



The Evangel

St John's Episcopal Church -- Walpole, New Hampshire

April 2017

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The Astonishment of Easter

Recently in our Narnia After School program, I was drawing parallels between the death of the lion Aslan in Narnia and the death of Jesus on a cross. Aslan dies but then appears alive, much to the astonishment of the witnesses Lucy and Susan. It's not too far removed from the scene at the tomb where the women find Jesus' body gone, and then see that he is alive. I took great pains to tell the Narnia kids this astonishing story.

After hearing this astonishing story, one of the younger kids, a very intelligent child, looked at me right in the eye and said, "It isn't possible. Once you're dead, you're dead."

How can it be anything else? Death is the end. If we're talking about lack of resuscitation, it cannot be anything but a final end. Death is predictable. We all will die. Death is inevitable, along with taxes, as the saying goes.

Our Easter faith is not about death as an end. It is about resurrection, something new and astounding. Easter means that the old things, the things subject to the inevitability of death--mortals-- will pass away; but those same mortals will be made new in the resurrection. Death does not get the final word.

To my young friend, as well as any adult friends struggling with this mystery, I say "You are right. Once you're dead, you're dead; but Easter is not about the inevitable boundaries of this mortal life. Easter is about the mystery that God will break through the inevitability of death. I can't prove it, but I have put my trust in God and believe the mystery of the power of resurrection over death."

That is not to say that I can explain it adequately enough to satisfy a third grader or an adult seeking proof; but I trust God enough to continue to be astonished! At this point, astonishment seems to lead me closer to the mystery of God made known in the hope of resurrection. I'll seek astonishment over certainty any day, especially on Easter.

Susan +

Holy Week and Easter at St John's

April 9 -- Palm / Passion Sunday

9:30 a.m. -- Procession of Palms around the Common
(weather-permitting)

10 a.m. -- Eucharist with the Reading of the Passion
Narrative

April 12 -- Holy Wednesday

Noon -- Eucharist

April 13 -- Maundy Thursday

6:30 p.m. Communion & Agape Meal (soup & bread)

April 14 -- Good Friday

Noon -- Liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer

April 16 -- Easter Day -- The Day of Resurrection!

10 a.m. -- Eucharist

Sanctuary Movement

The Vestry had an initial discussion about the topic of church involvement in the Sanctuary Movement; the Vestry stresses that this is a preliminary discussion and no action will be taken without considerable congregational input. We are wrestling with the question: What would St John's do if an undocumented worker came through our doors seeking sanctuary? We are seeking to invite the Bishop to share response from the House of Bishops, which just tackled this topic at the recent meeting. We will also be seeking congregational input. I cannot stress enough that there is no effort to register St John's as an official place of sanctuary.

As we consider what our response might be given the possibility of a sanctuary request, we also have to bear in mind Jesus' words, as in Matthew 25:31-46, especially these words: 'Lord, when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you....' And Jesus answered, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

The larger question we are considering is: what does it mean to be a faithful congregation? How far or how deeply are we willing to live that faith?

Vestry Highlights

The Vestry met on Wednesday, March 15. In addition to approving the minutes for February meeting and the Treasurer's report for February, the Vestry also:

- considered a follow-up on the apartment shower repair
- voted to put \$100 per month from the apartment rent into an apartment repair/maintenance fund
- discussed options for altar flowers

- talked about possible involvement in the upcoming Old Home Days

VESTRY

Andrew Wilking, Warden (2019)
Wayne Wagenbach, Warden (2018)
Mary Schoppmeyer, Treasurer (2019)
Jack Pratt, Clerk (2019)
Al Sparks (2018)
Katra Faust (2019)
Joanne King (2020)

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