



The S. Stephen

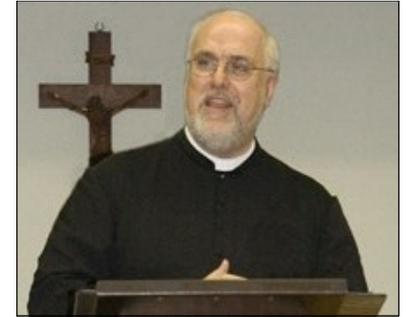
Lent/Holy Week

2013

Vol. 12, No. 3

My dear people:

From the Rector



A common theme of priests' letters to their parishes at this time of year is something like "Tips for keeping a good Lent." This year I find myself drawn to offering some thoughts along these same lines.

Do we observe Lent best by "giving something up" or "taking something on?" The answer is both, of course. But, to go a bit deeper, the real purpose of Lent is to "*repent and return to the Lord.*"

To that end, we need to make a Lenten rule – that is, we don't just think in about what we're going to do for Lent, but write it down, so we have an objective yardstick for measuring how well we're sticking to it. But we need to remember that a Lenten rule serves its purpose only to the extent that it helps us grow closer to God in Christ.

This year, here at S. Stephen's, we're offering once again Friday evening Stations of the Cross and a Sunday evening Supper and combined Film and Lecture series. Either or both of those are great activities to take on for Lent.

But first, we need to begin with *where we are*. Lent is an opportunity to get back to basics, to return to our Christian roots. So we need to take a good hard look at the current state of our Christian practices, asking how well we're doing all that the Church asks us to do year round in keeping our baptismal promises.

The first step is to attend Sunday Mass. The most basic commitment is to come to Mass every Sunday without exception unless prevented by some urgent cause like serious illness. This is the Church's standard for all baptized Christians throughout the year; and if we're not already fulfilling it, it's the first item to put in our Lenten rule.

The second step is to observe the Church's rules of fasting and abstinence. The two basic practices are the fast before Communion and abstinence on Fridays. Regarding the Communion Fast, the traditional rule, health permitting, is to abstain from solid food from midnight before receiving Communion in the morning, although in some places this has been mitigated to at least one hour before Mass.

Regarding abstinence on Fridays, the Catholic tradition enjoins abstinence from meat, hence "fish on Fridays." We shouldn't stop there, but before we consider what else to give up, we need to make sure that we're keeping the Church's year-round rules for starters.

The third step is to set aside a time every day for prayer, including some form of the daily offices of Morning and / or Evening Prayer. The form of Office can be that found either in *The Book of Common Prayer*, or in some other source;

and there are all sorts of options available both online and in books and devotional manuals.

The fourth step is to consider adding attendance at one or more of our weekday masses. Here at S. Stephen's, we offer Mass every day of the week. We've been doing so since 1896, as an integral expression of our identity and mission as an Anglo-Catholic parish. Participation in these services brings us closer to Christ in his Word and Sacraments; and we fulfill our identity as members of the Body of Christ by sharing in its work of prayer for the Church and the world. Yet currently a disproportionately small number of parishioners are participating in this vital ministry: sometimes as few as the proverbial two or three gathered together in His Name. So, please consider adding to your Lenten rule attendance at one or more of our weekday services.

And the fifth step is to take on something extra, above and beyond the basics – such as the Friday evening Stations of the Cross or the Sunday evening series on Forgiveness and Reconciliation. My point is simply that there is proper ordering of priorities. Address the question of Sunday Mass attendance first, then fasting and abstinence, then daily prayer including the Offices, then increased attendance at weekday Offices and Masses, and *only then* extra popular devotions such as Stations of the Cross or educational activities such as the Sunday evening series.

Needless to say, it will make me very happy if conscientious observance of Lent leads to increased attendance at both Sunday and weekday Masses, as well as at our specifically scheduled Lenten devotions and activities. But more importantly, as a parish community we will be fulfilling the purpose of Lent by drawing closer to Christ. Such spiritual renewal benefits our life together all year round. We shall do well, then, to take the opportunity this Lent to get back to the basics and put first things first.

With all best wishes and prayers for an edifying Lent and Holy Week, I remain, faithfully,

Your pastor and priest

Fr. John D. Alexander

Fr. John D. Alexander



Quodlibet

by James Busby

quodlibet (kwäd'lə bet') *n* [ME fr. ML. quodlibetum, fr. L. quodlibet, fr. *qui* who, what + *libet* it pleases, fr. *libere* to please] 1. a piece of music combining several different melodies, usually popular tunes, in counterpoint and often a light-hearted, humorous manner - *Merriam Webster*



This is being written the day after Annual Meeting where Father Alexander made public the honor to be awarded me by Nashotah House in October. I can only say how deeply moved I am by this, and appreciative of those who put me forward for recognition. To be able to continue my work is quite reward enough. Opening a few days of back-mail on 25th December, I found the letter from Secretary of Trustees of that institution asking "would I accept....?" It was an awfully fine Christmas gift!

Some goings on in choir: Two new and very fresh faces in Schola to whom I call your attention.....

Tenor Grant Randall writes:

"I grew up in L.A. and Seattle but am from hearty North Dakota stock and am ever distancing myself from the mystique of rapid thought of California and tech suburb. Truthfully, I love Washington state for the natural experiences it afforded me (ski bus every weekend, state parks everywhere you turn) but have felt just as at home at St. Olaf in Northfield, MN (B.M. trombone '07) and in Jamaica Plain, Mass., where my New England Conservatory (M.M. trombone '09) friends band together against the elements. It should be noted that I can bring a lot of reckless energy to the Schola Cantorum because I merely moonlight from a "day job" as trombonist (maybe we can have a twitter vote to see if I should switch that around). I am the low brass studio instructor at the South Shore Conservatory in Hingham, Mass. freelance performer, classroom educator, and personal assistant (to legendary third-stream musician and jazz pianist Ran Blake)". !.....

Mezzo Soprano, Jessica Harika was raised in the Maronite Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, in the Lebanese community in Richmond, Virginia, and did her undergraduate work at Virginia Commonwealth University. She's currently pursuing a Master's degree in vocal performance at

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the New England Conservatory specializing in high flying Rossini mezzo heroines. Apart from singing, Jess thoroughly enjoys cooking and baking and professes to be "absolutely thrilled to be a singing member of the S. Stephen's community!" February will find her in the role of Mrs. Grose in Benjamin Britten's astonishingly spooky and enigmatic adaptation of Henry James "The Turn of the Screw" at Cutler-Majestic Theatre in Boston.....Fine additions, both.....

While I don't encourage absences on major feasts, I did happily wish Godspeed to bass Mike Swanson over Christmas holidays. (I read recently on an old roster that he's been a loyal, patient and valued member of Schola since 1995). Mike's nephew Lars, who joined U.S. Air Force immediately after graduation from Boston College, was returning safely (if in secret) after being deployed first in Iraq, then for three tours of duty in Afghanistan. This was a most joyful reunion with family, including Lars' infant daughter Lorelei, who, it's reported, really admired Prof. Swanson's white beard and proved it by pulling it at every possible opportunity! Mike's a dotting grand-uncle apparently.

Why Polyphony? In my quest for submissions answering this question I received the following from Aaron Sheehan, tenor. Aaron is one of our success stories. A Grammy Award nominee for best opera, he has an active concert/recording career keeping him busy. He sang with Schola from 2001-2009 and still visits when in the environs. He writes....

"I have always been drawn to Polyphony...it seems practically congenital! At S Stephen's Renaissance Polyphony shaped the musician I am today. It made me a good sight reader, taught me to perform with very little rehearsal, to develop trust in one's fellow singers, how to sing a phrase, and last but not least, impeccable diction! I enjoy working in a group to create something beautiful, just as much as I love paying minute detail to my own line...." Thanks, Aaron - you are missed!

And speaking of missing, I'll be gone from Mass on Lent III as I'll be in France doing a little recital work, with venues including The American Cathedral in Paris. I appreciate Father Alexander encouraging me thus to do and I anticipate returning refreshed and possibly with some new ideas from the publishing houses.

I take this time to wish you a meaningful Lenten journey in anticipation of a joyous Eastertide!

—Yours, JCB

Parish Retreat APRIL 2013

St. Edmund's Retreat Center
Enders Island, Mystic, Connecticut
Friday 19 April through 21 April

The Parish Retreat in April will be held in the beautiful environs of Enders Island, Mystic, Connecticut, from the afternoon of Friday 19 April through lunchtime on Sunday 21 April. The format will be a traditional silent retreat, with addresses given by Mother Miriam of the Community of Saint Mary. Mother Miriam has been a frequent visitor to S. Stephen's in the last decade and we welcome her presence among us again.

Those of you who made the pilgrimage to Enders Island last fall will know what a holy spot this is. Originally, built as a private house in the Arts and Crafts style, it is now owned by the Order of St. Edmund who fled to New England from France in the 19th century to escape religious persecution. Today, in addition to the main house and extensive gardens, there are a number of outbuildings, including the beautiful chapel containing relics of the order's patron, St. Edmund of Canterbury [St. Edmund Rich, 1175-1240]. The St. Michael Institute for Sacred Arts has many examples of their work in Church art and stained glass adorning the various buildings. We will be able to use the chapel for our devotions.

To reserve your place, please contact the parish office at 401-421-6702, ext. 1 for payment details.



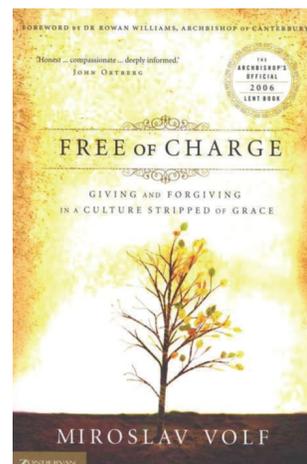
Lenten Quiet Day

Saturday 9 March 2013
9 am to 2 pm

Meditations by
The Rev. Michael Pearson
Recently Retired Rector
Saint Mary's Church
Wayne, Pennsylvania

To assist in our planning, please let us know if you would like to attend by contacting the parish office at 401-421-6702, ext. 1 or by email to office@sstephens.necoxmail.com.

LENTEN SERIES 2013 Forgiveness & Reconciliation



Sunday evenings in Lent
February 17 & 24
March 3, 10 & 17

Beginning with a light dinner at
6 pm in the Great Hall

A TIMELY POEM FOR US

Geoffrey Antekell Studdert Kennedy [1883-1929] was a Church of England priest who served as an army chaplain during World War I. Unlike many of his colleagues, he tried to identify as much as possible with the soldiers—to share their privations and dangers. To win their confidence, he handed out Woodbine cigarettes and peppered his plain-spoken sermons with swear words. He came to be known as “Woodbine Willie,” and used this name to publish his early poems, *Rough Rhymes of a Padre*.

When England went to war against Germany, Studdert Kennedy was a convinced and enthusiastic believer in the justice of the cause. However, like many others, he became sickened by the carnage of the trenches and the slaughter of young lives. Having been an Anglo-Catholic before his chaplaincy, he joined the Anglo-Catholic Socialist movement, convinced that wars served the interests of capitalism rather than the common people. On Armistice Day, he proclaimed his conversion to pacifism. Henceforth, he worked among the poor and fought for the rights of workers. He embraced the idea that not only had Christ suffered all human ills during his earthly life, but that God the Father also suffered in the loss of his human Son and in the misery of his creation. He wanted his hearers to understand that the Holy Trinity was not aloof from their own agonies, but shared all their pains and torments until the coming of Christ’s Kingdom.

The late 19th century had been full of optimism, romantic dreams and the Gospel of Progress. The period after the Great War brought disillusionment. Much of society turned apathetic, while others embraced passionate ideologies meant to bring reform and greater justice for all. Studdert-Kennedy was not the literary equal of the Great War poets such as Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen, but in “Indifference” and a handful of other poems, he grappled movingly with the dilemma of a Church that had for too long preached to the comfortable, while largely ignoring the poor. Recently, many readers have rediscovered his work, finding it as timely today as when it was first written.

INDIFFERENCE

By Geoffrey Antekell Studdert Kennedy

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged him on a tree,
They drove great nails through his hands and made a Calvary;
They crowned him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel times, the human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to [Providence*], they simply passed him by,
They never hurt a hair of him, they only let him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain,
They only passed down the street, and left him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do,”
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

[*The author wrote “Birmingham, but meant readers to substitute the name of any city where there were homeless people]

SCHEDULE OF HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY

24 MARCH

Morning Prayer 7:30 am

Low Mass 8 am

Solemn Mass &

Liturgy of the Palms 10 am

Hosanna to the Son of David —Weelkes

Missa III (Kyrie Deus sempiternus)

—Plainchant

O crux splendidior —Cesis

MAUNDY THURSDAY

28 MARCH

Maundy Thursday Liturgy

7 pm

Followed by

Vigil at the Altar of Repose

Missa VIII (De Angelis)—Plainchant

Ubi caritas —Durufle

O vos omnes à 6—Gesualdo

GOOD FRIDAY

29 MARCH

Good Friday Liturgy 12 noon

The Reproaches—Victoria

Crux fidelis—Jean IV, Roi de Portugal

HOLY SATURDAY

30 MARCH

The Great Vigil of Easter 7 pm

Missa I (Lux et origo)—Plainchant

Christus resurgens—Lassus

EASTER SUNDAY

31 MARCH

Morning Prayer 7:30 am

Low Mass 8 am

Solemn Mass

of the Resurrection 10 am

Missa Cellensis (Mariazeller-Messe)

Hob. XXII. 8—Haydn

Easter (Five Mystical Songs)

—Vaughan Williams

Christus resurgens—Lassus



ANNUAL MEETING ADDRESS

January 27, 2013

The Rev'd John D. Alexander

My remarks this morning come in two parts. First, I want to offer some pastoral reflections on the challenges of building and maintaining Christian community in a divided society. After that, I will share some thoughts and plans for the coming year.

Part One

Over the past year or so, it's become a concern to me that the tone of our public discourse is growing more and more strident. We need to examine what the repercussions may be within the life of a parish or congregation that seeks to be inclusive of all sorts and conditions – which inevitably entails building a community of people with a diversity of views on a variety of political, social, and cultural issues.

The ideological divisions in our society came home to me with particular force in the wake of the Newtown shootings on December 14. In my homily at the Requiem Mass we offered for the victims a week later, I remarked:

For me, one of the most disturbing aspects of this episode was its almost immediate politicization. The national reaction has magnified the deep ideological cleavages dividing our society. From the liberal-left side of the political spectrum came immediate calls for stricter gun control laws and attacks on the NRA and the gun culture that it represents, which in turn drew counter-attacks from those who felt that they were being scapegoated and demonized ...

Meanwhile from the conservative-right came suggestions that this massacre was somehow related to the numbers of abortions performed in this country, or perhaps secularization as manifested in the banning of prayer and religious symbols from the public schools ...

These various knee-jerk reactions from both the right and the left suggest that as a society we've lost the ability to create a space for mourning in the appropriate season ... The mutual recrimination and polarization that we've experienced in the past week is unseemly and does not honor the memory of the victims. It simply drives us further apart at a time when we need more than ever to come together in sorrow and grief.

This past week I received a letter of Bishop Lindsay Urwin, Administrator of the Anglican Shrine at Walsingham, to priests and deacons associated with the Shrine. Reflecting on his recent pilgrimage to the Holy Land and Jerusalem, and the divisions between Israelis and Palestinians there, he

writes the following:

The city of peace is also a place of turmoil and conflict, and how difficult it is sometimes to tell the good guys from the bad!

Even the advisability of such categories in some disputes is questioned by the Israeli author Amos Oz whose writings I have discovered recently. In an essay written in 2003 ... he challenges the question of who are the good and who are bad as one too often and too quickly posed in conflict situations ...

[Oz writes] "... *things are not so straightforward ... I am not going to make things any easier for you by saying simply: these are the angels, these are the devils ... It is not a struggle between good and evil, rather it is a tragedy in the ancient and most precise sense of the word: a clash between right and right, a clash between one very powerful, deep and convincing claim and another very different but no less convincing, no less powerful, no less human claim.*"

[Bishop Lindsay continues] I have been much helped and affected by this idea of right and right, and while the struggles of the Church of England seem hardly to compare with the momentous issues surrounding two such great peoples, nevertheless Oz's insights might be instructive to us, even crucial if we are to find a godly way forward in our current disagreements ...

(By the way, Bishop Lindsay will be our guest preacher on May 4 at the Annual Mass of the Society of Mary here at S. Stephen's.) With respect to our common life in this parish, I want to issue the pastoral caution that a danger exists that both the things we say, and the way we say them, can have unintended and unforeseen consequences. I offer two examples of which I have personal knowledge.

First, several years ago one individual stopped coming to coffee hour because he felt that the expression of some of his political views would be unwelcome here. Among other things, he was a self-described "card-carrying member of the NRA." He would sit at table with us and listen not only as opinions were expressed that were the opposite of his own, but also as those holding his opinions were scornfully derided; and he was effectively deterred from speaking up. In the end, he simply stopped coming.

My second example is far enough in the past now that I think I can speak about it publicly without embarrassing

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anyone. At the time of the Democratic primaries preceding the 2008 election, some members of our parish were upset by derogatory comments made during Coffee Hour about then-candidate Barack Obama by supporters of Hilary Clinton. The irony is that the people who made the upsetting comments were totally unaware of the effect they were having. But the hurt was real.

Now, I'm not saying for one moment that we're not entitled to our First-Amendment rights to free speech and freedom of expression. I'm not saying, "Can't we all just get along?" God knows I am not saying that I am without fault in this respect myself. And I'm certainly not denying that there are some issues on which the Church as a body needs to speak and act prophetically in witness to Christian principles of social justice, as Deacon Close reminded us in today's sermon.

I am saying, however, that we need to pay attention to the tone of our political discourse. We need to be aware of the effect our words may have on those who hear us but don't say anything in such forums as Coffee Hour. And we would do well to pay attention to what Amos Oz is saying in that passage about conflicts between right and right. We need to avoid being so self-assured of the rightness of our opinions that we automatically assume that all well-educated, sophisticated, and right-thinking people cannot but agree with us. That is the path to self-righteousness.

In short, I am saying that we need to be both aware and respectful of the diversity of political and social views likely to coexist in a parish community such as ours. An integral part of being an Anglo-Catholic parish in the Episcopal Church is the understanding that we're not all alike. What unites us is not being like-minded people who share similar social, educational, and cultural backgrounds, but rather our common commitment to the worship of God in Christ through the celebration of the Church's sacraments.

While I'm at it, please indulge me for a moment while I vent one of my pet peeves. "Friending" fellow-parishioners on Facebook, and then posting partisan political statements on controversial issues, can have the same divisive effects as I've been talking about. By their very nature, the social media do not promote reasoned discussion, but rather sloganeering and cheerleading. Simplistic postings on Facebook will never persuade those who disagree with us, but will simply upset and offend them, pushing them into a more and more defensive posture. That's the nature of the medium: it divides and polarizes rather than facilitating respectful dialogue or creative problem-solving. (In saying this, I'm not reproving or scolding; I'm just urging that we take a second look at how we use these social media for good or ill.)

We need to be both aware and respectful of the diversity of political and social views likely to coexist in a parish community such as ours. An integral part of being an Anglo-Catholic parish in the Episcopal Church is the understanding that we're not all alike.

A good model of responsible public discourse comes from our new bishop, Nicholas Knisely. As many of us may have seen, this past week he issued a public statement supporting the marriage equality bill before the state legislature. In so doing, he spoke forthrightly according to his conscience as a Christian bishop. At the same time, he expressed his respect for those who would disagree:

As your Bishop I respect and honor your right to disagree with me. A key part of what it means to be a member of the Episcopal Church is that, as long as we agree that we believe Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior, we can hold varied and diverse opinions on most other issues and still meet each other in Christ at God's altar.

And that quotation from Bishop Knisely fairly well sums up everything that I want to say on this topic for the time being.

Part Two

We are currently in a time of transitions at S. Stephen's. In July, we welcomed Buck Close as our new deacon. He brings a great deal to our parish's life, especially his

involvement in diaconal ministries in the wider diocese and beyond. At the same time, he's grown wonderfully in his execution of the demanding liturgical role of the Deacon in our High Mass. It is a blessing to have him assigned here.

Then, at the beginning of September, we bade farewell to our Curate and Episcopal Campus Minister Fr. Michael Tuck. After three years at S. Stephen's, which he began as a newly-ordained transitional Deacon, and during

which he was ordained to the priesthood, he received and accepted the call to be rector of Trinity Church in Lenox, Massachusetts. A group of twelve of us from S. Stephen's made the trip to Lenox to attend his institution as Rector there on December 15.

Our diaconal candidate Mary Ann Mello has now completed one-and-a-half years in her field assignment with us as part of her formation program. If all goes as planned, she will be ordained to the diaconate sometime this year; and we don't know where she will be assigned after that. I believe that she is well and truly ready for ordination; and her presence here with us is likewise an enormous blessing.

Since Fr. Tuck's departure, many have asked the question: Are we getting a new curate? The answer is YES. During the Fall, your Vestry Officers and I interviewed several candidates; but none of them are available before June of this year. I'm not able to say anything more at this time; but I'm confident that I'll be able to announce an appointment shortly after Easter.

This summer brings two milestones in my life; and one in the life of Organist and Choirmaster James Busby. This May, Elizabeth and I will mark twenty-five years of marriage; and the month of June will bring the twentieth anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood. Meanwhile, the year 2013 also marks twenty years for James as Organist and Choirmaster at S. Stephen's.

In recognition of James's many contributions to Anglican Church music, Nashotah House, the Anglo-Catholic seminary in Wisconsin, is awarding him an honorary doctorate at their academic convocation in October, at a special ceremony to be held in the Episcopal Cathedral in Milwaukee. It is, I think, a fitting tribute to a lifelong career that James has embraced as a sacred vocation.

For my part, in twenty-one years of ordained ministry, I have not yet taken a sabbatical, even though diocesan policy states that parish priests should get a three-month sabbatical every five years. Before now, I simply haven't felt the need for one. But, with a new curate on board this summer, the time has come, and the wardens and vestry have agreed that I should take a sabbatical during the 2013-2014 season, possibly during the Fall. I plan to use the time to complete my dissertation for the Doctor of Theology degree at Boston University. It's possible that I may spend some of that time in residence at Nashotah House, and I certainly want to be present when James receives his honorary doctorate in Milwaukee.

It's not easy to go away and leave the parish in the hands of others for a quarter of a year. But with the parish development program now well underway, we've created an infrastructure of committees and lay leaders who, together with a new curate, can keep the parish programs and activities running smoothly even in my temporary absence. I really am excited about the things we've got going here at S. Stephen's – especially the parish development program and the capital improvement project. I really am looking forward to seeing this room renovated according to the architect's plans we have on display. And I'm particularly eager to see the stained glass windows in the north aisle bright, clean, and luminous when they've been restored. We have much to do together in the months and years ahead; and I thank you all for your continuing prayers and support.

THE TREASURER'S CORNER

By Ransom Widmer

Among the historic treasures of our church, its stained glass windows are a particularly noticeable highlight. They reflect a variety of styles and were produced by different stained glass studios at different times. In fact, several of St. Stephen's windows are the work of the first stained glass manufacturer established in the United States. The Capital Campaign will provide much-needed funds to restore the five stained windows on the north aisle of the church. These five windows have sustained the most wear and tear, and it is our responsibility as stewards of our heritage to make sure they are properly preserved.

Nearest the back of the church in the north aisle is the Ives Window, dedicate to Robert Ives Jr. who died the Civil War. The Ives family helped raise the money for the building of our present building. The window depicts Saint John the Evangelist to the left while on the right is Saint Clement.

Next to it is the Ormsbee Window, memorializing Mary Spurr Ormsbee who died at the age of four in 1870. The painted glass shows Christ on the left, offering the Crown of life to a kneeling young woman. To the right, an angel bears a little child heavenward.

The Seagrave Window, made by the Tiffany Company of New York, depicts Christ the Good Shepherd on the left, while to the right an angel leads another little child to Paradise. The window memorializes Helen, Howard, Loraine, and Eleanor Seagrave. It was manufactured later than the other windows.

Fourth is the Mary T. Ames Window whose subject is a mystery. The two figures might represent Saints Margaret of Scotland and Elizabeth of Hungary, but may just as well be allegorical figures representing Charity in the feeding and clothing of the needy. Mary T. Ames died in 1860.

Fifth, and closest to the front of the church, is the Chafee Window, given in memory of Clara, Matilda, and Nathan Chafee. The left panel shows Christ receiving the little children (Mark 10:13-16) while the right panel depicts Jesus as a boy questioning the teachers in the Temple (Luke 2:46-47). This and the Ames window are older than the others.

All of these windows need restoration, which will include new frames and outside protective covering. This will insure their beauty and historic interest for future generations. Because of their variety in styles and differing places of manufacture, the work of restoration may well have to be completed by more than one stained glass studio. To assist us in determining the most effective restoration process for each window, we are contracting with an outside consultant to draft restoration specifications for each of the five north aisle windows. In addition, this project will include a complete documentation of the history of the windows which will be of help in attracting visitors to the church as well as identifying possible outside funders. Please continue your support of the Capital Campaign!



From the Sacristy

By Phoebe Pettingell

It would be easy for contemporary Episcopalians to assume that altar guilds have existed as long as our Church has existed. In fact, they are a relatively recent institution, brought about by the Anglo-Catholic movement in the second half of the 19th century. The Medieval Church had professional sacristans—invariably clergy who were responsible for the care of the altar and its appurtenances. They did not necessarily do the work themselves—often it was farmed out to lesser functionaries—but they were responsible for seeing that everything connected with the altar was in good order. Since there were no clerical supply houses, this meant not only taking care of tabernacles, chalices, candle sticks and such, but the making and preservation of vestments and altar linens, as well as the bread and wine for the Eucharist. Gradually, some monasteries and convents began to make vestments, just as they had long produced altar missals.

While I have never read a history describing what happened in the transition from the pre-Reformation to the post-Reformation Church of England, it is pretty safe to assume that the sacristan system continued for a while—just as it continues today in Anglican cathedrals and large parishes. However, the dissolution of the monasteries and their vestment-making helped spur the Reformation theology

calling for simpler clerical apparel. As celebrations of the Eucharist became less frequent—a state of things lasting well into the 19th century—there was little altar work to be done. Often the altar itself was a wooden table, shoved against a wall in the sanctuary when not in use. In the 1640s, Archbishop Laud was horrified to find altars in some parishes being used by male worshipers as a place to hold their hats while in church. A priest's wife or maidservant washed his clerical gown. The leftover, freshly baked bread [never hosts] was consumed directly after the communion service. There are reports from Colonial America of the wine used in celebrations of “the Lord's Supper” [it was not mixed with water by this time: that practice was revived by the 19th century Anglo-Catholic movement] being poured back into its bottle as though unconsecrated. Although the Thirty-Nine Articles affirm Christ's Real Presence in the Sacrament, a combination of Calvinist theology and sloppy practices regarding administration of the Eucharist had considerably diminished its importance.

It was left to the Anglo-Catholic movement to revive regular Eucharistic celebrations. And with the revival of female religious orders in Anglicanism, a body of women began sewing linens, making candles and hosts for the altar, and embroidering vestments and paraments for churches. They also helped train women of the parish for this holy work. Reading issues of *The S. Stephen* from the 1890s, one finds the Sisters of the Holy Nativity teaching our parishioners to do altar work. “Indeed, we have a goodly heritage,” since we are one of the earliest parishes in the Episcopal Church to have a daily mass, a regular Sunday Eucharist, and a functioning altar guild. Today, altar guilds are so essential that most of our Church has forgotten that there was a time when they did not exist, and that parishes like S. Stephen's taught the rest the importance of this labor of love and, through it, to remember that Christ is truly present with us in the holy sacrament of the altar.

SO... this Lent, consider whether this great spiritual devotion of handling holy things that make our services possible might be your calling. Our Altar Guild welcomes its newest member, Cathy Bledsoe, and hopes many of you may be moved to join us, as well. In addition to those who wish to be trained how to set up before and clean up after mass, we need people who would enjoy laundering and ironing the small linens used with the holy vessels, or who would like to polish silver. I particularly need someone to polish the brass followers used on the candle sticks [I am unfortunately allergic to brass and brass polish]. You will be joining a great spiritual work by volunteering for any of these activities, as well as learning to deepen your own understanding of our worship. Besides, there is great fellowship in an altar guild. Come and see...



BOY BISHOPS

By Bill Dilworth

Last month saw the end of Christmastide and the beginning of the Epiphany season, at which point we marked the somewhat overlapping commemorations of the arrival of the Magi, Christ's baptism, and Our Lord's miraculous changing of water into wine at Cana. Had we lived in medieval Europe, we would also have been marking the end of a long and somewhat boisterous festival cycle that began during Advent. Europeans attempted to make the cold, dreary months of winter a little less oppressive with drink, music, and the inversion of social roles: those on society's lower levels rose to temporary power, while the powerful momentarily sank into obscurity [In the words of the *Magnificat*, "He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek."]

One way they did this was the practice of enthroning a Boy Bishop. The custom arose in cathedral choir schools on December 6, the feast of St. Nicholas, of choosing one of the choirboys to fill this episcopal role. It took hold in other educational settings as well, so we have records of Boy Abbots reigning in monastery schools. The Boy Bishop's (or Boy Abbot's) term of service lasted from the first part of Advent until just after Epiphany. He performed most of the duties of a real bishop (except, of course, saying Mass or ordaining). He gave the blessing at the end of choir services, preached, and sat in the real bishop's stall; in some places he actually decided who would fill ecclesiastical job vacancies that arose during his tenure.

The Boy Bishop was a type of "Lord of Misrule," part of a larger pattern of social inversion that found expression in celebrations occurring around the same time—like the Feast of Fools and the Feast of Asses. As with the Boy Bishop, a lower ranking member of society was chosen to preside over a feast parodying the beliefs and patterns of the larger community. The workaday world was disrupted, the prominent were ridiculed, and drunken revelry was the order

of the day – of a whole series of days, actually. The drunken social critique, rowdy behavior, and potential for sacrilege predictably aroused the Church's opposition early on, and various Councils forbade the practices associated with this period of Misrule. Yet in spite of that opposition, the practice of choosing Boy Bishops remained very popular, especially in England. King Henry VIII tried to stamp out the practice once he gained control of the Church of England,

but his daughter Queen Mary revived it. It was finally decisively suppressed during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

In more recent times, however, Anglicans in various places have revived the practice of enthroning a Boy Bishop – even in ordinary parishes that would not have had a Boy Bishop in medieval times. The revived custom is less boisterous than the old one, but the Boy Bishop typically carries out some of the ecclesiastical duties of a real prelate. In some places the job title has been changed to that of Junior Bishop, in order to signal

that the post is open to girls as well as boys. Besides providing a bit of extra fun during a somewhat dreary season, it captures the attention (and participation) of children. We have a variety of potential candidates here at S. Stephen's. However, the prospect of our seeing a local Boy Bishop (or Boy Rector?) seem somewhat slim.



Society of Mary

Our Lady of Providence Ward

meets on the first Saturday of each month, following 9:30 am Mass and Recitation of the Rosary for a light breakfast, meeting, and fellowship. Join us.

VOTIVE LIGHTS

A sermon preached on December 30, 2012, the First Sunday after Christmas

By Mary Ann Mello, Diaconal Candidate

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I have a bit of quirkiness in me, I love family anecdotes, not just my own but yours too! I love hearing the history behind things, the back story. I also love church history and learning about ancient traditions. In 2001, I was the treasurer for St. Francis Church and for several more years after that and as exciting as this job was ... I occasionally took breaks and would clean the office and sort old papers and I found some really interesting things. I once found a stewardship letter written by the Vicar in the 1930's asking his congregation to increase their pledge to pay for a new boiler. Sound familiar? Times have not changed much.

You can imagine in my quirkiness, how excited I was when I came across a little pamphlet on Votive Lights written by the Episcopal Bishop of Michigan, Bishop Robert S. Emrich, incidentally a graduate of Brown University. Bishops often wrote pamphlets with instructions on various topics for the laity and clergy. We even have some in our own library. What makes this one interesting is that Bishop Emrich had just come back

from a three month visit to England. In this pamphlet, he expresses his thanksgiving to the Church of England, for her services, for her beauty and her ministry and writes in favor of having votive candles more available in our churches and cathedrals in the United States. The pamphlet is not dated but in 1958 he was made Honorary Commander of the Order of the British Empire, so I am guessing from the looks of the pamphlet, it was in this era. I thought at the time, this pamphlet was very neat and fantastic and thought somebody should give a talk about votive candles in the life of the church. So many years later, here we are.

In John's Gospel today, we hear "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."

Our Church is rich in tradition of the use of candles representing Christ's light in the world. What first comes to my mind is the Sanctuary light, reminding us of God's presence. It is a very humbling and a moving experience to watch the light being carried before the Sacrament between the Lady Chapel and the Main Altar, even in the busiest of time during the clean up and preparation for the next service, time seems to stand still and all is quiet.



In our tradition, the Deacon chants the Gospel by candlelight in the midst of church and the people of God. It gives us a feeling of what it must have been like in the early church and what it must have felt like to hear the Gospels for the very first time.

With this understanding, we can appreciate the use of votive candles for prayers and devotions. Just like in the early church, we light candles before the sacred image of our Lord, or the Virgin Mary or a saint for prayers of thanksgiving and intercessions. "In the middle ages, the symbolism of the votive candles was elaborated on by St. Radegund (who founded the monastery of the Holy Cross in France) in which she described a practice whereby a person would light

a candle or candles which equaled his own height; this was called measuring to a saint. Although it may seem peculiar to us, this "measuring actually reflects the idea of the candle representing the person of faith who has come into the light to offer his prayer."¹

Some Medieval spiritual writers expanded the image of the candle itself: beeswax symbolized the purity of Christ, the wick, the human soul of Christ and the light, His divinity. Also, the burning candle represented a sacrifice, which is made in the offering of the prayer and the acceptance of the Lord's will.²

When I read through Bishop Emrich's pamphlet, I loved the way he talks about prayer when lighting a candle; he says "Let him who lights a candle:

- A) Thank God for the light of Christ in this dark world;
- B) Pray that, he and the whole Church may spread the light in missionary zeal;
- C) Pray that, as the candle is consumed in giving light so may he spend himself in service to God and man;
- D) Pray that, as the flame witnesses to his prayer after he has left the church, so he may witness on his way and
- E) Pray that, as the flame is joyful so God's joy be in him."³

I really like the thought that the candle we light bears witness to our faith to others who visit the church after us

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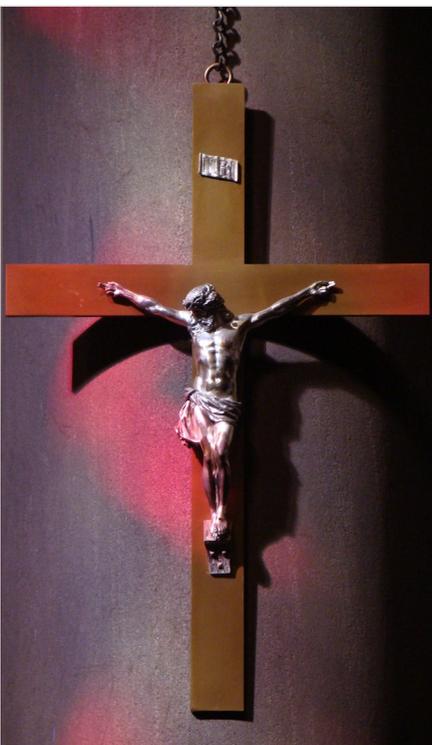
and as we leave church, the image of our candle burning is still with us.

So how do we, as Christians, bring this light out into the world? The needs of the world are so great, and there are so many who wait in darkness for the light, the homeless and oppressed, the lonely, the aged and neglected. How do we bring forth this light? Could it be that when we say "somebody should do something about this," that somebody is us? Could it be just being present and listening to somebody who has a story to tell? Who is it in your life that looks to you to be their light? Who, in this world, needs your witness to God's love, mercy as they sit in darkness? Who is it that needs your prayers and forgiveness?

This Christmastide, may we ponder these questions in our hearts as we light our own candles and rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the light of the world.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- 1,2-The History of Votive Candles by Fr. William Saunders for the Arlington Catholic Herald
- 3-"Votive lights" by Bishop Richard S. Emrich



Stations of the Cross

Friday Evenings in Lent

February 15 & 22 March 1, 8, 15 & 22

6 pm

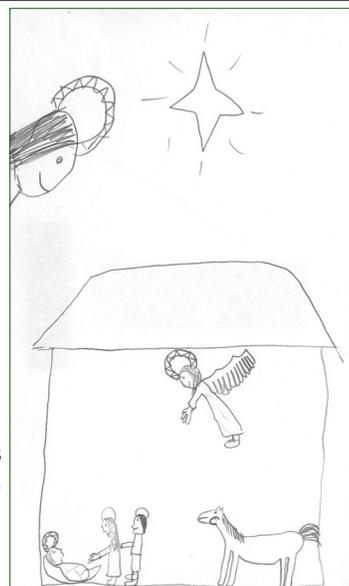
The Christmas Pageant

By Rose Callanan, Valexja Johnson & Wyatt Martineau

The pageant, in its 26th year, occurs on Christmas Eve. The whole Sunday school starts practicing for the pageant at the beginning of December. Each child is given a role to act out. At home they practice their lines and prepare for December 24.

The roles in the play are the Angels, the Head Angel, the Shepherds, the Head Shepherd, the Three Kings, the Three Gift bearers, Mary, Joseph, and of course the baby Jesus. It was Valexja's first time in the St. Stephen's Christmas Pageant. As a Shepherd and Gift bearer she made new friends and had a lot of fun acting out her role. Rose was the Head Angel. It was a great way for her to practice learning and delivering lines. Wyatt was a shepherd he enjoyed meeting new friends and learning even more about the birth of Jesus. Cailyn, an experienced Angel after three years says, "It was fun." Eian who sat on his mother's shoulders as a king says, "I just like being in front of everyone."

The Christmas Pageant is a creative and fun way to bring the Christmas story to life. It also brings the children closer to each other and Jesus. Not only parents and regular parishioners attend, it helps people from the community get involved in the church. Both Rose's family and Wyatt's family started coming to St. Stephens after they watched a Christmas Pageant. Overall it is a great experience for everyone.



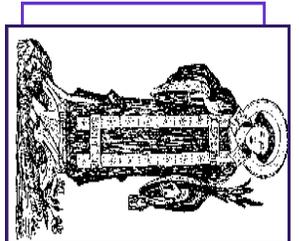
From the Nicene Creed...

...and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.



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Lent/Holy Week
2013