

ISSUE

25

AUGUST
2011



THE MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER OF
ST. PETER'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Epistle

August 2011

Interim Rector's Reflections

I give thanks for being called to serve as your interim rector. St. Peter's Episcopal Church is a wonderful community—warm and welcoming, lively and serving, traditional and progressive, open and flexible. It is a privilege to be here among all of you.

There is no one right way to "do" an interim year. It is a journey of faith and practice, listening and learning, dying and being born again. As William Bridges, change consultant, notes, change is external and always happening while transition takes place in the heart. An interim year is a time for giving thanks, strengthening that which is already working well and opening ourselves to the movement of the Spirit, all in preparation for the arrival of a new, permanent rector. We prepare for that which is new by opening up to the organic new growth of the Spirit which is already at work within us. The result will be fruits of increased devotion and love, mutual affection and generosity of spirit, mindfulness and awareness, compassion and creativity.

Traditionally there are five developmental task of an interim year: 1) coming to terms with history; 2) exploring a new congregational identity and direction; 3) raising up new leadership; 4) renewing denominational ties and relationships; 5) committing to a new vision in preparation for the arrival of a new, permanent rector. How we explore and learn from these tasks will depend on the shared and collegial work of parish, vestry and priest. We will grow as a community inasmuch as each one of us embraces this opportunity for some real depth work of inner growth and transformation. Let's explore each task in turn for a moment.

History is rarely objective and usually subjective. It is essential to explore who we have been throughout the long history of St. Peter's in order to better understand who we are right now and in preparation for who we might become.

Congregational identity is always in flux—we just don't see it because we are in the middle of it! It's the old joke about fish not being aware of being in water, it's just their environment and taken for granted. If we are to respond to the movement of the Spirit, which is, after all, the basis of a faith community, then we need to listen and pray, study and be open to the possibility that the identity, mission and ministry of St. Peter's will continue to evolve in the next year and many years, in the same way that it has evolved within our own living memory.

New leadership is rooted in the Baptismal Covenant of our faith. Each one of us is called to worship and prayer, inner growth and lifelong learning, service, ministry and outreach. Leadership in any organization tends to collect and consolidate power. As we raise up, identify and equip new leadership this will mean shifts in authority and parish life. These kinds of changes are eased, made transparent and comfortably assimilated as we attend to our own inner work, let go and open up to new synergies of collaboration, collegiality and creativity.

St. Peter's is solidly rooted as a Christian Church in the Anglican tradition. We are, of course, in the 21st century now, and our worship, prayer, learning and service need to reflect that reality. A great change has been going on for more than a century now in the Christian Church, and most world religions, in terms of beliefs, theology, worship styles, spiritual practices and universal human values. There is much talk these days of an Emerging Church. How is the Episcopal Church, and St. Peter's, prepared to move with the Spirit and take part in a 21st century Christian Church that is already here among us?

A new vision for a faith community can sound scary at first, touching off anxiety which is a natural part of change and transition. We know who we are and like it like that! But a community can unknowingly be rooted in a vision of the past that has slowly become concretized and encased in amber. Symbols, metaphors and visions must be alive, supple and flexible, still in touch with mystery and the divine. Do we know the operative vision, expressed or unexpressed, of our community, and does it actually require faith, hope and love? Doing what we've always been doing requires little faith, only comfort seeking comfort. A new vision emerges out of the grassroots of a faith community, often coming to us from the wilderness edges of the community. What is our growing, learning and loving edge as a faith community? What excites us and scares us and calls us to embark on a new journey of faith that actually requires faith?

In the 16th century, during a time of reformation and renewal, Richard Hooker identified what has been called the 3-legged stool of Anglican spirituality. Authority in the Episcopal Church resides in Scripture, tradition and reason. Experience has been added as a fourth leg in the 20th century. The movement among these four legs is a dance and dialectic, something structured and something improvised like jazz. To emphasize any one leg or spiritual value or energy over the others is to imbalance the heart and dynamism of our uniquely English spirituality.

Continued next page.

Parish Registry

Baptisms:

Melissa Ann Yates
on May 11, 2011

Lila Katherine Metcalf, daughter of
Jack and Shannon Metcalf,
on May 22, 2011

Bliss Seabrook Short, daughter of
Taylor Short and Chandler
McIntyre, on June 19, 2011

Helen Selby Cudabac, daughter of
Chris and Abigail Cudabac and
sister of Rosie, on June 19, 2011

Transfers Out:

Pat Good to Church of the
Ascension, Hickory, NC

Patty, James and Somer Alexander
and Elizabeth and Troy Stanek to
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
in Ft. Pierce, Florida

Jim Hillis to Church of the Holy
Comforter, Charlotte, NC

Wallace and Becky Jones to
St. Alban's, Davidson, NC

Bob Hopkins to Christ Church,
Charlotte, NC

Weddings:

Carrie Selby and Kenny Burr
on May 21, 2011

Lisa Marshall and Lance Carlyle
on June 4, 2011

Amanda Griffin and Ross Kirkman
on June 17, 2011

Theckla Sterrett and Beale Pope
on June 25, 2011

Katie Sobiesiak and Nate Iraheta
on July 1, 2011

Kristy Kelleher and Ryan Moser
on July 9, 2011

Nicole Kenney and Robert Joseph
on July 16, 2011

Deaths:

Sally Mackie, mother of Linda
Griggs and grandmother of Michael,
died April 24, 2011.

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I love tradition and history. Tradition, of course, is entirely subjective, what we remember and cherish. We've been enjoying the "New" Prayer Book now for 32 years! It is designed to work quite differently than the 1928 Prayer Book, with many options for deepening and expanding our worship experience. Our deepest tradition as Episcopalians, surprisingly, is neither Rite One nor Rite Two. It is the Prayer Book itself. I invite all of us to study, engage and learn more about that small red or black book in the sanctuary pews and discover the extraordinary riches found therein—resources for worship and prayer, faith development and historical memory, pastoral and liturgical resources for the stages of life, the prayers and Psalms of ancient and new spirituality that form who we are. Let us incorporate the polyphonal melodies and harmonies of Prayer Book worship, noting how different language, words, music and silence lead us to varied and fresh experiences of the Living God.

A bishop told a Sunday morning worship a few years back how we are not here in the Church to take care of personal needs. Half of the congregation sighed with disappointment and the other half nodded in agreement. Instead, we are here to learn faith, teach faith and practice faith. A vision rooted in individual need doesn't last very long. We are called to be a welcoming family but also more than a family—a community of faith, of disciples engaged in active works of justice, mercy and reconciliation. A vision rooted in a larger reality, the mystery of God in Christ, absorbs all that we are and can be in a remarkable experience of transformation and divine love. An interim year can explore this kind of journey, this lifelong and eternal task of loving God and loving neighbor which is the real, underlying and transformative task of a faith community.

Finally, an interim year is a wonderful opportunity for personal and communal growth. Grief and letting go is a natural part of ends and beginnings, and pastoral care is available to all as we move through this new chapter in the life of our parish. Scott Peck describes how a community formed around one vision of identity and health can experience chaos and emptiness before a new vision, perhaps more authentic to the moment, takes root. The temptation, of course, is to fall back, regress, return to Egypt before we've made it to the promised land. By monitoring our responses/reactions to change and transition, taking responsibility for our emotions (our feelings, no one has made us feel this way!), the Spirit can bring about a transformative process of healing that can spread through all parts of our life.

Interim training emphasizes the importance of non-anxious leadership during a time of transition. That is to say, health breeds health, and the opposite is also true! Let's make this a journey not just of enduring transition so we can hurry up and find a new rector—one who reminds us of one we've already known, or the exact opposite—but a journey of adventure and new things, rooting ourselves more deeply into the traditions, and new traditions, of our Anglican heritage. I give thanks for this opportunity to live and serve among you this year.

in Christ, the Rev. Tim Raasch+

You're Invited to a "Meet and Greet"

Please join the Parish Life Committee as we welcome the Interim Rector, Fr. Tim Raasch and attend an upcoming "Meet and Greet". The Meet and Greets run through Sunday, August 28 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Please attend the one that best fits your schedule. Please RSVP to the host as soon as possible so we can have an idea of how many to expect. *Meet and Greets* are designed so that priest and parish can get acquainted as we begin a mutual, shared journey of transition, ministry and growth as the parish prepares to welcome a new, permanent rector. The hosts will provide drinks along with one appetizer. You may be asked to bring an appetizer to share when you call and RSVP. If you have any questions about Parish Life or the Meet and Greets, please contact Logan Smith (logan_msmith@hotmail.com or 704-488-4436).

Sunday, August 7, Ruth Woodend (rwoodend@carolina.rr.com or 704-334-8946) in Plaza Midwood at 2501 Roland Street.

Sunday, August 14, Harris and Lyn Holt (lyn@harrisholt.com or 704-763-3564) in Myers Park at 3334 Windsor Drive.

Sunday, August 21 Michael Wright (mwright4@windstream.net or 704-641-4962) and John Ketron in Waxhaw at 9305 Clerkenwell Drive.

Sunday, August 28, John and Kathie Knip (kathie@datasuppliessource.com or 704-947-5645) in Huntersville at 7637 Horseshoe Creek Drive.

August Weekly Schedule

Sundays

Holy Eucharist, Rite I, 8:00 am
St. Peter's Choir Rehearsal, 9:15 am
Bible Study Group, 9:15 am
Sung Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 10:30 am
Coffee Hour, 11:45 am

Weekdays

Holy Eucharist, Rite II, 12:10 pm

Wednesdays

Centering Prayer, 11:00 am

Thursdays

St. Peter's Choir Rehearsal, 7:00 pm

August

Monday, August 8

Vestry Meeting, 6:00 pm

Monday, August 8 - Friday August 12

Choir School Camp

Sunday, August 21

Holy Eucharist in the style of Taizé, 5:00 pm

Thursday, August 25

Choir Board Meeting, 12:30 pm

Friday, August 26

Senior Class Party, 6:30 pm

Sunday, August 28

Acolyte Outing, 12 noon

Monday and Tuesday, August 29 & 30

Choir School Parent Meetings, 6:00 pm

AUGUST SENIOR CLASS END OF SUMMER PARTY

On **Friday evening August 26th** this annual party will be held at the home of Ann and Bill Hinson located at 2216 Colony Road. We each bring a favorite appetizer (finger food only please) and plan to have a good time! Dress is casual. While cards will be sent to our members if you would like to join us, contact Hannah Craighill at 704-334-6276 or Mary Griffin at 704-364-5268.

September

Sunday, September 4

Special Hospitality Hour
following 10:30 am service

Monday, September 5

Labor Day

Church Offices Closed

Sunday, September 11

Rally Day

Parish Covered Dish Luncheon
following 10:30 am service

Sunday, September 18

Hatsumi Miura Organ Recital, 5:00 pm

Sunday, September 25

Evensong, 5:00 pm

Bible Study Meets During the Summer

The Sunday morning Bible Study group has decided to meet in the summer at 9:15 a.m. in the Tower Room on Sundays as usual. Ruth Woodend, Jim Dunn, and Jim Dudley are taking turns leading the group. We would love having any interested Sunday morning folks join us.

Dear Friends,

Alene and I cannot thank you enough for the wonderful send-off you gave us on the last Sunday of June. The ten o'clock worship service was, as always, inspiring—the magnificent music, the heartfelt responses of creed and prayers, and the shared Sacrament, the communion that makes us a true community. It was such a fitting way to draw to a close our ten years of mutual ministry, giving thanks to God who has so richly blessed us. It was enough.

But then came the equally wonderful reception after the service, the kind words, and the very appropriate going-away gifts: computers for staying in touch and kayaks for getting away! Alene and I were very touched by your generosity, for, like God's grace, it is always more than enough.

While we will be dividing our time between the homes of our children in South Carolina and Hawai'i, we will never be far from you all in our thoughts and affections.

Faithfully,

David

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Epistle Newsletter Issue 25 August 2011

For all acolytes....we are planning an outing on August 28th after the 10:30 service for fun, frolic, and to thank you for your service at the altar on Sunday mornings. We will leave from the church and are being hosted by Terry and Cathy Roche at their home on Mountain Island Lake. Food will be provided by La-Tea-Da's and there will be lots of swimming, trips out on the pontoon boat and much fun for all.

In order to plan, we MUST have a response from everyone who will be able to attend. Please contact Gene Humphreys at : ghumphreys@st-peters.org or Mike Hoffman at : mhoffman@cannonschool.org.

Come and let us celebrate your service that you so willingly and lovingly share with us at St. Peters.

Education for Ministry (EfM)

Education for Ministry is a four year course in the theology of the Episcopal Church, offered by the seminary of the University of the South, for lay persons. It is, without any doubt, the most in depth study offered by our church for those who want a greater understanding of the faith and beliefs and history of our church, or those who may be considering an ordained ministry. First year is Old Testament, second is New Testament, third is History of the Church and fourth is development of theological thought. St. Peter's has offered this program, for most years, since the mid 1980's. Led by a mentor, there are discussions of the readings, and time for theological reflection. Those participating must commit to only one year at a time. The fee for the course is \$350.00, though some scholarships are offered. If you are interested in joining our EfM group for the coming year, which will begin meeting in September, please let me know at ghumphreys@st-peters.org or 704-749-6142. -Gene Humphreys

Eucharistic Visitors

Eucharistic Visitors are lay persons in the Episcopal Church who are licensed by the Office of the Bishop to take Holy Eucharist to those who are unable to attend regular worship. This sharing of the Eucharist is a holy expression of our calling at the Dismissal to "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord." Our worship is expressed in one way by sharing of the Gospel and the Sacraments on Sunday mornings. Our larger worship is to serve Christ in others outside, in the world itself. For a number of years, we have had a faithful group of EV's who leave our service at 8:00 to take Holy Eucharist to others. I would like to call others, who feel that this is a mission in which they would like to serve, to help broaden our base of Visitors, and those who we are able to serve. We will, eventually, be sending Eucharistic Visitors out at both services. There will be a luncheon after the 10:30 service on August 14th for those who have been serving and those who wish to lift up this ministry. We will discuss what it means to share in this fellowship and opportunities for training for all EV's on September 17th at Holy Comforter Episcopal Church. To make reservations or if you have questions, please contact me at ghumphreys@st-peters.org, or 704-749-6142. -Gene Humphreys