

February
2009

We are Spiritual and Religious

You may have heard some people say that they are spiritual but not religious. I'm not sure exactly what this means, but my guess is that to be *religious* implies an involvement with organization - church politics, traditions and rituals, that for many seem empty, meaningless and corrupt. Sitting, standing, kneeling, vestments and creeds - do we really need these? To be *spiritual* on the other hand means having an awareness of a greater mystery, whether known as "God" or another name, and a sense of desire for connection with it. The idea is that you can be spiritual without getting caught up in things that are religious.

This reminds me of a story where a minister and one of his parishioners are playing a round of golf on a Saturday morning. They are both having a great game, and near the 7th hole, the parishioner turns to his minister and says, "Look at this beautiful green, the trees, the blue sky. I don't need to go to church to pray...I can pray here." The minister says, "Yes, that is quite true. But do you?"

I believe that there is no such thing as a separation between religion and spirituality. It is like having family without people or music without sound. Religion gathers and guides people into spirituality, and spirituality is the life and purpose of religion. The upcoming season of Lent is a time to recognize and strengthen the bond between religion and spirituality, when we will gather in worship for the imposition of Ashes, prayers and Eucharist and be called upon to deepen and renew our spiritual lives.

In preparation for this year's Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 25th, I invite you to commit to a daily spiritual practice. There are many to consider. The traditional Lenten spiritual disciplines are fasting, praying and almsgiving. Others to consider are:

Journaling - using a daily calendar to write down or draw whatever is on your mind and in your heart - joys, sorrows, questions, humor, unresolved issues - anything that you wish to share with God alone. To add some structure, begin by meditating on the Lord's Prayer or write down a favorite verse from Scripture or a hymn.

Silence - commit to being in a silent setting for five minutes each day, alone or with someone else. You might light a candle and sit in a comfortable chair. For a few minutes, turn off the radio or TV, let go of the thoughts of the next thing to do; simply listening to the sounds of the world around you.

Questions and Listening - this is a modified version of Q&A. With your spouse, parent, child, co-worker, neighbor or friend, commit yourself to a conversation where you listen deeply to what is on their mind or heart. Don't fix, help or respond with your own perspective; listening in this way is a profound act of appreciation, love and respect.

Each of these suggested practices involves focusing your attention in a new way. Don't expect a miracle, but a sliver of comfort, hope or stirring of your inner life.

Yours in Christ,

George

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FROM OUR Rector

On the Liturgy

Lent begins *Ash Wednesday*, six and one half weeks before Easter. From the very beginning of the Church's history, the period of Easter has been celebrated as the triumph of the Incarnate God over the forces of sin and death. Also from that time, the period *prior* to Easter has been marked by prayer, fasting, self-examination, and discipline. This period, called *Lent* (from the old English word for Spring), prepares us for the Lord's suffering and death at Calvary and for his victory. Lent has its origins in the rule of the early church that converts must be given a rigorous preparation in the faith, marked by study and by special discipline, prior to their baptism on Easter Sunday. The forty days of Lenten preparation are mentioned as early as the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. Within a short time, this opportunity for preparation for the Lord's Resurrection was open even to "veteran" Christians. Lent contains the forty days between Ash Wednesday and Easter, but does not include Sundays. Sundays are not Sundays "of Lent," but "in Lent;" even Lenten Sundays are feast days.

The ashes imposed on believers on Ash Wednesday portray in a moving fashion our mortality and penitence. As we walk the way of Lent, we open our lives to the Lord's purifying scrutiny and widen the scope of His resurrection power in our lives. In Lent, look for changes in the service as we move into a more somber, reflective mode.

In Lent we say farewell for a time to the Alleluia, the ancient Christian acclamation of Christ's victory, to attend with sobriety to how we fall short of manifesting this victory in our daily lives. Lent is a time of self-examination, a time when we can say with the Psalmist, "I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." (Psalm 51:3). But how can I gain this self-transparency about my condition? An Anglican devotional guide, *Saint Augustine's Prayer Book* (Loren Gavitt, ed., Holy Cross Publications, 1984) helps us identify our sins in the context of the "seven deadly sins": Pride (which includes Irreverence, Sentimentality, Presumption, Distrust, Disobedience, Impenitence, Vanity, Arrogance, and Snobbery), Anger (Resentment, Pugnacity, and Retaliation), Envy (Jealousy, Malice, and Contempt), Covetousness (Inordinate Ambition, Domination, Avarice, Prodigality, and Penuriousness), Gluttony (Intemperance, Lack of Discipline), Lust (Unchastity, Immodesty, Prudery, Cruelty), and Sloth (Laziness and Indifference). An excellent explanation of Lent can be found in the Ash Wednesday liturgy, pp. 264-5 of the Book of Common Prayer.

David Fletcher
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Parish Life

Blythe

The ladies of Blythe started the New Year by making New Year's resolutions. This was followed by further study of the Gospel of Luke lead by Jim Hamilton. The girls were full of questions, as always, and finally able to get some real answers from an expert! Seriously, Mrs. Benich is most grateful to Mr. Hamilton for sharing his time and knowledge with Blythe. At our second meeting in January Valentine gifts were made for someone beloved in each girl's life. In February we look forward to further celebrating Valentine's Day by making valentines. February's meetings are Wednesday, February 4th and 18th. All middle school girls are invited to join us from 7:00 to 8:30 pm in Lehman Parlor. Mrs. Benich is always scrounging for snacks for the hungry bunch. Let her know if you can bring it ahead of time, or contact her with any questions at preb9@wowway.com or 545-2388.

Adult Forum Notes

Our Winter theme for Track One is "Art and the Soul." So far we've heard from **David Funck** about the power of the Holy Spirit made manifest through art; **Mark Lewis** about the power of theater to touch individuals; and **Charles Snider** on the purpose of liturgical music. **Jim Hamilton's** acclaimed "Your Bible" series has been the headliner in Track Two.

Please join us at 9:15 in the library (Track Two) or Mahon Hall (Track One.)

Recaps and a printable schedule are available on the Adult Education page of the St. Mark's website: www.stmarksglenellyn.org.

Parlor Make-over

We are looking for items to spruce up the Parlor. This is one of our most used rooms in the building-St. Mark's Café, Senior High, Blythe, and Serenity Seekers just to name the most frequent inhabitants. We are going with a white, red and black color theme and are looking for slip covers for the sofas, and shelves, end tables and tables that can be painted. Also needed are large floor pillows or bean bags, paint brushes, roller handles, rollers and of course CASH to help pay for paint and any other needed supplies. Please let **Kendall Vail (630-561-2210)** know if you have items that you would like to donate. Or make a donation with the check marked for Parlor.

The Unambitious, Busy Person Book Group

We will combat the tyranny of hectic schedules and agree to read four books over the course of the year. Here is the first: *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch (Hyperion, 2008). This is a short non-fiction read that is big on significance as Dr. Pausch reflects on his love of life and gratitude in the face of imminent death from pancreatic cancer. It is a good book for all members of the family and you might want to share it with your family after you read it yourself. It is also a good piece to read in conjunction with Lent. Plan to meet at 3:30 p.m., Sunday, February 22, 2009 at the home of **Dianne Hunter and Stephen Curtis. RSVP to Dianne: 630.469.5943.**

Gifts for Christmas Flowers are Given to the Glory of God:

In memory of John C. Kautenberger, by Mike and Linda Boskovic
In thanksgiving for Ella M. Sutherland, by Anna Panor
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by the Lewis / Oates family
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by Ann and Bob Cardwell
In thanksgiving for the people of St. Mark's, by George and Cecilia Smith
In thanksgiving for the birth of Ella Marie, by Don and Marie Sutherland
In thanksgiving for our parents, by Sue and Dick Mylander
In memory of Christine Jenkins, by the Jenkins family
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by the Toliver family
In thanksgiving for Horacio's safe homecoming, by the Chavez family
In memory of Leland A. Kenower, Dorothy C. Cliff, Albert Cliff, Sally C. Barnes, James Kenower,
James Wiesehuegel, by Gretchen Kenower
In memory of Carl and Lillian Tack, by the Ward family
In thanksgiving for friends and family, by Ken and Danna Gross
In memory of Florence Hunter and Mark Eastwood, by Julie and Hunter Walor
In memory of Nana Stramalia on her Christmas Eve birthday, by Ben and Olivia Vanderlei
In memory of David Scott Chambers and Audrey Julian, by Dan, Jennifer, and Audrey Chambers
In thanksgiving for blessings received and in memory of Virginia and William Allison,
by Rinda and Sandy Allison
In memory of Howard Baier, by Dave and Kris Baier
In memory of Roland D. and Thomas O. Schmitt, by Nancy Schmitt
In memory of Allan Mackie, Bob and Cass Wilson, Richard and Lucille Miller, by Fiona, Richard,
Kristin, and Gemma Miller
By Susan and Richard Edwards
In memory of Rachel Dorothy Dinse, by Dianne Dinse
In memory of Marge and Dale Clinkman, by Ron, Joyce, Brian, and Scott Hetzel
In thanksgiving for our son Nate, by Cheryl and Robert Olsen
In memory of Rex and Vie, Millie and Oliver, by Jan and Bill Novak
In memory of Paul Okey and Ray Zwiebel
In thanksgiving for family and friends and St. Mark's, by the Reed family: Lane and Kim, Alex
and Elliott
In thanksgiving for Phoebe, Mary Caroline, and Amelia, by Michael and Tricia Benich
In memory of Jack, Marion, Nancy, and Sarah, by John and Susan Schmuck
In celebration of our grandmothers and in memory of our grandfathers, by Meredith & Evan Fischl.
In thanksgiving for our grandchildren: Joslyn, Nathan, and Haley, by Andy and Chris Carter.
To salute Jackie Tack in thanksgiving for her time, her driving and her friendship,
by Elizabeth House.

Gifts for Christmas Music are Given to the Glory of God:

In memory of Meryl Wiggin, by Parker Wiggin
In thanksgiving for blessings, by Barbara Bradley
In thanksgiving for Ella M. Sutherland, by Anna Panor
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by Dick and May Anstee
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by the Lewis / Oates family
In thanksgiving for all our musicians, by Daniel Conaway
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by June and Bob Judd
In memory of our parents, by Joyce and David Fletcher
In memory of John Lad and Christopher Smith, by George and Cecilia Smith
In memory of Lisa Merrit Tack, by Jackie Tack
In thanksgiving for our children, by Sue and Dick Mylander
In memory of our loving parents, by Don and Marie Sutherland
In memory of Anna Claire Woodiwiss, by Ashley and Mary Woodiwiss
In memory of Evangeline and in thanksgiving for St. Mark's, by Margaret Barclay
In thanksgiving for our loving family, by the Chavez family
In memory of Kiki Tack, by the Ward family
In thanksgiving for happiness and health, by Ken and Danna Gross
In memory of Jack Almcrantz and Steve Burkholder, by the Vanderleis
In thanksgiving for blessings received and in memory of Mary Rothman
In memory of Bob and Isabel Gerlach, by Dave and Kris Baier
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by William Mark
In memory of Allan Mackie, Irene Turner, and Tracy Schmidt, by Fiona, Richard,
Kristin, and Gemma Miller
By Susan and Richard Edwards
In memory of George and Katherine Brown, and Dorothy and Robert Olsen,
by Cheryl and Robert Olsen
In thanksgiving for blessings received, by Jan and Bill Novak
In memory of Paul and Mary Louise Mielke and in thanksgiving for our many blessings, by
John and Mardie Roberts
In memory of Hilary Stent Jackson, by Jane Stent Zaccaria
In thanksgiving for Bonnie Schwanz, by Bob Bernero
In thanksgiving for family and friends and St. Mark's, by the Reed family: Lane and Kim, Alex
and Elliott
In remembrance of our sons, Christopher and Colin, by Janis and Guy Groner
In thanksgiving for our wonderful families and our supportive friends at St. Mark's,
by Ginnie Judd and Gerrit Faber
In memory of Philip Henry Schnell from the Lanzillo family.
In memory of Phil & Dru Carter from Andy and Chris Carter.

Rector's Report at the St. Mark's Annual Meeting January 25, 2009

It is an historic time. This past week, we have witnessed the inauguration of the first African-American president and a concurrent orderly and peaceful transition in the leadership of our nation. With the eyes of the world watching, we have seen something noble, the highest values and principles of our nation affirmed and celebrated. At the same time, the parades and inaugural balls have not erased the difficult reality we face – a deep recession with record home foreclosures, mounting job losses and few prospects for a quick turnaround. Here in Illinois, we have experienced political crisis, corruption and betrayal of the public trust. It is both a time of hope and fear: hope in an unprecedented election and sound democratic process; fear in a profoundly derailed national and world economy.

Through a time of crisis and change, the Episcopal Church is called upon as it has been in past crises to be a beacon of hope and assurance. It is noteworthy that the Episcopal Church played a prominent role in the inaugural events, with Bishop Gene Robinson offering the invocation prayer and focal worship services held at historic St. John's and the National Cathedral.

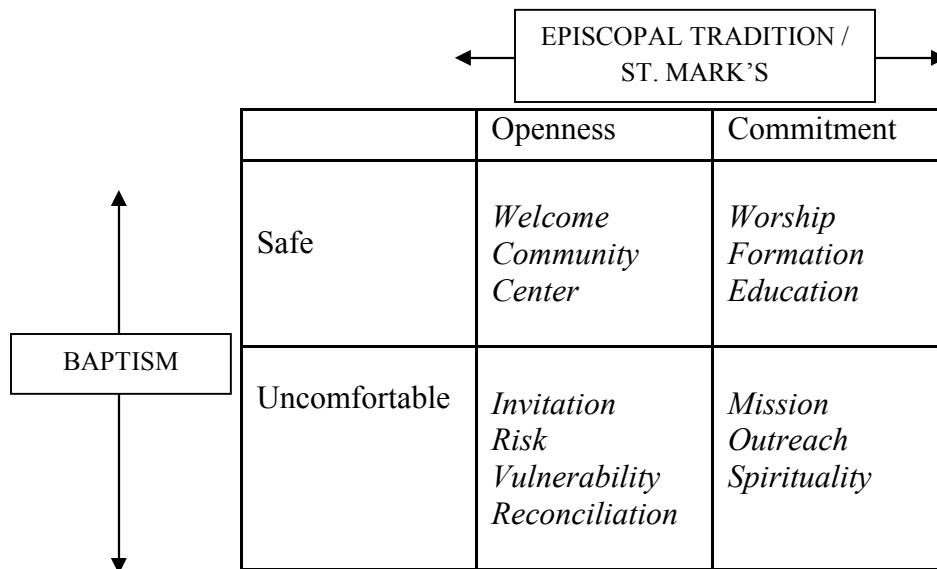
Here in Glen Ellyn, St. Mark's has been blessed with a spirit of hope, generosity and welcome. In this particular corner of an increasingly inter-connected world, St. Mark's has continued to strive to be a sign of God's love and a place where there is good news. A sampling of the highlights of our life and labor of the past year include:

- A strong response to our Giving Campaign.
- Twenty-two new pledges for 2009; a total of 165 pledges to-date – the most in over 10 years.
- Increased attendance at worship services.
- Expanded Parent's Day Out (PDO) from 2 days a week (2006-7) to 3 days a week (2007-8) and now 5 days a week (2008-9) with full enrollment.
- An extensive renovation of the undercroft, including new cabinets, lighting, and a window seat.
- New Cherub and Chorister's Choirs for children, led by Marsha Webster; at least 14 children are now participating for weekly rehearsals and singing in worship.
- Plans being readied for a St. Mark's pre-school.
- Strengthening our relationship with San Marcos in Nigromante, Mexcio where in June a group led a vacation Bible school and repainted the church roof.
- Raised \$4,000 for St. Gregory's School for educational equipment and supplies.
- Raised \$18,000 with the 2nd Pumpkin Patch; over \$5,000 donated to DuPage PADS.
- Celebrated Katie Wright's ordination to the Priesthood; Bishop Jeffrey Lee presided, his first official visit to St. Mark's and ordination as bishop.
- Opened a new "St. Mark's Café" in Lehman parlor on Sunday mornings.

Expanded Adult Education offerings to the summer month with the "Living the Questions" series.

One of the exciting projects of the past several months has been the development of a vision statement for St. Mark's. Beginning with materials from last year's vestry retreat, a dedicated cross-section of parishioners met for several months, received input from the congregation, prayed, laughed and wrestled with articulating an identity for St. Mark's that will lead us in the coming years. Such a process is recommended in our Scriptures: "Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18 KJV). A modern sage concurs: "You've got to be careful if you don't know where you are going, because you might not get there" (Yogi Berra). I am grateful to Sarah Adler, Bruce Benson, Eric McAlpine, Jeff Hill, Wilma Linde, Joyce Fletcher and Elizabeth Lanzillo for their commitment, creativity and dedication to this effort. Expect to become familiar the short version of the vision statement: "Rooted in Baptism, Growing in Faith, Branching out into the World." In worship, education and service, we will claim the good news of baptism, strive for creativity, and grow in vitality. The identity articulated in the vision statement should not surprise you. It is a reflection of what is already apparent in part at St. Mark's, and it will help us be accountable and direct us in new ways.

One way of seeing our vision is through a process of combining two of our foundational elements: baptism and our Episcopal tradition. The following diagram shows how the dimensions of these elements interact to create the substance of our identity:



The vertical axis describes the dual nature of our baptism. In baptism we are marked as Christ’s own forever. That is our **safety**. Our commitment to the baptismal covenant challenges us to seek and serve Christ in all persons. This is **uncomfortable**.

The horizontal axis describes the identity of St. Mark’s and our Episcopal tradition. For over 500 years, the Episcopal Church has followed a path to ever greater welcome and inclusion. That is our **openness**. Through our Apostolic claim and catholic roots, we are committed to witness the risen Christ who is known today at St. Mark’s and in every generation back to a group of peasants in Galilee. This is our **commitment**.

As these dimensions form the context for our life and faith, we are called to welcome, invitation, mission and spiritual renewal. Our vision will inspire us to be creative and take risks as we listen and are guided by the Holy Spirit. What will St. Mark’s be like in five years? Our vision will help guide us to this exciting future.

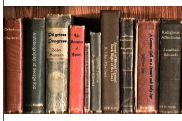
Today as we appoint and elect new leaders, it is also time to thank those who are finishing their terms of service. I thank...Martha Sexauer for her indomitable spirit and dedication to hospitality and welcome, Scott Bednas for his sense of calm and analytical acumen, Ann Cardwell for unwavering commitment to mission, Andrew Flynn for his bravery and willingness to enter the world of vestry deliberations as our first youth representative, Julie Carson and Jill Bednas for their commitments to the wider church and our diocese, and Elizabeth Lanzillo for her “yes” to serve as warden and her counsel, good humor, and total commitment to St. Mark’s and its future. I am also grateful for the hard work and dedication of our staff– Katie, Walter, Charles, Marsha, Miguel, Dale, Jim and Norma. Thank you!

Yours in Christ,

The Rev. George D. Smith

Weil, L., A THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP. The New Church's Teaching Series. Volume 12. Cambridge, MA.: Cowley Publications, 2002. 160 pages. \$11.95.

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Professor Louis Weil, currently at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, has been in ministry more than forty years, and is recognized as an expert in the field of liturgics. A cover note says that Weil “invites the laity to claim their true baptismal role and serve alongside the ordained as ministers and celebrants of the liturgy.” His five chapters of discussion are grouped under five question titles: Which Theology? Who Celebrates? Whose Culture? Whose Music? Whose Sacraments? Some of his comments (and responses) to these questions are in the form of historical sketches; others are discussions of current conditions or practices in the church; accompanied by opinions or advice as to what might be done to strengthen the Body of Christ in its fellowship and ministries. In all these areas he displays much wisdom and insight, though there will be agreements and disagreements from people in churches on the scale of Anglican values and practices.

As Christians share their liturgical experiences, Weil is emphatic that the rite be truly *ecclesial*; is it an act of the church? He means by this term that the reference is to the nature of the church “as the people of God, the entire community of baptized believers.” He affirms that the entire community gathered for worship should participate fully in the movement, music and word. It seems obvious that people can do this only to the extent that they have been properly prepared for communal worship (as well as service). Thus, Weil spends some pages talking about the (ancient) practice of the catechumenate, drawing on some ancient documents that describe a three-year period of preparation for those (first) chosen carefully after detailed examination of their backgrounds, occupations, and the like. It appears that he would favor such a practice generally today.

He also opts for a vigorous participation of all persons in the liturgy, clerical and lay alike. He seems not to approve of the distinction, affirming that lay people need to be trained and encouraged and allowed to have a part in sacramental liturgies. This should include, to the extent it is possible, men, women and children, various ethnic groups among us, and that styles of language and music should be adapted to the existing culture, not one cultural set be imposed upon another.

Does the language and the music fit the setting? Should certain parts of the liturgy, say at the Eucharist, be said? or sung? Is the concentration upon the clergy, officiating at the altar, or upon the whole congregation engaged in participation? These, and many other issues, will challenge to reader (and worshiper) to examine one's personal faith, one's involvement in worship, and in being a witness in and to the world in which ones lives and works.

Walter M. Dunnett

Mother Katie's Corner

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Movie Nights

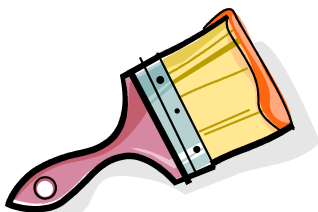
Middle School Movie night!

Friday, February 13th.
7pm to 10pm. Parlor.



High School Movie night and painting/decorating!

Friday, February 20th. 7pm to ???
Parlor.



Youth Outreach in March.

We had a great time in January going to
People's Resource Center (PRC) and
Cathedral Shelter

so we are doing it again!

Saturday, March 28th.

Middle School to PRC. 8:15am to
12:45. Lunch at Bells and Whistles to
follow. Bring money for lunch. Carpool
from St. Mark's- drivers needed.

High School to Cathedral Shelter.
8:00am to 3:00. Lunch in the city. Bring
money for lunch. Carpool from St.
Mark's- drivers needed.

Keeping God's People Safe

You are invited to participate in KEEPING GOD'S
PEOPLE SAFE, training class, on Saturday, February
28th. This is required for many within the church, but
suggested for all. Abuse can happen in a variety of
settings and it is good for many people to be able to
recognize it.

Level 1 concentrates on creating safe environments for
children, while level 2 encompasses creating abuse-
resistant organizations.

The schedule is:

9:30-11:30: Protecting God's People (Level 1)

11:30 – 12:00: Lunch (Please bring a sack lunch,
beverages will be provided.)

12:00-3:30 pm: Leading & Caring for God's People
(Level 2)

The sessions are free and all are welcome.

To register, please contact the church office before
February 24th: frontdesk@stmarksglenellyn.org

or

630-858-1020.

Information about the Diocese's Keeping God's People
Safe program can be found at:

Confirmation Mentors and Confirmands

Special lunch and speaker on

Sunday, February 22nd after the
10:30 service. More details to follow,
but reserve the date now.

Vestry Meeting Highlights December 16, 2008

Rector's Report:

- Lessons and Carols on Dec 14 with Glenbard East Madrigal Singers and choirs of St. Mark's – beautiful service, well attended; thanks to **Charles** for all of his work;
- baptism of **Roger Shorney** on Dec 14;
- Evensong held by **Jim Hamilton** on Dec 07;
- Jim Gill children's concert Dec 05, coordinated by **Kristin Novak, Jill Bednas, and Nikki Fry** – many groceries and \$750 in proceeds donated to Glen Ellyn Food Pantry;
- thanks to **Mike Benich and Dick Mylander** for the installation of the beautiful inlaid-marker-strips on the altar steps to prevent tripping;
- Advent Bedtime Stories by **Katie** held on Dec 03;
- much media coverage of the GPS devices installed on the Richard Rush nativity figures out front;
- baptisms of **Robert and Alethia Winley (grandchildren of Nick and Gloria Patinos)** on Nov 23;
- Diocesan Convention on Nov 21-22: delegates **Edith Jacobson, Julie Carson, and Danna Gross** attending.

Nominating Committee: **Elizabeth**

- Four vestry vacancies are to be filled, and five parishioners have accepted nomination: **Cindy Flynn, Perry Knutson, Eric McAlpine, Doug Page, and Kendall Vail**;
- two parishioners have accepted nomination to run for delegate and alternate to the Diocesan Convention: **Gretchen Kenower and Elizabeth Lewis**;
- **Phoebe Benich** has accepted nomination to run for Youth Representative to the Vestry;
- **Kris Baier** has accepted nomination to run for Junior Warden to the Vestry.

Communications: **Javier**

- **Nancy Gier** and the team have updated the master "contacts list";
- **Jen Grant and Elizabeth Lanzillo** built an "event kit" for further development of events promotion;
- several press releases out: Robert Poovey concert, Jim Gill event;
- banners for events on the front of the church;
- **Bob Cardwell** continues to develop and improve the website;
- **George and Javier** produced a two-minute video for the website, to welcome visitors!

Vision Team: **Elizabeth**

- drafts of the short, long, and “bumper-sticker” versions circulated;
- final product of each of these will be presented at the annual meeting.

Giving Campaign: **Joe**

- total of \$389,460 pledged as of today;
- 143 families (127 renewals and 16 new families – a +5% increase) make up this total;
- 35 families in 2008 have not been heard from yet for 2009;
- phone calls went out from **Joe, George, the Flynns, and the Figlers;**
- 11 families have moved away and left the parish.

Finance: **Dick**

- pledge payments are slightly ahead of budget right now;
- however, this is skewed by \$26K in gifts from parishioners above and beyond their pledges;
- as of the end of November, there are \$75K of pledge payments outstanding, and \$25K of those are considered “at risk”;
- if we do see that other \$50K come in, that will put us right about at our \$446K budget figure;
- open plate collections have been good, so the “giving” side of the report looks good;
- another \$20K in additional funds were drawn from the Campbell Trust, bringing the year’s total to \$85K; we had hoped to keep draws from the Trust to \$50K total;
- on the expense side, payroll expenses are close to budget;
- music expenses are under but will catch up this month;
- admin and B&G expenses are close to budget, BUT there was also a \$10K Buildings & Grounds debt-reduction-goal that has not yet been paid;
- overage in building maintenance costs have been covered generally by savings in other places in the budget;
- Diocesan pledge for November has not yet been paid.

Summary: good expense control this month, but no debt reductions.

Budget: **George**

- three versions of a letter from **George, Elizabeth, and David** are going out right now, to members of the parish falling into three categories: families who have already pledged and are being asked for an additional donation, families who have pledged before but have not yet responded this year, and families who have not pledged;
- letters are good news (we are growing) and hard news (we project a deficit to maintain current and projected programs).

Unofficial notes by **Daniel Conaway**

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner *February 24th, 2009*

According to long tradition, the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday are burned on Shrove Tuesday (the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday). The resulting ashes are imposed on the foreheads of worshippers on Ash Wednesday on which Lent begins.

At St. Mark's, we will burn the palms on the front steps of the church at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 24. At 6:00 p.m. that evening, we will have a pancake supper, in keeping with the medieval practice of using up all eggs, milk, and butter before the Lenten fast begins. Many people know this day as "Mardi Gras" which means "Fat Tuesday" in French. "Carnival" as well means "farewell to meat." The tone of the pancake supper is lively and festive, one final party before the rigors of Lent begin the following day.

***Reminder: Ash Wednesday Services, February 25th
at 6:30 AM, Noon, and 7:30 PM***