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The Epistle

November 2008

Letter from the Priest-in-Charge

Dear Beloved Community,

It is that time of year again....time to share and express our thanksgiving in and for our wonderful faith community by pledging our time, talent and treasure to each other over the year to come. It's stewardship season. But for some reason, stewardship has become among the most dreaded words in our ecclesiastical vocabulary. And even if we consider ourselves to be fairly generous with our resources, many of us still think of stewardship as the proverbial raspberry seed in our otherwise spirit-filled experience of church and community. Maybe it's because we see stewardship simply as another financial responsibility, another financial burden, or another suggestion that our community membership and status is just dependent upon our willingness to open our checkbooks. What does financial responsibility have to do with God and faith and community? But financial responsibility is sooooo not what stewardship is all about.

Stewardship is not a financial issue. And it is only about responsibility insofar as it is our response, to the best of our ability, to God's abundant grace. It is our response-ability to grace. And as such, it is more about opportunity than it is about owing. It is about the opportunity for a spiritual practice; not a membership requirement. It is, like praying, and preaching, and reading the Gospel, and tending the sick, and befriending the lonely, and even receiving the Eucharist, a way to connect with God by sharing our blessings with each other. And we share in response to our gratitude.

Stewardship is about thanksgiving. It is no coincidence that the literal translation for the Greek word for Eucharist in our Holy Scripture is actually *thanksgiving*. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, the *euchristia*, as the Greek is written, we are literally celebrating our gratitude for all that God has freely and graciously bestowed upon us. And so thanksgiving is our most holy Christian expression of our communion with God. But thanksgiving cannot simply be central to our liturgy without being central to our lives.

And this is where the spirit-filled gift of stewardship comes in. Eucharist is thanksgiving in worship. Stewardship is thanksgiving in action. For giving is the right and proper response to gratitude. Stewardship is living our thanksgiving. Stewardship is *thanksgiving*. The hard part comes when we have to decide how *much* thanksgiving is enough. How much can we *afford* to give? How much of our time? How much of our talent? How much of our treasure? What if we do not have enough to give? What if we do not have enough left? What exactly is enough?

You will remember chapter 16 of the Book of Exodus, which we engaged just a few short Sunday mornings ago. God says to Moses, I have heard the cries of my people and I will give them bread from heaven so that they will have enough to eat. And so Moses faithfully relays this message to God's people. And he further instructs them of God's commandment to gather only as much food as each one needs for each day and not a morsel more. They will be fed, but they are permitted only enough for one day at a time. And the next day, they are to *trust* that God will again provide enough, and likewise each and every day after that for the next forty years. But hear what the Spirit is saying here. This is not a divine delivery service. It is a spiritual discipline. Every day, the hungry community is required to gather together, to ask God to provide for one more day, to pool their resources and efforts to collect enough sustenance for that one day, and to trust that God will come through. And at the end of every day, every day for forty straight years, the people get what they need to survive. Thanks be to God. And thanks be to the collective effort, without which, no one would have survived. This is the biblical root of the meaning of stewardship. Pray. Trust God. Share. Count your blessings.

I'm not sure that living hand to mouth is what God intended of us in this day and age. In fact, I sincerely hope that it is not. But the story in Exodus does tell each of us that we can give and give and give some more because it will be given to us. Because it *has been* given to us. Because enough is always enough. Because we are called in our very liturgy and lives to a lifestyle of deep and true gratitude through holy thanksgiving. And so as we count our blessings, let us pray that we trust God enough to share our time, our talent, and our treasure until we have nothing left but enough....not a hardship, but enough.

Onward!
Peace,
Gretchen

Upcoming Events

November 2, Sunday, 12 noon Worship Council

November 3, Monday, 7 pm Book Group at St. John's Newtonville (*"The Story of Edgar Sawtelle"* by David Wroblewskia)

November 6, Thursday, 7 pm Choir Practice

November 7 & 8, Friday & Saturday, Diocesan Convention 2008 in Hyannis

November 9, Sunday, Interfaith Celebration 9:15 am – 10:15 am The Rev'd. Anne Minton will come and talk about The Children of Abraham for our adult ed hour. At 10:30 am, Holy Eucharist service, Rabbi Dan Judson will preach.

November 11, Tuesday, The Rev'd Anne Minton will continue her presentation on The Children of Abraham.

November 12, Wednesday, 7:30 pm Knitting Ministry at Ginny's

November 13, Thursday, 7 pm Choir Practice

November 19, Thursday, 7:30 pm Vestry Meeting

November 20, Thursday, 7 pm Choir Practice

November 27, Thursday, 7 pm Choir Practice

December 3, Wednesday, 7:30 pm Outreach meeting at Ellie Pandorf's

Wardens' Report

On Sunday, October 19, those who could attend were privileged to hear from Paul Swinglehurst, vice-president of the Greater Boston Food Bank. Paul's presentation gave us the facts, figures and pictures of the enormous enterprise of feeding the hungry in eastern Massachusetts. The parish made a substantial contribution to the foodbank, and more efforts, including our traditional fall food drive, are in progress. Awareness of the food needs in our society is part of our children's instruction, too.

Though we do not yet have a church school director, a number of generous and talented parents have stepped forward to help assure a full program for our children. In addition to working on Sunday mornings, they have also volunteered for the Sunday night confirmation class that we are sharing with St. John's in Newtonville. We are so grateful, once again, for our members' willingness to come forward to help our beloved community.

A good cadre of workers got the church and parish hall ready for winter last Saturday, the 25th. Manfred Hummel, our property manager, expresses his appreciation for all the help in tasks as varied as reglazing windows, dusting pews, cleaning the gutters and putting up storm windows. As usual, we face the heating season with some trepidation, and we continue to keep in mind our long-range plan of a new heating system. The diocese recently sponsored an "energy summit" which was full of ideas that we can use. We need the time, personnel and resources to put them into practice.

It's good, once again, to be in the midst of a fall season full of liveliness and promise. We look forward to a fruitful stewardship campaign. As always, we're glad to hear your comments and concerns.

Joan and Margaret

Reaching Out

- Outreach is sponsoring a FALL FOOD DRIVE for the next two Sundays – November 2nd & November 9th. The food collected will be donated to the Newton Food Bank and the Somerville Mental Health Clinic. Both the October and November 1st Sunday plates will be used to buy food cards that Gretchen can distribute to people who appear at St. Paul's in need of help. Annie Toffee and Mary Lou Pierron are organizing the food drive and can answer any questions.
- The Outreach Turkey will arrive on November 19th. Outreach will be selling turkey feathers (\$5/feather) for the three Sundays in November before Thanksgiving. We will use the money to buy grocery gift cards for the clients of Second Step. (Second Step's mission is to provide transitional housing and support services to women and their children who have successfully taken the first step away from domestic violence.)
- The Angel Tree will magically appear at the back of the church November 30th. Mary Lou will supply the names of 25 children under 12 who will greatly appreciate being remembered at Christmastime. Please take a name from the tree, purchase, wrap and label a gift and leave it at St. Paul's by December 14th. This will enable Mary Lou time to make the deliveries before Christmas.
- Outreach will be making and serving dinner at the Salvation Army in Framingham December 8th. If you would like to join us we would love to have your help! The high point of dinner is dessert. If you would like to make a chocolate cake with chocolate icing please call Ellie Pandorf. We need four cakes to serve 100 people. Thank you to Keith Hatfield, Annie Toffey, Ellie Pandorf, Charlotte and Dave Stafford, Faith Andrews and Nicole Vertescher, and Liza Meyer who helped at the Salvation Army dinner October 13th.

Our next Outreach meeting is December 3rd at Ellie's at 7:30pm. Please join us!

Faith and the Environment

VOICES CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS?

Not long ago I enjoyed a most extraordinary lunch. At the recent *Savings, Sustainability and Spiritually Conference* cosponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Power and Light the convener told us, "The lunch will be a carbon-footprint lunch, not a carb lunch. The caterer tries to find both organic and locally grown food if possible." That explained the bowl of fruit set out at coffee break (along with beverages) instead of pastries, etc. And indeed delicious sandwiches together with bowls of fruit, fruit leather, energy bars, etc. appeared at lunch time. Together with pitchers of water on the tables as well as containers of bottled water. Equally impressive was the environmentally friendly dishware as well as the credentials of the bottled water company, Keeper Springs, an "Environmental Project by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr." (which sends "all profits to the Environment.") A subsequent check on the caterer's website, www.basiltree.com, reveals, "Basil Tree's Earth Friendly Practices." It includes a long list such as "100% of our paper goods are now earth friendly. Plates are made from sugar cane waste...Coffee cups are lined with vegetable product and are compostable. Purchased from a non-profit that employs and provides services for the visually impaired...." But why extraordinary?

Many years ago I joined the Faith and the Environment Committee sponsored by the Diocese. One of our many goals was to eliminate disposables. (Inspired by the sight on trash night at the Cathedral of containers of debris lining the width of the steps.) To that end at the Conventions (held then at the Cathedral) we staffed tables loaded with information about the damage that the creating and the disposing of disposables does especially to children's health. (Other information about other goals appeared as well.) We also got permission to hire Conigliaro Brothers. This company's job was to provide, then after an event, take away huge receptacles for "trash." The Church School at the Cathedral one year created clever signs which we duly posted on the barrels. Guess what? No one read the signs: looking into the containers we saw "tons" of mixed trash. Same thing the next year. So--one of our members stayed after all had gone and sorted. More than one time. remember: 600 or so attended the Conventions. [Jack Blay: are you reading this?!] We asked and found out: what had happened before disposables and dishwashers (the Cathedral does have a dishwasher)? Turns out a group of women would come and wash up after events--a way of making some money. We also held mailing parties and sent out facts on the subject to every Church in the Diocese. So--we tried many, many different approaches over many years but at that time we felt like "voices crying in the wilderness", even though we had the blessing of the Diocese.

So that's why the lunch was extraordinary. If anyone had then told us back then that a company like Basil Tree would some day cater a Cathedral event--well, you fill in the blanks. Why do I end "Voices Crying in the Wilderness" with a question? Because maybe it only seemed like we were crying in the wilderness: maybe Someone was listening. Or to put it less poetically: activism works!

Note: this Committee initiated the naming of Deaneries after watersheds and it also initiated MIPL.

ABOUT CANCER:

"Shouldn't we do everything possible to reduce exposure to the suspected chemicals? Shouldn't we take precautionary measures, as we continue and deepen the research? In Massachusetts the leading cause of death in 2006 was cancer. It is time for action." Rita Arditti, "Why cancer's gaining on us", "The Boston Globe," October 27, 2008, p. A1. The reference is to "Why Cancer's Gaining on Us," Arditti, who inspired the initiation of the Green Decades's Committee on Alternatives to Pesticides," presents extremely sobering facts about cancer, and breast cancer in particular, and the connection to synthetic chemicals. http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/10/27/why_cancers_gaining_on_us/ Note: Recently Beyond Pesticides in its summer issue of "Pesticides and You," expounded upon triclosan in "Common Antibacterial Chemical Triclosan Raises Public Safety Concerns." The Conclusion mentions in part, "Since it has been shown that the use of the antibacterial triclosan is no more effective than soap and water for handwashing, human exposure to triclosan is not only unnecessary but risky and should not be allowed to continue to wreak havoc on our environment." One can substitute soap that contains Tea Tree oil, an anti-microbial substance, for soap that contains triclosan.

Maeve Ward, Coordinator

Charles River Deanery Youth Collaborative 2008-2009

Jesus said "Feed My Sheep"

A Program of Hunger Awareness & Action for Kids in Middle School

This year kids from the Episcopal Churches in Brookline, Dover, Needham, Newton, & Wellesley will come together to learn, and think, and talk, and maybe even do something about hunger in our world.



If you are
11-13 years old,
then this is for you!
Come...
and bring a friend!

Learn how u can
make a difference!

Show adults
how it's done!

Come up with some
great ideas!

Meet new friends!

Have a boatload
of fun!

You are the bread of life!



If you want to know more about how you
can follow Jesus' commandment to help
make sure that every one of us is fed,
please contact your rector or youth minister.

2008-2009 Events

September 26th, 2008
Hunger Banquet
(6-8pm, Christ Church, Needham)

November 23rd, 2008
Pie Making Party
(4-6pm, All Saints, Brookline)

March 7th, 2009
Work Day
at the Heifer Farm
(all day, Rutland, MA)

April 10th, 2009
Good Friday
Last Supper &
Stations of the Cross
(10am-noon, Grace Church, Newton)

May 3rd, 2009
Walk for Hunger
(overnight retreat, early morning
Eucharist, walk together to make
hunger history!)

People are hungry. What are YOU going to do about it?

Charles River Deanery Youth Collaborative

Charles River Deanery youth hear Jesus' call to "feed my sheep"

When the 45 middle school kids and adults from Charles River Deanery parishes sat down for a "hunger banquet" at Christ Church in Needham last month, four of them, selected randomly, were served a full meal at a table set with china. The rest of the group ate rice from paper bowls.

Afterward, the Rev. Chris Wendell, Assistant Rector at St. Andrew's Church in Wellesley, asked the group what Jesus might have said or done about the inequity if he'd been there.

According to Becky Taylor, Youth Minister at All Saints Parish in Brookline, the answers went like this: "He'd be mad!" "He'd want us to share." "He'd be eating rice with us." "He'd get rid of the barrier between us and them." "He would offer a blessing for the food we had."



Photo Courtesy the Rev. Gretchen Grimshaw

The Sept. 26 hunger banquet was part of the Charles River Youth Collaborative's efforts this year to help members learn about hunger—both worldwide and close to home—and respond with hands-on service projects. On this night, the focus was the uneven distribution of food worldwide.

One of the deanery's co-conveners, the Rev. Gretchen Grimshaw, Priest-in-Charge of St. Paul's Church in Newton Highlands, talked with the group about biblical instructions regarding food: take only what is needed each day and share with others.

After the event, Grimshaw said, "One of the primary reasons that I am so happy to be in this deanery is that this sort of gathering allows the kids from my small parish the joy of a large group of peers in their extended community, and the gifts and graces of wonderful, talented youth ministers from other parishes."

Now in its second year, the Charles River Youth Collaborative is a ministry with middle school kids who are members of the 14 Episcopal churches in Brookline, Dover, Needham, Newton and Wellesley. Their activities together this year are about trying to heed Jesus' call to his disciples in John 21:17 to "Feed my sheep."

"There are food pantries in each of our towns," Taylor said. "That means that some of our neighbors, maybe even some of our parishioners, don't have enough money for groceries. This is a problem that touches all of us. We can and must do something about it."

Upcoming Charles River Youth Collaborative events include a pie-making party on Nov. 23 at All Saints Parish in Brookline (the pies will go to local food pantries), and, in 2009, a workday at the Heifer Farm in Rutland on March 7; a Good Friday "Stations of the Cross and Last Supper" at Grace Church in Newton on April 10; and walking as a team in the Project Bread Walk for Hunger on May 3.

The Green Decade Organic Garden Tour visits St. Paul's



On September 13th, the Green Decade Organic Garden tour visited St. Paul's Meditation Garden. Maeve Ward, Betty Murray and Rev. Gretchen Grimshaw greeted everyone! From the Green Decade's newsletter: "A brief rest and snacks were provided at the mid-point of the tour, the small and peaceful nonsectarian Meditation Garden at St. Paul's Parish in Newton Highlands. The Reverend Gretchen Grimshaw, Betty Murray and Maeve Ward welcomed us and shared information about the history of the garden, which features an altar created from fieldstone and a piece of four hundred million year-old-schist."

KNITTING MINISTRY

The Knitting Ministry continues to meet monthly. This summer we had our first all-day knitting retreat at Liza Meyer's house in Marion, knitting and purling as we watched sailboats in the bay.

On Sunday, October 12th, many of the items we knitted over the past six months - baby sweaters, hats, booties, and blankets - were blessed at our altar prior to being delivered to charities. On that Sunday also a christening blanket we knit was given to Connor Bonegio at his baptism.

Anyone who is interested in joining our knitting group is most welcome. We will gladly teach you to knit!

Our next meeting is November 12, Wednesday, 7:30 pm at Ginny's

Thank you to everyone who participated on our parish Work Day on October 25th!!!! We got a lot done and your help and community support was hugely appreciated!!!! Thank you one and all.

Around the Diocese

Lay Eucharistic Visitor training. If you would like to be trained as a LEM and be able to take Communion to folks who are not able to get to church, there is a training scheduled on November 22 at the Cathedral of St. Paul from 9am-4pm. The cost is \$35 per person. Register by Nov. 15th. For more information contact Connie Melahoures, program coordinator, at 508-746-3805 or by email conmel@aol.com.

Junior High Retreat at the Barbara Harris Camp. This year's retreat is Nov. 21-23 at the Barbara Harris Camp in Greenfield, NH. All youth in grades 6-8 are welcome. The cost is \$110, and scholarships are available. This is a great event, and a great way to meet other kids in the diocese! Registration forms are available at www.diomassyouth.org – click on “calendar.”

Safe Church Training. Attention all folks who are or will be working with kids and youth at the Parish of St. Paul. The diocese requires that all such adults have a unit of Safe Church training. The workshop is offered several times a year, usually on a Saturday from 9am -3pm, at parishes around the diocese. The next offering is at the Cathedral of St. Paul on December 6. The cost is \$40/person (we do have some scholarships available) and registration is required 14 days in advance. For more information contact Dick Vanderlippe (rvan@aol.com or 978-263-1895) or register online at http://www.rvan.org/SC_Registration_info.htm Look for future dates here in the Epistle. And if you are planning to attend the Dec. 6th session, please let [Gretchen](#) know.

Community Events

Bethany House of Prayer Refreshment Day in Arlington November 4, Tuesday, 9 AM

Each month, Bethany House of Prayer offers a half day of quiet and hospitality for individuals and groups. The day begins with an opening meditation from area leaders and colleagues. Individual time for prayer or study follows, with an opportunity for shared reflection, worship and a meal. Rooms can be reserved for a colleagues group or staff to gather in the morning or afternoon. On November 4th, the Rev. Karen Montagno, Dean of Spiritual and Vocational Formation at the Episcopal Divinity School and a Bethany House Colleague, will lead the event. Suggested donation: \$25/ session Registration is required. Please contact us at bethanyretreats@verizon.net or 781-648-2433 to register.

**Concert to benefit the Millennium Development Goals
November 9, Saturday, 7 PM
Church of the Holy Spirit, Wayland**

The Church of the Holy Spirit in Wayland presents a concert to benefit the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals on Sunday, Nov. 9 at 7 p.m. The concert will feature solo pieces, chamber music, and selections for jazz ensemble performed by students from the Rivers School Conservatory Program. Admission is a \$10 suggested donation for adults; children are admitted free. All proceeds from the concert will benefit the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, which aim to improve the lives of the world's poorest by 2015.

**Episcopal Divinity School – Cambridge
The Joanna Dewey and Carter Heyward Lectures
November 13, Thursday**

4 PM, Dr. Renita J. Weems, a noted scholar, minister and author is a nationally-renowned theologian and an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Noted for her contributions to theologies of gender and race, she will deliver a lecture entitled ***Baking Cakes to the Queen of Heaven: God, Goddesses, and Growing Up Black and Female in America.***

7 PM, The Rev. Dr. Marvin Ellison, the William S. Bass Professor of Christian Ethics at Bangor Theological Seminary in Maine, is an ordained Presbyterian minister. He lectures widely on ethics relating to human sexuality, health care reform, and economic justice. He will deliver a lecture, entitled ***Is Marriage a 'Must' or a 'Bust'? Enlarging the Justice Agenda.***

Receptions will follow each lecture. For more information or to register, please contact Priscilla Burns at pburns@eds.edu or at 617.682.1506. Both lectures will be available via live webcast. Visit http://www.eds.edu/CURRENT/PDF/Webcasting/InternetEventLogin_general.pdf to learn about the webcast!

**Parish of the Messiah, Newton-Auburndale
November 23, Sunday, 7 PM**

The Parish of the Messiah in Newton-Auburndale will show Buster Keaton's silent film comedy, *The General*, with live piano accompaniment by Robert Humphreville. Admission (includes popcorn!) is \$10 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors and free for children. A portion of the proceeds go to the **Newton Food Pantry**. Call 617-527-8505 for more information.

November Celebrations

Birthdays

Nov 1 Richard Streetman
Nov 7 David Oliphant
Nov 10 Chris Meyer
Nov 10 Louise Makrauer
Nov 13 Keri O'Brien
Nov 14 Maggie DiMarco
Nov 17 David Montgomery
Nov 20 Lily Hatfield
Nov 20 Elizabeth Makrauer
Nov 24 Rita Hubner
Nov 30 Ginny DiMarco



Christmas Flowers

To celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus, we will surround our Altar with bright red poinsettias in memory of loved ones and in celebration of special people and joyous events in our lives. Please have information for the Christmas flower dedication list (names and events) in the church office **no later than 1pm December 15, 2008**. If you wish to contribute to the display, make your check payable to Parish of Saint Paul and mark it "Christmas Flowers".

Mail this form to:
Parish of Saint Paul, 1135 Walnut Street, Newton Highlands, MA 02461
or email to office@parishofstpaul.org

Questions?

JoAnn Grigoli 617-969-4673 jgrigoli@gmail.com or Amy Radin (617-527-5339 amyradin@comcast.net)

Christmas flowers in memory (or in celebration) of

Your name: _____ Telephone: _____ or Email _____
(in case we need to verify spellings)