



# The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist

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The Rev. Thomas M. White, Rector

Thanksgiving Day, 2016

Dear Member and Friend of St. John the Baptist:

It is Thanksgiving morning and, no surprise, I am thinking of you. St. Paul writes to the Philippians: "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the Gospel..." You are my joy and chief among the blessings for which I am thankful today! And the partnership we share in the Good News of Jesus Christ at St. John the Baptist inspires and empowers my life. I hope you believe, as I do, that God's Spirit is working busily in our congregation. God things are happening! So, "I thank my God every time I remember you!" You minister to me with love, encouragement, and support.

First, let me extend heartiest congratulations to our own John Robinson, who has been chosen as this year's recipient of the Delaware Youth Soccer Association's award for Volunteer of the Year! The Association will host a luncheon in 2017 when John will be honored and receive his award. John, we are so happy for you!

Last night St. John the Baptist hosted the Second Community Thanksgiving Service with 36 attending! Pastor Dusty Pruitt of Safe Harbor UCC Church, which meets twice monthly in our sanctuary, preached an inspiring sermon on God's call, not to be thankful for everything, but thankful in everything in the assurance God is with us faithfully to get us through. I was bursting my buttons with pride at the lavish refreshments and gracious hospitality extended by those who hosted the fellowship time following the worship service.

Another opportunity to bid fond farewell to Bishop Wright and his wife, Holly, as our Bishop prepares for retirement, will be this coming Thursday night, December 1, 7-9 PM, at a reception in their honor at Christ Episcopal Church, 200 North Church Street, in Milford. I will be attending.

Speaking of Bishop Wright, St. John the Baptist welcomed him for his last visit to us on Sunday, October 30, with a wonderful luncheon following Mass. Again, sincere thanks to all who worked very hard to make it so special! Praise God, the Bishop received ten new members into our congregation that day! We warmly welcome them to our fellowship.

During December we will again bring ourselves the great blessing of "adopting" a needy child from the Christmas angel tree in the Parish Hall and purchasing a gift, or gifts, for her or him so that they might have a happy Christmas. Also, boxes of instant mashed potatoes and jars of gravy will be collected for the essential ministry of feeding the hungry God sends to the Milton Community Food Pantry.

Our historic church has again been invited to be part of the Milton Christmas House Tour on Saturday, December 10, from 2:30 until 6:30 PM, the only church in Milton to be included in the tour. Our beautiful

sanctuary will be decorated for Advent rather than Christmas, with a flyer to be given out that will focus on the purpose and the beauty of the Advent season.

Mark your calendars! Christmas Eve Masses will be celebrated on December 24, at 7 and 11 PM, with a carol-sing beginning at 10:30. If you have never seen our church adorned for Christmas, you will be thrilled by the beauty.

On the first Sunday in January, this year January 1, New Year's Day, as has become our custom, we will celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany Mass, when the Church commemorates the arrival of the three kings to adore the Christ Child and to present their gifts.

Also in January, on Tuesday, January 10, our much anticipated Bible study will begin, at 7 PM for an hour. At this first gathering we will discuss which day and time might be better for future meetings, as well as what to study.

Good news! The project of installing the new roof on our buildings, re-siding the Parish Hall, and covering with wood the metal I-beams and posts inside the Parish Hall is very close to completion. Your enthusiastic monetary support for financing this much needed work is most appreciated.

Sunday, November 20, was our Pledge Sunday. If you have yet to offer your pledge to God's work at St. John the Baptist, we will still receive it gladly and thankfully!

The Landscape Committee recently planted 1,100 bulbs on our grounds. What a glorious display we will enjoy with the coming of Spring! It can't come soon enough for me!

Have you checked out St. John the Baptist's Facebook page recently? If not, you're in for a surprise. There are lots of good and current congregational happenings being featured there. Please, please "like" us, so that our church news can be spread more widely.

This Sunday, November 27, a new year of grace begins with the First Sunday in Advent, the Church's New Year's Day. The seasonal color is blue, reflective of the deep blue of the pre-dawn sky this time of year, symbolic of the hope of a new day and our sure hope in the coming of the Savior at Bethlehem, the promise of his coming again to fully establish God's Kingdom, and his coming here and now in his Holy Word proclaimed and his Holy Supper received to feed our souls. As many of you know, Advent is one on my favorite seasons of the Church year. I love that amid the hectic and stressful secular preparations that cram our days in December, the Church bids us to slow down, catch our breath, quiet down, be calm, and take the time to prepare ourselves for God's gift of himself in the Baby born. Advent calls us to believe that celebrating the coming of Christ is worth preparing ourselves for spiritually.

Happy New Year!,

Father Tom