

The Messenger

A newsletter of

St. John's Episcopal Church **Randolph, Vermont**

January 2011

Building for the future with thanksgiving and praise

Sr. Warden's Message

“Love shall be our token. Love be yours and love be mine. Love to God and all men, Love for plea and gift and sign.” – Christina Georgina Rossetti

A Season of Miracles

A couple months into our Interim Journey, I began to worry about the possibility of beginning the Advent season without benefit of an Interim Rector. As weeks passed, my worry increased at the likelihood that we would be without an Interim Rector for Christmas – how daunting that challenge seemed! With visions of the wonders and glories of Christmases past, the notion of “pulling off a Christmas” without resident clergy seemed impossible.

As the Sundays during our “supply period” passed, each with the blessing of terrific Supply Clergy, I began to focus... “All we have to do is find a wonderful supply priest for Christmas Eve and everything will be great!” Ah, but this wasn't such an easy task, even starting a diligent search early. Every supply priest I contacted already had plans to spend the holidays with family, or had already determinedly gone into hibernation for the winter. Can't say I blamed them in the least, but the situation was getting progressively dire. With no small amount of desperation I prayed for a solution. Then as the tension was getting rather severe, Karen Sheldon, having already served several Sundays, expressing such fondness for the People of St. John's, said that she'd be delighted to serve on Christmas Eve, bringing her extended family in tow. Hallelujah! Now we are set – Karen and her family would share our Christmas Eve services with us, the Sunday School kids were diligently preparing a wonderful pageant for that evening; everything was going to be perfect after all.

But it's never good to get too confident, leastwise in affairs of God... a week and a half before Christmas Eve, Karen called with some disappointing news – the “cold” she had developed a couple weeks earlier had only gotten worse, and her doctor had ordered her to bed rest lest she come down with pneumonia. Making matters worse, her husband Richard had been hospitalized with pneumonia, though he was improving steadily. How dreadful.

(continued on Page 2)

(Sr. Warden's Message, continued)

As we earnestly prayed for their recovery, we were back at square one... worse, Christmas Eve was yet much closer. Things were really looking bad.

Contingency planning went into effect. Additional calls made to clergy netted no positive results. The Worship Committee now considered the real possibility of being without benefit of clergy for Christmas. Evening Prayer and Pageant? Was it possible? Could we carry it off? On top of all the other minutiae the Worship Committee was trying to coordinate, we now had an entirely different and unfamiliar liturgy to attend to. That said, everyone quickly settled into the groove of making the best of it. We were going to do "this", and it would be, by God's grace, just fine.

And then it happened, just as the finishing touches were being put on the Evening Prayer liturgy, our mostly house-bound friend Burt Ulrich called me at home. Burt knew our plight and said that despite not little apprehension on his part, he couldn't leave us in the lurch. He said that if some people received communion only once per year, Christmas was no time to deny them of that. I couldn't agree more...

It was Christmas Eve far different than I ever imagined. It was Christmas Eve unlike any in the history of St. John's, I suspect. Never had I dreamt of wheeling Burt down the aisle during a Christmas processional to the altar now sitting at floor level, and how good it was seeing him there at that moment, again celebrating the Eucharist at the altar... of the team moving the altar back so that the scrim could be put in place for the children's both heartfelt and sometimes humorous pageant... of candlelight and carols and full pews—and of the blessings of community, family, teamwork and faith which made Christ so manifestly present at this re-creation of His birth.

It was indeed appropriate to feel so vulnerable, so exposed, so uncertain during this Advent season—watching, waiting, and anticipating. It was a gift to be reminded that God often answers our prayers in unexpected and unanticipated ways—better than we could have possibly imagined; as in the birth of a helpless infant born the Messiah in a barn in the dead of night. It was a blessing to realize that all of us working together towards the glory of God can indeed witness such a gift.

It was a Christmas to remember... a Season of Miracles.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.

-Steve

St. John's Episcopal Church 15 Summer Street Randolph, Vermont 05060

Vestry of St. John's

Steven Eubanks, Senior Warden
Ray Mayer, Junior Warden
Linda Nagy

Nancy Wright
Susan O'Malley
Ellen Baker

Treasurer, William Arnold

Receipts Treasurer, Jane Eubanks

Clerk, Pat Mayer

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Our website <http://stjohnsrandolphvt.org>

Transition Update

All information has been submitted to the Diocese as required. The Vestry is now awaiting a response from Lynn Bates, Minister for Transition. Our next meeting with companion Laura Hunter is scheduled for mid January.

Faithfully,

Your Vestry

Mark Your Calendars: St. John's Annual Meeting 2011 <<<<<<

The 2011 Annual Meeting and Potluck will take place on Sunday, January 23, 2011 in the Parish Hall following the 10 AM service. All Committee Chairs (and other suitable inspired individuals) are requested to submit your Annual Report entries to the Senior Warden no later than January 17th. Thanks! +Steve

Pastoral Care Committee

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 4, 2011.

Betsy Arnold
Ginny Cantlin

Ellie Streeter
Mickie Richardson

Pat Mayer
Beth Pelletier

St Margaret's Guild

The St Margaret's Guild had a wonderful bazaar. Special thanks to the Sunday School for joining us again – you add a lot of spirit!

The Poinsettias were very lovely at Christmas. Thanks to Louise and Lincoln Clark and Pat Mayer for picking up, wrapping and putting them out.

We will meet in early February to approve our budget and elect officers. If you have suggestions, please talk to Anna Sease, Linda Runnion or Pat Lawrence.

>>FOOD SHELF ITEMS<<

Please remember non-perishable food items for the Food Shelf as often as you can. The need is exceptionally high at this time.

Thanks, Mickie

Sunday Bulletin Announcements

For the foreseeable future, if you have announcements, meeting times or any other items you would like to appear in the Sunday Bulletin, please leave them in the appropriate shelf above the desk, in the work room office by each Thursday afternoon. If you are not able to get to the office please call me or e-mail me with anything you'd like to share. Our home phone is 802-276-3372 and my e-mail is pat@hearthlink.com.

Thank you all for helping to make this flow well.

On behalf of the Worship committee
Pat Mayer

Intercessions Prayers and Thanksgivings

When you have concerns or prayers for the Intercessions shared in Sunday Service please let me know so they may be added to the list. As always, last minute items may be written in for the Intercessor on Sunday mornings. These may also be left in the office or you may call me at 276-3372.

Thank you so much,

Pat Mayer

Please note – the Outreach Committee, Nancy Wright and Pat Lawrence, is looking for more members.

