



Epiphany 2022

Dear Friends,

Don't you just wish that life was like a TV game show? Wouldn't it be nice if bells and flashing lights went off, announcing each time you knew the definitively correct answer to life's perplexing questions? Even if your answer were a random guess, if it were correct, you would be rewarded with applause and a prize. Well, as your priest, coach, and friend, I must caution you that such a wish is a fantasy. I like doing puzzles; I like balancing my checking account; I like saving my thoughts and plans as PDFs, but even then, there are more questions. Even when we attain an accurate count or a successful completion, there is at least one more question: "So what?? What do I do now??"

Some whose wisdom I respect tell me that life is all about 'living the questions', and not insisting on definitive answers. If we imagine life's progress as a ladder, maybe one like Jacob saw in his dream, then each rung upward is not reached by properly answering the next question, but by entertaining the next, more intriguing, question. And reaching the very top of the ladder, hidden somewhere up in the cloudy heavens, is perhaps itself a fantasy. It might just go on up indefinitely. Forever and forevermore.

Science is like that, I'm told. Each experiment, each hypothesis, each calculation, each new piece of evidence ultimately leads to new questions, new directions of inquiry, new perspectives, new possibilities, new epiphanies. If we insist that we have the final answer, we will miss out on the excitement, the adventure, and the veiled truths 'out there'. So, the three wise guys in Matthew's nativity story did some calculations, were curious about an unusual heavenly body, packed their camels, and set off for the unknown with more questions, certainly, than answers. That probably took some courage, and more than a little whimsy. They decided to 'live their questions.' When they arrived in Jerusalem, they asked more questions, sadly misreading the sincerity of evil Herod, but listening carefully and reading between the lines.

And then on to Bethlehem they went, expecting to find the answer to their questions. But what they found there instead was an epiphany, an unexpected miracle. The infant king was poor and common and obscure; there were no bells and flashing lights (aside from the mysterious star, of course), and cattle lowing instead of audience applause. What must they have thought? But they lived their questions faithfully, worshiped the unlikely monarch, and unloaded their treasure chest. And then went home, probably scratching their heads. And asking "So, what now?" And that question probably prepared them for the next rung up their ladders.

The church season of Epiphany always begins on January 6th with the arrival of the Wise Ones in Judea, and concludes with the scriptures about the Transfiguration of Jesus on that isolated mountain. There he is bathed in light and converses, they say, with Elijah and Moses. Just what they were discussing, and why, is a mystery, and an unanswered question to be lived with. Meanwhile, Jesus increases in adolescent wisdom and Mary continues to ponder everything in her heart. And disciples gather around Jesus, and everyone lives with the questions, expecting astounding miracles. And they won't be disappointed, will they?! They keep climbing that ladder, one rung at a time, one question at a time, one revelation at a time. They keep their hearts open and their minds curious with inquiry, excited just to experience the mystery. And they are, dear friends, a faithful model for us.

Enjoy these weeks of Epiphany, dear friends, expecting miracles and accepting God's blessings.

Love, Nick+



The tower of St. John's Church is now lighted each night in memory and honor of Laura Bennett, that the Light of Christ might shine forth into the whole world as she so dearly dreamed.



Sue Miller

I spent many days with Sue Miller these last months, praying, singing hymns, sharing Complines. With apologies to King David in the bible, I personalized the 23rd Psalm for her. Several people liked this version so I thought others might too. Obviously, each person may insert names for whom or with whom they are praying.

Thanks and Happy New Year

Gloria :-)

Psalm 23...especially for _____.

_____, the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want.

He makes you lie down in green pastures;
he leads you beside peaceful waters;

He restores your soul.
He leads you on the right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though you may be walking in a dark or unfamiliar place,
fear no evil;
for you are with Jesus;
His arms are encircling you for comfort.

He is preparing a banquet table
in spite of anxieties you may have;
He is anointing your head with oil;
your cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you
all the rest of the days of your life,
and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord
with _____ and all whom you love...forever.



Merry Christmas

Flight 2022 Instructions

Good morning and welcome to Flight 2022. We are prepared to take off into the New Year. Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position. All self-destruct devices: pity, anger, selfishness, pride, and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt, and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your Positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer. Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith.

There will be NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight.

God, our Captain, has cleared us for take-off.

Destination – GREATNESS!

Wishing you a New Year filled with new HOPE, new JOY, and new BEGINNINGS!

Stay Blessed!

And welcome in 2022.



Submitted by Leslie Zebrowski

**SERVICE OF CHRISTIAN UNITY
ONEIDA AREA COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**



**Sunday
January 23, 2022
2:00 PM**

**This year's host church:
First Presbyterian Church
of Oneida**

Join the congregations and clergy of the Oneida area churches as they unite to celebrate the 2022 Week of Christian Unity together.

**FEATURING
THE COMMUNITY CHORUS
& AREA MUSICIANS**

**First Presbyterian Church
304 Broad Street, Oneida**

In the midst of humanity's darkness, the light of Christ penetrates its depth and unites us with one another!

January 23rd!!

Dear Friends, you may recall from history that January 23rd, 1552 was the day that the Book of Common Prayer (2nd edition) became MANDATORY by English law for all parishes. You *do* remember that, don't you?! Well, this year January 23rd is also a special day for us modern folk at St. John's in Oneida:

I

First, we will worship at 9:30, both in-person and on-line. We will ponder the scriptural case of Nehemiah gathering the Judeans to hear the whole recitation of the traditional Torah, we will recite together the important Psalm 19, we will hear Paul writing about the members of that miraculous Body of Christ, and we will hear about Jesus' attempt to preach to his neighbors in his hometown of Nazareth. We will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, and, oh BTW, I will be preaching. Don't miss it!!

II

At about 11 am, following our service, we will have our annual parish meeting in person in the parish hall. So, if you come to church, please stick around for the meeting. If you have been worshipping online from home, please consider coming over for this brief meeting. It will be, as they say, bare-boned. Last year I tried to prepare an extravaganza to be shared on screen for zoom, but, frankly, it was great, but just too much to do again. If you can come, fine...if not, well, be with us in spirit. We will be voting on our new vestry and wardens from a prepared slate, and hearing about our finances, which are pretty good, BTW. I will not be making any major address, and I am not aware of any compelling controversies to be addressed. Nevertheless, if you attend in-person, you will be offered 'the floor' for any concerns you wish to discuss.

III

So, after the annual parish meeting, please return home, have lunch, take a brief nap, and then return to the city for the Service of Christian Unity, which will be held this year in-person at First Presbyterian Church, 304 broad St. Now, you may feel like our congregation at St. John's is alone in its longing to be the Body of Christ, but, in truth, there are several other faith communities here locally who are intending to do the same. And, symbolically, once a year in January we gather from those various church communities to renew our commitment to Christ and to each other, that together we may make some progress toward installing the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace here in greater Oneida. While others may seek to disrupt the blessings of God, choosing violence and chaos over peace and faithfulness, we choose together to solve our local problems through Jesus' teaching to 'love one another' as he has loved us. It's a community effort, not dependent on denomination or dispensation. And it's important. It's crucial. It's our calling. So, please join me this year, on January 23rd, at the Presbyterian Church on Broad Street, to re-affirm our own part in this mission! Nick+

Church Family Nativities



St. John's Church



Colette's



Ann's



Norita's



Nick & Gale's



Anne & Val's
Unlit and Lighted with beautiful shadow effect.

Photo by
Peter Slaunwhite



Goodbye From Your Editor

It is with a heavy heart that I have to say this but, due to health as well as personal reasons, I have decided to step down from being editor of The Evangelist. I have greatly enjoyed this job for the past few years and really hate to leave it. I want to thank those of you in my church family who always encouraged me and complimented me on the job I did. You will never know how much your kind words meant to me. I hope you know I always tried to do my best.

Laura Weismore



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Junior Warden: Peter Slaunwhite

Vestry:

Sandra Aylesworth

Sheila Aylesworth

Suzanne Bauer

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.

Email: stjohnsoneida.org