
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

Dear Friends, this has been a great year of transitions for both me and for this parish. One year ago, this parish was in the middle of a rector search. It had been nearly three years since this church had had a full-time rector. In this time, the parish had grown spiritually and the leadership was strengthened, but it seemed past due to move on and find a new rector. In my own journey, I was in the middle of a search of my own. My curacy at my last parish was coming to a close. I had already been excited by the prospect of a parish profile of a church in New Jersey.

In April, you called me to be your rector. Since that time, we have shared our journey together. We have planned parish activities. We had a Mass on the Grass. There were baptisms, first communions, and a reception into the Anglican Communion. The bishop came in October, and I was installed as a Rector. This was a celebration for the whole parish as we all remembered our own baptismal vows and ministries. We had a rummage sale. We ended the year with Advent Evensongs, and Christmas. Then, we began the new Epiphany season with another baptism and a renewal of wedding vows. This has been an eventful year in the life of a small parish.

As a parish, we have a few challenges ahead of us. Primarily, we should not forget that this is

still a time of transition. The Spirit continues to move us at all times, but particularly at this time as I am getting to know you and you are getting to know me. We must remember that we have not even been working together for a year, and there are many ways we are still discovering each other. It is also worth noting that we are beginning 2010 with a slight budget deficit, and our leadership has worked hard, and is deserving of rest. But, let us not for a second let these challenges overshadow our successes. We do have a slight deficit. This is mostly due to the loss of rental income from Word of Faith. However, because of the efforts of our Stewardship Committee and because of your faith and generosity, our pledged income for this year has increased by 30% over last year. This is no small feat in the current economy! If all remain faithful in their pledges this year, and we manage to spend under budget, we may even be able to end 2010 with a slight surplus. This does require a bit of faith and dedication on all our parts, though.

As for our leadership, we have had little turnover in the last several years. By strong faith and dedication, they have skirted burnout and kept this parish running and strengthening. But, this is a parish that looks for solutions. We have been proactive and creative in finding ways to be faithful, not only to the institution of our parish, but to the people who run it. The vestry is proposing a plan of restructure that is

compatible with our by-laws and the Canons and Constitution of the diocese and the Episcopal Church. The restructuring will not only insure efficiency, but allow the current leadership to share their gifts of ministry in other areas of the life of the parish. This is a first major step in expanding what this parish will do in years to come.

There are many other successes that need recognition. Our average Sunday attendance is up slightly from the last few years. For the first time in many years, there have been a few Sundays that were not special services where we had over SIXTY people. Some of this is due to people returning to their parish home. Some of this is due to gaining new members. Ultimately, it is due to the welcoming nature of this community and, most importantly, due to our spiritual strengthening, and Christ's guidance. This spring we launched a website. We have gained a Christian Education director who is actually a member of this parish. This is a sign of spiritual strength of our membership to raise up new leadership from within, as well as a sign of personal dedication. This parish has also put a group together to pray for Christ's guidance as we look toward our future. For nothing can be done without Christ, and His will is ultimately what we strive to achieve.

The long-term prospects look very good for The Church of St. John the Evangelist, but even in the short-term there are good things happening. In the last couple months, I have had conversations with individuals who are interested in starting new ministries. Existing ministries are feeling the tug of the Spirit to reorganize and strengthen their work. In the next couple months, we are also going to try a few new things liturgically, and we will be re-instituting Stations of the Cross in Lent, something that has not been done here in several decades.

None of what is happening can be done without those people who have made these things happen. We do what we do through the Spirit's inspiration, but also out of our own love and dedication. This cannot be overlooked. I want to thank the people who make our music program happen: our choir members, who sound glorious Sunday after Sunday, and Susan who makes it all happen. I want to thank our deacon, Ken, who has provided me with liturgical guidance in this first year. Both Susan and Ken have also made our services happen by helping me plan every detail of our liturgies. I want to thank our treasurer, Dick, for being a good steward of the finances. This often overlooked task makes almost everything we do possible. I want to thank the women of our Altar Guild who have faithfully made sure things are always ready for our next service. A special thank-you to all our liturgical ministers: the readers, and our Eucharistic Ministers, particularly Christof, who has trained our new Eucharistic Ministers this year, and our new acolyte, Antonio. On a personal note, I want to say thank you to all the members of this parish who have helped my transition and who have gone out of their way to make my wife and me a part of this parish, particularly the women of the Guild of Sts. Mary and Martha. The last and most special thanks, though, goes to our Senior Warden, Marge, for the countless ways in which she has served this parish and advised me.

There is something I could thank each and every one of you for. You have all rolled up your sleeves in your own ways to serve Christ in this parish. Let us continue to pray for God's guidance, and support one another in all our journeys, as well as the journey of this parish. There are new and exciting places He will take us. May we open our hearts to hear His will in all we do.

Blessings and Peace,
Fr. Matthew+

Women's Guild Events

The Women's Guild will be sponsoring several events in the coming months. The first, a **Spaghetti with Meatballs Dinner**, will be held on Saturday, February 13th, at 5:30 PM. Admission is free to this fellowship activity, though donations will be accepted throughout the evening to help cover the cost of the groceries. Bring your Valentines of all ages and plan to enjoy a cozy winter evening with the people you love!

Rada knives and other Rada utensils and accessories, including candles, will be available to order from February 13th through March 13th as the first of three fundraisers the Guild has planned. See Peggy Koleser for a peek at the Rada product catalog and to obtain details on payment methods and delivery dates. High quality Rada items are great to own and make wonderful gifts

On Saturday, March 13th, the Guild will host a **Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner** fundraiser beginning at 5:30 PM. Tickets may be purchased for \$12.50 per dinner, though children under 10 years of age will eat for free! Dine at the church with friends on Saturday, then carry home a delicious meal to heat and serve for an easy St. Patrick's Day celebration. All you will need to provide are the shamrocks!

The Guild's third upcoming fundraiser will be a **Tricky Tray** ("silent auction") on Saturday, May 1st. Donations of *new* items for the event are already being accepted and may be marked "Tricky Tray" and left in the parish hall. Additional information relating to ticket sales will be advertised soon.

All proceeds from the three fundraisers will be turned over to St. John's **Capital Campaign Committee** to help pay for the new roof that is going to be installed on the church this year. Let's everyone get involved and help support

these efforts and we will keep our beautiful, historic church in good repair.

Lunches, With Love

St. John's continues to provide 50 nutritious bagged lunches to Elijah's Promise soup kitchen on the 4th Sunday of every month. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this heartwarming outreach project. If you wish to become involved, please speak to **Nancy Cole**, our newly appointed Project Coordinator (aka the "Lunch Lady".) Our next Bagged Lunch Sunday will be February 28th. Donations of bread, turkey, ham, cheese, fresh fruit, juice boxes and healthy snacks are always welcome.

Haiti

Please keep the people of Haiti in your continuing prayers. If you wish to send monetary support via Episcopal Relief & Development, you should make your check payable to St. John's and write "Haiti Relief" in the memo section. We will combine the proceeds into one check. If you prefer to send your donation individually, there are pre-addressed envelopes available in the back of the church. For information on how your money will be used, visit: <http://www.er-d.org/>

Stewardship is a Year Round Pursuit

Following is the third of seven spiritual practices relating to stewardship that are found in a pamphlet entitled, "Finding Hope in Hard Times". [www.episcopalchurch.org/stewardship.]

Learn to Be Content

We brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it; but we have food and clothing, we will be content with these. But those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and in their eagerness to be

rich some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pains.
[1 Timothy 6:7-10]

Learning contentment is one of the most significant disciplines we can achieve. Many people have amassed large debts chasing their dreams, only to find that their latest purchase provides only fleeting fulfillment. Contentment reduces our desire to spend, creating a cushion between our spending and our income. This brings about the opportunity to save, to give away, or to buy something special. If, on the other hand, our spending is regularly ahead of our income, then the inevitable consequence is debt. Debt can be difficult to manage and arises for all sorts of reasons. If you have significant debt, you are encouraged to take action as soon as possible.

► Action: *Look back at your budget and review your debts and savings. The National Foundation for Credit Counseling is a nationally recognized resource for debt management counseling. Contact them at www.nfcc.org or call (800) 338-2227.*

|| Pause for Reflection: *In which areas of your life do you find it easiest to be content? Where are the temptations?*

You may find the following prayer helpful:
Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us about building treasure in heaven rather than on earth; teach us to be content when our needs are satisfied rather than our wants, and grant us wisdom to be faithful stewards. Amen.

April 2010 Newsletter Deadline

Please provide Michele Bacorn with submissions for the April 2010 newsletter by **Sunday, March 14th**. 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 send it via email to stjohns9@verizon.net.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 7	Outreach Committee Mtg. @ 11 AM
Feb. 13	Spaghetti Dinner @ 5:30 PM
Feb. 14	Blanket Sunday collection @ 9:30 AM
Feb. 16	Pancake Dinner @ 6 PM
Feb. 17	Ash Wednesday Service @ 7:30 PM
Feb. 24	Stations of the Cross @ 7:30 PM
Mar. 3	Stations of the Cross @ 7:30 PM
Mar. 10	Stations of the Cross @ 7:30 PM
Mar. 13	Corned Beef Dinner @ 5:30 PM
Mar. 17	Stations of the Cross @ 7:30 PM
Apr. 4	Easter Service @ 9:30 AM
May 1	Tricky Tray

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 Pilanen

Eugene Pillar, Jr.