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

Email submissions to
[officeadmin@
stjohnflatrock.org](mailto:officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org)
or deliver them to the
church office.

From the Rector's Desk

God Manifests

The Epiphany Collect speaks of God being made manifest to the peoples of the earth by the leading of a star to Christ our Lord. We will celebrate Epiphany at Kanuga on Saturday, January 6th. (See page 2 for sign-up info.) Indeed, the Magi's journey – usually confused with Christmas in our society – is central to the Epiphany of our Lord, along with the stories of Christ's baptism in the River Jordan and the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee. All three of these stories have to do with people like us realizing the implications of the incarnation of God. In other words, "What does it mean for us and our world that God is truly with us, that Christ is the Son of God, and that our King is here?"

For us at St. John, these Epiphany questions are very much at the core of our discipleship as individuals and a community. For example, God being with us assures us of our intrinsic and irrevocable worth to God. We are surprised and delighted to discover that God has adopted us as beloved children, and we are knit together into this family with each other. We get to reorder our lives with Christ as our King and his love as the law of our hearts that we live out each day.

God being manifest to us in Christ leads us to serve those who are hurting and struggling in Flat Rock, Hendersonville, and beyond. Throughout this issue you will find examples of how we have shared God's love with others through our Outreach Ministries, such as Angel Tree, working with school social workers, or sending funds to support the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank.

On January 7, God being made manifest in Christ will have us baptizing Russell James Byars on the Feast of the Baptism of our Lord at our 11:00am service. These rituals of water, oil, candle, and Communion are what it looks like when a family and a community kneel before their King and Lord. Baptism is the citizenship ceremony of God's Kingdom – the new ordering of our lives where we get to join with this Suffering-Servant-King who gives his life and is raised up in Easter glory.

From March 7-10, the implications of Christ among us will take a group of us to Charleston to reexamine parts of our history related to race and slavery. I have been fascinated to learn about the longest serving priest in our parish's history, The Rev. John Grimké Drayton, who is buried in our churchyard. We are going to tour his gardens at Magnolia Plantation and visit his parish at Old St. Andrew's while we wrestle with questions about how slavery was a part of our life as a parish and why it matters for us today. I hope you will sign up this month to join us for this March pilgrimage at stjohnflatrock.org/travel.

Join us now as we ask these questions and seek the one who is the answer to all of the questions and longings of our hearts and souls. God in man has become manifest to us. Epiphany is here.

~ Fr. Josh Stephens+



O Come Let Us Adore Him
Acrylic on canvas by Jen Norton

Twelfth Night: Join Us for the Burning of the Greens & Other Revelry

*Friday, January 5, 4:00-6:00pm at Camp Kanuga
120 Camp Kanuga Circle, Hendersonville*



Gather around the fire with us as we sing Christmas carols, drink mulled cider, and celebrate the last night of the Christmas season. St. John will provide warm beverages and weenies for roasting. Please bring chairs for sitting around the fire, plus any natural greens you'd like to burn. No RSVP necessary.

2023 Angel Tree Success

Thanks to your generosity and the largest team of volunteers ever, the 2023 St. John Angel Tree provided Christmas gifts to over 75 Henderson County students and their families!



Bellringers Ring in Hundreds

Many thanks to the St. John parishioners who rang Salvation Army bells on December 5 in front of the Belk department store. Their infectious good cheer and ringing virtuosity brought in nearly \$400 in donations, which the Salvation Army will use to help families in need in our community. Kudos to those below:

Candace Lewis
Kathy Newbold
Vickie & Bill Taylor
Nancy Cooper
Kathryn Whitten
Diane & Sandy Skelton

Laurie Morris
Joey Popp
David & Elizabeth Christenbury
Meg & Jerry Holt
Polly Morrice & Scott Bell

You're Invited: Feast and Celebrate The Epiphany at Kanuga

*Saturday, January 6, 4:00-7:00pm
471 Kanuga Chapel Drive, Hendersonville*



All are invited to Kanuga for the Feast of the Epiphany! We have invited all parishes of the Hendersonville Deanery and look forward to joining our fellow Episcopalians for this amazing event. We will begin with a Eucharist in Kanuga's beautiful chapel. From there we will feast together, with Kanuga providing pork tenderloin, baked chicken, and hot dogs. Participants are invited to bring a side dish, salad/bread, or dessert. Check out the sign-up page (linked below) to see what you should bring.

The evening will be filled with fun activities such as viewing the night sky as the Wise Men saw it when they sought the Christ child, using a mobile planetarium. There will be crafts for making crowns and star lanterns, star gazing, and a candlelight labyrinth walk.

The cost is \$15 per adult, \$10 per youth, and free for children up to age 12. Tickets should be purchased in advance at bit.ly/EpiphanyAtKanuga. If you have any questions, please contact Aimee Bostwick at Kanuga by emailing abostwick@kanuga.org.



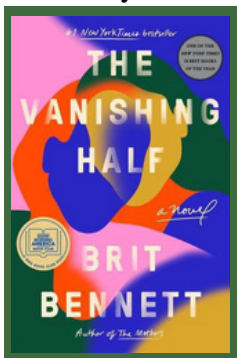
Meg and Jerry Holt display proper ringing technique.

Readers in the Wilderness

First Fridays (except January)

10:00am in the Library

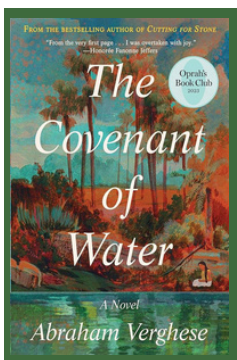
February 2: *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett



The Vignes twin sisters will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern black community and running away at age 16, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults, it's everything. One sister lives with her black daughter in the same southern town she once tried to escape. The other secretly passes for white, and her white husband knows nothing of her past. It is at once a riveting, emotional family story and a brilliant exploration of the American history of "passing."

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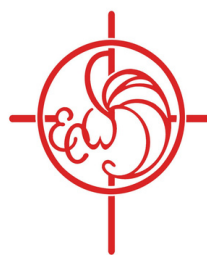
March 1: *The Covenant of Water* by Abraham Verghese



At the turn of the century, a 12-year-old girl from Kerala's long-existing Christian community, grieving the death of her father, is sent by boat to her wedding, where she will meet her forty-year-old husband for the first time. From this unforgettable new beginning, the young girl--and future matriarch, known as Big Ammachi--

will witness unthinkable changes over the span of her extraordinary life, full of joy and triumph as well as hardship and loss, her faith and love the only constants.

A Note from the ECW Chair



I'm delighted to announce, with four of our fellow church women, that the St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church Women (ECW) has a leadership board for 2024!

Board members include myself as Chair, Elizabeth Christenbury as Vice Chair, Diane Skelton as Recording Secretary, Polly Morrice as Corresponding Secretary, and Jan Tanner as Treasurer. We will meet monthly and are grateful to have several continuing standing committees to help us make a difference.

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming events below. All women in the parish are most cordially invited.

ECW Kickoff Luncheon Saturday, January 27, 2024

We will honor immediate past presidents and share ideas for the year ahead. Expect your invitation to come soon!

Restore, Renew & Reconnect Retreat Saturday, March 16, 2024

Dr. Mattie Decker of Transfiguration Preserve in Bat Cave will be our speaker. More details and an invitation to follow. Plan to join us in the Parish Hall and bring a friend.

Please know that with the support of all, we will continue to grow ECW for the future and make a difference in our church and community.

Sincerely,
Carmen Curtis, Chair

ECW Packs Gift Bags for Head Start Children

On December 7, members of the ECW met to carry on the annual tradition of packing gift bags for children enrolled in the Head Start Program in Henderson County. The bags included books, art supplies, toys carved and assembled by Apple Country Woodcrafters, blankets, hygiene items, and hat-and-mitten sets crafted by our Needlework Ministry. Thanks to all who had a hand in pulling this together!



The Packing Team: Brenda Hillyer, Lynne Miller, and Linda Giltner

Travel with St. John in the Wilderness in 2024!

www.stjohnflatrock.org/travel

The Travel Ministry of St. John in the Wilderness is thrilled to offer several opportunities to grow in faith and fellowship by making pilgrimage together this year. A Christian pilgrimage is a deeply intentional, introspective, and spiritual journey that often results in a transformation of the mind and soul. The Travel Ministry of St. John exists to facilitate pilgrimages to holy and historical sites across the world, and to arrange opportunities for service in Jesus' name. Our pilgrimages serve as an opportunity for us to seek and find God in new ways by breaking away from our regular day-to-day concerns. When our normal obligations, activities, and routines are removed, we find ourselves more available to consider our relationships with God, and experience in a new way the never-ending grace that is always present in our lives.

Upcoming Pilgrimages



Charleston Rediscovered: Claiming Our Spiritual Ancestors, Both Enslaved & Free

Thursday, March 7 - Sunday, March 10

Cost: \$200-400 | Registration Deadline: February 1
Scholarships available. All ages welcome.

Visit www.stjohnflatrock.org/charleston2024 to learn more and register.



Pilgrimage to Québec, Canada:

A Cultural, Religious, & Culinary Tour

Wednesday, August 21 - Thursday, August 29

Cost: \$3,000 per person

Registration Deadline: April 23 (\$1,000 deposit)

Scholarships available. No refunds after June 7.

Visit www.stjohnflatrock.org/canada2024 to learn more and register.

Formation Hour with Paul Porwoll, Drayton Scholar and Old St. Andrew's Historian

Sunday, January 28, 10:05am in the Wilderness Room

As we prepare for our pilgrimage to the Lowcountry of South Carolina, all are invited to learn from Paul Porwoll, Historian of St. Andrew's Parish Church in Charleston. Mr. Porwoll is the author of two books, including *"In My Trials, Lord, Walk with Me": What an Antebellum Parish Register Reveals about Race and Reconciliation*. He will share with us his knowledge of the Rev. John Grimké Drayton, a 19th-century rector of St. Andrew's and St. John in the Wilderness, who both owned enslaved people and ministered to them--a complicated relationship that we will explore more on our pilgrimage.

Formation will continue after the 11:00 service, when Fr. Josh will give a tour of the Churchyard around 12:30pm. Meet in the parking lot near the large stone cross.

The January Altar Flowers are Given in Loving Memory of:

January 7

Jack Day

by Carolyn Day

AND

Roderick Bryan & Martha Smith

by Friends

January 14

**Sara Henderson McCandless &
Edward McCandless**

by their Sons, Richard and John

January 21

Our parents,

**Johann & Cicilia Wiescholek
and Lyle & Arlene Ribley**

by Eduard and Lynn Wiescholek

January 28

Katherine Clinton Bissell,

Sara & Hardee Butler,

Margaret Bissell, and

Hardee C. Bissell

by their Family



A Tribute to Deacon Joyce

Lori Griswold

Father Josh has asked me to write a memoir of our much-loved Deacon Joyce's ministry among us. When it is finished, it will be available to read online on our St. John website and will be placed in our parish history archives.

I need your help! Many of you worked side-by-side with Joyce for years, helping her build ministries she initiated and maintain those she led. You have wonderful experiences and observations to share, just waiting to be captured and saved. Those stories convey the essence of what Joyce was and is about—a devotion to God and his people.

Please share your stories and observations with me. I would love to hear them, and I will include as much and as many as I can in the final piece. If you have related photographs, please include those as well! You can reach me at griswoldlori@gmail.com, or at 563-209-0994.

Churchyard Chatter: A Bit of History on our Memorial Garden

Luann Ham, Historic Churchyard Committee

In the historic sacred churchyard surrounding St. John in the Wilderness, the peaceful Memorial Garden is a newer addition. Lying directly across the road and slightly down the hill from the Carriage Entrance, the Memorial Garden is the final resting place of many people who are cremated, their names and dates of living listed on engraved brass plaques lining the Garden's walls. In 1985, the first burial in the Memorial Garden was parishioner Juan Emile Chaudruc, an engineer. Some church members may remember his wife Janet, who died in 2012, an active member of St. John as a choir singer, lay reader, and member of the Society of St. Francis, a world-wide religious order of the Episcopal Communion. Mr. Chaudruc's nameplate is the first attached to the plaque on a stone wall. In 2015, as the Memorial Garden walls filled with names, the Historic Churchyard Committee gave the task of expansion planning to member and engineer Malcolm McCormick.

Malcolm, with the help of David Dethero and Odell Russell, dug the new walls and pathways. Working in the cemetery of St. John in the Wilderness was important to Odell, who had helped maintain the cemetery grounds for years. His ancestors were enslaved, and he told Malcolm that the portion of the cemetery where enslaved people are buried meant so much to him. The expansion of the Memorial Garden was the last project Odell worked on before he died in 2019. He had his own farm and is buried in St. Paul's Episcopal Cemetery in Edneyville.

With the help of Nelson Motes, Malcolm ordered two Elberton, Georgia granite stones cut by Jerry Beddingfield for the bases of the two new nameplate plaques. Each stone base weighs 7.5 tons. Needless to say, setting the stones in the Memorial Garden in the fall of 2015 was a massive project, requiring ice cubes and a huge crane situated on the road near the Carriage Entrance. Even though it was a large crane, they knew the crane's arm could not reach the distance needed to place the granite bases on their spots; however, the heavy bases could be placed on an ice cube path and slid into place.

Farewell Reception for the Beschtas

On November 30, we held a reception to honor Deacons Jerry and Joyce Beschta and wish them the best as they prepare to move to northern Virginia to be closer to family.



Deacons Jerry and Joyce with Lynn and Tom Savage



Stacy Knapp, Leslie Stott, Deacon Joyce, Carol Rector, and Kathy Newbold

Continued on page 6

Scenes from Our Last Holy Hike

Little Bradley Falls | December 12, 2023



- 4 Sandy Schenck
- 5 Tom Savage
- 7 Susan MacDonald
- 8 Ceil Salvadori
- 9 Joanie Brendle
- 14 Michael Franz
- 16 Rhett Kanipe
- 16 Melanie Pace
- 18 JoAnn Ebbs
- 18 Nancy Dobson
- 19 Kristie Ogletree
- 19 Mary McCarty
- 19 Victoria Flanagan
- 22 Judi Bettendorf
- 23 Bill Morris
- 26 Faith Baker
- 28 Lynn Redmond
- 29 Mary Stroman
- 30 Harrison Caldwell



Join Us on Our Next Hike!

Tuesday, January 9, 2024, Time TBD

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

*For by me your days
will be multiplied, and
years will be added to
your life.*

Proverbs 9:11

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

*Please email Sarah at
[officeadmin@
stjohnflatrock.org](mailto:officeadmin@stjohnflatrock.org)
to update your information.*

Churchyard Chatter, continued from page 5

Before the stones arrived, Malcolm's wife Anne started making batches of ice cubes in preparation. On the day of the placement, everyone involved with the project was there: Malcolm, David, Odell, and others. The crane strained under the weight of the granite as it carefully set the stones on Anne's ice cubes and slid them into place. Happy day! The new plaques were applied with the help of Jim Olson. An Italian statue of St. Francis, donated by the Wright family in memory of John Armstrong Wright, was also placed in the Memorial Garden. If you haven't seen this beautiful tranquil spot, we invite you to visit. There is a growing interest in cremains burial and a sense of community in the Memorial Garden at St. John.

Greening the Graves

On December 14, the Young Family Ministry and friends gathered in the Parish Hall to break bread and participate in the St. John tradition of creating sprays to adorn the graves of those both enslaved and free who are buried in our churchyard. On Thursday, December 21, parishioners placed the sprays on the graves to honor the congregants of the past whose humanities were not fully recognized during their lives.



The Spray Assembly Team included Rosanna Couture; Wilder and Arlo Stephens; Fr. Ian, Sallie, Nora, and Greyson Williams; Sarah Yeargin; Judy and Mark Oldenburg; Mark Rountree; and Ellen Harris.



Special Christmas Offering to Support the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem is home to about 7,000 Anglicans worshipping within 28 different congregations. It is also responsible for more than 30 institutions, including hospitals, schools, clinics, rehabilitation centers, guesthouses, and retirement homes. The Diocese responds actively to the need for healthcare and education in areas where many cannot afford them, making no distinction by religion, ethnicity, or gender. Beyond its parish and institutional work, the Diocese of Jerusalem also sponsors a number of other ministries, such as the Diocesan Department for Peace, Reconciliation, and Interfaith Dialogue, which encourages participation in the Jerusalem Peacebuilders program and supports other interfaith peace-building efforts.

This Christmas, 100% of your cash and designated check donations from the Offertory went to support these important ministries. Stay tuned to see the total!

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



The Episcopal Church of St. John in the Wilderness

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Josh Stephens
Rector

The Rev. Ian Williams
Curate

The Rev. Dn. 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

Jerry Holt
Senior Warden

Will Rodriguez
Junior Warden

Tom Griswold
Treasurer

Margaret Barker
Clerk

Clint Adams, Patrice German,
Jim Gibbs, Jon Fitzpatrick,
E.R. Haire, Jr., Jill Owen,
Marissa Pharr, Kim Sanders,
Sandy Skelton, and Laura Teel



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

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

11:00am - Rite II 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



[@stjohnwildernessflatrock](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnwildernessflatrock)