

## The Parish News

St. Ann's Episcopal Church in Afton, ND

Member of the Chenango District

December 2012

Clergy: The Reverend David A. Hanselman

Office—607-656-9502

Cell—607-761-4601

Wardens:

-Tracey Tallmadge

343-1301

-Judy Rettberg

208-4084

In an emergency please contact one of the above.



### Make a Note

-Dec. 16th Vestry will meet at 10:45 a.m. following fellowship time. .

-Dec. 23rd: Special fellowship time following worship. Gifts for children and Secret Santa wrapup.

-Dec. 23rd: Greening of the church after fellowship.

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

### From Fr. David

As I sit to write this, I have no idea what December will bring us. In fact, every time I sit to write these letters, I have no idea what the month in question will bring. But that fact is raised to the nth degree this month. I was recently reminded, since I honestly forgot, that the Mayan calendar is telling us things will "come to an end" December 21st and a new age will begin.

What is most striking to me is that for most of the history of Christianity, Christians have used the very same sort of language. You see, from that first Easter morning, it's been part of the Christian worldview that a new age has begun. The slogan that's usually bandied about is "almost, not yet". That is, with Christ's resurrection, the general resurrection, the return of God to set things right has begun, but it's completion has not happened yet.

We have always lived in an "in between" time. All around us, if we look hard enough, we can see evidence of God's breaking into this world to heal it. Sometimes we have to look a bit harder than at other times, but it's there. The evidence of God's work in the world is always around us, waiting to be witnessed; waiting to be accepted.

Our three parishes have been working hard to witness to God's plans for us - God's plan of healing and health for us. The most clear example is with the family/youth group. Parents and kids from the three parishes have been meeting and getting to know each other over the past few months. That's about to take an important turn. Beginning in **January**, we will have group meetings on the **3d Sunday of every month from 2 pm - 4 pm**. Our first official meeting will be at **Zion, January 20th from 2 pm - 4 pm**. More information will follow.

And speaking of providing more information - we've started a facebook page dedicated to the cooperative effort of the three parishes! It's name is Southern Chenango Episcopal Churches. Please, look it up and "Like" it!

I'm coming to believe more and more that the old truism that "there's no such thing as an individual Christian" is also true of our parishes. No single Christian, not even those hallowed Desert Fathers and Mothers (the hermits of the early Church), has ever been able to do this on their own. There's a fundamental flaw in the arrogance which thinks that one person *can* draw closer to God *without* their brothers and sisters. I'm beginning to see that the same basic lesson applies to our parishes as well.

So, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord (that IS what we're doing at Christmas, right folks??), let us also be mindful of our brothers and sisters in Christ - without whom we simply cannot be who we have pledged ourselves to be.

Blessings to you all!!

David +

**NOTE:** St. Ann's will have a surprise visitor who will make a special sermon time presentation at the Christmas Eve service. Be there to check it out!

### Service Schedule

<u>Date</u>	<u>OT Reader</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>CS</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Acolytes</u>
HC Dec 2	S. Proffitt	P. Tucker	TV	C. Johnson	S. Proffitt/N. Setford
MP Dec 9	B. Vail	N. Setford	BV	----	N. Setford
HC Dec 16	C. Cimini	J. Rettberg	PV	C. Cimini	A. Cimini/B. Vail
MP Dec 23	J. Proffitt	C. Johnson	TV	----	B. Vail
HC Dec 24	P. Tucker	J. Rettberg	--	C. Johnson	B. Vail/J. Proffitt A. Vail/L. Felldin
MP Dec 30	C. Johnson	J. Proffitt	RF	----	N. Setford
HC Jan 6	C. Cimini	B. Vail	AC	----	B. Vail/J. Proffitt

CS- Children's Sermon

**MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO READ, EM and ACOLYTE. YOUR SERVICE IS APPRECIATED.**

<p><b>Morning Prayer Leaders:</b>                  Dec. 9 - Pete Vail                  Dec. 23 – D. Becker/J. Rettberg                  Dec. 30 – B. Vail/J. Proffitt                  Jan. 13 - Carol &amp; Mado Cimini</p>	<p><b>Church School Leaders:</b>                  Dec. 2 - Kerri Vail                  Dec. 9 - Robin Felldin                  Dec. 16 - Melrose Kelly                  Dec. 23 - Betty Vail                  Dec. 30 - Tom Vail</p>
--	--

**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 C)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>OT Reading</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
Dec. 2 Advent 1.	25:1-9	Jeremiah 33:14-16	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	Luke 21:25-36
Dec. 9 Advent 2	Luke 1: 68-79	Baruch 5:1-9	Philippians 1:3-11	Luke 3: 1-6
Dec. 16 Advent 3	Isaiah 12:2-6	Zephaniah 3:14-20	Philippians 4:4-7	Luke 3:7-18
Dec. 23 Advent 4	Luke 1:46-55	Micha 5:2-5a	Hebrews 10:5-10	Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve	Lessons and Carols			
Dec. 30 Christmas 1	147	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Galatians 3:23-25, 4:4-7	John 1:1-18
Jan. 6 The Epiphany	72:1-7, 10-14	Isaiah 60:1-6	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12

### Altar Guild

**Altar Guild Duty**—Betty Vail (639-1201) and Nancy Setford (639-1828.) If you wish to purchase or provide flowers for the altar on a particular Sunday, call Betty or Nancy. 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 Thursday before the designated Sunday so that a notice can be put in the Sunday bulletin.

The flowers on the altar November 25th were given by Jody and Sandy Proffitt in Thanksgiving for the baptism of their daughter, Natasha.

**NOTE:** *If you wish to purchase a Christmas flower, see or call Nancy Setford ASAP.*



## Vestry Highlights—11/18/12 Meeting

1. Outreach: Agreed to take a check for \$200 to Convention where it will be added to the collection taken for victims of Hurricane Sandy via Episcopal Relief and Development.
2. We will be doing the Secret Santa activity again this year for those who wish to do so.
3. Lenten program will be discussed at the December Vestry meeting.
4. Treasurer: Cash flow remains positive and expenditures are tracking reasonably well to budget. We received the recommended Assessment and Pledge figures from the diocese. Vestry decided to keep our total payment to the diocese at the same level as for 2012. A copy of the report is posted on the bulletin board.

### New Offering Envelopes

The offering envelopes for Year 2013 are ready. Look for them on the mail cubbies 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!

### Secret Santa Activity

For those who wish to participate in the Secret Santa activity, be sure your name is on a slip of paper and in one of the two baskets. People will draw a name; (if you draw a relative, return it and draw another.) Surprise your person with anonymous cards during Advent and have a simple gift for them to open on 12/23 when your identity will be revealed. Simple gifts means either something you make or, if purchased, no more than \$5.00. This will all take place at fellowship time after worship. Our young people will receive gifts from St. Ann's on the same day. If you have questions, see Judy Rettberg.

### Congratulations!

Our congratulations go out to Natasha Proffitt Sommer on her baptism Nov. 25th. Welcome, Natasha, into the household of God!

## Kudos

**THANKS!** to Mike & Andrea Debetta, Duane Kane and Cindy Johnson for helping with the Afton Community Thanksgiving dinner.

**THANKS!** to Duane Kane, Jody Proffitt, Al Tucker & Tom Vail for assembling St. Ann's crèche. **THANKS!** to all who bought Poinsettias that will be used to decorate the church. Be sure to take them home after the Christmas Eve service.

### Angel Tree

St. Ann's has "adopted" a family for Christmas and we will do our best to demonstrate 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. 16th so that they can be delivered.** Please make your best effort to support this very

### UTO Fall Ingathering

The United Thank Offering is a great way to demonstrate our thankfulness for God's daily blessings in our lives. Even a few coins offered in thanksgiving each day can add up to a significant amount over 6 months. And when these individual offerings are gathered together, great things can be done. St. Ann's UTO Fall Ingathering resulted in 16 individuals contributing \$234.38. Thanks to all who took part in this very important outreach.

### Snowbirds

Carol Tarvin is now at her winter residence in Florida. Her address is:

Ms. Carol Tarvin  
5123 Curran St.

## Advent Hope

We live in a world in which “bigger and better” define our expectations for much of life. We have become so enamored by super-size, super-stars, and high-definition that we tend to overlook small things and their potential. But through out the Scriptures, we find God usually works with small beginnings and impossible situations. Most of the Biblical heroes are frail and imperfect:

- § *Abraham, the coward who cannot believe the promise;*
- § *Jacob, the cheat who struggles with everybody;*
- § *Joseph, the immature and arrogant teen;*
- § *Moses, the impatient murderer who cannot wait for God;*
- § *Gideon, the cowardly Baal-worshiper;*
- § *Samson, the womanizing drunk;*
- § *David, the power-abusing adulterer;*
- § *Solomon, the unwise wise man;*
- § *Hezekiah, the reforming king who could not quite go far enough;*
- § *A very young Jewish girl from a small village in a remote corner of a great empire.*

If God used all of them for such great work, it is likely that God is able to use us, inadequate, unwise, and too often lacking in faith. We best not, in self-righteousness, put limits on what God can do with the smallest things, the most unlikely of people, the most hopeless of circumstances.

Listen to young children, recite the words of Handel’s Messiah, look to the leaves falling in the crisp morning light – this is the wonder of Advent. While many today talk about the death of Jesus and the atonement of sins, the early Church celebrated the Resurrection and the hope it embodied. Advent is a time of expectation for the Incarnation and Christ’s return in glory – a past and future orientation filled with hope!

Those who have suffered and still hope understand more about God and about life than those who have not suffered. Maybe that is what hope is about: a way to live, not just to survive, and to live authentically amidst all life’s problems with a faith that continues to see possibility simply because God is God.

May our Advent be filled with wonder and hope.

*The Rev. Joyce Stickney, St. Aidan’s, Malibu, California*

### Stewardship Status

A short reminder regarding “Stewardship Sunday.” If you have not returned an “intention” card, and plan to do so, please leave your card in the offering plate on a Sunday or return by mail in the envelope that accompanied the stewardship letter. This year, St. Ann’s has received 10 “intention” cards, so far, compared with 16 last year. It is helpful in the financial planning process to have an idea of what to expect in financial support for the parish. Please give this your prayerful consideration.

St. Ann’s Stewardship Committee



### 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.

Norman Vincent Peale

### **St. Ann's Prayer List**

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.

Kaitlin	Carol	Peter	Mary	Pat
Michele	Jane	Joyce	Holly	Bishop "Skip" Adams
Darin	Sally	Kody	Jim	Fr. David Hanselman
Adina & Tony	Jeri	Charles	Tony	Fr. Chuck Taylor
Mya				Fr. Bruce MacDuffie

### **Joyfully Aging book calls us to be "amazing grays"**

The following are excerpts from an inspirational and quotable book by Dr. Richard Bimler on the art of *Joyfully Aging*.

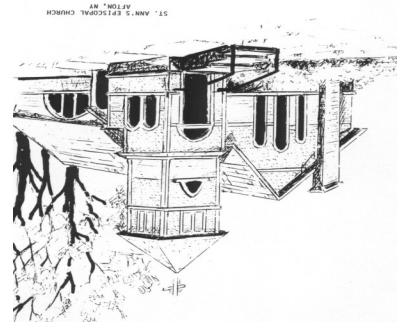
My new book is about celebrating God's gift of aging, instead of moaning and complaining about old age. It is about seeing aging as a gift and a blessing. For me, as it has no doubt been for you, life has been a roller coaster ride of Good Fridays and Easters, all mixed together. Just like you, I have experienced many low and dark times throughout my years, as well as many high and light-hearted times.

We live in a culture that still honors and worships youth. People still want to look youthful, smell youthful, and talk youthful. But why sweat the wrinkles? Even as you age, why not work at being the most joy-filled person in your neighborhood? We can affirm life as a gift from God despite all of our worries and woes and wrinkles and whining. We can celebrate Christ's presence within us each new day. Throughout Scripture, we do not hear much about people of different ages sitting or standing and talking about aging. We read about older folks such as Abraham, Anna, and Noah, and on and on, who went about serving the Lord and celebrating the Lord's presence in their lives. There is no such thing as retiring on this side of Heaven. We leave jobs, and we transition between places and people, but we never retire. It is not a concept shared in the Scriptures. Scripture talks about people transitioning from one role to another—of serving as a mentor or coach to younger people.

The story we have to tell of Jesus Christ is a story of love and forgiveness and joy. Older adults are called to be encouragers, affirmers, and cheerleaders in the Lord. The older I become, the more convinced I am that the three most significant priorities we older adults can have is to encourage, encourage, encourage!!

The four W's of growing old gracefully: wit, wisdom, wrinkles, and wow. We have a built-in "wow" detector because we know we live on this side of the resurrection. With this realization, we can look at life through the cross and resurrection, instead of evaluating it by whether we are in good health or well-off financially.

Laughter and aging go together like a horse and carriage. The older we get the more we become aware of the incongruities of life; therefore, older people are more able to laugh and chuckle about their weaknesses, failures, and even disappointments. We learn to laugh at ourselves more. It becomes a daily "holy habit" for many of us. So, people of God, lighten up! Our smiles and grins and even guffaws shine out to others around us.



Address label here

Services: Sunday 9:15 am Holy Eucharist on  
1st & 3rd Sundays; Morning Prayer on others

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



*Do not worry about anything; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:6-7

This seems to be excellent advice for us as we embark on the season of Advent with its air of anticipation, expectation and contemplation. With all the hype to decorate, buy countless gifts, attend loud, boisterous parties and prepare extravagant meals, how many of us can say that we are at peace and, if we are not, how might we experience that peace?

I would suggest that it involves setting priorities, or, in the words of our Presiding Bishop (PB,) "making some conscious decisions about how to spend your Advent time this year." Granted, there's lots to be done in the brief four weeks until Christmas but how much of it is essential?

If it's important to us we can all find 10 minutes a day in all of our busy-ness, pick a quiet place and spend part of it talking to God and the rest of it listening for His answers. Again, our PB suggests giving thanks for our various blessings. Or you might read the Scripture selections for the coming Sunday and let them speak to you. If you absolutely cannot find time to do this, try praying, praising and thanking God as you are falling asleep each night. I've found it's a great way to end the day and might even help you fall asleep! What better way to get away from the pressure of the secular world? Why not give it a try?

Our society emphasizes caring for our physical and mental health and this is good to a point. But what about our spiritual health? Paul tells us to not worry about anything but rather to pray. How are we doing with that? In computer programming a common acronym is: GIGO which stands for "Garbage In Garbage Out." Our spirit is much the same as a computer. What we get out of it depends on what we put in. How are you caring for your spirit? Now is a perfect time to do something for it! God's peace be with you.