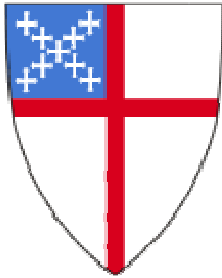


# The Fabric of St. John's

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



July 2007

## Pastor's Corner

"...So that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Ephesians 4:12b-13 (NIV)

The above is Paul's definition of discipleship. Throughout this month, in studying the Gospels of Luke, we will learn several themes regarding discipleship. This week we learn two basic lessons, one is that because someone shows bigotry toward you do not condemn them; the other lesson, if you say you will follow Christ don't put anything else in your path that takes you away from following Christ.

To attain to the fullness of maturity in Christ is to put what God asks of you before any other aspect of your life. Those in this weeks Gospel found this to be a hard lesson. Jesus' teachings were as much counter cultural then as they are now. Is it easy to be a Christian? No! But it is ultimately soul satisfying.

Have a wonderful summer. I hope to have a few pleasant surprises for you in the coming weeks.

Mary<sup>†</sup>

## Catching Hope

### “Behold, I am making all things new.”

Murree Christian School is now closed for the summer. We have seen off our graduates of the Class of 2007. We have said many good-byes, to the graduates, to other students who will not be returning, to students who will be gone for a semester or a year while their families are on home leave, to those who will be gone only for the summer. Staff, too, have largely gone, some for the summer, some on furlough and some because they have completed their contracts. In the relative quiet, we can now reflect on the challenges and blessings (not always distinct from one another) we have experienced, and give thanks for both, and rejoice in the hope which flows abundantly from all of the endings and new beginnings.

Grad week at MCS is very much a community affair, with parents, grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and other members of the missionary community gathering here on the hill for the various events. Monday evening began with a community meal, followed by a concert/recital, which showcased many of the musical talents of both students and staff. Tuesday evening featured the Baccalaureate Service, at which we celebrated and prayed for our graduates. Wednesday morning the Awards Ceremony recognized the many and varied achievements of our students over the past year. At a very moving service outdoors on Wednesday afternoon, five of our students were baptized and two confirmed. In the shade of the butterfly tree (actually a huge horse chestnut, but it attracts butterflies by the hundreds), all seven made public proclamations of their faith and shared portions of their journeys while a light sprinkle cooled the audience. Finally, Thursday morning brought Commencement. The salutatorian spoke very eloquently of challenges faced and overcome, of shared experience and bonding and of their hope in the future, as God leads them onward from MCS. After another song, the valedictorian stood, but rather than moving to the podium, she seated herself at the grand piano in front of the stage, and, briefly commenting that she had been unable to write a speech with which she was satisfied, proceeded to play and sing a song which she had written and composed for the occasion, entitled “Here We Go”. It was without a doubt the most eloquent valedictory address I have ever heard, and brought tears to every eye in the auditorium. Our valedictorian is in many ways emblematic of both the school and the missionary community. She is a second-generation MCS graduate, and from a family with five generations of missionary service, whose service in South Asia predates the founding of Pakistan. Her mother is our school nurse and she has a younger sibling and two cousins at the school. Also in attendance were her grandparents, an uncle and aunt and several additional cousins (her father, tragically, drowned while rescuing two MCS students just two weeks before the attack on the school in August 2002) The ceremony closed with the singing of the school hymn, whose refrain is

Building on a firm foundation,  
In God’s hands a tool,  
Shaping lives of dedication,  
Murree Christian School.

Sunday, with school closed and most people gone, there was no service scheduled here. We went instead with two other staff, into Murree, to an informal service at Hill Lodge, which serves as the center for the Mission Language Board’s Summer Language School. At one point in the service, testimonies were invited. An Ethiopian Christian gentleman stood to recount the story of the growth of the

church in Ethiopia in the 75 years since the coming of the first Christian missionaries. He spoke of their gratitude for that outreach and the determination of the Ethiopian church to be active in the spread of the Gospel. He told us that there are now over 1300 Ethiopian missionaries serving within Africa, and he and his wife, with their two year old son, were the first (along with a second couple sent to India) to be sent to Asia and they are expecting to be joined in Pakistan soon by another couple.

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." Faith is the foundation on which we can build our lives into God's kingdom, love, His love for us, and our reflection of that love to others, is the motivation without which we cannot reach the kingdom, but hope is what gives us direction as we seek it. May our eyes be open to see the hope in God's creation around us, and may our hearts be open to catch it.

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## **ECW news that everyone needs to know**

Submitted by Carolyn Anderson

ECW will not meet again until the second Saturday in September. If events should come up during the summer, we will call a quick meeting.

## **DOK News**

Submitted by Wendy Brown

The DOK will be collecting school supplies for needy students at Alma Middle School. Needed items include: backpacks, calculators, spiral

bound notebooks, pens, pencils, pocket folders, etc.

We will be collecting till late Aug., in order to have items available at the start of school.

Thank you in advance for you participation.

Remember dues are due to Carolyn by mid Aug.

## **DOK Prayers to Share**

O Lord, you know how busy I get every day;  
often I lose sight of what is really important.  
Help me spend the day according to your plan.

## Pastor's Schedule for July

1	10:00 Holy Eucharist 2:00 Masonic Pathways	10	9am - 1pm Office Hours
2	9am - 1pm Office Hours 7pm DOK Book Meeting	11	9am - 1pm Office Hours 1pm Home Communion 7:00pm Orientation by MIPL
3	9am - 1pm Office Hours 8pm Worship Committee Warden's Meeting	12	4:00pm Energy Audit
4	Office Closed	13	Day Off
5	Day Off	14	Spiritual Gifts 10-12:00pm
6	Sermon Prep	15	10:00 Holy Eucharist 2:00 Masonic Pathways
7	Day Off	16	Pastor's Vacation thru Aug. 30
8	10:00 Holy Eucharist	31	9am - 1pm Office Hours
9	9am - 1pm Office Hours 6pm Vestry		

### St. John's Episcopal Church

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# July 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist <u>2:00 pm</u> Masonic	2 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours <u>7:00pm</u> DOK book meeting	3 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours <u>8:00 pm</u> Worship Committee	4 Independence Day  Office Closed	5 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	6	7
8 <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist	9 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours 6:00pm Vestry dinner Discussion to follow	10 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	11 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours 7:00pm Orientation MIPL	12 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours 4:00 Energy Audit	13	14 <u>11:00 am</u> Outreach Comm. Mtg.
15 <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist <u>2:00 pm</u> Masonic	16 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	17 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	18 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	19 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	20	21
22 <u>10:00 am</u> Morning Prayer	23 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours  <u>7:00pm</u> DOK meeting	24 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	25 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	26 <u>7:45am</u> Spiritual Growth Group <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	27	28
29 <u>10:00 am</u> Eucharist	30 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours	31 <u>9:00-1:00pm</u> Office Hours				