

The Epistle

Choicemaking: Christian Faith and Public Schools

Lent is upon us –the season when each of us is invited to step back and take a long, hard and loving look at ourselves and our behaviors. One of the most fundamental dimensions of being a human being is using our freedom. For good or ill our choices affect not only our personal lives, but the very life of the planet.

This Lent, St. Ann's will join with our sister Episcopal congregations of St. Mark's, St. Anselm's and Holy Trinity to examine how we as individuals make moral choices. We will be learning of different ethical structures within our tradition, looking at how the Bible and our tradition inform our choice making, experimenting with different modes of discernment and ultimately wading in on a very controversial issue of our time, school vouchers.

There is a lot of discussion at the moment about the role of faith in the public square. Concern runs deep about the condition of our public schools and the hope of poor children. As Christians, how does our faith influence our opinions? Are we called, because of our faith, to care about public schools? What is the relationship between individual conscience and the teaching of the Church.

The intent of this series is not to preach.

The goal is to explore the foundations of moral decisions and to provide a structure for educated thought. The other hope is that there will be time to discern what actions might need to be taken on a personal or corporate level.

The issue of vouchers was chosen because it is a particular subject which will lead us into a broader range of concerns. We may have to touch on issues of race, taxes, quality, social justice, individual freedom, religious education. We will be invited to discuss without being "right".

The series will also give us the opportunity to meet other Episcopalians in a sustained way. Every Wednesday in Lent we will break bread together in the Eucharist at 5:30 p.m. We will share dinner at 6:00 p.m. We will open our hearts and minds together in discussion from 6:45-8:00 p.m. Childcare and homework support will be available on each night. The schedule will be as follows: March 7 at St. Ann's, March 14 at Holy Trinity, 615 Sixth Ave., South; March 21 at St. Mark's 3100 Murfreesboro Pike; March 28, St. Anselm's 2008 Meharry Blvd.; April 4 at St. Ann's.

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Rector's Note

Dear People of God,

At the Annual Parish Meeting there were several questions regarding our commitment to outreach in our budget and the placement of the diocesan commitment in that budget. Folks seemed disgruntled about the amount we were asked to give to the diocese (\$19,600) and the fact that honoring that commitment seemed to leave little to fulfill other areas of need. Implicit, if not explicit, was the question of how the diocesan commitment could be considered outreach at all. In retrospect I realized that my somewhat flippant response did not do justice to this basic question. Why should we give money to the diocese?

Adopting an attitude toward the diocese like some people have toward “the government” neglects the fact that we are the diocese, just like we are our government. In so much public discussion there is distance from and disillusionment with structures that seem big and impersonal. How can such structures be of use; why should we ignore our needs and concerns to give our money to big brother? In the frustration I heard at the meeting, I think a similar dynamic is at work.

Ours is not a church of free and independent entities, like the Baptists or the Campbellites. We are fundamentally catholic. The Church is not synonymous with our congregation. While it is the case that the portion of the Church we experience most intimately is our parish, we recognize that the power of Christ is universal. We are not rampant individuals in the faith; we celebrate communion for a reason. We are woven together with Christians around the world, around the country, around the state and throughout the city.

Necessarily our gifts or money and talent are shared abroad beyond the boundaries of our own congregation. We are organized as dioceses to make real the catholic nature of our community. We strive together to make visible the reign of God. So we are asked by our elected representatives to share of ourselves with other Christians around our diocese and around the world.

In what way is the diocesan commitment outreach? It is outreach because through these tithes we are educating children and youth, raising up new clergy for the church, planting new congregations, funding St. Luke's community house, supporting refugee ministry, funding ministry in Appalachia, providing a spiritual home for college students, offering solace to older adults, supporting our companion diocese in Ecuador, supporting ministry on a national and international level through our general church objective (the diocesan asking from the national church). Giving to the diocese has nothing to do with our feelings about our bishop or about any personality. Fulfilling our diocesan commitment has everything to do with making flesh the Body of Christ throughout the world.

How we treat the diocesan commitment demonstrates our own commitment to stewardship. What we do corporately sets an example of what we are asking ourselves to do individually. Would we want the parish to give more than ten per cent of its income beyond itself? Then let us begin to work aggressively toward the tithe in our own personal budgets. Would we want the diocese to support the asking of the national church? Then let us set an example by giving what we are asked.

Are there problems with how the diocesan formula functions? Yes. Can St. Ann's do more financially outside ourselves? Yes. But in both cases change can only happen through increased involvement and commitment, not less.

Peace,
Lisa

Financial Update

At the Vestry meeting, a question was raised about the restricted funds available. The following are the balances as of January 31:

Discretionary Fund	\$	0
Mission Fund		838.00
Memorial Fund		5,993.88
Altar Guild Fund		5,849.84
Music/Choir Fund		929.41
Organ Fund		10,001.00
Prayer Book Fund		4,414.95
Prepaid 2001 Pledges		<u>0</u>
Total		\$28,027.08

The Operating Budget as of January 31 shows an income of \$22,369.09 compared to the budgeted income of \$17,510.91 and expenses of \$21,471.48 vs. the budget of \$21,111.03. As we continue to live into our new building we appreciate the people who are keeping their pledges current.

Jackie Harris

Directory Update

Please notify the office at 254-3534 or email office@stannsnashville.org with any address, phone or email changes so we can update the directory. After updating, it will be available in hard copy or on the web.

New Accompanist

David Williams, a native of Nashville, is our new accompanist! He began his music studies in the pre-college program at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University. While studying piano, he also played French Horn in the Nashville Youth Symphony. He earned a bachelor's degree in piano performance and a master's degree in music theory from Indiana University. After teaching music courses at Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities, he returned to school to receive a master's degree in choral conducting from the University of Cincinnati, College-

Conservatory of Music. David has held a variety of music jobs ranging from church work to teaching to conducting a community choir to his current job working for a commercial jingle company in Nashville.

Notes from the Director of Music

Thule, the dog who altered God's original design of my left hand last summer, sits and watches me work most every day. He can roam the house but chooses to lay by the desk or piano while I write or type or talk on the phone. What I am doing doesn't matter to him – he simply wishes to be where I am. I asked a Vet about this "connectedness" as it related to last summer's accident and she said that a dog feels most "itself" when it is in communion. It loses identity when it is separate.

Understanding the analogy as exceedingly simplistic, I sometimes feel that way about God and God's people. The What or Who of God doesn't matter. I simply need to be near. I feel most myself when I am in communion with the Holy "Other".

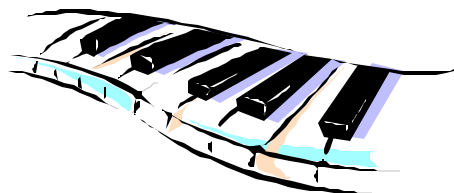
That is...except for Lent – that season when the day is long and dark and lonely. Why does Lent have to be so...(in the words of my progeny) yucky? Why the dankness? Why the guilt? Why the pain and suffering of denial?

I think part of the reason is that without those experiences of

separation and death, communion and resurrection are meaningless. If "tiny alleluias" were on occasion a part of Lent, would the Easter acclamation ring as loud or true? So we experience Lent. And in this unsettled wilderness term, God hones and shapes and refines us...if we are pliable.

Music frames the trying days of Lent and opens otherwise inaccessible pathways to understanding aspects of our Creator. In addition to the regular Sunday music, special opportunities for worship through Lenten music this year include the Ash Wednesday service February 28th at 7:00 p.m. and a Solemn Choral Lenten Evensong April 1 at 4 p.m. Please join us.

Peace,
Sheldon Curry



Second Sunday Series

The Second Sunday Series continues March 11th with "An Evening with Mike Eldred". Many of you have seen Mike perform as the leads in the Tennessee Rep's Production of "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" at TPAC and most recently in Marcus Hummon's "Francis of Guernica". He was also featured in both the Broadway and national road tour productions of Frank Wildhorn's "The Civil War" and a national revival tour of "Jesus Christ, Superstar". This is an evening you do not want to miss!

What's Cooking?

My husband's grandmother had a saying, "Don't set your expectations too high and you won't be disappointed." Well, we weren't expecting too much out of the kitchen, but we have been pleasantly surprised.



The renovation is now complete and we christened the new facility on Sunday night. We are the proud owners of a new institutional size range and an ice machine. We will be completely stocked when our equipment, that is in storage, is here and unpacked. In the meantime, please bear with us while we use disposable supplies. We are looking forward to being able to assist all the committees with any function.

Charlsie Holmes

Evangelism

EVANGELISM – a scary word for Episcopalians in general and St. Ann’s folks in particular.

I made a call to one of our parishioners the other day to see if she’d like to help out with planning evangelism this year. Her response was “I can’t imagine why. It sounds too much like something from my fundamentalist background.” Okay, a little public relations is probably in order here.

Currently, the Evangelism Committee is planning activities that sound interesting, exciting and even fun. Not once did we mention altar calls, pack-a-pew or weeping testimonials. We did discuss newcomers dinners (see Alan Edward’s article), hospitality and greeters. We also discussed reaching out to East Nashville and beyond, lapsed members, picture board, etc. The list is long and the needs many.

So, my question to each of you is do you have energy to help St. Ann’s grow? There are many roles that need to be played in making this happen. If you are interested in helping with a newcomers dinner, being a greeter, helping with mailings, designing a new brochure, contacting lapsed members, please let me know. I can be reached at any of the following: 255-5542 (home), 327-1189 (work), hardshipp@aol.com (home email), pharding@bohancardencherry.com (work email).

Kudos to our previous Evangelism Committee for a job well done under less than perfect conditions.

Peace,
Peggy Hardin

Singles Club

On Wednesday, February 14th, the newly-formed Singles Club got off to a roaring start at the Edgefield Bar and Grill. During this first outing we decided how we would like the group to work and came up with some ideas of things to do. There will not be any regularly scheduled meetings and our plan is to come up with one or two activities a month, a possible out-of-town trip or two and the opportunity to participate in various outreach activities throughout the year. We are going to try to come up with a wide variety of things to do as well as try to keep them all within a reasonable price range – or free! Any adult that is currently single is welcome to attend. Please call Kristen Deitrick if you are interested in joining us:
(home) 269-4178 or (work) 862-8846.

Upcoming Event:

Friday March 2 – Tennessee Rep’s production of “The Beauty Queen of Leenane”

-Tony Award-winning, comedy/drama by Irish playwright Martin McDonagh

-TPAC’s Andrew Johnson Theater

-7:30 p.m.

-Tickets \$25

-Please contact Kristen Deitrick for additional details if you are interested in attending.



Building & Grounds

The B & G Committee is back at work. In case you didn’t notice, we moved and thanks to the valiant efforts of a mighty few, we’re back and functioning. Kudos to Peg and the packers and deciders that packed and decided.

Since the move, we’ve learned a lot about our new building. Just learning where things are and which button to push took a few weeks, but we’re getting there. There are, of course, still a few bugs to be worked out here and there, but all in all, the transition has been a smooth one. By the time this Epistle is mailed the security system may be running, the parking lot is being paved and many other of the unfinished items will be coming to a close.

But as the construction comes to completion and the dust settles

from the move, it doesn’t mean our work is done. Our committee will be meeting again regularly and still has much work to do. The running of our new digs will take time and attention. As will the remaining issues related to off-site storage and other legacies left to us by the storm. May God bless us all and help us to use our new building wisely.

Roger Ferris & Peg Harrington





Newcomers Dinners

A few years ago, one Saturday, I was milling around one of those gourmet cookware stores with merchandise overpriced but so enticing that my budget considerations were caving-in to impulse. My arms were full as I noticed from the corner of my eye a store employee approaching. "I see you've had no problem finding some things you want," he observed, smiling. Sensitive to the slightest suggestion of excess on my part, I cut short any further shopping by handing my selections to the sales representative and saying, "I've decided on these." The man looked startled at first, then blushed a bit, and finally broke into a somewhat uncomfortable laugh. "Alan," he said, "I don't work here." I was as surprised as I was confused, until he further explained, "I know you from St. Ann's." There is never a trap door beneath me when I need one. With vanishing not an option, I instead fell back on my standard disclaimer to everything, "I go to 8:00," as if that would somehow explain or excuse not recognizing someone who knew me by name. Interestingly, this was not a case of my not having paid enough attention to a newcomer; I was to learn that this man had been in attendance at St. Ann's longer than I.

I do not mingle well, obviously. More precisely, I am not always comfortable in social settings involving large numbers of people. That pattern holds true even at St. Ann's. My closest friends within the parish are not people with whom I first bonded over Hospitality. Instead, I have come to know a number of people so well by sharing small group experiences, starting with the Catechumenate, and continuing through the years with such other activities as Evangelism, Christian Education, Outreach, Supper Clubs, and finally the Vestry (I am not an unusually active member; we all are encouraged to try new avenues of lay ministry every so often -- I simply have been around awhile). St. Ann's once sent me (and a couple of others) to a weekend workshop called, "The Welcoming Church." I learned two important facts. One, I am not alone as a wallflower. Rather, most newcomers to a church feel too awkward to take the initiative and jump into conversations during times such as Hospitality (and at these moments, members unfortunately are not always mindful of being attentive toward visitors). Second, whether a newcomer keeps attending a particular church, or instead drifts away, often depends upon how quickly

the new person has come to know seven other church participants (a number that sounds either magical or arbitrary but proves true) on some significant level. This echoes my own experience that smaller groups are the best place at church to meet others and eventually forge meaningful relationships.

Therefore, I am thrilled to be coordinating the Newcomers Dinners this year. It is an opportunity to reach out to visitors in a setting where such action is most effective, with the greatest rewards for both the newcomers and our participating members as well. Accordingly, we want to extend this opportunity to as many parishioners as possible. While there will be a small core group of us helping host all of the dinners, we also will call upon additional and different members each month to come join us and bring a dish to help welcome our guests and get to know those new to us.

Our first dinner, held Sunday, February 18, was a great success. Twenty-four people, including five guests, were in attendance. Newcomers were able to meet and talk with a variety of parishioners representing a full spectrum of our lay ministries. Our newly equipped kitchen and beautifully remodeled Martin Hall lent themselves perfectly to this endeavor. Thanks to everyone who brought food and wine, with special thanks to Peggy Hardin and Kristen Deitrick for providing table decorations.

As I looked around the room and breathed in the comfort of being back home, I appreciated more than ever the hard task of those who organized the Newcomers Dinners during our time at the Holy Name Parish Center, a space we were blessed to be borrowing on Sunday mornings but not necessarily eager to be revisiting on Sunday evenings. Therefore, our heartfelt appreciation goes to folks such as Allen Finley, Jo Veazey, and Battle Beasley for their work in keeping dinner on the table in spite of our having felt so homeless.

I will be looking forward to seeing some of you on the third Sunday evening of March!

Alan Edwards

Calendar

Shrove Tuesday	February 27	11:30 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Women's Prayer Group Pancake Supper West Gallery Quire	Joy Room Martin Hall Martin Hall
Ash Wednesday	February 28	12:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist Holy Eucharist	Martin Hall Martin Hall
Thursday	March 1	5:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Young Children's Choir Contemporary Prayer Group	Martin Hall Howe Hall
Sunday	March 4	8:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m.	Contemplative Eucharist Holy Eucharist Hospitality Christian Education	Martin Hall Mart in Hall All Saints' Hall Howe Hall
Tuesday	March 6	11:30 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Women's Prayer Group Outreach Spiritual Direction West Gallery Quire	Joy Room Conference Room Howe Hall Martin Hall
Wednesday	March 7	1:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Life Enrichment The Peoples Choir	All Saints' Hall Martin Hall
Thursday	March 8	5:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Young Children's Choir Contemporary Prayer Group Nashville AIDS Choir	Martin Hall Howe Hall Martin Hall
Sunday	March 11	8:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.	Contemplative Eucharist Holy Eucharist Hospitality Christian Education Second Sunday Series	Martin Hall Martin Hall All Saints' Hall Howe Hall Martin Hall
Tuesday	March 13	11:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Women's Prayer Group West Gallery Quire	Joy Room Martin Hall
Wednesday	March 14	7:00 p.m.	The Peoples Choir	Martin Hall
Thursday	March 8	5:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Young Children's Choir Contemporary Prayer Group	Martin Hall Howe Hall
Saturday	March 17	7:00 p.m.	Celtic Vespers	Martin Hall
Sunday	March 18	8:00 a.m. 9:30 a.m. 10:30 a.m. 11:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Contemplative Eucharist Holy Eucharist Hospitality Christian Education Celtic Vespers	Martin Hall Martin Hall All Saints' Hall Howe Hall Blakemore UM Church
Tuesday	March 20	11:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Women's Prayer Group West Gallery Quire Vestry Meeting	Joy Room Martin Hall Conference Room
Wednesday	March 21	1:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Life Enrichment The Peoples Choir	All Saints' Hall Martin Hall
Thursday	March 22	5:15 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Young Children's Choir Contemporary Prayer Group	Martin Hall Howe Hall
Tuesday	March 27	11:30 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Women's Prayer Group West Gallery Quire	Joy Room Martin Hall
Wednesday	March 28	7:00 p.m.	The Peoples Choir	Martin Hall
Thursday	March 29	5:15 p.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Young Children's Choir Pastoral Care Contemporary Prayer Group	Martin Hall Conference Room Howe Hall