



# The Grapevine

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

July/August 2003 Issue

Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church  
90 Broadway  
Methuen, MA 01844  
(978) 689-0463

E-Mail Admin@StAndrewsMethuen.org

## WORSHIP AND STUDY SERVICE

St. Andrew's has come a long way in the past couple of years, but our journey is not over. We've reached the point in our "interim" life where we need to decide what is to happen next. There is no question that we are in a decline. Membership and attendance are half what they used to be. But we are not alone with this problem- many other churches are in the same condition.

The Alban Institute has studied congregations across the country, and published a book by Alice Mann called "Can our Church Live?" In it, she looks at the reasons for decline and presents some strategies for redeveloping churches in decline. She also outlines options for closing a church that can not be brought back to life.

I think it is important that all voices are heard as we make decisions about the future of St. Andrew's. I invite all members of St. Andrew's to join me in a study group beginning Sunday evening, June 8<sup>th</sup>. We will meet each Sunday night through the summer, reading 8-10 pages a week and discussing the study questions presented. Through this process of discernment, I hope we can develop some strategies for the Vestry to act on in September.

For those that find it difficult to attend Sunday mornings, we will be offering the Eucharist at the end of each evening. The schedule will be:

6:30	Evening Prayer
6:45	Refreshment
7:00	Study
8:00	Eucharist

You are invited to attend all, or any part, of the Worship and Study service. You are also invited to attend any or all of the sessions. I will have the books available at the first session. They are \$18.95. I also invite those that cannot join us to purchase the book and read along with us. I think you'll enjoy it! I will post the questions to be discussed in the bulletin each Sunday. At least you will know what we are talking about!

## First Communion Requirements

First Communion at Saint Andrew's Church is a full year Sunday School program meeting during the Sunday School hour. The class meets from 9:00-10:00 AM every Sunday during the school year. There is a 75% attendance requirement with a 50% church attendance requirement. Many Sundays we will go to church as a group. The students will have homework, prayer journals, and memorization of Bible passages, prayers, and other information most weeks. This program is open to all school age children from Second grade on. Your child must be baptized before the spring of next year to participate in the First Communion Service on Pentacost Sunday.

### WELCOME BACK SUNDAY!

Sunday School will START  
September 7, 2003 At 9:00 AM  
Contact: Valerie Carey 978-682-6165

**Special Blessing of Sunday School Students & Teachers  
Pot Luck Supper Following Service**

Please make sure you have filled out the registration form and return it on or before that date

Attached (page 9)

There is an envelope on the bulletin board by the office for all completed forms

**Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and  
Classroom Aids needed  
For Starting this September**

If you are interested please contact  
Valerie Carey  
At 978-682-6465

The Sunday School program is only as good as the people who volunteer!!

## IN THE INTERIM

It is amazing to think that I began here to Saint Andrew's over 15 months ago, in April of 2002. For me, it seems like just a short time, but for others, it has seemed like forever. The goal of an interim period is to begin by looking back; celebrating the history and character of the church, acknowledging the struggles, and seek healing and reconciliation, and then to look to the future of the church and its mission. Among the many things we examined is the "life-cycle" of a church; its birth, growth, and inevitable decline, and, hopefully, its revitalization or even rebirth.

In a similar way, my presence with you (which coincides with your interim period) has its own cycle - a beginning, middle and end. We are now approaching the completion of this interim period and it is time to begin saying our goodbyes, not only me to you and you to me, but also to some aspects of the past in this church. Over the last year or so, it has been clear that there have been some things that have been more difficult to let go of than others. The struggles with "survival" and the short-term relationships with past clergy, have been ever present. For me, it has been a struggle being part time, only partly involved. For you, it has been difficult to see your priest as someone who is in transition and is only here for a while. This is, by definition, what an "interim pastor" is all about, and in reality, all clergy are temporary, even those who are around for decades. In any case, there is change, which is disruptive and requires adjustment (or denial, which is a way of adjusting to change).

So it is that Saint Andrew's will be moving forward in its plans for the future. Will you continue to have supply or part-time clergy to keep things as they have been for all these years? Will the church need to be closed? Or will the church need to undergo some kind of regeneration or rebirth?

Your wardens, Laura RuizdeLuzuriaga and Len Brown, have been exploring the life cycle of this church with a group of parishioners on Sunday nights this summer, and others have followed along with Alice Mann's book, *Can Our Church Live?* Reports on the thoughts of that group are found in this issue of *The Grapevine*. Whether or not a significant part of the membership of this church is involved in this study and its results, it will be a major turning point for the leadership of this parish. And this is what an interim period can be for a church.

I'm sure there will be anxiety *and* relief as I near the end of my time with you this fall. You may now have ideas of what you do and *don't* want in your next priest, but more importantly, each one of us must discern what God calls us to, for we find our greatest meaning in who we are and *whose* we are. It is not the buildings or the institutions that keep God's Word alive. Rather, it is in the constantly growing and deepening lives of those who seek the Lord and feel drawn to serve and be sent by God. We were created to be that way. And we are called to come together in that task and in that relationship with God. It cannot be done without involvement and commitment.

Leadership in this parish has been focused around a very few, especially your wardens and vestry. Much of the parish has relied on their hard work, and energy to not only maintain the church as it has been for many years, but also to please its members. As faithful Christians, your leaders have also prayed and thought hard about the mission of the church here at Saint Andrew's. Sometimes their understanding of the Gospel

imperative and what the membership wants are not always the same. They have attempted to include the membership of this parish in the study and planning of mission and purpose. They have acknowledged that times have changed: people are busier in their lives, the Church is less central to their family routine, and there is a reluctance to *join* in the hard work that is necessary for a community to function. So it is that this transition provides us all with a chance to state our position and set the pattern for the future.

The details of finishing up the interim period worked out in the next few months with more specifics to come. We are looking at Bishop Cedarholm's visit on October 4<sup>th</sup> as a significant point which may be a part of this transition.

This has been a challenging time for me given the limitation of time and involvement, but it has also been an opportunity to see God's work in the Church through all its members. I feel that Saint Andrew's is at a critical point in its life-cycle where it will probably no longer accept the survival mode of the past years. It is time for an end, or possibly for a new beginning. We all have our own personal opportunities: We can help with the endings, we can withdraw, we can resist, or we can be a part of a new thing, a resurrection, in which God makes all things, even old things, new. A choice will be made by each of us. Even if we choose not to choose, it will have been a choice with an important result. For some things we have no choice, like death and taxes. But God calls us to "choose life." May God's Word be heard and turned into action, if not here, somewhere in the lives of God's children who still seek the Lord.

-John Bonell  
Interim Pastor



Happy Birthday

## JULY

David Marsh 7/4  
Dorothy Hargreaves 7/6  
Jackie Tomeo 7/19  
Joyce Bearley 7/19  
Mimi Falk 7/20

## AUGUST

Kristine Milo 8/1  
Sara McGuire 8/3  
Sara Weisenborn 8/3  
Cynthia Sulesky 8/7  
Thomas Baker 8/8  
Cindy Ste. Marie 8/12  
Elizabeth Feugill 8/19  
Nicole RuizdeLuzuriaga 8/19  
Catherine Tomeo 8/22

**REFLECTIONS OF SERMON BY ROY A. BENJAMIN  
AT ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH JUNE 29, 2003**

Submitted by: Leonard W. Brown, Jr., Junior Warden

On Sunday June 29, 2003 we had a supply minister and his sermon moved me to tears. Here is the sermon as I remember it. There was a monastery high on a mountain. The monastery was made up of mostly older men. The prior was very concerned that they were not attracting new monks. He had the monks pray for direction for they feared that if new blood did not start coming forth to bring new life and to continue the work of Jesus in their community they would be forced to close.

The monks were getting older each year and many were dying. The prior thought the monastery would soon have to close. The prior met with the monks and they prayed, and prayed, and prayed, then they talked, and talked, and talked to no avail. The prior had an idea! He remembered that at the bottom of the mountain there lived a rabbi. He would go down to see him and ask him if he has any ideas.

The prior set out down the mountain to see the rabbi. When he reached the rabbi's house he knocked on the door. The rabbi answered the door and said, "What brings you here prior?" "Can I ask your opinion on a very serious problem? We are trying to come up with a solution or an answer we have prayed and prayed to no avail." The rabbi said to the prior, "What is your problem? I will be glad to offer my advice if it will help." The prior began to tell him the story of how the monks were getting older and dying off and there are no young men wanting to join the community to continue to do the work Jesus wants it to do.

The rabbi thought for a few minutes and then said, "Prior, Jesus is one of you. He lives in your monastery with all of you. Go back and find out, which one of you is Jesus!" The prior thanked the rabbi and set out back up the mountain to tell the monks the good news. When the prior got back to the monastery he called the monks together to pray and he told them what the rabbi had said to him; that one of them was Jesus. They all looked at each other and wondered who it was. Is it him or him or me? They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and were full of joy! The monks could not believe that Jesus, the Son of God, was among them. Soon the story spread of Jesus being present in the monastery and people began joining the community. They came and they came and they came; they believed and they believed and they believed. They joined together in the joy of the Holy Spirit.

This sermon moved me in a way I have not experienced before. It validated years of my belief that Jesus is alive in all of us. Can we as a faith community see that Jesus is with us always? Can we experience the joy of the Holy Spirit in ourselves and as St. Andrew's Church? Can we look at each other and ask is he or she Jesus Christ? If we are more Christ-like will they come, will they come, will they come?

***PLEASE JOIN ST. ANDREWS CHURCH  
CONGREGATION IN WELCOMING THE  
VISITATION WITH  
THE RIGHT REVEREND  
ROY F. CEDERHOLM, JR.***

***SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2003***



**MAIL PAGE**

**FOOD PANTRY ARLINGTON NEIGHBORHOOD**

St. Andrew's Church has been providing food for six working families that cannot take advantage of the Neighbors In Need program because both husband and wife work during the day. Through the coordination of Peggy Baker, who attends The Arlington Neighborhood meetings, Dave Marsh and I are advised as to what the needs are. We have been providing food to these six families since April of 2002. The staple items we always need are the following:

Cereal	tuna
jelly or marshmallow fluff	peanut butter
pasta	pasta sauce
canned vegetables	soup
money for fresh bread and milk	

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us with this outreach program. During the past 15 months St. Andrew's has not missed a week, however, the summer months, with families on vacation, has left us just making it. The cupboard is almost bare. Any donation to this project would be greatly appreciated. If you are making out a check make it payable to Arlington Mission Account.

Thank you,  
Leonard W. Brown Jr.

**THE COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE**

The Communication Committee has completed a welcome brochure and an instructional brochure. You should find them at the back of the church.

We are interested in placing an Episcopal sign off the highway. This will require us purchasing the signs and going through the town of Methuen for approval. Committee members are Paula Campbell, Karl Wunderlich, Cindy Sulesky, and Huib Walta.

Anyone interested in joining or have any ideas, please call Paula Campbell 978-794-1000.

**CONTACTING THE GRAPEVINE**

You can contact us in the following ways:

**Mail to:** The Grapevine

c/o St Andrews Church

90 Broadway

Methuen, MA 01844

**Phone:** 978-689-0463 for our Parish

Administrator Gloria Schwarz

**E-Mail:** [admin@standrewsmethuen.org](mailto:admin@standrewsmethuen.org)

**STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

*Friday Night Dance Group  
At St. Andrews Parish  
90 Broadway, Methuen, MA*

*June 29, 2003*

To The Vestry and Parish of St. Andrew's,

It is our pleasure to be able to donate \$150.00 again this year as a token and "thank you" for the use of the parish hall for the 4<sup>th</sup> year, serving the adult developmentally challenged community for dancing and sociability. We were able to maintain our donation level through the donations of several area businesses, Pieros Bakery in Methuen, Josephs Bakery in Haverhill Supper Stop n Shop, as well as several of the parents and friends of the clients.

The commitment that the vestry of the parish continues to provide, makes possible, an outreach program to a segment of the Merrimack Valley and beyond that is far reaching.

We are fortunate to have the continued nightly support from parishioners to bring this parish outreach about twice a month. Set up, providing refreshments, serving, and cleaning up. We wish to acknowledge, especially David Marsh and Len Brown, Betty MacKay, Betty Feugill, Thom Baker, George Driscoll, Trudi Driscoll, Joanna Bowes from the parish. Susan Foster, Joe Spinella, and several of the client's family members work together each Friday that the dances are held.

This year the confirmation class undertook a service opportunity to assist the Dance evenings. Aided by the members of the class under the very capable direction of Beth Regan and Lisa Storey for their help for which we are very appreciative.

If anyone would like to indulge in a wonderfully rewarding experience our fifth season at St. Andrew's and 29<sup>th</sup> year of dancing, will begin September 19, 2003 and continue on the first and third Friday evening through the 4<sup>th</sup> of June, 2004, the very special "Prom Night". (See the attached schedule). Interested folk are invited to drop in on a Friday night and join "the dance".

Trudi and George Driscoll - Joanna (Jody) Bowes  
Mrs. Gertrude A. Bowes

**SCHEDULE FOR FALL September 2003 through June 2004**

MONTH	DATE	EVENT
September	19 <sup>th</sup>	First Dance
October	3 <sup>rd</sup>	
October	17 <sup>th</sup>	Halloween Dance
November	7 <sup>th</sup>	
November	21 <sup>st</sup>	Thanksgiving Dance
December	5 <sup>th</sup>	
December	19 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Party
January	2 <sup>nd</sup>	New Years Dance
January	16 <sup>th</sup>	
February	6 <sup>th</sup>	Valentine Dance
February	20 <sup>th</sup>	
March	5 <sup>th</sup>	
March	19 <sup>th</sup>	St. Patrick's Dance
April	2 <sup>nd</sup>	
April	16 <sup>th</sup>	Spring Fling
May	7 <sup>th</sup>	
May	21 <sup>st</sup>	

June	4 <sup>th</sup>	PROM NIGHT
------	-----------------	------------

**DEAR FELLOW PARISHIONERS,**

Each year in mid-July, it is hard to believe that the end of the summer is not that far off. But then I see the back-to-school ads in the paper. So it is time to think about getting back to business in the fall, and that includes Saint Andrew's business. On September 7, we will be restarting the church school, and having a homecoming of sorts for the new year, an opportunity for renewing our commitment to the church.

But to continue the summer thoughts for a while longer, consider stewardship in the context of caring for our yards. Pledging is like the maintenance activities of watering, mowing, and weeding - necessary to insure that the lawn and garden (and parish) survive. However, what makes the yard special in the eyes of the outside world is the other things we bring to it, whether it be new annuals or a bit of 'yard art'. The non-pledging aspects of stewardship are like those extras; they make the parish thrive. There are many opportunities for that extra care. The reports of the other committees suggest ways we can make the parish shine to the outside world, whether it be helping at fellowship activities such as the Friday night dances for the disabled, assisting with the mission activity at the Arlington Street Project, visiting our home-bound parishioners with the pastoral committee, or bringing the good news of our religion to the children in the church school.

We all have gifts to share, and granted, we all have limitations too, in time, energy and resources. You might ask how can we keep renewing? Why the emphasis on our relationship to the outside world? This summer, you know the adult education topic was, 'How can this church survive?'. The class was held during the summer because it was viewed as important to start that discussion immediately; Saint Andrew's prospects for the future are somewhat tenuous. But just like the non-thriving plants in our garden can benefit from some extra effort and fertilizer, so can our parish. Like those plants, we need to grow in order to thrive. And just like the beauty of our gardens can give us back more joy and refreshment than the effort we put into them, so can the blessings of our church. Please come to the homecoming Sunday with your thoughts on what you can do to make Saint Andrews thrive.

Sincerely, The Stewardship Committee

p.s - the summer still continues. Please keep your pledging up to date even when you are away. Also, consider making a larger contribution to the food pantry to cover the period when you will be away. Many thanks.

**The Merrimack Valley Deanery will be having its meeting at St. Andrew's Church**

on January 14, 2004. It's a Wednesday, and these run from about 5 or 6pm to 9 or 10pm, depending on the amount of business needed to be done, and OUR CHOICE of time to arrive. There are roughly 20-30 people at the regular meetings. What St. Andrew's commitment is:

- ? A well-plowed parking lot and shoveled/sanded walkways for safety (remember it's on a Wednesday evening in the middle of winter!)
- ? A light supper (idea: salad, bread, spaghetti with meatballs?) and shoppers, cooks, set up and clean up people.

You don't have to stay for the meeting, but you are VERY welcome to join. At each church that I have visited in the past few years for these Deanery meetings, about 50% of the Parish

workers tend to stay and listen or ask questions or add comments. Please call me at 978-686-0840 and let me know which job you want! Thank you for your consideration.  
Cynthia Sulesky, Deanery Representative



Ethel G. Dixon, From John & Chloe Cohoon  
Ethel G. Dixon, From William & Jessie E. Banton  
Ethel G. Dixon, From Dana A. Cohoon  
Ethel G. Dixon, From: Raymond A. & Ethel F. Proulx  
Ethel G. Dixon From: Joan A. Riley  
Ethel G. Dixon From: Joseph F. Bartholomew  
Ethel G. Dixon From: her neighbor;s  
Ben Lerich, Mr. & Mrs. Drennan Lowell, Mr. & Mrs. Ned  
Town, Mr. & Mrs. William (Skip) Gray, Mr. & Mrs. Tom  
Porter, Mr. & Mrs. Bill Lundgren  
Ethel G. Dixon From: John & Rosemary Ellison  
Ethel G. Dixon From: Mary J. Legate  
Ethel G. Dixon From:  
The Sunshine Club of Imperial Point, Florida  
Ethel G. Dixon From: Richard R. Saunders  
Ethel G. Dixon From:  
David, Catherine & Elizabeth Feldman  
Ethel G. Dixon From: Robin Eichler

**IN MEMORY OF:**

**MEMORIAL FUND**

**Thomas N. MacKinnon  
Lucille Perrault  
Virginia Willett**

**ORGAN MEMORIAL FUND**

**Margaret Hassey  
Thomas N. MacKinnon  
Ellen Roman  
John Simpson**

**GARDEN MEMORIAL FUND**

**Virginia DeSilvestro  
Robert Duffield  
Thomas N. MacKinnon**

**OPEN VESTRY SEAT**

**THERE REMAINS ONE 3 YEAR VESTRY SEAT**

**IF YOU OR ANYONE WOULD LIKE MORE  
INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT  
LAURA RUIZDELUZURIAGA  
AT 978-686-6824**

**TRAUMA DISASTER TRAINING DAY**  
**September 30, 2003**

**Important Note:**

*There has been a great deal of interest in the Trauma and Critical Incident Response Workshop which was scheduled for Thursday, June 12. Since the announcement of this training many have contacted Bishop Harris ' office noting both diocesan and parish events also scheduled for the same day, causing a conflict for those wishing to attend Therefore, we have decided to postpone this workshop until September 3-2003.*

*Bishop George Packard, Bishop of the Armed Forces, Health and Prisons and his staff have agreed to be with us again to lead this training He is an experienced emergency first responder and has led many such events across the Church. We look forward to clergy, Church staff and lay leaders attending this re-scheduled event. This is an opportunity for all of us to learn ways to respond when an emergency, critical community event or trauma occurs.*

*A new announcement and registration information for the workshop on Tuesday September 30, 2003 will be transmitted to clergy and congregations by July 31.*

How would you respond to a community crisis or mass disaster?

**TRAUMA/DISASTER TRAINING DAY**  
**For clergy and lay leadership**

Attend this workshop to learn how to prepare for a major disaster or other traumatic event. Presentations will cover the needs of diverse populations, self-care during a crisis, and how to make the parish a place of sanctuary.

**September 30, 2003**

**9:00 AM — 3:30 PM**

**Diocesan Center — 138 Tremont Street  
Boston, MA 02111**

**SPEAKERS**

- The Right Reverend George Packard  
Bishop Suffiagan for Chaplaincies  
Episcopal Church Center, New York
- Judith Wightmann, PhD, Psychotherapist
- Rose A. Netzer, RN, Program Director, Inpatient Geriatric  
Psychiatry Unit, Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge

Bring a brown bag lunch  
Dessert and beverages provided

Clergy: Have your photo taken for your Diocesan ID  
Registration \$10 in advance; \$15 at the door  
Register with Suzette Phillips, [shp@diomass.orq](mailto:shp@diomass.orq)  
or 482-5800 x222

Please make checks payable to:  
The Diocese of Massachusetts

Location:  
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Main Offices  
138 Tremont Street  
Boston, MA 02111-1318

# Vestry

John Bonell, Interim Pastor Home: 603-434-8444  
[personjohn@adelphia.net](mailto:personjohn@adelphia.net) Cell Phone: 603-493-5331  
*Please do not hesitate to call John at any time at any of the above numbers, especially with pastoral emergencies. Be sure to inform him if you or anyone you know in the parish is ill and/or in the hospital.*

Gloria Schwarz, Parish Administrator 978-689-0463  
[admin@standrewsmethuen.org](mailto:admin@standrewsmethuen.org)  
 Office Hours: 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Monday through Friday

Laura RuizdeLuzuriaga, Senior Warden 978-686-6824  
[srwarden@StAndrewsMethuen.org](mailto:srwarden@StAndrewsMethuen.org)

Leonard Brown, Junior Warden 978-686-7770

Richard Falk, Treasurer 978-794-0704

Paula Campbell, Clerk of the Vestry 978-687-1340

Linda Kennedy 978-689-2592

Building & Grounds Dan Sulesky 978-686-0840  
 Jim Carey 978-682-6165

Membership & Fellowship Jim Wagner  
 Worship Beth Regan 978-687-1340  
 Chris Maynard 978-689-2665

Communication Paula Campbell 978-687-1340

Pastoral Care Len Brown 978-686-7770  
 Jim Beagan 978-688-0171

Education Linda Pacheco 978-688-4215  
 Music Elaine Morrisette 978-683-8841  
 Trudi Driscoll 978-682-8857

Community Service Peggy Baker 978-475-8844

Stewardship Jim Beagan 978-557-9007

Finance & Budget Richard Falk 978-794-0704  
 Jim Elliot 603-893-6369

Valerie Carey, Director  
 of Religious Education 978-682-6165  
[jimcarey@attbi.com](mailto:jimcarey@attbi.com)

David Marsh, Sexton 978-685-8473

Elaine Morissette, Pledge Clerk 978-683-8841  
[Remor20@aol.com](mailto:Remor20@aol.com)

Huib Walta, Webmaster 978-686-6824  
[Webmaster@StAndrewsMethuen.org](mailto:Webmaster@StAndrewsMethuen.org)

## St. Andrew's Church 2003 Goals

GOAL	COMMITTEE	CHAIR LIAISON
<b>GOAL #1: An inviting and nurturing environment that supports the spiritual health and development of members and attracts new members to the parish. (Inviting and Forming)</b>	Building & Grounds	Dan Sulesky & Jim Carey
	Membership & Fellowship	Jim Wagner
	Worship	Beth Regan & Chris Maynard
	Communication	Paula Campbell
GOAL #2: A variety of activities that involve and serve youth (Forming)	Pastoral Care	Len Brown & Jim Beagan
	Education	Linda Pacheco
	Worship	Beth Regan & Chris Maynard
GOAL #3: A music ministry that involves members and invites guests (Inviting)	Membership & Fellowship	Jim Wagner
	Worship	Beth Regan & Chris Maynard
	(also Music) Also related to Goal #2	(Trudi Driscoll & Elaine Morrisette)
GOAL #4: St. Andrew's is an important element in the life of our community (Serving)	Community Service	Open (Peggy Baker)
	Pastoral Care	Len Brown & Jim Beagan
	Membership & Fellowship	Jim Wagner
	Communication	Paula Campbell
GOAL #5: Keep St. Andrew's operating and in sound condition, managing its financial situation/needs	Stewardship	Jim Beagan
	Finance & Budget	Richard Falk & Jim Elliot
2003 Beth Regan Jim Elliot Linda Kennedy	2004 Linda Pacheco Dan Sulesky Jim Carey	2005 Jim Beagan Jim Wagner

## SUNDAY NIGHT WORSHIP UPDATE

As many of you know, a group of us have been meeting on Sunday nights for Evening Prayer, an hour of study, and then a short Eucharist. Attendance ranges between 9 and 13 people. We are studying a book called "Can Our Church Live?" by Alice Mann.

Our progress has been slow but steady. We are taking the time to really think and talk about the questions raised in the book. The following is a summary of our discussions:

### June 8

The first chapter describes the life cycle of a church. It looks like a bell curve, beginning with Birth, proceeding through Growth, peaking at Stability, then dropping into a Decline that ends with Death. The group determined that St. Andrew's is in Decline, and that, if we do nothing, we will close in 1-2 years. Given this reality, we will need to Redevelop to regain growth and stability. That is to say, we need to re-invent ourselves as a new church, and go through all the steps a forming church would require.

We see three choices for St. Andrew's:

- 1) Maintain the current path and die in 2 years.
- 2) Begin preparations for our own departure and plan to hand the ministry of St. Andrew's to another group of people.
- 3) Re-invent ourselves and our current congregation with a new mission, a new purpose, a new way of being and interacting.

Our goal through this study will be to determine the best choice for St. Andrew's. Then the process will begin to figure out HOW to do it!

Our questions for the evening were:

- 1. To what extent is your congregation now in the process of re-examining the three "formation" questions? By what means is that exploration taking place?**

We discussed the three formation questions:

- 1) Who are we at a faith level?
- 2) What are we here for?
- 3) Who is our neighbor?

We had no good answers for these questions! But we decided that this group and process was a good way to explore them.

- 2. How far along are you in the journey toward a renewed identity and purpose?**

Just beginning, not even born yet. Still trying to decide if we want to renew our identity and purpose, or just shut the doors.

### June 15

The end of Chapter 1 outlines three reasons that efforts to Redevelop fail:

- 1) Spiritual failure
- 2) Financial failure
- 3) Political stalemate

We discussed the question "What would we have to give up in order to avoid spiritual failure?"

Modernizing Traditions Changing the Music

Being more Inviting

Changing the Social, Community and Spiritual Environment.

Improving Interpersonal Relationships- disharmony, frustrations, living in fear, lack of sincerity, bad habits

Find the Core of Goodness in ourselves

Find the Holy Spirit in our Midst

In our discussion we also discovered that those that are the most involved in the church are those that are most dissatisfied, and also those who need to change the most. There are many in

the congregation that just come on Sundays, and seem satisfied with their experience at St. Andrew's.

### June 22

We began Chapter 2 with an exploration of why our congregation is in trouble now- what has happened outside the church that has impacted our decline. We discovered that there was no connection between the current environment and that of the original church, and that when the original purpose disappears, the church begins to decline. This was true of both All Saints and St. Andrew's.

- 1. Think about the "spark of interaction between faith and context" at the moment your congregation was founded. To what cultural realities did your church respond at birth? (Think about both your local community and wider societal trends.)**

All Saints was born to meet the needs of immigrant mill workers in Methuen, many of whom were from an Anglican background. Attendance was family oriented- children and grandchildren continued to be members. All Saints was the alternative to Grace Church, where the richer mill owners attended. By 1949, the church was in decline, the Methuen mills were closing and both All Saints and St. John's in Lawrence were in serious decline. Thus came about the first redevelopment effort, when the two churches joined for the simple purpose of survival.

- 2. Think about the "glory days" of your congregation. To what cultural realities was your church responding then?**

Methuen was growing, and there were an increasing number of people moving into town. The church was the social center of life outside of work. There was a visionary priest in Rev. Argyle, whose authoritarian style created energy and direction. The church was full of young people and provided both social and competitive athletic opportunities.

- 3. What about today? What current cultural factors must your congregation come to terms with to frame a vital ministry?**

New ethnic neighborhood

Hispanic, SE Asian, Muslim neighbors

Only "old timers" with historic or family connections are drawn to Episcopal Church.

The question was raised as to "What is our neighborhood" as Methuen contains a diverse range of ethnic and socio-economic groups. There are a number of Anglo-Saxon neighborhoods filled with young children. There are also neighborhoods of smaller homes occupied by the elderly. All are within a couple of miles of St. Andrew's. Are they also in our neighborhood? Is neighborhood still important in a day when churches no longer serve a "parish," but perhaps a culture, a denomination, or a common interest?

- 4. Which of these "three enormous changes" affected your congregation's life? How?**

- a) **Postwar baby boom**

Membership peaked between 1950-60 and then held steady for awhile. We were in our Stability phase.

The Baby boom brought in more children, but as they grew up they went away to school and often moved out to the suburbs, causing a decline and no new growth.

- b) **Emergence of the automobile suburbs**

Cars gave people the opportunity to "get out" of Methuen and go elsewhere, but still maintain family connections. The city was no longer the center of the world.

c) **Great Migration of African Americans into northern cities**

We did not experience this migration, but jobs were filled by lower paid immigrants from France, Germany, Italy, Ireland, and then another wave in the 70s of Hispanics and Southeast Asians. We also experienced the impact of:

- Mills leaving the area between 1960-1970 causing unemployment, economic decline and transience as people chased jobs;
- Women's Lib took women into the workforce and limited their time to do "other things";
- Blue Laws changed and provided alternatives to going to church.

5. **What feelings and thoughts do you have about the period(s) of decline on your chart?**

Decline seems almost inevitable. The world around us changed. Society was no longer dumping people on our doorstep. Organized structures of authority- government, education, religion- lost credibility during the 70s. Church attendance is no longer the norm. Kids are involved in sports activities on Sundays.

We need to reach out to the un-churched. We need to stand for something worthwhile. Our purpose has to have meaning and substance- not just words.

**June 29**

Chapter 2 continues with a discussion of how, although most people say they are "Christians," there are three gaps observed: an ethics gap; a knowledge gap; and a gap between believing and belonging.

1. **"The disestablishment of religion" is more apparent in some regions of the country, and in some cultural groups, than in others. What signs do you see in your local community that support or refute the change described in this section?**

Blue Law changes, people are working  
Athletic activities scheduled on Sundays  
Two working parents=less free time  
Increased number of single parents trying to balance multiple priorities

2. **Suppose it is true that the society will never again deliver people to your doorstep in the way that it did in the 1950s- when all a church had to do is open its doors. What would this new situation require of your congregation?**

We need to have a meaningful purpose  
We must believe in our purpose and be willing to live it  
We need to stand for something  
We need to enrich people's lives  
We need to reach out- bring in- and include new people

3. **How well is your congregation equipped to present the fundamentals of Christian faith and practice from scratch, to people with no prior knowledge at all? To people with negative attitudes toward Christianity?**

Poorly. We already have a whole population of passive members. The church school is probably the best equipped.

4. **Some churches are literally willing to sell everything they have to exercise their vocation well in a dramatically changed environment. What is the core vocation of your congregation- the one that you would "pay any price" to pursue?**

The vocation of St. Andrew's seems to be survival. We'll do anything to "keep the doors open" but the price is too high.

Many people are in denial. Our vocation SHOULD be to introduce people to the love of Christ, build and nurture their spirituality, and then prepare them to share with others in the community.

5. **What are some of your congregation's formal rituals? Which seem most central?**

Communion, Sunday School classes, Procession with the Cross, Vesting, Organ music- probably in that order

6. **What are some of your congregation's informal rituals? Which of these would provoke the most conflict if neglected or changed?**

Memorial envelopes; Christmas Eve service- music and lights; Prayer list; Easter breakfast; Hanging of the greens, Church architecture, Two chalices, Functional Organizations (e.g., Alter Guild, Lectors, Acolytes, Ushers, other "Committees")

Rituals most resistant to change would be those that changed a person's role with the church. Most have small groups of supporters who would be upset by change. So far, not using the memorial envelopes has caused the most strife.

7. **Which of your congregation's rituals are most effective in providing courage to face times of chaos- illness, death, societal upheaval, church conflict?**

We don't do a very good job. There is some Pastoral Care by the priest and a couple of members, but it's not a sustainable ministry. If anything happened to Len or Betty, it probably wouldn't happen. Laura tries to communicate with people, using the Grapevine and making announcements to keep people informed. There are no real rituals.

**July 13**

We continued Chapter 2 with an exploration of what has happened inside our congregation that has impacted our decline.

1. **From your congregation's behavior, what primary business would you say your congregation actually pursues?**

We work real hard at staying the same. That's where the most attention, time and money goes. We are also into historic preservation, property management, music, and Christian education.

2. **As you think about your congregation's central work, what are the two or three major things that ought to take priority?**

Preparing people for discipleship (education for all ages), service and outreach to the community, and living love- being joyful.

3. **If those aspects of your church life were truly recognized as "the main things," what would have to be adjusted, decreased, or relinquished?**

No longer live in the past, preserve the past. We may have to make hard decisions about what's really important- like give up music in order to get full time clergy. We may have to become more flexible, and provide new services and programs. The biggest thing to be reduced is people's fear of and resistance to change.

4. **Is your church focused on meeting the needs of current members, or on missionary outreach to your surrounding community?**

We seem to be most concerned with keeping current members happy- not necessarily meeting their needs. We are not really focused on our surrounding community, although the Arlington Neighborhood Food Pantry is a good start. But even then, we do not interact with the people themselves- only through and intermediary.

**PLEASE SEE ATTACHED RATING QUESTIONAIRE**

## **“CHARACTERISTICS OF GROWING CHURCHES”**

We rated ourselves on a scale of 1 (this doesn't describe us at all) to 6 (this describes us very well) according to the following “Characteristics of Growing Churches.” How would you rate St. Andrew's? Please circle your choice; complete and return it to the church, either in the plate, or at 90 Broadway, Methuen, MA 01844:

### **1. A clear and positive identity**

1` 2 3 4 5 6

The church conveys, in word and deed, a message that is truly “good news”. We are known and respected in our community for our genuine strengths.

### **2. Consistent focus on people who are not members**

1` 2 3 4 5 6

While meeting members' needs, the church searches for ways to share faith within a changing world; to communicate with people not now active in our ministry; and to address real needs in our community through social action or social service. Both our pastor and our lay opinion leaders are outreach-oriented.

### **3. Congregational harmony**

1` 2 3 4 5 6

The way people interact with each other in this church lends credibility to our preaching and teaching. When differences arise, we address each other with openness and respect. We celebrate our shared life in many ways, and we are strong enough to face up to our failings as a community from time to time.

### **4. A positive dynamic between pastor and congregation**

1` 2 3 4 5 6

Our pastor brings real strengths to this church, and these are well-received by our congregation. We work to be clear and realistic about what we expect of each other. The relationship between pastor and congregation tends to foster trust and generate enthusiasm for ministry.

### **5. Small-group programming**

1` 2 3 4 5 6

We often form new small groups of different kinds, where people can know each other personally and relate their faith to daily life. We give special attention to the way such groups are formed, nurtured, and ended. We look for ways to involve in most of these groups people who are not currently members.

*St. Andrews Episcopal Church*  
*90 Broadway*  
*Methuen, MA 01844*

**SUNDAY SCHOOL REGISTRATION FORM**

Parents Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**FIRST CHILD:** Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade entering in September 2003: \_\_\_\_\_

What year is this for your child in the St. Andrew's pin program? \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND CHILD:** Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade entering in September 2003: \_\_\_\_\_

What year is this for your child in the St. Andrew's pin program? \_\_\_\_\_

**THIRD CHILD:** Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade entering in September 2003: \_\_\_\_\_

What year is this for your child in the St. Andrew's pin program? \_\_\_\_\_

**FOURTH CHILD:** Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade entering in September 2003: \_\_\_\_\_

What year is this for your child in the St. Andrew's pin program? \_\_\_\_\_

## *Information For Confirmation Classes*

### *Notes for Valerie Carey*

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, my child would like to be enrolled in the First Communion Class. His/Her name is:

\_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

### **REGARDING TEEN AND ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASSES:**

The requirement for Confirmation Class is varied, and modified to the individual. Please check the note below if you are interested in becoming confirmed as an Episcopalian, and someone will get back to you with the information. Please note there is not a Youth Confirmation Class scheduled for this year. Thanks!

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to have information about the Confirmation Class.

I am a \_\_\_\_\_ Youth (13-17) \_\_\_\_\_ Adult (over 18)

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone and e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the area below if you wish more information. Someone will get back to you soon. Thanks!