

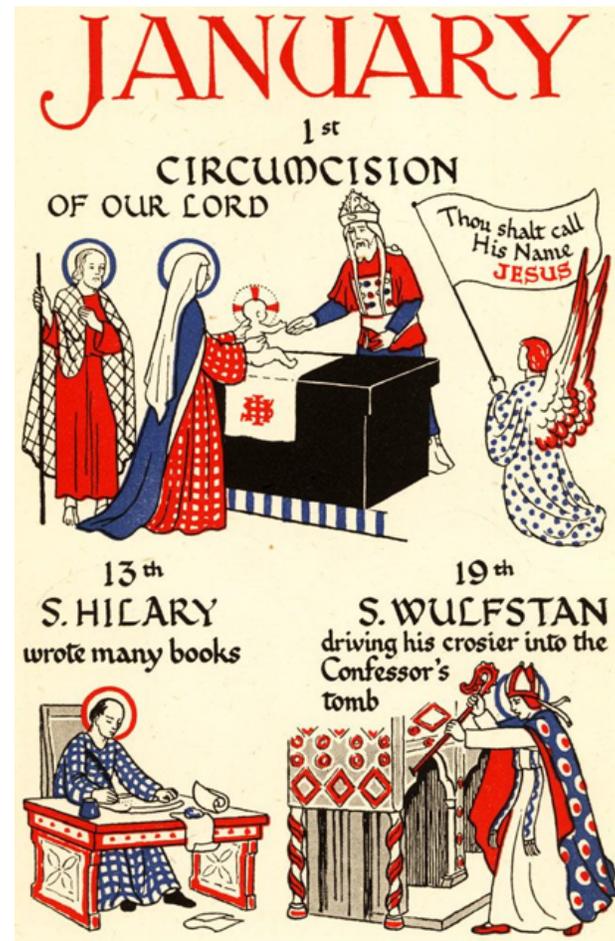


RECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Friends,



Happy New Year! So long, 2020! Doesn't it feel good to say goodbye to this past year? And yet, nothing has changed. We are still navigating our way through a global pandemic, public health restrictions are still part of our



everyday life, and we still do not know how long all of this will last. But today, and every day that passes by, I am more hopeful than ever before.

The approval and distribution of vaccines is truly a game changer. In our local context, the staff of Mt. Nittany hospital have received the vaccine, and not too long from now staff and residents of nursing facilities, like Centre Crest, will be next. We've been through a lot this past year, and even though we're still not in the clear, the arrival of vaccines has brought us a fresh sense of healing and renewal. Since the first vaccines were approved, I have offered a daily prayer for medical researchers and hospital staff. I give thanks for their skills and insights, and above all, for God's faithfulness during this time.



In the Church, we continue to celebrate the Christmas season, giving thanks to God for the birth of his Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Remember, the twelve days of Christmas begin on December 25 (they're not the twelve days leading up to Christmas; don't listen to store ads and commercials). The season of Christmas culminates every year on the feast of the Epiphany, January 6. This year we will celebrate the Epiphany on January 6 and on Sunday, January 10, at our Sunday parish mass. We will also make available, by mail and at the back of the church, blessed chalk, incense, and gold (gold covered chocolate coins), along with a service leaflet for you to use in an Epiphany house blessing.

After Epiphany, the Church calendar rests from major celebrations, and slowly prepares us for the start of Lent on Ash Wednesday. If you can remember, it is during Lent of last year that things began to shut down, including in-person worship. At this time, we do not know when we will reopen for public worship.

On December 28, our Bishop released a pastoral letter outlining what would be necessary to safely return to in-person worship: a sustained 5% or less positivity rate in the county for at least two weeks. Currently, only one county in our diocese has had a 5% positivity rate (for just one week), and the church there, St. John's, Eaglesmere, is a summer chapel. Later in

this issue of The Herald you will find a copy of the Bishop's pastoral letter; I commend this to you.

For now, we will continue to livestream masses on Facebook and YouTube. On Sundays, the church will remain open for personal prayer and for the reception of Holy Communion. In the months ahead, I hope we can find new ways to celebrate and mark the church year.

May Christ, who by his Incarnation gathered into all things earthly and heavenly, fill you with his joy and peace.

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Carlos†

NEW SAINT JOHN ICON



On Sunday, December 27, the feast of St. John, a new icon was donated by Father Carlos and Deacon Alex, in thanksgiving for the people of this parish, and blessed at mass. The icon is a modern replica of a gospel illumination depicting our patron, taken from the Gospel Book of Abbot Wedricus. The original image was produced in the 12th century at the Abbey of Liessies in Northern France.

The icon depicts key moments in St. John's life and work. Beginning on the top left corner, and moving clockwise, we see depicted: St. John's arrest and sentencing; the Holy Spirit inspiring St. John; his exile to the Island of Patmos; Abbot Wedricus, the donor, holding the ink well; St. John reclining as he receives his divine Revelation; either Emperor Domitian or Louis VII, the French king at the time; St. John in a cauldron of oil during his attempted martyrdom before the Latin Gate in Rome; his eagle and scroll attributions; and finally at the center of the icon, St. John writing his gospel.



The original Gospel illumination: St. John the Evangelist, from the Gospel Book of Abbot Wedricus. 1147 A.D. Tempera on vellum, Société Archéologique et Historique, Avesnes-sur-Helpe, France.

FROM THE DEACON'S PERCH

“Gratitude is our ability to see the grace of God, morning by morning, no matter what greets us in the course of the day.” C. Barnes



My Dear Friends,

This year has been a test for all of us in the way of work, education, family life, social activities, and worship. I have never been so proud to be your deacon at St. John's and companion to Fr. Carlos.

2020, for me, will be remembered for all the support—spiritual, financial, and emotional—we have shown as a family. Our church reached out more than ever before in our own community and in the surrounding area. We have supported food banks in Bellefonte and State College and through the World Food Bank; provided snacks to the staff at Mt. Nittany Hospital; provided lunch for the 245 staff members at Centre Care; participated in collecting items for the Penn's Valley children; and helped with Toys for Tots in Lewistown. We have given gifts to PAWS, Strawberry Fields, and Farmland Trust, and Bibles and workbooks to CCCF. Through the Episcopal Relief fund, Fr. Carlos and I have given many food and gas cards to the less fortunate, helped to pay for car repairs, and assisted in helping to pay for utilities for the disenfranchised.

All this was possible as a Church family. Without you it would be difficult to do many of the things we do. We are grateful for Fr. Carlos and his dedication to liturgy, music, and church programs, such as adult formation. His keen interest in children's ministry, along with Ellen's leadership, have kept our children engaged during this pandemic. He has a desire to see our children grow in Christ, and his partnership in many of our undertakings serve all.

The video program and media we provide and the countless hours getting it right for us to worship online are all due to his efforts.

Erik and Rebecca, along with others, have provided beautiful music this entire time and should be applauded and complimented.

I am eager to see you all when I can spend time with you and your families, but in the meantime let us continue with our ministries and support. Most of all, Thanks Be to God. Happy New Year.

~Deacon Alex†

2021 PARISH MEETING
SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

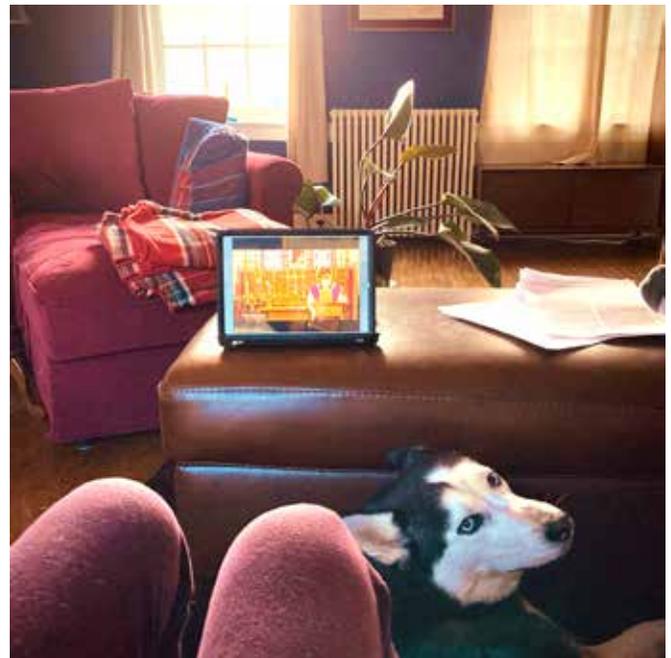


This year's parish meeting will take place on **Sunday, January 16**, following the 10:00 A.M. parish mass. The vestry is currently working on details to hold our meeting online. Stay tuned for more information. For now, please save the date.

STAY CONNECTED!

We now have the equipment and technology to offer a very good quality experience via Facebook and YouTube. Tune in Sunday (10:00) and Wednesday (9:30) mornings and support Fr. Carlos and Alex. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsepiscopalbellefonte/live>.

Adela Germano is grateful to Fr. Carlos for the opportunity to share Advent with her Christian brothers and sisters on screen. It looks like Balto likes it too!



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Joyce Banker | 2 |
| Rachel Pifer | 2 |
| Paula Hough | 6 |
| Christine Holt | 8 |
| Trinity King | 10 |
| Stuart Hough | 23 |
| George Holt | 27 |
| Scott Mauger | 29 |
| Wesley Mauger | 29 |

GOD'S PLAN FOR THE NEW YEAR

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Jeremiah 29:11 is one of the more widely known verses in the Bible. It reminds us that God has a plan for our lives, and that His plan is good. However, it is important to note that the word “prosper” in this passage does not mean what many people think. It does not imply material possessions, but rather prosperity of the inner man. It means completeness, soundness, welfare and peace. It is a tranquility and contentment that rises above whatever circumstances you may be facing.

In order for God to glorify Himself through our lives, He often pushes us out of our comfort zones. He leads us to mountaintops; but He also guides us through dark valleys. His plan does not always make sense from our limited

perspective. We must remember that anything the Lord allows into our lives is for our good and His glory. He can prosper us, giving us hope and a future no matter what is happening to us now or what will happen to us down the road.

This year has been hard for many of us. If we are being honest, we are glad to see it go and welcome the possibility, the hope, and the change that comes with a new year. However, we are not guaranteed that this next year will be better than the last. We don't know for sure what the next twelve months will produce. But we do know who holds the next twelve months, and we know that no matter what happens, God still has a plan and a purpose for you and me.

I pray that as you go into the new year, you will remember that you don't need something from God...you need God! His plans are invariably good, because God is always good!

*~ Dr. Curt Dodd
Higheraim.org*





The
EPISCOPAL CHURCH in
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

28 December 2020

Dear Members of the Episcopal Church in Central PA,

In my last pastoral letter addressing the Covid-19 vaccine on 14 November, I indicated that we would be ceasing in-person, indoor worship beginning on 21 November and extending through the Christmas season. I know that this was heartbreak for so many of you, and I appreciate the faithfulness with which you adjusted to a “Christmas like none other,” holding services outdoors and online and developing new ways to continue the choral and pageant traditions of the season. I continue to be in awe of the creativity that abounds in our diocese!

The Task Force on Operations and my staff have continued their vigilance, watching the incidence of the virus in our diocese and Commonwealth. A weekly spreadsheet is reviewed at our staff meeting as we wait and watch for numbers to be in decline and to approach a safer level. The spreadsheet is now posted on our diocesan website for your review, as well.

The threshold that many agencies are using to determine if a region is safe enough to allow re-gathering is a 5% or less positivity rate. We are also using this threshold in our diocese as a guide, and when a 5% or less positivity rate is sustained in a county for at least two weeks, and other factors seem to be in control (new case count, rate of incidence per 10,000) we will look to consider re-gathering by region. Currently, only one county in our diocese has had a 5% positivity rate (for just one week) - and the church there - St. John’s, Eaglesmere)- is a summer chapel.

I made a provision for Holy Communion to be available to our diocese for Advent and the Christmas season through a service called “Communion Under Special Circumstances.” This provision was for the reception of pre-consecrated elements in a home service, not in conjunction with an online “broadcast.” In light of the tenacity of the coronavirus in our diocese, I will extend the provision for “Communion Under Special Circumstances” for the season of Epiphany, as well. A service with the appropriate Epiphany materials will be sent out later this week to our parishes. Not every parish may choose to use this option; it is up to the parish priest to decide.

Thank you for your care of each other in time, for your understanding, and for your resilience. I remain confident that God is with us in this, serving as our great Shepherd, leading us beside still waters, and calming our troubled souls. Please pray for all those who are sick or have died, pray for their families and loved ones, and know that God is our “refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1)

In the Way of Love,

The Rt. Rev. Audrey C. Scanlan
XI Bishop

January 2021

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--------|----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 Second Sunday after Christmas Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube | 4 7:00 pm Men's Group | 5 7:00 pm AA Mtg | 6 9:30 am Low Mass for the Epiphany via Facebook 4:00 pm CCYSB ART Program | 7 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club | 8 | 9 |
| 10 Solemnity of the Epiphany (observed) Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube | 11 7:00 pm Men's Group | 12 7:00 pm AA Mtg | 13 9:30 am Parish Requiem via Facebook 4:00 pm CCYSB ART Program | 14 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club | 15 | 16 |
| 17 First Sunday after the Epiphany Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube | 18 7:00 pm Men's Group | 19 7:00 pm AA Mtg | 20 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live 4:00 pm CCYSB ART Program | 21 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club | 22 | 23 |
| 24 Second Sunday after the Epiphany Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube | 25 7:00 pm Men's Group | 26 7:00 pm AA Mtg | 27 9:30 am Low Mass on Facebook Live 4:00 pm CCYSB ART Program | 28 2:30 pm Bellefonte Elementary Good News Club | 29 | 30 |
| 31 Third Sunday after the Epiphany Parish Mass 10:00 am on Facebook Live & YouTube | | | | | | |