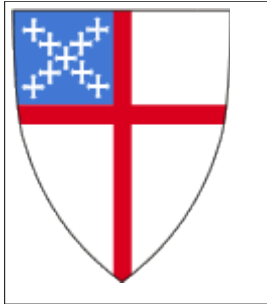


The Fabric of St. John's



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



March 2009

Pastor's Corner

The month of March is a wonderful month; we enter into Lent as a preparation for Easter, we will welcome with great relief the beginning of Spring, and observe all of the volatile weather we have in March.

The winds of March can symbolize all that is going on in the Church and in the world. Sometimes those winds of change are as gentle as a spring breeze; sometimes they are as cold as the winds of winter; but overall they move us forward and always teach us about endurance and the joy of new beginnings. Whether March is a lion or a lamb, or a little of both, I pray that it is a time of renewal for us all.

God's blessings for a holy Lent,

Mary+

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

Vestry Retreat

The Vestry Retreat was held on Saturday, February 14th. Attending were Rev. Mary Delaney, Nancy Mills, Vickie Bethka, Angie Ballard, Bev Anderson, Wendy Brown, Tim Cruttenden, and Doug Ballard.

New wardens were elected. Vickie Bethka is now Senior Warden and Jake Hamilton is Junior Warden.

Alex Radzibon presented a check for \$1500 in memory of Margaret. Alex's wishes for the distribution of the money are for property repairs or improvements. Additional donations in Margaret's memory have also been collected. Alex also delivered a religious icon and it is magnificent, and we will need to find a location to display it.

Mick Bowerman of Century 21 suggests a fair market price for the land is now \$199,099.00 with the current economy. Minus his commission would leave us with about \$180,000.00. The Vestry voted to stay with Mr. Bowerman for the sale of the property.

Rev. Mary discussed the church's tithing and individual tithing. The church is currently paying \$100 monthly to the diocese and we need to give more.

The calling tree list needs to be redone as well as the mailing list. It was suggested that we update our lists as to phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses at least every 2 years.

Chuck Zilch has suggested that we begin a game night once a month. It would be cards, board games, and include both young and old. There will be a Lenten program on Wednesdays at

noon or in the evening. Rev. Mary will ask the congregation for their opinion.

The Vestry paid the Plaid Door mortgage for February.

Doug Ballard suggested that we use the following monies to repair the roof over the office and classrooms--\$1,065 from designated building funds, \$6,346 from the current memorial funds and \$1500 from Margaret Radzibon's memorial, which totals \$8,911.00. He asks that we check into the Robert Wagner memorial and ask for permission to use it for the roof instead of the altar as was originally designated. This would total about \$10,000.

Not all the pledge cards have been received. They are needed!

The Vestry highlights were submitted by Angie Ballard, Clerk of the Vestry

Daughters of the King Prayer

LORD, I am thankful that your opinion of me is more important than anyone else's opinion. The work you accomplish through me is equally effective whether in my gifts or in my weaknesses since my weaknesses cause greater dependence on you. Help me not to shy away from using the gifts you have given me, and make me an example of your love, faith, and purity. Amen.

Daughters of the King News

Congratulations and much thanks to the newly elected or continuing officers: Wendy Brown, president; Bev Anderson, Secretary; Melba Demas, Treasurer. May God bless your offices. Thanks to everyone who came to our first blanket making workshop. It was a great time of fellowship and we had all ages there, from middle school students to retirees, men and women. Our next workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 14th 11am - 2pm. Bring a sack lunch. The only skills you

need are cutting and tying knots. ALL ARE WELCOME. We have also scheduled our next Taize' service for Sunday, April 19th at 6pm. This should be early enough to get everyone home before dark. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Our next meeting is Sunday, March 22 after service, all women are invited.

Youth Group News

This month's breakfast topic is *Finding God in Myself and Others*. All youth 7th grade and up are invited to join us at Burger King the first Sunday of the month.

Thanksgiving Corner

Thanks for CO detectors.

Wendy Brown

Episcopal Church Women

ECW met on Sunday, February 15, following the 10:00 a.m. church service.

The minutes for January were approved and the financial report showed \$1298.69.

The Women's Aid collection will be held during the month of March. A list of needed items will be in the Sunday bulletin. Items needed are paper products like paper towels and toilet paper, single bed sheets, towels and wash cloths, personal hygiene products like sanitary napkins and tampons. Bring your gifts to church and put them on the table in the library. The collection will run all through the month of March.

Angie and Rocky Ballard are in charge of the Chili Cook-off on Sunday, March 15th. Bring a pot of your best chili to compete for a prize. There will also be baked potatoes and toppings.

Coming events include the Easter breakfast on April 12th and the Spring Tea on April 25th. Sign-up sheets for hostesses for the Tea are up in the Parish Hall.

The next ECW meeting will be on Saturday, March 14, to prepare for the Chili Cook-off on Sunday, March 15. The women of the church are asked to join us and participate in the plans and events of the church.

Chili Cook-off

March 15—mark your calendars!! The St. John's annual chili cook-off!! The competition is always stiff and delicious! There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall for either making your favorite chili or bringing an item for the baked potatoes, or both. We do need volunteers for judging, so if you are interested, please let either Angie or Raquel Ballard know. Remember to invite family and friends to the fun!

In memory of Margaret Radzibon

The family of Margaret E. Radzibon would like to express their most heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the St. John's church family and Rev. Mary, for their prayers, compassion and support during the events of January 25, 2009 when Margaret suddenly and unexpectedly departed this earthly life.

Rev. Mary's pastoral support and prayers at hospitals in Alma and Saginaw helped the family cope with this fatal event. The service of Christian Burial over which she presided was superb. We received many wonderful comments as to what a beautiful service it was.

Also many, many thanks to the ECW and others who prepared and served the luncheon afterwards. An outstanding job.

Being embraced by such a wonderful church family at such a difficult time is heartwarming indeed.

God bless each and everyone of you.
Alex Radzibon and Family

Please keep these people in your prayers:

Catherine Zilch (member)
Jim Rhodes (Cruttenden relative)
Kay Crispin (member)
Mario and Carol Pedini (Crispin relative)
Sheri Rinfret (Atchinson relative)
Tony Atchinson (Atchinson relative)
Tony Dill (Hamilton relative in military)
Karl Wakeman (member)
Lillian Gostola (Dixie's mother)
Gabrielle Kooi (R. Anderson relative)
Alex Radzibon and family (member)
Bea Palmer and family (members)

Tied Fleece Blankets

The Daughters of the King are making tied fleece blankets for the dialysis patients at Gratiot Medical Center. Each blanket takes one and one-half yards of fleece for the top and another one and one-half yards for the bottom of the blanket. Any donations of fleece are welcome.

On Saturday, March 14th, we will meet again to make blankets. The time is from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Bring a sack lunch and join us. You need to know how to cut and tie—that's all.

Annual Spiritual Retreat Day

A Day of Prayer will be held on Saturday, March 28, at St. John's, Midland. The topic is "Stay with Me, Remain with Me." There will be three meditations leading into Holy Week. The reservation form deadline is March 15. Talk to Rev. Mary if you are interested in going.

Happy Birthday in March!

2 Martha Bamfield
6 Patrick Schweri
9 Estella Ruzkowski
17 Evelyn Gay
29 Stephanie Brown

"Come Home to St. John's"

It's time for a party after a long and difficult winter. We are having one on Sunday, March 1st. There will be a celebratory Eucharist with beautiful music, a potluck lunch and music by Bob Crist,

There will be a door prize for the lucky person with the winning number on their plate.

Come join us. We'll be glad to see you.

Lenten Study

On Wednesdays during Lent we will have a special study at church. Come at 5:00 p.m. for soup and bread supper. At six o'clock we will begin the study and end at seven o'clock. The books we will be using is Watching the Disciples Learning from Their Mistakes. Rev. Mary will have copies of this book.

There will be a sign-up sheet for those who are willing to furnish soup and bread for one of the Wednesdays.

United Thank Offering

Are your Blue Boxes getting full? Pick up another Blue Box at church if necessary. We have lots to be thankful for surviving this difficult winter. We still have our homes and food to eat. God has blessed us and we should be very thankful. Drop another coin in your Blue Box. The Ingathering will be the first Sunday in May. Thank of all the places your pennies and nickels will go to help those with much less that we have.

Pray the United Thank Offering Prayer:
"Source of all creation, all love, all true joy, accept we pray, these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life. Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering, and keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way, through Him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen"

March Schedule

Sunday, March 1

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and
Sermon
“Come Home to St. John’s”
Potluck and Special Music

Monday, March 2

Tuesday, March 3

9:00 a.m. Plaid Door Check Writing
7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, March 4

5:00 p.m. Soup and Bread
6:00 p.m. Lenten Study

Thursday, March 5

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group
7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Clericus at
St. Alban’s, Bay City

Friday, March 6

Saturday, March 7

Sunday, March 8

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and
Sermon
11:15 Vestry Meeting

Monday, March 9

Tuesday, March 10

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, March 11

5:00 p.m. Soup and Bread
6:00 p.m. Lenten Study

Thursday, March 12

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, March 13

Saturday, March 14

10:00 a.m. ECW Meeting
11:00 to 2:00 p.m. Daughters of the
King Fleece Blanket Making

Sunday, March 15

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and
Sermon
11:30 Chili Cook-off

Monday, March 16

7:00 p.m. Saginaw Valley Convocation
At St. Alban’s, Bay City

Tuesday, March 17

12:00 p.m. Commission on Ministry at
the Diocesan Office
7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, March 18

5:00 p.m. Soup and Bread
6:00 p.m. Lenten Study

Thursday, March 19

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, March 20

Saturday, March 21

Sunday, March 22

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon
11:30 Daughters of the King Business
Meeting

Monday, March 23

Tuesday, March 24

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, March 25

5:00 p.m. Soup and Bread
6:00 p.m. Lenten Study

Thursday, March 26

7:45 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group
12:00 p.m. Alma Clericus at His Place

Friday, March 27

Saturday, March 28

Sunday, March 29

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Monday, March 30

Tuesday, March 31

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Mission Trip taken by Jake and Shirley Hamilton and Barbara Gladding in February

CAMP COAST CARE DIOCESAN MISSION TRIP

In January the opportunity arose to do something Jake and I have been wanting to do for the last several years, ever since a couple we know (Methodists) have talked about their church mission trips to Appalachia. Since Hurricane Katrina on August 29, 2005, we know two other couples from other churches and Hamilton relatives who have helped with the rebuilding at Katrina-devastated Gulf shore area sites.

Upon reading the December "Anglican Connections," we learned of the Diocese of Eastern MI mission trip to Mississippi to assist with the continuing rebuilding there. The trip timeline from Jan. 31-Feb. 8 fit our schedule. Barb Gladding was also available then and wanted to participate. Our minivan alleviated space for the two other minivans and pickup truck that were to transport the other 15 people and luggage going on the trip from northeastern and central eastern Michigan.

Camp Coast Care (CCC) at Long Beach, Mississippi, is where our diocesan group stayed. It is 1 ½ hours east of New Orleans, just east of Pass Christian, and west of Biloxi, MS. The complex, about 3 mi. north of Hwy 90 which follows the Gulf of Mexico shoreline, has existed on the grounds of Coast Episcopal School since Katrina hit the region. More than 1,800 people were killed, including 238 MS residents +64 from MS still missing. As of December 1, 2008, 1,783 FEMA trailers and 2,400 "Katrina cottages" are still being used by coastal residents.

CCC is operated by Lutheran Episcopal Services in MS. It has evolved through different stages as needs have changed since the storm. Rehabilitation and new construction of homes will be continued by this organization in this area through 2012.

The complex contains a large steel-framed building which can accommodate at least 80 adult volunteers. There are barracks-like bunk rooms with a wall and restrooms and showers separating the men and women. The large kitchen provides three meals per workday. The dining /meeting room also houses worship space for St. Patrick's Episcopal Church.

There were only about thirty volunteers using the facility the week we were there. The 18 people from our diocese worked at six of the seven job sites (including the Camp site itself) over the five work days. Jake did finish caulk and interior trim, laid large ceramic floor tiles in a laundry room, put in cement board above a tub, and installed the small ceramic tiles on it the next day. Some worked independently, but most worked in at least teams of two. Shirley helped paint interior walls--taping, striking in, touching up. On a team of four, she helped tear down a 70' chain link fence and clear the fence row of vines in preparation for a new chain link fence and dug postholes before we cemented in the new steel posts. Part of one afternoon, Shirley helped a "demo" crew strip vinyl siding from an unclaimable house to be torn down.

The people living in the houses and FEMA trailers where our diocesan crews worked were very appreciative of the volunteer work being done. They were assisting and/or giving input in various ways but were in need of the help in completing their housing projects. A number of our crew also served on the camp's building and grounds brigade and as kitchen and housekeeping volunteers at various times.

Your diocese was well represented by an energetic crew! Jake and I learned some new home maintenance “skills” as we helped people who had been through much trauma--the loss of friends, family, pets and “things” needed for daily living. We both feel more thankful for all aspects of our lives. We learned to be less judgmental and to listen to victims’ stories.

The most surprising gifts we received in preparing for this trip was financial assistance from our Saginaw Valley Convocation and from the collection taken up here at St. Johns-Alma for our mission trip before we left. We had no idea how many of you wanted us to be representative of you on this venture! Thank you so much!

Thank you also for the many prayers for safety during this trip.

Jake and Shirley Hamilton
Parish Outreach

First of all, I want to thank all the contributors in our parish and also the Saginaw Valley Convocation for their generous support. Of the money paid to Camp Coast Care from our Diocese (\$140.00 each), \$15.00 per person (18 x \$15 = \$270) was donated to the Robinsons who are living in their home while under renovation. There is so much more work to be done - and Camp Coast Care plans to continue this work with the help of the volunteers who show up and with contributions from their various resources.

For myself, it was a fabulous experience. Meeting volunteers from other parts of our Diocese -- Alpena, Brown City, Port Huron, Marine City, St. Clair, as well as from Vermont, Washington, D.C., Florida, and Washington

State was interesting. We all worked at projects assigned by the construction supervisors at Camp Coast Care. The Camp itself was well organized - we had a tight schedule: lights out at 10:00 p.m., lights on at 6:00 a.m., breakfast at 6:30 a.m., morning meeting at 7:00 a.m. - work for the day reviewed and assigned in crews - and morning devotions. Lunch and water went with us and we returned at various times before 4:30 p.m. in time to shower and meet again at 5:00 pm for review of the day and prayer. Dinner at 6:00 p.m. Lots of time to talk with others and exchange ideas from their churches. Time to relax before 10:00 p.m. lights out.

At the end of the week those of us who had started as strangers had become friends and had worked hard side by side all week. Shirley and I were on the same crew. We painted, trimmed at two different sites and moved furniture around to do so. We removed 70 ft of 6 ft high chain link fence, and prepared the area, dug post holes and set new poles in cement for the weekend. A new crew on Monday would hang the fence and complete the job. We took siding off a house that was to be demolished. The siding would be re-used. We were stretched to the limit and it was good.

Barbara Gladding