

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND



NEWSLETTER January 2012

**THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST.
JOHN THE BAPTIST, MILTON, DE.
www.saintJohnmilton.org**

A Joyous Epiphany to all,

I trust that all are enjoying and celebrating the wonderful gift of Christmas, the God-given child who grows to be the Son of God and save all humankind.

It was a different and sometimes difficult time of life for me and my family. Peggy had been such a loving center for all of our lives and we missed her so very much. I feel like I'm preaching to the choir for many of you have walked the very same path. The wonderful news is that our Loving God walked with us, even in the darkest of days.

Now we turn our thoughts and hearts to a new time of life and with it the season of the Epiphany, a season of light and inspiration and hope. Sometimes I'm truly amazed at guidelines of the ancient church writers and authorities who understood our human condition and got it so right by arranging the Church Year as they did...

Light, the story and emphasis of Epiphany is so important to us and our spirits. Years ago, I recognized that our shut-ins were so much more lively and positive on days that were bright and shiny. I truly feel their reactions were a function of the light that God provides on sunshiny days. Is it by intent that the ancient church arranged the celebration of the brightness of the Epiphany Season and Christmas right in the heart of the darkest part of our earthly year, winter?

Isn't that how God works for his people all the time? Just when we think all is lost and the darkness surrounds us, he comes in measures of light: families, friends, neighbors, and fellow followers of Christ's church.

He most assuredly walks with us in the dark winters of the soul, walks with us to the joy of new life in him, to the joy of new hope, to the promise of healing and wholeness in our Lord Jesus.

God's peace and love to all of you, may you be wrapped in the Eternal Light.

Amen.

+Fr. John

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

JANUARY

- 6 Epiphany Service 7 PM
 Preceded by soup and salad
 supper at 6 PM
- 8 Removing of the greens after
 morning worship
- 10 Sussex Stamp Club 7 PM
- 15 Vestry installations at morning
 Worship
- 17 Century Club 1 PM
- 18 Vestry meeting 7 PM
- 19 Milton Garden Club 6 PM

Birthdays

- 5 Marie Johnson
- 6 Tom Di Orio
- 8 James "Tuck" Clendaniel
- 9 Anna Mae Millman
- 12 Charlotte Jones
- 23 Stewart Renard
- 25 Marjorie Robinson
- 27 Toni Hykes
- 29 Max Selders

Anniversaries

- 28 Carl & Julie Schirmer

Bishop's Visit

The recent annual visit of Bishop Wright was a great success with his talk about generosity during the worship service and the wonderful luncheon prepared by Sharon Lamando, Louise Frey, Tammy Rust and Margot Lawrik with the help of many others supplying salads and dessert, made it a very successful visit.

December Vestry meeting

At the vestry meeting on Tuesday, December 13th the members elected your new Senior Warden, Tammy Rust and Junior Warden, Stewart Renard. The proposed 2012 budget was presented by Tom Sombar and will be voted upon at the January meeting. The vestry adopted revised and amended by laws reflecting mostly terminology and grammatical changes. The vestry extended the invitation to those groups using our church to continue for another year.

Book Club reminder

The next book is titled *Tidings of Comfort and Joy: A Classic Christmas novel of Love and Reunion* by Thomas Nelson... The discussion date will be announced in the weekly bulletin at church and on the website. Stay tuned.

Convention Notes

We are still in need of volunteers to help with hosting the convention at the Sheraton Dover Hotel, Friday and Saturday, February 10th and 11th, Warm bodies are needed for counting votes during the business session, registration and hospitality as we" as helping with the Holy Eucharist on Saturday in the morning. Please contact Gary Lawrik if you have time to help, 443-442-5902. We are one of the two hosts for this 227th convention.

Out Reach

Under the direction of Terry and Steve Gieser we are continuing with our support of Casa San Francisco. The lists of items needed are on a chart in the parish hall. Besides Casa we will be taking on other projects this year as well, including again the Christmas Shoe

boxes, which was a huge success.

Annual Meeting

For those of you unable to attend the annual meeting on December 4th, the congregation elected three new members for three year terms. They are Louise Frey, Alex Donnan and Tom Di Orio, who will be installed during morning worship on January 15th.

Those leaving the vestry are Ken Keith, Jr., Doris Schirmer and Gary Lawrik. The committee chairs gave summary reports for the congregation's information.

On their way to Cincinnati

Anita and Tom Von Bokern finally had settlement on their Rehoboth Beach home and are heading west to Ohio. Their warmth and dedicated service to our parish will be greatly missed. Anita was a worship leader and Tom on the grounds committee, and if asked would do anything to help. We wish them God speed and happiness in their new home.

Chrismons

The decorative hangings on the walls of the sanctuary are known as "Chrismons" which means Christ's monogram. They are graphic representations of Christ. They were created several years ago to enhance and beautify the church for the Christmas season. Just ask Gary Lawrik should you want to know more about anyone of them.

Bible Study

The new topic for study in the New Year will be "Heresies of the Church". Not our usual biblical book of study but a theme which was attributed to coming from

the Book of Thomas. Heresy as defined in the dictionary, "opinion or doctrine at variance with the orthodox or accepted doctrine of a church or religious system." We will look at different heresies, how they came into being and where they came from. IF you find this thought provoking please plan to join us on January 9th at 7 PM in the parish hall.

Never too late

The following true story was submitted but got lost in the clutter of the editor's desk, so here it goes!

Tablecloth: A Christmas Story Understand things happen for a reason.

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc. and on December 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished.

On December 19th a terrible tempest—a driving rainstorm hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess

on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home

On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity, so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church. By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. Pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area.

Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet. "Pastor" she asked "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria.

The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten "The Tablecloth". The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria.

When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. He

was captured, sent to prison and she never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth; but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home. That was the least he could do.

What a wonder service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said they would return.

One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. He lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a housekeeping job.

The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike.

He told the pastor how the Nazis came how he forced his wife to flee for her safety and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the 35 years between.

The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier.

He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine.

True story submitted by Pastor Rob Reid. "who says God does work in mysterious ways". Thank you John Townsley

White Altar Hangings

Our Altar guild has decided to raise funds for new white altar hanging which are used on high holy days and other special occasions. Shortly there will be a list on the bulletin board listing the items we will be ordering and the costs thereof. There will place for anyone who would like to donate funds to help defray the cost of the purchase.

Thank you for your service

The vestry would like to thank our three retiring members who have fulfilled their commitment to the vestry. Doris, Ken and Gary have served well and helped in the growth of our church in many ways. Thank you.

Your prayers and visits

Charlotte Jones is recuperating at Cad bury in Lewes from a recent fall. Your prayers, cards and even a short visit would boost her already great spirits.

EPIPHANY SEASON

On January 6th we will celebrate the feast of the Epiphany that had its origins in the Eastern Christian Churches and was the general celebration of the manifestation of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. It included commemoration of his birth; the visit of the Maji to Bethlehem; and all of Jesus' childhood events. It is a continuation of the Christmas season and together with Epiphany last forty days. One of the earliest references to Epiphany as a Christian Feast was in A.D. 361. Please

take time and join us on January 6th to gather in fellowship at a 6 PM soup and salad supper prior to the 7 PM Evening worship service.

**WISHING EACH
AND EVERY ONE
A JOYFUL AND
BLESSED NEW
YEAR**