

January 2007

Volume 6 Issue 5

THE LION'S ROAR

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Set Love in Order Within Me

As we move beyond holidays and back to a daily rhythm, my mind returns to one of the most compelling thinkers of Christianity and Western civilization. If I could reach across the centuries and invite someone to engage our souls, my no-brainer choice would be St. Augustine of Hippo.

Augustine (354-430AD) was the product of a dysfunctional family with a tortured love life and enough personal ambition to make a hedge fund manager appear lazy. Living by his wits, he rose from modest roots to indelibly shape his world—and ours. In spite of his outsized ego, Augustine was captivated by an introspective quest for divine love, praying famously to God, “My soul is restless until it rests in Thee.”

Although criticized for undue pessimism about the human condition and original sin, Augustine wrestled with human freedom and its compromise, not to mention our disordered love of self (pride) that thwarts our quest for the ultimate good (*summum bonum*) of God's love. Many would place Augustine's *Confessions* among the most important (and readable) books of Christianity and Western literature.

How does Augustine connect with life at St. Mark's? Recently, your vestry sent you an important letter expressing concern that despite an outstanding 2006 we face a potential 2007 deficit in excess of \$200,000. This reality continues a 10-20 year game of chicken this parish plays with vitality and capacity for ministry.

Augustine would understand. We live in wildly restless times that distract and suppress our quest for God. Our experience of God is compromised by ego and love turned inward. In our own finance-driven community, control of purse strings becomes the classic extension of vanity (the opposite of gratitude-driven, no-strings stewardship). In the process, God sheds a tear or rolls His eyes. Only divine grace beckons our fallen hearts toward pure love (*charitas*) and self-transcendence.

Although I can place our stewardship challenges in an Augustinian framework, let me be blunt: chronic deficits exhaust lay leaders and hinder St. Mark's mission. The parish's historic failure to turn corners also places your next rector at high risk for hitting the same wall, continuing a painful legacy of discouragement, depression and alienation. In short, we face a crossroad that is both temporal and spiritual in nature, materially impacting the very search process recently commissioned.

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Light in the Darkness: Reading the Psalms amidst our busy lives

Biblical Scholar and Theologian Walter Brueggeman writes in his book, 'Spirituality of the Psalms,' "As children of the Enlightenment, we have censored and selected around the voice of darkness and disorientation, seeking to go from strength to strength, from victory to victory. But such a way not only ignores the psalms; it is a lie in terms of our experience. [Reading] the psalms

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Sunday Morning Adult Ed Class - Reading the Psalms

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as a canonical book is finally an act of hope. But the hope is rooted precisely in the midst of loss and darkness, where God is surprisingly present. The Jewish reality of exile, the Christian confession of crucifixion and cross, the honest recognition that there is an untamed darkness in our life that must be embraced- all of that is fundamental to the gift of new life.”



Psalms Frontispiece,
from the *St. John's Bible*
Donald Jackson, artist; Brian
Simpson, scribe.

Through the season of Epiphany with its themes of light and darkness come and read the psalms to discover

how our faith insists we admit to what is dark in order to find what is light. In our busy culture, how can the psalms tell us when we deceive ourselves? How can the psalms lead us to reflect on our lives and lead us to new light?

Explore the Psalms with Rita Powell on Sunday mornings (9:00-9:45) in the Education Center starting January 7th. For a class outline, visit our website at: <http://www.stmarksnewcanaan.org/psalms.asp>.

Interfaith to Host Annual Dr. King Celebration

Monday, January 15 at 10:30 a.m.
United Methodist Church NC

To mark the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday, Interfaith of New Canaan hosts an ecumenical celebration at the Methodist Church on Monday, January 15, at 10:30 a.m.



Dr. Cynthia Barnett, who in her youth was herself the recipient of an MLK scholarship, will speak on “Fulfilling the Dream”. Dr. Barnett spent most of her career as an educator before becoming an author and entrepreneur.

This celebration is open to all. The members of every faith community are invited to join Interfaith for this special event and to visit afterwards for fellowship and refreshments.

January Discussions

(continued from front page)

In this *Lion's Roar*, you will find the schedule of meetings first outlined in the vestry letter. Please attend and share your dreams for vibrant new direction. A 2007 budget has been deferred until we complete this discussion, after which your vestry will move decisively toward a balanced budget. We are in the zone of active discernment and choice. Matthew's Epiphany story states that after their encounter with the Christ child, the magi went home by another way. Will we?

Happy (as Augustine would understand it) New Year!

DMR

(For the schedule of conversations, see next page)

St. Mark's 243rd Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, January 28, 2007
11:30 in Morrill Hall

At our Annual Meeting, we elect vestry officers and members, along with delegates to diocesan convention and deanery meetings. We also elect a nominating committee for future parish elections. Our parish bylaws call for contested elections. The candidates standing for election will be announced shortly.

We do not allow for absentee votes, so those eligible to vote must be present to cast a vote. If you have a question about your voting eligibility, refer to the bylaws on the website (under the vestry tab on the welcome page) or posted outside the music room or in the church office.

Parish Vocational Direction: Where Are We Headed?

During January, the vestry sponsors a series of discussion to take stock of our financial condition and vocational direction in ways that will impact our programs and rector's search in material ways. We especially invite those who have not yet participated in recent parish discussions.

Date/Time	Topic
Sunday, January 7 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Morrill Hall	Vestry Letter to Parish: A Conversation We begin the new year with conversation regarding the vestry letter. Vestry and search committee representatives lead discussion of our challenges, choices and direction.
Wednesday, January 10 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. Library	For Newcomers Only Many of our newcomers lead wildly busy lives, often at the expense of knowing what makes St. Mark's tick. Our vestry reps prepare you for the "family business" of our Annual Meeting.
Sunday, January 14 [MLK] 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Morrill Hall	Reclaiming the Great Commission, Revisited Two years ago, we examined ways that St. Mark's embodies both nominal member services (maintenance) and miraculous outreach to the unchurched (mission). Which direction are we headed?
Wednesday, January 17 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. Library	For Newcomers Only, Take Two See above. Couldn't attend last Wednesday? Come this evening. Better yet, send one spouse the first week and the other spouse the next.
Sunday, January 21 9:00 – 9:45 a.m. Morrill Hall	Stewardship at St. Mark's: The Long View A panel of former stewardship leaders reflects on our efforts to engage parishioners over the past decade.
Sunday, January 21 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Morrill Hall	Annual Meeting Warm-Up We hold voting to next Sunday, but today's meeting begins a two-week discussion about the course of our parish at a crossroad. Do we rise to the budgetary challenge or make changes that dramatically impact our parish?
Sunday, January 28 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Morrill Hall	Annual Parish Meeting We cast important votes and continue our discussion about the temporal realities and spiritual direction of our parish.
Sunday, January 28 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Library	Annual Parish Meeting optional discussion For those who would like to continue discussion by the fireplace of our parish library.

Donation from IRA

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 which was signed into law on August 17, 2006 provides an important tax planning opportunity for certain individuals.

Ask yourself three (3) questions:

1. Are you and/or your spouse over 70 ½?
2. Do you and/or your spouse have a significant individual retirement account (IRA)?
3. Do you and/or your spouse plan on making a significant charitable contribution this year?

If you answered “yes” to all three (3) of the above questions, you need to pay particular attention to this opportunity.

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows direct gifts of up to One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) per taxpayer in each of the 2006 and 2007 tax years to one (1) or more qualified charitable organizations.

If you intend to make a significant charitable gift this year, you should consider making the donation directly from your IRA rather than donating personally. If you make an IRA direct donation, the donated amount is not included in your taxable income and there is no corresponding charitable tax deduction.

There are certain benefits to a direct IRA donation. If you are interested in hearing more, please contact your tax accountant or Dick DePatie in the Parish House, 966-4515.

The Lion's Den Book and Gift Store

The arrival of a new year often brings resolution, reflection and hope. We encourage you to find time to stop by the Lion's Den to see our calendars, planners, daily meditation books which will keep you in a state of mind ready to embrace the joys and challenges of 2007.

Coming up - watch for Valentine's Day cards and gifts and a new jewelry line by Cynthia Gale, resident designer for The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.

All the best to you in 2007,
The Staff and Volunteers of the Lion's Den.

The Lion's Den hours are:

Wednesday and Sunday: 9:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Thursday through Saturday: 10:00 – 2:00 p.m.

Store will be opened when special events are scheduled, watch for details.

Rector Search Committee Update

The search committee continues to meet on a regular basis. For frequent updates on committee work, visit the Rector Search tab on the website. A summary of questions and answers from the December 10 parish meetings may be found on the meeting summary tab as well.

The committee welcomes questions, comments, suggestions, and names of clergy candidates. Emails should be directed to:

RectorSearch@stmarksnewcanan.org.

Your message will be promptly acknowledged and forwarded to the appropriate person for follow-up.

If you are more comfortable contacting individual members of the committee, you will find their home phone numbers and addresses in the parish directory. If you do not have a directory, call Thea McGee in the church office, 966.4515.

Please send written messages to:

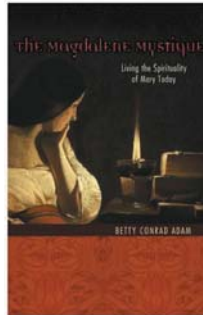
The Rector Search Committee
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
111 Oenoke Ridge
New Canaan, CT 06840



Book Group: January 17

Third Wednesday of the Month, 12:30 – 2 p.m.

In January, Mother Davis' book group begins a two-month journey exploring Mary Magdalene, reading two books, back to back, on this enigmatic – and often misunderstood – woman from scripture. On Wednesday, January 17, 12:30-2:00 p.m., in the Education Center, we will discuss *The Magdalene Mystique, Living the Spirituality of Mary Today* by Betty Conrad Adam. *The Magdalene Mystique* invites readers into the spiritual life of an actual community that celebrates Mary Magdalene as mystic and visionary, beloved companion of Jesus, and first witness to the resurrection. The Magdalene community arose out of studying the Gospel of Mary, which resurfaced in Cairo in the late nineteenth century, after being lost for centuries. The author, Betty Conrad Adam, an Episcopal priest, is resident Canon Theologian at Christ Church Cathedral, Houston, and spiritual director of the Magdalene Community at Brigid's Place, a women's spirituality center. She also holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Rice University.



February's book, *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* by Margaret Starbird will continue this exploration of Mary Magdalene through the lens of another author.

Each month's reading selection is available in the Lion's Den Bookstore. Any questions, call Mother Davis, 966-4515 x102. Please join us!

- January 17, 2007: *The Magdalene Mystique: Living the Spirituality of Mary Today* by Betty Conrad Adam
- February 21, 2007: *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* by Margaret Starbird
- March 21, 2007: *The Mighty and the Almighty* by Madeleine Albright
- April 18, 2007: *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe
- May 16, 2007: *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion

Children's Programs

Christmas is already a joyous memory and the season of Epiphany is upon us. Nomadic shepherds, drumming pages, a convoy of camels, the return of the Christmas leopard, a visit by a fluttering butterfly – were just a small part of this year's Christmas Pageant. The children were amazing and those who witnessed the rehearsals know the miracle they pulled off.

Thanks to all of you who helped – behind the scenes, over the weeks, on the day, afterward. Special thanks to Heather Drugge, who ran the rehearsals and brought a dramatic flair to the glorious story. Too many to thank and I do not want to leave anyone out.

With the change of the year, there is a change in direction for our children in Sunday School. The younger grades, 3's through 1st grade are moving into the stories of the ministry of Jesus; the 2nd grade will begin the study of Communion on January 21; 3rd and 4th grades are plowing through the Old and New Testament; 5th grade will start to learn about the Sacraments and 6th grade is embarking on a comparative study of major world religions.

There are opportunities for teaching in the winter/spring semester. Contact Rhonda Morrill for details.

If you would like us to store your Advent Wreath frame for you until next year, please leave it in the pantry in Morrill Hall.



Sheep in the narthex awaiting their shepherd.



Some Christmas Angels



Upcoming Baptism Dates:

- † Easter Vigil
Saturday, April 7, 2007
7:30 p.m.
- † Pentecost
Sunday, May 27, 2007
10:00 a.m. Worship
- † All Saints' Sunday
Sunday, November 4, 2007
10:00 a.m. Worship

At St. Mark's, we celebrate Baptism on the feast days listed above. For information on baptisms please call the church office and if you are scheduling a baptism be sure to call several weeks before the desired date.



PARISH REGISTER DECEMBER 2006

MARRIAGES

Gwendolyn Hampson Gray to Glenn Bateman Syska

MEMORIAL SERVICES

Edith Mitton Ogden

The Food Pantry of New Canaan

Grocery and Supplies Wish List

Our inventory is low, please help replenish our shelves with the following:

<i>Pasta sauce</i>	<i>Canned fruits and vegetables</i>
<i>Bottled juice</i>	<i>Juice boxes</i>
<i>Rice</i>	<i>Dried fruit</i>
<i>Baking mixes</i>	<i>Pancake mix and syrup</i>
<i>Coffee: drip and instant/regular & decaf</i>	<i>Instant soups</i>
<i>Children's lunch snacks</i>	<i>Laundry and dish detergent</i>

All non-expired donations can be dropped off in the foyer of the St. Mark's office building anytime! Financial donations payable to St. Mark's Church or grocery giftcards may be sent to 111 Oenoke Ridge, New Canaan, CT 06840.

Inclement Weather

In the event of severe or dangerous weather conditions or if you are just not sure whether we are having a program, please check either our phone message or our website – under on the “Calendar” (click on the specific day). Children's choirs are canceled if the New Canaan schools close for inclement weather.






In line with that, chairs or committee leaders, if you would like to post a message to your group about a meeting – change or cancellation - contact either Thea or Rhonda and it will be posted on the website calendar.



St. Mark's Episcopal Church
 New Canaan, CT 06840
 www.stmarksnewcanaan.org

January 2007



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1 New Year's Day</p> <p>Office Closed</p> 	<p>2 Remembrance of President Ford</p> <p>Office Closed</p> <p>10a AA 12p Alanon</p>	<p>3</p> <p>9-2p Book Store 9:30a Eucharist & Healing 10a Adult Ed Class No Choirs 7:30 No Adult Ed Classes 7:30p 7th grade Confirmation only</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 7:30p Adult Choir</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 10a Senior Men's Club</p>	<p>6 The Epiphany</p> <p>10-2p Book Store</p> 
<p>7 1 Epiphany & Baptism of Our Lord</p> <p>8:00a HE I 9-2p Book Store 9:00a Adult Ed. 9:00a Parish Conversation—Morrill 10:00a HE II/with Baptisms/Children's Ed/Worship 11:15 Coffee Hour 6:00p HE w/Taize 7:00p EYC</p>	<p>8</p> <p>12:00p ACOA/Alanon 1:00p Staff Meeting</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9:00a Food Bank 10a AA 12p Alanon 4:00-4:30p Cherub & Joyful Noyze Choir</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9-2p Book Store 9:30a Eucharist & Healing 10a Adult Ed Class 4-5:00p Choristers 6-7:00p Youth Choir 7:30p Parish Conversation: Newcomers 7:30p Confirmation</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 6:15 Food Bank 7:30p Adult Choir</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 10a Senior Men's Club</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 4:00-5:15p Parish Choir</p>
<p>14</p> <p>8:00a HE I 9-2p Book Store 9:00a Adult Ed. 9:00a Parish Conversation: Reclaiming 10:00a HE II/No Children's Ed/Worship 11:15 Coffee Hour 6:00p HE w/Taize 7:00p EYC</p>	<p>15</p>  <p>Office Closed</p> <p>10:30a Martin Luther King Service - Methodist Church 12:00p ACOA/Alanon</p>	<p>16</p> <p>10a AA 12p Alanon 4:00-4:30p Cherub & Joyful Noyze Choir 7:30p Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>17</p> <p>9-2p Book Store 9:30a Eucharist & Healing 10a Adult Ed Class 11:15 Waveny Service 12:30p Book Group 4-5:00p Choristers 6-7:00p Youth Choir 7:30p Parish Conversation: Newcomers 7:30p Confirmation</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 7:00p NC CaTS (FPNC) 7:30p Adult Choir</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 10a Senior Men's Club</p>	<p>20</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 4:00-5:15p Parish Choir</p>
<p>21 Annual Meeting Warm Up</p> <p>8:00a HE I 9-2p Book Store 9:00a Adult Ed. 9:00a Parish Conversation: Stewardship 10:00a HE II/Children's Ed/Worship 11:15 Coffee Hour 6:00p HE w/Taize 7:00p EYC</p>	<p>22</p> <p>12:00p ACOA/Alanon 1:00p Staff Meeting</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9:00a Food Bank 10a AA 12p Alanon</p>	<p>24</p> <p>9-2p Book Store 9:30a Eucharist & Healing 10a Adult Ed Class 4-5:00p Choristers 6-7:00p Youth Choir 7:30 Adult Ed Classes 7:30p Confirmation</p>	<p>25</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 6:15 Food Bank</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 10a Senior Men's Club</p>	<p>27</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 4:00-5:15p Parish Choir</p>
<p>28 Annual Meeting</p> <p>8:00a HE I 9-2p Book Store 9:00a Adult Ed. 10:00a HE II/Children's Ed/Worship 11:15 Coffee Hour 11:30 Annual Meeting 1-2:30 Further Discussion 6:00p HE w/Taize 7:00p EYC</p> 	<p>29</p> <p>12:00p ACOA/Alanon 1:00p Staff Meeting</p>	<p>30</p> <p>10a AA 12p Alanon 4:00-4:30p Cherub & Joyful Noyze Choir</p>	<p>31</p> <p>9-2p Book Store 9:30a Eucharist & Healing 10a Adult Ed Class 4-5:00p Choristers 6-7:00p Youth Choir</p>	<p>Feb. 1</p> <p>10-2p Book Store 7:30p Adult Choir</p>	<p>2 Ground Hog Day</p> 	

*Many thanks for all the support for
the 2006 performance of Handel's Messiah*



Weekly Service Times

Sunday	8:00 a.m.	Rite I Holy Eucharist
	10:00 a.m.	Rite II Choral Holy Eucharist
	10:00 a.m.	Children's Eucharist
	6:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II with Taize Music
Wednesday	9:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II with Healing

The Rev. David Rider
Interim Rector

The Rev. Vicki M. Davis
Curate

Rita Powell
Director of Youth and Family
Ministries

Brian-Paul Thomas
Organist and Choirmaster

Richard DePatie
Parish Administrator

Rhonda Morrill
Director of Christian
Education

Helen Palmesi
Nursery School Director

Melanie Mandler
Bookstore Manager

Nadia Cwiach
Financial Secretary

Thea McGee
Parish Secretary

The
Lion's
Roar



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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