

The Desert Wind

SPIRIT OF THE DESERT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

873 D Coyote Gulch Circle Ivins, Utah

November-December 2012 Volume 2 Number 3

We are Spirit of the Desert, an inclusive, Christ-centered faith community in the Episcopal tradition, dedicated to knowing Christ and to make Christ known. We practice Christ's unconditional welcome at Spirit of the Desert.

Saying Grace Invites God's Presence

We all say "Happy Thanksgiving", "Merry Christmas" and we gather with family and friends to celebrate this time of year. What would a delicious meal be without a prayer. We call this prayer *GRACE*. In order to say grace, you have to stop doing other things. You have to stop talking, planning, going. Saying grace invites you to just be present: See the color of the radish in your salad, smell the soap on your hands, notice the texture of the tablecloth, and hear your own breathing. Even in as mundane a moment as this, the



astonishing richness of human life is laid before you. If you are safe from danger, sheltered from the elements, and not alone, grace gives you a

chance, crucial moment in which to know it. "OK," you might be saying. "That sounds very nice but what am I supposed to say?" Excellent question. You may not have to say anything. It might be enough just to be silent and breathe.

The best thing about silent prayer is that it is never actually silent. As you sit at your dinner table, your inhaled breath can pick up a few words and bring them forth as grace: For the food before us and those beside us and the love that

surrounds us; for these thy gifts we are about to enjoy, let us be truly grateful.

A spoken prayer declares aloud what is implicit in the breath: the sacredness of ordinary life and the splendor of ordinary love. You can say grace before every meal, or only in times of special thanksgiving. You can use words, or you can sit there without saying anything.

And maybe it won't happen every single time, but it will happen: in some ordinary moment of ordinary prayer, you will experience the extraordinary form of gladness that is indistinguishable from gratitude.

PEOPLE IN THE PEWS

Profiles of People at Spirit

John and Loraine Militello

Each one of us probably has a story as to how they arrived at this little piece of heaven called Southern Utah. This one is a little extreme.

John was born in Jersey City; Loraine born in a very small mid-state New York town and arrived in New Jersey via Long Island. They both grew up in the area right across the Hudson River from New York City but never met. They both married young and subsequently divorced. They met through mutual friends and married in 1967, combining two families totaling seven children. John was a professional musician and Loraine

typed court transcripts at home. They lived in Parsippany, New Jersey, for almost thirty years. Their children are in New Hampshire, Texas, New York, three in New Jersey, and one deceased.

When the children were grown they started to travel, and learned to love the desert. However, at this time the desert was surrounding Las Vegas. In 1995 they moved west and stayed in Nevada for eleven years; John became a chef and Loraine worked for District Court in Las Vegas as assistant to the District Court Administrator. They both retired and were ready to leave the city life.

Loraine worked with many people who were very familiar with the St. George area and investigated. First priority: Find an Episcopal Church. Loraine is a cradle Episcopalian and John entered the church in 1996 (received by Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori who was Bishop of Nevada at the time.) We found Grace Church and bought our retirement home in Santa Clara in 2005.

Spirit of the Desert was formed subsequently and who could tell at the time how priceless it would become! From a huge church in Las Vegas to this tiny group of kindred spirits; closer than family. What a pleasure to belong and be embraced.

Unfortunately, there are not too many people who don't know of their

house problems - BLUE CLAY; they are still not resolved. But, with the support of everyone and God's help, the Militellos will be just fine.

Their little shining star, Gigi, a five-pound poodle who loved everyone, just passed on. Again, there was much love and support from her Spirit fans.



John and Loraine Militello with their beloved Gigi.

Oriole Collar

Oriole Coller was able to visit her precious little great granddaughter, Mia Foutz, recently in Arizona. She is the little six year old we have adopted in our hearts. She is recovering from brain cancer and all that entails. Oriole reports that she is doing well. Her activities in school keep her challenged and happy to be with others her age. Oriole's daughter Kim hired a professional photographer to visit during this family reunion and a Christmas card will be created from one of the photos. We look forward to "meeting" all the family. Speaking of Christmas, we wonder what Mia

would like to find under her tree? There will be something there from her Spirit friends for sure!

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT PRAYER?

We probably ask ourselves this more and more. As we grow older aches and pains visit us frequently. Our kids are grown and have their own families. We see them struggle at times as we did when they were young. It goes on and on. Our Intercessory Prayer group prays daily for many families and friends and even some we haven't met. Our faith and trust in Jesus to hear our pleas never wavers. Sometimes a prayer is answered in a way we hadn't imagined. Putting our faith and trust in Him is really all we have to do. Eight faithful ladies meet monthly for a time, outside of church on Sunday, for fellowship and sharing.

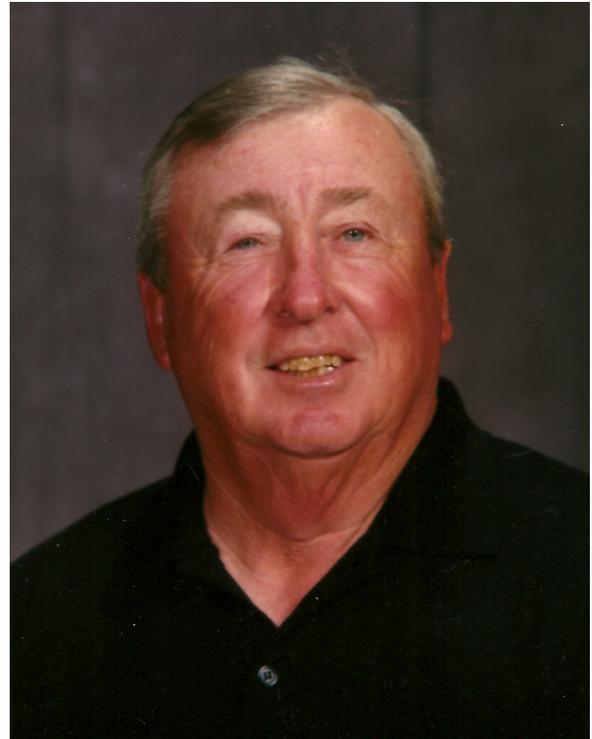
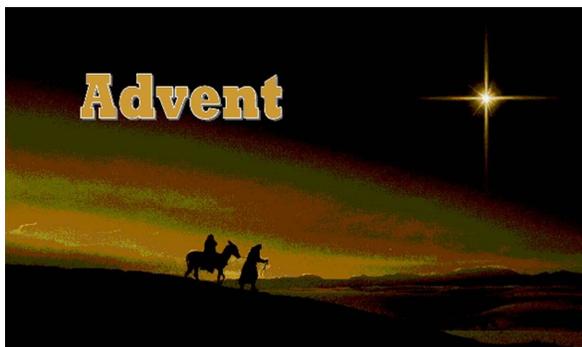
We hear the reports of those we are praying for. We always seem to be adding more names to our list and occasionally we remove someone who has improved or been healed. We met on September 20 and November 16 at the home of Katie Mays. Our prayer those days and every day is: Loving God, open our ears to the cries of those around us who need your help. Remind us that the call to pray for another is always a holy call. Amen.

Bishop's Committee Meetings Provide Opportunity To Reflect on Spirit's Mission

Our Bishop's Committee meetings give us an opportunity to discuss upcoming activities of Spirit of the Desert. Rev. Lee reports on diocesan business and his frequent contacts with Bishop Scott and other priests. There is always Spirit business to act on and voting and hearing that "I second the motion" response.

No, it's not like running a business that gathers us together. It is seeing us as we grow steadily month by month. We learn more of how we can impact others around us in loving, outreaching ways. We try to schedule these meetings in combination with the intercessory prayer meetings.

We met on September 20 and November 16. Afterwards we had dinner at a favorite diner nearby to continue our sharing. We are such a close family. We spend as much time together as we can.



Jim Craig

Spirit Mourns the Loss of Jim Craig

Jim Craig passed away on October 20. Quiet, steady, and loving throughout his life, Jim gave countless hours of help to his family and friends.

He faithfully hung the banner at the entrance to our church room and placed the big, heavy signs each Sunday at both Old Highway 91 and Kayenta Parkway welcoming people to our Sunday Eucharist service.

Whether at the drafting table or swinging a hammer in the hot sun, he lent his many skills, sound judgement and tireless work ethic to help realize dreams of those he loved.

He applied the same thoroughness and determination to the game of golf, through which he made many close friends in his retirement, especially in the Sunbrook golf league. At his funeral we met his seven siblings, his two sons and a daughter and two lovely granddaughters. After the funeral service, at the reception with food provided by Spirit, his many friends from the community joined in for a time of celebration and sharing of treasured memories of Jim. He may have been a man of few words at times but that never took away from his marvelous nature and loving personality. Our deepest sympathy to Ila and their family. Their loss is ours as well.

Roger and Lois Represent Spirit at 107TH Convention

The Diocesan Convention was held at the Cathedral Commons in Salt Lake City October 12 and 13. Roger and Lois Moritz attended as delegates along with Kim Montgomery attending as an alternate. The diocesan theme, resolutions and agenda matters centered around "Proclaiming the Gospel" as Bishop Scott selected. The workshops, table discussions at meals and the social events combined to ensure a successful convention.

Just in Time for the Holidays: Enjoy This Gift from Ila Craig

Ila Craig is an extraordinary cook. We have enjoyed her desserts and snacks frequently at church. We asked her to share some of her recipes with us if they weren't too complicated - we haven't gone to Europe attending cooking classes like she has. So here's another. Enjoy!

HOLIDAY CARAMEL CORN

Pop: 1-1/2 cups unpopped corn. Don't add salt. Place in a large pan. (She uses her turkey roasting pan.)

Combine and boil for 5 minutes:

2 cups brown sugar

2 sticks margarine or butter

½ cup white corn syrup

1 teaspoon salt

Stir in:

½ teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon butter flavoring

1 teaspoon burnt sugar flavoring

Stir quickly and pour over popcorn and, if desired, add some peanuts or other nuts. Mix well and put into a 250 degree oven for one hour. Stir every 15 minutes during that hour.



Vet's Care Center Offers Opportunity For New Ministries

A VA Nursing Home is now being built in Ivins. It will be called the Veterans Care Center. The nursing home will have one hundred eight beds of which twenty two will be a "memory ward" for those with dementia and Alzheimer's. Kathy Wood, our faithful church member and community contact in Ivins, has been in touch with the Veterans Administration. She was told that the VA will not be managing the facilities. They issued a RFP (Request for Proposals) the week of November 12 to select a qualified management company to operate the care center. Once the management company is selected Kathy will contact them about our desire to donate books. This special outreach program is planned by Spirit of the Desert.

We have started collecting books for a library they will have. A label inside each book will tell the veterans that they are remembered by the parishioners at Spirit of the Desert. The library and a chapel will be combined in one room. Rev. Lee hopes we will be permitted to conduct services from time to time for the residents.



Spirit members have volunteered to ring bells again for the Salvation Army.

Spirit's Bell Ringers Lend a Hand to Salvation Army

The Salvation Army annually provides \$12,000 to pay for dental, pharmacy and medical needs of the uninsured in the greater St. George area. Our Kathy Wood serves on the Family Healthcare Board and thus her connection with the Army. The Family Healthcare Clinic serves all ages, incomes and persons, with or without medical insurance. Last year there was an old lady, short and shivering, wearing reindeer antlers on her head and a big smile as she rang the bell and greeted the customers coming out of the market. Why is she looking forward to doing this again, you ask? Of course you know. She was a Bell Ringer for the Salvation Army's Christmas annual fund raiser. Several members of Spirit of the Desert have joined in this community effort in the past.

They will join in again this season. Kathy has organized our church's efforts before and we look forward to another successful outreach this holiday season.

Spirit Book Study Focuses on "The Best Christmas Pageant"

During Advent Lee will lead Spirit members as they read a very delightful book, "Best Christmas Pageant Ever" by Barbara Robinson.

The story revolves around the Herdman family and their six kids. No one is prepared when this outlaw family invades church one Sunday and decides to take over the annual Christmas pageant. The Herdmans are notorious for abusing each other and stealing from and abusing other kids as well. They smoke, steal, lie, bully and generally create havoc in their town.

Their father disappeared years earlier and mother works two shifts at the shoe factory to support herself and the kids while the kids run wild. But this WILL be the best Christmas pageant ever when the Herdman kids learn the Christmas story and about the true meaning of Christmas.

None of the Herdmans has ever heard the Christmas story before. Their interpretation of the tale -- the Wise Men are a bunch of dirty spies and Herod needs a good beating -- has

a lot of people up in arms. But it will make this year's pageant the most unusual anyone has seen and, just possibly, the best one ever. Of course there is much more to this story than what you've just read now. Join with us as we learn of another true meaning of Christmas. The study will start on Sunday, December 2, at 1:30 p.m. Plan on being there and bring a friend. A light snack will be provided.

Christmas Eve Service to Feature Candles and Carols

Our Christmas celebration will be on Christmas Eve at 3 p.m. Join with us to open your hearts before your presents. It will be an early beginning and a joy to the world. The twenty fourth of December is more than a time to wrap or unwrap the presents. It's a time to begin unwrapping the greatest gift of all.

The simple song of Christmas - Silent Night, Holy Night - reminds us to sleep in heavenly peace. This peace isn't something we have earned. It was carefully chosen just for us, to bring joy, amazement, peace and renewal. We don't always find presents under the tree that fulfill all our desires. Every day of our lives is a new Christmas Day. Maybe your fondest wish will be granted this year. May you and your family celebrate the holidays in this spirit.

Members Respond to Bishop's Challenge to Read Bible in a Year

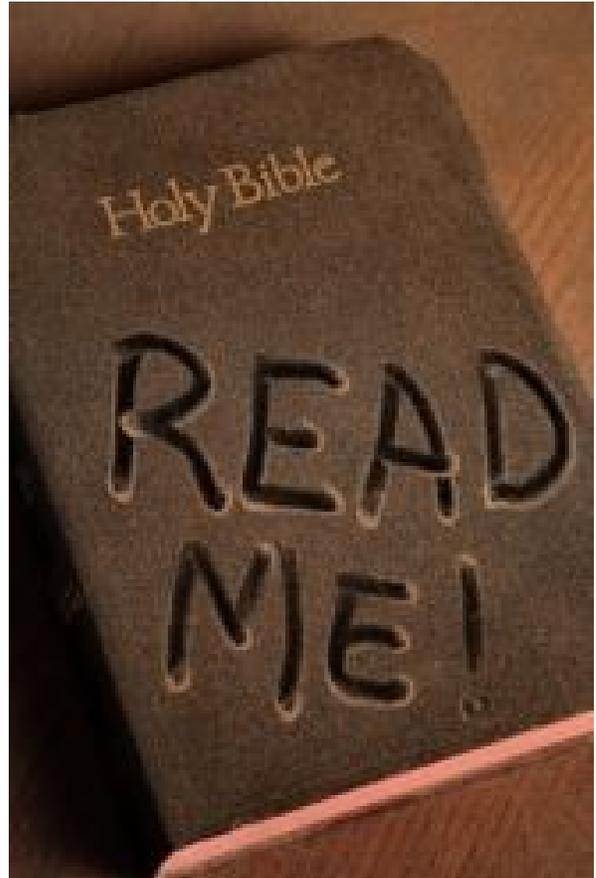
Several members of Spirit of the Desert have challenged themselves and each other to read the Bible from cover to cover during 2013 - or you can begin whenever you please.

If you'd like to join us in our response to the Bishop's challenge, you can find a schedule of readings on the Spirit of the Desert website at: <http://www.spiritepiscopalchurch.org>

Click on When We Worship, then click on Calendar of Events then finally click on Bible In a Year Challenge. You will find the complete reading schedule to help you commit to reading successfully the books of the Bible in sequence and ensuring that a psalm and a portion of the New Testament are read each day in order to provide strong spiritual daily content to sustain readers through the entire Bible.

We offer this prayer, written by Archbishop Thomas Cranmer in 1549 The Book of Common Prayer as you begin your spiritual journey and the Bible Challenge: "Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the

blessed hope of everlasting life which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen."



Don't let your Bible collect dust. Join us in our challenge to read the Bible in a year.

Spirit to Celebrate Sixth Anniversary

November 30 will be the sixth anniversary of Spirit of the Desert Church. How we have been blessed in our growth and fellowship. God brought Rev. Lee Montgomery to us after Rev. Susan Wiltsey went to St. Jude in Cedar City. We are truly a family of believers.

Fifth Sunday Collections Benefit Local Charities

In each month of the year that has five Sundays, our congregants continue with the practice of making a donation to remember a designated charity such as Doctors Volunteer Clinic, Dixie Care & Share, and Ivins Animal Shelter. In July we gave Doctors Volunteer Clinics a gift of \$275.00. Dixie Care & Share was given \$220.00 in September. To close out this year we will be remembering the Ivins Animal Shelter. This is the only municipal shelter in Utah designated as a "no-kill" animal shelter.

Our gift will help this wonderful shelter purchase badly needed items such as food and medicine. Loraine and John Militello recently experienced the death of their tiny poodle, Gigi. We all knew Gigi and her darling personality. In her memory the Militellos contributed food and other items to the Shelter.

Spirit Members Respond to Minister's "Wish List"

Since this list was presented at our April meeting two items have been contributed by members of Spirit - an Altar book and a Gospel Book. We are still in need of the following items:

Candle Lighter - short handle (\$90)

Altar Book Stand - polished brass (\$850)

Processional Cross - polished brass (\$1,300)

BCP Books, 1979 - Chancel Size, Red or Blue (\$32 each, need 8-10)

Chalice Veils and Burses -for Advent, Christmas, and Easter white and purple sets - \$200 each a set

Portable Altar - 60Wx26Dx39T - \$1,295 or more

What better reason to donate an item than in memory of a loved one or for a special occasion. Spirit members are discussing ways to combine their efforts to purchase the more expensive items. Lee has researched the availability and cost of these items and is eager to share this information with anyone so inclined.

Intercessory Prayer Group Sets December 14 Meeting

The Intercessory Prayer group meet at the home of Katie Mays on **Friday, December 14, at 2:30**. This will be a special meeting as we remember those less fortunate, sick, grieving and missed as we celebrate the holidays without them. The Bishop/Vestry meeting will be held the same day, same place at 4:00. This meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss our annual budget.

Presiding Bishop Schori Offers Advent Message

As you prepare for the season of Advent, I would commend two questions to your musings and your prayer and your meditation: What is it that you are most waiting for? And, how are you going to wait this year?

I'm struck this particular season by the waiting of several women in Christian history. Mary obviously, waiting for the birth of the Promised One in her part of the world, a child born for the whole world. Also Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptizer, who comes before Jesus. Elizabeth has been promised a child in her old age, these are both very unexpected births, they are waiting.

And I'm struck particularly this year by Elizabeth of Hungary, a saint of the Church who lived in the thirteenth century, who was betrothed as a child herself, married at 14, a mother of three by the time her husband died when she was 20.

She spent her life giving it away, giving it away both physically through her means and through her presence and her healing. She was an icon of generosity. What is it you wait for this year? Is it an opportunity to meet the surprising around you?

Is it an opportunity to reflect on what is most needed in your heart and in the world around you? How are you going to wait for that gift? Are you going to wait actively? Engaged? Honing your desire? Stoking the passion within you for that dream? Are you going to wait for a dream that will bless the whole world?

That's what Christians wait for in the season of Advent - of the coming of the Prince of Peace, the one who will reign with justice over this world. I believe that's what the world most needs, this year and every year.

May your season of waiting be fruitful and blessed. May it be filled with surprise and a willingness to engage that surprise. A blessed Advent.

The Most Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori

Bishop to Visit Spirit on October 20, 2013

We will be honored when Bishop Scott comes to our church on **Sunday, October 20, 2013** for his official visit with us. We have gotten to know him better and he now knows more about us. On his last visit, Bishop Scott brought along his guitar and joined John Marchall in an impromptu duet. His next visit will be like a family reunion. How blessed we are to have him leading our diocese.