

THE LION

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Issue 3

Message from the Rector

“And his gifts were that some should be . . . pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . .”

(concluded)

Ephesians 4:11-12

In the last two issues of *The Lion* I have written about who really “owns” the ministry of the Church. Or, more precisely, I should say the “ministries” of the Church since they are varied and many. I also outlined what many of those ministries are: assisting with our Sunday morning and Holy Day worship services, Altar servers and lay-readers, Altar Guild members and Sunday School teachers, voice and hand bell choir members, team members and substitutes for our ongoing ministry at The Source, and so forth. All of these are ministries that need to be filled, and some of you have already volunteered to do just that. And for that I am grateful.

Too, if you will remember, in the past two issues I have also written about the Biblical model of who the true ministers of the Church really are: *you*. As St. Paul reminded the church in Ephesus, God has given the Church “...pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” In other words, the clergy are to provide the tools and opportunities for the people to minister, *not* take on the role of the sole ministers of the Church.

No place is this any more important than in the caregiving function of pastoral ministry; not that this allows the clergy to shirk their pastoral caregiving responsibilities, but it does mean that they are to train those whom our Lord has gifted with pastoral gifts in order that they might assist the ordained clergy in being the pastoral caregivers of the Church. This is the only way that extensive pastoral care can be provided to everyone in Church. In other words, those laypersons, to which our Lord has given pastoral gifts, should be both equipped for ministry and given the opportunity to exercise their God-given pastoral gifts within the congregation.

To say the least, this is a huge paradigm shift – for both clergy and laity – in a tradition such as ours. Our tradition is very “clerically” oriented, meaning that it is generally expected that the clergy are the only ones to “give” ministry while the laity are the ones to “receive” it. But, as I said, this is not the Biblical model. The Biblical model is that we *all* minister to *and* receive ministry from one another. Therefore, if we are going to return back to this Biblical model of ministry, both our thinking and our expectations will need to change.

For instance, will the clergy – *me* – both equip (i.e., train) and make room for those with pastoral gifts to exercise those gifts within the congregation? Will I trust their judgment? Will I feel comfortable allowing them to tend our Lord’s sheep without me always being there? Or will I jealously safeguard what has always been *my* “pastoral turf?”

On the other hand, will the laity – *you* – receive ministry at the hands of someone other than me? Will you consider the pastoral care of someone other than an ordained clergyman valid pastoral care? Will you be comfortable receiving pastoral care from someone other than me? Or does that care have to be packaged in a black shirt with a white collar?

Message from the Rector, Continued

We are all familiar with the pastoral care paradigm under which the Church has for far too long labored (i.e., the clergy “doing it all”) and frankly it isn’t terribly efficient. The only question is whether or not we are willing to make the shift back to the Biblical paradigm of not only recognizing, but also receiving pastoral care from those who have been gifted by our Lord to provide it, whether ordained or otherwise.

I am willing to step out of my comfort zone, and I ask that you be willing too. To that end, several people have stepped forward to begin training as the very first of our lay-pastoral caregivers. I will be working with them to assess and develop their spiritual gifts for lay-pastoral ministry, help train them, and provide space for them to exercise their gifts within the congregation. I hope that you too will receive their spiritual gifts and provide ministry opportunities for them to be exercised. By necessity, this will have to be a collaborative effort, as there will undoubtedly be a learning curve for all of us. We will take it slowly and learn from one another since this paradigm will be as new to me as it will be for you. I hope that we can all embrace it as we learn to minister to, as well as receive ministry from, one another.

You will hear more about our new/old vision of lay-pastoral care as it continues to unfold. In the meantime, please keep it in your prayers.

A Challenge and Invitation: Stepping Out to Help

Susan Chenault

James 2:26 tells us, “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” Do you ever think about that passage in connection with St. Marks? What are the works that we can do within our very own church to demonstrate and grow our faith? I’ve been a member of St. Marks since 1998 and I’ll admit that I am ashamed of myself and my works on many levels. I spent years sitting in the pews for the service and then heading out as quickly and quietly as I could at its conclusion. There are familiar people in the pews whose names I don’t know either because I haven’t taken the time to introduce myself or because I don’t recall and am too embarrassed to ask. Do I make time to stay for Sunday school? Not in over a decade. I listen to Father Mike read the prayer list every Sunday. Do I call anyone on that list to say “I hope you’re doing okay. I just wanted to tell you I am praying for you”? Rarely. Do I at least send a card when I have the parish address list right there in my desk drawer? Nope. Have I thanked Kathleen Knott for being so dedicated in what she does with our music and the choir? I can’t remember the last time, if ever. Do I visit a church member who I know is homebound or hospitalized? Not lately. Do I participate in the Deaconess program that our Anglican faith offers? Attend Morning Prayer? Be serious! Do I attend the monthly ACW meetings? Hello?! They’re during work hours. Yet, I make time for a charity board meeting during work hours to promote my employer. Do I ask Father Mike if there’s something I can do to help him with my church? Well, no, but that’s because *he* is the priest, and heck, I am just so busy!

On the day I face Christ, I’m going to have to answer for the “busy” that I chose, over and over, on earth. I am going to face God and be held accountable. That scares the heck out of me, but does it change my behavior? Maybe – hopefully - one step at a time.

I volunteer as a reader at the 8:00 service. I serve on the altar guild. I cook vegetables one Friday a month at The Source. I serve on the vestry. I attend most potluck suppers. I take two angels off the tree each year at Christmas and I fill my baby bottle for CareNet each spring. That doesn’t sound so bad, right? But honestly, not one item on that list takes me out of my comfort zone. Total time spent on all those things combined is less than 100 hours over the course of a year. Less hours than I spend at work each month. That’s how I put my faith into action at my very own church? If I was God, I’d fire me! And yet, I know he still loves me, and loves when I take even a small step closer to him through my works.

A Challenge and Invitation, Continued

Christ commands us to love one another. I need to start right here with the members of my own church. Father Mike calls us a family and like family, I fear I take my sisters and brothers in Christ for granted more often than not. Hopefully, God will give me time to fix that. If you're nodding in agreement, hopefully He will give you time, too. We are entering Advent season; what better time to reflect on how better to love and serve our church family. Perhaps we can all do more. The first step is probably the hardest, but with God's help, I look forward to stepping out of my comfort zone for St. Mark's and I hope not to step alone! God bless our church and ministry.

Music Notes

Kathleen Knott, Music Director

Advent Hymn

Advent is the liturgical period prior to Christmas which includes only four Sundays. It is a penitential time with a focus on the preparation of our hearts and minds for the Nativity and Second Coming of our Lord. The Advent hymns in our 1982 Hymnal are an eclectic mix that reinforces the themes of preparation and judgment.

The most famous Advent hymn is # 56 "O Come, O come, Emmanuel". The chant is from the 15th century and the title refers to Isaiah 7:14 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Hymn #76 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" reminds us of the role of John the Baptist in heralding the arrival of the King of Kings. Several Advent hymns # 62 and # 63 "Sleepers, Wake!" and #68 "Rejoice! Rejoice Believers" refer to the story of the Bridegroom and the ten virgins. The five virgins who were prepared with oil for their lamps were ready for the marriage feast or judgment day.

Hymns # 57 and # 58 "Lo! He Comes With Clouds Descending" feature a text by Charles Wesley. This text with two different tunes gives us a vivid picture of Christ's return with "clouds descending" as King and Judge. Verse three also refers to His passion and the scars from His crucifixion.

During this time of Advent, let the words of the hymns speak to you as you prepare for His coming. Also, thank you to the choir and hand bell ringers who are working hard to prepare musical offerings to enhance our worship at St. Mark's

Women's Bible Studies

(Spring 2014)

Linda Philpott

1 and 2 Samuel

1 Samuel - January 8- March 5

2 Samuel - March 12 - either April 30 or May7

The Wednesday women's bible study will be studying the first and second books of Samuel and learning about the life of King David. The 1 Samuel study will begin with a get acquainted day on January 8th and continue until March 5th. The workbooks for the 2 Samuel study will be handed out on March 5th and the class will immediately move into the second part with no get acquainted day. We will discuss if we wish to not meet during Holy Week which would end the class on May 7th or, if the class wishes to meet during Holy Week, the class will end on April 30th. Please join us for both or one of these exciting studies on a man after God's heart. Please invite friends and neighbors to join us, as well. The cost of each study will be \$20 and each study will be 8 weeks long. Please let Linda Philpott know by Thursday, December 19th if you will be participating in the

class (772.794.3750 or thepotts04@yahoo.com)

Calling Card Program

Did you know that St. Mark's has a Calling Card program? This program is made up of two groups of people: those willing to call and those members of our parish who would like to receive a call. The idea is for members of our congregation to stay in touch. Some people are on both lists – callers and recipients. What a great way to not only get to know parish members a little better, but to help look after one another, as well. If you would like to be included on the parish Calling Card list, as either a caller or recipient, please contact **Joyce Smith (772.231.5425)** or **Lisa Brenneman (772.59.5641)**.

Upcoming Holy Days

December/January/February

December 21 (10:00 a.m.) – St Thomas the Apostle

December 24/25 (11:30 p.m.) – Carol Sing and Midnight Mass w/incense (obligation)

December 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Christmas Day (obligation)

December 26 (noon) – St Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

December 27 (noon) – St John, Apostle and Evangelist

December 28 (10:00 a.m.) – Holy Innocents

January 1 (10:00 a.m.) – Circumcision of Christ (obligation)

January 6 (noon) – Epiphany

January 25 (10:00 a.m.) – Conversion of St Paul

February 24 (noon) – St Matthias the Apostle

St. Mark's Anglican Church

Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA

Rector

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