



The Messenger



The newsletter of St. Mary's Church, an Episcopal-Lutheran Community

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FEBRUARY 2008

The Padre's Pulpit

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Here we go again. The beginning of another (fiscal) year and that means another Diocesan Convention. For the Diocesan staff, it's another major undertaking. The logistics, cost, and programs all require an enormous amount of preparation.

What about the effect of such conventions at the congregational level? Well, each congregation knows it is responsible for sending its priest and constitutionally set number of lay delegates. So for many delegates, it is a boring necessity. Little is found to be interesting, and their report to their congregation will reflect that. For others, those with an issue to vent, it will be a crusade and maybe they will be successful and maybe not; at least they will be involved. Hopefully their issue will be of value to the Diocese, the national Church or society in general and not just a personal "axe to grind."

Unfortunately, for too many delegates and their congregations, the convention holds little interest beyond objecting to an increased budget. Most parishioners listen to or read the brief convention report from their delegates and that's it! It's over and done for another year.

Why is that? Why is there so little interest in the workings of the Diocese? The catchword is "PAROCHIALISM." (Webster's New World Dictionary: 1. Of or in a parish. 2. Restricted in scope.). The lack of interest in the Annual Convention is just one sign of a serious problem that is infecting many, if not most, congregations of every denomination. Church life is so parochial! Our spiritual interests go little further than ourselves in "our" congregation.

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The Padre's Pulpit, continued

For example, how many visitors did we have at St. Mary's on December 2nd, the inaugural service of our new Episcopal-Lutheran ministry? Did you know every congregation of our local Episcopal and Lutheran Deaneries was asked to send someone? Would you believe that clergy of our Episcopal Deanery meet every month for fellowship and sharing, and we are lucky if one third of the clerics attend? Parochialism is alive and well in the church!

Much of our lives centers around ourselves, and a group of such-minded folk centers its life around the group and tends to not relate to the wider community with which their group is affiliated. Because of this parochial attitude, we all suffer. We lose out on so much. In the Church, we can't justify this parochialism on being threatened or fearful of the others. We are Christian brothers and sisters. We all have so much to share and learn from one another. Wouldn't it be great if we actually had people volunteering to be our convention delegates – so many we had to choose? Wouldn't we all benefit if John and Jane Doe came back from their vacation and wanted to report at the coffee hour about an interesting experience they had at a church they visited?

The Church, the Family of God, is so much more than our own parish, and we all have something to give and learn. Little St. Mary's has proven that. We are actually on the agenda of the Convention this year because of it. We have thrown off any parochialism we might have had, going beyond "Episcopalian" to include "Lutheran." And I have a feeling we'll soon be hearing about reaching out beyond the borders of our Diocese, even our Country, and going international. In addition, our own Linda Hadden is very much involved in the 125th Diocesan Anniversary historical presentation at the Convention this year, which will also include some of St. Mary's history thanks to the assistance of other members.

That takes us back to the Diocesan Convention. The Convention is an extension of our congregation. The delegates are all one with us in our church family, and we have much to offer and much to gain by sharing with each other. When we reject parochialism, we will find that such gatherings are actually enjoyable and exciting. Next year, let's see how many of our members offer to be delegates. The last thing we are going to be is parochial!!!

In Christ,
Father B.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 3!

On Sunday, February 3, all voting members of St. Mary's are asked to attend a congregational meeting immediately following 11:00 AM worship.

Lenten Bible Study

As has been the practice for years past, instead of mid-week Lenten Services, St. Mary's has conducted a Lenten Sunday morning study at 10:00AM. (Yes, with coffee ready thanks to MarthaAnn.) Last years participation was great! Hopefully we will be able to out-do ourselves this Lent. If you want to be especially prepared, read Paul's FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS before the first session on February 10. If any of your reading raises questions, write them down and we'll discuss them as we get to those passages. REMEMBER: We need you because we all benefit from each other's participation.

Those of us who knew Father Tom Noe (St. Mary's priest from 1985 to 1988) and his wife, Alice, are saddened to hear of Mrs. Noe's passing in 2007. She was living in Richmond, Virginia and went into the hospital in March for a procedure. Mrs. Noe developed a staph infection that took her life on May 13, 2007. She was laid to rest in the memorial garden at St. John's Church in Wilmington. Notes may be sent to the Noe's daughter, Ms. Sallie Noe, at 14607 Bass River Court, Midlothian, VA 23112.

Submitted by Helen Crouch

WANTED: Lay Assistants and Crucifers

More lay assistants and crucifers are needed to help lead our worship! Please consider volunteering for one or both of these positions. Contact Bob Goslee for more details. Thank you!

Diocese newsletter available via email

You can keep up with the news and events of our Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina by signing up for a monthly email newsletter. Visit www.diocese-eastcarolina.org, scroll to the bottom of the page, and enter your email address in the box provided.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Please join us for our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on February 5 at 6:30 PM. Jimbo Robbins and the men of the church will host this event.

February Water Saving Tip

If you are like most of us, you do not have instant hot water at your sink or tub. You need to let the water run for a while until the hot water finally comes out. Where does all that cold water go before the hot water reaches your hands? Most likely – down the drain! It's wasted...unless you have a container ready to catch the unwanted cold water. Don't waste it. Catch it!!! Use that water on your indoor and outdoor plants. Conserving our natural resources is part of Christian stewardship – not to mention plain common sense. Let's do it!!

MOVIE REVIEW

If you have the opportunity, see the movie *For the Bible Tells Me So*. It's controversial but enlightening and will explain many issues confronting us and the church today. It was featured at the "Wilmington Cucalorus Film Festival" and even contains a very brief appearance (silent) of our own bishop.

Come along on safari!

St. Mary's members are cordially invited to travel on a "Discovery Safari" to Tanzania, East Africa! Trip dates are July 2-17, 2008. Details can be found at www.godparents4tz.org. Please speak with Kristin McFarland if you are interested. *Karibu sana* (Swahili for "you are very welcome")!

Help Pender County kids succeed!

Volunteer with the PaSS (Partnership for school success) Program and help Pender county students. PaSS is a ten week tutoring and mentoring program for third and sixth grade children who need help preparing for their end of grade tests. Volunteers are asked to attend one training session and tutor two students for thirty minutes per week. In 2007, 90.6% of third graders who received tutoring through the PaSS Program were promoted to fourth grade. Information about the PaSS Program is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.

PRAYER LIST

Please continue to pray for MarthaAnn Blake, Joyce Harrell, Bill Lacer, Joe & Kay Lowell, Jackie Robbins, and the Von Oesen family. Also, please pray for Bonnie O'Connor (daughter of Bettie Phelps) and Jeannette Patterson (sister of Linda Hadden) as they continue cancer treatment and Helen Suther (daughter of MarthaAnn Blake) as she recovers from surgery and testing.

February 2008 Sunday Servers

FEBRUARY 3

The Transfiguration of our Lord

Presider	Father Lawrence Baietti
Lay Assistant	Joan Weld
Cantor/Crucifer	Brian Zygmunt
Oblations	Helen Crouch & Linda Hadden
Usher	Bert Yepko
Sunday School	Laura Zygmunt
Altar Guild	Marilyn Von Oesen
Coffee Hour Angels	MarthaAnn Blake & Laura Zygmunt

FEBRUARY 6

Ash Wednesday

Presider	Father Lawrence Baietti
Lay Assistant/Crucifer	Bob Goslee
Altar Guild	MarthaAnn Blake

FEBRUARY 10

First Sunday in Lent

Presider	Father Lawrence Baietti
Lay Assistant	Linda Hadden
Crucifer	Brian Zygmunt
Oblations	Kathy Reid & MarthaAnn Blake
Usher	Bill Lacer
Sunday School	Laura Zygmunt
Altar Guild	Annette Olesen
Coffee Hour Angels	Marion Clark & Joyce Harrell

FEBRUARY 17

Second Sunday in Lent

Presider	Father Lawrence Baietti
Lay Assistant	Pat Casaw
Crucifer	Jimbo Robbins
Oblations	Larry & Annette Olesen
Usher	Larry Olesen
Sunday School	Laura Zygmunt
Altar Guild	MarthaAnn Blake
Coffee Hour Angels	Helen Crouch & Linda Hadden

FEBRUARY 24

Third Sunday in Lent

Presider	Father Lawrence Baietti
Lay Assistant	Brian Zygmunt
Crucifer	Bob Goslee
Oblations	Chauncey & Bettie Phelps
Usher	Chauncey Phelps
Sunday School	Laura Zygmunt
Altar Guild	Marion Clark
Coffee Hour Angels	Bob & Katherine Goslee

VESTRY MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Pat Casaw

February Birthdays

04-Dede Yepko
13-John Corcoran
14-Annette Olesen
16-Mary Caputo
22-Dawn Connor
23-Bettie Phelps
28-Chauncey Phelps

February Baptismal Birthdays

06-Carol Cossette
09-Kristin McFarland
10-Marion Lacer
21-J.P. Walker
21-Nikki Fields Walker
24-Kathy Reid
27-Joyce Harrell
28-Claire Dees

February Calendar Notes

- February 3:** Worship at 11:00 AM (Lutheran)
- February 4:** ECW meeting at 10:00 AM
- February 5:** Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner at 6:30 PM
- February 6:** Ash Wednesday worship at 5:30 PM
- February 10:** Lenten Bible Study at 10:00 AM
Worship at 11:00 AM (Episcopal)
- February 15:** Deadline for submissions to the March newsletter
- February 17:** Lenten Bible Study at 10:00 AM
Worship at 11:00 AM (Episcopal)
Vestry meeting after the Coffee Hour
- February 24:** Lenten Bible Study at 10:00 AM
Worship at 11:00 AM (Episcopal)