

The Eagle

The Newsletter of St. John's
Episcopal Church
February 2010 Edition



Annual Parish Meeting

St. John's Episcopal Church
January 10, 2010

The meeting was called to order by Senior Warden, Jan Biondo, at the end of the 10:15 am service. It was determined that a quorum was present. Barbara Snyder was appointed as secretary.

The minutes from the 2009 meeting were not available as the secretary had another one of her senior moments and she duplicated the wrong document. Should anyone wish to see those minutes, contact Barbara and she will email them.

Senior Warden's Report

Jan distributed a copy to all parishioners. She spoke of Fr. John Elledge's passing and the effect this has had on her personally as well as on the church. The Search Process is ongoing. She addressed the need to focus on parish growth. St. John's Commons is progressing despite serious delays in the process. A memorial brick can be purchased for a donation of \$250 and members interested in this purchase were encouraged to speak with Jan. Jan shared a heartfelt thank-you from the Church of the Nazarene for allowing them to use our facilities. Jan concluded by thanking all who help keep the church going. She reminded parishioners that they all have gifts to offer at St. John's.

The Treasurer's Report

Kallie Lyons distributed a copy of this past year's financial summary. She thanked everybody for their patience as she has been overwhelmed and is slowly learning the job. She publicly thanked Fr. John and Tim White for correcting some serious problems with both office computers. The budget at the end of 2009 was projected to be \$87,000 in the red; the actual deficit was \$20,000. The church received approximately \$11,000 over the amount of money actually pledged for 2009. Investment incomes were up \$2000, but this amount does not begin to recoup the recent losses. Buildings and Grounds spent \$14000 more than their budget; investments and endowments paid for much of those expenses. The Diocese lowered our assessment by \$762. Four salaries are paid by the church; of those, two employees will take a 2% raise for the next year. The other employees declined the raise. The books need to be audited as soon as possible. Kallie asked for volunteers. Mary White is interested in helping. In answer to a request she's had, Kallie will not speculate on "how much time we have left" with our money as she believes this is counterproductive to growth. "We have as much time left as He says we have left...We are on His time, His schedule." Barbara publicly thanked Kallie for consistently performing above and beyond the expectations of the duties of her job.

The Junior Warden's Report

Bill Price summarized various improvements/repairs to the church property. The interior walls were painted as was the kitchen ceiling, the choir room was finished, the Grace Place storage space was established, the 200th Anniversary banner was hung, and the property landscaped and leaf-raked. He thanked Joe Smith for being instrumental in the completion of many B&G projects. The Historic Preservation Committee awarded us for our property and there is a sign to be permanently erected. Bill hopes to put our building on the historic registry. A sinkhole in the back of the church was recently brought to Bill's attention. He is working to discover the source of the problem and a permanent fix for it. Bill and Joe worked with the Woodwinds ensemble, and the concert was a success. Bill is hoping to see another Chili Cook-Off this year. He encouraged parishioners to send him their "honey-dos" for his never-ending list of parish projects. In conjunction with Bill's report on Buildings and Grounds, Donna Patnode mentioned that she was working with the Vo-tech school concerning the construction of a marquee for the front of the church.

Elections

The following elections were held.

Vestry: 3 year terms

Dee Ashby and Anne Shinn volunteered and were approved unanimously in a vote by the parish members.

Barbara Snyder was nominated as Vestry Registrar. She accepted the nomination and was approved by the parish.

The Delegate and Alternate to Convention will be Jan Biondo and Lillian Burch. They will also serve as Regional council representatives. They were unanimously elected to both positions.

Gay Lynn Price was voted in as Historian of St. John's Church.

Question and Answer Period

Joe Smith spoke concerning unused space on our property, especially the rectory. As he noted, it has been empty for too long. Renting it out could provide another source of income for the church. It was decided that the rectory would be a topic for discussion at the next Vestry meeting.

Joe also suggested that we might want to consider discontinuing the 8:00 service as a way to save money. Dee suggested not combining/eliminating services until we have a clearer picture of what direction the parish would like to take. Barbara will include an insert in the bulletins to generate parishioner opinions for the February Vestry meeting.

In his service to us, Joe has been helping to keep the boiler in the rectory going. It is corroded and in bad shape. In Joe's opinion, this system is in need of replacement. Again, this will be an issue for Vestry to discuss.

Pledge Cards

Jan asked that parishioners please turn in their pledge cards to Kallie before the end of the meeting.

With that, the meeting adjourned at 12:20 pm with a concluding prayer.

Thanks to all who attended the meeting!

February Calendar

Happy Birthdays:

2 Rev. Alicia Alexis
7 Wade and Ava Brendle-Williams
16 Laura Brandon
20 Derek Pryor
21 Libby Green

Dates to Remember!!!!

February 6: Soup/Chili Cook-off 6:00 pm See Kallie Lyons (Kallie67@comcast.net) or Bill Price (williamprice3rd@msn.com) for details about participating. All parishioners are invited to attend and judge the winner. Be there! Bring a friend!

February 16: Pancake Supper 5:00-7:00 See Dee Ashby for details. Help is needed to set-up, cook, and clean-up. This is a free event, and the participation of the parish members and friends is an important start to the Lenten season. Please plant to be here.

February 17: Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm The Rev. John McIntyre serving as rector

May 8: May Market 9-2

Please Give the Office Your eMail Address

If Barbara has your eMail address, you will receive a monthly calendar and the Eagle. Due to new postal regulations, we are no longer bulk mailing our newsletter. Please encourage anyone who wants to continue receiving the newsletter to eMail the office at:

stjohnshdg@verizon.net

The May Market

It is not too early to start planning this event. There are many ways that parishioners can help.

- Can you help set up and clean up?
- Do you know a crafter/vendor who might like to sell their wares that day? Suggest they reserve a table. Do you know anyone who would like to sell flowers, plants, etc. that day? If you have any names, numbers, and/or emails of people who might want to serve as vendors that day, please give that information to Barbara who will invite them to attend. Can you donate baked goods and/or bottled water? Can you spend a few hours selling these?
- Can you donate to the church yard sale? We are being very fussy about the items we'll accept. No used clothes, shoes, etc. No dollar store items. Nothing that is broken, rusted, or dirty will sell, so don't give it to us. Books should be in good condition with no mold, missing front covers (illegal to sell these), water damage, etc. Books should have common appeal to consumers. We'll start accepting items in March and stop accepting them 2

weeks before the event. This will give us time to price and display all donations for the sale. Can you spend a few hours monitoring the white elephant? See Donna Patnode or Barbara Snyder for more information.

- Do you have something valuable to donate for the silent auction?
- Can you donate money to help pay for advertising in the newspapers?

Please keep this date open and participate in this event

Ladies at the Luncheon – January 9, 2010

A Toast to another successful event! Thank you to Gladys for the table favors. Thank you to Dee for organizing the event.



Remembering Fr. John

"So what's the new rector like?" my husband asked our then four-year-old son. "Is he old or young?" "Well", said our son, "he looks old but he's really young". Children perceive things as they really are and my son immediately picked up on Fr. John's exuberant, young-at-heart spirit and his sense of humour.

Fr. John was a member of the Fellowship of Merry Christians and never missed the chance to share a joke, a funny story or a corny pun, especially when he had a captive audience during his sermons. He was also known to burst into song mid-sermon, aided and abetted by Mindy and the rest of the choir if we were familiar with the hymn. The points he was making were serious but he got them across in entertaining ways.

He would paint vivid mental pictures that would make the Gospels come alive, making me understand that Jesus experienced exactly the same human emotions as I do. I could just picture Jesus resigning Himself to honour his mother's wishes as, ignoring His protests, she instructed the servants to do as He said at the wedding in Cana.

'Evangelism' had become the dreaded 'E' word but Fr. John taught us that we evangelise by our actions. He proved this point by getting to know local business owners and workers and inviting them to church. He and Mindy bought a house in Havre de Grace and became part of the

community. He was a "people person" with friends from all walks of life. Those who came to him for financial help were encouraged to better themselves and sometimes given chores to do in order to earn money.

We would often travel together to Regional Council, Diocesan Convention and other meetings. Our conversations covered everything from church, family and topical events to social and political issues. He was always there to offer support and advice for me. One of the things I miss is emailing articles to him for his viewpoint. It usually coincided with my own views but Fr. John was mindful of other people's opinions. I learned that you don't have to like everyone but it is important to respect them.

Children were drawn to Fr John because he had a special rapport with them. When youngsters were present he would often invite them up to the altar while he celebrated the Eucharist, illustrating one of his favourite Bible verses: But Jesus called them to him, saying, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God." **Luke 18:16.**

In October, Fr. John purchased a Mini Cooper convertible. When I made a not-so-positive comment about it he chastised me, telling me that God wants us all to be happy and enjoy life. The shock and sadness of losing Fr. John so suddenly will be with me for a long time but I take comfort in knowing that he did embrace life and lived it to its fullest. I am grateful to have known him, for his friendship and for all the lessons he taught me.

God Bless you, Fr. John.

Jan Biondo
Senior Warden



To Being 18 Again!- In Memory of Fr. John Elledge

By Andrew Long

As these notes typically go, there is a lot of sadness involved in reflecting on a life that has been lost. I'm not going to avoid the sadness that Fr. John's passing has brought to me, but rather I will experience for what it is worth.

I met Fr. John while rehearsing with the Harford Choral Society in the Fall of 2004. As a requirement for my Associate's Degree, I joined the local choir and was able to take it for credit. I was also familiar with the director, Herb Dimmock, so I figured it would be a good experience all around. While I do not remember the first time I met Fr. John, who was singing bass, I do remember the first time we were really able to talk.

At a post-concert party at another member's house, I wandered around looking for someone to talk to. I was significantly younger than most of the people there and did not really have much to contribute to the ongoing conversations. Standing in a small group of people was Fr. John and his wife Mindy. I guess out of sensing that I was not really fitting in, Fr. John introduced himself and began asking me who I was and what I was doing singing with the Choral Society. After some small talk, I learned that he was the Rector of St. John's Episcopal Church in Havre de Grace, and that they were in the process of searching for a new organist. I mentioned to him that I had played in my home church growing up and that church music had always been an interest of mine. Again, forgetting the conversation, it was agreed that I would come to the church a few weeks later and interview for the position of organist and choir master. Wow.

I timidly went to the church that day having never held a real church job with no real experience to speak of. We talked in his office for quite some time, and after a few hours, he presented me with a contract for the position. I was really excited to have the chance to begin my professional music career having not even graduated with a four year degree. He showed me to the church and to the organ and explained that choir rehearsals would begin the first week of January, only two weeks away.

At that first rehearsal, I had no worldly idea of how to direct a choir or even how to run a rehearsal. Sure I had sat in many rehearsals in my time, but never had I led one. Scared, I asked Fr. John and Mindy what I should do. He calmly looked at me and said, "How about you start with the hymns for Sunday, then go from there." Needless to say, this was all the advice I needed and things went really well. I served at St. John's for one full year before moving on to take another position as a director of music.

Well, so what? A chance meeting at a party only launched my entire career of service in the church. That is what.

As I look back on the year that I worked with Fr. John and took to heart his sometimes tactfully placed criticism, I see now that he saw more in me than I ever have in myself. He gave me confidence in letting me do my job as I saw fit, and only stepped in when needed. He let an inexperienced youth run the music program of his beloved church. I was only 18 at the time.

On Fr. John's Facebook page in the "About Me" section, he wrote in his last days about his declining physical condition and about how he was really an 18-year-old stuck in the body of a 70-year-old. The more and more I think about this, I know that being 18 meant more to him than just a number. It was a time in life where there was no pain, no responsibility, and certainly no immediate thoughts of death.

At the tender age of 18, we all are just emerging into the world of adulthood about as naive as can be. Because of Fr. John's service to his country, he knew responsibility, but was able to still enjoy the life of a young adult. From the age of 18 we begin to move into the intellectual, and for some of us, the spiritual forming years of our lives. This is where most of us flourish and become who we ultimately stay as the rest of our lives. In faithful response to the call of God, Fr. John was educated and later ordained into the ministry of the Episcopal Church. A combination of the intellectual and the spiritual was the fruits of his early years of life.

I reflect on this because it would be great to 18 again. For me it was a time when people were taking chances on me that led me to later on start discerning a call to ministry in the Church. We were carefree and naive, and most of us lived without any physical restraint or disability.

I praise God for calling Fr. John home, even as I mourn. I praise God because now Fr. John can be 18 again in body, with the keen intellect and loving nature that marked the later years of his life. There is no pain, no crying, and no death in the heavenly light that Fr. John now resides in. I believe in the resurrection of the body and in Christ's triumph over death, and in that belief I find some comfort. I hope and I humbly pray that his wife Mindy will find that same comfort over time.

On Saturday we will lift praise to God in memorial of Fr. John's life. A man of country, of honor, and of God will be laid to rest in the loving arms of the God he so firmly believed in. While sad for those of us that are left, it is fitting that he can now enjoy eternity with our Creator.

I will miss you Fr. John. You took a chance on a scared 18 year old, and look where it has taken me. Each time that I sit at an organ bench, stand in a pulpit, or read the Scriptures, I will think of you and impact you made on me in just a short year.

An FYI: Barbara will not be in the office from March 26-April 5. This is the week before and including Easter, probably the busiest time in the church. Please plan for my absence if you are counting on the office to take care of business. I will be in Hawaii with my sister and the girls. We are taking a pilgrimage to see Pearl Harbor; my father was a survivor.



PLEASE DO NOT DELAY! TIME-DATED MATERIAL



ash
wednesday
services

7:00pm
February 17, 2010
St. Johns Episcopal Church
The Rev. John McIntyre