



“I Said to My Soul”

BY REV. DANIEL GREEN

“I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.”

T. S. Eliot, *East Coker*

THESE LINES from a great 20th Century Anglican poet epitomize the discipline of Advent, the season which begins the church year. The stillness and waiting which the poem describes clear the ground into which a new revelation of light and joy can come. Inner stillness and self-emptying restraint, however, are in short supply in our culture. More than that, they are seemingly hardest to come by at this time of year, just when the ancient wisdom of our tradition tells us we need them most. We rush around celebrating Christmas, often well in advance of the actual date, with a hectic binge of shopping and parties and special events, as if we were trying to force it to happen. When the whole point is that Christmas is something that God makes happen for us where and when we are not expecting it, right under our noses, in our very midst.

This doesn't necessarily mean staying home from the holiday parties, or refusing to get presents for the kids. But it does mean that, while there may be real warmth and sentiment in those secular festivities, if we are looking for the kind of joy, illumination, and inspiration this Christmas that will have some real traction in our lives, we need to remember that we are not likely to find them in those things. If we want to be ready for Christmas to come in the spiritual sense, the most important thing we can do is wait. If we wish for a new movement of the soul that sets a course for the year to come, we have to begin with stillness. ■

Calling All Angels!

...AND SHEPHERDS, NARRATORS, AND SO ON!

For the last few years, the children of St. John's have been presenting a Christmas Pageant during the Christmas Eve Family Mass at 5:00 PM.

We would like to keep up this tradition, so we will have three rehearsals leading up to the Pageant. These rehearsals are tentatively set for December 8, 15, and 22 after church/end of coffee hour.

If you are interested, please contact Sarah Hudspeth at shhudspeth@gmail.com.

Christmas at St. John's

*Almighty God, you have poured
upon us the new light of your
incarnate Word:*

*Grant that this light, kindled in our
hearts, may shine forth in our lives...*

—Book of Common Prayer

Sunday, December 22

11:30 a.m. Decorating the Church

Tuesday, December 24

5:00 p.m. Family Christmas with
Children's Pageant and
Holy Communion

10:00 p.m. Festal Christmas
Eucharist

Wednesday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Christmas Lessons and
Carols

The following services will not take place:

Centering Prayer - 5:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, December 24 & 31

Centering Prayer - 9:30 a.m.

Wednesdays, December 25 & January 1

Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayer - 12:15

Wednesdays, December 25 & January 1



For more information on these events:
www.saintjohnseiscopalpetaluma.org
www.facebook.com/petalumaepiscopal

More December Events
are listed on pages 3 and 5.

Photos from the Advent Soup Supper

On Saturday, November 30, St. John's held its annual Advent potluck soup supper with wreath-making and a visit from St. Nicholas for the children. Allison Adams organized this wonderful event.



Changing

BY REV. DANIEL GREEN

We had an honest, searching, and lively meeting on Sunday, November 24 to talk about a proposal in the vestry's Strategic Plan to consider changing our service schedule. The following comments are taken from an email I wrote to one of our members who was unable to attend, but took the time to let me know in writing of her concerns. I also read my response aloud at the conclusion of the meeting:

I understand that a change of service times would inconvenience some folks, just as others might find it more convenient. All of our members' needs and preferences are important to me.

My hope is that, as we consider making a change, we will not see this as a question of whose wishes count most, or even whether a majority are for or against, but one about how to make our Sunday morning program best serve our mission. To me there is something important lacking in our current schedule, which is a time every Sunday when folks from both our early and later services can come together for fellowship, conversation, learning, and equipping for ministry.

There are people for whom that is not important. They come here for worship, and maybe a quick check-in with their friends, and then they want to leave and get on with other things. Which is fine—there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. But there are others who want more, and yet it is difficult for them to get back to church at other times during the week, their lives (and Petaluma traffic!) being what they are. Most importantly, there may be folks in our community who want more than worship who won't come to our church as long as we don't offer more.

I could be wrong about that, but I do know that if our congregation is going to be able to accomplish what we want to do, we need to grow. What we've done up to now has been wonderful, but we have hit a ceiling under our current program. We need to take risks, and try new approaches, with an eye to how we can meet the needs of those who are not now our members, who may be different from us, and want different things. Which is inconvenient, and even painful. And the pain will be felt more keenly by some than by others—not because those folks matter any less, but just because that's how things go in this broken world.

Anyway, I trust we can all really listen to each other, and keep an open mind and open heart. I hope you feel like I take your needs and desires seriously, and if you want to talk to me about this, my door is always open. No decision will be made until everyone has had their say. I will be encouraging the members of the vestry to continue to have an active part in this and other decisions related to our Strategic Plan, so you can also speak with them. If we do make a change to the Sunday schedule, it likely would not be until after Easter, to give everyone time to prepare and adjust.

Thank you for all you do for God and neighbor. ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

Advent Prayer Retreat

Tuesday–Saturday, December 3 – 7
https://www.saintjohnsepiscope-petaluma.org/advent_prayer_retreat_2019

Taize

Friday, December 6, 7:00 p.m.

A Sparkling Night of Carols The North Bay Singers

Saturday, December 7, 7:30 p.m.

Fellowship Prayer and Potluck

Wednesday, December 11, 5:30 p.m.

Interfaith Food Pantry

Thursday, December 12, 5:00 p.m.
 at Elim Lutheran Church,
 504 Baker Street

Carols and Candlelight Petaluma Children's Chorus

Monday, December 16, 6:30 p.m.

Sacred Circle Dance

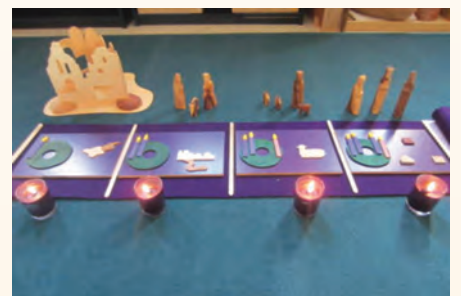
Wednesday, December 18, 7:00 p.m.

Poetry Circle | Living Word

Friday, December 20, 7:00 p.m.
 In the Sanctuary

Veriditas Community Labyrinth Walk

Sunday, December 22, 5:00 p.m.



Godly Play December

The unfolding of the Godly Play Advent stories is sequential and beautiful. "We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, so let's go with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, the Magi and all the rest to make the journey that was not just back then. It is also now." Come join us this month as we get ready for Christmas!



Senior Warden's Report

BY WALTER LEDERHAUS

Staying with the theme of change, this month I would like to share some information about the Diocesan Convention which took place in Sacramento last month. As you are all aware we have a new Bishop and this was her first time leading our Convention. For those that have not had the pleasure of attending a Diocesan Convention, I have to say that you are missing out on good fellowship and a better understanding of the workings of the Episcopal Church. I must admit that some of the "Official" businesses like the filing of all the Reports, the Consent agenda, Floor Resolutions can be a bit dry.

The interesting parts started with the Bishop's Address to the Convention. This year Bishop Traquair gave a stirring speech about her roots and of being brought up on a farm in Central California. The theme was about "New Beginnings". One story she spoke of was her grandfather's interest in grafting apple trees to find the perfect apple. He did it and when asked what he had done to produce this perfect apple, he said that he didn't remember. Bishop Megan's take-away was that the Diocese was at a new beginning under her leadership. She wants us to "graft together" to build a new direction for our Church.

Another highlight of the Convention was our Keynote Speaker. Mary Parmer has studied what makes a religion grow. She has developed a program that is not a "take this class and you'll be all set", but rather a blueprint or guideline. The program is titled: "Invite, Welcome, Connect". There are three principles outlined in the title. The first is: INVITE. As most Episcopalians are introverts, Invite is probably the hardest for us. She showed us a brief video entitled "Goulash". It was about a neighbor that was returning home from church and he thought it would be a good idea to invite his next-door neighbor to church. The conversation was very strained. The churchgoer started to have reservations about whether his neighbor would think him some type of religious fanatic. The neighbor was hoping for that invite but didn't want to seem too eager. The nut is that the churchgoer changes the invite to having goulash at his house as the neighbor moves toward the idea of being invited to church. It was quite comical but also to the point - it's hard to talk to anyone about your relationship with Jesus. She drills down and gives us the tools to understand the reasons people go to church.

When she spoke of WELCOME she said that it was the hospitality component. She said that when she visits different churches, she notices that though they say they are a friendly

church they are actually a church of friends. She noted that people tend to gather with the people they know and are friends with rather than making an effort to meet new members. To Mary, the concept of "Welcoming" also extends into the community. She gave a few examples of outreach other churches have used but prefaced her comments by saying that each congregation needs to use its own imagination to find their way. She emphasized remembering how our creativity was cultivated in our youth.

In CONNECT the connection helps the newcomer answer these questions: "Where do I fit in? Can I make friends in this church? Is there room for me relationally? Does this church need me? Can I find a place to belong and serve? Am I safe here?"

One way is through intentional conversation, hearing the newcomer's soul story, an intentional conversation of the head and heart. During the initial conversation, we should strive to find the following: "Where did you grow up? Did you grow up in another church tradition? If they've been away from church for a long time, what or who brought you back? How did you find your way to this church? Did someone invite you?"

These are simple steps each of us can take to connect with newcomers. It will take all of us to reach out to newcomers and extend a connection that will give them purpose in our church. ■

The Spirit of Christmas

BY BETTY PETRILLO, Junior Warden

Merry Christmas to all! As Christians, we know that the true meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Christ. Christ is a symbol of love, hope and peace that makes this such a joyful time of year. The spirit of Christmas is not about buying the latest gadget, electronics or other material things, but unselfish giving with no expectation of anything in return.

We were recently reminded of this spirit of giving in our stewardship campaign. And we thank everyone for their generous contributions and pledges in support of our church property and ministries.

As we prepare for this holy and festive Christmas season, let us all recognize those less fortunate and give from your heart to your favorite charitable organizations dedicated to helping those in need. We hope that St. John's will be included on your list. Embrace the spirit of Christmas and find the true meaning of the season to bring more joy and happiness into your life. ■

Upcoming Activities

Monthly Labyrinth Walk

Sunday, December 22, 5:00 - 6:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary

Veriditas and St. John's are partnering to offer community labyrinth walks. Come as you are to share in the experience of a walking meditation that quiets the mind, opens the heart and reduces stress. First-time labyrinth walkers are warmly welcome. Live musical accompaniment by Robin O'Brien. Facilitated by Brigid FitzGibbon. Donations gratefully accepted. Please Register by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.veriditas.org/event-3163962/Registration>

Monthly Prayer and Potluck

Wednesday, December 13 - 5:30 p.m.

Members and friends of St. John's are invited to gather for a monthly potluck supper. A 5:30 p.m. intergenerational prayer service, combining elements of traditional Evening liturgy with a spirit of intimacy and improvisation, precedes the 6 p.m. supper. If you would like to be part of a team to help plan, lead, and develop this monthly event, contact Daniel at rector.episcopal.petaluma@gmail.com or 762-8872. If you can help host the potluck supper, contact Betty Petrillo by email at betty.petrillo@comcast.net.

The Raphael Madonnas A Contemplative Viewing

The 11th Day of Christmas, Saturday, January 4 - 5:00 p.m.

The contemplative viewing of this series of Madonna paintings by Raphael, accompanied by gentle lyre music, is a wonderful experience to deepen one's appreciation for the Heart of the Holy Nights. It was developed by doctors in Europe as a therapy; and is now becoming a yearly event to deepen our relationship to this Holy Mystery during the Holy Nights for us here and many around the world. All are welcome.



- 5:00 p.m. Singing and Eurythmy
- 6:00 p.m. Refreshments!
- 6:30 p.m. Introduction to the Madonna Series and a deeper look for our time.
- 7:00 p.m. The Madonna Pictures with Lyre Accompaniment



PETALUMA CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Margaret Starr, Director
Linda Evans Manuilow, Director
Colleen O'Malley, Accompanist
presents



CAROLS & CANDLELIGHT

Monday, December 16, 6:30p.m.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Cram Hall
C Street (between 5th and 6th Streets)
Petaluma, California



Tickets are available at the door
General \$12 Seniors/Students \$8 Children under 12 Free

The North Bay Singers

Invite you to

A Sparkling Night of Carols

Saturday, December 7

7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

**Norm Cram Hall
St. John's Episcopal Church**

A Note from Kayleen Asbo about Celtic Evensong

Dear Friends,

I am very grateful for your participation and support of Evensongs over the past four years. It has been an experience that meant a great deal to so many people gathered there, and I think we created many memorable evenings of deep beauty for our community.

Next Sunday there are not enough volunteers to make our scheduled event work, and our featured musician has also bowed out. So, given the exhaustion factor I--and I think many of you--- are experiencing, cancelling the event seems like the best course of action.

It seems no longer sustainable to continue to offer these events on a monthly basis. Even with robust attendance, we have not solicited enough in donations to make future

monthly events financially feasible. I hope to find a way to offer periodic gatherings in the future. If you have ideas, please let me know.

Thank you for your help over these years. Mythica will be offering a year end workshop of music, reflection, poetry and art making at St. John's on December 29 from 1:30-4:30, preceding the Veriditas labyrinth walk. It would be lovely to see you there, and I want to offer the event to you as a gift in thanks for your own contributions to the contemplative events at St. John's over the years. If you'd like to attend, let me know before Christmas.

With gratitude and warmest wishes for the holidays,

—Kayleen

Decorating for Christmas and Christmas Flowers Donations

Join in decorating the church and parish hall for Christmas on Sunday, December 22nd at 11:30 am. This is a rewarding community activity for people and families of all ages. For more information, contact Heather Oehm at heather@oehm.com or 707-280-4333.

You may also help purchase poinsettias, evergreens, and other materials to decorate the church and Parish Hall for the Christmas season. Donations of any amount are welcome and may be accompanied by a dedication in memory

of a departed loved one or in celebration of a blessing. Clip out the donation form below or find one at the back of the church or on the information tables outside the library and in Cram Hall. Please write legibly, especially when spelling personal names. The forms can be returned in the offering plate, along with payment to St. John's marked "Christmas flowers," or delivered to the office. In order to be included in the Christmas service bulletins, the dedications must be received by 2 p.m. on Wednesday, December 19th. ■

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, PETALUMA Christmas Flowers Donation 2019

Name _____ Amount _____

Dedication (please print legibly) _____



Please place completed form in the offering plate on Sunday along with your payment. Write "Christmas flowers" in the memo line. You may also deliver the form and payment to the Parish Office. The deadline for dedications to be included in the Christmas service bulletin is by 2pm on Thursday, December 19.



WISDOM of the Ancients

From the December, 1904 edition of The Instructor, the monthly newsletter of St. John's, Petaluma, along with an advertisement reading: "When you want the largest line of jewelry with the smallest prices, go to Daunt's."

Christmas is the Festival of Home because of its glorification of Motherhood. That "sweet story of old," of Mary and her babe, by bringing Christ into the home circle, has done more to purify, ennoble, and rejoice home life than all the metaphysical disquisitions ever written or uttered. Bewildered by incomprehensible dogmas, men in all ages have turned the worshipping devotion to the

"Great Little One, whose glorious birth
Lifts earth to heaven, stoops heaven
to earth."

Be it, then, ours to obey with gladsome mind the call of the catholic church, which has resounded throughout Christendom for many generations:

"O! Come! Let us adore Him." ■



**More photos
from the
Advent Soup
Supper.**



Stewardship Report

BY KEVIN JONES, Chair, Stewardship Committee

Following our ingathering on Sunday, November 3rd, the Stewardship Committee is pleased to report that as of November 24th, we have received 43 pledges for the coming year totaling just over \$147 thousand.

The good news is that the net pledges are running over 9% ahead of last year in terms of total financial contribution and include several new members pledging for the first time. The less than good news is that we are still below the total pledges expected of 60 or more—and the more participation we have, the more accurate our budget planning process can be. Please consider this a gentle reminder that we still need to receive your pledge in order for the Finance Committee to construct their budget with confidence. Dropping your completed pledge form in the offertory plate or at the office would be very much appreciated! ■

Year-end Giving

In the month of December charitable organizations of all kinds invite their members and donors to make an extra gift before the end of the year. If you are fortunate enough to be able to contribute to causes you support, we encourage you to consider the following:

- St. John's Annual Fund is the financial life-blood of our parish, enabling us to retain our staff and maintain our operations. Contributions from our members and friends are what enables our growing presence in downtown Petaluma, as a center of spiritual renewal and community resilience.
- St. John's Building Fund meets our capital improvement needs, such as the ADA access we expect to install in 2020.
- The Rector's Discretionary Fund enables the Rector to assist individuals in need in our community, and meet ministry expenses not otherwise provided for in the budget.
- Episcopal Relief and Development works with church partners across the USA and around the globe to provide disaster relief and ongoing development assistance for the world's poor (www.episcopalrelief.org). During December your donations are matched dollar-for-dollar by lead benefactors. ERD also has a Gifts for Life program that enables you to make life-changing gifts in the honor of a loved one to communities in need. ■

From the Peace and Justice Committee

BY FRANCES FRAZIER

For the past several months, we have been attempting to discern whether to proceed with a program called Sacred Ground, and our discussions have been intense. This is a film-based dialogue series on race and faith developed by the Episcopal Church, and it leads participants on a sometimes uncomfortable and disturbing journey through the history of racism in our country up to our current times. The recommended reading list includes books such as *Waking Up White* by Debby Irving, *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman, *Beyond the Messy Truth* by Van Jones, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo, plus videos such as "American Creed," "Truth and Reconciliation Pilgrimage to Ghana," "Ancestors in the Americas," and "Slavery by Another Name."

Our discussions have been leading us into deeper and more vulnerable parts of ourselves and helping to get to know one another in a more comprehensive way. We are doing a few sample sessions of this curriculum to see if we do indeed wish to take on the whole of this challenging project. ■



Some of the wreath-makers at the Advent Soup Supper.

Help for Fire Victims

Many of you have asked how you can best help the folks dealing with the Kincade Fire. Currently, the best way to help disaster victims is through monetary donations and gift cards.

Monetary Donation Information:

Please consider donating to Disaster Relief in our diocese—100 percent of your donation will go directly to assist victims in the first stage of the disaster and later during long term recovery. Donate now to disaster relief: bit.ly/NorCalDisasterRelief

Make checks out to EDNC, with "Disaster Relief" in the memo line and send to address below.

Gift Card Donation Information:

The following types of gift cards are being requested:

- Safeway
- Visa

You can mail the gift cards to The Office of the Bishop, who will coordinate distribution.

The Episcopal Diocese of Northern California
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Sacramento, CA 95825

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Help Wanted

Please inform your friends and acquaintances about our opening for the position of Parish Administrator at St. John's. This is an opportunity for the right person to bring administrative and communications skills, and passion for growing community, into service in a creative environment. The Parish Administrator will work with a committed, caring team of volunteer and professional leaders to help us strengthen our organization, leverage our resources, and broaden our influence. Part-time hours (16/wk.) allow for some flexibility. \$22-\$25/hour starting pay, DOE. All kinds of persons encouraged to apply.

More information about this opportunity is on our website at parish administrator.

Easy Ways to Remember St. John's

BY CLIF HILL

Perhaps you have thought about including St. John's in your estate planning. "Estate" may sound like a grandiose term, but whether large or modest, it is simply what we leave behind. More-often-than-not in thinking about how to do it, our first reaction is "this must be complicated" and we drop the whole idea. But in reality there are some ways that are quite simple. Here are three easy ways to remember St. John's:

1. Make St. John's a beneficiary of your IRA/401(k)/403(b). Just call the toll-free number on your monthly plan statement and ask for a Change of Beneficiary form. Or, you can download it from the internet. Fill in the blanks, including the percentage you wish to leave to St. John's. No attorney needed! You will continue to have access to all your funds for as long as you live. But when you no longer need them, the percentage you have chosen will pass, tax free, to the church.

2. Make St. John's a beneficiary of a life insurance policy. Call the insurance company and ask for a Change of Beneficiary form, or download it. Fill out the form as above. Again, no attorney needed.
3. Leave a bequest to St. John's. Add a codicil to your will or an amendment to your trust to provide a specific dollar amount (or a percentage of the remainder) to St. John's. You may want to check with your attorney on this one.

Remember there are a lot of St. John's churches and many St. John's Episcopalians. So, make sure your gift designation is for "St. John's Episcopal Petaluma".

There are many other ways to include St. John's in your personal legacy. The best way for you depends on your circumstances and intentions. We will be discussing other options in future newsletters.

Life Planning Chapter 2: Assets

BY CLIF HILL

In last month's newsletter we started building a three-ring binder Life Planning Guide with some examples of Basic Information that you might want to include in the first chapter of your guide. This month we will examine items to consider when you provide a list of your assets. The first challenge your loved ones will face in distributing your assets will be knowing just what your assets are. There have been cases where determining that has been very expensive and taken years, all of which could have been avoided by simply having a list. Your asset list should be as thorough as possible to include approximate value, purchase history, beneficiary, location, copies of important papers, appropriate contact people, and any other helpful information you can think of. Items covered on your list can include:

- All Trusts.
- Bank accounts, location of bank books, account website, passwords.
- Insurance policies.
- Investments, stocks, bonds, CD's, mutual funds, passwords, date and value at purchase.
- Pension information, death benefit, survivor benefits.
- Real property, location of deeds of trust, mortgage information (including mortgage insurance).
- Business ownership interests, partner information.
- Patents and copyrights.
- Income tax returns.
- Debts owed.
- Debts owed to you.

Finally, it's helpful to provide a quick reference for places and people your heirs can turn to should they need assistance. An example Asset Information sheet is attached to this newsletter. Some of the information may be redundant or duplicated in other chapters of your Life Planning Guide, however duplication is better than leaving something out.

In the next newsletter we will cover chapter 3 of the Life Planning Guide: Personal Property. And, remember St. John's will host a Life Planning Workshop from 11:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, May 2, 2020.

Life Planning Guide: Asset Information

Location of Will: _____ Executed on: _____

Location of Trust: _____ Executed on: _____

The Executor/Trustee of my Will/Estate/Trust is:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

The Guardian I have selected for my children is:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Attorney:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Financial Advisor:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Accountant/CPA:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Location of Tax Returns: _____