

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SENIOR WARDEN NEWS
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Greetings from the Attic,

My home office is in the attic of the house. It does not have the same cache as the garrets of Paris but is probably as chilly. The windows look south to the state capitol and it is beautiful to see the dome lighted at night. We moved to Maine in a snow storm and the first night in the house we had a beautiful view of the capitol in the midst of blowing snow. It was magical then and it has remained magical ever since.

On Thanksgiving morning I was sitting in the den of my mother's house when my cell phone rang. I answered it and it was one of our church volunteers/guests. He and his wife were feeling lonely that day and needed to touch base. We spent a few minutes talking and I told them I would be back in Maine this week. Isn't it amazing how our little actions of helping those in need build this immutable bond so that on Thanksgiving Day someone in need would reach out to be connected to our church? At the last public supper, a young girl and her parents came up to give me her school picture. She said, "You are our family because of the kindness you show us each month. I want you to have a picture." I carry it in my wallet. We are given many opportunities to help God's people at St. Mark's.

Today is Advent I. Happy New Year!!!!!!!

It was wonderful to be in church with you today. I enjoyed the sermon immensely especially when Fr. Ralph reminded us of the lyrics of "Something's Coming" from West Side Story. The lyrics were written by Stephen Sondheim who is one of my favorite lyricists/composers. Read the lyrics and you will feel the magic of anticipation and waiting. As if things could not get any better during the service, Jean Wright then gave her stewardship talk and recited an incredible poem she had written about waiting. I will ask if she will share it with all of us.

The talent and treasures of our members are given of God and you are a gift to God's people in Augusta and around the world. Do you sense the wonderment of being among and worshipping with God's people? It is truly inspiring to me as we continue on our journey together.

I started my Advent discipline this morning. Each year I start a diary on January 1st and stop writing sometime during the year. Before heading out on my trip to Virginia I picked up my copy of Julia Cameron's book, *Perseverance*. I had started it earlier and somehow it was re-shelved before I finished it. I had a chance to read while sitting in airports and being on a train for the overnight return to Boston. In her book Julia writes about morning writing. I started today. Each morning I will write three pages of whatever travels from my thoughts through the pen to the paper. The point is to not spend a lot of time thinking about what you are going to write but rather to just write. Julia urges one to get hopes, aspirations, hurts, concerns, worrying, gratitude on paper each morning and then put them away. Then live your day. During this period of waiting and anticipation there is a lot in our lives that is happening around us and to us. This quiet time in the attic each morning with a cup of coffee, looking out the window will be a gift to

me by spending time with God. I have committed to journaling in Advent and will decide whether I persevere into Christmas, Epiphany and Lent.

I had an email from the Rev. Connie Wolfe today reminding me of the Trinity Episcopal Church Christmas Home Tours in Portsmouth, VA. Connie and I were members of the parish. Many of the members lived in the historic neighborhood where the church was located. Hundreds of people would buy tickets to go into these historic homes anticipating they would be fully decorated for holidays and instead found purple bows on the front door wreaths, advent calendars in the kitchen and den and nary a Christmas tree in sight. The problem was that it was advertised as a Christmas Tour but it happened in Advent and these good folk didn't decorate for Christmas until Christmas. I chuckled in remembrance when I read the email.

What are you doing in your life to live into this time of Advent? Do you have a special ritual that you follow? Trinity Wall Street has a website that includes an Advent calendar, videos and reflections for each day. I encourage you to use this wonderful resource.

<http://www.trinitywallstreet.org/news/features/2011-advent-calendar>

It is nice to be home among God's people at St. Mark's Church.

Peace be with you this week, as we await the Christ child.

Joseph Riddick