

August 2004 Issue

The Grapevine

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

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LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

My Dear Friends,

Many years ago when I was in seminary I took a course from a wonderful and challenging professor. It was an honors course, which only the brightest students were allowed to take. Even in seminary students were concerned with their grades. At the professor's first lecture he gave out an impossible reading list for the semester. Immediately all of the seminarians thought maybe we should drop that course because it would affect our grade averages. Then he said with a smile on his face that he would give us our final grade that morning and we would all be receiving A+. Even though nearly fifty years have passed I shall never forget that course; I never worked and studied harder. Every student read the whole reading list and even some extra books. I remembered thinking this is crazy, working so hard, already knowing our final grade would be and A+. That professor taught us a great lesson concerning life, we are all assured the gift of salvation, and it is a free gift we do not earn it, even though we have that gift we offer our stewardship (talents) because that is the very nature of those who receive love from God.

As some of you know I recently celebrated the fortieth anniversary to the priesthood. It has been a wonderful journey for both Sally and me. I have learned a lot over the years and more importantly I have changed a lot because of what I have experienced. When I was a young rector of a parish I thought the survival of my parish depended upon me and especially upon my leadership. I was responsible for everything: shovel snow, the heat in the church, every member canvass, Sunday school, youth groups on and on. I just knew if I failed the church would fail also. I began to read the scriptures in light of my experience of ministry. The church is the body of Christ and was instituted by God and Christ is the head of the Church and most importantly the church will not die – “not even the gates

of hell can destroy it.” I began to realize the survival of the church did not depend upon me (although I realize I need to offer my talents to the church) the survival of the church is in the hands of God. To be assured that my parish would survive not by what I accomplished but because it was part of the body of Christ helped me to be free to be fed by Christ Himself.

I have been with you for seven months and it looks like I will be with you for a while longer. One of the freedoms I enjoy in this stage of my ministry is to be able to think theologically about the church and what ever parish I am serving. I am always amazed when a parish feels it is in trouble, the practical goals and solutions they always come up with. Some are achievable others are not realistic. Let me assure you who doubt the future of St. Andrew's, as my old seminary professor assured me, the future of St. Andrew's is in the hands of God not our hands. St. Andrew's lives and not even the gates of hell will prevail against it.

St. Andrew's is part of the one holy catholic and Apostolic Church. Let us celebrate with a sense of assurance St. Andrew's has an exciting future waiting for it. I wish I could tell you what the future will look like, if we were in charge I suspect we might be able to create our own vision but the head of the church is Christ and His vision may differ from the one we have for the future. We need to realize although the church is anchored in Christ, the worries of our modern world are throwing us all about. I am excited about the church and its future but I cannot tell you what it will look like. We are called to be faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ remembering that Christ is always faithful to us.

One hundred years ago this fall a little band of Episcopalians had faith in St. Andrew's in Methuen, can we who are here today have any less faith in the future of St. Andrew's?

Sincerely and faithfully
Roy A. Benjamin

LETTER FROM THE WARDENS

Dear Friends and Family of St. Andrew's;

The summer is drawing to a close, and we look forward to seeing everyone back at Sunday services. We miss you over the summer! The bathroom renovations are underway, even as you read this. In some ways they are a symbol of our determination- it has taken a long time, but they are being brought into life, even as we see St. Andrew's being brought into the future.

As your Wardens, we have spent the last several months thinking, and re-thinking, about the issues that face St. Andrew's and its longer-term future. We have spent time with Father Roy and received his guidance. We have talked with the Vestry. We only think it right to share with you some of our observations and perspectives. We hope you'll find them interesting, and ask that you provide us with feedback. We need to know what YOU think! (even if you disagree!)

1) What is a church?

There are multiple definitions of a church and what it does. As far as St. Andrew's is concerned, we'd like to offer the following definition:

Our church is a place where people are welcomed to join us in our worship of God. We enjoy the fellowship and support of other Christians, we share the love of our Savior Jesus Christ, and our spirits are fed each week.

2) What is ministry?

Ministry has multiple forms. It can be done inside or outside of the church walls. We would like to inventory the many ministries of St. Andrew's- done through its individual members. After all, WE are St. Andrew's. To be fair, we'd like to suggest:

The Ministry of St. Andrew's consists of each of our members bringing the love of God out into the world. Each of us has a God given gift, an interest, a passion, that can make the world a better place. The important part is that we share a part of ourselves, our time, and our love, to make a piece of the world a better place. When we take the credit, it is volunteer work. When we give God the credit, and think of it as our responsibility as a Christian, it becomes a ministry.

Some things, we support as a church. They are "corporate" ministries. Others, we do individually. They are "personal" ministries. But both are equally important!

3) Is there hope for a future at St. Andrew's?

We believe there is. Despite declining numbers over the years, there are a number of signs of life here at St. Andrew's:

- Active Sunday School, with new children every year
- Good distribution of age groups
- Members willing to take responsibility as teachers, lecturers, LEMS, ushers, acolytes, altar guild
- Satisfying music program

- Active, collaborative Vestry
- Various Adult Education opportunities, upon request
- Growing sociability among "middle-aged" members

4) What happened to the full time Priest in Charge?

So far, the Diocese has not been able to present us with a good candidate- someone with the experience and skills we need. We have talked to two candidates, but their strengths were in areas we didn't feel fit St. Andrew's. During this time, we have thought more than twice about the decision to hire someone full time. Perhaps God is behind the fact that we have not found the right person. Perhaps He has other ideas for St. Andrew's.

5) Don't we need a full time priest to make us a viable, self-sustaining church?

We don't think so. Even if we spend the last dime of our savings, a full-time priest will not bring in the members necessary to keep us open after three years. The more we look into it, the more dismal the outcome becomes. The LAST thing we would want is for St. Andrew's to close- there is too much good here! As we look around, we can see the important things being done already. What don't we have that is necessary to be a "church"? We believe it is more responsible to live within our means, even if our means are not as great as we would like.

6) What will we do about a priest?

We are happy to report that Fr. Roy Benjamin has agreed to stay onto us for another year. Although he is retired, he is willing to prepare Sunday services for us each week. His influence has been very positive for us, as your wardens, and it seems you like him as well. While this is not a permanent solution, it does buy us some time. We must have faith that this is God's church, and He will provide when the time comes.

7) How will we survive into the future?

Long-time survival depends on a combination of things:

- We will do what we can afford to do- even if it means a part-time or only a supply priest.
- We will each take responsibility, as members, for the "housekeeping" of the church- keeping it functional. We will be good stewards, and will pledge as much as we are able for the financial stability of St. Andrew's.
- We will be inviting and welcoming to newcomers, helping them with the service, inviting them into fellowship, introducing them to other members, and asking them to come again.
- We will support the "formation" of our members- teaching them the language, the culture, and the values of our organization. We will support the education of our young people, and will participate in adult education opportunities to enhance our relationship with God and become stronger Christians

- We will encourage our members to take their Christianity out into the world- building the skills and attitudes necessary to become disciples of the truth, love, and wisdom that is our Lord.
- We will each, as members, devote a portion of our lives to living out our discipleship and making some part of the world a better place. We will each use our gift in a “ministry” that is meaningful to us, and allows us to serve others.

We know some of this may be contradictory to what you have heard in the past. We, too, are on a spiritual journey. We don't know where it leads, but we do know we need to be open to the word of God, and allow him to teach us and give us insights. After all, it is His church. We are still learning, but we are trying to do our best to help St. Andrew's be all it can be.

In Christ, we remain His servants,
 Laura Walta, Sr. Warden
 Len Brown, Jr. Warden



AUGUST

Kristine Milo	8/1
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

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Teachers, Assistant Teachers, and
 Classroom Aids needed
 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!!

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For the Church: For Frank Griswold, our Presiding Bishop; Tom Shaw, our Diocesan Bishop; Bud Cederholm and Gayle Harris, our Bishops Suffragan.

For those of this parish, especially Rene Morissette; Dick & Sue Lorenz; Joann Moran; Dick Fraser; Agnes Gourdeau; Lawrence Barnes, husband of Peggy Barnes; Laurie D'Addario, Betty Mac Kay's daughter; Anne Edwards, friend of Linda Pacheco; Niall Fleming, long-time member of Saint Andrew's; James Johnson, Susan Foster's brother; Jean McGurn, Tom Johnson's cousin; Adolph Medelinskas, Carol Elliott's father; Al Willmore, Deb Wunderlich's father; Ted Clark, friend of the Falk family; Kylie McGurn, Susan Foster's cousin; Erin Feugill, Granddaughter of Betty Feugill; Nicholas Gayhete, great-grandson of Harriet Hebsch; Tony Imondi, (cancer) neighbor of Dora Atkinson; Grace Sinclair, sister of Lloyd Campbell; Judy Makin, cousin of Gail Ratcliffe, Linda Hernandez, Niece of Dora Atkinson; Ava Elizabeth Medeiros, newborn at Children's hospital, daughter of Melanie & Troy Medeiros friends of the day-care center.

If you are submitting a name to be put on our prayer list, please include along with the name of the individual, the relation to you or parish family and your name.

Thank you

VOLUNTEERS

It seems as though the list of requests for volunteers is steadily growing. As with all organizations volunteers are extremely important to help keep the many projects running smoothly. So again we ask for help for the following projects:

- Sunday Coffee Hour (Bulletin Board in Parish Hall)
- Donations for our food pantry (Len Brown)
- Altar Guild: (Gail Ratcliffe & Blanche Campbell)
- Teachers for Sunday School Classes (Valerie Carey)

Should any of the above requests for help is of interest to you please speak with the above listed members.

MEMORIAL FUNDS

IN MEMORY OF:

ORGAN MEMORIAL FUND

William kelley
 Donna Gail DeSousa

GARDEN MEMORIAL FUND

Donna Gail Desousa
 Elizabeth Potter

MEMORIAL FUND

Eric Bruce Pidduck

MUSIC MEMORIAL FUND

Arthur Poole

ST. ANDREW'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Canned Tuna Peanut Butter, Jelly Pasta
 Spaghetti Sauce Canned Vegetables Boxed Cereal
 Canned Fruit \$ Money \$ (to purchase perishables)

ST. ANDREW'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PLEDGE FOR THE PANTRY

During the upcoming Summer Season with vacations the Food Pantry for the Arlkington Neighborhood really gets depleted. Would you be willing to pledge \$12.00 or 12 one dollar items of food from the super market, i.e.:

- 12 cans tuna @ \$1.00 each
- 12 jars jelly @ \$1.00 each
- 12 cans vegetables @ \$1.00 each
- 12 jars of spaghetti sauce @ \$1.00 each

If every family participated with a pledge, we would have enough food for the summer. I would only need to purchase the 6 gallons of milk each week and six loaves of bread from our mission account.

Thank you Len Brown

ST. ANDREW'S BITS & PEICES

ELEVATOR LIFT

Should you find it difficult to climb the stairs to the sanctuary or Parish Hall, the elevator/lift is available for your convenience. Please contact an usher or member of the vestry and they will assist you.

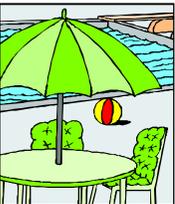
MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY

SEPTEMBER 12th

POT LUCK LUNCHEON FOLLOWING 9:30 AM SERVICE

CALL PAULA CAMPBELL AT 978-794-1000

TO VOLUNTEER HELP AND TO DONATE A FOOD DISH



R SERVICE SCHEDULE

June 13th through September 5th
 Services will be held at
 8:00 am & 9:00 am

VESTRY INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am-1:00 pm, Monday - Friday
 Gloria Schwarz, Parish Administrator 978-689-0463
 E-mail: admin@standrewsmethuen.org FAX: 978-689-0463

Laura Walta, Senior Warden 978-857-0624
srwarden@StAndrewsMethuen.org

Please do not hesitate to call Laura at any time at the above number, especially with pastoral emergencies. Be sure to inform her if you or anyone you know in the parish is ill and/or in the hospital.

Leonard Brown, Junior Warden 978-686-7770
 Paula Campbell, Clerk of the Vestry

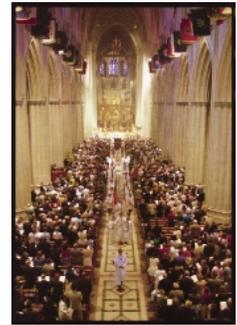
Matt McKeon James Beagan Beth Regan
 James Carey Dan Sulesky James Elliot
 James Wagner Richard Falk

Valerie Carey, Director of Religious Education 978-682-6165
carey.james@comcast.net

David Marsh, Sexton 978-685-8473
 Elaine Morissette, Pledge Clerk

Remor20@aol.com 978-683-8841

Huib Walta, Webmaster
Webmaster@StAndrewsMethuen.org



NATIONAL ACOLYTE FESTIVAL

This year's National Acolyte Festival takes place on Saturday, October 9 at Washington (DC) National Cathedral. The Rev. Ramon Aymerich, Priest-in-Charge at St. Anne's Church in Lowell, is willing to look into bus rental and other arrangements if there is sufficient interest from other congregations in the diocese. If any acolytes or their families would like to discuss this with Acolyte Director Cindy Sulesky, please email TheHappyEpiscopalian@yahoo.com or call 978-686-0840 or see her at church.

We need a head count as soon as possible of people who are interested, and of course we understand the cost is certainly a consideration. I would like to extend this invitation to all acolytes and leaders – BOTH CURRENT AND PAST. Please R.S.V.P. by August 29, 2004. Funds to help offset this cost will be gratefully

accepted. Make checks out to St. Andrew's Church, and earmarked for the "National Acolyte Festival".



NEW BATHROOM CONSTRUCTION

All bathrooms will be under construction in August. The two existing bathrooms will be redesigned and a new handicap bathroom will be installed. Completion is expected by the end of August. PORTA TOILET WILL BE AVAILABLE AND LOCATED AT THE MESSER AVE. OFFICE SIDE ENTRANCE.

PARENTS – Please accompany children to the outside porta toilet. Please forgive the inconvenience.

PLEASE RETURN

One of the albs for the Acolytes is missing. This is a large size and may have been used by a lay minister and brought home. Please return it --- it was bought specifically for the acolytes with money from the Christian Crafters, and the other albs don't fit our taller Acolytes.

Thank you, Cindy Sulesky

There are also several Lay Eucharistic ministers Albs and a personal cross missing. Suggest if anyone has any vestments at home for cleaning that they be returned so we can take a proper inventory and have them available as needed. Thank you, Trudi Driscoll

SPECIAL MAILINGS

If you would like to help defray expenses of mailing and purchasing greeting cards, Home Devotions, Day By Day booklets and mailings. Contributions will be greatly appreciated. Please see Betty Feugill



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Non-Profit
Organization
U.S.
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Lawrence, MA



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