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# On Eagles' Wings

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A Communication From

The Church of Saint John the Evangelist

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## A Message from Fr. Matthew

*The eyes of all wait upon You, Oh Lord. (Psalm 145:16)*

Patience has never been one of my strong points. It's not that I am impatient with crying children or angry people. I usually do just fine with them. It is the kind of patience that requires waiting. That is what gets me. Have you ever had to meet someone in a new place that you've never been, only to find that the person you are meeting is running late? For me, this produces just enough anxiety that I start watching every person within a block's radius to see if it's the person I am meeting until s/he arrives. I have had similar anxiety waiting for an important phone call or email.

I have often heard it said, that God has His own time. My experience is that this usually means a really long time that almost makes whatever it was I was waiting on a moot point. So, knowing the anxiety it causes me, I wonder why God makes us wait. And, there is no greater testament to this waiting than walking into any retailer the day after Halloween and finding none other than...*Christmas* things. Yes, already out just in time for All Saints Day.

So, fine, we say, they're getting ready for the Holiday season. Retailers depend on this time of year to beef up their annual profits. This is

all well and good, but then I remember, I'm a Christian, and I happen to celebrate Christmas not on November 1st, not on Black Friday or December 15th, but I have to wait all the way until **DECEMBER 25TH!** Seriously, Christmas is practically over by then! Thank goodness I'm not Orthodox having to wait until January 7th. It hardly seems worth celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior at that point. I'm practically ready for Valentine's Day by then, although...the after-Christmas Sales would be a plus!

It is kind of funny how the Church insists on waiting until Christmas to celebrate Christmas. Here the rest of the world is putting their Christmas decorations away, and we're just starting. We can still say Merry Christmas, and make our neighbors think we're nuts because it's January 5th. Then, to really make us feel it, we have this thing that really gets in the way of celebrating Christmas called Advent. But, what this teaches us is that pesky thing called patience.

We recognize Advent as a time of waiting. It goes against the grain of society. It's even a little frustrating. But, waiting for something makes getting it in the end so much sweeter. On December 24th, when the rest of the world is Christmas-ed out and ready to put Santa back in the attic, we Christians are singing "Gloria in

excelsis Deo!” On January 3rd, when the rest of the world is feeling the holiday hangover, we’re still singing praises to the birth of our savior.

No, sometimes waiting is not the easiest thing. Sometimes, patience is less of a virtue, and just a plain struggle. But, when we come to the end, when we’ve waited when we should have waited, the Incarnation is opened up to us in an amazing way. That is the grace of Advent: The grace of waiting.

Blessings and Peace,  
*Fr. Matthew+*

### **Advent Evensong Services**

Evensong services will be held at St. John’s on four Saturday evenings during Advent (November 28<sup>th</sup>, and December 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>). Each service, to begin at 5 PM, will be followed by a light supper in the parish hall. Come join our glorious choir and celebrate the season in song! Your friends and family are welcome.

### **Rummage Sale**

The Women’s Guild-sponsored rummage sale held on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> was a success by many measures. Although the sale did not raise a great deal of money, what proceeds were realized will be put to good uses, such as *community outreach activities* or paying for *capital repairs* to church property. Being able to contribute to the funding of either of those efforts will be evidence of success.

In addition to the monetary aspect of the sale, many of us successfully cleaned out our basements, attics and garages and felt proud about being able to recycle the many still useful items we uncovered in our homes.

Not least of the successes, was the value of the time the women of the guild spent volunteering together: sorting and pricing items donated for

the sale, greeting old friends who stopped by to visit, *laughing* all the while we worked, and generally being supportive of one another. It was a thoroughly satisfying *social event*! Joyce and Marge, Marty, Michelle T., both Shirleys, Eleese, Ruth, Charlotte, Nancy and Lynn – what a remarkable group of hard-working and generous women you are!

Arguably the most successful outcome of the sale was the fact that we literally *opened our doors* to our community. We welcomed our neighbors into St. John’s and helped to fill some very basic needs of our community. One small girl, accompanied by her mother, seemed truly delighted to discover several Barbie dolls and a warm, pink knit hat to take home with her. An unemployed divorced man who recently had to relinquish both his home and his young son to his former wife, found a microwave oven for his spare new apartment. An elderly woman who spoke only Spanish acquired a sewing machine. We observed men and women of college age buying t-shirts and denim jeans. A couple of adolescent boys vied for a Devils warm-up jacket; the fellow who ultimately got to purchase the jacket was clearly pleased with himself! People with obviously little money left with bulging shopping bags and happy smiles.

Maybe, we will see some of these neighbors again. They have come into our church now and been made to feel welcome; that is a fine, successful start on developing a relationship. We can be happy about this tentative first step and think about striving to further our outreach efforts in the coming year. If you have thoughts along these lines, Fr. Matthew and members of the **Outreach Committee** (Martha Godfrey, Chair) and/or **Visioning Committee** (Helen Beckley, Brandon King and Michele Bacorn) will welcome hearing your ideas.

## **Best Wishes to Fr. Matthew and Kristen**

The people of St. John's extend our warmest and best wishes to you, **Fr. Matthew** and **Kristen**, as you are *married* in Kansas on January 9th! You will be in our prayers on your big day and we will look forward to joining you here at St. John's on Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, when Bishop Cuncell will officiate at a service *renewing* your marriage vows.

With love,  
Your Church Family

## **Stewardship is a Year Round Pursuit**

We understand that stewardship is not simply an annual "event," it is a year round pursuit. In the spirit of that pursuit, we will continue to explore the seven spiritual practices relating to stewardship that are found in a pamphlet entitled, "Finding Hope in Hard Times". We read the first of these practices in our October newsletter. The second is set forth below:

### Count Your Cash

*For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." (Luke 14:28-30)*

*Most of us don't enjoy budgeting. Writing down where we spend our money can be painful, particularly if we have less coming in than going out. But budgeting is not just a case of trying to make our money last till the end of the month; it's a spiritual exercise, too, revealing what our actual priorities are. Billy Graham has said on a number of occasions, "Give me five minutes with a person's checkbook and I will tell you where their heart is." Whether we feel we need to or not, making a budget is a good way of managing the financial resources God has entrusted to us. It enables us to take control and make decisions as to where we*

*allocate money. Without making a budget, we may unwittingly allow money to leak away in some areas of our spending.*

► Action: *Review your monthly income and spending. You might find it helpful to use the budget template from the National Foundation for Credit Counseling at [www.debtadvice.org/Credit101/budget\\_debt\\_ws.pdf](http://www.debtadvice.org/Credit101/budget_debt_ws.pdf).*

|| Pause for Reflection: *What does this exercise reveal about your priorities? What might you seek to change in the way you allocate your money?*

[To download the entire brochure from which the above passage was taken, visit [www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship](http://www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship).]

## **Packages for Soldiers for Christmas**

If you are interested in supporting one of our military personnel by sending him/her a care package for Christmas (or at any time throughout the year), the following link to the "Operation Military Pride" website will direct you to details on how you can help. Let our brave patriots know that YOU care!  
<http://operationmilitarypride.org/index.html>

## **Christ Church Food Pantry**

Food pantries around the country traditionally run low on supplies during the winter holidays and it can be a time of sadness for people who do not share our great bounty. We encourage you to do something special this year and bring donations of non-perishable food items with you to church to help support the Food Pantry at Christ Church. You may drop your donation off in the designated basket in the narthex. Let's bring the joyful spirit of Christmas into households across central Jersey!

## Annual Parish Meeting

St. John's 2010 **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held on Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, following the 9:30 AM Eucharist. Please submit all reports for the meeting no later than January 17<sup>th</sup>.

If you are interested in running to fill an open position on the vestry, or if you would like to nominate someone else, at your earliest opportunity please speak to Fr. Matthew or to a current vestry member (see the vestry listing below).

## St. John's Music CDs

If you are searching for unique and uplifting Christmas gifts, we still have for sale a limited number of the two music CDs recorded by St. John's choir scholars. You may see Michele Bacorn if you would like to purchase copies of "*Gloria!*," a service of Lessons and Carols, and/or "*Our Sacred Voice*," a collection of sacred music. Orders may also be placed via email ([stjohns9@verizon.net](mailto:stjohns9@verizon.net)) or by calling the church at (732) 545-5619. The CDs are priced at \$15 each (or \$12 when purchasing 3 or more).

## St. John's Website

Please visit [stjohnepiscopalnb.org](http://stjohnepiscopalnb.org) to see the beautiful website *Godrim Beckley* has engineered for St. John's. The site contains a history of the church, service times, driving directions and a *new* and nifty monthly calendar of events!

## February 2010 Newsletter Deadline

Please provide Michele Bacorn with submissions for the February 2010 newsletter by Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. Your contributions are always welcome. You may leave stories, articles, news of upcoming events, and other communications in the "Newsletter" mailbox in the parish hall, hand your material to Michele during coffee hour, or via email to [stjohns9@verizon.net](mailto:stjohns9@verizon.net).

## Upcoming Events

Dec. 5	Service of Evensong @ 5PM
Dec. 12	Service of Evensong @ 5PM
Dec. 13	Christmas Pageant @ 9:30 AM
Dec. 19	Service of Evensong @ 5PM
Dec. 20	Service of Lessons & Carols @ 9:30 AM
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve Service @ 9:30 PM
Dec. 25	Christmas Day Service @ 9:30 AM
Dec. 27	Lunches for Elijah's Promise
Jan. 24	Renewal of Wedding Vows - Fr. Matthew and Kristen
Jan. 31	Annual Parish Meeting @ 11AM

## Committees and Chairpersons

Worship – Fr. Matthew Buterbaugh

Music – Susan Huslage

Finance – Dick Engle

Renewal (Outreach) - Martha Godfrey

Parish Life – Marge Koleser

Christian Ed – Stacie Kelly

Property – George Koleser

## St. John's Vestry

Marge Koleser, Sr. Warden

Martha Godfrey, Jr. Warden

Michele Bacorn

Christof Beckley

Victor Beckley

Nancy Cole, Clerk

Dick Engle, Treasurer

Susan Huslage, Music Director

George Koleser, Sr.

Lynn Pihanen

Eugene Pillar, Jr.

*So fine was He, so tall and straight,  
That all the world was lit,  
A pathway widening out ahead  
As he walked into it.*

Author unknown

*Blessed Christmas!*