

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



December. The end of a strange and difficult year, but not an end to the strangeness and difficulty. I am using mild language here, but the reality is that for so very many people, this has been a truly devastating year and we must not minimize the tragedy they have endured. And yet, we can begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. What a difference from November.

In last month's newsletter, I tried to address the anxiety I have heard people express and pointed out that it may be difficult for some people to find things to be thankful for at Thanksgiving. Well, I am writing this just days before Thanksgiving and I for one am extraordinarily thankful for the many different COVID-19 vaccines that are very nearly beginning distribution.

To be sure, we still have several months ahead of us in which we need to remain vigilant. Until there is widespread immunization – something that best estimates say will begin in earnest in springtime and continue through summer and fall – we will still be faced with the very real threat of pandemic.

But I would like to take a moment and comment on what seem to me to be the incredible ways I have seen God working in our world. Scripture teaches us that aside from the spectacular miracles attributed to God, so much of God's work in the world is done through people. And our reading from Matthew for Christ the King Day told us that as we have treated "the least of these", so we have treated Jesus himself. People relating to people, to put it simply, is our main interface with God.

And so, I'm convinced that so many people around the world working so diligently for a cure, and companies either foregoing any profit or pledging only to take a small profit, and individuals – billions of individuals! – wearing masks knowing that it reduces the amount of virus that gets spread around, all of these things speak to the loving, healing, life-giving presence of God in our midst – the Holy Spirit at work in the world.

I am also reminded of the parable of the 2 sons whose father told them to go work in the vineyard. The first said he would go but did not. The second said he would not go but did. Jesus asks, "Which one of them did the will of the father?" How great is God that in a world in which there is so few true believers, there are still so many who do the will of the Father and care for one another. Thanks be to God! As we approach Christmas, may Christ's spirit fill the hearts of all people.

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL WHO SERVE

The **SERVICE SCHEDULE** is not available due to the **COVID-19** and absence of parishioners in Nov to fill it in. Once regular services begin again, Lay Readers in attendance will be asked to read the lessons for that particular Sunday. The readings for each Sunday in December are listed below. Please take the time to read the lessons and Gospel for each Sunday.

The corona virus is causing more than its share of problems but it has not stopped us from having a Sunday worship service. Holding a service via the "ZOOM" software is a little strange but seems to be working okay. If you have not tried tuning in for a "ZOOM" service, why not try it next Sunday. Everyone who has their E-mail address on file should be receiving a forward of Fr. David's instruction letter for each service. If you have not been receiving that letter, please advise Tom Vail of your E-mail address and you will be added to the parish listing. Bettom415@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
Lectionary (Year B)						
		Old Testament	Psalm	New Testament	Gospel	
Dec 6		Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8	
Dec 13		Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8,19-28	
Dec 20		2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Romans 16:25-27 Luke 1:26-38 Canticle 3 or Canticle 15 or Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38	
Dec 24		Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14(15-20)	
Dec 27		Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 147 or 147:13-21	Galatians 3:23-25; 4:4-7	John 1:1-18	
Jan 3		Jeremiah 31:7-14	Psalm 84 or 84:1-8	Ephesians 1:3-6,15-19a	Matthew 2:13-15,19-23	



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 Tracey Tallmadge 343-1301. No later than the Thursday before the designated Sunday so that she can include a notice in the bulletin.

St. Ann's Prayer List for December 2020

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. 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 months unless updated.**

Short Term

Raevin
Thomas
George
Eileen
Anne
Anonymous
Karen
Alyssa

Long Term

Fr. David Hanselman
Fr. Steven White
Deacon Kay
Pastor Becky
Rev. Elizabeth Gillett
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. Matthew's Church
St. Peter's Church
Carol Peter
Joyce Dakota
Mya Nate
Holly Marion
Hailey Amaya
Clifford Rachel
Richard Burdette
Bill



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.



The Bishop and Clergy of the Diocese of CNY met on Tuesday November 17. After much discussion, they made the decision to return to virtual services. In person services will resume sometime after the first of the new year. Due to the spike in COVID in New York, they felt this is the safest way to keep from contracting the virus. St. Ann's will continue virtual services at 9:00 a.m. beginning November 29th. Bible Study will be on Wednesday evenings from 7pm to 8pm. This is wonderful way, under the circumstances, to prepare for Christmas. Please try to stay in touch with other parishioners, by phone, email, or drive byes, particularly those who do not get out and about.



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



CHURCH TERMS - ADVENT - Latin, "coming." The first season of the Church year, which begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas. The first Sunday is called Advent Sunday. A period of preparation for the coming of the Lord at Christmas and at the end of time, it lasts for four weeks, ending at Christmas.

Liturgical color: **violet**



WHY IS CHRISTMAS DAY ON DECEMBER 25?

Although the exact date of Christ's birth is unknown, Christmas Day has been symbolically celebrated on the 25th of December since the 4th century.

The word Christmas comes from "Christ's Mass." We do know that the oldest existing record of a fest to celebrate the birth of Christ is in the Roman almanac called the Chronographer of 354 or the Philocalian Calendar. This ancient almanac noted that a festival commemorating Christ's birth was observed by the church in Rome in the year 336.

Chronographers of the third century were the ones who reckoned December 25, around the winter solstice, as the most likely day of Christ's birth.

In ancient times, Celts divided the year into four sections marked by "quarter days"-- the day of the two solstices and two equinoxes. The winter solstice, the shortest and darkest day of the year, was the fourth quarter day. It signaled a celebratory time, as the Sun began to reemerge, and the land experienced a rebirth.

Gradually, to conform more closely to the liturgical year of the Christian church, the fourth quarter day merged easily with the Christian celebration of the birth of Christ. As Christianity began to spread in the 4th century, the Christmas feast day was set on December 25 by Pope Julius I to align with the Roman pagan holiday *Dies natalis solis invicti*, "the birth of the invincible Sun."

Many historians believe that the church stirred up interest in a festival at this time of year to counter the pagan festivals surrounding the solstice, but no historical document proves Rome's involvement. The record shows that such a festival was adopted throughout the Christian world by the year 458.

St. Ann's Vestry Synopsis Via Zoom 11/16/2020

1. Our outreach payment for November will be sent to the Afton Community Chest. The December outreach will be sent to the General Theological Seminary along with any Christmas offering.
2. A wi-fi extender has been installed that will enable an elderly widow, on a limited budget, to receive TV reception.
3. The veterans Christmas card project at the Oxford Vets home was a rousing success with many cards received.
4. The dead tree between St. Ann's and Hope Church is a dangerous situation. NYSE&G to be contacted and if they will not remove it, the two churches will consider splitting the cost.
5. The oil burners have been serviced.
6. Stewardship support is running behind previous years.
7. Christmas Eve service arrangements were discussed. After deciding how the service would be conducted, it became a moot point as the Diocese and clergy have decided to suspend in building services until after the first of the year.
8. AA to be notified that the Parish Hall is again available for meetings, following COVID guidelines.
9. The Afton Glenwood Cemetery was given the okay to use the Parish Hall for quarterly meetings. COVID guidelines to be followed.
10. St. Ann's to provide pies for the Community Thanksgiving Service.
11. Suggestion was made that vestry members make an effort to stay in contact with parishioners who have not been able to attend any gatherings. Phone calls or drive bys were suggested.
12. The crèche has been set up by Calvin Tallmadge, Bailey DeBetta and Tom Vail.
13. The Diocese office was complimented on their handling of the convention on an on-line basis.
14. Christmas gifts for Fr. David, the sexton and grounds keeper were discussed and approved with compliments for their service this past year.
15. Mado Cimini was thanked for his assistance with the Zoom services.
16. Financial report shows that the parish is solvent with income steady and expenses down slightly vs budget due to the pandemic.



Stewardship

If you have not returned your "intention" card, it is not too late. Expenses continue whether services are held in person or not.

Christmas Without Anglicans?

One of the things I like most about the Christmas season is the music. It only occurred to me recently that so many of the Christmas carols came to us from Anglicans. Even our popular image of jolly old St. Nick was shaped by a professor of biblical studies at (of all places) an Episcopal seminary.

“Twas the Night Before Christmas” is a poem published anonymously in 1823 and generally attributed to Clement Clarke Moore, a professor of classics at Columbia and lay Professor of Hebrew and Bible at the General Theological Seminary in New York. (built on land he donated.) The poem, which has been called “arguably the best-known verses ever written by an American,” is largely responsible for the conception of Santa Claus from the mid-nineteenth century to today.

And what about the carols? The text of the popular “O little town of Bethlehem” was written by Phillips Brooks, an Episcopal priest, long-time Rector of Trinity Church in Boston, and later Bishop of Massachusetts. He was inspired by visiting Bethlehem in 1865. At Christmas, 1868, he asked his organist, Lewis Redner, to write music for the poem he had written. Redner’s tune, titled “St. Louis,” is the one most often used. John Mason Neale, an Anglican priest, scholar, and hymn-writer, translated many ancient hymns, including the Christmas classic, “Of the Father’s love begotten.” He was also responsible for much of the translation of the Advent hymn “O come, O come, Emmanuel,” based on the “Great O Antiphons” for the week preceding Christmas. Neal’s most enduring and widely known legacy is probably his own original Christmas contributions, most notably “Good Christian men, rejoice” and his Boxing Day carol, “Good King Wenceslas.”

The Anglican priest Charles Wesley penned the classic “Hark! The herald angels sing.” The original words were reworked by his friend and fellow priest George Whitfield into the verses familiar to us today. The “Father of English Hymnody” Isaac Watts, a nonconformist minister in the Church of England, wrote the famous carol “Joy to the world!” Anglican bishop Christopher Wordsworth penned the famous carol, “Sing, O sing, this blessed morn.”

Christina Rossetti was an English poet and a devout Anglo-Catholic. Two of her poems, “In the bleak midwinter” and “Love came down at Christmas,” became popular Christmas carols. Cecil Alexander, wife of a bishop in the Church of England, wrote the hymn “Once in royal David’s city.” Nahum Tate, the son of a priest and England’s poet laureate, wrote the hymn “While shepherds watched their flocks by night.” At the age of twenty-nine, English writer and Anglican layman William Chatterton Dix was struck with a sudden near-fatal illness and confined to bed rest for several months. While his illness resulted in a deep depression, out of his traumatic experience, he wrote the lovely carol, “What Child is this?”
Yes, what would Christmas be like without Anglicans?

The Rev. Timothy Matkin, SSC, Commanche, Texas





The Final Word

Happiness: Psalm 16:8-9 – “I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. No wonder my heart is filled with joy, and my mouth* shouts his praises! My body rests in safety.”

**As in Greek version: Hebrew reads glory.*

David discovers that joy is far deeper than happiness. Joy can be felt even in the midst of and in spite of one’s deepest troubles. Happiness is temporary because it is based on external circumstances, but joy is lasting because it is based on God’s presence with us. As we learn to contemplate this presence, not only will we grow in contentment, but we will discover the deeper joy that is connected to our confidence in God’s abiding love for us. NLT-GEZ



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

**SHARING GOD’S LOVE IN OUR
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AND ACTION**

Clergy: The Rev. David A. Hanselman

Worship Service: Sunday 9:15 am

Address Label Here

