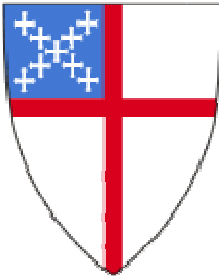


The Fabric of St. John's



Parish News of
St. John's Episcopal Church
Alma, Michigan



January 2006

Pastor's Corner

First of all, I wish to thank all of you for the warmth of your welcome. It truly is a joy to be with you and to serve you.

The feast of the Word made flesh which we just celebrated is one in which we could meditate on aspects of this basic tenet of Christianity and still not fully comprehend its meaning. If we did, we would fall down in paralyzing awe and totally transform the world around us. The Word made flesh is not only an action, it is also spoken. The Word happens. It is divine speech that speaks God's love into the flesh of Jesus. It is "ever self-giving and self-creating as an active force and power"¹ alive in the church today. As members of the Body of Christ, and brothers and sisters of Jesus and one another, we understand that words also possess a sacramental value, and speaking can be a sacramental act when addressing one another in love and fellowship.

Unfortunately, we are inundated with words and actions that are not incarnational, but bespeak polarization, war, revenge, anger, all those things which are quite the opposite of the Incarnation, the Word made flesh. This is true in our national life, in some areas of our church, and in our local society. This does not mean that dissent and criticism are wrong. It does mean that dissent and criticism, when spoken in love, may be leveled for the purpose of the common good and to build up the Body of Christ; it also means that we must be open to the possibility that we may be wrong. How do we know if what we say is in the spirit of the Incarnation? What is the outcome of what we say? Did our comment cause division and polarization, or did it bring about deeper thought, openness and conversation?

¹ Advent letter from our Presiding Bishop, 12/2/05

In this wonderful post-Christmas season let us rejoice with one another that this incomprehensible miracle happened and we have the joy of celebrating with each other.

God's blessings on you in this New Year.

Mary[†]



WELCOME!

Thank you to newcomer Pat McDonald for sharing information about herself with us! Be sure to share something about yourself with her.

Shirley Hamilton
Outreach for ECW

I moved from Bad Axe, MI, to Alma when I was seven. I have three daughters and a son who are married with families. A total of ten beautiful lads and lassies call me Nana and are the joy of my life. Two of the families are in Ithaca, two in Alma.

I grew up with a rich Celtic heritage with great-grandparents from both Scotland and Ireland. As a child I was bathed in music, poetry, and folklore from the Isles. My dad, his parents, and grandfather were 'fiddlers'. I was richly exposed to Celtic, traditional American, and bluegrass fiddle music from the beginning. July 2005 I began fiddle lessons with Bruce Bauman from the Wheatland Music Organization in Remus, MI. I recently joined the Just For Fun Dulcimer Group that meets once a month in Ithaca. We gather to play a variety of traditional and Celtic music-just for fun.

In 1998 I graduated from the Health Enrichment Center School of Massage in Lapeer, MI, certifying me in massage therapy. In that same year I received training in Reiki: levels I & II and plan to receive training at the Master's level. Reiki (RA-KEE) is a gentle laying on of hands that works with universal life energy, which promotes healing on the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual levels and offers deep relaxation and a sense of well being.

I have a home-based business that offers massage and Reiki therapy. I specialize in hands-on care giving for the disabled, elderly, and terminally ill. I also serve the general population, those who need to de-stress and balance the body, mind, and spirit connection. I also contract my massage therapy services with Hospice of Central Michigan in Mt. Pleasant

My hobbies include photography, music, reading, writing, chats around the bonfire, and nature walks.

I have been attending St. John's, Alma, for two months. Thank you for your warm welcome and friendships.

Pat McDonald

Remember, it all starts with God

Pastor's Schedule

1/1 9:00 Christian Ed.
 10:00 Eucharist
 2:00 Masonic Pathways

1/2 Office 9 - 4:30

1/3 Office 9 - 4:30
 8:00 Worship Comm.

1/4 Office 9 - noon

1/5 Noon SV Clericus

1/7 10:00 Altar Guild

1/8 9:00 Christian Ed.
 10:00 Eucharist
 11:30 Finance Comm.

1/9 Office 9:30 - 4:00
 6:00 Vestry dinner
 6:50 Compline
 7:00 Vestry

1/14 Diaconal Workshop
 10:00 - 4:00

1/15 9:00 Christian Ed.
 10:00 Eucharist
 11:15 Annual Meeting
 & Potluck
 2:00 Masonic Pathways

1/16 Office 9 - 4:00

1/17 10:00 COM Exec Comm
 12:00 COM

1/18 Office 9 - 4:00

1/19 12:00 Ministerial Assoc.

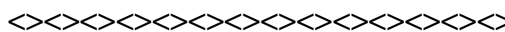
1/22 9:00 Christian Ed.
 10:00 Eucharist

1/23 Office 9 - 4:00
 7:00 Daughters of the King

1/24 Office 9 - 4:00

1/25 Office 9:30 - noon

1/29 9:00 Christian Ed.
 10:00 Eucharist



New Facilities Use Policy

The Vestry has adopted a new policy governing the use of our facilities.:

There is **no charge** for the use of facilities by members of St. John's, although we do ask for a \$25 refundable cleaning deposit for the use of the Parish Hall (in the case of a wedding, this applies if either member of the wedding couple is a member).

For non-members, the following charges will apply:

Sanctuary	\$200
Hall and Kitchen	\$300
Hall only	\$200
plus \$50 refundable cleaning deposit for use of the Hall	

Use of the Sanctuary must be coordinated with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge.

Arrangements may be made for ECW members to serve food (all food and supplies must be furnished by the using group). Contact the ECW President or Hospitality Chairperson for charges and conditions.

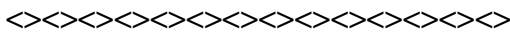


A Joyous Time

"Come Home to Alma for the Holidays" was a successful evening at the Plaid Door. Thanks to all who furnished cookies, to everyone who helped bag and to Vickie Bethka for the handmade ornaments we put on the bags. A special thank you goes to Tim Cruttenden for installing new lighting in our front windows and to the Devens family for providing music for our carol sing. We had lots of people in the store and gave away 97 bags of cookies. Thanks again to all of you who helped in any way. I feel so blessed to be a part of this caring congregation.

God Bless!

Margaret Trimmer



A Note Of Thanks

Thank you for all of your prayers for me and Shirley during my recent surgery to remove a lump under my jaw. It turned out to be an inflammation of a salivary gland and was benign. Praise the Lord!

This was a first for me, as I have never had any surgery except for a tonsillectomy when I was about 4 yrs. old. To say the

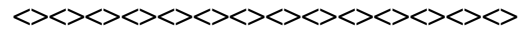
least I was concerned about the whole ordeal and looked like a mummy with a bad toothache for four days while the incision healed.

But, what I really wanted to let you know is that I was very comforted by the outpouring of concern from each of you. He was there with me before, during and after this medical experience thanks in large part to your prayers. You all should be aware of how very important that is to me and to the Lord's church here at St. John's. If we just continue and build on this kind of caring for each other and let it show to the glory of God then that warmth and love will come through to anyone who comes in our door. Imagine, if you will, how that can help us all spread the word of Christ and to make St. John's all it can be.

God Bless You All, Every One.

Faithfully yours,

Jake



Vestry Highlights

Reports

Two MBA students from CMU are working on a marketing plan for the Plaid Door. Alma College students have also been in touch with Margaret. Business is up. Hopefully it will continue after the holidays.

Preliminary figures indicate a profit of \$148.99 on the first fundraising dinner. A permanent license will require a major investment in ductwork and

ventilation for the kitchen. The Health Department has indicated that we can continue to get a temporary license for each event, so we will go that way for now.

The pole lamps in front of the building have been repaired and new, brighter bulbs installed.

At the request of the Worship Committee, Rev. Mary will explain the reasons for the placement of the baptismal font in front of the altar, and discuss the reasons and appropriate ways to pass the peace in the service.

\$200 has been donated to Gratiot Emergency Housing on the recommendation of the Outreach Committee. Sally, our sponsored student, will be completing her studies at Nyakabungo. We have written her about the arrangements needed for us to support her further education.

LOAF Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 3rd. Angie Ballard and Cindy Kabell will co-chair.

We have four parishioners who have been through the Via Media training. Rev. Mary would like to start the program early in 2006 (possibly beginning as a Lenten study, although it would extend past Easter).

New guidelines for facilities use have been published.

Community Café has asked if we can supply a crew of nine people twice a year to help them serve. Vestry will

consider this and discuss with the congregation.

Bids for the necessary work on the Plaid Door building are proving hard to get. Jerry Crispin will continue to work on it.

Treasurer reported that with the Curtis concert fundraiser and the dinner, we have erased our deficit and are slightly over \$1,000 in the black as of the end of November.

Actions

Adopted proposed budget for 2006. It will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Meeting on Jan. 15th.

Established a committee to review and revise the Employee Handbook, as there are some confusing and possibly conflicting sections.

The Diocesan Anti-racism Ministry will be contacted to schedule the required training as soon as new vestry members are on board.

**Not Quite Ready For That
Tropical Vacation?**

**We still have winter things
available at**

The Plaid Door

M – F 9:30 – 5:00

Sat 9:00 – 1:00