

## E-Portion – May 2008

### From the Curate

It's springtime in Massachusetts:

As much as we may love the four seasons of Massachusetts's living it is really easy to tell when it becomes spring. I think it is the season that we are the most ready for when it arrives. People come out of their homes again! Teenagers walk the streets holding hands. Fresh fruit and corn on the cob appear at the grocery store, and you may even have a conversation in line about dance recitals, graduations, soccer games etc.

Spring is one of my favorite seasons; the flowers start to bloom and the grass becomes green. I just love it!

Many of you know that I have been married only a year now. Being married in May meant missing the opportunity to plant flowers at the rectory, which for some reason I felt would turn my house into a home. So, this year I was really excited to plant my first garden. When the first signs of spring appeared I got my gardening supplies and went to work. Here's what I learned:

- ✓ Gardening is hard: you need the tools to save your back, hands etc. When weight watchers said it was exercise I didn't take them seriously. Now I do.
- ✓ Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference between a developing flower and the weeds.
- ✓ A cold winter frost can cause a major set back: just as my flowers had started to bloom the frost came and took them away.
- ✓ Plants are all very different from each other and need specific environments for them to thrive.
- ✓ Gardens take time. Plants grow at different rates, we need to keep pruning and watering to see a gardener really come to life.

Gardening is not the only firsts I've taken on this year. And, they have all taught me a lot. It seems to me that building a garden is a lot like being part of the body of Christ. We all bring our gifts to St. Francis and we work like gardeners to till and prune our faith and this church. Sometimes it is hard. It may not be the exact right time for a new ministry or idea. It may be that we are feeling too spiritually dry to be as involved or really look for signs of growth around us. Spirituality is exercise that requires the building of skills and constant practice and discipline. Those things are difficult.

We all know people in churches who act a lot more like weeds than flowers. Those people that no matter how much we try to we can never please. And, we also know people whose gifts are obvious to us, but seem to not see the same talents in themselves. Sometimes it is difficult to see all the flowers before they fully bloom.

Like an overnight frost there are bound to be setbacks in our life together. That's what it means to be human, but in the end God will help us to come to full bloom.

Each one of us has a unique gift just like the unique plants of a garden. We bring them together to form community. Whether it is teaching, hospitality, preaching, friendship, organization, or so many more, we use our gifts to create a beautiful and diverse garden.

Finally, it takes time to build a church and the work never stops. We have to always keep asking, "What is God calling us to now?" This allows room for the Holy Spirit to move and create and make us even more than we can ask or imagine.

My first garden is a moderate success. And I am not giving up! Next year I will know even more about planting seeds and tilling the land. As I grow in knowledge I am thankful that each season is like a new beginning. Spring is a time for rebirth and reconnection with beauty of all of our gifts. I wonder how God will till the beautiful and diverse flowers of St. Francis. I wonder where we will be called to next and what we will learn along the way?

Jill

### **Liberation Theology**

At 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday nights in May I will be holding a short study on Liberation Theology. To some of you this may sound entirely new, but you are actually hearing it all over the place. Liberation theology has been a source of critique in the political arena, a way of discussion what it means to be involved in mission work, and the way that we talk about diversity in the church. This is the perfect class for those of you who may see yourselves involved with the El Salvador project or wonder how to work with missions here at home. Please join us as we begin conversation around some of the most famous liberation theologians including Boff, Gutterrez, and Cone. Sign up in the Narthex and pick up the first weeks reading today!

### **EfM Graduation**

The St. Francis EfM class invites you to join their Eucharistic celebration for this year graduates on Sunday, May 4th at 2:00 p.m. at St. Francis. (Please note the time change) Four members of our St. Francis EFM group will be graduating this year; Robin Carlo, Jonathan Phelps, Clare White and Beatrice Kayigwa. There will be a reception after the service in Fellowship Hall.

### **Mission Matters**

While a final tally will not be in until the end of the month, it appears that you have generously given approximately \$2,500 to the Walk for the Homeless sponsored by the Central Massachusetts Alliance for Housing. Thank you!

We are planning a second trip to El Salvador. Anyone with any interest in going should let Jim Bourque ([jbouque66@verizon.net](mailto:jbouque66@verizon.net) or 508-829-9275) know as soon as possible. Nothing is as yet set in the proverbial stone, so people interested in going can still have a voice in the planning.

Volunteer needed! Our representative to the Holden Crop Walk has stepped down after many years of service and needs to be replaced. It involves going to a few planning meetings (May 13 is the 1<sup>st</sup> one) and coordinating the recruitment of the folks who walk and pledge in the fall. St. Francis has traditionally been the half way refreshment stop, so we need to coordinate that as well. Interested? Please contact Jim Bourque....info above.

### **A Request from the Prayer Shawl knitters...**

Would the knitter of the triangular prayer shawl please provide us with the pattern. We'd be most grateful.

With thanks  
Barbara Beck (508-829-3045)  
on behalf of the Prayer Shawl Ministry

### **Celebrating Ten Years of Ministry Together With Grateful Hearts!**

On March 29, 2008 we celebrated the ten year anniversary of ministry with Fr. Rich Simpson as our rector. We were welcomed by youth greeters and a joyous spirit emanated from the congregation which gathered at the 5:00 pm Saturday service to worship together. We were happy to welcome Bishop Gordon Scruton, our previous rector, and Rebecca Scruton; Rev. Mark Hatch, former associate priest; Rev. Darrell Huddleston, former associate priest, and Bunny Huddleston; Police Chief George Sherrill and several members of the police department and many others who came to join in this occasion. We were blessed by the participation in worship of many musicians, and by the children who led us in a moving interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. We also gratefully acknowledged the blessing of Hathy, Graham and James Simpson for these years in our congregation. The parish has purchased some new altar linens to commemorate this milestone, one of which was presented to Fr. Rich.

After the Eucharist we sang and clapped “Oh Mary, Don’t You Weep” a piece by our rector’s favorite musician, Bruce Springsteen, and watched, with misty eyes, a beautiful video presentation reviewing the shared events, faces and fellowship of these ten years. We then enjoyed the food (including make your own sundaes for the children), fellowship, and the balloon animals made by Andi the Clown. Thanks to all who participated in making this even special and memorable.

### **Altar Guild Help Needed**

New members are needed for the Altar Guild Ministry. We invite you to come and observe a team as they prepare the altar for worship. Then, if you’d like, we will put you on a team.

If you’re interested please email or call Dianne Thibeault at [diannethibeault@aol.com](mailto:diannethibeault@aol.com) / 508-829-5306 or Bev Giarusso at [bgiarusso@verizon.net](mailto:bgiarusso@verizon.net) / 508-835-3580

### **Vacation Bible School is Coming to St. Francis!**

Last summer’s Vacation Bible School was such a success, we’ve booked a week for this summer! This year’s camp, under the direction of Jill Williams and Bement Camp, will be held the week of July 28 - August 1. The camp will run from 9am to 3pm with an option of an extended day until 5pm. The program is for children ages 5 to 12 and the cost is \$50 per child (there will be an additional fee for extended day.) Please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. For further information please contact Dawn Rooke at 508-829-7124 or [dtsar39@aol.com](mailto:dtsar39@aol.com), or Jill Williams at (508-829-3344) or [jwilliams@diocesewma.org](mailto:jwilliams@diocesewma.org)

### **Church School!**

**Eucharist Instruction:** Meeting dates – April 26<sup>th</sup> (Saturday, 10-12:00), May 17<sup>th</sup> (bread baking, 3-5:00) and May 18<sup>th</sup> (celebration during the 10:00 service.)

**June 1<sup>st</sup>:** A pageant called, “The Rich Man, The Builder and The Feast” will be presented on June 1<sup>st</sup> during the 10:00 a.m. service.

**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!

### **Alleluia Fund Golf Tournament – Last Call**

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. Sign-up on the table in the Narthex by Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Thank you.....**

Thanks to all for the wonderful tenth anniversary celebration and party on March 29<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to be among all of you.

Rich, Hathy, Graham and James

To the Saints of St. Francis,  
Jane and I are so grateful for the warm outpouring of prayers, call, cards, and offers to help. Jane is all better, and I am in the middle of a 12 week course of chemotherapy, to be followed by surgery in

Boston this summer. You never realize how much your thoughts and prayers mean until you need them. It is a good lesson to remind me to reach out more to others when they have problems.

God bless you all,

Jane and Mark Williams

**The deadline for the June Little Portion is Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

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](mailto:stfran@verizon.net). The Little Portion will be mailed on Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.