

E-Portion – April 2008

From the Wardens

Please understand that you are reading this text after the celebration of Easter and after the celebration of Rector's tenth anniversary at St. Francis. We ask for your understanding because these reflections were written in advance of these celebrations and because we are not gifted with the written and expressive gifts of our Rector and Curate.

We are, however, extremely grateful to represent the leadership of our congregation in this message. While our Rector will certainly be missed during his well-deserved 12-week sabbatical, we can assure you that the Vestry devoted significant time during its March 1 retreat to review leadership responsibilities for the next three months. The insightful guidance of the Reverend Dr. Paul Taylor helped provide insight and suggestions for the consideration of both the Clergy and Vestry. Additionally, the Clergy and Vestry briefly outlined our desire to invite the entire congregation to engage in some "re-visioning" for the St. Francis community in the fall of this year.

Over the next few months, we hope to continue with our Capital Campaign commitment by addressing some of the maintenance items awaiting us at St. Clare House and beginning to move forward on the implementation of the Memorial Garden design plan. Bryan Diehl will coordinate a committee to identify and implement the repairs of key components of the St. Clare House renovation. Kathleen O'Connor, Jenn Stanovich and Jo-Anne Crystoff have worked very hard with Busy Bee Nursery over the last year to formulate an attractive, functional and practical design for our Memorial Garden space.

Since the beginning of February, your wardens have spent a Saturday participating in a Diocesan Warden's Workshop in East Longmeadow and another Saturday at the annual Vestry and Warden Day in Springfield. Along with benefiting from the wealth of knowledge that is shared by the representatives of other parishes in attendance at these workshops, we are reminded of how blessed St. Francis is as a congregation. Each one of our members is truly a servant leader providing his or her gifts unselfishly and as needed to further our effort to achieve the ministry goals of our Mission Statement.

Over the next few months, please feel free to seek out members of the Vestry to advance any items you would like to have heard and also to express your gratitude for their dedication. Each Vestry member is aligned as a liaison to the different ministries of our congregation. A listing of Ministries along with their Vestry liaisons is included in this Little Portion. Please feel free to communicate your prayers and celebrations to these liaisons or the Ministry leaderships.

Finally, thank you for all your prayers during this and all times. While we will miss the physical presence of our Rector during these next few months, we know that his spiritual presence along with the dedication, commitment and knowledge of our Clergy, Vestry and Staff will surely provide a continued period of growth for our congregation.

Peace,
Laura and Chris

Vestry Liaisons 2008

Ministries Report Month	Leader	Liaisons
Finance Committee January/July-Aug	Dave Simmons	Chris Berglund
Memorial Garden March	Kathleen O'Connor	Laura Caswell
Senior Events March	Kathleen O'Connor	Chuck Manero
Pastoral Care April	Jill Williams	Jill Williams
Newcomers April	Kathy Diehl Linda Letourneau	Dawn Rooke
Audit Committee May	Chris Berglund	Chris Berglund
Property Committee June	Bryan Diehl	Bryan Diehl
Mission Committee June	Jim Bourque	Cynthia McIntyre
Personnel Committee July-August	Patrice Mavricos Mary Jane Anderson	Patrice Mavricos
Church School September	Susan Bastardo	Cynthia McIntyre
Youth Ministry September	Lori Churchill	Laura Caswell
Adult Learning September	Rich Simpson	Rich Simpson

Stewardship Committee September	Laura Caswell	Laura Caswell
Crafts/Church Mouse Fair October	Barbara Beck	Dianne Thibeault
KITES October	Carrie Grinstead	Doug Rayworth
Acolytes November	Nancy Olesin	Sandy Kimball
LEMs November	Sam Davenport	Mary Ann DiPinto
Music November	Charles Nwachukwu	Bryan Diehl
Ushers November	Craig Stanovich	PJ Mann
Altar Guild November	Bev Giarusso	Dianne Thibeault
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Health Ministry December	Mary Lindfors	Patrice Mavricos

Mission Matters

The good people of St. Francis contributed \$466 to Dismas House on Ash Wednesday and \$257 to the Rector's Discretionary Fund on Maundy Thursday. The Good Friday offering of \$818 will be sent to the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Holy Land where it will help fund much needed educational and medical facilities. The Easter offering of approximately \$2,500 will stay closer to home in support of WALK for the Homeless benefiting the Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Friendly House, Hope for Housing, and Interfaith Hospitality Network.

In late March we made our first quarterly payment of \$3,000 to Fundacion Cristosal for its work in rural El Salvador. The Anglican Church of El Salvador is working with local people in three very isolated communities to develop a program of sustainable agriculture. Cristosal, an American-based nonprofit organization, has suggested that St. Francis might sponsor a second trip to El Salvador in the fall of 2008. If you are at all interested, let Jim Bourque (508-829-9275) know.

On Saturday, April 5, there will be an opportunity for Episcopalians in the area to work with the Worcester Habitat for Humanity in putting some finishing touches on a home they have been building. If you are interested in helping out, there will be a sign-up sheet in the narthex with details.

Prayer Shawls for Fallen Soldiers (PS4FS) Update

I had lunch with the Founder of this organization plus one other colleague. It was fun to actually meet face to face and to ask questions and discuss this wonderful opportunity to help others. Below is an excerpt from the PS4FS Newsletter. Prayer Shawls are going out quickly to as many family members of our brave soldiers who have, unfortunately, lost their lives in this five-year battle. Please continue to keep all these family members in your thoughts and prayers.

Thank you.
Beryl Turner

Here's What's Happening in Church School!

Lent: February 10 – March 9: During the season of Lent, we learned about Nicodemus and what it means to be “born from above.” We learned that it is okay to ask questions of God and bring our concerns to God. The younger children read a beautiful story called, “You Are Special” by Max Lucado. All classes used various activities such as baking and puppet shows to learn about Nicodemus’ nighttime visit with Jesus. (“Nic at Nite!”) We focused on learning John 3:16 and understanding that “God so loved the world.”

Eucharist Instruction: Meeting dates – April 6th (during Church School), April 26th (Saturday, 10-12:00), May 17th (bread baking, 3-5:00) and May 18th (celebration during the 10:00 service.)

March 30 – June 1st: For the remainder of the year we will be preparing a pageant called, “The Rich Man, The Builder and The Feast” during the Sunday AM Church School time. We will use drama and songs to learn these three parables. During this time, children will be meeting in Fellowship Hall rather than their church school classes. Children will then be grouped by parable rather than by grade level. The pageant will be presented on June 1st.

There will be regular church school classes on Saturday nights (one room schoolhouse). Lessons will also focus on the parables of the Rich Man, Builder and Feast. Volunteers are needed to teach the last Saturday night rotation (5/11 to 6/1).

June 7-8: Year-end party – We will make a new banner for the walls of Fellowship Hall and have a party to celebrate another wonderful year together in Church School!

Wednesday Night Eucharist

During the Season of Lent, the average attendance at our mid-week service on Wednesday nights at 7 p.m. was 22. While it is normal for us to experience an increase in attendance at that service during Lent, it also seems like a faithful community is developing around this quiet, relatively short (half-hour) liturgy.

As spring arrives, if you know you won't be around during the weekend, or simply need an opportunity to refresh mid-week, keep in mind that this service is offered all the way through June. (We take a break in July and August and then resume again in September.)

Newcomers Social

On Sunday April 13th after the 10 am service, at the St Clare House, the Newcomers Committee would like to invite any new members to join us for a social get together to welcome you to St. Francis. Light refreshments will be served. Please join us so we may have the opportunity to introduce ourselves and our wonderful community of worship. If you have any questions please call or email Kathy Diehl (508)829-4835 / khdiehl@charter.net or Linda Letourneau (508)829-9430 / lrkkelly@aol.com

Save the Date

Senior Luncheon Wednesday, June 4, 2008. More info to follow.

Alleluia Fund Golf Tournament

The Fifth Annual Alleluia Fund Golf Tournament will be held on **Saturday, May 10, 2008** at the Southwick Country Club in Southwick, MA. Proceeds from this event will augment our Alleluia Fund Offerings, which support both the Southwick Community Episcopal Church and our efforts in Liberia. The tournament fee is \$90.00 per golfer, which includes cart, 18 holes of golf, and a buffet dinner. Registration form will be in the Narthex.

The deadline for the May Little Portion is Thursday, April 17th.

Please have all information to the office by this date. You can leave it in the Office mailbox or email it to stfran@verizon.net. The Little Portion will be mailed on Thursday, April 24th.