be done; let's not take time to stop for Bartimaeus!

I find myself in this role because of an experience I had this week. Last week I got a call from Kathy Hulley, asking me if I would come and give a blessing of their horses at a gathering at her and Mike's place. I replied that I would love to do it, but I couldn't this week because I was so busy. I had places to go to and things to do, and I wouldn't have time to stop by for a horse blessing, so I suggested the following week. But it turned out that Kathy's event *had* to be this week—it couldn't be delayed, and I started to feel really guilty. So I told her that I would make the event after all; I'd find the time. And I did. We had a lovely short time with Kathy, Mike, and several of their friends—and Gordo, and Patches, and Rosie and Deputy, too. It was fun, it didn't take too much time and I got everything else done that needed to get done.

There is an old story about a Christian minister who was always lamenting that he didn't have enough time to do ministry because of all the interruptions he kept having. Until one day he realized that the interruptions *were* the ministry. Or at least as much the ministry as the other tasks that were being interrupted. Kathy's "interruption" was at least as much ministry as planning the next service or the upcoming pledge drive or the paperwork from the diocese or whatever made me think I didn't have time for the horses.

And in reading the Bartimaeus story, it occurred to me that the call to follow Jesus is not just a once and for all kind of thing. Yes, there is that first time, what we often call a conversion experience. But there are also the continuing calls to follow Jesus that pop up all the time. The call that the disciples missed when they urged Bartimaeus not to interrupt Jesus, and the call that I almost missed when Kathy asked me to bless her horses.

And this is not just about clergy, of course. For all of us, following Jesus on the way is not a decision that is made once and not revisited. It is a call that comes again and again—all along the way.

Updates from the Church Family

**The show must go on!**

And you will not want to miss our star thespians, Tyler and Sheila Orr, in *Thoroughly Modern Millie* at the Middle Park High School auditorium. There are performances Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, November 12-14, at 7PM. Come support our youth and have an enjoyable evening.

**On the mend**

We have had a trying month at St. John's with several hospitalizations, but we joyfully celebrate the successful homecomings of Ken Von der Heiden, Betty Clark, Pauline Friend, and Dan Zacek-Smith, all of whom are doing well. Do please continue to pray for continued recoveries.

**Location, location, location**

Fr. Spencer and Karla are in the midst of a big change, having just sold their Boulder home and purchased their eventual retirement home, a smaller and more manageable home in an "age qualified" community in Broomfield. The Broomfield house will be ready in March, so there is a three month gap during which Karla will be staying with her sons and daughter until it is ready. Fr. Spencer assures all that his own retirement is not at all imminent!

**More sweet sorrow**

A fond farewell to Eleanor Holley, who has rented her Granby home and moved to Boulder to be near daughter Jeanie and granddaughter Jessica. We will miss each of these three generations of women.

**An angel returns**

Perhaps only a few of you will remember that Cranmer Chapel was a gift to St. John's from Vic and Mary Jane Vestman. After almost thirty years, and several years after Vic's death, Mary Jane has come forward to offer to further support the chapel ministry financially. And she has begun by paying for the new retaining wall, just installed to protect the previously exposed foundations. Stop by to see the good work done through Kirk Lietzke's good office, and if you know Mary Jane or her son Bill Eisenhart, be sure to give them your hearty thanks for this support!

**A gift that keeps on giving**

The Al and Betty Clark family just continues to contribute so much to St. John's. Thanks to their Brian—and to Jim Magill for coordinating this effort—for his help in selecting and obtaining our new office copier and printer. And Al has discovered that our water meter was faulty, which led to years of dramatically inflated water bills. We will enjoy a substantial credit for years to come as a result of his insight and persistence. Thanks, Al!

**Whinny, whinny**

Several of Kathy and Mike Hulley's friends and fellow National Sports Center for the Disabled volunteers gathered at their home to celebrate the arrival of four horses, being given a rest home at the Hulley's new "corral." Fr. Spencer contributed a horse blessing (see the sermon of the month), and church dog Jake ran about the legs of the horses, managing not to get kicked. Kudos to Mike and Kathy for rescuing these animals after many years of service bringing joy to their disabled riders.

## November 2009

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					2:45 PRAYER/ FORMATION TEAM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * 10:30 ADULT EDUCATION				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	2:45 PRAYER/ FORMATION TEAM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * 10:45 VESTRY MEETING				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	8 AM WORSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING * 2:45 PRAYER/ FORMATION TEAM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * PLEDGES DUE				THANKSGIVING DAY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
29	30					
ADVENT 1 * 9 AM HOLY EUCARIST						