

The Parish News

St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Afton, MD

Member of the Chenango District

December 2013

Clergy The Reverend David A. Hanselman

761-4601 cell 656-9502 office

Wardens:

-Judy Rettberg

208-4023

-Tracey Tallmadge

343-1301

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



Make a Note

-Dec. 7th: Afton Christmas parade begins at 5:30 p.m.

-Dec. 8th: Angel Tree gifts are due at St. Ann's.

-Dec. 15th: Poinsettia orders are due to Betty Vail

-Dec. 15th: Vestry will meet following fellowship time.

-Dec. 22nd: Brunch in the parish hall following the worship service. Bring a dish to share. Sign up on the sheet in the parish hall.

-Dec. 24th: St. Ann's Christmas Eve candle light service begins at 4:30 pm.

From Fr. Dave

Let me begin by wishing everyone a Happy New (Liturgical) Year!! Have you made your resolutions yet? I've got one big resolution remaining from last year. You might call it an un-resolved resolution...

Well, it turns out that I've failed at something I was really hoping to accomplish. You see, for the 2d time, I've failed to be accepted for blood donation. And, again for the 2d time it's because my pulse rate was over 100 bpm.

For those of you who remember way back to last Spring, you'll recall how I asked for your support to find the courage to try to give blood again. If you don't remember, I'm a world-class chicken when it comes to giving blood. I'm such a chicken that it's actually quite insulting to chickens.

Well, I can't begin to tell you the joy I felt when a number of you came out to support me in my first attempt (in June, if memory serves). I thought it might have been because of all the excitement that my pulse was elevated.

So a few weeks ago I tried to go by myself; hoping without the excitement to finally get it done. Well, no luck once again. To be honest, a part of me was relieved. But, surprisingly, it was just a small, little bit of a relief. I actually found it quite troubling that for a second time I failed at something I want to accomplish.

So, what am I going to do? Keep trying, and quite possibly keep failing? Maybe give up altogether and tell myself that at least I tried? Or, perhaps I'll try to find new ways to prepare? What would you do if you were in my shoes?

I know the kind of person that I want to be, but it shouldn't be this difficult to accomplish. Should it? I know the kind of person I want to be, but I keep falling short. What's a person to do?

For months now, I've been a part of a district discernment group. We begin and end each meeting with a prayer from Thomas Merton; part of which reads, "...we believe the desire to please you does in fact please you. And we hope we have that desire in all that we are doing." It's a difficult question with no really easy answer: What is a person to do?

God's guidance and blessings to you all!

David+

Service Schedule

Date	OT Reader	Epistle	CS	EM	Acolytes
HC Dec 1	M. Harding	D. Becker	AC	B. Vail	A. Cimini/J. Proffitt
MP Dec 8	R. Felldin	D. Becker	TV	-----	J. Proffitt
HC Dec 15	J. Proffitt	M. Harding	BV	D. Becker	D. Becker/B. Vail
MP Dec 22	J. Rettberg	T. Tallmadge	JP	-----	A. Cimini
HC Dec 24	Lessons and Carols		--	D. Becker	B. Vail/A. Vail
Christmas Eve					
MP Dec 29	S. Proffitt	R. Felldin	PV	-----	J. Proffitt
HC Jan. 5	J. Rettberg	T. Vail	TV	J. Rettberg	B. Vail

Morning Prayer:
 Dec. 8 - B. Vail/B. Wright
 Dec. 22 - B. Vail/J. Proffitt
 Dec. 29 - J. Rettberg/R. Felldin

Church School: Dec. 15—B. Vail
 Dec. 1 - R. Felldin Dec. 22—S. Proffitt
 Dec. 8 - K. Vail Dec. 29—No Church School—Christmas week

MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO READ, LEAD MORNING PRAYER, EM, ACOLYTE. & TEACH.

Note to all who serve: It would be most helpful if, when you cannot make your assigned date, you would arrange for a substitute. If you are unable to do that, please notify a warden. Thanks for your cooperation!

Lectionary (Year A)

Date	Psalm	OT Reading	Epistle	Gospel
Dec. 1 1 Advent	122	Isaiah 2:1-5	Romans 13:11-14	Matthew 24:36-44
Dec. 8 2 Advent	72:1-7, 18-19	Isaiah 11:1-10	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
Dec. 15 3 Advent	146:4-9	Isaiah 35:1-10	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2-11
Dec. 22 4 Advent	80:1-7, 16-18	Isaiah 7:10-16	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-25
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve	Service of Carols and Scripture readings			
Dec. 29 1 Christmas	147	Isaiah 61:10—62:3	Galatians 3::23-25; 4:4-7	John 1:1-18
Jan. 5 2 Christmas	84	Jeremiah 31:7-14	Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-19a	Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Altar Guild

Altar Guild Duty—Betty Vail (639-1201). If you wish to purchase or provide flowers for the altar on a particular Sunday, call Betty. If you are giving flowers in memory of a loved one, sign up on the bulletin board in the parish hall and please notify Pete Vail (639-1444) by no later than the Wednesday before the designated Sunday so that he can include a notice in the Sunday bulletin.

Important Announcement

To order a poinsettia for the church on Christmas Eve in memory of loved ones, please see, call or email Betty Vail (607-639-1201) (Bettom415@aol.com) no later than Dec. 15th.

Vestry Highlights—November 2013

1. Outreach: Voted to send \$200 to the Episcopal Relief & Development earmarked specifically for relief in the Philippine Islands. Voted to send the Christmas Eve plate offering plus \$100 to The General Theological Seminary.
2. The 3-parish youth group packed and wrapped 29 shoe boxes of “goodies” for Operation Christmas Child. Thanks to all who donated items to be packed.
3. The recent St. Ann’s Closet clothing giveaway was very successful.
4. Treasurer Pete Vail presented account balances, budget and cash flow reports. Our cash flow is positive. Voted to move \$10K to the Diocesan Investment Fund (Intermediate-term.)

UTO Fall Ingathering

As of November 24th, the UTO Fall Ingathering has resulted in 12 people donating \$158.95. A big thank you to all who donated!

Youth Group Doings

The 3-parish youth group had a fun day at St. Ann’s packing and wrapping boxes, listening to Christmas music and eating goodies. Thanks to Kerri & Dan Vail for coordinating the Operation Christmas Child packing, wrapping and delivering the boxes to the drop-off church in Johnson City for mailing to children around the world.

Afton Interchurch Council Items

-The Community Thanksgiving Day meal was well attended and delicious. Thanks to Mike and Andrea Debetta, Duane Kane and Judy Rettberg for their kitchen work. (Weather forced cancellation of the Community Worship Service.) The Afton Christmas Parade will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 7th. and the Christmas Coffee House at the Presbyterian Church has yet to be announced. Watch your newspaper or local paper.

New Pledge Envelopes

The pledge envelopes for Year 2014 will soon be ready. Look for them on the table in the parish hall. Please be sure to put your name on the sheet next to the number of the set that you take. Envelopes allow you to designate exactly what you want your gift to support. Try them!

Kudos



THANKS! to all who donated gifts for the Angel Tree. and **THANKS!** to Mado and Carol Cimini for coordinating the project.. **THANKS!** to Mado Cimini, Judy Rettberg & Tracey Tallmadge, Tracey T. & Robin Felldin for leading our Morning Prayer services in November. **THANKS!** to the St. Ann’s who set up the manger scene this season. **THANKS!** to Grace Affuso, Melrose Kelly, Pat Tucker, Betty & Tom Vail for helping clean brass and ready the church for the Advent and Christmas seasons. And **THANKS!** to Bobbie & Gary Zurn for maintaining and underwriting St. Ann’s Web Site.

St. Ann’s Brochure

A sincere thank you to Sue Weibel for her invaluable help in arranging the rework of St. Ann’s brochure on the computer. It would not have been completed without her.

If you have not done so, please take a minute to look over our brochure. It makes a good “ice breaker” to give to someone who you may have been meaning to ask to church, but have not known quite how to approach them. Just tell them what church attendance means to you and give them a brochure. We really do have a lot to offer and the long term benefits are remarkable. Why not “try it?”

A Christmas Prayer



Dear Lord, in this holy Christmas season, may we draw nearer to you. How

wise you were to reveal yourself in the presence of a little baby, the Christ Child. You demonstrated the power and depth of your love for each of us. Thank you for showing us that Christmas begins in the heart, and for the love that it teaches. Help us now to keep the light of the Christmas message burning brightly all year through. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

In Need of Prayer

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 for whom we have been asked to pray. The clergy of the Chenango District have been included. Please remember these people in your personal prayers. Send or give any additions or changes to Tom Vail, 639-1201.

Kaitlin	Joyce	Mya	Sally
Carol	Fay	Holly	Clifford
Peter	Edna	Cindy	Bishop "Skip" Adams
Michele	Jen	Lou	Fr. Chuck Taylor
Sally	Kody	Gloria	Fr. David Hanselman
Mary	Pat	Toni	Fr. Bruce MacDuffie
St. Peter's Church in their search for a rector			Pope Francis

The following prayer is suggested by Bishop Skip. It is from the Evening Prayer and Compline services 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.

Speaking of Christmas Trees

St. Ann's is again "adopting" a family for Christmas as one way of demonstrating God's love and the reason for the season. Information on each person will be contained on the "angel tags" on the Christmas tree at the back of the church. Each angel will have the first name, age and size as appropriate.



Items have been selected so that each child will receive as equally as possible. Please take an angel, obtain the recommended gift, wrap it and, **very importantly, put a tag on the gift with the child's name. We need to have gifts at St. Ann's by Dec. 8th so that they can be delivered.**

The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath is of German and Scandinavian traditions. It developed out of the simple use of an evergreen spray of fir, spruce or balsam placed near the hearth for its aromatic qualities. The ever-greenness of it in the wreath reminds us that the life offered in Christ's coming is for ever, not bounded by times or seasons. The greens have come out of the winter where most other living things sleep or die back, but its life continues.

The Advent candles are intermingled with the evergreen spray. Of course, candles and their light have always been associated with the beauty and mystery of divinity, and have been from ancient times. The warmth and the glow and the fierceness of fire all remind us of qualities of God: our God is a consuming fire, so ages and ages of sages and prophets have taught.

The use of four candles, one for each Sunday as the light grows, is well established. Various meanings have been attached to each as instructive: #1, the prophecy candle, announcing the yearning and anticipation of the people for a Savior; #2, the Bethlehem candle, reminding of the specificity of God's self-revelation to the Jews, through the house and lineage of David; #3, the Shepherd's candle, which can recall the lowliness of the Christ's first worshippers, how he came first to the meek and lowly of the people of the land; #4, the Angels' candle fulfills the chorus of light and splendor proclaiming the pure spiritual grace of heaven intersecting human life.

The greatest and most glorious guest imaginable wants to come to our homes this season, and preparing for so supreme an honor is our joy and service in this place. Thanks be to God!

Stewardship Notes

Stewardship update as of November 24, 2013. Have you returned your stewardship card? Our stewardship effort presently stands at just over \$23,000 pledged for the coming year. This is below last year's total, but there is still time to send in an "intention" card. A sincere "thank you!" to all who have expressed their intent to provide financial support for the coming year.

If you have not yet returned your card, please drop it in the offering plate Sunday or send to P.O. Box 22, Afton, N. Y. 13730, Attn. "Stewardship."

A sincere "Thank you!!!" to all who have returned their cards.

Thirty "One Others"

from *The Searchlight*, Diocese of Port Elizabeth

THOSE LITTLE WORDS — "one another" have great significance for anyone involved in recovering a New Testament lifestyle. In Scripture there are thirty "one another's" that are to characterize the people of God. Reviewing the list makes it apparent that God intends His Church be built with a strong relational emphasis.

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|------------------------------|--|
| -Love one another | -Mutually depend on one another |
| -Forgive one another | -Outdo one another in showing honour |
| -Be devoted to one another | -Submit to one another |
| -Forbear with one another | -Rejoice with one another |
| -Encourage one another | -Weep with one another |
| -Build up one another | -Stir up one another |
| -Don't judge one another | -Be hospitable to one another |
| -Accept one another | -Minister gifts to one another |
| -Counsel one another | -Be clothed in humility to one another |
| -Greet one another | -Don't speak evil against one another |
| -Wait for one another | -Don't grumble against one another |
| -Care for one another | -Be kind to one another |
| -Serve one another | -Confess your faults to one another |
| -Pray for one another | -Bear one another's burdens |
| -Fellowship with one another | -Have the same mind toward one another |

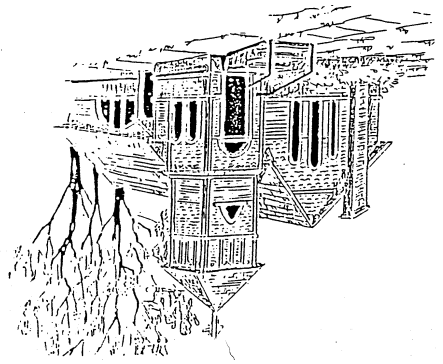
These "one another's" are the relational "building blocks" without which Christianity becomes brittle formalism. Seeing this list makes at least two things clear: 1) Christianity cannot be lived in isolation; and 2) few of them can be fully exercised in a public assembly alone.

Random Thoughts

Please note that there are several Daily Reflection booklets, for Advent, on the card table in the Parish Hall. They provide daily devotions from the first Sunday in Advent to Christmas day. Feel free to take one. You may find them a helpful guide for this wonderful Advent season.

Advent means coming or arrival. During these four weeks before Christmas, we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the unexpected King. This King, however, did not wear a golden crown, but a crown of thorns when he died on the cross for us. And then—in a joyfully unexpected event—he rose from the dead! Eternal life is ours through faith in his name.

During this busy Advent season, as you shop and cook and wrap gifts, remember that Jesus your King is coming again on a day you do not expect. By God's grace, through faith in Jesus' name, you are ready to welcome him. Your King is coming. Expect him!



Address label here

Worship service: Sunday 9:15 am

Tracey Tallmadge

Wardens: Judy Rettberg

Clergy: The Rev. David A. Hanselman

SHARING GOD'S LOVE IN OUR
COMMUNITY THROUGH PRAYER, STUDY
AND ACTION

Afton, New York 13730

P. O. Box 22

St. Ann's Episcopal Church

The Final Word



For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Romans 15:4-7

To me, one of the fascinating things about the Bible is how ideas originating thousands of years ago are just as applicable to us in the 21st century. The passage above is taken from the Second Lesson for the Second Sunday of Advent. It is a letter written by Paul to the Christians in Rome. He wrote to give them the essentials of the Christian faith in order to help them grow and mature until he was able to visit them in person.

In the passage above, Paul asks that God grant that the church in Rome might live in harmony

with one another and that together they might glorify God and welcome one another. These words apply equally to us as Christians living in the 21st century.

Do we live in harmony with each other? Sadly, I believe that the answer is likely to be "no." We may do so with some of our good friends but more often than not, there is one, and probably more, with whom we are "on the outs." It may be due to something that was said or maybe something that was done or not done. Whatever the reason, the relationship is out of harmony. And that means the church, the Body of Christ, is out of harmony.

So what's the solution? It is spelled out in the Lord's Prayer that we recite every Sunday. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Forgiveness is at the heart of our faith. We are to forgive others when they wrong us and we are to seek forgiveness when we have wronged others. Only then will we be in harmony with one another. May God grant us the grace to make it so. (reprinted from 2007) PCV