



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF

St. John in the Wilderness

THE VOICE

December 2023

Inside this issue:

Readers in the Wilderness	2
Christmas Flowers	2
Parish Breakfast	2
Churchyard Updates	2
Sustainability Team	2
Churchyard Tour	2
Advent	3
Friends of Music: Baroque Record Duo	3
Christmas	4
Flower Memorials	4
Parishioner Spotlight: Bill Gordon	5
<i>A Christmas Memory</i>	5
ECW Reflections	6
Holy Hike	6
Birthdays	6
Convention	7

The deadline for *The Voice* is the 15th of each month.

Email submissions to officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org or deliver them to the church office.

From the Rector's Desk

More Advent?

Did you see that Advent made the news? I was surprised when NPR featured a story a few weeks back entitled, "A longer Advent helps some Christians prepare for more than Christmas." The story explained that some Protestant Churches have extended Advent this year to provide more space for encountering God in Advent. Oftentimes, they said, it seems Advent becomes a prelude to Christmas when actually it means much more. They are saying that we are in need of more Advent.

There is no denying that stores are boundaryless when it comes to going after our money in the final weeks of the year. If ignoring the cultural line in the sand that says "No Christmas before Thanksgiving" means they can make some more money, they are glad to decorate and advertise at any time. I honestly don't expect stores to be the keepers of our holy calendar, but I do wonder if we are capable of any restraint. I wonder if more Advent is exactly what the Good Physician orders.

One thing that Advent teaches us is that restraint can be holy. I sometimes feel that waiting is the most unAmerican thing that I do. Even though I spend a lot of time waiting for this or that, I am absolutely sure that my waiting is wrong and I should not have to do it. But in Advent, we are invited to wait. We are invited to the paradox that restraint can be holy. It's the kind of anticipation familiar to those who are expecting a child to be born: exciting and scary. It's the kind of anticipation that takes shape in the hearts of families as a loved one returns home from a longtime away. It's also the kind of humbling acceptance when we realize that we cannot fix a large and difficult problem. Instead, we are invited to sit with it and to pray.

What if this holy restraint is an end in itself? What if these weeks in December are not only about preparation for Christmas? What if we are also shaped in the journey and not just in the destination? What if God shows up in the waiting, in our restraint, in between what was before and what has not yet come to be? This Advent season, I pray that we can find restraint to be active and holy work. Lean into the waiting this month. Embrace the journey by looking around prayerfully inside and outside of your soul. Let go of the instant gratification and the boundarylessness of our culture's seasons. Ask God to sanctify your waiting.

An expectant Advent to you,

Fr. Josh Stephens



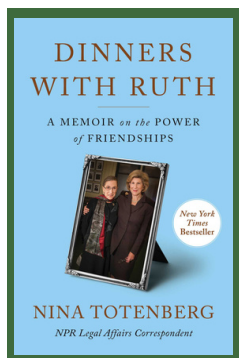
Mary: Love Forever Being Born
An Icon by Kelly Lattimore

Readers in the Wilderness

First Fridays (except January)

10:00am in the Library

December 1: *Dinners with Ruth: A Memoir of The Power of Friendships* by Nina Totenburg



Celebrated NPR correspondent Nina Totenburg delivers an extraordinary memoir of her personal successes, struggles, and life-affirming relationships, including her beautiful friendship of nearly fifty years with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Together these two women paved the way for future generations by tearing down professional and legal

barriers. It is also an intimate memoir of the power of friendships as women began to pry open career doors and transform the workplace.

Honor or Remember a Loved One with An Altar Poinsettia this Christmas

The Flower Guild is planning our Christmas decorations. You can support the ministry during our most expensive season by sponsoring a poinsettia in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special person or event. The suggested donation is \$75.



Please put donations in the Christmas Flower envelopes (available on the table at the Carriage Entrance and in the Parish Office) and deliver them to the office or send them to PO Box 185, Flat Rock, NC 28731. Please print clearly the name(s) of the person(s) you wish to remember or honor. Submit names and donations by Sunday, December 17, for inclusion in the bulletin on Christmas Eve and Day.

Updates from The Historic Churchyard Committee

The Rev. Deacon Sandy Rex, Chair

- After many years of caring leadership as Chairman of the Historic Churchyard Committee, Ken Jones has decided to retire. We will miss his guidance and pastoral concern in helping those desiring a place in the Churchyard. The committee looks forward to soliciting his advice and experience.
- The family of Marti and Rod Smith are donating a bench to be placed in the Churchyard near the Memorial Garden.
- We recently received a substantial gift from the Marion Carlson and Robert Pinckney Tucker, Jr. Foundation, Inc., Robert P. Tucker, III, Suzanne Tucker Plybon, and Richard K. Tucker. The gift is designated for the Restricted Trust for perpetual care and for the headstone cleaning. This family has roots in many of the earliest members of our Church community. In the near future, we look forward to restoring the beauty of many of the older headstones and making the inscriptions easier to read.
- For any questions or comments about the churchyard do not hesitate to talk to one of the committee members or to Deacon Sandy Rex: 847-507-7212 or cwrexiii@rmimidwest.com.

Join the Sustainability Team!

Did you know that St. John in the Wilderness is committed to sustainable practices such as using reusable cutlery, dishes, and glassware? Not only are we committed to these practices, but we have volunteers who help collect, wash, and dry the dishes at each breakfast or event. It is a very rewarding activity and gives you an opportunity to meet people from both services. Volunteers are placed on a team that works about four times a year. If you are interested, please call or email Elizabeth Christenbury at 828-676-7163 or eachristenbury@gmail.com.

Join Us for a Parish Breakfast

*Sunday, December 3,
9:30 to 10:30am in the Parish Hall*

Join us for another Parish Breakfast hosted by the Chefs of St. John. They will serve bacon, sausage, eggs, grits, biscuits, gravy, fruit salad, potatoes, quiche, and juice/coffee/tea. This is a pay-as-you-please breakfast because of our Annual Meeting. No RSVP necessary. We hope to see you there!

One Churchyard Tour Left in 2023

A tour of the church and cemetery will be held Saturday, December 16, at 11:00am. Attendees should meet inside the Carriage Door entrance of the church. The tour will last about an hour. Participants are encouraged to wear comfortable shoes.

Tours of St. John in the Wilderness are free, but advance reservations must be made online at www.stjohnflatrock.org/tours. Space is limited for each tour.



Advent



AT ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

First Sunday of Advent December 3

Rite I Services

8:45 and 11:00am in the Church

Annual Meeting & Parish Breakfast
10:00-10:55am in the Parish Hall

****Angel Tree Deadline****

Second Sunday of Advent December 10

Rite I Services

8:45 and 11:00am in the Church

YFM Churchyard Spray Assembly Thursday, December 14

5:30-7:00pm in the Parish Hall

Each year, our children and youth gather to create sprays for decorating the graves of the people who were enslaved and freed by our church's founders. We do this to honor the parishioners of the past whose humanities were not recognized during their lives.

RSVP to Fr. Ian: ian@stjohnflatrock.org

Third Sunday of Advent December 17

Rite I Services

8:45 and 11:00am in the Church

Laying of the Sprays

10:05-10:55am in the Churchyard

All are welcome to join in placing the sprays made by our children and youth to honor parishioners of the past.

****Christmas Flower Memorial Deadline****
Honor or remember a loved one with a poinsettia at the altar on Christmas Eve and Day.

Suggested Donation: \$75

Contact the Parish Office with the name(s) of your loved one(s).

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 24

Service of Advent Lessons and Carols

10:00am in the Church

Friends of Music Presents: Tom Hudgin and Andy John, Baroque Recorder Duo Sunday, December 17, at 4:00pm in the Parish Hall

Local musicians, Tom Hudgin and Andy John, will present a concert of classical compositions on Sunday afternoon, December 17 in the Parish Hall. The 4:00pm event is free and open to the public, with donations gratefully accepted to support the Friends of Music.

Both artists began playing the Baroque Recorder at a young age. Their careers have included other instruments and styles of music, but they particularly enjoy introducing the recorder to young and older students.

National Public Radio (NPR) has broadcast nationwide their selected arrangements of early Christmas music using a variety of recorders and early percussion instruments. In addition, they have played for religious, commercial and private venues.

Hudgin, who lives in Hendersonville, recently teamed up with Asheville John to combine their skills and repertoire. They perform compositions by Handel, Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and more, plus Broadway and film scores.



Christmas

AT ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS

Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24

Rite II Eucharists | 5:00 and 10:30pm in the Church

Christmas Day
Monday, December 25

Rite II Eucharist | 11:00am in the Church

****The Parish Office will be closed**

Monday, December 25 through Monday, January 1. **

The Feast of the Holy Name (Transferred)
Sunday, December 31

Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols
10:00am in the Church

Twelfth Night
Friday, January 5

Burning of the Greens and Other Revelry

4:00-6:00pm at Camp Kanuga

120 Kanuga Chapel Dr. Hendersonville, NC 28739

Bring Christmas trees and other greens to burn! St. John will provide food and beverages as we gather around the fire to sing songs and celebrate the coming of Epiphany.



The December Altar Flowers are Given in Loving Memory of:

December 3

**My parents,
William and Betty Broyles**
by Joan Broyles Odean

December 10

**The Reverend and Mrs.
J.R. Little and
Albert and S. Lee Moreno**
by their family

December 17

Wesley Welborn Smith
*by Gayle and Bill McHaffie and
Megan and John Durlach*

December 24

See Bulletin
*Submit names for memorials or
honorariums by Sunday,
December 17.*

December 31

All our dear, departed loved ones that passed in 2023 at St. John in the Wilderness



Parishioner Spotlight: Bill Gordon

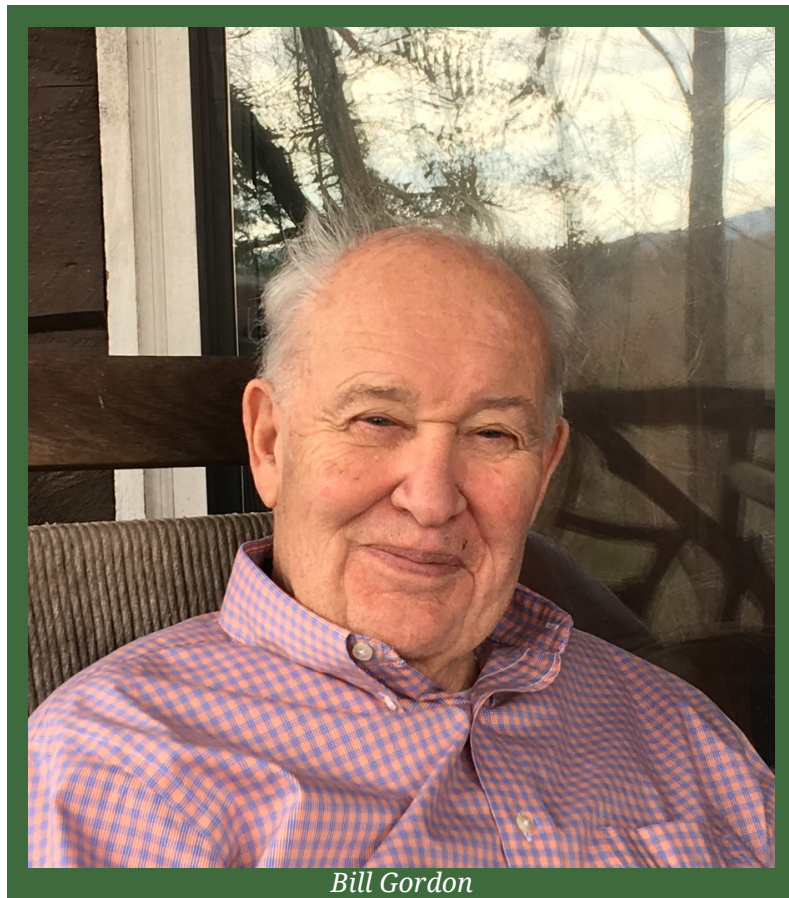
*The Rev. Patricia Tanzer Askew,
Homebound Ministry Co-Chair*

Can you remember a teacher who made a real difference in your life - one who listened to you and knew your dreams and aspirations and went beyond the duties of the classroom to help you move ahead in your life? Bill Gordon was such a teacher.

For many years he taught his own students and also teachers in many countries around the world. His wife, Worth, accompanied him on these many trips, visiting 20-25 countries during his career (Morocco being their favorite), and they both agree that much is to be learned by traveling and experiencing how others live. As an educator, he was interested in all children getting a good education and so was involved also in school desegregation, including the formation of magnet schools and bussing.

Sometimes a student of Bill's needed help. He was known to provide appropriate clothing for a job interview and even co-signed loans when necessary. When Bill saw a need, he acted on it. I believe he probably surprised some by his wonderful generosity.

Bill Gordon has been attending worship at St. John in the Wilderness since he was a child, serving as an altar boy and then president of the men's club years later, sponsoring swim parties for the youth, as well as holding positions on the vestry. Bill's Dad, Russ, was Senior Warden of our church many years ago and Bill followed in that direction, holding the positions of both Junior and Senior Warden. The one ministry Bill never ventured into was teaching formation classes in the church. I suppose he did enough of that during the work week!



Bill Gordon

What Bill loves the most about his church are the people. If he could share a bit of wisdom he has learned over the years, he would say, "If you are going to take responsibility, then take it."

Thank you, Bill, for your loving service in our church and also in your many encounters with God's children. They may not have realized it at the time, but they were in the presence of someone very special—someone who knew how to share the love of Christ.

A CHRISTMAS MEMORY Returns to St. John this Month

Friday, December 15, at 7:30pm

Saturday, December 16, at 7:30pm

Sunday, December 17, at 2:00 (SOLD OUT) and 7:30pm

For the fifth straight season at St. John in the Wilderness, actor and theologian E.R. Haire, Jr. will perform Truman Capote's beloved short story, *A Christmas Memory*, as a one-man show. Four performances will be held in the Wilderness Room.

Dr. Haire has performed the story from Los Angeles to Edinburgh, Scotland with many stops in between during the last 20 years, this season being his 21st.

"I am delighted and humbled to once again perform this wonderful beloved story. I thank the people of St. John in the Wilderness and the greater Flat Rock community and people from other areas who have supported my effort. I hope everyone will enjoy the performances which have become something of a tradition for the community." said Dr. Haire.

The show is free to the public, but seating is limited to 60 people per performance. The 2:00pm performance on December 17 is sold out, but you are welcome to add your name to the waitlist. We will contact you with any openings. Plenty of seating remains at the 7:30pm performances on all three dates. RSVP is required at bit.ly/christmasmem23.



Reflections from the Head of the ECW

Linda Giltner, ECW Chair

This is my "Thank You" to the many who have helped ECW to be a success story in 2023!

We had two gatherings with food, fun, and sharing of stories in January and September. We baked cookies for Empty Bowls, took poinsettias to many of our parishioners who are homebound, collected money for the United Thank Offering, hosted the Friends of Music reception for the 2022-23 season, offered LONG hours for the SUCCESSFUL BAZAAR, made money to give back to the community through the Make a Difference Fund, and helped with the Angel Tree and Head Start donations.

Thank you Bettie Orr for all the donations that Books for Good has shared with ECW and others who have made personal donations. We have also been friends to many who have needed a hug, a shoulder to cry on, or a moment of comforting silence. All of you have been angels on earth for many of us. Thank you to my ladies in Christ. Being your chair for the past few years has been a blessing although at times tiring!

A new year is close at hand, and I hear of new and exciting things happening! Love to all.



- 1 Carol Spencer
- 2 Vickie Taylor
- 3 William McHaffie
- 4 Catherine Popp
- 4 Ian Williams
- 6 Henry Mills
- 6 Jacque
Brown-Williams
- 8 Sally Hopper
- 9 John Wyatt
- 9 Ada Fitzpatrick
- 9 Riggs Goodman
- 10 Ruth Kern
- 10 Nancy Cooper
- 11 Anita Reid
- 11 Patty Vint
- 11 Abby Stephens
- 11 Jane Mildren
- 12 Hilton Swing
- 14 Mary Shelton
- 15 Beth Ann Melton
- 16 Jill Blanchard
- 17 Michael Jeffery
- 18 Hop Potter
- 18 Sandy Skelton
- 20 Betsy Tibbs
- 22 Jane Irwin
- 23 Jim Cooper
- 24 Jerry Holt
- 24 Georgia Mattern
- 25 Gregor Pickral
- 26 Isabel Schiro
- 26 Will Rodriguez
- 27 Sara Mooney
- 27 Emmery Guth
- 31 Roan Ghahreman
- 31 Carolyn Franz
- 31 Penny Amerman

Scenes from Our Last Holy Hike

John Rock Trail | November 14, 2023



Join Us on a Holy Hike

Tuesday, December 12, Time TBD

More information is forthcoming at www.stjohnflatrock.org/upcoming-hike.

Don't see your birthday here?
That means we don't have a record of it!

Please email Sarah at officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org to update your information.

Scenes from the 101st Annual Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina *November 9-11, 2023, at St. John in the Wilderness and St. James Episcopal*



1. Bishop José and Canon Augusta with Becca Stevens, keynote speaker of the Convention this year. Becca is the founder and Executive Director of Thistle Farms, a Nashville-based nonprofit that works with female survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction to empower them with healing and hope in the form of a safe place to live, a meaningful job, and a lifelong sisterhood of support. Learn more about the incredible organization at www.thistlefarms.org.
2. Thistle Farms showed us a small selection of all the handcrafted goods they offer. Browse all of their wares at the link above.
3. Sarah Yeargin, Debby Staton, and Missy Izard were among those from St. John who attended the pre-Convention dinner and address.
4. Becca and her team brought with them 40 hand-knitted stockings that were carefully crafted by Love Rises, a group of Ukrainian artisans who are refugees. All 40 stockings were purchased within 10 minutes!
5. During the Friday workshops, Mary Anne Inglis gave a presentation on Creation Care Camp. Attendees also heard from others in the Diocese who are doing the important work of environmental stewardship.
6. The Diocesan Youth Council (featuring parishioner Mary Shelton, far left) performed some classic Camp Henry songs at Convention on Saturday.
7. St. John in the Wilderness was represented well at Convention by our clergy, Fr. Josh Stephens, Deacon Sandy Rex, and Fr. Ian Williams; our delegates, Laurie Morris and Sandy Skelton; and our alternates, Don and Lynne Stine.
8. Not pictured: many behind-the-scenes folks who worked hard to provide hospitality to our guests this weekend, especially Kevin Hunt, Elizabeth Christenbury, Patrice German, and Diane Skelton. Thank you so much for cheerfully jumping in wherever help was needed!

Flat Rock, NC 28731
PO Box 185
**St. John in the
Wilderness**
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF



The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness

The Rev. Josh Stephens
Rector

The Rev. Ian Williams
Curate

The Rev. Dea. Charles Rex
Deacon

Sarah Yeargin
*Director of Parish Communication
& Administration*

Stacy Knapp
Parish Financial Assistant

Dewitt Tipton
Organist and Director of Music

Kevin Hunt
Sexton

Vestry

John Barker
Senior Warden

Will Rodriguez
Junior Warden

Tom Griswold
Treasurer

Margaret Barker
Clerk

Clint Adams, Elizabeth
Christenbury, Patrice German,
E.R. Haire, Jr., Jerry Holt,
Marissa Pharr,
Kim Sanders, Jennifer Shelton,
and Laura Teel

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

8:45am - Rite I Eucharist (in person)

11:00am - Rite I Eucharist (in person)

**Services are live-streamed to Facebook on a rotating schedule.*

**St. John uses Rite I liturgies during Advent and Lent and Rite II during the rest of the year.*

Monday through Thursday

9:00am - Morning Prayer (live-streamed on Facebook)

Wednesday

10:30am - Healing Service in the Wilderness Room

4:30pm - Evening Prayer in the Atrium Chapel

Our Mission Statement

To know and love God as He is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, to bring others to His saving love, and to serve the world in His name.

828-693-9783
www.stjohnflatrock.org
officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org

