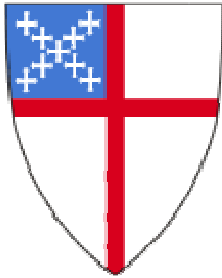


The Fabric of St. John's



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



October 2008

Pastor's Corner

In the September Issues of Anglican Connections and Episcopal Life, there is a wonderful quote by Rt. Rev. Katherine Jefferts Schori which I am sure all of you have read: “We need to get busy about healing the world. That’s what we have been called to do. We need to stop focusing on our internal conflicts. The mission of the church is the centerpiece.”

How do we carry out the mission of the church? In fact what is the mission of the church? The General Convention adopted the eight millennium goals to be accomplished by the year 2015. Very ambitious. If we focus on goals 1 & 2 (to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and achieve universal primary education) we will be well on our way to accomplishing the next four goals. With additional universal education we will make progress in the last two goals (ensure environmental sustainability and develop global partnerships for development).

That is all well and good for the “church” but what can we do at St. John’s? Our scholarships for our daughter in Kinkiizi addresses the goals of education and empowering women but what else can we do to help heal the world? What else can we do to be a reconciling force in a world of increased nationalism, radicalism, and racial hatred? We at St. John’s can choose a ministry on which we focus our time, talent, and treasure. This ministry may be local or farther away, be part of the Episcopal Development and Relief Fund, or any other project, but we need to go beyond ourselves and select a mission we can be enthusiastic about, be part of, and support with our time, talent, and treasure, and know that we are carrying out the mission of the church.

Most importantly this is a mission we will pray for, a mission which will become part of our intentions in our Taize and healing services on the first Wednesday and Sunday of the month. Mission is who we are, how do we carry it out? How are we going to help heal the world?

What's going on at St. John's?

Episcopal Church Women

ECW met on Saturday, September 13th, opening with prayer. The minutes were read and approved and the financial report showed \$1886.86.

The new chairs are here and in use in the Parish Hall. They were purchased as a memorial to Pat Mills and were paid for out of her memorial fund.

The calendar of events for the coming year was planned. Coming will be for this fall a Thankful Dinner on November 9th and Hanging of the Greens with a potluck on December 21st. Events for 2009 are the Epiphany Cake on January 11th, the Annual Meeting and Potluck on January 18th, a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 24th, the Chili Cook-off on March 15th, Easter Breakfast on April 12th, the Spring Tea on April 25th, our Father's Day Sunday Sundaes on June 21st and our final event will be the Eucharist in the Park on June 28th.

Planning for our adopt-a-family and senior citizens will be at the October meeting. We need to start early to get ready for our Christmas plans.

The suggestion was made to change the date of the ECW meeting since women are having trouble attending on Saturday morning. We will now meet on the third Sunday of each month following the 10:00 a.m. service. Our next meeting will be Sunday, October 19th, with Melba Demas as chairperson.

We closed with prayer at 11:15.

WELCOME!

Claudia Eaton, originally from Harrison, MI, resides in Alma. She has been regularly attending St. John's Episcopal-Alma since last fall. Last December 9th she became

engaged to Ryan Ballard, who has had connection to this church since his baptism here as a baby. They will be married on May 16 in the Alma College Chapel.

Claudia graduated from Harrison High School in 2000. Her dance lessons--ballet, tap, jazz, starting at age three--continued through high school. She played a flute in band from middle school through high school. She was on the golf team four years in high school.

She attended Alma College. Continuing to play her flute, she was a member of the Kiltie Marching Band for four years. As a member of Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority, Claudia lived in the sorority house her junior and senior years. Summers were spent working at Wilson State Park, just around the corner from her Harrison home where she lived with her parents and younger sister.

Claudia graduated from Alma College in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts major in Art and Design and minor in Psychology. When introduced to ceramic arts in her senior year, Claudia discovered her favorite art form! After graduation from Alma College, she took ceramic arts classes at Central Michigan University for a year.

Presently you will find Claudia working as a retailer in the Something Special Hallmark Shop in Mt. Pleasant, where she is also their florist. She became its store manager in mid-September.

Favorite hobbies are painting with oils and watercolors, creating ceramics, and jewelry-making. Camping/hiking and gardening are favorite activities. Her future might include her own ceramic studio someday!

Thank you, Claudia, for letting us get to know you better.

Shirley Hamilton,
Outreach

Bible Study

Bible Study is meeting on Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. The study is on the Epistle to the Romans and anyone is welcome to join the group at any time. There is usually a lively discussion which you would enjoy being a part of.

DOK News

Thanks to everyone who help with making sure area school children had the supplies needed to learn. Your help and donations are deeply appreciated, by us and by the children that were helped.

Also thanks to everyone who came to hear Vickie Atchinson sing. It was a joyful night full of praise and worship. All who attended were blessed. Vickie has kindly donated her portion of the proceeds, back to us for use in building our new roof. Many thanks and blessings to her for her generosity.

We are still looking for donations of fleece in order to make blankets for dialysis patients. The fleece should be the standard width by 1 1/2 yards. We will be looking at setting a date in November for a blanket making workshop. All will be invited to help.

Our book meeting will be held on Mon. Oct. 6th and we will be finishing the final chapter, of *Bad Girls of the Bible*, by looking at The Sinful Woman: I beg Your Pardon. This chapter looks at why God's grace and mercy are for everyone. The business Meeting will be Sun. Oct. 26th after church.

Taize' service will be Sunday, October 26th at 7pm. All are welcome.

Taize' Service

DOK will be hosting it's quarterly Taize' service on Sunday, October 26th at 7pm, here at the church. It is a wonderful experience and a chance to enjoy peace and

God's presence without distractions. All are encouraged to attend.

Youth Group

St. John's has a small, but dedicated Youth Group getting started this year. We are hoping to make our presence felt in good ways throughout the church. Look for them as they Acolyte, read, and take on some service projects, to help out the church wherever possible.

Wendy Brown

Diocesan Convention

The annual Diocesan Convention will be held on Friday and Saturday, October 17th and 18th at St. Paul's, Flint. This is a very important event as we have a chance to hear news of the Diocese, check the Diocesan budget and elect people to the Standing Committee, the Board of Trustees, and delegates to General Convention. People will be appointed as Examining Chaplains and to the Commission on Ministry. Our delegates this year are Barbara Gladding, Margaret Trimmer, Wendy Brown and Kenalee Atchinson.

Notice the New Lights!!

On Sunday, September 21st, the church was much brighter. Did you know why? Evelyn Gay donated lights from the Jim Gay Memorial Fund so that we could become energy efficient. The new lights are the squiggily kind and will cost less to burn and will last longer. Thank you to Evelyn and to Ryan Ballard who put the lights up by climbing high on the ladder. They really make a difference. Come and see!

Vestry Highlight

Watch your Mailboxes. Pledge cards are coming!

They need to be returned by November 1st, so that an accurate budget can be planned. Money is tight everywhere

and it is necessary to know what monies will be available in the coming year.

Blessing of the Animals

Bring your pets to church at the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, October 5th! Please have dogs on a leash and cats or other pets in cages so that we won't have chaos. The blessing will be during offertory time when pets will be brought forward. This should be a very interesting service so plan to be there with your pet.

Say Happy Birthday in October!

- 6 Jennifer Davison
- 7 Erin Harrier
- 12 Brian VanCise
- 14 Margaret Radzibon
- 15 Jacob VanCise
- 15 Rev. Mary Delaney
- 24 Randi Randell
- 25 Caleb Cruttenden
- 26 Haley Tessman
- 28 Beverly Anderson

Prayers are needed for Guidance and Healing:

- Nicole Gulick (Episcopalian in hospital and new to Alma)
- Betty Wright (Trimmer friend)
- Callie Ehlman (Bethka daughter)
- Royce Clark family (members)
- Eich Family (Cruttenden friends)
- Francis Hamilton (Hamilton relative)
- Jerry and Cindy Kabell (members in Lahore, Pakistan)
- Jim and Noralee Rhodes (Cruttenden relatives)
- John Palmer (Erin Harrier's brother)
- Karl Wakeman (member)
- Kim Vuong (Gladding friend)
- Larry Anderson (Crispin relative)
- Lee Beard (Gladding relative)
- Ronda Sorensen (Wohlfeill friend)
- Tony Dill (Hamilton relative in Military)

- Varda Hanson (Rector's friend)
- Vera Hilliard (Ruskowski relative)
- Walt and Bea Kennedy (Jerry relative)
- Gabrielle Kooi and Jade Herber (R. Anderson great-granddaughters)

Newest Member

We give thanks for the safe delivery of our newest member--Ivan Robert Holtz was born on Tuesday, September 9th, weighing 7 lb. 6 oz., 19 inches long. He is the son of Chris and Angie Holtz and brother to Christopher Holtz.

United Thank Offering

"The United Thank Offering is a long standing tradition in the Episcopal Church. Placing "thankful coins" in the Blue Box is also a tradition, rich in spirituality and love. The United Thank Offering began as a part of missionary efforts of the Women's Auxiliary in the Board of Mission in 1889. Julia Emery, secretary to the Women's Auxiliary, and Ida Soule, who counted the missionary offering of the 1886 Triennial meeting of women, inspired women to pray and give coins with the idea of building a new church in Anvik, Alaska and sending a woman missionary to Japan.

In the 1889 Triennial Meeting the offering was \$2,188.64 and accomplished those purposes. In the 1990's,UTO has given grants between \$2.5 - 3 million each year to address human needs and promote mission expansion.

Every coin from every Blue Box and Blue Envelope is given away in grants. Every cent you give, representing your thankful prayers today, is the dream for tomorrow's life and gives hope to people all over the world."

From the UTO Home Devotional Guide

October Schedule

Wednesday, October 1

9:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, October 2

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Clericus
at St. Alban's, Bay City

Friday, October 3

Saturday, October 4

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast at the
Big Boy

Sunday, October 5

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Blessing of the Animals

11:30 a.m. Young Families with
Children

Monday, October 6

7:00 p.m. Daughters of the King
Book Meeting

Tuesday, October 7

9:00 a.m. Plaid Door Check Writing

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, October 8

9:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, October 9

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, October 10

Saturday, October 11

Sunday, October 12

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 a.m. Vestry meeting

Monday, October 13

Tuesday, October 14

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, October 15

9:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, October 16

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, October 17

Diocesan Convention at St. Paul's,
Flint

Saturday, October 18

Diocesan Convention at St. Paul's,
Flint

Sunday, October 19

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 a.m. Episcopal Church Women

Monday, October 20

7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Convocation
at St. Alban's, Bay City

Tuesday, October 21

12:00 a.m. Commission on Ministry at
Diocesan Office

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, October 22

9:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, October 23

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

12:00 a.m. Alma Clericus at His Place

Friday, October 24

Saturday, October 25

Sunday, October 26

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 a.m. Daughters of the King
Business Meeting

Monday, October 27

Tuesday, October 28

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, October 29

9:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Group

11:00 a.m. Bible Study

Thursday, October 30

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, October 31

Original Sin Is Alive And Well

(And Living In ...)

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” (Mark 12:29,30)

But the serpent said to the woman “... when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, ...” (Genesis 3:5)

So just what is Original Sin? There are various versions in popular Christian tradition. In some, it has to do with eating apples (or paying attention to women). For others it revolves around the question of (unquestioning) obedience. There is a strong strain in both Catholic and Protestant tradition that it is all about (whisper it) sex. The verses from Mark’s Gospel record Jesus’ response to the Pharisee who asked about the greatest commandment. It says simply “God is the center of your Universe. Keep Him there.” The serpent’s words to Eve in Genesis point diametrically opposite. “You will be like God. You could take His place. Wouldn’t you like to be the center of the Universe?” How many of you have seen the t-shirt with the message “It’s just been proven: the world really does revolve around me!”?

Of the famous Seven Deadly Sins, Anger, Avarice, Envy, Gluttony, Lust, Pride, and Sloth, every single one can be understood as putting one’s self, the satisfaction of one’s own desire’s, at the center of one’s life, ahead of God (and particularly ahead of the thought of honoring His image reflected in those around us). The stories dominating the news today are pointing up just how far we have strayed in this direction.

In Pakistan, after a hopeful start following the February 18th elections, we have watched a fragile coalition government, united only in their mutual hatred of Gen. Musharref, crumble and fall apart with no substantive accomplishments, while the country itself is crumbling and falling apart around them. Multiple voices are raised within the government making contradictory statements. We are treated to stories of five women beaten, shot, and ultimately buried alive, for the sin of wanting to marry men of their own choosing, and when this is discussed on the floor of the Senate, one Senator defends the action in the name of “tradition”. Most recently we have the bombing of the Islamabad Marriott hotel, probably targeting either the government (which was supposed to be having a gathering there) or the foreign community and upper class Pakistanis who habitually gather there on weekends, but in which the overwhelming majority of the victims, both dead and injured, are ordinary Pakistanis, drivers waiting in their employers’ vehicles in front of the building, security guards (both hotel staff and personal security for patrons), and the hotel’s reception staff.

And this is not confined to Pakistan by any means. On the world scene we have the ongoing meltdown in the financial markets, the adulterated milk products in China, the Russian invasion of Georgia, violence against immigrants, both legal and illegal, in the US and elsewhere, not to mention the wretched excesses of the American political campaign.

Every single one of these, along with many others, can be laid to someone who felt that he/she belonged at the center of the Universe in place of God, together with those of us who acquiesced through inaction, because we couldn't take the time, the trouble, the energy or the risk to defend the image of God in our neighbors. "But it's the law...", "It says right here that ...", "I was only doing what I was told ..". In secular jurisprudence, there is the law, and there are the administrative guidelines for the application of the law. Courts have repeatedly held that if the administrative guidelines contravene the intent of the law, they are null and void. For us, the Law is clearly stated in the passage from Mark (actually quoted from Deuteronomy). If we get caught up in the administrative details, we become Pharisees. In God's justice system, we are not called to be judges, nor are we called to be lawyers. We are called to be witnesses, and we are called to be advocates for those who cannot, for reasons of weakness, fear, lack of resources or cultural disability, speak for themselves.

Yes, original sin is alive and well, and living in all of us. In the immortal words of Pogo Possum, "We have met the enemy, and he is us." Please reflect with us on the question "Who is at the center of my life?", and if you say "God is," or "Jesus is," the follow-up question is "Always?"

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Sing to the Lord a new song;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Sing to the Lord, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
Psalm 96:1-3

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Sunday Eucharist: 10:00 a.m.
Christian Education (all ages): 9:00 a.m.

October 2008

St. John's is a Church of the Episcopal
Diocese of Eastern Michigan

The Rt. Rev. S. Todd Ousley, Bishop

The Rev. Dr. Mary Delaney, Rector
Nora Kowitz, Secretary
Bob Crist, Organist
Basil Anderson, Sexton

VESTRY

Margaret Trimmer (Sr. Warden), Ryan
Ballard (Jr. Warden), Angie Ballard (Clerk
of Vestry), Doug Ballard (Treasurer), Sue
Young, Wendy Brown, Vickie Bethka, and
Tim Cruttenden