

# THE RECTOR'S CHRONICLE

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A NEWSLETTER OF THE CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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June, 2010

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

Remember our Prayer Boxes? We still have a half-dozen out in various places. And faithful volunteers collect the prayer requests, which also come in from our web site, and circulate them to those who have agreed to pray for each request every day for a week. We also remember the requests at the Wednesday Mass each week. This work of intercession is part of the ministry of the parish, and you should be aware of it even if you are not directly involved. Additional prayers are most welcome. I think we have all found it humbling to be counted worthy to share in others' needs. While praying does not take a lot of time, it does take some discipline and effort – and I encourage you to consider joining our happy band.

## Summer Schedule

As we have in recent years, we will go to a single Mass on Sundays during July and August. The Mass will be a said Mass with hymns and sermon at ten. This affords us the opportunity to get the two congregations together, which I know is appreciated by folk from eight as well as ten. We start the summer “coffee hour” – iced tea and lemonade outside, weather permitting – in June.

I expect to be away on holiday for a week and a half in June and a couple of weeks in August. Fr Harold Minor will be taking the Sunday services when I am away in June. You may remember him from last summer when he also helped us out. I am grateful to him for his willingness to travel down from Easton to help us out – and also to the various people in the parish who manage the many practical details for the Masses. During the times I am away (I will also be away later in June for Diocesan Synod), the weekday Mass schedule will be suspended. I regret that, but with the current logistical situation, there seems no feasible alternative. During the summer, each week's weekday schedule is announced on Sunday. If in doubt, please call the rectory (215-247-1092) before you come.

If you are traveling this summer, remember that worship does not take a vacation. Do take the effort to find a church where you can join in the offering of the Mass while you are away. I'm willing to try to make suggestions before you leave if that would be helpful. If you don't travel, then please remember that the Chapel of Peace is air conditioned, and will provide a welcome relief from the heat – also a much needed relief from worldliness and self-centeredness, as we encounter the living God in our worship.

Also coming up this summer (in July) is our week-long Bible Camp for the younger children, especially those who have been involved with Homework Club. This is tentatively scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> at the Laurel Hill Cemetery Gatehouse in the “old” neighborhood. Volunteers welcome: please speak with Beth. We will also be helping (by scholarship and transportation) a number of our older children to go to church camp in July.

## Diocesan Synod

I would ask your prayers for our up-coming Diocesan Synod, June 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> in Columbus, Georgia. It appears likely that this synod will receive details about the offer of inter-communion with the Roman Catholic Church, and begin discussions of a response. As you can imagine, this has the potential for being divisive. As Anglicans, we have all been “not Roman:” this has been part of our identity. The reasons for being “not Roman” vary from person to person – for some it is doctrinal, for others it is rooted in a bad personal experience, for others it may have more to do with worship, aesthetics or ascetics. For all of us, it is probably also a matter of habit, to some extent at least, and we could all say with some degree of truth, “I don't want to be Roman.” So before we even get to the particulars, the idea of entering into communion with the See of Peter goes against the grain.

At St Michael's, we have been aware of the Apostolic Constitution which Rome published last fall, and of the conversations between the Traditional Anglican Communion (of which we are a part) and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican. We have not tried to figure out what we think about it, since we lack key details about how the Constitution would apply in our situation, and it did not seem worthwhile to try to discuss it with so many unknowns. I hope that these details will be available at Synod, and if so, I will make them available as soon as possible after we return. (Though I have not heard them, I gather that a new set of rumors is circulating about the ACA and its – our – response to the Roman offer. I think it would be both safe and prudent to ignore these, whatever they are, until we have reliable information, presumably from the Synod.) Since we are a part of the Traditional Anglican Communion, which must decide how to respond to the Roman offer, we, too, will need to make a decision.

The first step in our discussion will be to help everyone be clear about exactly what entering into the Anglican Ordinariate (the structure which the Constitution sets up in communion with the Roman Church) would mean for us as individuals and as a parish. Then the next step is to discern what God would have us do about it.

This will require prayer, humility, and charity, as well as deliberations. It will require that we listen carefully and attentively to one another. (Assuming that we do have the chance to discuss the matter at Synod, I am particularly interested to hear what others in the Diocese think.) Since it is likely that people already lean one way or the other, we will have our work cut out for us to make sure our discussions are godly – doing all we can to get self out of the way and let God have His way with us. I cannot tell you what that is. We will need to listen to one another, to work together, and trust that God will guide us to a common mind, as He did a decade ago about leaving the Episcopal Church. As He did with Israel of old, He has given us good reason to trust Him – but (also like Israel) we need to practice and cultivate that trust every day.

### Parish News

We have put together a new *Parish Directory*. If you did not get one on Sunday, and would like one mailed, please let me know. I would remind you (probably unnecessarily) that the information in the Directory is for internal use, and not for general circulation. Don't give the email addresses to spammers!

The Trinity set of paintings for the “wings” of the *Altarpiece* at West Laurel Hill are now in place – and will be until Advent. Again, we extend our thanks to Chris Jordan for a wonderful work. This set includes scenes from our Lord's earthly ministry, including the first great catch of fish, the healing (and forgiveness) of the paralytic let down through the roof, Nicodemus' nocturnal visit to Jesus, the woman who was a sinner washing Jesus' feet with her tears at the house of Simon the Pharisee, the raising of Jairus' daughter, the feeding of the 5000, Jesus' walking on water (and Peter's sinking), and the Transfiguration. Do take a close look after Mass some Sunday. The paintings help make the events concrete to us. Because the artist's view sometimes differs from the way we had pictured the scene in our imagination, it gives us the opportunity to see the event in a new way.

Since we left St James, we have not had a bazaar or fair, since we lack a facility in which to hold it. A parishioner has suggested that as an alternative means of raising money for the parish, we might donate items to be sold on Ebay. It is a worthy suggestion – and one which requires a volunteer or two to do the Ebay work: listing, keeping track of things, and sending the items once they have been sold. The one who sends need not be the same person who lists. The one who lists will need computer and Internet access, and will need to know (or learn) the Ebay process, which is not hard. Any takers? Please let me know.

You may recall that we did a *food and clothing drive for the Whosoever Gospel Mission* during Lent and the beginning of Paschaltide. We have had a very nice thank-you note from the Rev'd Robert Emberger, the director of the Mission. He notes, “We won't know how much we will get from the Feinstein Foundation [Challenge Grant] until August, but in all of the years we have participated in the matching challenge grant, this was the best year ever for us. Thanks for your wonderful generosity!!!” He also notes, “The Mission feeds all its residents three meals a day (not surprisingly!), which comes out to over 73,000 meals a year. With donated food, careful budgeting and a well-run kitchen, the average food cost per meal is twenty-five cents (somewhat less than the rectory). Since part of the program is to teach the men what a good diet looks like, they strive for well-balanced meals that are also appetizing and nutritious. ... Good meals are not the end-all of what we do. However, when a homeless man first arrives at the Mission, a hot, hearty and delicious meal conveys a lot of hope – it tells a broken and hurting man coming off of the street that a better day has arrived. It can also put a smile on his face.” We had also made a collection for Haiti relief, and have had a gracious letter of thanks from the International Anglican Fellowship, the arm of the Traditional Anglican Communion which provides for the relief and mission needs of the foreign churches. Thanks to all of you who contributed!

The *renovations at the Chapel of Peace* are, as you may have observed, well along. The new, handicapped-accessible bathroom is nearly ready for use, and most of the dust-producing work is now past. The paving stones outside the Chapel have all been reset, making falls less likely. Part of the plan is the refinish the stone floors throughout the Chapel, cloister and columbarium. I do not know when that is likely to occur, thought it could conceivably affect our use of the Chapel at some point.

On a related note, *our youth* spent a Sunday afternoon attaching felt pads to the bottoms of all the chair legs in the Chapel, both to reduce the noise when the chairs slide around (which they inevitably do), and to protect the floor, especially after it has been refinished. Perhaps you have noticed that there is less background noise during Mass. I'm grateful to all our young people who worked on this service project.

### Kudos

Thanks goes this month to:

- Jesse Buck, for the donation of a holy water bucket, in thanksgiving for the birth of his son last year (the delay in acquiring it was mine – he was ready to go a year ago).
- all who helped with Homework Club this (school) year: Barbara Freeman, Janis Wilson, and Beth, Nancy and Jonathan Ousley
- Martha Eischen, for teaching Sunday School as well as the confirmation class this year.

For your summer reading (or singing, should you care to), I enclose “The Bishop's Song” which goes to the well-known Gilbert and Sullivan tune. I do not know who originally penned it (it has been around for many years), but I hope you will enjoy it.

Faithfully,

