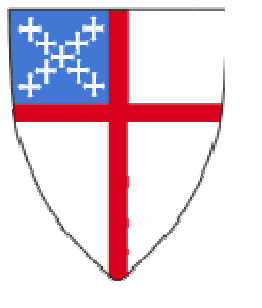


The Fabric of St. John's



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



July 2009

Pastor's Corner

“We emerged from the folds of time, each an intense mixture of visible and invisible” (John O’Donohue). This poetic description of our particular interruption of time and space helps to put into perspective who we are and why we are here. The integration of time and eternity, the desires of this life and the desire to be with God in the next are often in conflict. That conflict expressing itself in the manner we treat one another, often well some times not, the feelings of guilt when we have been less than what God intended us to be. And yet, the joy of a beautiful sunrise or sunset, the love experienced when you receive a gift for no other reason than that you are you. All of these experiences and so many more are the expression of our visible and invisible selves.

Being both mortal and eternal can be a bit much, on the other hand who would have it any other way. After all, the Word became human to find out and decided we were worth redeeming.

**May the Angel of Justice disturb you
To take the side of the poor and the wronged.**

**May the Angel of Encouragement confirm you
In worth and self respect,
That you may live with the dignity
That presides in your soul.**

.....
**May all the Angels be your sheltering
And joyful guardians.**

John O’Donohue 2008

Mary+

What's Going on at St. John's

Highlights from the Vestry

The Vestry met on Monday, June 8th with five members present.

The last weekend of every month will be Morning Prayer because Rev. Mary is Dean of Formation for the seminarians and will be teaching in the program beginning in August. She will provide a schedule. Heather Kesselring is interested in becoming a lay worship leader and will be trading off with Barbara Gladding.

Convocation counsel meeting: Bishop Todd would like to meet with the delegates on Saturday, June 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at St. Matthew's in Saginaw. Vickie Bethka says that Jake and Shirley Hamilton will attend.

Rev. Mary suggests we organize a walk, run or bike ride using the new trail to earn money for a charity. It would take a great deal of organization and advertising and we could possibly get the word out to other churches. This is just for thought as nothing can be decided at this meeting. We could possibly organize something for the fall. Vickie Bethka suggests we invite other churches to be involved.

Senior Warden, Vickie Bethka, checked further into a request for the use of the Parish Hall for a fundraiser, which was declined. Rev. Mary will write up a reminder to be placed in the Newsletter about usage of the Parish Hall.

The Vestry will meet in July, on the 12th after church, and skip the August meeting.

We need to look seriously at moving forward to get the roof repaired. We have been sending \$100 to the Diocese every month. The designated funds are staying well supplied and we should try to repay what we borrow. There is \$9000 in Edward Jones and we could use some of the Bartley Trust Fund toward the roof repairs. Doug Ballard has checked with the trustees, and they have agreed it is within the guidelines for use of the money. Rev. Mary will do further checking on the bids and comparing the differences in the estimates. We will pool what

resources we have and try to have the repairs done before winter.

Episcopal Church Women

ECW met on Saturday, June 13th, at 10:00 a.m. We had special prayers for Kenalee Atchinson, Kay Crispin and Sue Young.

Graduation recognition was held at the coffee hour on Sunday, June 7th. Bea Palmer made a lovely cake. Erin Harrier was the only graduate present. She received a BS from Central Michigan University. Her son, Mike Harrier, received a BA from Central Michigan but he was already working at his new job in Alaska.

The Eucharist in the Park will be held at the church this year on Sunday, June 28th. The Eucharist will be in the church, but the picnic will be held outdoors or indoors as you please. The men will grill hot dogs and hamburgers, and those attending should bring salads and potato chips and other picnic food.

Vickie Bethka has charge of funeral dinners and she would like to purchase heavy duty paper plates and flatware to be used only on these occasions. Sam's club has a package deal of 300 plates, small plates, flatware for about \$127. ECW approved the purchase of a set to be used only for funeral dinners.

ECW will not meet during the summer, so the next meeting will be Saturday, September 12th, at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. We hope more women will consider attending as this will be a planning meeting for the coming year. We will set the dates for special events, so your input would be very valuable. Come and join us!!

Episcopal Relief and Development

At the church picnic on June 28th we will take up a collection for Episcopal Relief and Development which is the national Episcopal church organization which provides help and relief for hurricanes, tornados, and all other kinds of happenings throughout the world. One of the major projects is the furnishing of mosquito nets to families in Africa for the prevention of malaria in

babies and children. We have a need to do more Outreach in our parish. The following article was submitted by Barbara Gladding. The columnist is Ronald Clark.

Outreach

The overwhelming ambition of this generation, it seems, is to strive for, and obtain, the “Good Life.” And, if our “Good Life” must come at the expense of others, that’s too bad. “Loving your neighbor as you love yourself” is certainly not our supreme social motto today.

And so, we have a world “at odds” with itself, where competition supersedes cooperation. The “strong” usually become rich, successful, while the “weak” remain poor. “Developed” nations have “too much,” while “Third world” countries often suffer and starve.

How does Jesus Christ feel about this?? Will this terrible situation ever change?

Ah, yes, there seems to be increasing hope! More and more these days we hear the term OUTREACH, coming especially from the churches.

OUTREACH demands many things from Christians. First, we must all thoroughly examine ourselves. What is our attitude towards ourselves and others? Are we Christ like?

Part of the examination requires us to take stock of our possessions. Do we really NEED all we have? Do we NEED more? Most of us are very good at WANTING so much more than we actually NEED. If we are honest Christians, we will most likely conclude that we already have far more “things” than we NEED. So, what???

A real Christian stated recently that, if you have things you don’t use very often, that you therefore don’t really need, then these surplus things DON’T actually BELONG to you, they BELONG to SOMEONE who truly NEEDS them. So, why not give them to the needy?? Reach out—donate!

What about our attitude towards MONEY?

First, we Christians must truly understand that, directly or indirectly, our ability to earn comes from God. Who else gives us the time, the health, the talent/ability to do work and earn? Shouldn’t we all truly return to him a fair share of his gifts?

Does God really NEED our gifts?

How else does his church REACHOUT, to bring his children into his kingdom?

How else can we prosperous people REACH OUT to our poor, suffering brothers and sisters elsewhere?

OUTREACH requires that we carefully, conscientiously, examine our incomes!

How much do we REALLY NEED? How much does GOD need? Are we actually keeping too much? Giving too little?

How much can we give away? Till it really HURTS?? How about SACRIFICAL giving?? If we sacrifice ourselves can’t we TRUST God to give us, even more to satisfy our NEEDS? My wise old grandfather used to say, “my son, you’ll never go bankrupt giving to the poor!” He himself died with more than enough.

OUTREACH, thank God, is now becoming more widespread. Churches send mission groups to Third World countries, bringing supplies, building hospitals and schools. Wealthy corporations and individuals use vast sums of their money in needy countries. Great stuff! But unfilled needs are still enormous. And, what are you and I doing?

Have we truly examined our financial situations? Have we determined whether we are allotting enough to God and his needs? Have we enough faith in God to give to him sacrificially?

A good Christian I know recently decided to sacrifice some of his “luxuries.” He cut back on his “entertainment,” cut out “rich foods,” gave up smoking and decided not to buy a new snow machine, even saved money by not renewing subscriptions to favorite magazines he’d had for years. The total money saved paid the upkeep of an African orphan for a year, bought medicines, sent several sheep and hens to an African family and furnished a whole school with supplies in Guatemala!

I’m really pleased with myself,” he stated, “and I know for sure that I can and will do more!”

The Good Lord would surely say to you and I: Go thou, and do likewise!”

REACH OUT, BEYOND YOURSELF! For God's sake!

Help for St. Paul's, Saginaw

A feeding program is held at St. Paul's, Saginaw every day with other churches in Saginaw helping out. But on Sunday, they have to do it alone and are asking for volunteers to help out during the summer. Most of July and all of August has Sundays where we could help out. We would need to cook the food here at our church and then carry it to St. Paul's and serve it. We need some who will cook and about 10 people to go to St. Paul's and do the serving. It is a wonderful Outreach experience and those who have gone in the past have felt enriched by it. Do you think we could sign up for a Sunday this summer? Do you think we could find enough volunteers to help serve the meal? Think about it, but not too long. We need to know. Talk about it with Barbara Gladding or Vickie Bethka or Rev. Mary. Do it now!

Let us Pray for those who have asked for our prayers for healing or guidance.

Betty Wright (Friend of Margaret Trimmer)
Bill Davidson (Friend of Mike Bethka)
Dean and Trish Wilson (Friends of Jerry and Kay Crispin)
Francis Hamilton (Hamilton relative)
Jim and Diane Harper (Margaret Trimmer's relative)
Kay Crispin (Member)
Royce Clark (Member)
Tony Dill (Relative in Military of Jake and Shirley Hamilton)
Varda Hanson (Friend of Rev. Delaney)
William Harris (Member in Masonic Home)
Karl Wakeman (Member and friend of Dick and Carolyn Anderson)
Bishop Todd Ousley (recovering from a mild heart attack on June 12th)

Birthdays in July

1 Raquel Ballard
6 Jackie Warsop
6 Tom Trimmer
12 Angie Ballard
15 Nancy Jerry
16 Mary Dill
19 Phil Warsop
20 Alex Radzibon
25 Margaret Trimmer

General Convention in Anaheim

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church is held every three years and this year it will be held from July 8th to July 17th in Anaheim, California. The church will discuss many resolutions and make many decisions about the governing of the church. Jerry and Cindy Kabell will be attending the Convention and hopefully they will tell us about it when they return to Alma, just before they leave for Pakistan in late July. It is important that we be aware of what is going on and to pray for those participating. Here is a prayer that you might use in your daily prayers:

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those in preparation to serve at the House of Bishops and House of Deputies this summer for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach them in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide them to perceive what is right, and grant them both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Daughters of the King Prayer

Lord, thank you for providing something to hold on to when everything in this world seems to be shaking. My hope in Jesus is an anchor for my soul and will keep me steady in all the storms of life. Thank you for the promise that those who flee to you for refuge can take new courage because your promises are true and you never break your word! AMEN.

Daughters of the King News

Thanks to everyone who attended the Blanket making workshop. Four more blankets were completed and will be delivered. Thanks also to all who attended the Taize' service. Our July meeting will be held after church on the 26th.

Wendy

Choose Your Job at Church

Jake Hamilton, our Junior Warden, has made a list of projects that need to be completed at the church. The list is posted in the Parish Hall on an easel so that you can easily read it and check those which you could do. These are work that our sexton cannot be asked to do, but things that need to be done. Look at the list, and if there is something you can do, put your initials by the project. When it is completed, check it off and sign your name. Talk to Jake if you have questions.

Jerry and Cindy Kabell

We were happy to welcome the Kabell's to church on Sunday, June 21st. They brought pictures of their home in Lahore and the University and their friends. They are here from Lahore, Pakistan for about six weeks to see their sons, Ian and Kenneth, who live in Mt. Pleasant and Lake Isabella. Jerry has completed a year of teaching at Forman Christian University where he is chairman of the computer department. They will return for at least two more years at the University. Cindy has been busy tutoring a dyslexic 7-year old girl who has made much progress with Cindy's help. This summer they will travel to Alabama where they hope to purchase a home for their retirement, and then travel to California to visit Cindy's mother and go to Convention.

Living in Pakistan involves many choices and Cindy Kabell has written an article to tell us of the many choices she faces.

Choices

In our life in Pakistan the last two and a half years we have had to make choices daily, always keeping in mind why we are there in the country in the first place. For example – answering the door, or, sometimes, since this is the Punjab, greeting people after they have already appeared in my living room. People come all the time and I am often left to deal with them with a mixture of a few words in their English and my Urdu and sign language. I struggle with this, but we have made a conscious decision to accept everyone that comes as someone God with has sent. (I do, however, have a rule that babies must wear diapers). One frequent caller at our house is our gardener. Although he has very little schooling, his faith is deep and clear. We choose to accept his visits humility and gratitude for his wisdom and prayers.

When traveling on any roads, it is a no-brainer to choose to pray continuously. While there are traffic laws, no one bothers to observe them and when this traffic chaos is mixed in with donkey carts, horse carts, sheep, goats and sometimes camels, prayer is advised. Prayer is also advised in encountering the outside world as well. We are assumed to be Christians when we appear in public and it is hard to choose how to react to the overwhelming poverty. There is not money enough for every beggar, and many of those beggars are forced to turn over their money to others at the end of the day. We choose to invest in the education of some young and bright Pakistani's, although our heart aches for all we are not helping. Our Bible study group has discussed this often and together we hope to get better clarity on this issue.

We have chosen to support the Pakistani Christian community in whatever ways we can. The Christian population in the country is about 2% and they face daily persecution – not life threatening persecution but job and educational discrimination and verbal (sometimes physical abuse). Jerry, in the course of his professional work, was invited to a town in the Sindh, the southeastern province. As Sunday came close, we asked the faculty of the University where he was speaking for the time of church. Since they were all Muslim and hadn't had to think about this before, this engendered a good deal of conversation around the dinner table. Finally one of them had an idea. "We'll ask the Christian student." Yes, out of 2, 000 plus students at that University – one Christian student. That boy faced choices every day that students in this country can't imagine.

We face choices every day regarding our safety. We have had bombs rattle our windows twice in the past year, with the immediate thought as to where the members of our extended Christian community are at that time. We are indeed a small group, and are deeply concerned for each other. Pakistan has always had its times of unrest since it was founded in 1947 and we pray that it emerges from this one. It is a little disconcerting to go on a church picnic when our bus filled with picnic goers said Forman Christian College in big letters on the side and left with an armed guard. We chose to get on the bus and it was a great picnic with a lot of fun. By the way, I should put in that our church picnic was in early February. We were sitting in the sun eating grilled chicken then – some choices are very good.

Then there are the choices that I don't make very well. There is not enough electrical power in Pakistan, so the power is on one hour and off one hour. I could accept this in a Godly fashion. I really, could. Let's just say that as a result of my attitude, our little parrot swears every time the lights and air conditioner go out. (We are running close to 120 degrees every day, so it is no small thing.) I also have a problem with bugs of all kinds and lizards running around the bedroom at night when I am trying to sleep. God created them – yeah, I know that. Choices, choices.

On July 30 we will also have another choice to make. That is when we get on the plane to head back to Pakistan. We have seen the rewards of the work there. We have watched the kids we have worked with at Murree Christian School grow and mature and we continue to be in touch with them. Two of the students from there have been attending Forman Christian College. Forman Christian College just graduated 296 students, and 32 of them were Christian. That is huge to add so much to those who will be shaping the future of Pakistan. There are lives touched in other ways, people to people, friend to friend. Choices – choices. It isn't easy, but the rewards are great.

Pray that we make the right choices as we continue to work in Pakistan. Pray for the Pakistani Christian community as they live out their faith under so many obstacles and pray also for the country of Pakistan that the right choices will be made by those in power.

Cindy and Jerry Kabell

July Schedule

Wednesday, July 1

Thursday, July 2

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

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

Friday, July 3

Saturday, July 4, Independence Day

Sunday, July 5

9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Monday, July 6

Tuesday, July 7

9:00 a.m. Plaid Door Check Writing

Wednesday July 8

**General Convention starts at Anaheim.
California**

Thursday, July 9

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

General Convention at Anaheim

Friday, July 10

General Convention at Anaheim

Saturday, July 11

General Convention at Anaheim

Sunday, July 12

9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 a.m. Vestry Meeting

General Convention at Anaheim

Monday, July 13

General Convention at Anaheim

Tuesday, July 14

General Convention at Anaheim

Wednesday, July 15

General Convention at Anaheim

Thursday, July 16

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

General Convention at Anaheim

Friday, July 17

**General Convention ends at Anaheim,
California**

Saturday, July 18

Sunday, July 19

9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

Monday, July 20

Tuesday, July 21

**12:00 p.m. Commission on Ministry at
Diocesan Office**

Wednesday, July 22

Thursday, July 23

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

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

Friday, July 24

Saturday, July 25

Sunday, July 26

9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 a.m. Daughters of the King

Business Meeting

Monday, July 27

Tuesday, July 28

Wednesday, July 29

Thursday, July 30

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, July 31