



Autumn Edition 2021

Latter Days of Pentecost Season

Dear Friends at St. John's,

While it would be attractively comforting to think of our parish church as a refuge from the outside world, it would be a mistake. We would, I think, be mistaken if we thought that when those big red doors were closed behind us on Sunday morning we were somehow, with a sigh of relief, shutting out the random craziness of the world. Yes, everyone is entitled to a bit of respite once in a while, but even Jesus found it unrealistic to discover a place where he could be alone and insulated; the crowds sought him out, and the authorities haunted him. His mission was rather to be engaged with the people, to walk the dusty roads with them, to gather with them, to share their needs in each village and community. As his 'Body' in our own generation, it is our mission, too.

Your Vestry and I have begun an initiative to help us engage with our community, and I'd like to share its particulars. It is being called "Oneida Listens." For some months now, a planning committee from the parish has discussed just how we might do a better job of connecting with the greater Oneida community, recognizing all our neighbors no matter what their differences might be. As much as Jesus might have been told that his mission should only be to people of a certain background, God's Spirit led him to all others, despite their language, tribe, or nation. Our initiative is meant to involve all aspects and people in our community. It is not evangelizing. It is not proselytizing. It is not trying to 'fix' any specific problem. It is an opportunity to build trust and to love our neighbors as ourselves. It is, in a sense, setting a table to which all are invited and encouraged to bring their own personalities and stories.

At this table, the hope is for common reconciliation and refreshment. The vision is for a healthier and happier community. The end-game is inclusion. And it begins with dialogue. So, here is the plan: We have designed a dialogue series on seven Thursday evenings, from Sept. 23 - Nov. 4, at the Oneida Public Library Meeting Room. Participants will share their experiences and their stories of diversity, inclusion, and exclusion in a friendly and welcoming learning environment. Sessions will include structured activities as well as discussion. Experienced facilitators Darline and Jeremy Wattles have participated in and led dialogue groups in other Upstate NY communities as well as in higher education since 2015. This initial offering includes a group of 25 participants, and as the program is tweaked and adapted, we hope to offer it again (and again) to any who are interested. Participants from St. John's this time include myself, Gale, Jeremy and Darline, Gloria Wilkins, Ann Hodgins, Peter Slaunwhite, Marty Walrath, Birdy Burdick, and friends of the parish Charles and Malinda Abraham.

While this initiative began with our vestry, we are not treating it as a 'church function', but rather as a community activity. St. John's has, I think, been called to convene this activity, seeing a need and finding a way to address it. I hope you will be intrigued enough to participate in subsequent meetings, and, meanwhile, that you will pray earnestly for this autumn's group. Pray for God's blessing on our initiative and for Christ's work of reconciliation in our community.

Thanks, Nick+

God Comes to Women

Have you ever noticed how in the scriptures men are always going up into the mountains to commune with the Lord?

Yet in the scriptures we hardly ever hear of women going to the mountains. But we know why — right?

Because the women were too busy keeping life going; they couldn't abandon babies, meals, homes, fires, gardens, and a thousand responsibilities to make the climb into the mountains!

I was talking to a friend the other day, saying that as a modern woman I feel like I'm never "free" enough from my responsibilities, never in a quiet enough space I want with God.

Her response floored me, "That is why God comes to women. Men have to climb the mountain to meet God, but God comes to women where ever they are."

I have been pondering on her words for weeks and have searched my scriptures to see that what she said is true. God does indeed come to women where they are, when they are doing their ordinary, everyday work.

God meets them at the wells
where they draw water for their families, in their homes, in their kitchens, in their
gardens.

God comes to them
as they sit beside sickbeds,
as they give birth,
care for the elderly,
and perform necessary mourning and burial rites.

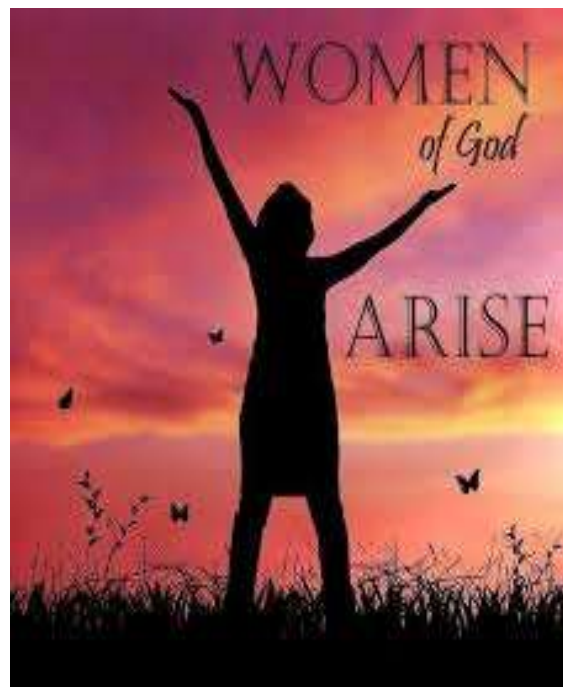
Even at the empty tomb,
Mary was the first to witness Christ's resurrection,
She was there because she was doing the womanly chore of properly preparing
Christ's body for burial.

In these seemingly mundane
and ordinary tasks,
these women of the scriptures found themselves face to face with divinity.

So if — like me — you ever start to bemoan the fact that you don't have as much time
to spend in the mountains with God as you would like. Remember, God comes to
women. God knows where we are and the burdens we carry. God sees us, and if we
open our eyes and our hearts we will see God, even in the most ordinary places and in
the most ordinary things.

God lives. And God's using a time such as this to speak to women around the world.

~ Heather F.
Submitted by Gale Smith



God sighting by Val Hill while on vacation in Wildwood,N.J.

THE GUIDING LIGHT



FOOD PANTRY

Please continue to not bring items to the church but instead make a cash donation to these organizations below:

Karing Kitchen
116 W. Grove St.
Oneida, N.Y. 13421

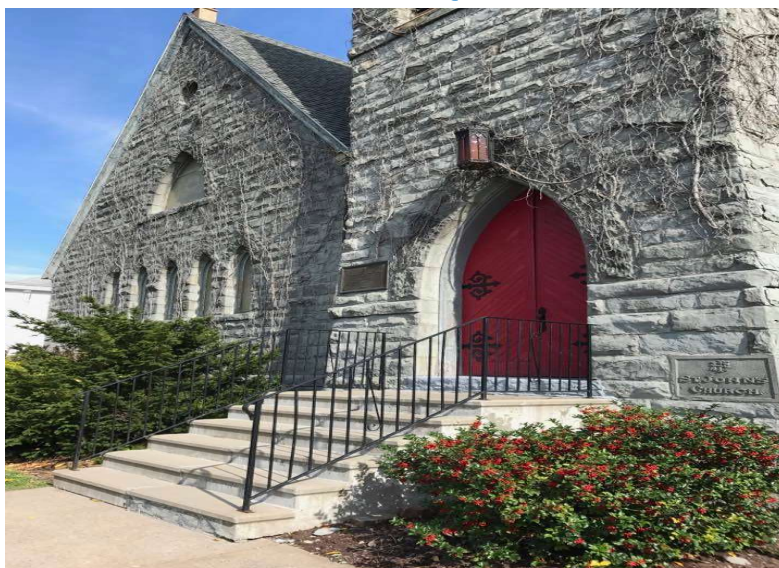
Church on the Rock
164 Madison St.
Oneida, N.Y. 13421

Food Bank of CNY
7066 Interstate Island Rd
Syracuse, N.Y. 13209

I would also like people to consider donating to the **CNYSPCA** for the animals in need as well. Unopened packages of pet food and litter are appreciated or contact them at FrontDesk1@cnyspca.org to find out what they need the most.

CNYSPCA
5878 East Molloy Rd
Syracuse, N.Y. 13211

For upcoming coffee hours, Bible study and other events, please check the St. John's website @ www.stjohnsoneida.org



St. John's Episcopal Church
341 Main St.
Oneida N.Y. 13421
Phone: (315) 363 -1940

Bishop: The Rt. Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan Probe

Rector: The Very Rev. Arthur W. Smith

Parish Administrator: Susan Slaunwhite

Treasurer: Jack MacMullen

Clerk of the Vestry: Valerie Hill

Senior Warden: Leslie Zebrowski

Junior Warden: Peter Slaunwhite

Vestry:

Sandra Aylesworth

Sheila Aylesworth

Suzanne Bauer

Cathy English

Valerie Hill

Garry Hirst

Ann Hodgins

Shelly Sears

Bob Wilkins

Loving God, by your grace you have gathered us from many walks of life to become a loving family at St. John's. Help us to sustain the miraculous love within this parish, and guide us in sharing this love with our neighbors. All this we ask through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen.

Please submit Evangelist articles to Laura Weismore @ snowkittens7311@gmail.com