



Saint John's

Inter Change

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Susan J. Latimer Is Called to Be Our Rector!



The vestry is pleased to announce that The Rev. Susan J. Latimer will be the 25th rector of St. John's Church. Susan and her family will arrive in Charleston in early August.

Originally from a small rural town in Southern California, Susan attended Yale University where she received her Bachelor's Degree in Music in 1982. She went on to obtain her Master's in music from the University of Southern California in 1984.

Susan received her Master of Divinity, Magna Cum Laude, from Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia in 1992, with a concentration in Liturgical Theology. Following her ordination to the Episcopal priesthood in 1992, Susan served as Assistant to the Rector at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Athens, Georgia, Associate Rector at Holy Trinity Parish in Decatur, Georgia, and Assistant to the Rector for Christian Education and Youth at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Atlanta, the parish that had sponsored her for ordination and the place where she met her husband, John Roberts; both are "cradle" Episcopalians.

Since 2001, she has served as rector of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Waterville, Maine, where she also enjoys serving her diocese as retreat leader for both vestries and clergy.

Susan loves to lead retreats and quiet days. She practices several forms of contemplative prayer, including Centering Prayer, Taize' sung prayer, and meditative walking. She is committed to Christian formation for all ages, and sees the spiritual journey as a life-long process. She looks forward to helping St. John's reinvigorate its Christian education and youth programs.

Susan's husband, John, is a senior analyst of labor and economic statistics for the State of Maine. Together they have two young boys, Franklin, who will enter high school next fall, and Hugh, who will begin middle school as a fifth-grader. As a family, they enjoy music, singing, reading, hiking, and camping.

We look forward to welcoming Susan and her family to St. John's and to having her join us on our spiritual journey. When Susan accepted the call to be our rector, she said, "I am deeply honored to have been called as your rector. It would seem that God has been preparing me during my entire life for this call!"

Our Mission: We reach out to the world in Christ's name in the hope that all might find a home in God's healing love.

**Sundays May 25 and June 1 and 8, 2008
Second, Third and Fourth Sundays
after Pentecost**

- 8:00 a.m.** **Holy Eucharist**
- 8:45 a.m.** **Lectionary Study and Group Discussion**, library
- 9:30 a.m.** **Adult Forum, May 25**, Ken Sullivan, executive director of the West Virginia Humanities Council, will discuss "Keeping the Ninth"; **June 1**, Anne Saville, proprietor of Taylor Books, Charleston's popular bookstore and after-church gathering place of St. John's "coven," will describe her colorful path from England to Capitol Street, Room 109.
- 10:10 a.m.** **Parents' Fellowship**, Room 208
- 10:10 a.m.** **Chapel for Older Children**, Room 225
- 10:30 a.m.** **Classes for toddlers through Grade 5:** Toddlers, Room 298; Godly Play, 4 to 8 years old, Room 299; St. John's Eagles, 3rd to 5th Grades, Room 221.
- 10:30 a.m.** **Holy Eucharist**, with choir
- 11:30 a.m.** **Coffee Hour**, Hunter Hall

St. John's Summer Schedule Begins June 8

The last Adult Forum and Sunday School classes of the season will be held on Sunday, June 1, and will resume in September. To launch our summer schedule, we will celebrate on Sunday, June 8, with Sunday Sundaes, an old-fashioned ice cream social which will follow our 10:30 a.m. service. All parishioners and their guests are invited to attend. Chapel for older children will continue to meet Sundays at 10:30 a.m. To volunteer for this, please see Kathie Giltinan.

Thank you, Search Committee

The vestry would like to express its gratitude to the search committee for their diligence and dedication in finding the best possible rector for St. John's and their discerning minds and spirits that led them to Susan Latimer.

No great things are accomplished without some stress and struggle. Transition in church leadership is always stressful. But, as we prepare to welcome Susan and her family to St. John's, we should all say prayers of thanksgiving for a wonderfully successful ending of the transition.

Thank you, search committee, for your dedication to St. John's and for the good work you have done on our behalf.

Memorial Day Picnic

Come to the Gorman Shelter at Coonskin Park on Monday, May 26, for St. John's annual picnic. We have the shelter for the entire day.

The entire parish is invited to come and bring covered dishes to share. Hot dogs, hamburgers, etc. will be provided with grilling going on from 4 to 6 p.m.

There will be games for the children and an intergenerational activity. Last year Michelle Walker introduced the popular "I remember it well . . ." listening project. It is rumored that RC the Clown will be there. Suggestions are welcome as are volunteers to help set up and clean up. Call Kathie Giltinan at 346-0359, ext. 12, if you can help.

VBS Undergoes Changes

This year our Vacation Bible School, *Passport to a Better World*, will be July 22, 23 and 24, Tuesday through Thursday. It will take place in the evening to allow greater participation by working people. We'll start at 5:30 with a light dinner and finish by 7:45. This way the whole family can join in.

Passport to a Better World will re-use materials and decorations from our past VBS programs: *Serengeti Trek*, *Lava Lava Island*, and *Fiesta!* We'll learn about the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), introducing them to children as young as five. Our program for young people, based on understanding and responding to the MDGs, will help kids will learn about the struggles of people here and around the world. Most importantly, they'll realize their ability to make a difference by taking small actions such as reducing waste, helping people have access to healthcare and partnering with others.

St. John's will be learning about partnering through this experience because Charleston's Unity and Unitarian churches are joining us to produce this ecumenical event. Our own Outreach Committee has already stepped up to help.

What could your role be for this year? We need decorators, registrars, kitchen crew, shoppers, teachers, technical/computer people and more. Please call Kathie Giltinan to save a place for your family.

Party for David and Kay Hackett

On Sunday, May 25, St. John's will have a potluck lunch to celebrate the ministry of David and Kay Hackett and to send them on their journey to David's next interim position.

Please prepare your favorite dish, bring it to the kitchen before the 10:30 a.m. service, and attach a note if the dish needs to be heated.

Please contact Michelle Walker if you can help with set up or clean up.

Archives Intern Says Thanks

I would like to thank Janet Morris and Juanita Reed for the opportunity to fulfill my 100 hours of internship from West Virginia State University with St. John's Episcopal Church.

Janet, Juanita and I performed numerous tasks to organize the archives to be better suited for easier access for interested persons to acquire articles, photos and other artifacts. We hope you enjoy and utilize the archives to gain better knowledge of the significance that St. John's has in Charleston. I will still help them in the future to improve the archives and make access to everything much easier.

Brad Pauley

Summer Vacation for Interchange

We'll be publishing just once a month during summer, with the next issue being for the weeks of June 15, 22 and 29 and July 5. Please send items to bdearien@stjohnswv.org no later than Tuesday, June 3, at 4 p.m.

Jo Blackwood Wins National Honor

One of St. John's most active members has been chosen as the 2008 National Mother of the Year.

Jo Lambert Blackwood, director of teacher education at the University of Charleston, was selected from thousands of applicants and two dozen finalists by American Mothers Inc., a non-profit organization for women. She was honored after a February meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska.

She is the mother of two sons, Andrew, 41, and Matthew Joseph, 38, and grandmother of six. Her husband, E. Neale Blackwood Jr., is also a professor at the University of Charleston with 42 years of service teaching math and physics.

The entire family was present at St. John's on May 11 when Jo received a bouquet of roses and an ovation from the congregation.

As a mother, Jo stayed home until her youngest son was in kindergarten, then returned to school. She graduated from Morris Harvey College with a bachelor's degree in biology and obtained a master's degree in journalism from Ohio University. Much later, she earned a doctorate from Virginia Tech. She has taught at Morgantown High School and Charleston High School and was first dean of humanities at Capital High School.

At St. John's she has taught Sunday School, been a member of the vestry, served as lay minister, chalice assistant, Vacation Bible School teacher and led confirmation classes.

To the Search Committee from a Search Committee Member

By Sue Harpold

It has been such a growing experience for me to have worked with you in this terribly important time of choosing a new rector for our beloved St. John's. From the beginning in July before we really knew each other there was this knowledge we all felt of the responsibility that came of this decision we were to make.

I am so thankful and proud of the way the meetings were conducted. We could agree, disagree, question and disagree again, because of the atmosphere in the room. Each of us felt comfortable and safe enough to be truly honest in our discussions. It has been so interesting to learn the many reasons our candidates gave for wanting to come to St. John's. It has been a learning experience to read and to hear their stories that were sometimes painful as to the experiences some of them had faced.

We, as a group, grew to trust and to care for and support each other through the rumors and sometimes the distrust from others that were shown. Thank you for helping me in the times I needed it. Thank you for being a part of those sleepless nights we all shared. And thank you for being you, each of you. We have made a great choice in Susan. Let us all now support and love her.

Remember that "God comes to see you without ringing a bell." (Anonymous)

My love and thanks,
Sue.

New CFT Leaders Needed

The Sunday school year is winding down and we will be recognizing this year's volunteers at the June 8 Sunday Sundae celebration. Shonda Toler concludes her term as Christian Formation Team (CFT) Chair/ Parish Liaison. She has been a great help this past year, giving her time and talents for *Avalanche Ranch*, the St. Francis blessing of the animals, the Christingle making party and Christmas services for families, our Epiphany party and many events for our youth group.

We will need a new Chair/Parish Liaison. If you would like to help, or suggest someone else, please call Kathie Giltinan at 346 -0359, ext 12.

We will also need a new head of the POINTs committee. The Parents of Infants through Teens or POINTs is a group intended to support and encourage parents in our parish and the larger community. It has played an important role in bringing new families to our church and to involving existing members who have children.

Each year the group holds a series of dinner meetings that feature speakers and timely discussions. The POINTs leader plans and oversees those evenings and works with the CFT coordinator to invite speakers.

In Memoriam

Parishioner Roger Starcher departed this life on May 7. His funeral was held May 12. *May light perpetual shine upon him*

Reflections on the Papal Visit

By Lawton Posey

The Bishop of Rome has come and gone. His visit stirred a variety of feelings within me.

For starters, I perceived him as a rather retiring and pastoral man, with a persona which differed from the general perception that he is the “enforcer” of doctrine. Indeed, that was a role he played as Prefect of Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. It was a seminal document entitled *Dominus Iesus* which set forth the official belief that the Orthodox churches were “deficient” and the churches with a Reformation heritage were at best “ecclesial communities.” I do not believe he has this view. If others are saved, it is through the mediation of the Roman Catholic Church.

Still, his willingness to meet with sexual abuse victims, and his visit to Ground Zero could move the stoniest heart. Here, he met people eye to eye, and offered words of consolation. I do not believe that such personal contact is easy for him.

As a preacher, he lacks the ability to improvise which we saw in his predecessor John Paul II. There was no possibility that he could get “off message” as some politicians do, to their downfall. Every word was carefully chosen, and read in a serious tone. No television commentator could nail him on this or that gaffe. As a celebrant, he is orderly and precise, as befits his rather unemotional, cerebral view of faith. His faith in natural law is strong and abiding.

Benedict both loves and fears the American Catholic Church. The enthusiastic crowds certainly conveyed joy to the solitary figure riding in a converted Mercedes SUV, called the Popemobile. He knows, however, that his doctrinal hold on Americans is fragile at times. The American Church is a great fountain of funds for worldwide work. It is also a stormy sea of dissent, as Catholics practice birth control, have a tough battle to recruit priests, and may pick and choose which beliefs they honor.

Surely, he does not want the fire of the American Catholic Church to wither as it has in his native Europe. And then, there is Africa, where the Roman Church is growing, and China, where there is hope for closer ties with the Roman See.

My personal take is that despite a few words here and there, Benedict is uninterested in ecumenism. The great ecumenical progress of the past in liturgy and Scripture study may mean less to him than it did to the liberal bishops and clergy 40 years ago. If he is interested in church unity, it will be on his own terms.

So, off he went, in his chartered Boeing 777, a man in the ninth decade of his life. From my Protestant viewpoint, he has some virtues. He is a pastoral Pope. I wonder if he is threatened by the strength of independent evangelical groups that may gain strength over the next 50 years in North and South America. Or does he quietly rejoice in the fading of the once sturdy “mainline” churches of America?

Watching My Kids at the Altar

By John Canfield

I still can't get used to seeing my children at the altar. My sons often serve as acolytes on Sunday morning. I sit in the pew and observe their every move. Lighting candles. Carrying the cross. Holding the Gospel. Helping with communion. I marvel at their confidence. Their father was not nearly as poised at their age.

Watching my sons at the altar brings a flood of memories of my own youthful service as an acolyte. I grew up in a parish with a strong sense of community. As children, we "belonged" in our parish. We knew that we had a role in the life of our church, and the church community supported us in that role.

There are many ways in which we provide that same sense of family and community to our youth here at St. John's. Last month, we celebrated the ministry of our acolytes and congratulated our "seniors" on Acolyte Sunday. Bishop Klusmeyer confirmed six of our youth on Mother's Day. The Rite 13 group meets regularly for social events and community service opportunities. Godly Play and the St. John's Eagles educate our children every Sunday morning. Vacation Bible School will take place this summer during the week of July 20-25.

As my sons serve at the altar, I hope that they feel the same sense of community in the church that I felt as a child. Despite the obvious cliché, I believe that it truly does take a village to raise a child. Here in the "village of St. John's", it's our responsibility to provide that sense of community to our youth. As village members, are we fully engaged in providing them with that sense of "belonging"?