



# The Light

A monthly newsletter for

St. Augustine's in-the-Woods The Episcopal Church serving Whidbey Island.



Rev. Nigel Taber-Hamilton, *Rector*  
Rev. William Burnett, *Rector Emeritus*  
Rev. William Seth Adams, *Priest Associate*  
Rev. M. Fletcher Davis, *Priest Associate*  
Rev. Amy Donohue-Adams, *Priest Associate*  
Rev. Julie Bird, *Deacon*

## St. Augustine's Weekly Services

### **SUNDAY**

**8:00 am** Eucharist Rite I  
followed by coffee and Adult Forums

**10:30 am** Eucharist Rite II  
with music, church school & child care  
followed by coffee hour

### **MONDAY**

**5:30 pm** Solemn Evensong  
(with incense)

### **TUESDAY**

**7:00pm** Quiet Time Meditation

### **WEDNESDAY**

**10:00 am** Eucharist and Holy Unction

## **DECEMBER 2011**

**December 1**

**6PM Program:**

**"Prayers Over Bread & Wine"**

**December 3**

**ECW Advent Tea**

**December 4**

**2PM "Family Fun Day"**

**Making Advent Wreaths**

**December 18**

**6PM Program:**

**"Prayers Over Bread & Wine"**

**December 10**

**10AM "Safeguarding God's Children" Training**

**December 15**

**6PM Program:**

**"Prayers Over Bread & Wine"**

**December 23**

**9AM "Greening" of the Church  
for Christmas Services**

**\* \* \***

**December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE**

**5PM Carols**

**5:30 Choral Holy Eucharist Rite II**

**9:30PM Carols**

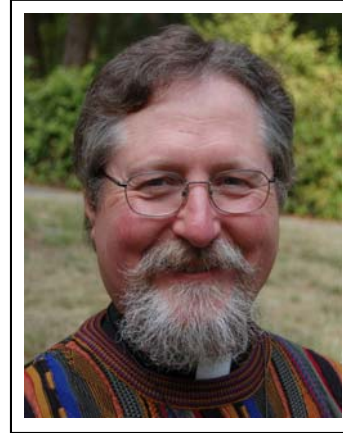
**10:00 Choral Holy Eucharist Rite II**

**December 25 CHRISTMAS DAY**

**10:30AM Spoken Holy Eucharist  
Rite II**



## *From the Rector*



As you will all know by now, our Organist and Music Director, Marion Anderson, will be leaving us after Christmas. This is an update on where we are, and also an invitation to a conversation about the future of our music program.

Firstly, we have made arrangements for a team of musicians to provide music on an interim basis. We're seeking to expand this team a little. Most musicians we've contacted don't want to be tied to providing music every Sunday. We're therefore looking at a more diverse musical model. Some play the organ, some play the piano, some are singers. So you can see that this will have to be handled with some forethought to make it work.

Here are some thoughts discussed by the vestry:

- Our island's rich resources offer the potential for a wide variety of musical styles.
- Liturgical music requires careful selection and presentation.
- The Episcopal Church has a rich tradition of music.
- We have a wonderful organ
- Liturgical music is available for many instruments.
- It's becoming much harder to find organists.
- It's actually easier to find choral directors and pianists
- Too much variety might be too rich.

There are certainly many more things to be said about liturgical music at St. Augustine's! And we would like to hear them. So this is the second thing: your invitation to come on Thursday, December 8 at 5:00 p.m. in the undercroft.

We'll finish at 6:00 p.m. and if you want to stay for the Formation Program (Bill Adams' on everything you wanted to know about the Episcopal Church) you're welcome to do so.

A sign-up Sheet is in the Narthex.

Grace and peace to you,

Nigel



# *Christian Formation at St. Augustine's*

*by Shantina Steele*



What is Godly Play?

Last month I shared with you the definition of Christian Formation as defined by the Episcopal Church. We learned that Christian Formation is a lifelong action. Over these next few months I would like to share with you what is happening in our youth programs here at St. Augustine's. I am going to begin this month by sharing our Godly Play program with you.

Godly Play is a Montessori-based program developed by Jerome Berryman, an Episcopal priest educated at the University of Kansas, Tulsa University School of Law, and Princeton Theological Seminary. Jerome also holds a diploma from the Center for Advanced Montessori Studies in Bergamo, Italy.

The Godly Play approach is quite different from the traditional model which many of us are familiar with; the teacher tells the children what they need to learn. *Our goal with Godly Play is not just to keep children entertained and busy, our goal is to guide the children in discovering for themselves the art of Christian language – parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action – helping them become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives. Godly Play respects the innate spirituality of children and encourages curiosity and imagination to understand how each of the stories of God's people connects with the child's own experience and relationship with God. Godly Play is a non-coercive way to encourage people to move into larger dimensions of belief and faith through wondering questions and open-ended response time.* ([www.godlyplay.org](http://www.godlyplay.org))

Our Godly Play program occurs on Sunday mornings during the 10:30 service. Two of our committed and gracious volunteers begin the class by welcoming the children. The volunteer acting as the Door Person will stop and greet each child as they arrive. The purpose of this is not only to create a personal connection with each child but to help the child prepare himself to “enter the sanctuary”. This action calls the child to prepare for entering sacred time, similar to what most adults do as they enter the doors to the sanctuary upstairs ready to begin church. After being greeted by the Door Person, the child will go to retrieve their sitting mat to make a space for themselves ready to hear the story.

At this point the Storyteller will greet the children and begin the lesson. The lessons follow the church year and include the Sacred Stories of the Old Testament, the Liturgical Actions of our tradition, and the Parables of Jesus. The story telling is accompanied with the play action of the Montessori style props, simple yet beautiful wooden figures, developed for the program.

After the lesson, the children are invited to “wonder” about the story. Wondering questions are suggested such as “I wonder if there is any part of this story that we could take out and still have the same story” or “I wonder where you are in this story.” The leaders do not try to guide the children to come up with the “right” answer, understanding that even if the child doesn't speak the process that is working within him or her is “right”.

Next the children are invited to “work”. During this process the children decide what they would like to work on for that day and are provided with the raw materials to be swept away by the deep and personal creative play process.

The final action in the Godly Play class is gratitude, prayer and feast. “It is the intent of the feast in Godly Play to begin to build up the experience on which the words of Holy Communion are to be based. What is going on in the circle during the feast is that children are invited into a ritual of sharing love and concern for each other. Simple food and drink are the

symbols used to express this concern. It is communion that is holy.” (*Teaching Godly Play*, Berryman, Jerome W.) In our Godly Play classroom we share water, and bunny crackers. The children prepare the feast by passing out cups, pouring water and making sure each person has crackers and a napkin. We then settle ourselves in a circle and take turns giving thanks, either silently or aloud, and share our feast.

As you can see the form of the Godly Play class very closely follows our adult pattern of church going on upstairs; readings and lesson, liturgy and joining with each other in praise and thanksgiving as we come together at Christ’s table. “The point of Godly Play is to learn the art of how to use the Christian language system to cope with the limits to our *being* and *knowing*. In the process God’s presence also becomes manifest. Christian language provides the way to identify the experience of God’s presence as well as to name and express it.” (*Teaching Godly Play*, Berryman, Jerome W.)

Now that you all know a bit more about what the children are doing in their classroom while you are taking part in the service upstairs I invite you to consider engaging the children in conversation and reflection about their Godly Play activities. This action will allow all of us to support the growth and formation of the children and establish intergenerational relationships to confirm for them that we are all a family and we care about and want to know each other. Ask them about the stories or what they are working on; ask them about their favorite part of the Godly Play class. If you would like to learn more about Godly Play, come join us for a class some time!

Lastly I would like to thank our wonderful volunteers, David Close, Lynda Anderson, Brian Reid, Dennis Gregoire, Amy Picco and Dick Hall, who have come together to learn the program and are doing a fantastic job of showing their care and love for Godly Play and for the formation of these young ones in the way of Christ. Thank you!!

Upcoming Youth and Adult Formation Events:

### **December 2011**

1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00pm-8:30pm – Advent Program w/Light Supper: *Prayers over Bread and Wine* Led by Rev. Dr. William Seth Adams: During this program we will look at the Church's practice of praying over bread and wine from very early times. Additionally we will consider the prayers we pray each Sunday. The aim will be to deepen and enrich our engagement in these prayers.



3<sup>rd</sup> @ 10am-2pm – Liturgical Ministries Training: We invite youth and adults involved, or wishing to become involved, in the following ministries to attend: acolyte, worship leader, Eucharistic minister, reader. The workshop, led by Rev. Dr. William Seth Adams, Dr. Nancy Ruff, and Br. David McClellan and Br. Richard Tussey, is designed get us all “on the same page” – to provide the appropriate training so that everyone serving will know the liturgical customs of our parish. Ultimately we will make such training a required part of serving in these important ministries – here’s your chance to get in on the ground floor!

4<sup>th</sup> @ 2pm - Family Fun Night: Advent Wreath Making

4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> @ 9:15-10:00am – Adult Forum: *Jesus Comes into Our World: The Incarnation According To The Gospels* led by Rev. Tom Johnson: The Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John have stories of Jesus entrance into our human world. We will explore these stories during the first three Sundays in December in the Adult Forum. Bring a Bible and an Advent spirit!

## December 2011 continued



10<sup>th</sup> @ 9am-2pm – Safe Guarding God’s Children Training: This program is a diocesan requirement for all those who share their gifts of ministry with our children. If you have not yet earned your certificate of completion and are currently working with the youth of our parish this is your opportunity to attend this training locally.

18<sup>th</sup> @ 9:45-10:15am – Lector Training: Nancy Ruff teaches the fine points of being a Lector. This training is open to all adult and youth lectors and to those interested in learning more about this ministry.

## January 2012



1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> @ 9:15-10:00am – Adult Forum

12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> @ 6:00-8:30pm – Epiphany Program w/Light Supper: *Embracing An Adult Faith* Video Series and Discussion Led by Rev. Nigel Taber-Hamilton & Shantina Steele: Author and Bible scholar Marcus Borg invites us to join him in revisiting Christianity’s most fundamental questions: Who is God? What does salvation mean? What place does Jesus hold in contemporary Christian faith?

15<sup>th</sup> @ 9:45-10:15am – Acolyte & Worship Leader Training: David McClellan and Richard Tussey invite current Acolytes and Worship Leaders as well as those interested in learning more about this ministry to rehearse how we serve the clergy during the liturgy.

22<sup>nd</sup> @ 5:00-7:00pm – Family Fun Night



## *Christmas Gifts for Mary's Place*

**A basket for the gifts is on a table in the narthex.**

We will be collecting new hats, scarves, gloves, mittens and socks for women and children, as we have each year. A wooden Christmas tree will have additional gift suggestions taped to the tree. They are 4 shoe vouchers for \$15. each.

The checks should be made out to **Church of Mary Magdalene** and placed in the red leather box in the Mary's Place basket.

Gifts for children to give to their mothers are on slips taped to tree. Please take the ornament with you and return the gift to the basket by

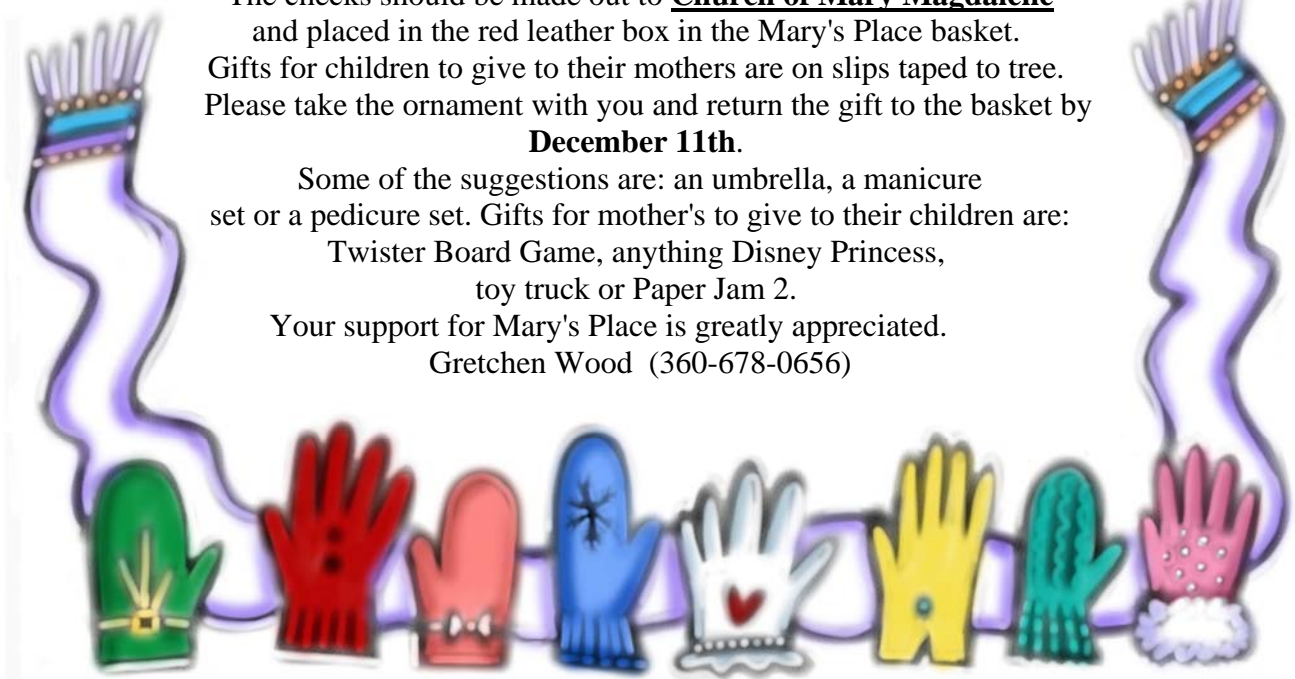
**December 11th.**

Some of the suggestions are: an umbrella, a manicure set or a pedicure set. Gifts for mother's to give to their children are:

Twister Board Game, anything Disney Princess, toy truck or Paper Jam 2.

Your support for Mary's Place is greatly appreciated.

Gretchen Wood (360-678-0656)



## Adult Forum Schedule - December



Advent season is finally upon us, and for Christians it brings with it a sense of euphoria, optimism, and happiness. I am not speaking from a secular perspective, but from a spiritual one. We marvel at and delight in the Christmas story and the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. Through his birth, subsequent ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection we have been given the greatest of Christmas gifts, our salvation. Speaking of gifts, the 8th Day Committee has added a special surprise to your Christmas stocking this year. Dr. Tom Johnson, our esteemed, resident theologian, will present a three part series titled "The Coming of Jesus-The Incarnation According to the Gospels." He will show us the 3 different Gospel views of the Advent of our Lord and then have us study them. We will be focusing on the Incarnation according to Matthew, Luke, and John (remember Mark did not write about the birth of Jesus). So bring your Bible and Advent spirit. This is the perfect subject matter for a meaningful, timely Bible study.



Specific forum dates, subject matter, and presenter\* are provided below:

4 December - Jesus Coming According to St. Matthew.

11 December - Jesus Coming According to St. Luke.

18 December - Jesus Coming According to St. John.

25 December - Christmas Day, No Forum is Scheduled.

\* Tom Johnson will host and present all 3 December forums.



## From the Parish Nurse

by Wendy Close

Deep breathing through the holidays.

At an adult forum a few weeks ago Janie Keilwitz, a registered nurse at Whidbey General Hospital, discussed these healthy benefits of abdominal deep breathing.

The root word for breath is "spirit"

Abdominal deep breathing naturally lowers your heart rate, your blood pressure and your respiratory rate.

Breathing in this manner brings more oxygen to the body.

Relaxation is enhanced

The immune system is supported.

How to deep breath from the abdomen.

Think about keeping the shoulders down.

When you inhale drop your diaphragm and let your abdomen move out.

Breathe in for the count of 2

Pause for 1 – 2 seconds for full oxygenation.

Breathe out to the count of 4. Your exhalation is twice as long as inhalation.

During the holiday season this abdominal deep breathing will help keep your stress level to a minimum. Combine it with meditating on a single positive word and you experience a renewed sense of peace.



# *Mission Sunday Offering for December is C..A.D.A. Citizens Against Domestic Abuse.*

*The following was submitted by Margie Porter, Executive Director of CADA*

CADA has served victims of domestic and sexual violence in Island County since 1979. This past year CADA staff provided services to 949 women, men and children. These services include a 24-hour hotline, free, confidential assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, elder abuse, rape, sexual harassment, stalking, child abuse, child sexual abuse or neglect and other forms of interpersonal violence. During the past year we provided shelter to 20 women and 14 children for a total of 1,551 bed nights at Marjie's House, our emergency shelter in Oak Harbor.



We continue to make our vision of ending violence a priority by working with our youth to change their behaviors and attitudes. Casey Scott-Mitchell was hired in August as South Whidbey Youth & Community Education to provide services in the South Whidbey Schools. She'll be working with middle and high school staff to provide presentations on safety, healthy relationships, bullying, including cyber-bullying, dating relationships and other forms of violence. For the younger children, we have a puppet theater dealing with bullying, healthy friendships and how to respect one another. She's also available to provide presentations are to community organizations/agencies and churches.

Through our 7-week parenting classes using the "Positive Discipline" curriculum, parents are given skills and tools to be better parents so children will have a safer environment. Classes are free, available to all community members.

The majority of CADA services are funded through grants. However, we are facing our biggest challenge this year due to the deficit in our State Budget. Additionally, there are limited funds to provide personal assistance to our clients. Then there's the difficulty with our economy. We've seen an increase in families needing assistance with the costs of daily living. This past year we assisted clients with gas, groceries, clothing, school supplies, and transportation costs to help clients and children flee the area. We do not give cash to our clients and only provide these services through the use of vouchers, gift cards or direct billing from the service provider.

In these tough economic times, we know giving is a sacrifice and we are truly grateful for your membership's generosity, love and support. In the coming year, we will overcome our financial challenges and it is our commitment to continue to provide services to victims and children and work with our youth as we continue our efforts to end violence in our community. That's a promise.

There are no words or ways to thank you for your support these past years and for your continued support. On behalf of our staff and Board of Directors, THANK YOU!

Margie Porter, Executive Director

*This year, more than ever, CADA needs our help. Please be as generous as possible with your donations this December.*

*Thank you, Carolyn Castleberry, MSO committee member*



# Episcopal Church Women (E.C.W.)

by Shirley Bauder

To all women who call St. Augustine's In The Woods their church home.

Did you know that you are a member of the E.C.W. just by attending services here?

Do you also know that we are probably the only active E.C.W. group in the diocese?

For those who are not familiar with us. We are a group of women who raise money to help the church and help several charitable groups in the community.



We have a lot of fun planning the **Christmas Bazaar** and the **Trash and Treasure Sale**, which fund most of our charitable donations for the year and help us contribute to the kitchen and building fund.

Did you know that the E.C.W. **paid for our beautiful new kitchen** with some of these funds?

We also organize and put together **the parish dinner, church picnic** and most social gatherings at St Augustine's. We arrange **receptions for memorial services** and other functions held at the church.



Those of us who are active members would really like to keep our group active and vital.

Our membership seems to be dwindling down each year. Some of our members have passed away or are not in good health but it seems that many of our members are just not attending regularly anymore.

We are trying to make the meetings shorter and our program directors have engaged some very interesting speakers this year.



**Please try to come to the meetings,  
or let us know why you are not attending anymore,  
maybe we can make changes to get you back with us!**

**The regular E.C.W. meeting is on the first Wednesday of the month.  
We all bring a sandwich to share and we take turns making soup.  
We meet at 11:00 A.M.**

We would really like to see some new members join us in the new year.





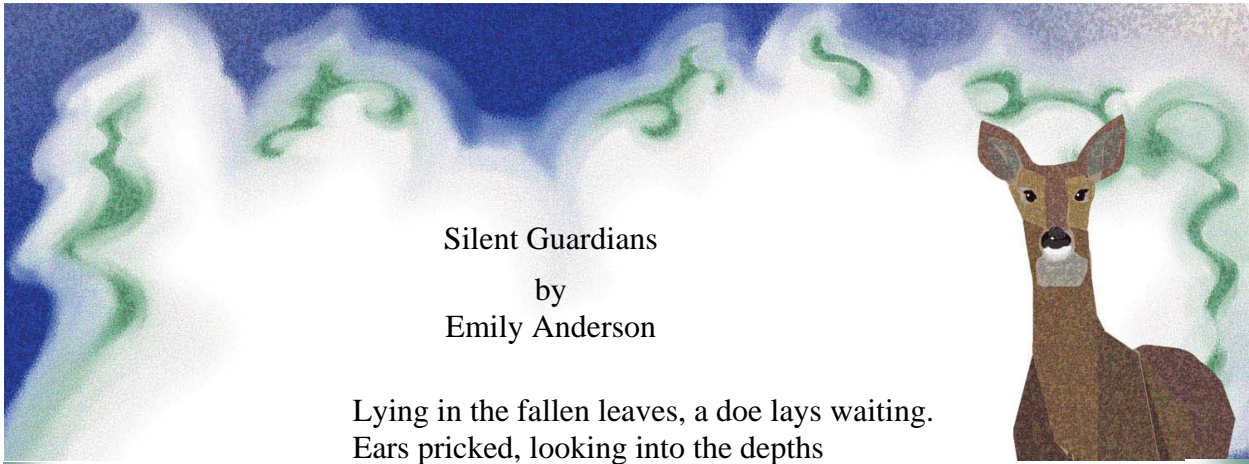


## *St. Augustine's Greening Committee*

### **A Merry Waste Wise Christmas 20 Steps to a Waste-Wise Christmas**

1. "SNUB" - Say No to Unwanted Bags. Try to take reusable shopping bags or a basket with you and decide whether or not you really need a new bag for every purchase.
2. Compost vegetable peelings and food scraps except meat, seafood and dairy products.
3. Try to buy Christmas decorations that can be used for several years.
4. Close the loop – buy recycled Christmas cards, wrapping paper, tags, diaries and calendars.
5. Avoid buying presents with excess packaging.
6. Make your own cards and presents if possible with reusable materials – it could be a lot more fun and more personal. Have a go at making your own gift labels by recycling last year's Christmas cards.
7. When shopping, make a list! Don't buy unwanted presents! You may be creating unnecessary waste. Before you buy, think whether it will be a welcome gift.
8. If you receive a present that you don't like, why not give it to the charity shop and give someone else a chance to enjoy it rather than throwing it away.
9. Email electronic Christmas cards – saving money, paper and the environment.
10. Don't waste paper – wrap creatively! Use tea towels, cloth, wool, ribbon, reusable bags or Christmas stockings.
11. Reuse old Christmas wrapping paper (and open your presents carefully!).
12. Recycle paper, cardboard and recyclable containers from your Christmas cheer (glass bottles and jars, soft drink bottles and other recyclable plastics, aluminum and steel cans) through curbside collections.
13. Recycle your old Christmas cards by taking them to local recycle centers such as Bayview Recycle, Island Recycle, or Coupeville Recycle.
14. Buy 'live' Christmas trees which still have soil around the roots ready for potting. After Christmas you can re-plant it in your garden. Artificial trees can be re-used year after year.
15. Choose gifts and products which are long lasting, repairable, refillable, reusable, or recyclable when they eventually reach the end of their life.
16. Avoid purchasing items which are non-functional and gimmicky. Avoid buying gifts which need batteries.
17. If you are throwing a party, avoid using disposable items such as cups, plates and napkins. Why not rent glasses?
18. If goods are packaged, choose items which are made from recycled materials, and that can be easily recycled by you after use, such as glass and paper products.
19. Christmas gifts don't necessarily have to be material items. Treat somebody to a day out, buy theatre tickets, open a children's savings account, make a donation to charity, or arrange a year's membership in a society such as The Sierra Club, or a subscription to a magazine such as National Geographic..
20. Plan meals wisely. Think ahead when buying food and plan ahead for leftovers. This will help minimize the amount of food you throw away, and avoid wasting money.





Silent Guardians  
by  
Emily Anderson

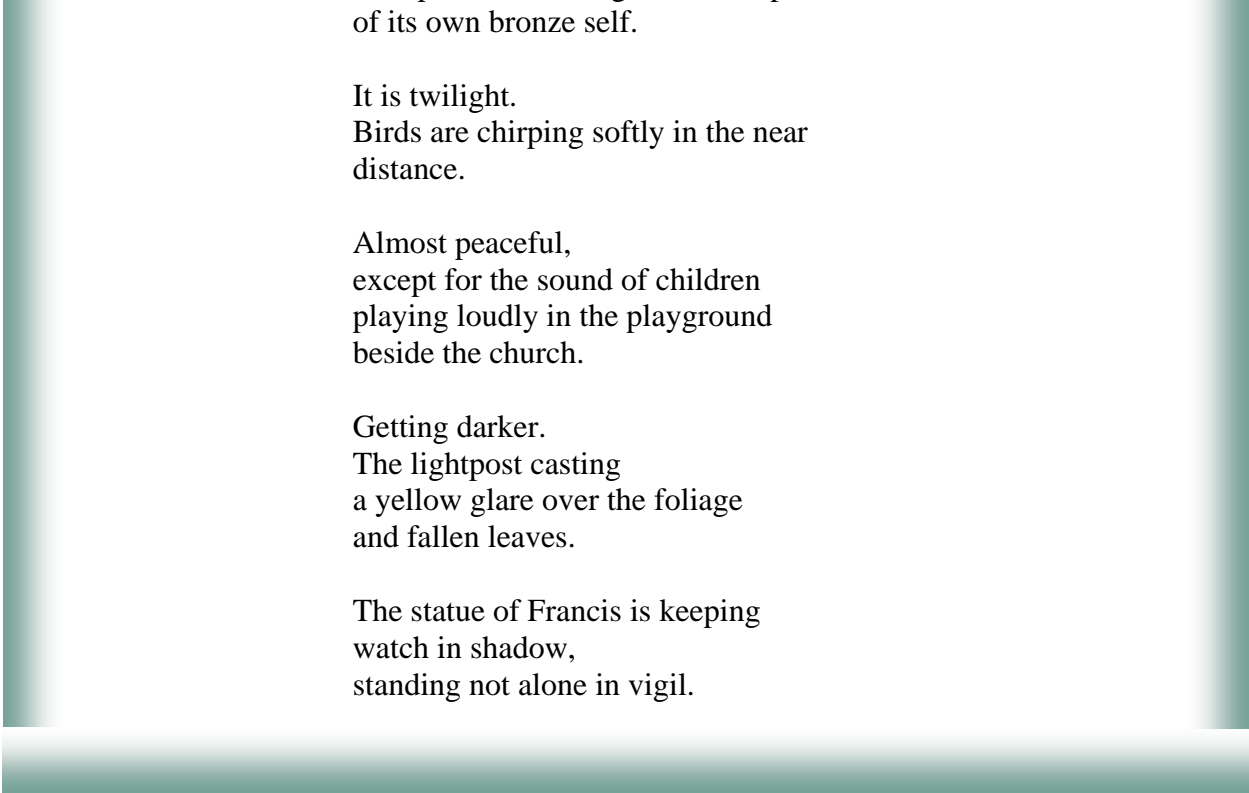
Lying in the fallen leaves, a doe lays waiting.  
Ears pricked, looking into the depths  
of its own bronze self.

It is twilight.  
Birds are chirping softly in the near  
distance.

Almost peaceful,  
except for the sound of children  
playing loudly in the playground  
beside the church.

Getting darker.  
The lightpost casting  
a yellow glare over the foliage  
and fallen leaves.

The statue of Francis is keeping  
watch in shadow,  
standing not alone in vigil.



*Katie Reid in "All The King's Women"*

"All The King's Women" is a series of short plays which describe the stages in the life of Elvis Presley through the eyes of women he touched in some manner.



"Tupelo"  
A story about the sales woman who sold Elvis



"When Nixon met Elvis"  
A story about Elvis' visit to the White House.



"Pink Cadillacs and God"  
About how Elvis equated cars with having a religious experience.



### *The Eighth Annual Whidbey Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope*

This year's vigil attracted 185 persons to St. Augustine's. The Nave was filled to overflowing and approximately 20 individuals participated by closed circuit TV in the Narthex.

We began with congregational singing led by Trinity Lutheran's Karl Olsen, followed by a cleansing of the sacred space with a First Nation smudging ceremony performed by Rachel Taber-Hamilton and Shantina Steele. Following readings from the sacred scriptures of several faith traditions (Jewish, Christian, and Muslim) and a musical rendition of the Buddhist Heart Sutra by the J Bees of Whidbey, Diarin of Tahoma One Drop Zen Buddhist Monastery led several Buddhist sutra chants.

The central part of the vigil was a presentation by the Interfaith Amigos – a Jewish rabbi, a Muslim imam, and a Christian minister – who shared the commonalities found among the Abrahamic faiths and all authentic religions. These commonalities or core teachings of each faith tradition are Oneness of God and people (Judaism), Unconditional Love (Christianity and Compassion (Islam).

Religion goes astray, they said, when the core teachings are violated. The primary source for the abuse of religion is from those who make claims of exclusivity. In Judaism the exclusive claim is that the Jews are the "Chosen People." The Christian claim of exclusivity is that Jesus is the only way to salvation. Muslims claim that the Qu'ran corrects the Jewish and Christian scripture and is that the Prophet Muhammad is the "seal of prophets." Exclusivity creates the basis on which differences are emphasized and those who have different views as "Other". This in turn leads to misunderstandings, prejudice, hatred and conflict. Exclusivity allows religion to be used for violence rather than as collaboration in seeking peace.

The Amigos offered an alternate narrative to these exclusive claims by stating the Jews are chosen for the way of the Torah, Christians for the way of Jesus and Muslims for the way of the Qu'ran. Removing exclusive claims allows a centering on commonalities.

In addition to exclusivity Amigos defined three other markers – violence and acceptance of war, inequality of men and women, and homophobia – as deviations from core teachings of each faith. These four deviations or untruths allow religion to go astray.

The Amigos most recent book, *Religion Gone Astray*, will soon be available from the parish library.

### *Reflections on the evolution of the Interfaith Vigil of Peace and Hope*

The first Whidbey interfaith vigil was held in August of 2004. The idea of an interfaith peace vigil originated with the Coupeville "corner people." In September of 2002, as the storms of war gathered, a corner witness in Coupeville began with a single person holding a sign questioning the coming wars. He was soon joined by many others and a community developed. The "corner people" were primarily "spiritual but not religious" but we also included Christian, Jewish and Buddhist people of faith. Loosely organized as the Coupeville Peace and Reconciliation (CPR) they did a number of remarkable things. One of the first ventures was the Interfaith Vigil held at St. Augustine's. The vigil led to the formation in November of 2004 of the St. Augustine's Episcopal Peace Fellowship to be an advocate for peace and justice within the parish and community. Finally 8 years after the first interfaith vigil The United States is leaving Iraq by a time certain. Although The American occupation of Iraq is ending and our country is still involved in a military action in Afghanistan that lacks a definite withdrawal date. "When will they ever learn?" (*Pete Seeger*) With over 50% of U.S. discretionary spending dedicated to the war machine the military industrial complex is alive and well. A witness of peace and justice is much needed at a time when violent domination is seen by too many as a solution, but to quote a Joan Baez song "I believe that one fine day the sons and daughters of Abraham will lay down their swords and shields ..."





# UNITED THANK OFFERING

The Ingathering of the blue  
United Thank Offering “mite”  
boxes will be Sunday  
December 11, 2011.

Remember  
every cent will be matched  
up to \$500  
so your “thankfulness”  
will be doubled!

There will be a special basket  
at the baptismal fount  
for depositing your box.

If you make out a check  
please be sure to “note”  
that it is for U.T.O.

## *Birthdays & Anniversaries in December*

- 4 = Shirley Erb's Birthday
- 6 = Patsy Colton's Birthday
- 7 = Cleveland Riley's Birthday  
Colin Stewart's Birthday
- 9 = Pete Snyder's Birthday
- 10 = Albert Rose's Birthday
- 11 = Laura Valente's Birthday
- 16 = Grant & Jody Heiken's Anniversary
- 18 = Fred Ludtke's Birthday  
Haley McConnaughey's Birthday
- 21 = Joe Beck's Birthday  
Pandora Halstead's Birthday  
Paulette Thompson's Birthday
- 22 = Bill Carruthers & Nancy Ruff's  
Anniversary  
Elaine Ludtke's Birthday  
Meade Brown & Laura Valente's  
Anniversary
- 28 = Michelle Vaughan's Birthday
- 30 = Hannah McConnaughey's Birthday



# *Children's Hospice Newsletter*

Dear friends:

What is the autumn? It is coffee with cinnamon; maple leaves, colorful, like a children's drawing; and warm sweet-buns. But autumn is also a time of farewell to the summer; it's the time of the first cold and involuntary sad thoughts.

Our autumn was also very different, both joyful and difficult. In October, many events occurred in the Children's Hospice, both funny and sad ones. All of these events could not leave indifferent those who took part in them.

On October 27-29 in Minsk, the 5th International Conference "Children's palliative care in Eastern Europe" took place. Sharing experiences with colleagues from other cities and countries is a necessary and important part of our work, so some of our workers participated in it. Sergey Predvzhkin, Medical Director of Children's Hospice, presented his report on the activities of the St. Petersburg Children's Hospice. The establishment of an Association of Children's Palliative Care in Eastern Europe was actively discussed at the conference with our participation.

Since early October we have cared, in the Inpatient Facility, for 4 children in very severe condition. They suffer from cancer. All of them receive special support and attention from our staff. A scheme for pain-fighting therapy has been worked out for each child; psychological support for children and their parents is being provided. We strive to give free rein to every feeling and thought of these children. We want to fulfill their dreams, to give them moments of joy and a feeling of fullness of life.

We deeply appreciate all the good wizards, who help us in this. A dream that comes true is a proven remedy, a second breath.

Masha V. wanted to meet with Daria Dontsova - a writer whose books helped her to endure all the difficulties of treatment. Darya Mikhailovna, not being able to come promptly to St. Petersburg, called Masha on the phone. She suggested corresponding by e-mail, calling, and meeting in December. The girl felt very happy and is looking forward to meeting.

Little Zakhar K. generously shared his dreams. And they all came true!

A cake in the form of a funny car from the movie "Cars" rolled up to him... Santa Claus and the Snow Maiden came to him with a rustle of autumn leaves this year. Earlier than to all the other kids! They brought him the railroad, which Zakhar wrote about in his letter.

In addition, a very cheerful and kind clownness comes to see him - every time he calls her. They have their own magical secrets, which they do not tell to anyone else.



Kolya N. is very consistent in his wishes. He is interested in everything related to cats, his favorite animals. Many different breeds visited him in the hospice. They were friendly, willing to communicate and empathize and, of course, they loved to cuddle!

The fourth of our severe patients is Zhenya Z. He is quite an adult; he is already 17 years old. He came to St. Petersburg from his native Stavropol in South Russia and has been treated in St. Petersburg for more than a year. Between treatments, Zhenya lived with his mother in our Family Center in the village of Ol'gino.

In September, Zhenya felt worse again and was taken to a hospital. Then he was discharged home. Despite the desire of Zhenya to go home, his mother realized that only in our hospice can he receive the necessary assistance. That's why, Zhenya has been treated in our Inpatient facility since mid-October.

Even before his illness, Zhenya was fond of the music performed by the German metal band 'Rammstein.' Anything that reflects the symbolism of the band, seems valuable to him. But he could not even imagine that he would receive a CD autographed by all Rammstein artists, brought to him personally from the Moscow fan club of this band!



One more of Zhenya's dream was fulfilled. He wanted to see a live owl. A visitor came to Zhenya right in the ward, where he lives. Looking at the bird, it was impossible for Zhenya to suppress his smiles.

In October, the themed weeks - so beloved by our small patients - continued in Children's Hospice Inpatient Facility. There was an Animals week, an Autumn Week and a Cartoons Week.



During these themed weeks, various concerts, lessons on making different articles, workshops, excursions, and interesting meetings took place.

Quite an unusual experience for the children and parents was a master-class on carving of vegetables and fruits. It was held by a longtime friend of the Children's Hospice, chef of international class, Alexey Nagornov. Ordinary things were turned before the eyes of the children into works of art, which it would be a pity to touch. But the children could safely eat all fruits that "failed" or were not used. Everyone, who took part in this master class, felt like a real artist.

We are pleased to inform you that there is a new, somewhat unusual, doctor among the staff of Children's Hospice. Thanks to his charisma and ability to please, our young patients immediately grew fond of him. However, he still did not disclose the secret of what his name is. Or perhaps the children themselves would think of an appropriate name for him?

The program "Dr. Doll" was developed several years ago by Alexander Emmanuilovich Gref for psychological treatment of seriously ill children's behavior, to reduce stress steadily emerging with long-term illnesses, and to generate additional motivation to recover.



Dr. Doll is a large, openly operated doll depicting a funny and good doctor-clown. The program "Dr. Doll" has been successfully implemented in children's hospitals in Moscow and now we have our own wonderful "doctor" and 'he' became a part of Children's Hospice socio-psychological rehabilitation program.

During the work of the Children's Hospice Family Center in the village of Ol'gino, we could see that many children, who have successfully completed treatment of their main disease, have a variety of complications caused by this treatment. We believe it is an important task for us to look for possibilities of rehabilitation or any other additional treatment in medical institutions of the city for such children. The main objective of these activities is to return the child to a full life. All the more so, because most children cannot get this kind of help at home - in the remote regions of the country.



One of the first persons who proposed and implemented such a program for rehabilitation of our patient, Sasha from Kaliningrad, was Alexander Mushkin, a Ph.D., professor of St. Petersburg Institute of Phthisiopulmonology. After that, he counseled many of our patients. Now we daily bring a girl, Nino, from Vladikavkaz to him. She needs to exercise for a joint, so that she could walk without a cane. After months of treatment, she will be able to go home, where she is awaited by her beloved twin sister. We hope that she will feel better by this time.

In October, our Family Center established successful collaboration with the Institute of Pediatric Hematology and Transplantology (named after Raisa Gorbacheva). The doctors of the Institute tell their patients of recreational opportunities at our Family Center, and more and more families enjoy the opportunity.

No matter how many days we host a family with sick children in our Family Center, this place becomes their home for that time. It is very important for us to create a domestic and comfortable atmosphere around them. But a home, above all, must be safe. For the safety of our guests, we decided to conduct training for all employees on fire safety and on rendering First Aid.

There is a professional rescuer among our best friends. Vitaly Kuznetsov told us about the serious and important things so excitingly and simply that even the children listened to the lecture with undisguised interest.

And then, we all ate apples from the garden outdoor and barbecued, inhaling the pungent smell of wet leaves, smoke, and the fleeting autumn.

The last day of October was a very bright and moving one for patients of the Family Center. They were invited to the Czar Theodore's Cathedral in Tsarskoye Selo, a former residence of the Russian imperial family. In the cave church of St. Seraphim of Sarov, the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick was performed for three sick girls and a thanksgiving service was held for children and parents. After that, a priest answered all the questions that were asked by young and grown-up guests. A rector's assistant then told us about the history of the cathedral, held a small tour through it and presented the sick girls with icons and information booklets. The children watched with interest the chapel of the Empress and admired her handiwork, and then they prayed with their parents in the upper church at the Theodore Icon of the Mother of God.

The majestic atmosphere of the temple, where the imperial family prayed, made a strong impression on both children and adults. The cordiality and concern of the church workers helped all of us to get a feeling of security and a real holiday.

At present, the list of children's wishes for the New Year's "Dreams Come True" program has been almost completed. This year, more than two hundred children have told us about their dreams. They are patients of Children's Hospice, Children's Cancer Departments at the Research Institute of Oncology named after N.N. Petrov and the 31st City Hospital, the Oncology Department at the First Children's Hospital, the Russian Oncological Scientific Center named after N.N. Blokhin in Moscow, Regional Children's Hospitals of Kaliningrad and Khabarovsk and other Russian regions.

One dream, which was expressed on the last New Year's Eve was fulfilled in this year. In late October a book by a boy, who was a patient of Children's Hospice until this summer, was published before his 18th birthday.

Kirill waited almost a year for this event - the publication of his book, a science-fiction novel. It made him truly happy. Despite the fact that, due to the deterioration of his condition, the boy was almost not able to hold a pen, he autographed a few books to members of the hospice staff. We heartily congratulate the beginning writer with fulfillment of his dream.

Thank you for your assistance and support to Children's Hospice. We hope that what you have read touches both your heart and your soul. Please share this joy with your friends and pass this newsletter on to some of them. If any questions arise, don't hesitate to contact us. We are always happy to hear from you. See you in the next issue of our bulletin.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Alexander Tkachenko, Children's Hospice, October 2011

Detski Hospis/Children's Hospice

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