

**St. John's**  
**Episcopal Church**  
New Milford

To receive this via email, contact the office: 860-354-5583 or stjohsepiscopal.office@gmail.com



Dear St. John's family,

"The Bible of creation" is a phrase that's been part of Christian parlance for centuries. I don't know who coined it, but it refers to the understanding that God speaks to us not merely through Holy Scripture, but also - actually first of all - through the natural world. I'm thinking of this because of an experience I had at the annual ECCT clergy retreat a couple of weeks ago, which I would like to share with you.

The retreat was led by a priest (from the Diocese of Massachusetts) with a passion for environmental ministry; and at the second session she introduced us to an exercise in Christian meditation on an object from nature. She had a bag of stuff she'd collected from the woods that surrounded the place the retreat was held - leaves, small deadfall branches, stones - and laid them out on a mat in the center of our circle of chairs. She asked us each to find one that particularly caught our eye, come pick it up, and take it back to our seat.

The exercise was in three parts (each of which took five minutes; this is a very brief summary.) The first was called, What Have We Here? She asked us to spend five minutes observing the object, with all our senses, getting to know it. I had picked a leaf which looked to be from the elm family - small, about three inches long, oval, with serrated edges - and there were many things I observed about it; but the most striking was its brilliant colors: about seven-eighths bright red, one-eighth bright green, with no gradual fading at all in between, there was a distinct line of demarcation.

The second part of the exercise was, What Might This Mean? We were asked to think about what our observations might suggest about human life: about relationships, work and play, joy and suffering, anything at all. And it occurred to me, looking at the leaf I'd chosen, that I was actually seeing a snapshot of the moment of its death: red being the representation of its aging, green the life it had been born with, which had been suddenly cut off, and it had fallen from the tree.

The third part was, What Is God Saying To Me? To me this was quickly clear: it was a reminder of mortality: that, in God's creation, every individual life - unique and wonderful as it is - comes to an end. And contrary to what I might have expected, at this realization I didn't feel any kind of dread, or foreboding, but rather something in the opposite direction: a deep sense of gratitude for the time God has given (and is giving) me, and for the beauty of creation.

If we take the time - and it doesn't have to be a lot of time, this particular exercise took about twenty minutes - the Bible of creation offers us unique gifts of God; and it's all around us, all the time. Thanks be to God.

Faithfully,  
Jack

### Important dates

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| Nov.<br>1  | <b>Healing Service</b><br><i>in the Chapel every<br/>Wednesday<br/>at 10:00 AM</i><br><b>Book keeper in</b><br>8:30 AM-12:30 PM              |
| Nov.<br>5  | <b>TWO services at</b><br><i>8:00 AM and<br/>10:00 AM</i><br><b>Bible Study at 9 AM</b><br><b>Sunday school begins</b><br><i>at 10:00 AM</i> |
| Nov.<br>8  | <b>Healing Service</b><br><i>in the Chapel every<br/>Wednesday<br/>at 10:00 AM</i>   |
| Nov.<br>10 | <b>Office Closed</b><br><b>Veterans day</b><br><b>observed</b>   |
| Nov.<br>12 | <b>TWO services at</b><br><i>8:00 AM and<br/>10:00 AM</i><br><b>Bible Study at 9 AM</b><br><b>Sunday school begins</b><br><i>at 10:00 AM</i> |
| Nov.<br>15 | <b>Healing Service</b><br><i>in the Chapel every<br/>Wednesday<br/>at 10:00 AM</i><br><b>Book keeper in</b><br>8:30 AM-12:30 PM              |
| Nov.<br>19 | <b>TWO services at</b><br><i>8:00 AM and<br/>10:00 AM</i><br><b>Bible Study at 9 AM</b><br><b>Sunday school begins</b><br><i>at 10:00 AM</i> |
| Nov.<br>22 | <b>Healing Service</b><br><i>in the Chapel every<br/>Wednesday<br/>at 10:00 AM</i>   |

## Vestry report to the Congregation

**ECCT Recognition** - Our Bishops Ian Douglas and Laura Ahrens recently recognized St. John's as one of the ECCT parishes that "are fulfilling the administrative, financial and canonical expectations that are fundamental to our common life. Sharing such information will help to provide transparency and accountability as we participate in God's mission together."

**Election of Evan Mills to Vestry** - We are very happy indeed to welcome Evan Mills to the Vestry. Evan's term runs through January 2020.

## Important dates

Nov. 23-24 **Office Closed Thanksgiving Holiday**

Nov. 26 **TWO services at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM Bible Study at 9 AM Sunday school begins at 10:00 AM**

Nov. 29 **Healing Service in the Chapel every Wednesday at 10:00 AM Book keeper in 8:30 AM-12:30 PM**

## Ladies Night Out

On Monday November 7, the ladies of the parish will dine out at The Iron Grill in new Milford. We will meet at 6pm. Feel free to bring a friend. Please let Lise Smith know you will be there. [liseasmith0325@att.net](mailto:liseasmith0325@att.net)

**The office will be closed on November 10th for Veterans day**

## Volunteers needed

Elaine will be taking Mondays off from October 16 through December 18. I am looking for someone to answer phones from 9 AM to Noon on those Mondays, please call the office or email if you can help out in that way!

**The office will be closed on November 23 and 24 for Thanksgiving.**

## Victorian Tea and Bazaar

This years Victorian Tea will be held on Saturday December 9th from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. Venders tables are now being reserved. Any questions contact Lei Lemos, [860-354-9833](tel:860-354-9833) or Margo Terwilliger 203-405-3774



## November Anniversaries

11-4 **Sandra and Ivana Violette**

11-14 **Donnie and Katie Maxwell**

## November Birthdays

11-3 **Joan Jejer**

11-10 **Jens Larsen**

11-11 **David Larson**

11-11 **Ronald Wohlschlaeger**

11-12 **Marilyn McLaughlin**

## November Birthdays

11-13 **Amanda Colarusso**

11-14 **Jean Churchill**

11-20 **James Denino**

11-20 **John Roger**



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