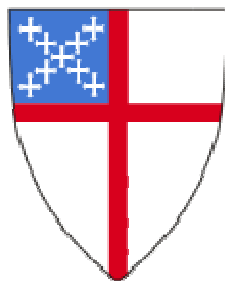


The Fabric of St. John's



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



April 2010

Pastor's Corner

Spring has sprung
The grass is riz
I wonder where da birdies is!

This silly little rhyme, which I am sure we have all heard, is usually recited when we hear the first robin and get the first whiff of spring. I've been thinking of the rebirth that we witness each spring and how we look forward to it. We look in everyone's yard to see the first crocuses and daffodils if we don't have any in our own yard as yet. Flowers mean so much to us, especially the perennials. We count on them to confirm that spring has indeed arrived. Everything is fresh and new and anything is possible; our spirits automatically lift with the longer days and the visible signs of changing weather. Think what it would be like if the world were perpetual winter!

As we celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Savior on April 4th, I believe we will have even more joy than usual because we at St. Johns contributed so generously to the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund. We sent over \$700 to help, and from a small congregation I believe that demonstrated giving from the heart.

God's blessings,
Mary

Beginnings

by John O'Donohue

I arise today

In the name of Silence
Womb of the Word,
In the name of Stillness
Home of Belonging,
Of the Soul and the Earth.

Urgency of thought,
Miracle of health,
Embrace of God.

I arise today

Blessed by all things,
Wings of breath,
Delight of eyes,
Wonder of whisper,
Intimacy of touch,
Eternity of soul,

May I live this day

Compassionate of heart,
Clear in word,
Gracious in awareness,
Courageous in thought,
Generous in Love.

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

Vestry Highlights

These are some highlights from the Vestry meets on February 14th and March 14th.

Jake Hamilton was unanimously elected as Senior Warden, but a Junior Warden has not been chosen as yet. Kenalee Atchison has volunteered to be Co-Junior Warden if another person can be found to help her.

It has been suggested that we have a portable lit sign out front to advertise our special events. There was discussion of how to obtain one, maybe rent one or purchase a used one. We do have a sandwich-board sign, and it was suggested that we could place this somewhere to advertise our special events. In March it was agreed that we will have to make do with the portable sandwich-board sign.

We do have another leak in the roof!

It was discussed that we have albs worn by the LEMs. It was passed that albs should be worn. We have some that can be altered and Bev

Anderson volunteered to do hems. Rev. Mary will be training the LEMs in a modified role of Deacon.

At the March meeting, the times for the Sunday service came up. It was approved by the Vestry that during daylight savings time, the church service will be at 10:00 a.m. with Christian education at 9:00 a.m. When we go back to Standard Time in November, we will go to the 11:00 a.m. service time with 10:00 a.m. for Christian education.

Easter service on April 4th will be at 10:00 a.m. with an Easter breakfast at 9:00 a.m.

We need a Public Relations person for the church, someone who will get events advertised, such as in the Gratiot County Herald.

Daughters of the King Prayer

LORD,

I pray you'll fill my soul
With beauty and laughter as I grow
Please hold my hand as I walk this road
And carry me off when I get old
And when I feel empty and alone
Please give me faith to hold my own

Never leave my side, lord, I plead
Here I am to follow in your lead.
AMEN

Daughter of the King News

Thanks to everyone who attended our Taize' service on the 21st. We will hold another one in June. All are welcome to attend.

Our next blanket workshop is scheduled for Saturday April 10th, 2-4pm, feel free to bring a snack or fleece 2 or 1 1/2 yards each. We usually tie a patterned piece to a plain piece. Only skills need are cutting and tying. All are invited. Blankets are donated to patients on the dialysis unit here at Gratiot Community Hospital. There is a growing demand and they are well used and appreciated.

Our next business meeting is April 25 after church. All women are invited to join us or at least check us out. We are also looking at hosting a lawn/craft show in late July or early August, so keep your ears open for more info.

YOUTH GROUP

Welcome to Jade and Gabrielle. We are glad to have you. We will be helping with the annual Easter Egg hunt, and are always on the look out for ways to help around the church. Suggestions appreciated.

We continue to work on understanding our church and our roles in it and it's role in us. After the Easter season we hope to get back to our monthly discussion at the local Burger King. So plan on meeting there on May 2nd. Hope everyone has a blessed Easter season.

Wendy Brown

Church Leadership Conference – March 13, 2010

Rev. Mary, Shirley and I attended this conference at Trinity Church in Bay City. IT WAS A DAY WELL SPENT!

Bishop Todd led off with a brief introduction on the “challenge” of “Being relevant to society’s

needs. The Rev. Martin Field, St. Paul’s Flint, then led us on to several small group discussion activities concerning leadership in our local churches.

To give a complete report would take several pages so I’ll sum it up by raising a few questions for us as a congregation along with some of my own thoughts. First, note that in most organizations, whether it be General Motors, Microsoft, a college basketball team, the Episcopal Church, or St. John’s Alma, there is a bell curve of start-up, growth, leveling off, stagnation and finally decline. Once one is in the stagnation/decline stage it is time for redevelopment and rebirth. It’s quite obvious where St. John’s falls on this curve. But don’t be discouraged because we can “start-up” again by asking some tough questions.

What are we?

Where are we going and why?

WHAT GIVES US ENERGY?

What has God done for us this week, this month, this year, etc.?

What are our unexpected blessings?

.....What does our community need -community being anywhere within thirty miles of St. Johns.

Once we answer at least some of these questions we can start redeveloping and rebirthing St. John’s. That is, what needs to die, what do we need to let go and what does God want us to do? To help us on this journey, ask what if, why not, and should we?

A full text of the day’s presentation can be found on the Diocesan web site. There will be follow-up sessions in the on the months to come. Watch for them and try to attend.

As a direct result of the positive energy produced at this conference, St. John’s-Alma’s vestry has scheduled a congregational meeting for May 2, 2010, after church, just before our monthly pot luck.

In closing, keep in mind this quote by Rabbi Albert Lewis in Mitch Albom’s book, Have a Little Faith, “Let us be comforted by God who is always with us, even when he says no!”

Jake Hamilton, Sr. Warden

Spring Tea - April 24

Our annual Spring Tea is being held on Saturday, April 24, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The tables are sold out but there are some seats available at different tables. Call Shirley Hamilton for a ticket. The cost is \$6.50. Entertainment is going to be different—we have heard it is going to be bridal gowns. Should be very interesting!

Saginaw Valley Convocation Council Meeting

7 pm, Monday, March 15, 2010; Location – St. Alban's Church, Bay City
Representing St. John's – Alma: Jake and Shirley Hamilton

Our new dean, The Very Rev. Robert Skirving, St. John's, Midland, led the Bible Study on John 12: 1-8. Two main questions considered:

1. How do we use the resources we have?
2. How do we nurture the presence of Christ in our life?

The February 15 Secretary's Report and the current Treasurer's Report were distributed. There was no Standing Committee Report as they did not meet. A convocation secretary for 2010 is needed! A volunteer is being sought.

Saginaw Valley Convocation Grant Guidelines and Grant Request Form are available in our church office and from Jake/Shirley Hamilton. All churches are reminded that help is available for Christian Formation, Christian Growth/Development, Witness/Evangelism, and Social Service projects. There was discussion of the Saturday, March 13, Diocesan Leadership Meeting at Trinity Church of Bay City. Reactions shared.

Harold, a non-convocation representative, attended the meeting in order to witness to the group the many blessings he had received as a volunteer since 2001 at the Food for Faith outreach to the community project at Trinity Church -Bay City.

Next scheduled meeting: 7 pm, Monday, April 19. A motion passed granting Chair Leibrand permission to cancel if not enough business on the agenda.

Episcopal Church Women News

The women met on Sunday, March 21, after church. A schedule of meetings and events for 2010 was worked out.

We are still collecting items for Women's Aid. Place items on the table in the library next to the church office. Cash items should be put in the office and please leave a note in Kay Wohlfeill's mailbox so she will add these items to our collection. New and gently used items are welcome. Don't forget to shop at the Plaid Door for great bargains.

Upcoming events are the Easter Breakfast on Sunday, April 4 at 8:30 a.m. and the Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30 a.m. Easter service is at 10:00 a.m. See Vickie Bethka for tickets to the Spring Tea on April 24 from 2-4 p.m.

June will be a busy month with Graduation Celebration on June 6; Father's Day-Sunday Sundae Sunday on June 20; and Church Yard Picnic on June 27. Come join the fun and fellowship!

The next ECW meeting will be Sunday, May 16 immediately following the church service.

We are Happy to Welcome the Mitchells!!

Last fall the Mitchell family from the countryside near Ashley began attending church here at St. John's. The family includes Bob and Lise Mitchell, Charlie, age seven, and five year old Karen.

Bob was born and raised in Lansing and has been with GM for 25 years as a machine repairman. He is currently working at the Delta stamping plant in Lansing. Bob's mom and brother's family still live in Lansing. Besides loving how to figure out how machines work and how best to fix them. Bob loves photography, Geocaching, and nature walks. He is an excellent cook!

Lise was born and raised in southeast Michigan (Pleasant Ridge to be exact). She has been the library director at the public library system in Mt. Pleasant, the Chippewa River District Library, since 1999. Lise is the youngest of six, with one brother and one sister in Michigan, one brother in Ohio, one brother in Hawaii, and one sister in Germany. Lise loves horses and hopes one day to get back to riding, is trying out quilting, and loves to read science fiction.

Bob was raised Methodist and Lise Catholic. They were married in April 2000 at Greenfield Village in a Renaissance themed wedding. They frequently attend the Renaissance festivals around Michigan.

Charlie and Karen are doing well at school. Charlie is in Second Grade and Karen is a Kindergartener in Ashley Community Schools. Both enjoy soccer, fishing, nature walks, water parks, and animals. Charlie is a Wolf Scout. Karen is taking dance classes at Duhadway Dance.

Bob and Lise want to say thank you for the warm welcome received at St. John's and look forward to growing with this community and joining the Episcopal faith.

Thank you to the Mitchells for sharing information about themselves. The Mitchell family is participating in our Christian Ed classes.

Bob was one of the judges for our March Chili Cook Off. Lise has been offering her skills and laptop at ECW meetings as she records Secretary's minutes on the spot. If you are here

for the Easter breakfast, you will see her in the kitchen as she chairs that event for ECW and all of us!

Shirley Hamilton
ECW Outreach

United Thank Offering

The annual Ingathering for the United Thank Offering will be Sunday, May 2. By now, your Blue Boxes should be overflowing with coins of thankfulness. Pick up a Blue envelope or another Blue Box in the Narthex. Put your offering in the Alms basins at the 10:00 a.m. service. If it is in a Blue envelope or Blue Box, we will know it is for the UTO collection.

Remember that every coin goes to grants that UTO gives out. Over two million dollars is given out each year to churches, schools and diocesan projects all over the world. This is a wonderful way to do outreach and express your thankfulness to our Lord and Savior at the same time.

April Birthdays

7 Sue Young
7 Jay Atchinson
14 Melba Demas
19 Marilyn McClintic

Your Prayers are asked for healing and guidance

Adam and Tracy Chatfield (Relatives of Jerry and Kay Crispin)
Alana Rodgers (Relative of Barbara Gladding)
David Long (Member)
Esther Jackson (Relative of J. Hamilton)
Francis Hamilton (Father of J. Hamilton)
Grace Dean (Relative of Barbara Gladding)
Karl Wakeman (Member)
Kimberly Hodge (Relative of Jerry and Kay Crispin)
Shawn Wells (Relative of J. Hamilton)
Catherine McDonald (Military-C. Zilch)
Karl Ruschman (Military-A. Radzibon)
Tony Dill (Military-J. & S. Hamilton)

Holy Week

Monday, March 29 Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 30 Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 31 Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 1, Maundy Thursday

Holy Eucharist at 7:00 p.m.

Friday, April 2, Good Friday Service at 1:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 4 Easter

Easter Breakfast at 8:30 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30 a.m.

Celebration of the Resurrection at 10:00 a.m.

April Schedule

Thursday, April 1, Maundy Thursday

7:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Friday, April 2, Good Friday

1:00 p.m. Good Friday Service

Saturday, April 3

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

Sunday, April 4, Easter

8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast

9:30 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt

10:00 a.m. Celebration of the Resurrection

Monday, April 5

Tuesday, April 6

9:00 a.m. Plaid Door Check Writing

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, April 7

Thursday, April 8

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

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

Friday, April 9

Saturday, April 10

2:00p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Fleece Blanket Workshop in Parish Hall

Sunday, April 11

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist and Sermon

11:30 Vestry Meeting

Monday, April 12

Tuesday, April 13

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

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

Wednesday, April 14

Thursday, April 15

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, April 16

Saturday, April 17

Sunday, April 18

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

Monday, April 19

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

Tuesday, April 20

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, April 21

Thursday, April 22

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

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

Friday, April 23

Saturday, April 24

2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Spring Tea

Sunday, April 25

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, April 26

Tuesday, April 27

7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Wednesday, April 28

Thursday, April 29

8:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth Group

Friday, April 30

I said a prayer for you today
And know God must have heard-
I felt the answer in my heart
Although He spoke no word!
I didn't ask for wealth or fame
I know you wouldn't mind-
I asked Him to send treasures
of a far more lasting kind!
I asked that He'd be near you
at the start of each new day.
To grant you health and blessings
And friends to share your way.
I asked for happiness for you
In all things great and small-
But it was for His loving care
I prayed the most of all!