

The Epistle

SAINT PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

March 2007

FOUNDED 1883

*The Reverend Dr. Carol M. Flett
Priest-in-Charge*

Dear Friends:

There is a lot of reporting of the discussions within the Anglican Communion and the Episcopal Church in the USA (the name of our Province within the Anglican Communion). Some of you may not have known anything or much about the Anglican Communion until the General Convention in July 2003 when the Rev. Gene Robinson (an openly gay man in a committed relationship) was duly elected by his diocese and confirmed at the General Convention in Minneapolis. The Episcopal Church USA approved his subsequent consecration as diocesan Bishop of New Hampshire, and permitted Rites of Blessing for Same-Sex Unions. Recently, with the Covenant proposed by the Primates that challenges our relationship with the Anglican Communion, there is renewed or new interest in knowing the need and significance of our relationship with the Anglican Communion. Several people have asked very good questions, such as "Does the Archbishop of Canterbury have authority over the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church?", I have forwarded information to you online in a timely fashion whenever it seemed useful to you. However, there is much more to read and digest. Check out <http://www.anglicancommunion.org> and <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/tour/index.cfm> and http://www.aco.org/primates/downloads/communique2007_english.pdf for the Primates' Meeting communiqué.

Please join me on Sundays, April 22, 29, May 6 and May 13 from 9:15 – 10:15 am in my office for a discussion on the Episcopal Church and its relationship to the Anglican Communion. In the mean time, this is a summary of the events that led to the actions of the Primates' Meeting.

Every ten years since 1867, the Archbishop of Canterbury has gathered the bishops from every diocese within each of the 38 Provinces of the global Anglican Communion for a meeting at Lambeth Palace in London. The most recent meeting was in 1998. Since 1978, the Archbishop has also called the Primates of each Province to a meeting as an opportunity for "leisurely thought, prayer and deep consultation" and the group has met regularly since then. The most recent meeting was in Feb. 2007 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Among the many issues discussed by the Primates, including the UN Millennium Development Goals, was their concern about "the developments in the life and ministry of the Episcopal Church USA and the Anglican Church of Canada, which challenges the standard of teaching on human sexuality as described in the 1998 Lambeth Conference resolution 1.10; and the intervention into those Provinces which arose as reaction to the urgent pastoral needs that certain Primates perceived. Both the innovation and the intervention are central factors placing strains on our common life". (African bishops of Provinces such as Nigeria, Kenya have stepped in to provide oversight of parishes in the USA) Because the Primates' Meeting and the Lambeth Conferences have no legislative power, since all Provinces are autonomous bodies, they may vote to give voice to an opinion and a request of another Province. Recently, a majority of Primates asked the Episcopal Church USA to stop ordaining homosexual persons and blessing same-sex unions. The Primates' Meeting reports that the many Primates have lost trust in the Episcopal Church's readiness to change, and the Presiding Bishop reminded the Primates that the Episcopal Church has lost trust in the Primates, who are all too ready to undermine or subvert the polity of the Episcopal Church USA.

In her letter to the Episcopal Church, our Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori wrote: "It is our strong desire to remain within the fellowship of the Anglican Communion. The Primates' Communiqué, however, raises significant concerns. First among these is what is arguably an unprecedented shift of power toward the Primates,

represented, in part, by the proposed "Pastoral Scheme." This proposed plan calls for the appointment of a Primatial Vicar and Pastoral Council for The Episcopal Church whose membership would consist of "up to five members; two nominated by the Primate, two by the Presiding Bishop, and a Primate of a Province of the Anglican Communion nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury to chair the Council." We believe this proposal contravenes the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church. Moreover, because it is proposed that this scheme take immediate effect, we were compelled, at this March meeting, to request that the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church decline to participate in this aspect of the Communiqué's requests. Nonetheless, we pledge to continue working to find a way of meeting the pastoral concerns raised by the Primate that are compatible with our own Church's polity and canons. We should note that our recommendation to Executive Council not to participate in the Pastoral Scheme, though not unanimously endorsed by this House, came at the conclusion of long and gracious conversation."

I also want to affirm the life and ministry of gay and lesbian members of our Church, both of St. Paul's and our diocese, and of our national Church. St. Paul's in Newton Highlands is fortunate to have three homosexual families, wonderful people who have contributed their time, talent and treasure to the life of this parish for years. May our shared experience be spread not as *innovation*, but as *recognition* of our baptismal promise to "respect the dignity of every human being." Let us boast of this parish's inclusive ministry to others we know in surrounding towns.

Peace,
Carol

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OUTREACH COMMITTEE

SALVATION ARMY DINNER - The Outreach Committee assembled a group to cook and serve dinner at the Framingham Salvation Army dining room on March 12. We began cooking at 4:30, served dinner to approximately 100 people at 6:00 and were cleaned up and out the door by 7:00! Ellie and Bob Pandorf did the grocery shopping. Dave and Charlotte Stafford, Ellie and Bob did the cooking. Eliza and Craig Bley brought Jack and his Cub Scout troop to help serve. GREAT TEAM EFFORT!

If you would like to join us at a future dinner please call any member of the Outreach Committee. We'd love to have your help and we think you will enjoy this rewarding experience.

FOOD DRIVE - The Lenten food drive was a great success. Donated food was given to the Newton Food Pantry and the Somerville Mental Health Clinic. Thank you to all who contributed.

MITTEN BASKET - The clothing collected for the Grow Clinic at the Boston Medical Center was delivered March 1st. Charlotte and Dave spent \$106.22 from the Outreach budget for additional warm clothing. Their shopping spree at the Carter's outlet took advantage of end of the season savings. We appreciate all donations to the Grow Clinic but we want to emphasize the need for new rather than used clothing.

APRIL PLATE - Outreach distributes the money collected in the plate on the first Sunday of each month. The April plate will be given to "Gifts of the Heart" a program sponsored by Bishop Cederholm. Gift certificates from a variety of stores like Wal-Mart and Home Depot are distributed to Katrina survivors.

COIN ROLLING PARTY - We are hoping to schedule a coin rolling party this spring. The money collected will be used to buy books for the library at The Epiphany School. Mary Lou will check dates with Joan Whelan.

CANDIDATES CORNER

Easter II Sunday, 2007 Update from Mark McKone-Sweet

Dear Friends,

I write you on this second Sunday in Easter with great anticipation and joy. This morning we read about doubting Thomas and we heard Jesus say to his disciples “Peace be with you”. I confess that the events of this week have allowed me to set aside my “doubts” and to accept the “peace” of Christ in my life (*which was there all along, as we all know*).

On Wednesday of this week, Kate and I received an update on our adoptive son, that he continues to be well cared for and that we can come visit him for 2-3 days. This is just one of many steps in a long adoption process from Guatemala, but for us, this is a BIG step. We are planning on flying down in early May to be with him.

In yesterday’s mail, I received final word from the Standing Committee that I will indeed be ordained to the transitional Diaconate this June. Even though I was told to order my clergy cloths and collar(s) a month ago by several mentors, I cannot deny that opening this letter allowed my pending ordination to become a reality.

This morning, The Rev. Jon Strand, Rector of Saint Paul’s Episcopal Church announced that they have called me to be their full-time assistant. I have accepted this call.

Over the past eighteen months as the seminarian at Saint Paul’s, I have grown quite fond of this community. Their growth, I have learned, is merely an output of an amazing coming together of individuals seeking Jesus daily and in all others. As many parishes have reduced the hours or even cut assistant positions, this parish is yet again placing their faith in Jesus to provide, placing faith in their capacity as a community committed to the transformative power of not being held back by perceived limitations, and to use the abundance which the Creator is providing them daily. It is taking such a ‘leap of faith’ that affirmed that my theology is a good match for theirs.

I am excited to be able to continue my formation as a minister for this church. Saint Paul’s Natick has proven, much like my be-loved Parish of Saint Paul’s Newton-highlands, that they are committed to forming clergy as part of their ministry. My responsibilities will include working with the Christian Education Committee (*especially the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program*), Coordinating and supporting their many lay ministries, and of course, assisting Jon with liturgies, preaching, pastoral response and overall organizational development. I will begin working at Curate in May.

Please mark your calendars!!

- June 2, 2007 (10:30am) Diaconate Ordination at the Cathedral of Saint Paul’s
- June 3, 2007 (10:30am) Parish of Saint Paul’s, Newton-Highlands *first full liturgy as a Deacon. And a time to give thanks for our time together.*
- June 10, 2007 (7:30am, 9:30am, 11am) Saint Paul’s, Natick *first Sunday as a Deacon.*

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Mark

FAITH & THE ENVIRONMENT

"The General Prologue"

"Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote, ...
[Then] small foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open eye...."

--Geoffrey Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales," 1387-1400

CLIMATE CHANGE "UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL: Kevin Knobloch, President, Union Concerned Scientists, writes, "Late last year UCS collaborated with a group of scientists to examine the changing climate of the northeastern United States....this latest study really hit home for me personally. Born and raised near Boston, I've seen firsthand the changes our report documents and the effect they can (and will) have on local communities.

"I grew up spending my winters outdoors with friends, playing pond hockey, building snow forts that towered over our heads, and tobogganing down hills. And it wasn't terribly long ago that refreshingly cool summer nights allowed us to forego air conditioning, since heat waves were few. As I grew older, I noticed that the pond hockey season grew shorter each year, and the snow forts melted more quickly. Air conditioners became more important to enjoying the hotter summers.

"Sadly, our research findings confirm that the changes I recall are real and not a product of my nostalgia; annual temperatures in the Northeast have warmed almost two degrees Fahrenheit since 1970." But it's not too late, he continues. "Fortunately the Northeast has shown signs of willingness to help lead the nation toward the goal of reducing "our global warming emissions from every source." We hope, he concludes, other states do likewise. ("Earthwise," Spring, 2007, Union of Concerned Scientists)

*Boston University biology professor and BU researcher Abraham Miller-Rushing recently presented a talk, "Global Warming, Up Close and Local." They have studied how climate change has affected local birds, insects, and plants. For example blueberries bloom one month earlier than they did when Henry David Thoreau was writing about them.

*A Fact Sheet from the Physicians for Social Responsibility "The Medical and Public Health Impacts of Global Warming," includes facts and projections such as, "...Exposure to air pollution can aggravate chronic respiratory and cardiovascular disease, damage lung tissue, lead to premature death and may even contribute to cancer. Global warming may exacerbate these problems by affecting the concentration, distribution, and type of both manmade and natural air pollutants....Although increasing atmospheric CO2 concentrations have no known direct adverse health effects, other byproducts of fossil fuel combustion,...are associated with a number of well-established health risks. Consequently, a continued rise in CO2 emissions would be mirrored by a rise in the harmful effects of these combustion byproducts....There is also growing evidence that rising global temperatures are impacting both the timing and abundance of airborne allergens, especially pollen." (You can find the report at http://www.psr.org/site/page/Server?pagename=enviro_resources.) WHAT TO DO? Watch for suggestions in the May "Epistle."
Maeve Ward, Coordinator

NEWS NOTES

WALKING FOR THE CLIMATE:

Chris Gruener, Margaret and Manfred Hummel, Laura Powers-Patey, and Maeve Ward represented St. Paul's at the recent Interfaith Walk for Climate Rescue which started in Northampton and ended on the Boston Common. We and other newcomers were welcomed by the spirited "through" walkers--who had trudged at times in snow-- at the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary. (The Walk was organized so people could join for short times.) We touched base with the Rev. Margaret Bullit-Jonas who was one of our leaders at our environmental Forum (last May) and a leader for the Walk. Altogether a very inspirational experience. Thanks go to Laura for creating a Parish of St. Paul banner.

ALTER FLOWERS:

April 22, April 29 and May 27 are available if you would like to give a Sunday Altar arrangement. We will print your dedication in the Bulletin; the cost is \$40. For information, including other dates, contact JoAnne Grigoli or Amy Radin.

A SALUTE TO BILL WARD:

The March 21 issue of the "Newton TAB" included a photo of Bill Ward taken at a recent Iwo Jima Day Celebration at the State House. A salute and "thank you" to Bill and his fellow service men.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS:

In connection with Alternatives to Pesticides Month in March, the News Director of NewTV, Jenn Adams, interviewed GreenCAP (Committee on Alternatives to Pesticides, Green Decade Coalition/Newton) members Ellie Goldberg and Maeve Ward. Included was the poster, "Stop Climate Change" created for St. Paul's environmental Forum last May.

DATES TO REMEMBER

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION:

Save Sunday morning/afternoon, **April 29**, for St. Paul's Earth Day celebration! On Sunday morning the Church School will talk about the wonders of God's Creation and especially about the "Sea Around Us." We will then gather for a brown-bag lunch and leave for a visit to the New England Aquarium in Boston. Want to join us? Do come! Children can bring friends if they wish. But please let us know: we need to have a head count. Hope to see you!

****FYI...** May marks the one-hundredth anniversary of Rachel Carson's birth. Rachel was the founder of contemporary environmental movement, author of *Silent Spring*, and an advocate of nature and environmental ethics!

CONCERT!

Save the date and please come to an Organ Recital by Reiko!

Reiko Akasaka, St. Paul's music director and organist extraordinaire, will be performing works by Bach, Mendelssohn, and Heiller on Saturday, **June 9 at 7:00 pm at St. Paul's.**

This is a pre-concert for recitals that Reiko will perform in Italy this summer. As the winner of Gherardeschi Prize at the 2006 Italian Organ Music Academy-Shirakawa of International Music Festival in Japan, Reiko will tour and give two organ concerts in Italy -- one is an Italian program on Italian style organ, and another is a German program on German style organ. For this concert, Reiko will mostly play pieces from the German program.

A small donation is requested. A reception will follow.

We are so fortunate to have such a talented, wonderful woman as a part of our parish. Please attend and show your support of Reiko!