

The Messenger

The Newsletter of
Saint John the Evangelist Episcopal Church
1720 Old Black Horse Pike (at Chews Landing Road)
Chews Landing, NJ 08012-5218

Church Office (856) 227-1051
Web Page: [HTTP://www.stjohns1789.org](http://www.stjohns1789.org)
Church E-mail: stjohns1789@verizon.net
The Reverend Margaret Sterchi, Rector

Volume MMXVI— Issue I

Lent/Easter 2016 Issue

Annual Parish Meeting

Well it is Super Bowl Sunday and that means it is time for the Annual Parish Meeting & Pot Luck Luncheon! Please plan on joining us February 7, (no matter which service you attend) immediately following the 10:00 a.m. service (approximately 11:30 a.m.), when we will be electing the parish leaders (Junior Warden, Vestry, Delegates to Convention, and Delegates to Convocation). Additionally, there will be reports covering the events of the past year and we will hear some plans for 2016.

“Souper” Bowl Sunday!!

Super Bowl 50 will be played on February 7th! That means that it is “*Souper*” Bowl Weekend at St. Johns. You will have an opportunity to show your team spirit on Saturday evening or Sunday morning after service and during the annual meeting. Which team are you rooting for Broncos or Panthers? Two containers will be available for you to vote for the Super Bowl winner. Drop a dollar (or more) into the soup pot designated for your favorite team! The votes will be tallied and the winner, at least if St. Johns has anything to do with it, will be announced at the Annual Parish Meeting. All proceeds will be used to support our feeding outreach at St. Paul's.

Speaking of Soup

While on the subject of soup, we will also be collecting canned soup “Souper” Bowl weekend to be donated to SCUCS. Please bring a can or two of something a little fancy or something traditional, and leave them leave in the back of the church. It will be sure to warm a senior citizen some cold evening this winter!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

The annual Pancake Supper will be on Tuesday, February 9 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Helpers are needed!!! Please consider coming in during the afternoon to help prepare the meal and help set up. Clean up folks are also needed. Come enjoy delicious pancakes and fellowship as we prepare to begin Lent.

**Vestry meetings are held in the Parish Hall on the 4th
Tuesday evening of each month 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.**

The Bishop is coming! The Bishop is coming!

Hear ye, Hear ye! The Bishop is coming April 10 at the 10:00 a.m. service. He will be preaching and celebrating as well as confirming and receiving anyone who is interested. If you have not been confirmed in any denomination you may join the classes and be confirmed at that time. If you were confirmed in another denomination (Catholic, Lutheran, or Methodist) and would like to be received into The Episcopal Church you may join the classes as well and be received. The youth are meeting on Sundays at coffee hour and the adults will meet later on Sunday afternoons according to the following schedule:

January 24; February 7; February 14; February 28; March 13; March 20-27 there is no class but **everyone** is expected to attend all of the Holy Week services (unless you have a serious conflict); and April 3.

ASH Wednesday

Lent begins on February 8 with Ash Wednesday Services being held 7:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., and 7:30 p.m. The evening service will include music. The morning services will be as short as possible for those needing to get to work. You are invited to attend the service that will best fit your schedule.

Lenten Program

We will be combining with St. Mary's in Haddon Heights for our Lenten Program this year. There will be a simple soup supper, Stations of the Cross, and a brief Bible Study on Wednesday Nights between 6:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. A sign-up sheet is posted in the back of the church.

Confession

The Rector is available for appointments for confession at any time. This is one of those things we do offer in The Episcopal Church but few are aware. Lent is one of those times of year that this is often done.

Irish Potatoes

On Sale March 7

The Messenger

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Web Page: [HTTP://www.stjohns1789.org](http://www.stjohns1789.org)

The Realm (On Line Parish Directory): <https://onrealm.org>

STAFF

Rector

The Reverend Margaret Sterchi
Organist & Music Director

Parish Secretary

Shirley Mullen

Sexton

Mike Millisky

Senior Warden

Craig Keisling

Junior Warden

Matt Torpey

Treasurer

Lisa Schwinge

Vestry

Louis Gross

Diane Chando

Nancy Hawkins

Steve DeBaun

Jason Komancheck

Michael Millisky

Linda Amber

Lou DeCecco

Pat Bosch

Michael Lutz

Joe Baylouny

Mary Wonderlin

Delegates to Convention

Jason Komancheck

David Amber

Linda Amber

Delegates to Convocation

Nancy Hawkins

Pat Bosch

Jason Komancheck

Altar Guild/Flowers/Memorials

Phyllis Sowers

Church School

Mary Wonderlin

Churchyard

Ernie Jones

ECW

Bernie Brown

Editor

Bob Goodman

Ushers

Shirley Mullen

Acolytes/Readers/Servers Scheduling

Rev. Margaret

Webmaster

Carolyn Bausinger

GoodSearch

You Search or Shop...
We Give!

Remember when searching on the internet or ordering on-line to go to **GOODSHOP.COM** when ordering and **GOODSEARCH.COM** when looking for a particular site. At the box where they ask who are you shopping for or who are you searching for just type in "St. John's Chews Landing" and hit the verify button. Our official name will come up. Then continue using the site and any purchases you make using the link to the many shopping sites will give us a percentage of your purchase at no cost to you. Every time you search for something we will get a penny. That may not seem like much, but it adds up. If everyone in the parish would use these sites and share them with their friends and family just imagine how much we could make...at no cost to anyone! If you are not sure how to use these sites please call Reverend Margaret. She will be delighted to walk you through the process. Like the gift cards, this is FREE MONEY, so please invite your friends and family wherever they may be to take advantage of this

Weekly Schedule

Saturdays

5:00 p.m. Rite II Eucharist with Sermon

Sundays

8:00 a.m. Rite I Eucharist with Sermon

9:30 a.m. Church School

10:00 a.m. Rite II Family Eucharist with Sermon

Wednesdays

11:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday (March 20):	Usual times. (The 10:00 a.m. service we will meet in the Parish Hall and process to the church).
Maundy Thursday (Mar.24):	Service at 7:30 p.m. As usual the WATCH will follow in the chapel.
Good Friday (March 25):	Stations of the Cross at noon. Service at 7:30 p.m.
The Great Vigil (March 26):	Service at 8:00 p.m. (No 5:00 p.m. service this day)
Easter Day (March 27):	Services 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Sunday after Easter:	Services as usual. Flowering of the Cross at the 10:00 a.m. service. Easter Egg hunt for the children following the 10:00 a.m. service.



From the Rector's Desk

Dear ones,

Lent is upon us. Easter is not far behind. I realize this as I sit here eating the first Zitner Butter Krak Egg of the year. As an aside, there is a reason "Krak" is in the name. These are the most addictive candy ever created in my opinion. I am grateful that they are only available this time of year, although I have been known to hoard them until June! I was disappointed when I saw that Zitner put out Christmas candy this year, but the Butter Krak was not among the options. The peppermint was pretty good, but nothing compared to Butter Krak.

Moving on from my personal addiction, let's get back to Lent. It is early this year. We just finished Advent and here we are. Advent is a time of waiting and preparing. In Advent we take the time to prepare for the coming of Christ. Lent is also a time of preparation, but of a different type. This is the most holy time of the year. This is the chief penitential season when we prepare our very souls for the reality of the Resurrection. There are numerous books to read; programs in which to participate; and suggestions to give something up or take something on. All of these are good and should be considered. Your Lenten discipline is YOURS! You get to decide what will make this Holy Season meaningful to you. My hope for each of you is that you will decide to do something to make this time of year different in regards to your spiritual life and growth.

As a part of that spiritual life and growth, I remind you again that as we approach Holy Week at the end of March please take into consideration that this is the most holy time for a Christian. The services of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Great Vigil are the most important services of the year in which we learn our very name; who we are and whose we are. This is why those preparing for Confirmation or Reception into The Episcopal Church on April 10 are expected to be at as many of those services as they can possibly attend. The children in the Holy Communion class are also encouraged to attend. These are experiential services in which we move and speak and participate to a greater degree than in other services. Please consider coming. Wear comfortable clothing. Be prepared to be there for a while. As the Ents in "The Hobbit" say, it takes a long time to tell our name. It is so worth the time and energy to be with the church family at this time.

I will be praying for each of you as we begin our Lenten Journey.

Reverend Margaret Kentigern, AF+

Please contact the offices with any changes in address, phone number, or E-mail address.

Help Our Counters!

Those who count our donations and those who record them in the computer are volunteers from among the vestry and congregation. They spend time every week in making sure our deposit and the recording of donations is accurate. There are ways YOU can make their job easier and faster that will mean very little extra time for you. It may mean the counters will be able to come up and enjoy a bit of coffee hour however.

1. When preparing your envelope, please make sure you PRINT information neatly and completely. Indicate what account you want your donation to go for. If you indicate other, please specify. Otherwise it will go into the general fund. Under your amount, please indicate if it is cash or check and put the check number down as well. If you don't do this, the counter has to, which takes time when you are dealing with over 40 envelopes.
2. Remember that Operating Fund and Capital Fund are TWO different accounts. We cannot tear your check in half, so PLEASE put in two separate checks, one for each account. Please put the check numbers on the envelope under the proper fund.
3. Flower and Oil money go into the Operating Fund. They are NOT memorial account donations. If you are making a donation in memory of someone who has died, please use a separate check. Shirley Mullen and Rev. Margaret handle this. Rev. Margaret will send you a letter acknowledging your donation for tax purposes. It does NOT get put into the computer.
4. If you miss a week or more you can use one envelope to "catch up". Enclosing multiple envelopes is not helpful. The donation is recorded on the date it is received, not the date on the envelope. It is fine to write one check for the entire amount for the same reason.
5. Unless you are enclosing coins or mailing in your envelope, it is not necessary to seal the envelope. The counters just have to "unseal" the envelope, which takes more time. If you are compelled to seal it, please do so lightly!
6. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mary Wonderlin, Chris Goodman, Sarah Carter, or Craig Keisling.

If you are willing to be included as one of our counters, please contact Mary Wonderlin. We can always use another counter or two.

**Deadline for the Spring Messenger
Sunday, March 20, 2015**

Items may be e-mailed to Robertgoodman1@comcast.net
(Please show The Messenger in the subject line.)

The ECW Page

Here we are half way through the year already. Our fund raising affairs have been a success due to the wonderful support we get from our parishioners. Thank you so much! We just finished our soup sale and will be planning our bake sale in February and then our delicious "Irish Potatoes" in March. April brings our annual Basket Auction. Please be thinking of making a basket and/or obtaining one from a business that you frequent. Forms are in the back of the church.

Wish to join the E.C.W? Meetings are the first Monday's of every month at 10:00 am and on Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall. Please come and join us.

**Mark your calendars:
Feb 13 & 14 Cake Sale
Mar 7 Irish Potatoes
April 12 – Basket Auction.**



**It's Almost *Irish Potato* time!
Available Starting March 7
St. John's Parish Hall
So stop in and pick up a box.
At just \$5.00 what a bargain!**

Irish Potatoes will also be given to our shut-ins.



**Books, Bible, and Coffee
Next BBC Book Club,
February 18 & March 17, 7:00 pm
Panera Bread, Voorhees, NJ**

The BBC meets every month at Panera's in Voorhees (across from Target on White Horse Road), usually on the third Thursday of the month. It is a wonderful place to meet, get something to drink and/or something to eat, and talk about many things, including the book we are reading. Even if you have not read the book, it is still fun to come to talk because we seldom have a night in which we don't go down a few rabbit trails! So join us! Our next gathering gatherings will be on February 18 and on March 17.

Parishioner Update

Nancy Hawkins went to visit her brother in Florida, fell while she was there and broke her shoulder. She has come to the decision she needs to stay closer to family. She has a house next door to her brother so he can watch over her.

Her new address is:

Nancy Hawkins
510 Windsor Place
Rockledge, FL 32955
856-419-3018

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

February 1: ECW meeting 10:00 a.m.
February 2: Evening ECW meeting 7:00 p.m.
February 7: Annual Parish Meeting following 10:00 am service
February 6-7: "Souper" Bowl
February 9: Pancake Supper 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
February 10: Ash Wednesday 7:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.
February 13-14: ECW Annual Cake Sale
February 14: Community Day at coffee hour
February 17: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
February 18: BBC, Panera Bread, Voorhees 7:00 p.m.
February 23: Vestry Meeting 7:00 p.m.
February 24: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
March 1: ECW meeting 10:00 a.m.
March 2: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
March 7: Evening ECW meeting 7:00 p.m.
March 9: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
March 16: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
March 17: BBC, Panera Bread, Voorhees 7:00 p.m.
March 20: Palm Sunday, usual times (The 10:00 a.m. service we will meet in the Parish Hall and process to the church).
March 23: Lenten Study at St. Mary's HH 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
March 24: Maundy Thursday Service at 7:30 p.m. As usual the WATCH will follow in the chapel
March 25: Good Friday Stations of the Cross at noon.
Good Friday Service at 7:30 p.m.
March 26: The Great Vigil Service at 8:00 p.m. (No 5:00 p.m. service this day)
March 27: Easter Day Services 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
April 2: Sunday after Easter Services as usual. Flowering of the Cross at the 10:00 a.m. service. Easter Egg hunt for the children following the 10:00 a.m. service.
April 10: Bishop's Visitation & Confirmation 10:00 a.m.

Remember to mark your calendars

SCUCS

One of our major outreach efforts is donation of food for SCUCS, an organization in Camden County that provides food for senior citizens in the county. With the current economy, there are many seniors who go hungry every day. We provide reusable grocery bags with suggested items attached to the handle. Pick one up, purchase whatever items you choose, and return the bag the following week. Joyce Root will make sure the food gets to the proper location. They always send us a thank you and are most appreciative of our help. No matter the weather, our older folks all need to eat, so consider helping with this wonderful outreach opportunity.

GO TEAM ST. JOHNS

As my two years as a Warden (Junior & Senior) draw to a close, I want to take a moment and discuss the future of St. Johns based on my experience. Every Sunday, I come to church with a “hit the ground running” mentality with a list of things to be done in preparation of the morning services, as well as tasks to be completed after the 8:00am service. I often forget as I am running around that there is more to St. Johns both physically and figuratively than what I see as I make my regular route through the Parish Hall over to the church and back again.

St. Johns is comprised of 3 primary buildings and a small shed behind the Parish Hall. Our buildings are getting older and will require more financial and physical resources as they continue to age. In the past two years there have been two major leaks at the Rectory. While they have been repaired, they are indicative of the issues we face going forward. Within the next five (5) years we will need a new roof for both the Rectory and the Parish Hall. Other projects include improvements to the parking lot, painting multiple rooms both at the Rectory and Parish Hall, upgrades at the Rectory (new heating system?), possibly revamping our landscaping so we have fewer flower beds to manage, and other items will have to be addressed within the five year period.

While this seems daunting, it is not meant to alarm you. I seek to make you aware of the needs that are coming in the short and long-term. As a parish we have been here for 226 years and there have been numerous roof, heating and plumbing, landscaping, and other issues that have been dealt with over the years and enabled us to continue to function as a Beacon of Light and Hope in Chews Landing. How do we as the Stewards of St. Johns at this moment complete these items and enable St. Johns to be here for another 226 years? The first part is knowing what needs to be done. The Vestry has a good grasp of what is going to have to be done in the next 5 years. What we as a Vestry, *and I as a Warden particularly*, have not been able to accomplish is to provide a clear list and tentative time line so that the Parish is cognizant of these issues. Secondly, we need to investigate other opportunities (grants, community involvement, etc) for funding outside of the St. Johns community to help manage the costs, and finally continue to give to our Capital Campaign fund.

As we have started our 227th year we have an opportunity to plan for the future and ensure our outreach into the community and out into the world for generations to come. I invite you to join Rev. Margaret, the new Wardens and Vestry as they lead us into the exciting future of St. Johns and please support them with your ideas, thoughts and prayers.

Thank you for all of the support and prayers you have given me these past two years.

Yours in Christ,

Craig Keisling, Senior Warden

As I reflect back on the past year, it is the people of the parish who are at the center of my memories during my year as the Junior Warden. We are a great community of generous people who are always willing to pitch in and support the Church community and the greater community. I am optimistic about the coming year when I will be Senior Warden. I do not doubt that we will have bumps in the road and of course the parish budget is always at the top of Vestry's mind. But I know, with the great people of our parish, we will pull together and overcome any trials that we face. I ask for your continued support and prayers as we continue this faith journey as a community.

Sincerely,

Matt Torpey, Junior Warden

HOLY COMMUNION CLASS 2016

Our Holy Communion Class of 2016 began January 10th. The six students witnessed the Baptism of Ethan Robert Conn. The class gathered near the parents to hear the Promises made for Ethan and observe the ceremony.

On January 24th the students will sign the Intent to Study Book and their parents will meet with the teachers following the 10am Mass. They will review the parent support materials and learn how they can help personalize each child's experience.

Community Sunday, the St. John's Reel, and introductions between students and sponsors will be February 14, St. Valentine's Day. This event is to show the children how important they are in our “Loving Church Family.”

We hope everyone will join in the fun as they finish their “Paper People” and share some treats.

Another special class will be April 10th when Bishop Chip comes to Confirm our candidates. The Holy Communion Class will assist our adult stewards during Mass and witness the next sacrament in their faith journey.

On April 30th, there will be a pizza party for the children and their families following their final rehearsal. This event helps our young parents get to know each other while the children finish their Thank You cards.

The Holy Communion Mass will be May 1st at 10:00 am. A reception for the families, guests, and our church family will immediately follow in the church hall.

On May 8th the children will be called to the altar, given a candle in memory of their Baptism and instructed by Reverend Margaret to go forth and be the Light of Christ.

Please greet and pray for our children:

Luke Baylouny
Corrine Myers
Gabriella Myers

Erek Schwinge
Kacie Schwinge
Brianna Teasdale

Wawa Shorti Coupons

Coupons for Wawa Shorti hoagies are available from Mary Wonderlin 783-6805 and Shirley Mullen 227-1051. Coupons are \$3.50 each and can be used to purchase any Wawa Shorti sandwich or be used towards the purchase of any larger sandwich. Proceeds benefit St. John's.

“Stewardship Corner” – by Linda Ambler

Craig Keisling has served on the Vestry as Junior Warden and for the last year as our Senior Warden. Craig will retire as our Senior Warden this year.

Craig has done an excellent job and we appreciate his devotedness to St. John's. He is a strong proponent of Stewardship and following are a few thoughts he has to offer on giving time and talent:

“At the Annual Meeting last year during my report as Junior Warden I laid out a number of ideas and issues that I felt we, as a parish and leadership, needed to work on. In hindsight it was naive to attempt to tackle so many issues at once given the amount of time that I had to get the items either completed or at least started. Stewardship of time involves not just allocating time to categories of your life such as work, school, church, sports, etc. It involves choosing what to do (within limits) within that category. For example, if you go to the gym and spend 3 hours there 5 or more days a week are you being a good steward of your time? Working out/physical activity is important and if you are training for a triathlon or some other event then you will need to train that much possibly more. If you're working out to keep yourself healthy you could ask yourself “Is there a way to do this in 1 hour to 1 ½ hours instead of 3” It is good stewardship to review what you do with your time and how you manage it at least once a year probably more often than that. The 5 minutes you spend looking at the news online can grow to a half hour each day before you know it.”

Matt Torpey will be taking over the position of Senior Warden at our annual meeting on February 7, 2016. Matt has served as Junior Warden over the last year. Matt is an excellent example of the giving of time and talent. Matt also serves as our Hospitality Chairperson and puts a lot of time into our Church events and outreach program. Matt has done a wonderful job in putting together the annual picnic, the pancake supper, and the spaghetti dinner. On top of this, Matt also coordinates and prepares the food for our outreach program to feed the homeless at St. Paul's. We owe our gratitude to Matt for his stewardship of time and talent, as well as to all those who help Matt to make these programs successful.

If you look around, you will see so many dedicated members of our congregation that give generously of their time and talent to make St. John's our Church home.

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Dear People of the Diocese of New Jersey,

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Luke 2:29-32

February 2 is the Feast of the Presentation, also known as Candlemas. It is understood by some as a closing feast of Christmas. Many people keep their crèches in place until this feast. Some even keep their Christmas trees up and decorated (ours would never have lasted - there were more pine needles on the floor than on the tree by January 6th!). Traditionally, churches have processions with candles, symbolic of the one who is "a light to lighten the gentiles."

The gospel reading appointed for the day is from Luke 2:22-40, an account of the Mary and Joseph bringing the infant Jesus to the Temple where they are encountered by the elderly pair - Simeon and the prophet, Anna. This encounter has always captivated me.

Luke - himself likely a gentile, a non-Jew - appears a little confused about Jewish customs and practices of the time, conflating the purification of the mother after childbirth with the redemption of the first born and offering the child's service to God. No matter, these are details. It is the encounter with the two elders that provide the power and drama of the story.

Simeon, described by Luke as "righteous and devout," is looking for the "consolation of Israel." Luke tells us, "the Holy Spirit rested upon him." The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. I wonder how long he had been waiting, yearning for that promise to be fulfilled. Then it came. Luke writes, "Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God..." and prayed his treasured words, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...." Can you imagine? Can you imagine how his heart stirred, how his heart sang?

But the moment is not all joy and singing. Simeon blesses the parents, saying to them, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed." What, I wonder, did Mary and Joseph make of this? They didn't have much time to think about it. Simeon turned to Mary and said, "and a sword will pierce your own soul too." It is a foreshadowing of Good Friday. What did she make of those words then? What did she make of them as Jesus grew and became an adult? Did those words echo in her heart and soul when she stood on Calvary?

Anna comes on the scene. Luke tells us she is a prophet. She, too, sees the child, and not only sees the
(continued on page 7)

Bishop Stokes – (continued from page 6)

child, but sees in the child, God's revelation. Luke writes, "At that moment, she came and began to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel." She knew. She just knew. It is striking to me that the very last words faithful Episcopalians who recite Compline, the closing office of each day, say are a variation of the words uttered by Simeon in the temple so long ago:

*Lord, you now have set your servant free
to go in peace according to your word
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior,
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:
A light to enlighten the nations,
and the glory of your people Israel. (BCP, p. 135)*

As God's faithful, "righteous and devout," we should be able to take our rest each night, confident that, at some point during the day, we have seen the Lord's Messiah. In the midst of all we do, in the people we meet and the love we show, Christ is present. We can rest, be set free, and go in peace according to God's word.

Where have you seen the Lord's Messiah this day? Give praise and thanks with Simeon and Anna. Speak with them about the child to all whom you meet. *Know your story, live it boldly!*

Happy Candlemas!
Blessings and peace,



The Right Reverend William H. (Chip) Stokes, D.D.
XII Bishop of New Jersey

16th Annual Diocesan Acolyte Festival

February 13, 2016
9:30am-3:30pm
Trinity Cathedral

Join acolytes from across the diocese for a day of workshops, fellowship, and worship on the theme of Experiencing Holy Week and Easter. Learn more and register!

Singers Wanted!

A Celebration of the Life of Absalom Jones

All are invited to sing two anthems. Rehearsal is at 1:30 PM on Feb. 14 in the Cathedral Service at 3pm with a reception following. Please RSVP to Canon Deborah Ford with voice part and participants' names: 609-392-3805 ext 102. Please bring Choir Vestments if possible. Please practice music ahead of time. Looking forward to making a joyful noise unto the Lord!

March 4-6
232nd Convention of the Diocese of NJ
Crowne Plaza Hotel, Cherry Hill

March 18 - Youth Adults
Theo's Cafe: Young Adults Dinner
Location TBA

A Statement from the Bishop of New Jersey in Response to the
Primates' Meeting 2016

January 16, 2016

Dear People of the Diocese of New Jersey,

*The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you',
nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'*

1 Corinthians 12:21 22

Although a number of important issues including religious violence and global climate change were addressed, the Meeting of the Anglican Primates 2016 held in Canterbury this past week will be remembered primarily for actions taken against The Episcopal Church. According to the official communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Primates' Meeting, The Episcopal Church is to be sanctioned for its decisions this past summer to change the marriage canons and to permit the marriage of gay and lesbian persons (the Archbishop of Canterbury insists these are "consequences," not "sanctions" but few could argue that they are not intended to be punitive). An agreement passed by the majority of the 38 Primates meeting this past week details the objections the Primates have with The Episcopal Church's actions at the 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah as well as the "consequences" for The Episcopal Church resulting from these actions.

A majority of the Primates are demanding that "for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent [the Anglican Communion] on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal [Anglican Communion] standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, [The Episcopal Church] will not take part in decision making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity."

In addition, the Primates have asked the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a Task Force to "maintain a conversation among ourselves with the intention of the restoration of relationships, the rebuilding of mutual trust, healing the legacy of hurt, recognizing the extent of our commonality and exploring our deep differences, ensuring they are held between us in the love and grace of Christ."

It is important to note that characterizations of the Primates' vote as a "suspension of the Episcopal Church" which appeared in the popular press are grossly overstated. The Communique was clear that the unanimous decision and desire of the Primates is "to walk together, however painful this is, and despite our differences, as a deep expression of our unity in the body of Christ." As Dean Andrew McGowan of Berkeley Divinity School stated in an excellent analysis of the Primates' Meeting, "the Episcopal Church has not been suspended from or by the Anglican Communion." McGowan writes, "...let us not imagine that these events make TEC 'second class Anglicans,' let alone that they remove TEC members from the Communion in any way. They should have little impact on how members of TEC see themselves as part of a wider Communion, a

(Primates continued on page 8)

Primates —continued from page 7

community of Churches with a common history and with an extraordinary scope and richness."

I am encouraged by the Primates' expressed unanimous desire "to walk together" and relieved that the Anglican Communion and our participation in it remain intact. I also have deep concerns.

In the communique the Primates "condemned homophobic prejudice and violence" and expressed their resolve to work together to offer pastoral care and loving service irrespective of sexual orientation." They have made similar statements before. Despite these statements, the conversation about LGBT persons in the church is often hostile and hurtful. Draconian laws in parts of the world foster an environment in which our LGBT brothers and sisters are frequently harassed and persecuted, leading to violence, imprisonment, brutality and sometimes death. Sadly, some Primates and other church leaders in these regions have been vocal in their support of harsh laws and policies against gay and lesbian persons.

Once more, it appears the Primates' Meeting makes statements of care and support on the one hand, while punishing The Episcopal Church on the other. It obscures widespread oppression and persecution of gay and lesbian persons and the violence done against them around the world with a concern about "unilateral actions on a matter of doctrine without Catholic unity." I find this incompatible with the baptismal demands that we "seek and serve Christ in all persons loving our neighbor as our self" and that we "strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being."

I take heart, however, from the words of Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, who addressed the Primates before they voted on their statement, saying to them:

"Many of us have committed ourselves and our church to being 'a house of prayer for all people,' as the Bible says, when all are truly welcome....Our commitment to be an inclusive church is not based on a social theory or capitulation to the ways of the culture, but on our belief that the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross are a sign of the very love of God reaching out to us all."

He continued, "While I understand that many disagree with us, our decision regarding marriage is based on the belief that the words of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians are true for the church today: All who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female, for all are one in Christ. For so many who are committed to following Jesus in the way of love and being a church that lives that love, this decision will bring real pain. For fellow disciples of Jesus in our church who are gay or lesbian, this will bring more pain. For many who have felt and been rejected by the church because of who they are, for many who have felt and been rejected by families and communities, our church opening itself in love was a sign of hope. And this will add pain on top of pain."

According to the Episcopal News Service, Presiding Bishop Curry told the Primates, "I stand before you as your brother. I stand before you as a descendant of African slaves, stolen from their native land, enslaved in

a bitter bondage, and then even after emancipation, segregated and excluded in church and society. And this conjures that up again, and brings pain. The pain for many will be real. But God is greater than anything."

He concluded, "I love Jesus and I love the church. I am a Christian in the Anglican way. And like you, as we have said in this meeting, I am committed to 'walking together' with you as fellow primates in the Anglican family."

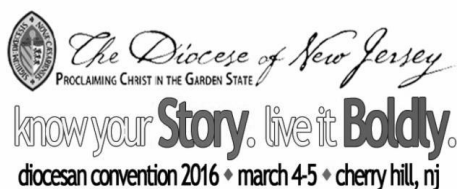
While I believe it was not a great week for the Episcopal Church, the Anglican Communion or Christianity, I support our Presiding Bishop and commit myself to "walking together" with all others in the Anglican Communion even as I, and we as a church, continue to uphold the full dignity and place of our LGBT brothers and sisters in the life of the Church. So let us persist in love and "take the lower seat," (Luke 14:12) "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and the perfecter of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2) Let us "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17) and live into the servanthood to which Jesus calls us, partnering with those Anglicans around the world who recognize that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you" (1 Corinthians 12:21). We all need one another.

In the end, more than formal structures, the Anglican Communion is a network of relationships. Even with the steps taken by the Primates, congregations and dioceses of The Episcopal Church will continue to have warm, transforming relationships with Anglicans in all parts of the world. We in the Diocese of New Jersey enjoy such relationships with our companion dioceses of Ecuador Central and Ecuador Littoral and, through our missionary Charlie Nakash, with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic. These relationships bless us all.



The Right Reverend William H. (Chip) Stokes, D.D.
XII Bishop of New Jersey





The theme for this year's Diocesan Convention is Know your Story. Live it Boldly. featuring preacher and speaker The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop and Primate.

Diocesan Convention is a time when representatives from around our diocese gather to share in the polity of the Church, upholding the common mission and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. All are welcome to join us as we worship, conduct business, attend workshops, view and listen to presentations, socialize, and network.

The Convention will be held at the Crowne Plaza, 2349 Marlton Pike West, Cherry Hill NJ 08002, March 4-5, 2016

PRE-CONVENTION HEARINGS

All clergy and deputies are invited to attend one or more of the pre-convention hearings to learn more about the budget, resolutions, and canons being presented at convention. All meetings will be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and hosted at the following sites:

February 2 - Church of the Holy Spirit, Tuckerton
February 4 - St. John's Church, Somerville
February 8 - Trinity Church, Asbury Park
February 11 - St. Bartholomew's Church, Cherry Hill

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

A block of rooms has been secured through the Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill for members who wish to remain in the area for the early start on Friday and Saturday. To receive the convention rate, please call 1-888-233-9527 by February 9, 2016 and mention The Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey when making reservations. Or you can register online: <http://tinyurl.com/232ndDioNJConvHotelReg>

CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Clergy, deputies, visitors, and guests attending convention are expected to register online: <http://tinyurl.com/232ndDioNJConvReg> or complete the registration form. You can fax it to 609 394-8015 or mail it to 808 West State St., Trenton, NJ 08618-5326. Deadline to register and order meals for convention is

WORKSHOPS

Banquet - Friday, March 4, in the Riverside Pavilion at 7:00 p.m. Learning the Ancient Stories by Heart: Biblical Storytelling as a Spiritual Discipline, Featuring The Rev. Jason Chesnut

Women's Commission/Episcopal Church Women Breakfast - Saturday, March 5 at 8:00 a.m. - Riverside Pavilion The WC/ECW Annual Breakfast is offered on Saturday, March 5, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. in the

Riverside Pavilion at the Crowne Plaza, Cherry Hill. Seating is limited so be sure to register.
Presenter: Neva Rae Fox, Public Affairs Officer for The Episcopal Church

.....TELL it Boldly.

Saturday, March 5, in the Grand Ballroom from 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Presenters: The Rev. Jason Chesnut and The Rev. Joanne Eppy-Schmidt

AMP UP! - Strengthening Ministries through Project Resource Saturday, March 5, in the Grand Ballroom from 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. Presenter: Thalia Mingo

Making Disciples - Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of New Jersey
Saturday, March 5, in the Grand Ballroom from 9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

To attend all or one of the above, register here:
<http://tinyurl.com/232ndDioNJConvReg>

Please watch for more details on workshops and presenters. Visit www.dioceseofnj.org for updates on convention news.

Tentative Schedule

Friday, March 4, 2016

7:30 - 10:00 a.m. Convention Registration/Exhibit Set-up
7:00 - 9:30 a.m.Breakfast, Cash purchase at site
10:00 a.m. Eucharist (The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry)
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.Lunch, Pre-paid box lunch
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.Business Session
3:00 - 3:15 p.m.Break
3:15 - 4:15 p.m.Bishop's Address
4:15 - 6:00 p.m.Business Session Resumes
6:00 - 7:00 p.m.Fellowship/Twelve Step
7:00 p.m.Banquet

Saturday, March 5, 2016

7:00 - 8:00 a.m.Eucharist
7:30 - 9:30 a.m.Convention Registration
8:00 - 9:30 a.m. ...Women's Commission/ECW Breakfast
7:00 - 9:30 a.m.Breakfast, Cash purchase at site
9:45 - 10:45 a.m.Workshops
11:05 a.m.Business Session Resumes

NOTE: Schedule subject to change

Please watch for convention updates on
www.dioceseofnj.org

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour Hosts are needed for the fall and winter. A sign up sheet is posted in the Parish Hall. Coffee Hour is the perfect venue welcoming our visitors and newcomers as well as getting to know each other better. Coffee Hour follows the late service and it is an important opportunity to meet and greet people. Keep this a success and join us for some refreshments and good fellowship. Also please consider finding a buddy and hosting a Coffee Hour. A signup sheet is posted in the Parish Hall.

Spotlight on our Youth:

Cookies for Santa



(& the Rector)



Breakfast



With Santa

