

THE LION

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Issue 6

Message from the Rector

*“I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.”*

Psalm 122:1

I remember sitting in someone’s house one time – not a parishioner or anyone who will be reading this, so everyone can breathe easy – when she pointed to a throw lying over the back of her couch and said, “That is what I want carved on my tombstone.” Embroidered on the bottom of that throw was the first verse of Psalm 122: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.”

Frankly, I was a little surprised when she said that, because consistent participation in corporate worship has never been a mark of this person’s Christian life. As a matter of fact, I facetiously thought to myself, “A better epitaph would be, ‘I was glad when they said unto me, Today we *don’t* have to go into the house of the Lord’.” I thought it, but I didn’t say it.

Now, I know that doesn’t sound like a very nice thing for me to have been thinking, but this person has never been one to faithfully attend church, especially if things like the weather, or visiting friends and relatives, or generally not feeling well (either emotionally or physically), or just about any other reason one can find for *not* going to church would provide a good excuse for not doing so. Or just generally no real reason at all.

And I think that we have all known people like that. Or perhaps we are a little like that ourselves: if we aren’t feeling well (and I don’t mean downright sick, but just generally feeling “blah”), or if it’s too hot or too cold or looks like rain, or if we have family and friends visiting us, or whatever else it might be that gives us an excuse *not* to “go into the house of the Lord,” we won’t. And, like the lady I just mentioned, sometimes we don’t need any excuse at all.

What a contrast between that and those Jews who were making their pilgrimages to Jerusalem in order to celebrate their feasts. Those pilgrims, many of whom *walked* from their homes in the outlying areas of Judea to the Temple in Jerusalem in order to worship their Lord in his house, were elated at the prospect of going into the house of the Lord. For them, worship was a privilege and a delight. It was an opportunity for them to come into the presence of their maker – *in his house* – and worship him with others who had come to the Temple to do the very same thing. Communal worship was more than just an obligation: it was a privilege that they all shared together.

Do we view our opportunities for weekly communal worship the same? Do we look forward to the sacramental character of worship, not simply the receiving of the Sacrament of Holy Communion itself, but also the grace, strength, and comfort that is imparted when we share our worship *together*? Do we come knowing that we will meet our Lord *together* in an atmosphere of joy and thanksgiving?

Or do we, consciously or otherwise, look for any excuse *not* to come into the house of the Lord?

I remember listening to a sermon once on Hebrews 10:25: “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together, as is the habit of some.” In that sermon, the preacher mentioned many of the excuses he had heard over the years for why people don’t go to church: *We have family in town* (Can’t you invite them to come? And come anyway, whether or not they join you? What kind of example are you setting?); *I don’t feel well* (You are going to feel poorly at church or at home; besides, there is something uplifting about being in the presence of both other believers and your Lord); *I’ve just had an awful week and just can’t go out to face people* (You need to be with those who can support you); and so forth. Finally, the preacher just looked at his congregation and

said, "Peanut butter." Peanut butter? Yes, peanut butter. I guess any excuse is just as good as another.

Now obviously, there are legitimate reasons for missing a Sunday morning worship service; but for many of us, some of our reasons – maybe even most of them – are far from legitimate. Perhaps we should reread, and recapture, how those early pilgrims felt as they made their way towards Jerusalem to worship their Lord *together* in his temple: instead of neglecting the assembling of themselves, as is the habit of some, they were "glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." May we find it in our hearts to feel the same. Amen.

Confirmation... for the Confirmed

Don't forget: beginning in late fall or early winter, Fr. Mike will once again hold a Confirmation class for all those who are in need of the Sacrament of Confirmation. All who have not been Confirmed by a Bishop in Apostolic Succession (i.e., Anglican/Episcopalian, Roman Catholic, or Eastern Orthodox) are strongly encouraged to attend. Fr. Mike will schedule an Episcopal visit by Bishop Grundorf once the class is completed.

As he has done in the past, Fr. Mike will hold this class during the adult Sunday School hour (9:00 a.m.). He also encourages all who have been Confirmed, but who would like a refresher on our tradition, to attend the class as well.

The material used for this class will be new to us. Special thanks to Bishop Stephen Scarlett for permission to use his inquirer's class/Confirmation manual. If you would like to get a head start, you can download the manual at <http://www.stmatthewsnewport.com/resources/inquirers-class>. More information will follow.

Music Notes

Kathleen Knott

Organist and Music Director

As the choir and handbell ringers take a much deserved rest from regular rehearsals, I would like to thank our singers and ringers for their dedication to St. Mark's music ministry. They have all used their musical gifts to serve the Lord and enhance worship. Since I featured the choir members in the last issue, I will focus on the handbell choir in this newsletter.

During the summer of 2012 the Vestry generously approved the purchase of a used set of Malmark handbells. Bell choirs have long been a part of the Anglican tradition, and the group was formed with the goal of providing an opportunity for musical service, Christian fellowship, and mental and physical stimulation for its members. The choir has evolved into a diverse group of both parish members and non-members of a variety of ages. Most importantly they have a bond of Christian fellowship and are diligent workers. Several started with no musical experience and can now read music notation. The members with experience are always willing to share information on ringing techniques or ring multiple bells.

Our handbell choir members are Joan Aspelin, FE Brown, Lisa Hanlin, Liz Hansen, Charlotte Hyzer, Linda Philpott, and Keith Vittitoe. Choir members Sheila Ward, Sarah Ward, and Mel Knott have also joined in the ringing. I would be remiss not to thank Keith and Mel for being the work horses of the group. There are always tables to assemble and bell cases to carry. Joyce Malkmes was also a wonderful addition to our group for part of the first year.

We can always use more ringers, so please consider joining us in the Fall. Our rehearsal time is Wednesday at 4 p.m. In addition, the choir would like to congratulate June Avery Barnes for her college graduation and welcome her back to the choir loft. She has always been an invaluable member of our group.

When We Pray

Joyce S. Smith

Is Talking to God a Problem for You?

When I receive an email requesting prayers for someone in our Parish, my first thought is, "how should I reply and with what kind of prayer?" If all of those answering the same request were saying the same prayer, is it possible the prayer would become more powerful? No one knows how God answers prayer, we just know he does. I spoke to Father Mike about what should or should not be said when answering prayers. I asked how we should respond and his answer was, "Keep it simple." That helped, so I then submitted the following prayers to him for guidance and direction. These are prayers with some parts taken directly from our Book of Common Prayer, under "Prayers for Families." Father Mike's response was positive for their use and I share them with you.

1

A PRAYER FOR HEALING

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, I ask you graciously to comfort Thy servant _____ in her suffering, and to bless the means made use of for her care, Please fill her heart with confidence, Although, She may be afraid, she can still put her trust in YOU through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR RECOVERY FOR THE SICK

Oh Merciful God, Giver of life and health; Bless your servant _____ and those who administer to him. May he be restored to health of body and mind through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Heavenly Father, who hast blessed us with the joy and care of children. Provide us with strength to guide _____ them and if need be send a guardian angel to walk beside them to protect them from evil. Amen

Anglican Church Women

Donna Burton

In April we elected new officers for 2014 – 2015 ACW. President – Linda Philpott, Recording Secretary – Donna Burton, Treasurer – Ann Dozetos, Assistant Treasurer – Carol Strong, Chaplain – Sheila Ward. Peggy Scott will continue to be our Program Manager.

Fr. Mike was our guest speaker this month. He talked about the meaning of the Stations of the Cross and about attending the Synod this year, the Lay Pastors ministry, and a call for all!

We will not hold meetings June through August, but will resume meetings on September 18th. Some summer events will include the annual Thrift Crawl June 19th with lunch at a restaurant that will be announced as we approach that date. Also, on July 10th there will be a movie day in the parish hall and we will brown bag our lunch. Please let Linda Philpott or Donna Burton know if you are interested in either one of these events. More information will follow when we are closer to the dates. Email address for Linda: thepottso4@yahoo.com and email address for Donna: dburton001@cfl.rr.com.

Women's Bible Study

Linda Philpott

The Women's Bible study concluded their study of 1 and 2 Samuel in April. It was a rich study of the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David and of the history of Israel. Class members shared some thoughts on the study: Wanza Murray stated, "God will continue to love, protect, and guide us despite our sinful unworthiness, if only we confess our sins and turn back to him". Melvena Grice echoed much the same thoughts, "David, like all of us, had human frailties, but David sought God's forgiveness, repented and received God's merciful grace."

The class will break for the summer. We will begin a study on the book of Luke beginning in October - more details to follow in August.

Blessing of the Animals

Janice Johnston

I would like to take this time to thank Fr. Mike for the Blessing of the animals on March 16th. This was a very special time for all the pet owners. A special thank you goes to all the people that helped that day. The refreshments were great and enjoyed by all. Thank you to those that helped setup and breakdown the tents and tables, and to those that helped with cleanup. The individuals that I have spoken to that are not member of St. Mark's have expressed how much they enjoyed meeting everyone and look forward to next year.

Church Construction

Construction is underway on the new walkway between the church and the parish hall. Construction began on April 28 just after Easter and will continue into the fall. Removal of the old walkway was quick - the rusty posts and rotten wood are gone and the new concrete walkway has been poured. There are a few more steps to take to travel between buildings right now, but soon we will have a much improved walkway with an impressive new look. The architect's plans are in the parish hall, just under the picture board. Please feel free to take a look.

PART TIME HELP WANTED

Michelle Cook

Altar Guild - This a part time position before or after mass once a month, or as needed. No experience is needed since we have on-the-job training. Both men and women may serve. Qualifications are few: over the age of 16, tall enough to reach the altar, and able to walk and carry small items. Compensation is a thank you from other members of the guild for sharing the work. Contact Michelle Cook 772-567-7347.

Server/Reader - This is a part time position for the men in the church, for either the 8:00a.m. mass or 10:00a.m. mass. No experience is needed. Training will be provided by other servers, and guidance is provided by Fr. Ward during the mass. Compensation is a thank you from the other servers, Fr. Ward, and the members of the church. Please contact Robert Clark at 772-466-8336.

Cash count help - This is a part time position for one time a month after the 10:00a.m. mass. No experience is needed. Training will be provided. Compensation is a thank you. Please contact Janice Johnston in the parish hall after the 10:00AM mass.

Upcoming Holy Days

Please note:

All holy day services are suspended until our construction/renovation project is complete.

St. Mark's Anglican Church

Rev. Canon Michael L. Ward, SSA

Rector

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