

NEWSLETTER



Episcopal Parish of Ames

January 2017

Managing Our Spirituality

In the past several months we have looked at the stewardship or management of several areas of our lives. We have looked at how we manage and care for the earth, our time, our abilities and talents, and our accumulated assets. This month I would ask us to look at the management of our spirituality. I know that this sounds very religious. While it does involve matter of faith, there are also many other parts of our spirituality. How we treat others, our compassion, our patience, our concern for those less fortunate, and our ability to study and cultivate changes in these areas are all part of our spiritual life.

How we receive the energy and courage to live our lives as we feel called is part of our spiritual heritage. Prayer, meditation, the study of scripture, and personal introspection can greatly enhance the deepening of faith. Having said this I realize that a large percentage of church going people have never participated in a Bible study group, prayer group, or even read a recent book related to their spiritual life. We seem content to rely on our sixth grade confirmation class knowledge.

Well we certainly realize that much has changed since most of us were in sixth grade. In just about every aspect of our lives we have grown and developed a body of knowledge that serves us well.

My plea for us in 2017 is that we make an extra effort to manage our spirituality more deliberately. Join or organize a study group, read a book on a related topic, find a spiritual friend or guide, spend more time in prayer or meditation.

If we make the effort we will be amazed at the growth and peace it will bring us.

Faithfully,

Al

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Lebanon!

I've been thinking about everyone at St. John's a lot ever since I put up my Moravian Star. I have to wonder if it's the only one in Beirut! And as much as it has always made me feel connected to my Moravian brothers and sisters around the world, it also now makes me feel connected to all of you.

So what has happened to me since my last letter? Wow! So much!

One thing I do want to share with all of you is that I did attend the Anglican Church here one Sunday. Let me just say that it was no St. John's! All of the songs were led by two soloists, a guitarist, and a drummer. It was very difficult for me to contain my misery of missing your choir and organ! I will say that the minister gave a thought-provoking sermon, and the people seemed nice, but I didn't feel a strong attachment. And since much of my worship experience stems from the music, I have not managed to convince myself to go back.

What's interesting is that there are a lot of "Evangelical" churches in Lebanon. That descriptor is not one that would normally make me keen to go check them out, but I just recently found out that it essentially refers to churches that are what we know of as Presbyterian. Presbyterian missionaries were historically some of the most influential in and around Beirut (the American University of Beirut was actually founded by Presbyterian missionaries and was originally named the Syrian Protestant College). So at some point I will have to find out which of those churches offer services in English and check some out.

As for work, my semester on the whole was great. My students are very engaging and highly motivated. I always struggle to get students to be excited about taking a writing course, but the students here seemed especially willing to tackle the projects I gave them and pay attention to how their communication skills were growing and changing through the semester. Because the education system in Lebanon is very diverse, a lot of my students had done very little academic writing or very little writing in English. I had several students who were French-educated or Lebanese-educated, who had never been asked to write in English for their classes. Things like that make teaching here a unique experience. In the US, we can assume that there are general standards being met by all schools, at the absolute very least that everyone is being educated in the same language and with similar cultural expectations. That's not at all the case for elementary, middle, and high schools in Lebanon (or even colleges for that matter)!

And now, my knowledge of those types of things will be greatly expanded because I'm going to be Director of the Writing Center and the Writing in the Disciplines Program starting next semester! This means I'll be mentoring graduate and undergraduate students who will be tutoring other students in the Writing Center, and I'll be working with faculty members from all over the university to help them design courses where writing is a focus and help them better integrate and manage writing activities in their classes. The work with faculty is something that I did at Appalachian State before moving to Ames, so I'm excited to get back into it. But I'm definitely nervous too, especially as a young, Anglo, female. I foresee needing to adapt to a lot of contexts in which I'll have to present my credibility in ways that are not yet familiar to me. For instance, I already have been put on a panel with department chairs from the humanities in which we'll be presenting about the importance of the humanities to the university Board of Trustees and major donors! Eeek! I'll need lots of prayers on January 17th for that! But I really am looking forward to it on the whole. I don't expect it to take too long to start feeling more confident.

As for other general life things, all has been going really well. I've made several really good friends here at AUB, and we try to go out pretty regularly. It's really a lot of fun to be back in a big city with a lot going on and lots of good restaurants to pick from. A few of us have even started going to a trivia

night occasionally. (It doesn't compare to the Heartland Senior Services trivia nights!) And since James hasn't been working this semester, he's been taking Arabic classes to improve his language skills. That's something I plan to do more of next semester because it's a shame for me to be living here and still only know a handful of words in Arabic! But his language abilities make it easier for us to get out and do things. I really appreciate it because just negotiating prices with taxi drivers can be really complicated!

I am going to go to NC for Christmas, and even though my father retired a couple years ago, he agreed to fill in for a friend and will be preaching at the Christmas Eve Lovefeasts and the Christmas Day service. It will be really pretty nostalgic to experience that.

I want to include a couple photos that can't be seen (yet) on my blog, so below are a photo of James and me having a traditional Omani dinner last week, and another of me trying to keep my head covered at 9:30am in the Omani desert. (And I was not covering it for pious cultural reasons, but because it was already in the high 80s that early in the morning in December! Let's just say that I have no desire to visit Oman in the middle of the summer!)



wonderful Christmases and New Years! I hope you get to spend quality time with friends and family and get a chance to be rejuvenated before 2017 is upon us!

Love and hugs to you all!
~Erin



wish
all of
you

EPISCOPAL PARISH OF AMES

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The Reverend Donald R. Payer, Deacon
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Vestry, 2016

Senior Warden: George Smith
Junior Warden: Stacy Joiner
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Clerk: Gloria Starns
Nicola Bowler Chuck Deppe
Michael Howell Jeremy Long
Maddy Losby Jim Murdock

Newsletter, January 2017, Vol 23, Num 1

This publication, Newsletter, is published monthly except July by the Episcopal Parish of Ames, a non-profit organization, 2338 Lincoln Way, Ames, Iowa 50014. Comments or inquiries may be sent to the church office. The **deadline for the next Newsletter is Monday, January 23**. Submit articles to Jeannie at St. John's or via email to church@stjohns-ames.org and jgalyon@iastate.edu

January Birthdays

1 Robert Hoenike
3 Jim Andrews, Saikat Banerjee and
Giles Fowler
5 Andrew Montgomery
7 Mary Kay Abbott
9 Don Anderson
13 Carole Magilton
15 Les Holland
16 Barbara Martin
20 Robert Harvey
22 Erica Cobb
23 Tim Muggli
24 Andy Hillier
25 Willie Kunerth
27 Robin Fletcher, Jen Matthews
28 Mark Bloom
30 George Junkhan
31 Alan Abbott

January Anniversaries

1 Ruth & Clayton Swenson
1 Vicki & Steve Davidson

January Coffee Hour

January 1

8:00 & 10:00 a.m. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

January 8

8:00 & 10:00 a.m. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

January 15

8:00 & 10:00 a.m. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

January 22

8:00 & 10:00 a.m. VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

January 29

Potluck and Annual Meeting

Deepening Faith

Everyone is invited to join us. We meet from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the parlor on the second and fourth Thursdays in January.

Jim Murdock

January Lectionary

January 1

The First Lesson: Numbers 6:22-27

The Psalm: Psalm 8

The Second Lesson: Galatians 4:4-7

The Gospel: Luke 2:15-21

January 8

The First Lesson: Isaiah 42:1-9

The Psalm: Psalm 29

The Second Lesson: Acts 10:34-43

The Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

January 15

The First Lesson: Isaiah 49:1-7

The Psalm: Psalm 40:1-12

The Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:1-9

The Gospel: John 1:29-42

January 22

The First Lesson: Isaiah 9:1-4

The Psalm: Psalm 27:1, 5-13

The Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

The Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

January 29

The First Lesson: Micah 6:1-8

The Psalm: Psalm 15

The Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

The Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Building and Grounds

A new retaining wall has been installed along the east side of the parking lot to replace the landscape timbers that were disturbed during construction of the apartment buildings. The new wall provides a very nice finished look to the area and will stabilize the grade along our east property line. The wall is primarily on our property, but was paid for by Gilbane Development in appreciation for the assistance we provided during the construction process. In the spring we will install a chain and post pedestrian barrier to discourage foot traffic over the retaining wall.

Our exterior work is done for the year, but it is not too early to start thinking about next year. There are many projects to work on inside and

out, and we need your help. Please contact Ed Gillott or George Smith if you would like more information on how you can help.

Food at First

This year our 4th Saturday commitment to Food at First fell on Christmas Eve. Serving the meal on the Christmas Eve can be challenging to plan. Students are gone, families are traveling and gathering, and everyone is busy. Once again, the St. John's community stepped up and we are able to assemble a great crew of volunteers to prep and serve a hot meal. Thanks to Beverly Baustian, Jim Murdock, Galen, Tom and Andy Wilke, Helen McRoberts, Leigh Ann Long, Dave Oakland, and Daniel and Helena Appau.

Deciding how much to cook is also a challenge. We never know how many people will show up, especially when the weather is bad or there is a holiday the next day. Attendance this year has varied from 25 to 60 people, so as a rule we prepare food for 60 and the extra food goes home with our guests in take out boxes. At the start of this meal at 11:30 we only had 3 guests! By the end of the meal service at 12:15 we had served 20 guests and the prep crew had a chance to eat as well. Chef Michael was out of town for the holiday, so we kept the prep easy this time - hearty chicken noodle soup and pizza.

We were blessed to have great participation in the Food at First ministry in 2016. I am very grateful for everyone who has helped this year. Working with someone to prepare and serve a meal is a great opportunity to get to know them, more so than just seeing folks on Sunday at coffee hour. The crew this year has included youth, college students, young adults, families and seniors. Thanks to everyone who has helped this year, and special thanks to Michael Howell and Joanna Muggli for helping as Head Chefs.

In 2017 we will serve meals on January 28, February 25, March 25, and every 4th Saturday of the month that follows. A sign up sheet is located in the Parish Hall. For more information contact Ed Gillott or Jeannie in the parish office.

Metro Chapter Events.

St. John's is one of ten Episcopal Churches in the Metro Chapter of the Episcopal Diocese of Iowa. There will be several opportunities in 2017 to get to know our neighbors better.

1. **Youth Ski Trip**, Seven Oaks and Camp Hantesa, Boone, IA. January 13 -15, 2016

2. **Metro Chapter meeting**, St. John's by the Campus, Ames. Saturday, April 29, 2016.

3. **REVIVAL 2017** - an opportunity to gather together in local congregations to reawaken and rediscover God's Holy Spirit at work among us. It is an invitation to rekindle and recharge your faith and ministry and to share in Christ's abundant joy and strength. Additional information is available on the Diocesan Website at <http://www.iowaepiscopal.org/>

Readers for the 10 a.m. Service

We need volunteers to sign up to read for the service. A signup sheet is in the Parish Hall.

Monday Daisies

We need volunteers to take flowers to shut ins or to people who are in need of encouragement. A new chart for signups is on the bulletin board by the water fountain.

Christian Formation Announcements:

Sunday School Classes

4yo - 4th grade will be in Godly Play.

5th-8th will be known as #JesusSquad.

9th - 12th will be in The Den.

All Classes will resume on January 22nd.

St. John's Youth Gifts

The youth would like to thank all of those who purchased supplies for the bags we put together before Christmas. We were able to make up 25 bags with toiletries, water bottles and some snacks. We also made six fleece blankets and 10 stockings for some children. Some of the bags and stockings were left at the ACCESS Shelter and the remaining bags, stockings and fleece blankets were taken to Emergency Residence Project.

Mark Your Calendar for these Upcoming Youth Events:

January 7 - Lock-in for youth

January 8 - Epiphany Celebration

January 13-15 - Diocesan Ski Trip -
No Sunday School Classes

January 22 - Sunday School Classes resume at
9 a.m. - EYC at 5 p.m.

January 29 - Sunday school classes for all - No
EYC

January 2017 Events

January 2 (Monday) New Year's Day
Offices Closed

January 7 (Saturday)

Lock – in for youth

January 8 (Sunday)

Epiphany Celebration

January 11 (Wednesday)

Bible Study Resumes

January 12 & 26 (Thursdays)

Deepening Faith 7:00 p.m.

January 13 - 15 (Friday – Sunday)

Youth Ski Trip (for grades 6 - 12)

January 15 (Sunday)

Daughters of the King Meeting

January 16 (Monday)

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Offices Closed

January 22 (Sunday)

Sunday School Classes Resume at 9:00 a.m.

EYC Resumes at 5:00 p.m.

January 28 (Saturday)

Food At First 10:30 a.m.

January 29 (Sunday)

Potluck and Annual Meeting after 10 a.m.
service

NO EYC

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE MATTHEW 25 HOUSE:

This is my winter update covering the comings, goings and doings at the house and in the lives of the men who call 330 South 2nd Street "home."

The house currently has three residents, and one open room. We have a number of men approved to come to the house upon parole. There has been significant interest by Correctional counselors, parole officers, and others to direct men to apply to the Matthew 25 House.

HEAD RESIDENT

Dan Sheeler our head resident continues to enjoy his role at the house and the relationships he is building with the men in the house. He is a valuable sounding board for the men as they search out guidance and advice to help them make good life-changing decisions.

Master, what are you talking about? When did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or homeless or shivering or sick or in prison and didn't help? He will answer them, "I'm telling the solemn truth: Whenever you failed to do one of these things to someone who was being overlooked or ignored, that was me – you failed to do it to me."

Matthew 25: 44-45 2016

CURRENT RESIDENTS

ROBERT D. – Robert moved into the house in late December, 2015. It is hard to believe that he has been in the house for almost twelve months. Robert is in the process of making plans to move out of the house in January of 2017. He is looking for affordable housing options which are difficult to find in Ames, IA.

He continues to attend church at Saint Cecillia Church in Ames, IA, with Terry, a board member of the Matthew 25 House. The Matthew 25 House Board is planning a graduation celebration for Robert to recognize the hard work he has put into changing his lifestyle and developing new life skills that have allowed him to handle challenges in a positive manner.

JAMES C. – James moved into the house in August and has been doing very well. Recently he was placed back into jail on an old federal charge that just got processed through the system. We are holding his place in the house waiting to see if the judge will allow him to return to the Matthew 25 House. Even with this set back he has a positive outlook on life and trusts that God will help him through this event.

EVENTS

We continue to have Bible study each Monday and Thursday evening. There are a number of men that are not part of the Matthew 25 House that attend the Bible study and share their lives with the residents. Monday evenings at the Matthew 25 House is one of my weekly highlights. It is a time to develop deeper relationships with the men and share our life's successes and struggles with each other.

CHRIS S. – Chris moved into the house in early July and is currently working for *In God's Hand* service. Chris is also working hard to re-enter the radio business doing voice over work. He has set up a small recording studio in his room and spends hours working on sound tracks for many different organizations. His hope is that this past career will blossom into a fulltime job. I have been amazed by the sound tracks Chris has shared with me. **If you know of any opportunities for Chris, please contact me. He would be very appreciative of any leads you might have.**



Chris is attending Christ Community Church on Sunday mornings. He enjoys the teaching and the friendships he has developed there.

In my last update I shared the Matthew 25 House Board strategies to increase the awareness of the Matthew 25 House in the local community and increase our support network over the next three years. One of those goals was to raise \$150,000 of additional support over the next three years that will help fund our strategic strategies. I am excited to announce that we are well on our way to accomplish this goal. As of December 15th we have raised \$131,920 or 88% of our three year financial goal.

I hope this short update provides you with a glimpse of life at the Matthew 25 House and the men currently living there. If you have any questions about the house or the application process, please contact me.

Bible Study

