

January 2008

Volume 7 Issue 5

THE LION'S ROAR

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Manifesting Christ in our Daily Lives

This Sunday, January 6, we embrace the rare opportunity to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on its actual date. In my sermon, I'll try to challenge some of your assumptions about exotic Magi and explain why the dramatic story embodies the entire gospel crammed into a few paragraphs. After that, we leave baby Jesus behind to explore other manifestations (epiphanies) of God's love in Christ for this world.

Also this Sunday, we return to full speed with our children's ministries, Taize, youth group and adult Christian education opportunities. At 9:00 a.m., Anne Richards and I begin two new and extended classes. Anne's Christian Basics—An Exploration of What We Believe weaves its way through the foundations of Christian faith. My God in the Media uses recent articles from mainstream journalism to stimulate discussions about theology and current events. Thanks to technology, we hope to link articles for both classes to our website (www.stmarksnewcanaan.org) under Adult Education to facilitate your reading beforehand. Join either class for 45 minutes of community and spirited conversation, a "program parish" at its best.

Beginning Monday, January 7, Anne Richards joins us in residence on Mondays for pastoral conversation, hospital visits and a 7-session class (beginning January 14) on parenting. Open to the entire community, the class will read *The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage are Creating a Generation of Discontented and Unhappy Kids*. Anne has used this book and its related discussion successfully in her role as chaplain at Grace Church School in NYC, and I know she will stimulate new insights and sharing in our library from 9:15 – 10:30. Consider this a great opportunity to invite a neighbor or friend to church. Feel free to drop by or make an appointment on Mondays with Anne for individual conversation.

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EYC to NYC:

"Midnight Run" Team Hits a Home Run!

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On Sunday, December 23, just before 9:30 PM, three vans (fully) loaded with wholesome food, warm clothing and 14 energetic St. Mark's teens pulled out of the church parking lot. Destination: the streets of New York City. We arrived back in New Canaan around 3:00 AM, having been food servers outside Penn Station, outerwear consultants at a shelter near the Port Authority, and faithful disciples wherever we went.



Sandwich assembly line in action.

Our "Midnight Run" ministry to the homeless was a parish-wide effort, and it can be counted a parish-wide success. We received almost more clothing donations than we could use, so a big thank-you is due to all those parishioners who contributed. Special thanks go to the 2007 Midnight Run committee: Laurie Saggese (a chairperson who is not afraid to get her hands dirty), Beth Goetz, Jennifer Pivrotto (with art and design assistance from Mac and Molly), and

continued on page 3

St. Mark's 244th Annual Parish Meeting
 Sunday, January 27, 2008 ~ 11:15 in Morrill Hall

At the Annual Meeting, we elect vestry officers and members, nominating committee members and substitute delegates to the Diocesan Convention and Mid-Fairfield Deanery. Our parish by-laws call for contested elections. This year we will elect vestry members for three year terms, nominating committee members for two year terms and substitute delegates to a one year term.

Four new vestry members will be elected. Standing for election to the vestry this year are:

John Chappell	Joy C. Luke
Jon Fleming	David Park
Chris Gruseke	Stan Twardy

Three new nominating committee members will be elected. The candidates' names are not available as yet. Their names will be announced shortly.

Two substitute delegates to the Diocesan Convention and Mid-Fairfield Deanery will be elected. Standing for election to these positions this year are:

Kate Adamson	Joy H. Luke
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Bios on all candidates will be made available soon.

Thanks to the following retiring vestry members who have served this parish for three years with distinction: Jan Annunziato, Tom Berardino, Stuart Lovejoy and Kerry Robinson.

Also retiring, from the nominating committee, are Jarvis Cromwell and Fanny Moran who have served for two years and Bill Landis who has served one year (fulfilling Bob Grieves' term when Bob resigned to serve on the search committee.) We thank them for an outstanding job.

Grateful thanks are also in order for the other members of the nominating committee serving this year with Jarvis, Fanny and Bill. They are Jennifer Donovan, Alison Gruseke and Jim Lisher.

Childcare and refreshments will be on hand in the library.

Epiphany at St. Mark's *(from front page)*

Also in January, our search committee reconvenes for an expedited search process for our next rector. Our wardens and search co-chairs have worked carefully with diocesan leaders to create a revised strategy for discernment of a new and shorter list of potential candidates. They will report on their progress at our upcoming Annual Meeting.

Speaking of Annual Meeting, join us on Sunday, January 27 after 10:00 worship for parish elections and reports on our common work. Inside this edition, please review the work of our Nominating Committee chaired by Jim Lisher.

Epiphany season is brief this year, with Ash Wednesday coming on February 6. Despite the cold days of winter (remember, the days are getting longer) join us for refreshing worship and warm community as the blessed body of Christ at St. Mark's.

Happy New Year!
DMR

2008 Pledge Campaign Update

We thank all who have pledged thus far. To date, 238 households have pledged \$892,402 (as of January 3) toward our \$1.2 million 2008 stewardship goal. If you have not pledged, please give prayerful consideration and submit your 2008 pledge card in the offering plate, mail/deliver it to the parish office, or e-mail it to our Financial Secretary, Nadia Cwiach, at ncwiach@stmarksnewcanaan.org. If you have any questions about your 2007 pledge balance, please contact Nadia Cwiach.



Christmas Midnight Run (continued from first page)

Shelby Cromwell; to our drivers, Ed Willett, Rick Pivrotto and Jarvis Cromwell; and a big shout-out to Breeze Hobbs (for making *gallons* of *incredible* chili), Nancy McSorley (for organizing the Confirmation Classes into a Detroit-worthy bag-lunch assembly line – complete with chef's hats), Allison and Chris Gruseke (for lending us their capacious family Suburban), the Outreach Committee (for generous assistance with our grocery expenses), and to Lisa Bitting (for helpful information from a veteran Midnight-Runner's point-of-view).

But the real stars of the 2007 Midnight Run are our EYC teens. They powered cheerfully through the grunt work of sorting and sizing mounds



Sorters and sizers preparing for a long night in the city.

of clothing, packing up the food and loading the vans. And the real grace shone through as they were serving and chatting with our clients on the streets. A genial, even festive atmosphere prevailed wherever we stopped. One of our teens literally gave someone the shirt off his back! We can all be proud of these wonderful young men and women, and the way they embody St. Mark's Church in the world. So a sincere "well done, good and faithful servants" to this year's team: Harley Brown, Margot Cromwell, Sean Donovan, Molly Goetz, Andrew Hilboldt, Alex Hobbs, Cameron Mason, Emily Roach, Kyler Rowley, Chelsea Saggese, Alex Silverman, Lauren Sweitzer, Samantha Turner, and Sara Willett.

Midnight Run, Spring '08, anyone?

- The Rev. Carol Hoidra



Midnight Run helpers Beth Goetz, Breeze Hobbs and Courtney Saggese

From the Search Committee...

As fellow parishioners, your Search Committee members were as disappointed as anyone else that the candidate we so optimistically recommended for final calling by the Vestry in October withdrew at the very late stages of the Calling Process.

We have stayed at work and, through this "setback", have refined our thinking and methods.

The Diocese has issued a "new call" on its website, which remains open until January 28th. We have also received fresh input from some parishioners, and we welcome any additional input that will help guide us as we continue.

We will work closely with the new Vestry, and expect to be focusing on a new "short list" of rector candidates by mid-February.

This process, we have learned from a year's plus worth of experience, is certainly not simple. With God's continual help we will strive steadfastly to find a future rector both suited for, and desirous of, service to the St. Mark's Parish family.

We look forward to keeping in touch with any and all interested parishioners.

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 "News" or on the "Calendar" (click on the specific day). Most programs are canceled if the New Canaan schools close for weather issues.

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 web site. Do tell your committee members to check the website for information. It will be posted on the calendar.



Adult Ed Classes in Epiphany and Lent

For Class Notes and Readings visit: <http://www.stmarksnewcanaan.org/adulteducation.asp>

Christian Basics: An Exploration of What We Believe

The Rev. Anne Richards Sundays, 9:00-9:45 in the Outreach Room

In this 9-session class, the Rev. Anne Richards presents various foundational aspects of Christianity for class members to discuss. The goal of the class is to help members formulate their own working theology and to be able to put words to what they believe. This will be an informal, low-key group, based on conversation and reflection.

We will use various brief readings from such essayists, poets, and writers as C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Simone Weil, Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, N.T. Wright, James Alison, Flannery O'Connor, Franz Wright, Jane Kenyon, William Stafford, and Wislawa Szymborska. We will also look at brief portions of Scripture.

God in the Media

The Rev. David Rider Sundays, 9:00-9:45 in the Education Center

This class reads one article per week from the mainline press to explore major Christian themes through a larger cultural lens. How do journalists portray church dynamics and Christianity's impact on the larger world? On Martin Luther King weekend, we engage King's final sermon preached at the Washington Cathedral, days before his death. David Rider will select an article for group reading before Sunday discussion and careful listening to each other's perspectives.

Parenting Book Group Discussion Series

The Price of Privilege: How Parental Pressure and Material Advantage are Creating a Generation of Disconnected and Unhappy Kids

The Rev. Anne Richards Mondays, 9:15-10:30 a.m. in the library

All are warmly welcome to join this book discussion group, which begins on Monday, January 14 from 9:15 to 10:30 a.m. in the library. Join St. Mark's priest associate (and mother of two grown sons) The Rev. Anne Richards in an informal conversation about parenting and child raising in a culture of affluence. The class will run for 7 sessions, each on a Monday (Jan. 14 and 28; Feb. 4, 11, and 25; and March 3 and 10).

Letter to the Hebrews

The Revs. David Rider and Carol Hoidra Wednesdays, 10:00-11:15 a.m. in the Education Center

During the five Wednesdays of Epiphanytide, the Rev. Carol Hoidra will lead a discussion of *The Letter to the Hebrews*. "Hebrews" is considered by many scholars to be one of the most impressive works in the New Testament. Yet it is also one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian canon. Both the writer and his (or her!) intended audience remain unknown, and the "letter" is actually anything but.



Were you out of town for Christmas? Not able to hear a Christmas homily this year? Do you want to ponder an idea from a sermon? The season's messages are on our web site along with sermons from the past 2 years. For quick access to the text, go to: www.stmarksnewcanaan.org and click on the Worship button.

Dear Dove Families,

Your congregation really stepped up to the plate this Christmas. This year, we had so much extra need – 913 receiving families, icy delivery days, 19 participating churches, and 12 agencies. All in all, a greater challenge than usual but all the doves were delivered and the recipient families were most grateful.



*Blessings to all,
Person-to-Person, Darien CT*

Special thanks to Jennifer and Elizabeth Donovan, the Grownays, Meredith Landis, Amanda Layng and Rhonda Morrill for organizing this gift of love.

Praying, Believing, Being, Doing:

8th Grade Confirmation Class to
Begin Spring Semester on January 9

The eighth-grade Confirmands are steaming down the home stretch toward their date with the Right Rev. Laura Ahrens, Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese of Connecticut, on Saturday, May 17. During the autumn semester, our Confirmation class focused on the Doctrines of the Church, tackling the big subjects like the doctrine of Creation (and humanity's place in it), an introduction to Trinitarian theology, a focused exploration of the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist, and the seasons of the great Church Year.

We'll begin our second semester on Wednesday, January 9 at 7:30 p.m., and throughout the seasons of Epiphany, Lent and Easter we will focus on Ethics and Praxis (what we do – in Church and in the world – and why we do it). We will work on a community service project, become familiar with the *Book of Common Prayer* and the 1982 *Hymnal* (the latter with the gracious assistance of guest presenter B-P Thomas), develop individualized Lenten disciplines, and explore the ways in which what we believe influences how we behave.

Questions? Suggestions? Please contact the Rev. Carol Hoidra (choidra@stmarksnewcanan.org).

News from the 7th Grade Confirmation Class

We have a big wonderful group of 7th graders this year who are exploring the Bible in preparation for their confirmation next year. We have been looking at the Old Testament in the first half of the year, focusing on two main questions “What is man’s relationship with God?” and “What is man’s relationship with his fellow men?” By exploring the books of the Bible we are learning how to have a closer relationship with God, his world, and with our neighbors.

But, confirmation class is not only study! We had a terrific lock-in where the kids played games and explored the church with a scavenger hunt. Just before Christmas we helped the EYC prepare for their Midnight Run by making sandwiches and assembling 150 supper bags. To see an efficient assembly line of 20 kids, laughing and enjoying themselves is a beautiful thing. It is true that many hands make light work, and they accomplished this enormous task in little time. We have an untapped workforce in the 7th Grade--just wait for May Fair!

After our midterm exam we will move on to The New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of Paul. It has been a privilege to work with your kids--I don't know who is learning more! - Nancy McSorley

Children's Programs

The Christmas Pageant is already a joyous memory and the Magi are around the corner. Wandering angels with teetering halos, determined shepherds, less than hospitable innkeepers, dapper kings donning crowns and bling, royal pages with a cluster of camels – were just a small part of this year's Christmas Pageant. The children were amazing and those who witnessed the rehearsals can attest to the miracle they pulled off. The reviews are in, “The Best Christmas Pageant Ever! You could hear everyone one! It all went so smoothly”... and on and on.

Thanks to all who helped – behind the scenes, over the weeks, on the day, afterward. 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 27; 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.

We have a few vacancies in the teaching rotations this winter/spring – if anyone would like to help in Sunday School, I am sure you will find it a fun and rewarding ministry. Contact Rhonda Morrill for further information: 203.966.4515 x117 or rmorrill@stmarksnewcanan.org.

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.

St. Mark's Book Group

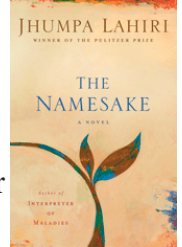
2nd Wednesday of the Month, 12:30-2p.m.

Please note the change of meeting day, we are going back to meeting on the second Wednesday of the month from 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. in the Education Center. All are welcome – you do not need to come to all the meetings. Come when you can; bring a lunch. The schedule alternates fiction and non-fiction. The meeting dates are the second Wednesday of each month. Each month's selection will be available to order in the Lion's Den Book and Gift Store. For more information call the church office, 203.966.4515

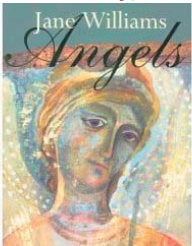
Wednesday, January 9, 2008: *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote . . . One School at a Time*
by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Rel

Wednesday, February 13, 2008: *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

The Namesake takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. From the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri's critically acclaimed first novel is a finely wrought, deeply moving family drama that illuminates her signature themes: the immigrant experience, the clash of cultures, the tangled ties between generations.



Wednesday, March 12, 2008: *Angels* by Dr. Jane Williams



The Bible describes a universe in which we are not the only created beings. There are other creatures who are not human, not animal and not God. Angels are one of those orders of being. In this beautifully illustrated book, acclaimed author Dr. Jane Williams explores the world of angels in Scripture and what we can learn from them today. Dr Williams is an author, lecturer and theologian and is married to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Earth Ministries Wishes You a Happy and Responsible New Year!

We urge you to make and keep some green resolutions – the seemingly minute things each of us do has a dramatic impact on God's Creation.

- ✓ Keep Energy Star appliances in mind when purchasing
- ✓ Replace your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs
- ✓ Try the non-toxic cleaning products, i.e. 7th Generation
- ✓ Plan your outings to reduce unnecessary car trips
- ✓ Explore hybrid cars if you're considering a new vehicle

My own resolution is to leave the car in the garage one day a week – no driving anywhere! I know it can be done, if I plan carefully. Sometimes it's deprivation, but that's what being responsible is all about. Our children, our grandchildren and our great grandchildren (for those of us who have reached that venerable age) will thank us.

Bobbie Bacon,
Earth Ministries Chair

Compact fluorescent light bulbs are available in the Narthex, outside Morrill Hall or in the church office for \$2 each. Help yourselves!



Camp Hand-in-Hand



Distinguished by its commitment to diversity, the camp provides a unique opportunity for children from different backgrounds and life experiences to come together and create life-long memories of summer camp. This year the camp offers 3 two-week sessions for children 5-8 years old:

Session 1: June 23 - July 3

Session 2: July 7 - July 18

Session 3: July 21 - August 1

Camp Hand-in-Hand is a Connecticut state licensed day camp operated by Hand-in-Hand Foundation, Inc., and independent Connecticut not-for-profit corporation, sponsored by St. Mark's Parish and Interfaith of New Canaan. While the traditions and values of all sponsors are reflected in the camp culture, the activities do not include specific religious instruction.

Want to learn more? Contact the camp office at 203.966.6920 or visit the St. Mark's website under the Outreach tab. Camp applications will be available February 1 in the Camp Office (in the church house) .

Need A Notary?

Nadia Cwiach, our Financial Secretary has recently received her Notary Certification in the state of Connecticut and is happy to offer her services to the parish. Please call/email her to set up a time to meet if you need a document notarized, 203.966.4515 or ncwiach@stmarksnewcanaan.org.







Upcoming Baptism Dates:

†	Baptism of Our Lord	January 13, 2008	10:00 a.m.
†	Easter Vigil	Saturday March 22, 2008	8:00 p.m.
†	Pentecost	Sunday, June 7, 2008	10:00 a.m.
†	All Saints' Day	Sunday, Nov. 2 2008	10:00 a.m.

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

The Bulletin Board

St. Mark's Nursery School

-  Open House for prospective families for Fall 2008 Nursery School
Tuesday, January 8, 7-8:30 p.m.
-  Tea Time Parenting Discussion - "Mrs. Palmesi's Rules". Open to all on Tuesday,
January 15, 10-11:45 a.m. in the library
-  Early Childhood Teacher with certification for the 3's class needed. Class meets on
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 - 12:30 a.m.
-  Applications for Fall 2008 for 3s & 4s now available in the Nursery School office
or on line at: <http://www.stmarksnewcanaan.org/nurseryschool.asp>

Nursery School Office: 203.966.7888 Helen Palmesi, Director

Join us to celebrate . . .



Martin Luther King, Jr.

in a service at the

United Methodist Church
Monday, January 21
at 10:30 a.m.

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Stephen J. Sidorak, Jr.

Executive Director, Christian Conference of Connecticut

“Martin Luther King, Jr. on Justice and Peace”

Sponsored by Interfaith of New Canaan

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
Lion's
Roar



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

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New Canaan, CT 06840
203.966.4515
203.966.0439 (fax)
203.972.7888 (nursery school)
203.966.3838 (bookstore)
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The Rev. Carol Hoidra
Assistant to the Rector

Helen Palmesi
Nursery School Director

The Rev. Anne Richards
Priest Associate

Melanie Mandler
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