

The Messenger

A newsletter of

St. John's Episcopal Church

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Mark Preece, Interim Rector

October 2011

Building for the future with thanksgiving and praise

Message from our Interim Rector

Dear Friends—

The life story of St. Francis of Assisi is well known: he grew up a child of wealth and dreamed of what most of us dream of as young people: being a rock star (a *troubadour*, in the language of his age), being a sports star, being a war hero, being popular. An unsuccessful military campaign, some time in prison, and a serious illness gave him space to pray and ponder; then a series of visions (and a sermon, of all things!) caused him to change his life. He renounced his family's wealth, dressed in a gardener's rough tunic, and took to begging for his food.

So far, this is not a particularly amazing story—you can meet people living on the streets of any major American city whose life stories are not so different. The miracle of St. Francis is that he embraced this life with such joy that others wanted to follow him, to live the way he lived; first tens, then hundreds, then thousands of others.

He lived his life with such integrity – there was such consistency between his principles and his actions – that people flocked to be with him. He said, “It is no use walking anywhere to preach unless our walking is our preaching.”

Even during his lifetime, people began to tell stories about him: *He preached to the birds! He negotiated with wolves!* But the really miraculous thing about him was the most down-to-earth: in St. Francis people experienced the possibility of living a life of real freedom, committed to following Jesus. He was free because he had no fear of losing what he had, and because he did not long for what he did not have. No one and no thing has power over

(continued on Page 2)

(Interim Rector's message, continued)

someone who finds such deep joy in things that are free. In a scary and dangerous world, he *chose* to be fearless, uncompromising, compassionate, and joyful, no matter what, and others found that in his presence they had the power to make that choice, too.

St. Francis started out rich and became poor, but we don't remember him for what he gave up. We remember him for what he discovered he *had*, and for how he lived as a result. His life invites us to ask how we can live out our lives in a way that is marked by fearlessness and gratitude, by an awareness that the most important things we have are the things that cannot be taken from us.

As we get on with our work over the coming year, as we talk about the community St. John's has been and is and dreams of becoming, as we ponder the gifts we have been given and the opportunities we face, I offer you the face of St. Francis (feast day October 4), who once said, "Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

Peace,

Fr. Mark.

Visitors and newcomers are always welcome here!!

Please visit our website <http://stjohnsrandolphvt.org>

Our e-mail info@stjohnsrandolphvt.org

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

Delegates to 2011 Diocesan Convention – Gay Gaston, Ellen Baker, Mickie Richardson
Alternate Delegates – Susan O'Malley, Neil Richardson, Marcia Stone

Pastoral Care Committee

Pastoral Care met September 6th with our opening prayer read. Mark Preece joined us and we were grateful to have his presence. After our usual check in we spoke of those in the parish effected by Hurricane Irene.

This was Betsy's last meeting. Ellie also resigned after many years on the committee. New members are needed. This is a very rewarding commitment.

Our next Pastoral Care meeting will be on Tuesday, October 11 at 10am in the Canterbury Room.

Thank you

Betsy Arnold
Beth Pelletier

Ginny Cantlin
Mickie Richardson

Pat Mayer
Ellie Streeter

St. Margaret's Guild

The St. Margaret's Guild met on September 24 to plan our Bazaar. The Bazaar will be on Saturday, December 3rd, from 9am until 2pm, in the parish hall.

We will have decorated Wreaths, Crafts, Baked items, Trinkets and Treasures, Penny social, a Vermont products raffle basket, possibly a Silent Auction item, as well as the Sunday School table and the soup, salad, pie Luncheon. A very busy day!

We need help with:

- wiring pinecones. The cones and picks will be in the vestibule shortly. If you don't know how, ask Ellen Baker. It can be easily done watching the game!
- Items for the gift baskets. This year, we are focusing on 5-6 themed baskets. The themes are; Baby Boy, Baby Girl, spa, gardening, Christmas. *Please have them in the kitchen no later than October 30th.*

We will have 2 ornament making sessions:

SATURDAY OCTOBER 15 from 9-12: making beaded stars, milkweed pod stars, etc.

SATURDAY OCTOBER 22 from 9-12: making sheep ornaments and earrings, etc.

We would love to have another idea or 2 each time ("etc"), so we can break into groups and make different ornaments. (30 of anything is likely too many!)

If you have an idea, talk to Anna, Louise or Pat Lawrence. If you have materials or glue guns, please bring them.

BOW MAKING SESSIONS: times/dates to be finalized, keep your ears peeled during announcement times, or watch the "posting" pole in the vestibule!

WREATH DECORATING starts Monday November 28 at 9am, coffee served!

(St. Margaret's Guild report continued on next page)

(St. Margaret's Guild report continued on next page)

As always, we need crafts, Penny Social items, VT products, Trinkets and Treasures, baked goodies. PLEASE PRICE AS MANY OF YOUR ITEMS AS YOU CAN!

If you've never taken part, it's never too late!! We share a lot of laughter and fellowship!!

Thanks, Pat Lawrence

Fall Finishing Friday – October 14th

The next Finishing Friday is Friday, October 14 in the afternoon. Please bring whatever you need to work on and stay a while!

Pat Lawrence and Louise Clark

Sr. Warden's Message – Irene: An Object Lesson in Gratitude

It is through a humble heart that God can speak to us most clearly.

Vermonters tend to regard themselves as pretty self-reliant. We have four wheel drive vehicles, woodstoves that operate when electricity doesn't cooperate, chainsaws, snow tires and plows and generators. We're pretty good at dealing with whatever our environment tends to throw our way... or at least take comfort in being "able to ride it out" until it's over.

Vermonters also tend to have a strong affinity to their natural surroundings; the hills and valleys, the trees, rock, weather and water that make up our world. It's rougher living here than elsewhere. We're tougher people than most – after all, who would willingly put up with Vermont winters by choice?

You could generalize this to our entire country—We started as far-flung colonial outposts. We relied on our own resourcefulness to get by, our own ingenuity to succeed. And although our founding fathers (and mothers) routinely gave thanks to Divine Providence for their very survival, our national DNA is imprinted with the drive of a self-made people, the hubris of our own abilities. But as the years have worn on, our thankfulness has often become more perfunctory and ourselves rather less than humble. We begin to persuade ourselves that our lot is entirely of our own doing—those who work hard always succeed. Those who don't work hard....well, it's their own fault, isn't it?

Is it? Is it really? Do any of us really get what we deserve? Do we really deserve all that we get? Did we really "earn" what we already have, let alone all that we still want?

The stories of devastation and kindness in the wake of Irene are countless; of neighbors

(Sr Warden message continued)

helping neighbors, of strangers hiking miles to offer food, water and comfort to those stranded, of groups providing shelter and clothing to families whose households were swept away by torrents of water, of entire communities rising as one to gather and rebuild. Indeed, there are enough stories to tell for lifetimes to fill.

Jane and I, like many, lost acreage to Irene—parts of the property will never look the same again; but we have each other, our house, barn and animals. I know of other families, their yards full of bagged heaps of sodden clothing, mementos, and memories, thankful they have each other, that their home still stands. I know of people whose homes are destroyed, thankful for their lives, for the fragments of their households they can still piece together.

About a year ago, I read an article about one young couple who, in 2010 spent all they had to buy three acres of land just south of Rutland. Their dream was to start a CSA (community supported agriculture), a vegetable farm, to develop deep and meaningful connections with the people nourished by the food they grew, to fully support and be fully supported by community, to have their needs met by community and to give back generously with healthy and vibrant food, feeding friends and neighbors in times of need and difficulty. Ryan Beauchamp and Kara Fitzgerald invested their souls and their labors in Evening Song Farm, three acres of untested fields which hadn't grown crops before. Long hours. Much patience. Great devotion. Neither were new to farming—there are good years, there are bad years. This summer began their first harvest at this location. It was indeed a huge joy and relief for them to see vegetables growing so well on their land.

On Sunday, August 28th the Mill River flooded, changed course and ran directly through the middle of their farm. Their fields and crops destroyed, unlikely to be replanted in their lifetime, like many farms in central and southern Vermont...

'Our hearts are broken wide open at seeing our beautiful land destroyed so thoroughly and irreparably. The most painful part is to connect with the loss of all the dreams and goals that had started to materialize and take form—dreams of a vibrant CSA community; a space that's nourishing and healthy for people to come, work, and stay; healthy and fertile soil that grows nourishing food for people in our community—the loss of those dreams cuts most deeply. And yet inseparably connected to the deep pain of the loss of our land and our dreams for it is also the possibility for us to start again at re-envisioning our dreams and starting over again to give them form, to be humbled and softened by the support of our friends and neighbors that will make it possible for us to move forward and begin again at working to make the world a more kind and beautiful place. We also feel so immensely grateful to be nestled amongst the supportive and caring people in this community. We're so grateful for all your support as CSA members as we took the risk to start a new farm in this spot. Your commitment to us allowed us to live a beautiful dream, if only for a brief while. We hope you'll stay in touch as we do whatever we can to begin again'- Excerpt from a letter to Evening Song CSA members

In the midst of that devastation is humility and gratitude...and I'd argue the first fruits of their labors is not so much their crops, but a community which will help their dreams live and thrive—that what they started giving their community will come back to them manifold, that they may yet give again.

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(Sr Warden message continued)

It's but one story. An inspiring story. There are countless others.

Sometimes we don't fully appreciate the blessings we've received until something happens which turns our world upside down. Sometimes we aren't truly thankful for what we have until it's gone completely. Sometimes it takes a rather dramatic shift of perspective to discern our priorities. If we're lucky, we'll find that what we truly treasure is still there, buried under the mounds of flotsam we once found so valuable. Sometimes like Jacob, we need to wrestle with the angel until it blesses us. Each of us may have our handicaps, setbacks and disasters, yet we are all blessed in some way. What we ourselves might lack, other parts of the body of Christ contain. Those that might appear "better off" might indeed need blessings from those deemed "less fortunate".

This fall we will use the theme of Feasting on Gratitude for our Pledge Commitment drive. In the weeks ahead we will learn what it means to be good stewards of all of God's blessings; our lives, our communities, our church and each treasure we hold in our hearts. Let the first fruits of our own harvest be thankfulness. And let us feed our hearts and minds with a Fest of Gratitude for all the blessings we've received.

Thanks be to God.

Steve

Food Shelf Sundays

Please bring food donations the 3rd Sunday every month. The food shelf greatly appreciates our help! And our dollars buy even more food than what our donations cover because of the food shelf's buying power.

PLEASE NOTE – OUR HELP IS NEEDED MORE THAN EVER DUE TO THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HURRICANE IRENE !!

3rd Sundays – Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 18

**Thanks
Pat Lawrence**

Community Notes

Randolph Community Suppers

The Community Supper for October will be potluck and held on Tuesday, October 25th, at Green Mountain Gospel Church, Hebard Hill Rd. Doors open at 5 pm

Anniversaries - October 2011

Birthdays:

October 12	Joyce Burrell	October 17	Jim Gardner
October 14	Norman Runnion	October 18	Pat Lawrence
October 14	Brian Kennedy	October 24	Jennifer Curtin

Baptisms:

October 12 **Rico Lioce**

Wedding:

October 16	Ray and Pat Mayer	October 17	Bill and Betsy Arnold
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Sunday ministries

	Eucharistic Minister	Readers	Ushers
Oct 2 10 am	Bob Sparadeo	Joe Pelletier	Susan O'Malley
Oct 9 10 am	Linda Runnion	Mickie & Neil R	Anna & Lee Sease
Oct 16 10 am	Christine Gilbert	Nancy Wright	David & Gay Gaston
Oct 23 10 am	Pat Mayer	Neil Richardson	Ellen & Phil Plumb
Oct 30 10 am	Ray Mayer	Pat Lawrence	Pat Lawrence

	Oblations	Intercessions	Coffee Hour
Oct 2 10 am	Betsy & Bill Arnold	Louise Clark	Louise Clark
Oct 9 10 am	Mickie & Neil R	Nancy Dubois	Pat Mayer
Oct 16 10 am	Pat & Ray Mayer	Pat Mayer	Sunday School
Oct 23 10 am	TBA	Susan O'Malley	Susan O'Malley
Oct 30 10 am	TBA	Mickie Richardson	Ellen Baker