

Sharing God's Love in Our Community Through Prayer, Study and Action

St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Afton, NY
(Member of the Chenango District)

The Parish News

www.stannsaftonny.org

The Newsletter of St. Ann's Episcopal Church, Afton, NY

Clergy: The Reverend Fr. David A. Hanselman Cell: 761-4601 Office: 656-9502

If you desire Father David to visit you or give you a call, please contact him at one of the numbers above.

In an emergency and Fr. David cannot be reached, please contact one of the wardens.

Wardens: Dan Vail: 607-240-9264 Tracey Tallmadge: 607-343-1301



Ah, December. Advent and Christmas! And we are still working our way through this pandemic... Our second Christmas with Covid hanging over us. I took the opportunity to go back and see what I wrote last year and in 2019. In 2019, I was (not surprisingly) oblivious to the coming pandemic. But last year, I think there were some important points (if I do say so myself) that we should remember for this year – there's still a lot of anxiety around, people are exhausted – mentally, emotionally, and physically – so

we still need to soften our hearts to be open to the pain we and others are going through. Along these same lines, we've also witnessed some incredible examples of God's work being done in the world around us. It won't make big news, but most of the people in the world are really, truly caring for others. It's the relatively small number of loud, selfish, and angry people that seem to be making all the headlines. Thankfully, there are many indications that we're much closer to the end of the scourge of Covid-19 than we are at the beginning. So now is a perfect time to begin to consider a world without Covid hanging over us. It may still be too early to make any definite plans, but we can surely consider the things we've learned – successes and failures in maintaining our faith and our communities of faith. The stresses we've been under have been incredible. Again, we're still not done with Covid, there are still people suffering and in need, but a time will come when we can relax. A time will come when this scourge will be over. The incredible stresses we've been under will end. But, while we've made our way through this time, where have we seen God at work? Where have we seen our faith strengthened? Alternatively, where has our faith needed the help and support of others? Are we (individually and collectively) like a caterpillar being transformed into a butterfly or are we more like trees being whipped every which way by the storm and just hoping we can spring back to "normal" and not be broken? Or are we something else entirely? There's lots of questions as we seek to find our way forward. The good news, as always, is that we don't need to be doing this work on our own. As we speak, the bishop is gathering people together to look forward as a diocese; but it's also work we need to do as parishes and individuals. To try to simplify a complex thing by drawing upon images from our faith – it's mostly up to us to determine whether these last couple years have been a refining fire or something more like a woeful punishment as we've wandered around in the desert not sure of which way to go. Do we have a direction – a compass bearing? A couple months ago the Diocese offered a conversation led by Bishop Mark D. W. Edington. He shared many fascinating thoughts, but one thing in particular he offered that has stuck in my mind is this observation: God has a mission. God's mission has a church. Are we that church? One way to elaborate Bishop Edington's observation is this – Scripture provides us with a clear vision of God's will for God's creation – love, healing, reconciliation. God's mission calls for a community (a church) dedicated to living in accord with God's will. Are we willing and able to be that community? Advent and Christmas – the annual renewal and reminder to prepare ourselves for the great celebration of the coming of our King; a celebration of the incredible love God has for God's creation. Amen! Alleluia!



DECEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE

During the months of January and February, Zoom services will take place on Morning Prayer Sundays. Holy Eucharist Sundays will take place in the church. At this time, MASKS ARE REQUIRED for in church services. If you forget your mask, extras are available at the back of the church. In the case of severe weather conditions, phone contact will be made if a service is cancelled.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO SERVE

If you are not currently receiving email Zoom invites, then please send your email address and you will be added to the parish listing. Bottom415@aol.com Yes, the "zoom" service is different, but change is what life is all about.

Services are also available through the Diocese via their website.

Service Schedule						
Date	Service	OT Reader	Epistle Reader	CS	EM	Acolytes
12/5	HC	R.Felldin	R.Felldin			D. Vail
12/12	MP	C.Cimini	C.Cimini			B.Vail
12/24	HC	Various	Various			B.Vail
12/26	ZOOM	ZOOM SERVICE				
Morning Prayer Leaders				/Food Pantry		
12/12	MP	T.Vail, T.Tallmadge				
Lectionary (Year B)						
		Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel	
Dec 5		Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4	Canticle 4 or 16	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3:1-6	
Dec 12		Zephaniah 3:14-20	Canticle 9	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18	
Dec 19		Micah 5:2-5a	Canticle 15 (or 3) or Psalm 80:1-7	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)	
Dec 24		Carols	Carols	Carols	Carols	
Dec 26		Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 147 or 147:13-21	Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7	John 1:1-18	
Jan 2		Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalm 84 or 84:1-8	Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a	Matthew 2:13-15,19-23 or Luke 2:41-52 or Matthew 2:1-12	



Altar Duty for the month of December is Betty Vail 639-1201. If you are giving flowers in memory of a loved one, please notify Betty Vail 639-1201. No later than the Thursday before the designated Sunday

St. Ann's Prayer List for *December 2021*

It has been suggested that the names of individuals on the parish prayer list be included in the newsletter. A current listing follows. The names listed are not necessarily members of the parish and may include individuals or other requests for which we have been asked to pray. The clergy persons of the Chenango District are included. Please remember these individuals in your personal prayers. *"We are trying to be sure that our prayer list is as updated as possible and don't want to remove someone that should be on it."* Send or give any additions or changes to Tom Vail, 639-1201. Please note: Long term names will be left on the list indefinitely, short term names for two/three months unless updated.

SHORT TERM

Raevin
Eileen
Anne
Pat
Ralph George



Please keep in your prayers our shut-ins –
Pete and Carol Vail
Joyce Whitney
Marion Diehl
Grace Affuso
Bonnie MacPherson

LONG TERM

Fr. David Hanselman
Fr. Steven White
Deacon Kay
Pastor Becky
Fr. Geoff Doolittle
Very Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan-Probe
Bishop Michael Curry
The Revs Ralph & Liz Groskoph
Emmanuel Church
Epiphany Church
Zion Church
St. Paul's Church
St. Andrew's Church
St. Matthews Church
St. Peter's Church
Carol Cindy
Peter Katy
Joyce Jason
Mya Dakota
Holly Doc
Clifford Hailey
Richard Joan
Nate Bobbi
Marion Thurston
Rachel Fred
Bill Barbara
Bonnie Tyler
David Terra

The General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church, the Episcopal Divinity School. The Learning Communities Initiative of the Diocese. The following prayer is from the Evening Prayer service in the Book of Common Prayer: *Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous: and all for your love's sake. Amen.*

Birthdays

12/01 Lexi Cutmore
12/08 Woody Robbins
12/16 Sandy Proffitt
12/18 Abigail Burch
12/20 Dan Vail



Anniversaries

12/5 Dave & Nancy Setford

Please let me know if I am missing a Birthday or Anniversary. Call 607-343-1301 or email: cttallmadg@aol.com

Your Way or God's Way

Each of us will have to answer to God.

Romans 14:12 NCV

The popular song "My Way" is a perfectly good tune, but it's not such a great guide for living.

If you're looking for life's perfect prescription, forget about insisting on your own way and start doing things God's way, even if you're sorely tempted to do otherwise.

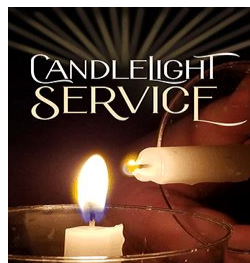
Sometimes God's plans are crystal clear to us; sometimes they're not.

When you're uncertain about God's direction for your life, keep searching and keep praying. If you do, in time God will answer your prayers and make His plans known. You'll discover His plans by doing things

His way, and you'll be eternally grateful that you did.

God not only orders our steps, but He orders our stops.

Author Unknown



December 24th Christmas Eve service will begin at 4:30p.m. Masks are required and social distancing.

December 26th - A Zoom service will begin at 9:15 - **No** in-church service.

January 2nd - Holy Eucharist at 9:15a.m. - In church service

**CHURCH TERMS:**

three-dimensional scene of the Nativity with the Holy Infant in its "crib."

CRECHE -- French, "crib." A

Many thanks to Calvin Tallmadge, Jay Christian and Bailey DeBetta for setting up the Creche. Always a very beautiful scene to remind us of the Christmas season.



There was no Vestry Meeting in November

Why the Chimes Rang

by Raymond Macdonald Alden

There was once in a faraway country where few people have ever traveled, a wonderful church. It stood on a high hill in the midst of a great city; and every Sunday, as well as on sacred days like Christmas, thousands of people climbed the hill to its great archways, looking like lines of ants all moving in the same direction. When you came to the building itself, you found stone columns and dark passages, and a grand entrance leading to the main room of the church. This room was so long that one standing at the doorway could scarcely see to the other end, where the choir stood by the marble altar. In the farthest corner was the organ; and this organ was so loud, that sometimes when it played, the people for miles around would close their shutters and prepare for a great thunderstorm. Altogether, no such church as this was ever seen before, especially when it was lighted up for some festival, and crowded with people, young and old. But the strangest thing about the whole building was the wonderful chime of bells.

At one corner of the church was a great gray tower, with ivy growing over it as far up as one could see. I say as far as one could see, because the tower was quite great enough to fit the great church, and it rose so far into the sky that it was only in very fair weather that anyone claimed to be able to see the top. Even then one could not be certain that it was in sight. Up, and up, and up climbed the stones and the ivy; and as the men who built the church had been dead for hundreds of years, everyone had forgotten how high the tower was supposed to be.

Now all the people knew that at the top of the tower was a chime of Christmas bells. They had hung there ever since the church had been built and were the most beautiful bells in the world. Some thought it was because a great musician had cast them and arranged them in their place; others said it was because of the great height, which reached up where the air was clearest and purest; however, that might be no one who had ever heard the chimes denied that they were the sweetest in the world. Some described them as sounding like angels far up in the sky; others as sounding like strange winds singing through the trees. But the fact was that no one had heard them for years and years. There was an old man living not far from the church who said that his mother had spoken of hearing them when she was a little girl, and he was the only one who was sure of as much as that. They were Christmas chimes, you see, and were not meant to be

played by men or on common days. It was the custom on Christmas Eve for all the people to bring to the church their offerings to the Christ-Child; and when the greatest and best offering was laid on the altar there used to come sounding through the music of the choir the Christmas chimes far up in the tower. Some said that the wind rang them, and others, that they were so high that the angels could set them swinging. But for many long years they had never been heard. It was said that people had been growing less careful of their gifts for the Christ-Child, and that no offering was brought great enough to deserve the music of the chimes.

Every Christmas Eve the rich people still crowded to the altar, each one trying to bring some better gift than any other, without giving anything that he wanted for himself, and the church was crowded with those who thought that perhaps the wonderful bells might be heard again. But although the service was splendid, and the offerings plenty, only the roar of the wind could be heard, far up in the stone tower.

Now, several miles from the city, in a little country village, where nothing could be seen of the great church but glimpses of the tower when the weather was fine, lived a boy named Pedro, and his little brother. They knew very little about the Christmas chimes, but they had heard of the service in the church on Christmas Eve and had a secret plan which they had often talked over when by themselves, to go to see the beautiful celebration.

"Nobody can guess, Little Brother," Pedro would say; "all the fine things there are to see and hear; and I have even heard it said that the Christ-Child sometimes comes down to bless the service. What if we could see Him?"

The day before Christmas was bitterly cold, with a few lonely snowflakes flying in the air, and a hard white crust on the ground. Sure, enough Pedro and Little Brother were able to slip quietly away early in the afternoon; and although the walking was hard in the frosty air, before nightfall they had trudged so far, hand in hand, that they saw the lights of the big city just ahead of them. Indeed, they were about to enter one of the great gates in the wall that surrounded it, when they saw something dark on the snow near their path and stepped aside to look at it.

It was a poor woman, who had fallen just outside the city, too sick and tired to get in where she might have found shelter. The soft snow made of a drift a sort of pillow for her, and she would soon be so sound asleep, in the wintry air, that no one could ever waken her again. All this Pedro saw in a moment, and he knelt beside her and tried to rouse her, even tugging at her arm a little, as though he would have tried to carry her away. He turned her face toward him, so that he could rub some of the snow on it, and when he had looked at her silently a moment, he stood up again, and said:

"It's no use, Little Brother. You will have to go on alone."

"Alone?" cried Little Brother. "And you do not see the Christmas festival?"

"No," said Pedro, and he could not keep back a bit of a choking sound in his throat. "See this poor woman. Her face looks like the Madonna in the chapel window, and she will freeze to death if nobody cares for her. Everyone has gone to the church now, but when you come back you can bring someone to help her. I will rub her to keep her from freezing, and perhaps get her to eat the bun that is left in my pocket."

"But I cannot bear to leave you, and go on alone," said Little Brother.

"Both of us need not miss the service," said Pedro. "And it had better be I than you. You can easily find your way to church; and you must see and hear everything twice, Little Brother--once for you and once for me. I am sure the Christ-Child must know how I should love to come with you and worship Him; and oh! if you get a chance, Little Brother, to slip up to the altar without getting in any one's way, take this little silver piece of mine, and lay it down for my offering, when no one is looking. Do not forget where you have left me and forgive me for not going with you."

In this way he hurried Little Brother off to the city and winked hard to keep back the tears, as he heard the crunching footsteps sounding farther and farther away in the twilight. It was hard to lose the music and splendor of the Christmas celebration that he had been planning for so long and spend the time instead in that lonely place in the snow.

The great church was a wonderful place that night. Everyone said that it had never looked so bright and beautiful before. When the organ played and the thousands of people sang, the walls shook with the sound, and little Pedro, away outside the city wall, felt the earth tremble around them.

At the close of the service came the procession with the offerings to be laid on the altar. Rich men and great men marched proudly up to lay down their gifts to the Christ-Child. Some brought wonderful jewels, some baskets of gold so heavy that they could scarcely carry them down the aisle. A great writer laid down a book that he had been making for years and years. And last of all walked the king of the country, hoping with all the rest to win for himself the chime of the Christmas bells. There went a great murmur through the church as the people saw the king take from his head the royal crown, all set with precious stones, and lay it gleaming on the altar, as his offering to the Holy Child. "Surely," everyone said, "we shall hear the bells now, for nothing like this has ever happened before."

But still only the cold old wind was heard in the tower and the people shook their heads; and some of them said, as they had before, that they never really believed the story of the chimes and doubted if they ever rang at all.

The procession was over, and the choir began the closing hymn. Suddenly the organist stopped playing; and everyone looked at the old minister, who was standing by the altar, holding up his hand for silence. Not a sound could be heard from anyone in the church, but as all the people strained their ears to listen, there came softly, but distinctly, swinging through the air, the sound of the chimes in the tower. So far away, and yet so clear the music seemed--so much sweeter were the notes than anything that had been heard before, rising, and falling away up there in the sky, that the people in the church sat for a moment as still as though something held each of them by the shoulders. Then they all stood up together and stared straight at the altar, to see what great gift had awakened the long silent bells.

But all that the nearest of them saw was the childish figure of Little Brother, who had crept softly down the aisle when no one was looking and had laid Pedro's little piece of silver on the altar.



*To one
and All
from St.
Ann's*

The Final Word

Accountability: **Proverbs: 27:6** – *Wounds from a friend are better than many kisses from an enemy.....*

The Proverbs above says it all.

NLT-GEZ

St. Ann's Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 22
Afton, New York 13730

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Clergy: The Rev. David A. Hanselman
Worship Service: Sunday 9:15 am

Address Label Here

