

September, 2016

Dear Member or Friend of St. John's:

"Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near." (Luke 21-29-30) In these verses, Jesus is talking about looking for signs of the seasons. As I see school buses on the roads, chrysanthemums and pumpkins at local nurseries, a letup from sweltering heat, a little less traffic on the Coastal Highway, shortening days, I'm reading the signs of the seasons and know summer is drawing to a close. Where has it flown to?! I pray yours provided time for R and R, a slower pace, and quality time for fun with family and friends.

Now, though, with the coming of fall, the return of activities at St. John's, and the start of new ones, is fast approaching. There are so many that the bulk of this letter will be to raise them up for you. In a recent sermon, I mentioned that, come fall, I would begin leading a weekly **Bible Study**. For those interested, please let me know your preference for daytime or evening, either 11 AM, 1 PM, or 7 PM. At first the study will focus on the Scripture readings for Mass the following Sunday, but we can move, if you wish, to a book of the Bible you might prefer studying.

Have you missed St. John's kids as much as I have? I'm delighted and excited that they're returning for **Sunday School**, 10 AM, September 11! Take a moment to ask yourself what child or children, ages 4 through 9, you might know, in your family or neighborhood, who would be blessed by your invitation to join St. John's Sunday School.

The next **Weeding Party** will be on Tuesday, September 13, 9 AM. I make fun about it being a "party," but we really do have fun together and, at the same time, keep St. John's grounds pristine! In connection with our landscape, there

will be a **Work Day** on Saturday, October 15, again at 9 AM. We will clean the grounds, prepare with compost the beds on either side of the front entrance for landscaping in the spring, and plant a host of bulbs for spectacular beauty next spring!

St. John's **Book Club** resumes on Monday, September 19, 7 PM. Participants will review Rebecca Kanner's "Esther: A Novel," which examines the biblical Queen Esther and her courage to stand up for what is right, no matter the risk. This book is available in Kindle, paperback, or hardcover.

A memorable, historical, fun **Trip is planned for Wednesday, September 14**, to Delaware's capital, Dover, to tour the Governor's home and guest house followed by a bag lunch (bring one with you, beverage and dessert provided) enjoyed in the gardens and on the porches of the Governor's home, and then a tour of the Victrola Museum, followed by a walking tour of The Green led by a guide in 18th century dress. We meet at St. John's at 8:45 sharp, arriving in Dover at 10 and departing Dover at 3 PM. Please sign up on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall to either drive or ride.

In commemoration of the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the Annual **Blessing of the Animals** will take place on Saturday, October 1, 10 AM, outside the Sanctuary. Bring your beloved pets; and, yes, we bless gerbils, fish, horses, iguanas, etc, in addition to our cherished cats and dogs!

The Right Reverend Wayne Wright, Episcopal Bishop of Delaware, will make his yearly, and farewell, visit to us on Sunday, October 30, preaching at the Mass and receiving new members. With his retirement in early 2017, we commend Bishop Wright for his faithful shepherding of the churches and priests of the Diocese over a span of decades. Lunch will be served in the Parish Hall that day. In preparation for the Bishop's visit, I will be leading three sessions of an **Inquirer's Class** for those wishing to become members of St. John's by Confirmation, or simply to explore Episcopal faith and practice. Tell me of your interest so we can tailor these classes to your schedule.

Hope you're as happy and thankful as I am to see the beautiful new roof on our Sanctuary and Parish Hall! The re-siding of the outside walls of the Parish Hall will begin any day now. If you wish to make a monetary gift to these much needed improvements and did not receive the Capital Appeal mailing, please email me at whiteall99@aol.com. **Pledge Sunday** is September 11.

A brief word about some of my activities as your Rector in reaching out to the Milton community and making sure St. John's stays visible to it. As a member of the Board of the Milton Food Pantry, I have been invited by the **Milton Women's Club** to speak with them at their meeting on Tuesday, September 13, 1 PM, about my commitment to the critically important ministry of the Pantry. I continue to meet monthly with the **Milton Minister's Alliance**, a fellowship of the Pastors serving the congregations of Milton. The Town of Milton has graciously invited me to be part of a **9/11 Ceremony** on Saturday, September 10, beginning at 6 PM, in Milton Memorial Park. I was privileged and blessed to participate in this tribute last year and look forward to honoring again this year the fallen from 9/11 as well as our local women and men who serve as first responders.

Whew! I apologize for the length of this letter, but Praise the Lord!, many great things are happening in our St. John's community of faith. Please take a moment to mark your calendars with the above events that are bold-faced.

The Good News of God's faithfulness is that God is with us, his steady hand guiding us and his undefeated love supporting us, through all the seasons of our life! The Psalmist sings, "He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps." (Psalm 121:4). God never takes a vacation from watching over us. Thanks be to God!

Yours in Christ,

Father Tom