

The Grapevine

A Publication of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Methuen, MA

From the Senior Warden:

Dear Friends of St. Andrew's:

May has always been my favorite month. The snow ceases to be a threat, the temperatures stay moderate and the world is ablaze in color. It is also the month of Ascension, when Christ returned to heaven "to prepare a place for you." The promise of our reunion with Him, and the everlasting beauty of our life in heaven is like looking forward to an eternal springtime.

Spring is also when we leave the protection of our homes and get outdoors. We focus on the world around us. So too, should we be looking outside the confines of our building to see what needs to be done in the community around St. Andrew's. Even as Christ was returning to prepare a place for us, he reminded us of our work here on earth. We have a church, His church, and even now we are discerning His will for this congregation. What would Christ have us do? How can we make this community a better place because of our presence and efforts?

I am proud of our accomplishments over the past eight months. Even in the midst of our hardships, we have come together, have made plans for the future, and have begun new ministries. We have come a long way. And we will continue that journey! Some notes to bring you up to date:

Music Program: Elaine and Trudi are in the process of interviewing applicants for the position of organist. I am hopeful that the Lord will send someone our way before the end of the month, so that we can enjoy the fullness of worship with music accompaniment.

Interim Rector Search: The Interviewing Committee has continued to interview candidates referred to us from the Diocese. In light of past history and the horrific stories we are all reading in the papers, we are paying particular attention to references and are conducting thorough background checks. Things have been going well, but the process moves slowly and we must be patient. I am hopeful that next month I will be introducing an Interim Priest who will be working with us as we create our mission and identity, then as we focus on our growth, and finally as we begin the search process next year. As we get closer to having a priest again, it is important to remember the lessons we have learned, especially:

- The priest is not the answer to all our problems. We are. He can help, but it won't happen without EVERYONE involved.
- The priest is only with us part-time. That means she will need to focus on three or four things only. If we want to change the focus of work, we will have to take something off the plate as we add something on!



Errors to note:

The e-mail addresses for the Senior warden in the Sunday bulletins should NOT have a period after the or. Please correct your personal addressbooks to read swardens@standrewsmethuen.org.

There is no Jr Warden e-mail address at this time.

(The Memorials etc. were left at work, and I didn't have them with me when I created this month's issue of the Grapevine.)

The Grapevine is published monthly by St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, 90 Broadway, Methuen, MA 01844.

To contact the Grapevine for articles, please call 978-686-0840 or e-mail

Grapevine@St.AndrewsMethuen.org or leave a message in the "Grapevine" folder on the Rector's door.

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- No matter what happens in the future, the priest cannot destroy what we have built over these past eight months. We will not let anything divide us. We have a focus, we have a plan, and we will persevere- with or without the help of a priest. Have faith, stay involved, and we will remain strong!

Interim Schedule: Unless we choose an interim, Fr. Bob Gollodge has graciously agreed to support us through the entire month of May. It is possible, if an interim is chosen, that the Interim Priest could begin during the month of May. I know everyone will want to welcome Fr. Bob back among us. Please let him know how much you have enjoyed his care!

Strategic Planning Meeting: The next all-parish meeting with Pat and Aiden from the Diaconate is scheduled for Tuesday, May 28th at 7PM. We have had a good level of enthusiastic participation at the last three meetings, and are close to completing our work. This month we will be working on our identity - What are our goals as a church? On what areas would Christ have us focus? What do we want to accomplish? We hope to have a good turnout of parish members as we develop a set of goals to focus our work, and a list of ministries that support each of our goals. We are forever indebted to Pat Boyd and Fr. Aiden for their help during this process. Please plan to join us for this very important work!

Acolyte Training: I am pleased to introduce Hiro Toyoda from Christ Church in Andover. Hiro has offered to work with our Acolytes over the summer. He will be with us on the third Sunday of each month. We are hopeful that some of our teens will also become involved in the teen worship program at Grace Church in Lawrence. Teens from Grace, St.

Paul's, Christ, and St. Andrew's are invited to plan an entire service, complete with Eucharist, on the first Saturday of each month at 4:30. Hiro has been active with this group, and I would love to see St. Andrew's get involved.

Ascension Day Service: The Linkage- a group of representatives from St. Paul's in North Andover, Christ Church in Andover, Grace Church in Lawrence, and St. Andrew's in Methuen- has planned a joint service for Ascension Day on Thursday May 9th at 7:30 PM at St. Paul's in North Andover. (Some of you may remember a similar service we held here at St. Andrew's for Candlemas in February.) While the entire service promises to be lovely, I want to encourage everyone to attend and experience the incredible music produced by the joint choirs. I can promise you won't be disappointed!

Faithfully yours,

Laure

Sunday School Notes:

First Communion is May 15th (Pentecost)

Recognition Sunday is June 2. This is when we celebrate our church community and especially our leaders and teachers. This year's theme is Mardi Gras!

Sustaining Creation

Saturday, May 11

8:30 - 10:30 am

Legislative Breakfast Forum, Co-Hosted by the Greater Lawrence Council of Churches and the Massachusetts Council of Churches.

Guest Speakers

**Hon. Walter MatFain

US House of Representatives

**Rev. Dr. John Drysdale

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology

**Ms. Pam O'Brien

Environmental League of Massachusetts

BIG Reminder!!!

The Parish Clean-Up day is THIS Saturday, May 4th at 9AM, with a Pot-Luck Lunch afterward.

We will be working inside AND outside the church - doing things both large and small. There is NO reason you cannot join us - even if it is to sit on the sidelines and cheer us on!

At Last! Our Own Community Involvement Opportunity!

We believe that St. Andrew's needs to be more involved in our local neighborhood. We have talked to the Methuen Arlington Neighborhood group and find that there are 6 families in particular where the adults are working, but still need some assistance with food. This group (and others like them) are known as the "Working Poor".

We are going to start by helping them receive some help with food. We need actual donations of

- Cereal
- Spaghetti / Pasta
- Jars/Cans of Spaghetti sauce
- Canned vegetables
- Canned soups
- Tuna

And in "cash" form:

- Bread (money to buy it fresh)
- Milk (money to buy fresh)

When these items are on sale, parishioners can buy in quantity and leave with us and when these items are needed we will distribute. This project will help people in our neighborhood who are trying to help themselves. This will give the church a NAME in our community. Please help us to support this project. Contact Peggy Baker, Len Brown, Tom Baker, or David Marsh.

Donations will start on April 1st.

Bring your Family Food to the kitchen and leave it on the center island (under the hanging pots and pans) each Sunday. The young adults of our church will be handling it from there. Sincerely,

Peggy Baker

Verity/Community Outreach Team

A Very Successful St. Patrick's Supper

*(The Gospochar apologizes for delaying this...
I mean a "Writing and Appear" thing.)*

Thanks to the efforts of almost everyone in our congregation, our annual Irish supper was a success. I have to say thanks to so many:

- our cooks, Paul and Helen Waite, assisted by Lloyd and Maude Campbell;
- our decorators, Len and Ilev Brown (also - Bev, THANKS for the 15 loaves of delicious Irish bread which REALLY complemented the meal);
- Betty Fogell who made sure all the tickets got sold, handled all the money, worked with the Raffle people, got the tickets, programs, flims and place mats printed and kept me on my toes;
- The Raffle crew - headed by Miss Fala, did an awesome job getting some terrific prizes;
- Doc Henry for helping with the tickets, etc.;
- Val Clancy for her contribution from the craft table - as well as the efforts of all those who assisted her in the making of those crafts;
- Trudi Detroit for putting together and playing the Sing Along music - it really topped off the night!
- Patsy Ehrbridge for agreeing to be hostess and getting everyone seated without a problem, all the young people who worked so hard serving and being generally helpful;
- the ladies who served,
- those who peddled vegetables
- the ones who came the night before to set up
- and those who stayed to clean up after it was over.

If I forget to mention anyone, I'm sorry - and I hope you know that I appreciate all of you for your fantastic spirit.

We were treated to a terrific group of step dancers - 14 of them! - more than we've ever had! They were great and we hope the four who went to the competition in Scotland did very well. It was especially wonderful to see one of our own - Erin Kennedy - in the group. We wish her continued success and hope to see her dancing again next year!

Again, I thank you for the true fellowship you all showed, and to all of you who helped in any way, financially or physically, you're the greatest!!

Sincerely,

Betty MacKay