

The Episcopaper – December 2011



St. John's Episcopal Church

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The Rev. Mark J. Miller, Rector

Year-Round Schedule:

Sundays: 8am and 9:45am

Thursdays: 10am and 5pm

From the Rector:

The days before Christmas are indeed rich and full. There is intensity of shopping and preparation; intensity of remembrances and anxiety too. And hopes and desires, if for nothing else, hope for a merry and serene holiday with our families.

The darkness adds its own focus. We are aware of time and its changes. Northern hemisphere winters get darker and darker, but never without end.

The church's prayer in this season is also rich and full. All who have kept it love Advent – the four Sundays before Christmas Day.

We hear the prophets in the Bible readings. The prophets always spoke directly to the present moment, pointing out its intensity and importance. God's judgment was indeed a warning, but containing the promise of redemption. For it means the day is God's, and the present does not finally belong to our memories and the past – good times lost, experience of evil gripping us. No, God takes charge of the day to free us to look to the future.

The Advent Sundays take us along this path. First the prophets point to the day of judgment. John the Baptist appears for two Sundays. He points directly to Jesus - to Jesus' baptism and to his teaching. And John's message to the present: look up, turn around, and change your minds because God is not absent and uncaring. Finally Mary and Joseph, both of them anxious, hear the announcement of Jesus' birth, giving way to joy.

We light four candles. The color is dark, but it yields to joy. The most joyful of the Sundays is the fourth, so the custom of rose instead of purple is appropriate for that day.

~Fr. Mark

Looking Forward:

- ❖ Advent – Taizé Services Wednesday Evenings
- ❖ Holiday Tea – Episcopal Church Women
- ❖ Matthew House Giving Tree
- ❖ Women's Book Study News
- ❖ Outreach Project Status: Instant Oatmeal
- ❖ Green Christmas Music – "Environmental Geek"
- ❖ Christmas Pageant: "The Advent Tree"
- ❖ Poinsettia Memorials for Christmas
- ❖ Worship Services Scheduled
 - Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- ❖ Stewardship: Financial Pledge Appeal
 - Pledge Cards & Offering Envelopes
- ❖ College of Congregational Development: After the First Year
- ❖ Epiphany Potluck Dinner Planned

More Looking Forward:

- ❖ Baptism of the Lord/Blessing of Water
 - Earth Ministry Award
- ❖ Annual Meeting on January 22nd

Reflecting Back:

- ❖ Diocesan Convention Report
- ❖ Family Movie Night/"Green" Holiday Wrap-up
- ❖ Vestry Report
- ❖ Bishop Rickel Confirms Eight Parishioners

Plus:

- ❖ Many Thanks to...
 - Ushers & Greeters
 - Outreach Committee
- ❖ A Place for Business Cards
- ❖ Snohomish High School Holiday Play
- ❖ December & January Calendars

Advent – Taizé Services on Wednesday Evenings



Candles, darkness, soft Advent music - find peace and prayer during Advent. Join us Wednesdays: November 30 & December 7, 14 and 21 at 7 p.m. in the church. The 30-minute Taizé prayer services include chants, psalms and lessons, and Advent hymns. Nursery care is available.

Episcopal Church Women's Holiday Tea – December 3rd, 2-4 p.m.

The ECW's annual Holiday Tea is this Saturday, December 3rd, from 2-4 p.m. Tickets are available at the door: \$12/individual; \$25/family (1 or 2 adults and children). Raffle tickets are \$1 each.

Great gifts available: St. John's new Cookbook supplement and latest Cookbook, and special baked goods in the Parson's Pantry. Invite your friends and family to this holiday tradition!



Matthew House Giving Tree

Matthew House offers help and hope to the families of prisoners in the Washington State Department of Corrections. The Matthew House Giving Tree is in the Narthex, with colorful tags for the taking.

Unwrapped gifts for children ages 0-12, and **only** gift cards for ages 13-16 are being collected at St. John's through December 11th. In particular, new clothes, including winter coats, hats, mittens and boots for ages 0-12, and gift cards for clothes for ages 13-16.



Women's Book Study News

A new book for Advent: "*Made for Goodness*" by Desmond Tutu, Anglican Bishop and his daughter, Mpho, an Episcopal priest.

How does the way God view us differ from the way we see ourselves? How could looking at others with God's eyes change us and the world? Tutu addresses these questions along with commonly-asked ones such as "How do you maintain such faith and hope despite the terrible things you see and have lived through in your life thus far?" That is what this book is about. Through family stories and living histories our inherent goodness is explained.

So much more can be gained from a book when you gather with others and discuss it. Please join us Saturday mornings in the Memorial Room at 10 a.m. Call Connie Pynsky @ 425-339-4095 with questions.

Outreach Project Status: Instant Oatmeal

The St. John's Outreach Committee has joined forces with other organizations in Snohomish to assist the Snohomish Community Food Bank efforts to provide their clients with bags of food for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

For Thanksgiving food bags, St. John's collected ~325 boxes of instant oatmeal. Elizabeth Grant, director of the Food Bank extends a big "thank you" for the contributions from St. John's.

However, the need has surpassed original estimates, and for the Christmas food bags, we hope to collect **460+ boxes of individually-packaged instant**

oatmeal for St. John's contribution to the Snohomish Food Bank program.

The boxes of oatmeal can be placed at the back of the church. Please contribute and help feed our neighbors!



Lauren & Mary deliver 198 pounds of oatmeal (146 boxes) for Thanksgiving.

Green Christmas Music – the "Environmental Geek"

Creation Stewards just hosted our 4th annual family movie night. One of the features of this event has always been green Christmas songs. These are a collaborative effort of Candace and the two Nancys. So if you are looking for something new to sing this year, here they are. We think a lot of the ideas for taking care of the earth also work for having a more meaningful, spiritually-focused Christmas.



I'm dreaming of a green Christmas,
With presents gift-wrapped in cloth bags.
Where the bows are re-used,
Store bags are refused;
We bring our own bags to the store.....
Refrain: We take our own bags shopping.
I'm dreaming of a green Christmas,
With every gift chosen with care.
May your days be bright and waste-free.
And may all your Christmases be green.

Deck the halls with boughs of holly.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
Cedar swags are also jolly.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
No outdoor lights cut emissions.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
And save our men from risky missions.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

Use cloth napkins on your table.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
And beeswax candles when you're able.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
Tis the season for faith and family.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.
Don't let STUFF disrupt this holiday.
Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

~Nancy Vandenberg, St. John's "Environmental Geek"

Christmas Pageant: "The Advent Tree" – Sunday, December 18

The Annual Christmas Pageant (some call it a "miracle") kicks off the week of Christmas. Join us in the Parish Hall at 11:15 a.m., on Sunday, December 18th. Directed by Freda Solie and Dottie Nelson, with the help of the Sunday School teachers, the Sunday School children and St. John's youth present "The Advent Tree". We will learn about symbols one might not associate with Advent or Christmas.



Poinsettia Memorials for Christmas



The Altar Guild welcomes donations for Christmas Poinsettia Memorials. Envelopes for donations are located on the greeter table in the Narthex and in the pews. List your memorial information on the envelope front and enclose your donation. Checks can be made payable to St. John's, referencing the Altar Guild. Return your donation either in the offering plate or to the office by Sunday, December 18th. This will ensure your memorial will be listed in the Christmas bulletin.

Worship Services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

Plan to join us for worship services on Christmas Eve and/or on Christmas Day to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The scheduled services are:

Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24th:

- 5:00 p.m. Setting up the Crèche at a family service with carols and Eucharist. Nursery care available this service only.
- 10:30 p.m. Midnight Mass with choir music and singing of carols. Eucharist begins at 11:00 p.m.

Christmas Day, Sunday, December 25th:

- 8:00 a.m. Early Morning Eucharist
- 10:00 a.m. Christmas Morning Eucharist with carols and meditation at the Crèche.



Stewardship: Financial Pledge Appeal

Thank you to all who have returned financial pledges for 2012. Many of the financial pledges were blessed on November 20th. However, don't despair – it is not too late! Please return your completed pledge card, either in the mail, or bring it to Sunday worship and place your financial pledge in the offering plate. If you have lost your pledge card, extras are found in the Narthex or ask in the office. During the month of December, labeled offering envelope boxes will be in the lower Narthex, outside of the Nursery. Be sure to pick yours up, to save on postage costs.

College of Congregational Development: After the First Year

Seven members of St. John's (Father Mark, Dottie Nelson, Mary Nilsen, Ann Sage, Gerry Vandenberg, Phil Sevenants, and Eric Fritch) have attended four weekend sessions on Congregation Development. The first weekend we covered basic Organization Development theories as they relate to churches. We learned a method for assessing how healthy our church is and it was favorable. We were divided into two groups, each meeting with representatives from several other churches. We started out practicing how to facilitate a group.

The second weekend we learned more about each of our own personalities - our strengths and our weaknesses. This let us see how diversity in a group is good, but the leader needs to recognize the different styles. We continued to practice facilitating groups.

The third weekend we started to get into more "meat". We learned about conflict management. First, how to assess how bad the conflict is, and then methods to deal with

it dependent on how bad the conflict. We kept practicing our facilitation techniques.

The fourth weekend we joined back together and looked at our church. Our charge was to find a project to try back at our church. By practicing what we were learning, we decided an area that we should take on as our project is family ministry. So the first step will be interviewing families and kids separately about what they like and don't like about St. John's, as well as what they need and want. We will start that interviewing in January.

I think that part of the value of this program is the interchange with members of other churches. It was there that we got the idea of an "opt out" coffee hour instead of "opt in". All the members attending are becoming skilled at leading groups and should give us a strong core of facilitators. After we collect information from families we will move to the next stage of developing a strong family ministry which we hope will lead to a strong youth ministry.

~Dottie Nelson, Senior Warden

Epiphany Potluck Dinner Planned – Saturday, January 7th at 5 pm



The Epiphany Potluck Dinner is Saturday, January 7th, beginning at 5 p.m., to celebrate the conclusion of the Christmas season. As in past years, we will have three special Wise Men present their gifts, sing songs, and share an Epiphany cake, with its tokens inside.

New this year: all children present have the opportunity to be part of a "living nativity" and dress in costume. The potluck fare will be a "tour" of the St. John's cookbook and new supplement. Sign-up sheets and more details to come.

Baptism of the Lord/Blessing of Water/Family Service – January 8

Our celebration of the Baptism of the Lord will be Sunday, January 8th at both services. The 9:45 a.m. service will be a Family Service. We will bless water gathered from the Snohomish River, and be joined by Jessie Dye, Outreach Director, and Betsy Cannon, Outreach Coordinator of Earth Ministry, who will present a "Greening Congregation" banner to St. John's Creation Stewards.



Blessing of Water - January 9, 2011 Photo by Bill Tygret

Annual Meeting on January 22nd

St. John's Annual Meeting is Sunday, January 22nd. There will be one service that day – beginning at 9:15 a.m., and the Annual Meeting follows at 10:30 a.m.



Diocesan Convention Report



A complete wrap-up of the 101st Diocesan Convention held in late October can be found on the Diocesan website at this

link: <http://www.ecww.org/annual-convention-diocese-olympia>. Also, note there are various Convention documents linked on the right side of the screen, as well.

Questions? Ask the St. John's delegates: Sally Wesley, Bob Knight, Jim Church and Eleanor Church. Katie Akesson acted as a teller instead of our delegate.

Family Movie Night/"Green" Holiday Wrap-up

Nine families (including 15 children) gathered in the Parish Hall on November 19th to sing "green" carols, make Advent calendars, learn some ways to lower holiday stress, and watch the movie, *Rio*. Popcorn, trail mix, and juice were enjoyed during the movie. Kids used brown paper grocery bags and old Christmas cards to make eco-friendly Advent calendars for their families.

Watch for the next movie night, and join the fun!



Advent Calendars in the works! Photo by Marilyn Imbach.

Vestry Report

At their November meeting, the Vestry voted to place \$6,182 (funds received from a non-restricted annuity) into the Building Fund for maintenance needs.

Your Vestry Members are: Dottie Nelson (Senior Warden), Jud Chapin (Junior Warden), Mike Allert, Cathy Davis, Sharon Hall, Jerry Johnson, Rick Jusko, John Macho, David McConnell, Jack Norvell, Marsha Russell and Nancy Vandenberg.



Bishop Rickel Confirms Eight Parishioners on Christ the King Sunday



Bishop Rickel Preaching
Photo by Bill and Helen Tygret



Confirmands with Bishop Rickel & Father Mark
(Robert Moore not present) Photo by Eivind Nilsen

Christ the King Sunday (November 20th) was celebrated in a special way this year. Bishop Greg Rickel and Deacon Dennis Taylor joined us for both services, at which the financial pledges were blessed. The 10 a.m. service included the Confirmations of Emmalyn Beede, Brian

Berard, Chase Cote, Birgitta Moore, Robert Moore, Roy Rubin, Philip Sevenants and Janet Skidmore. The Vestry hosted the reception after the Confirmations. Bishop Rickel also met with the St. John's Congregational Development team.



Many Thanks to...

- **Our Ushers & Greeters** – each of you do a great job welcoming and caring for our parishioners and visitors each week!
- **Outreach Committee** – dedicated members work all year long to search out needs and help in many ways...some of which are not visible to us as a parish, but impact our church, our community and beyond.

A Place for Business Cards

A small area of the bulletin board outside the kitchen has been designated as the place for parishioners to post their business cards. Take a look – perhaps there is a service offered by someone you know, but had no clue.

Snohomish High School Holiday Play in December

The Snohomish High School Drama Club presents "*The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge*" on December 1, 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10, at the PAC. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., and curtain rises at 7:00 p.m. Cost is \$7 with ASB/\$10 without. Parishioner Karl Akesson is the Drama Advisor for Snohomish High School. A poster is found here: <http://shs.sno.wednet.edu/>.