



The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist
Post Office Box 441 / 307 Federal Street
Milton, Delaware 19968



www.stjohnthebaptistmilton.org

The Rev. Thomas M. White, Rector

Thanksgiving 2018

Dear Member and Friend of the St. John the Baptist Family,

I hope thanksgiving is filling your minds, hearts and prayers. Certainly it is for me. For you have given me countless reasons for thanksgiving!

- Twenty new members received into our fellowship by Bp. Brown when he visited October 7...thanksgiving!
- Our new choir comprised of ten talented and committed singers, rehearsing weekly in preparation for their first major offering, the Advent Lessons and Carols service...thanksgiving!
- One hundred and fifty-nine Christmas stockings, with oodles of toiletries and other gifts to fill them, sent to our soldiers sacrificing for us and protecting our freedoms far from home at the holidays...thanksgiving!
- A Sunday School of which we can be proud and the children who come so faithfully to learn about Jesus and their place in Christ's church...thanksgiving!
- The Parish Thanksgiving Dinner this past Saturday, when close to fifty of us celebrated our oneness in Christ and savored an abundance of delicious food, it was Spirit-filled, what a party...thanksgiving!
- And Deacon Paula, who has brought energy, commitment, and a myriad of visions and ideas to renew and enrich our life together...thanksgiving!

I could continue for many pages, but you get the idea! Yet reasons for thanksgivings continue:

- Let me take this opportunity to say a heartfelt "thank you" for your response to our stewardship drive on Pledge Sunday, December 2, when you are asked to express your commitment and faithfulness to the ministries of this parish in pledging your monetary gifts and your offerings of time and talent for Christ's work.
- Plan on attending the aforementioned Advent service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 2, at 3 p.m. You will be inspired by the beautiful anthems, duets, and solos prepared by our new choir. Also, the accomplished violinist, Jacob Colby, will be performing! You'll be happy you came.

- When Deacon Paula came among us, she envisioned a weekday worship service, maybe one a month to begin, perhaps becoming weekly, coupled with a service healing and anointing with holy oil. Well, as a start, the deacon and I invite you to Advent Evening Prayer, Tuesdays during Advent, December 4, 11, and 18, 6:30 and concluding at 7. And for our members who aren't out at night, there will be Morning Prayer the next day, Wednesdays in Advent, 9 to 9:30 a.m., December 5, 12, and 19. The brief homily will focus on three saints who are commemorated during Advent: St. Nicholas, St. Lucy, and St. John of the Cross. Deacon Paula and I pray your Advent observance will be deepened by your worship at these services. Please come.
- How grateful I am for the bakers who have said "yes!" to providing a host of cookies for our first Cookie Sale on Saturday, December 8, 9-12, open to the community, to raise funds for our many outreach ministries. Come to choose from many varieties of cookies, sold by the pound, for gift-giving or simply to be enjoyed by you and your family and friends.
- One of our beloved outreach programs is the "Christmas Angel Gift Tree," when you are asked to be Santa by providing gifts for children in need. We're asking that you join a team of fellow members, each team adopting one of ten families, gifting each family with a food basket and gifts for each child. By working together, we can coordinate to assure that each child receives an equal measure of presents. Making a merry Christmas for ten families is quite a challenge, but no problem, you have proven many times that the St. John the Baptist family is up to any challenge!
- Be sure to read Deacon Paula's Thanksgiving letter accompanying this. We have so many reasons to be thankful!

Now for the number one reason my heart overflows with thanksgiving...you! And so, as has become my tradition, on Thanksgiving morning, this year at my cousin's home on Cape Cod, mug of coffee in hand, I will open the current parish directory, look at your names, one by one, see your face, think of what makes you unique, special, and pray my thanksgiving to God for you. And when I'm done, I will know so fully why I love serving the family of St. John the Baptist...you!

My profound wish to you and yours for an especially happy Thanksgiving!

In Christ's love,

Fr. Tom