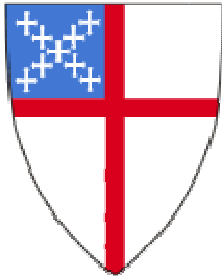


The Fabric of St. John's



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



June 2007

Pastor's Corner

Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples and they became apostles, they were 'sent' to spread the Good News that all was forgiven and we were back in God's good graces. Jesus did the reconciling and now the apostles were necessary to carry on the work of spreading the Word.

In the bible study we have been doing since the beginning of Lent, one of the messages in the Acts of the Apostles is that the Holy Spirit was essential to the spread of Christianity. The question could be asked, why was the Holy Spirit so visible then and seems less so now? I think one of the reasons would be that the Good News needed to be spread quickly to a large number of people outside as well as inside the Jewish community. Second, the apostles needed strong spiritual encouragement to spread the Gospel because they could be killed by the Romans or the High Priests of the Temple. They were setting out on a new path that no one had walked before; they were going against the Mosaic Law which had been a very important part of their life prior to becoming the disciples of Jesus. They were so filled with the Holy Spirit that their joy in the work of the Gospel could not be contained.

What we often don't recognize is that the Holy Spirit is still very much at work in each one of us whenever we are suddenly 'nudged' to do something for someone, call someone, or ask a question that may open another up to the grace of God. God's Spirit is always with us, we just have to listen.

Mary[†]

Pakistan? How Can You Work In Such A Dangerous Place?

“Death Toll Rises To 41 In Karachi Riots... 25 Die In Latest Suicide Attack In Peshawar... 15 Killed In Quetta Courtroom Blast... Shooting Continues in Tank, 5 More Die...”

This is a small sample of recent headlines from Pakistan, and it is only natural to ask how the work of a loving God, of the Prince of Peace, can be getting done in such an environment. To gain a little perspective, let's first understand that Pakistan is a country about the size of France and the UK combined, stretching from the Arabian Sea on the south to the heights of the Himalayas in the north, with a population of over 163 million people. It is divided into four provinces, Balochistan in the southwest, Sindh in the southeast, Punjab to the north of the Sindh, and the Northwest Frontier Province, along with the Northern Areas and Jammu and Kashmir, which have been in dispute with India throughout Pakistan's existence as a nation. In the western part of the country, Balochistan and NWFP, much of the society is based upon tribal identity and has remained relatively unchanged for several hundred years. In the Sindh and the Punjab, if one looks beneath the modern façade, the basic pattern of the society is feudal, still basically agricultural in the Sindh (although Karachi, Pakistan's largest city at around 15 million people, is the country's commercial and financial hub) and mixed agricultural/industrial in the Punjab. As a result, most Pakistani's find their identity first in their relationships, extended family, friends and associates, or ethnic group, rather than in their nationality. Tradition, and in the more tribal areas the *jirga*, or council of elders, has far more actual authority than the relatively recent framework of laws, courts and police. Since the history of the entire area is one of successive waves of invaders (with Alexander the Great somewhere around the midpoint), the normal mode of change is through violence. So just how does God's work get done in this environment?

The answer is that God's work is prospering in Pakistan. First, the environment is not what is reflected in the western media (or even the Pakistani media – the headlines at the beginning are all from our local Pakistani newspaper). We have found the Pakistani people to be almost uniformly friendly, open and accepting, eager to welcome us and show their pride in their country. Is there danger in Pakistan? Of course there is, and suitable precautions are taken. Is there danger in the US? My brother-in-law, who has never had a problem in Pakistan, found himself face down on the floor of a bank in Pittsburgh with a gun at his back the last time they were home. When we look at the ministries of the parents of some of our students, we can see God's work going forward even in the midst of some of the worst of the chaos. Good Samaritan Hospital in Karachi continues to provide some of the finest medical care available in that city. At the orientation program in Lahore a few weeks ago, we met a young couple with two small children who serve at Tank Christian Hospital, and they tell us that although they have had to discontinue their mobile clinics, patients will walk for several days to come to the hospital for care. My sister and brother-in-law in Sialkot have been told “You are Sialkoti. If there is ever a problem, we will see that you are protected or safely evacuated.” Bach Christian Hospital in Qalandarabad, about ten miles north of Abbottabad in NWFP, one of the more conservative areas of the country, last year celebrated 50 years of service to their community. The hospital served as a major hub for relief work after the devastating earthquake of 2005, which was centered only about 80 miles away, and over the years has sponsored a network of clinics serving the NWFP and the Northern Areas. Today, patients will walk past other local hospitals to come to Bach for treatment. The patients waiting in the Outpatient Clinic are shown videos while they wait, with the “Jesus” video playing alternately with a sequence of health promotion subjects. Even in a culture which is nominally not open to proselytizing, evangelism continues to go forward. One of our houseparents is flying out tomorrow to Skardu, a small town in the far north east of Baltistan in the Northern Areas, where he and his wife ran one of the outreach clinics from Bach which was forced to close a couple of years ago. Even though they can no longer maintain

the clinic there, they return periodically to check on the community of believers which grew up around the clinic, and which continues to grow. His wife is still remembered as the person who dressed a young girl who had died in childbirth there in a suit of her own clothes to send her body home for her funeral.

Pakistan continues to be an overwhelmingly (nominally) Muslim nation, but the quiet witness of presence and service continues to grow the Christian community here. Pray for all those who serve in Pakistan, for their safety and the effectiveness of their witness.

Cindy and Jerry Kabell
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DOK Prayers to Share

Starting this month, our DOK chapter is going to submit a prayer to the newsletter. If anyone has a prayer they would like to share, please pass it on to Wendy Brown.

This month's is by St Francis of Assisi:

LORD, make me an instrument of your peace...
Where there is hatred, Let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, Joy;
O DIVINE MASTER,
Grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal life.

Postage Woes

Due the postage increase and a general attempt to cut costs, the vestry suggested we begin emailing newsletters to all those willing to receive their newsletter by email rather than paper. All those who elect to receive their newsletters via email will be saving the church the cost of the paper they are printed on and a substantial chunk in postage. The postage increase is not only the .02 cent increase, but because the thickness is measured as well as weight, we could possibly be spending .80 cents or more per newsletter. If you would be willing to receive your newsletters through email, please send your email address to Heather Kesselring at kesselrh@lcc.edu and note that you'd like to receive your newsletter through email. We understand of course, not everyone has email capabilities and will continue to print them for those who do not have email. It is yet to be decided if we will continue to mail them out.

Also note, Ryan Ballard, our current webmaster, has created the webpage for St Johns. Please visit our website at www.stjohnsalma.org. If you have information you would like added, that can be sent to Ryan at rgballard@komputerguy.com. Newsletters will also be posted to this location.

ECW news that everyone needs to know

Submitted by Carolyn Anderson
& Angie Ballard



Graduates - On June 3rd, we will have a special coffee hour to honor our graduates.

-Ryan Ballard, son of Doug and Angie graduated in May from Central Michigan University with B.S.

-Carlos Alonzo, Doug and Angie's nephew, will be graduating on June 10th from Simon Graduate School of Business, in Rochester NY, with an Executive MBA. Carlos is employed by Kodak and lives with his wife, Damaris, and 2 children in Rochester.

-Dr. Jamie Longhurst, granddaughter of Evelyn Gay, graduated from Michigan State Medical School in May.

"Son Day, Sundae, Sunday" - held on Father's Day, June 17th at the coffee hour. Come and make yourself a big sundae! We will have ice cream and lots of toppings.

Eucharist in the Park held on Sunday, June 24th in the pavilion in Wright Park. We will serve hot dogs and hamburgers following the Eucharist service. Bring your own folding chair and a salad, dessert, or chips to pass. We are hoping to have some special entertainment for your enjoyment.

United Thank Offering - Our spring ingathering was held the first two Sundays in May and 18 people participated with a collection of \$151.75. Those coins you have put in your Blue Box represent the large and small gifts from God that brighten your life and the lives of those around you. The power of the Blue Box is unlimited. Your prayers and offerings have built

churches and schools, made needed renovations, fed the hungry, clothed the poor, provided shelter for the homeless and have provided care and support for those with physical, mental and emotional challenges.

If you do not have a Blue Box, or would like to know more about the United Thank Offering, please ask. We need you! Regular, intentional thanksgiving can make a difference in your life as well as in the lives of those who receive your offering.

Sunday School News

Submitted by Susan Young



Thanks for supporting the children's Rosary Project. Rosaries will be available until June 3rd. The children have currently raised almost \$80 which they plan on donating to the building fund and the Girl child fund. They have done a great job, and their work is beautiful. June 3rd will also be the last day of Christian education for the children. Hope you all have a great summer.

DOK News

Submitted by Wendy Brown

Province V retreat - Candy, Kenalee, Sue and Wendy attended the Province V retreat the first weekend in May. They all had a great time and plan to attend next year.

DOK meetings - The book meeting for June will be on the 4th and the business meeting will be on the 25th. National dues will be due to Carolyn by mid August, so they can be mailed in the beginning of Dec.

Pastor's Schedule for June

- 1 Ann Arbor, Oral Surgery
- 2 Off
- 3 9:00 Christian Education
10:00 Holy Eucharist
2:00 Masonic Pathways
- 4 9am - 1pm Office Hours
7pm DOK Book Meeting
- 5 9am - 1pm Office Hours
- 6 8:30am Warden's Meeting
9am - 1pm Office Hours
1pm Home Communion
- 7 12pm - Saginaw Valley Clericus
4-7pm Diaconal Studies St. Paul, Flint
- 8 Sermon Prep.
- 9 10am ECW
11am Outreach Comm.
- 10 9:00 Christian Education
10:00 Holy Eucharist
- 11 9am - 1pm Office Hours
6:45pm Vestry
- 12 9am - 1pm Office Hours
7pm Bldg Committee
- 13 9am - 1pm Office Hours
1pm Home Communion
- 14 Off
- 15 Sermon Prep.
- 16 Spiritual Gifts Workshop
- 17 9:00 Christian Education
10:00 Holy Eucharist
2:00 Masonic Pathways
- 18 9am - 1pm Office Hours

- 19 9am - 1pm Office Hours
12:00pm C.O.M.
- 20 9am - 1pm Office Hours
1pm Home Communion
- 21 12pm Alma Ministerial Assoc.
4-7pm Diaconal Studies St. Paul, Flint
- 22 Sermon Prep.
- 23 off
- 24 10:00 Holy Eucharist
In the Park
- 25 9am - 1pm Office Hours
- 26 9am - 1pm Office Hours
- 27 9am - 1pm Office Hours
1pm Home Communion
- 28 Off
- 29 Off
- 30 Sermon Pre

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June 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 <u>9:00am</u> Adult Ed. <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist <u>2:00 pm</u> Masonic	4 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours <u>7:00pm</u> DOK book meeting	5 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	6 <u>8:30am</u> Warden's meeting <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	7 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	8	9 <u>10:00am</u> yard work Lunch
10 <u>9:00am</u> Adult Ed. <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist	11 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours 6:45 Vestry	12 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours 7:00pm Bldg Committee	13 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	14 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	15	16 Spiritual Gifts Workshop
17 Father's Day <u>9:00am</u> Adult Ed. <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist Sunday, Sonday, Sundae <u>2:00 pm</u> Masonic	18 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	19 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	20 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	21 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	22	23
24 <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist in the Park	25 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours <u>7:00pm</u> DOK meeting	26 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	27 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	28 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	29	30