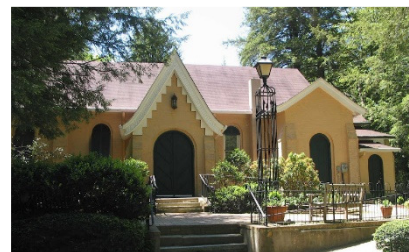


The Voice



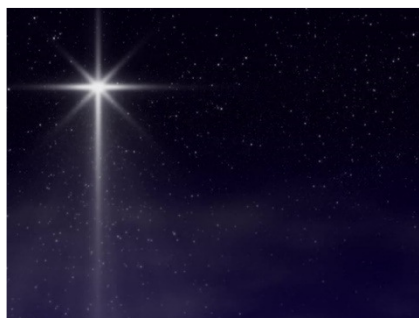
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From the Rector's Desk

The Light Cannot Be Contained: The Epiphany of our Lord



You'll never guess what happened during our first Christmas week service this year on the Monday before Christmas. Before the service, we went over with the usher, Greg Newbold, how to dim the lights for Silent Night when parishioners' candles are lit at the end of the service. The service started at 4 p.m. During the sermon, just as I was emphatically

proclaiming that God enters the world at its darkest moments, there was a power outage, and the lights went out in the church!

It was quite a moment. We were instantly taken back to Christmas in the 19th century when candlelight was all we had at St. John in the Wilderness. Things got very quiet (once someone punched in the code to the security alarm). We continued with the Eucharist. Dewitt did not skip a beat as he led his trio of singers a cappella in Christmas music. Behind the altar during the Eucharist, the vesper light came through stained glass as the chalice and host were lifted. We had a true candlelight Christmas service, and we discovered that despite how prevalent and encompassing the darkness may seem, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. After the service, we told usher Greg that his timing was a bit off in dimming the lights!

On January 6 of each year, we celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord. After 12 days of Christmas, we land on another "principal feast" (see the *Book of Common Prayer*, page 15). Epiphany is actually older than Christmas. We celebrated Epiphany before we celebrated the birth of Jesus. It remains a major event in other countries, especially places where Spanish is spoken.

The Epiphany question is as follows: *What are the implications of the incarnation?* The answer is no secret. This light of Christ cannot and will not be contained. It's on the move, traveling quickly and with distance, to break through the darkness and enlighten the world. The true light which enlightens everyone is in the world (John 1:9). God joins us in Christ with the incarnation, but the light cannot be locked inside our churches or homes

(Cont. on page 3)

What's Happening at St. John

Volunteer Opportunity – We need volunteers to serve as Gatekeepers who open the gates and the church building on Sunday mornings for our parishioners. Gatekeepers serve one month each quarter, and the schedule is flexible. For more information or if you are interested in serving, contact Dick Zecher at rtzech@gmail.com or (828) 808-0169.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers

It was a blustery day. It was Vickie Taylor's birthday. It was a day of generosity from shoppers who passed our red kettle in front of Belk. We had a total of 15 St. John volunteers, each taking one-hour shifts, to collect money for the Salvation Army. We brought in a whopping total of \$571, which may be something of a record. Yippee! These funds will greatly assist our Henderson County neighbors who are in need this winter.



The Younger Voice

Fun was had by all as the youth and young families gathered to make Advent wreaths and sprays for the slave graves. We enjoyed a lovely afternoon to be outside and ring in the Advent season with this special time together. Father Josh blessed the sprays before we spread out to place them on the crosses that mark the slave graves. It was a meaningful time for us all.

We look forward to many good times of fellowship ahead in 2021!

Mary Anne and Susan



From the Rector's Desk *(Cont. from page 1)*

or hearts. It cannot be contained but must be shared and taken to those who are trying to find a way through the darkness. The light will show us the way. This is Epiphany and it is Good News, indeed.

Fr. Josh+

The Epiphany of our Lord -- 2021

January Flower Memorials

January 3:

In loving memory of Jack Day

By: Carolyn Day



January 10:

In loving memory of Sara Henderson McCandless and Edward McCandless

By: Their sons, Richard and John

January 17:

In loving memory of our parents Johann and Cicilia Wiescholek, Lyle and Arlene Ribley

By: Eduard and Lynn Wiescholek

January 24:

In loving memory of Katherine Clinton Bissell, Sara and Hardee Butler, Margaret Bissell, and Hardee C. Bissell

By: Their family

January 31:

In loving memory of Roderick Bryan Smith

By: His wife, Martha

January Birthdays

1	Jane Sherrill	18	JoAnn Ebbs
3	John LeGault	18	Nancy Dobson
4	Ingrid Heegaard	19	Mary McCarty
4	Sandy Schenck	19	Kristie Ogletree
5	Vicki Bell	19	Victoria Flanagan
5	Tom Savage	22	Judi Bettendorf
7	Susan MacDonald	25	Dean Patrick Wheless
9	Tom Head	25	Helena Wheless
9	Joan Brendle	26	Faith Baker
10	Malcolm Allen	28	Lynn Redmond
16	Melanie Pace	29	Erin Mitschow
16	Rhett Kanipe, Jr.		

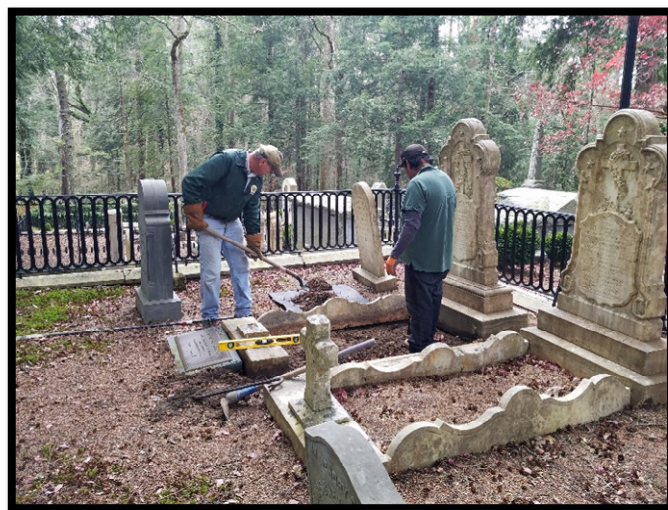


January Calendar

As restrictions are subject to change on short notice, it is not possible to provide a reliable calendar of events at this time. Please refer to our online calendar which we will keep updated as information becomes available. You can access the calendar by clicking on the link from the homepage of our website at www.stjohnflatrock.org.

Historic Churchyard Committee

The Historic Churchyard Committee has the responsibility for providing perpetual care for the sacred grounds of our cemetery. Several times a year, the dedicated members of the committee gather together for a workday to assist with the upkeep and to undertake the preservation of the historic monuments. December 12 was the most recent workday scheduled by Jim Olson, who has taken the lead in this maintenance work. Here are a few scenes of the work in progress. During the past year, the C.G. Memminger plot needed special attention because of recent heavy rains. The committee was happy with the results, and we are sure that the Memminger family would approve. When you are coming or going to the church, spend a few moments in the churchyard to enjoy the legacy that has been left for us today.



Message from Bishop José about In-Person Worship

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As many of you know, the winter wave of the Coronavirus pandemic is dramatically affecting all of North Carolina and it is having a tragic impact on the rural areas of our state, especially in the western 28 counties that comprise the Diocese of Western North Carolina. We are experiencing record high cases of the virus; our hospital systems are nearing capacity of ICU beds and medical staff are stretched thin. According to state reports, 19 of the counties in our diocese are in the critical category.

As the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement in this beautiful area of God's Kingdom, we have the opportunity to continue modeling Jesus' love of neighbor and self by wearing masks, honoring physical distancing and, when necessary, suspending in-person worship.

After much prayer and conversation with lay and clergy leaders in the Diocese as well as consultation with public health advisors, I am asking all Episcopal Churches in Western North Carolina to begin suspending public, in-person worship beginning Sunday, December 27 until the end of January 2021. Indoor prerecorded or livestreamed services may continue, however, only ten people (or preferably less if possible) are allowed to assist in such gatherings.

I know that this decision may not be well received by some, but my intention is that together, as the newly authorized Covid-19 vaccines are making their way to the most vulnerable sectors of our communities, we all can participate in limiting the spread of the virus over the next month.

Please know that I will continue to monitor and evaluate the situation and I will provide updates as necessary.

And finally, please also know that you each remain in my prayers. I am grateful for your faithful service and ministry.

Faithfully,



The Rt. Rev. José A. McLoughlin
Bishop of the Diocese of Western North Carolina

Remember the Days of Old

The following excerpt was written by Missy Schenck and was featured in the December 2020 edition of the Charleston Mercury newspaper. You may find more of Missy's writing at charlestonmercury.com

Generations of families have shared in traditions, weddings, baptisms and funerals at St. John's, sparking a plethora of memories. Their stories, often not recorded, tell a history of the church and give insight to the cohesiveness of its congregation bound by the common bond of worship. Many of these memories show that even when things go awry, the stories become legendary, wonderful tales.

In the summer of 1945 World War Two ended; Libby Maybank Guerard Wright's father, Burnett Maybank, was the governor of S.C. and senior warden of St. John's. Libby related, "My father

(Cont. on page 6)

Remember the Days of Old *(Cont. from page 5)*

took Alicia Walker and me to the church and unlocked the door to the bell tower. Alicia and I hung onto the bell ropes and rung them as hard as we could to let everyone know the war had ended. My father's car had a siren, but he never used it. That day, we rode around Flat Rock and Hendersonville with the siren on to signal the end of the war. I remember on Main Street in Hendersonville there were several trucks of German war prisoners who were working on the farms in the area. They were so excited to be going home. After riding about town, we returned to the church and rang the bells some more."

Around 1971 there was an arsonist burning schools and churches in Henderson County, recalls Sandy Schenck. "One night, Flat Rock High School burned. The next day the St. John's congregation came together and decided they needed to protect the church from the arsonist. A group of men, including my father, organized 24-hour watches until the arsonist was caught. The first night as the group assembled, my father asked the men what they were carrying to defend the church. With that, one man spoke up and said, 'A golf club.' To which, my father responded, 'a three iron or a putter!' The arsonist was eventually caught and turned out to be a volunteer fireman who was always the first one on the scene of the fire."

Bay Chamberlain's family has been a part of Flat Rock and St. John's since 1914. Several members of her family have married there and now the fifth generation descendants call St. John in the Wilderness a major part of their lives. "The feeling of continuity I get from participating in a church that is a part of my family's history is warm and rewarding," Bay says.

Throughout the years, Flat Rock has become a vibrant and diverse community of year round and summer residents, some descendants of its early settlers. Rooted in strong historic tradition and continuity, the Church of St. John in the Wilderness has remained the Flat Rock constant where the calmness and peace of its surroundings offer an opportunity for a reprieve. I am reminded this holiday season of the Christmas Eve service at St. John's, the one night all differences are set aside and everyone is deeply moved by the spirit of the season. At the end of the service the congregation stands in silence and darkness, basking in the glow of flickering candles and the companionship of fellow parishioners singing "Silent Night," just as they have for generations.

"Remember the Days of Old" is a column about the history that has shaped St. John in the Wilderness. The title comes from Deuteronomy 32:7, "Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you."

Thank You from the Flower Guild



Thank you to all who contributed Flower Guild Memorials in 2020. I hope you will continue and that more will also support this happy ministry. The team members of the Flower Guild have worked hard to keep this beautiful part of our services going in the face of logistical challenges. Thank you for your support!

Bay Chamberlain, Flower Guild Chair

The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness

The Rev. Josh Stephens
Rector

The Rev. Dn. Charles Rex
Deacon

Leslie Stott, *Parish Office
Administrator*

Tracie Lutz, *Administrative
Assistant for Finance*

Dewitt Tipton, *Organist
and Director of Music*

Kevin Hunt, *Sexton*

Mary Anne Inglis, *Youth
and Families Coordinator*

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www.stjohnflatrock.org

Vestry

Senior Warden

Jerry Tanner
Junior Warden

Tom Griswold
Treasurer

Margaret Barker
Clerk

Janet Johnson, Shelley
Schiro, Cindi Easterling,
Terry Enslen, Marie
Hyder, Dick Zecher,
Gibson Sims, John Barker,
Elizabeth Christenbury,
Shelley Schiro, Lynn
Wiescholak

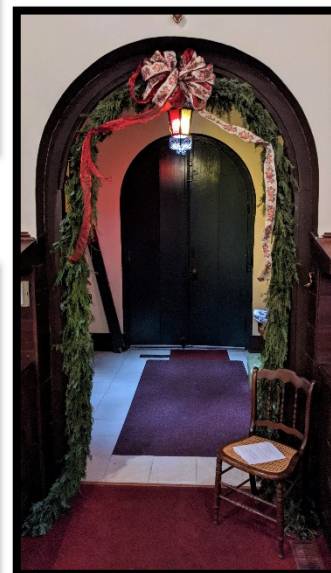
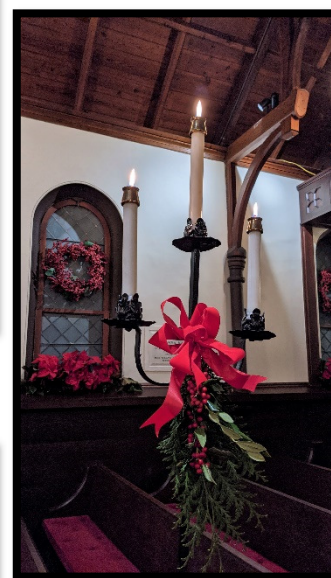
Vestry minutes are posted
on our website at
www.stjohnflatrock.org

Deadline for *The Voice* is the
15th of each month. Email items
to your editor, Leslie Stott, at
officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org
or deliver them to the
church office.

2020 – Year in Review

Joey Popp and our Communications and Publicity Committee have put together a video montage of events here at St. John during 2020. You may view the video on our YouTube channel.

Christmas at St. John



Love Came Down at Christmas



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:45 am

Rite Two Eucharist (live streamed)

11:00 am

Rite Two Eucharist

Monday through Thursday

9:00 am

Online Morning Prayer (live streamed)

Wednesday

4:30 pm

Evening Prayer

Our Mission Statement

To know and love God as He is revealed to us
in Jesus Christ, to bring others to His saving
love, and to serve the world in His name.