



AUGUST 15, 2007

August Worship At St. Thomas' Parish

Our worship schedule will continue throughout August with services on Sunday and the Wednesday 12:15 Eucharist. The Rev. John Dwyer will be the celebrant on Wednesdays, leading a "Deacon's Mass". Summarily what this means is that John will follow the order of service as found in the prayer book, eliminating the prayers of consecration and administering reserved sacrament (bread and wine having been blessed at the previous Sunday service).

Our Sunday schedule is as follows:

Together @ 10

During the month of August our 10:00 a.m. service will be using the third of the Eucharistic Prayers found in the supplement, *Enriching Our Worship*. This supplement was published in 1997 by The Standing Liturgical Commission through the General Convention "as an enrichment of our liturgical prayer. This collection is part of an ongoing process of listening to what the Spirit is saying to the Church through the diverse experience of those who gather to worship and to celebrate the sacramental rites which fashion and identify us as the People of God". *Enriching Our Worship* is not intended to supplant the Book of Common Prayer, rather to provide additional resources to assist worshipping communities wishing to expand the language, images and metaphors used in worship.

Taize @ 5:00 p.m.

Our Sunday Taize service will continue through the month of August, beginning @ 5:00. During August, however, we will be following a Taize style, which will be shaped around our Evening Prayer offices and will not include the celebration of Holy Communion.

Four members of our parish will be the homilists for these services, sharing what their faith means to them and their ongoing spiritual journey as members of St. Thomas' Parish. Our preachers will be: August 5 - Kristin Queen

Schaeffer, August 12 - Chris Parker Hunt, August 19
- Dustin Cole, August 26 - Barbara Hays

We hope you'll come and hear how God continues to form and shape, nurture and challenge Kristin, Chris, Dustin and Barbara in their lives—personally, vocationally and in their ministry at St. Thomas'.

A Letter From The Rector

Editor's Note, This letter was written in late July

Dear Friends,
As August 1st draws near—the day that I leave for a month's vacation—I am aware that (1) I am excited to have this time of refreshment and (2) I will miss being with you day-by-day and especially on Sundays—when all our lives come together in worship. I also know that an extraordinary staff-team of dedicated professionals and lay leaders are here, quite capable to love and nurture, lead and support our parish and mission! We have a good August & September schedule in place—and I hope that each of you will continue to encounter the living God in worship, in prayer and play, as this incredible community,

St. Thomas' Parish. YOU are AMAZING!

Love, NL+

– The Reverend Dr. Nancy Lee Jose, Rector

September Is Close!

We will 'kick off' the '07 – '08 program year September 9 by honoring John Johnson at the 11:00 service and dedicating our new Godly Play Room in John's name. Initiating Godly Play for our children is a milestone in the life of our parish and our ongoing life together. Join us for worship this day, a liturgy of dedication and special reception will follow the service!

On September 15th, John Dwyer will be ordained a priest at St. John the Divine Cathedral in NYC, and preside at his first holy communion September 16th. We hope to pack the buses and trains heading to NY (AND back!!) to attend this sacred day in John's life and our life together!

On September 30th, at the 11:00 service, our Prayers of the People & The Confession, will be supplanted by prayers of induction and affirmation for our staff and lay-leaders. At this service, all our staff will be formally inducted as well as our vestry, choir and committee chairs.

Creating Pockets Of Prayer

Work and prayer are not mutually exclusive activities. That's the basis for "Pockets of Prayer," a new initiative of St. Thomas' to encourage parishioners who work in same neighborhood to gather once a week for brief, midday prayer.

Although the Parish conducts a midday service on Wednesdays, it's nearly impossible for most parishioners to attend. So, rather than having to commute, we're hoping that small groups of parishioners will gather in the neighborhoods where they work.

Drew Boatner, Hardee Mahoney and I have been gathering in Bethesda on Fridays at 12:30 p.m. since the start of the year. We found a conference room in a satellite facility of the Montgomery County government that we can reserve six months at a time. We use the day's readings (which we pull off the Internet) and follow the outline provided in the Book of Common Prayer for noonday services.

All three of us stay busy at work, but find that carving out as little as 15 minutes a week brings enormous rewards. We are reinvigorated and strengthened by sharing the word and each others company.

We're looking for parishioners who are willing to launch a "prayer pocket" in their work neighborhood. We would publish your name in The Phoenix and on our web site and ask you to convene the first gathering. Your group would then decide where and when to meet regularly.

Please contact me at jsclms@comcast.net or 703-892-0034 if you have any questions.

– John Carter, Senior Warden

Everything I Needed To Know...

The "everything I needed to know for life I learned in kindergarten" message has produced more income for Hallmark than our licensed kindergarten teachers; however, those of us who are members of St. Thomas' are relearning this message in concrete ways these summer days. Learning how to share both, our limited space and resources!

I have just delivered some muffins to our contractors and builders who are putting up a wall in the primary office area, to create a 'cubby-office' for John Dwyer, who begins as our Assistant Rector August 1. There are two pieces of great news in this building-project. First, Cindy and I can still get to the rest-room without walking through John's office. Second, the construction is coming in approximately \$1,000 under budget. KUDOS to Matt Jarvis for not only hiring the contractors, but also for loaning us the expertise of his architects training and license to design the space for us.

Simultaneously, Tim Hagy has been in need of a quiet space to work his creative genius among us, so we have created an office space, with phone and computer, in the Fisher Room. The choir boxes have also been relocated to this room. Sunday mornings will be even more energized with worship leaders sharing and praying together in the same space before the Opening Acclamation! JOY ! JOY! JOY!

Finally, Mike Mattmiller has been working behind the scenes, installing a new computer for the main office while upgrading and moving the second office computer to Tim's office space. These are only a few examples of the ministry going on behind the scenes so that we can all come together and worship on Sunday mornings and be fed to go forth and love and serve God and our neighbors.

– The Reverend Dr. Nancy Lee Jose, Rector

12 Parish Hikers, 1 Dog, 4 Cars, 10 Miles, 1,900 Vertical Feet, 2 Kinds of Mead – Immeasurable Fellowship!

When Jerry Donohoe invited us on one of his (in)famous treks, we knew we would be inspired by the beauty of creation and fed by each other's company. We hoped we would be able to manage the climb. We brought yummy snacks to share and were generous with our water bottles as the day got hotter. But few of us could have imagined the joy of wading in the cool streams of the Shenandoah National Park after a sometimes-grueling circuit – or the serendipitous fun of a dulcimer concert – or the delight of sharing memories over scrumptious dinner amid Prom-going couples in historic Warrenton, Virginia.

If you're wondering about the poster-size photo on the bulletin board downstairs, ask any of those smiling faces about our June 2 hike through the woods of Shenandoah National Park to Camp Hoover, President Hoover's summer camp. The chimney in our group photo featured prominently in historic photographs of world leaders who visited Hoover and his wife, Lou, at their summer retreat! "Don't touch anything, ladies . . . "

We wound our way along the scenic Rapidan River to the camp, had a guided tour of the cabins, ascended Fork Mountain abloom with rhododendron, and rewarded ourselves with a trip to a meadery and a gourmet dinner on the way home. A wonderful day – and a wonderful way to commune with fellow parishioners and pet!

To sign up for the next adventure, call Jerry Donahoe at (202) 543-1339.

Bible Study Group Completes Thirty Weeks!

Well done good and faithful ones! Jeremy Ayers and David Kucharski have just completed 30 weeks of leading/teaching/and inspiring a core of St. Thomas' members in a bible study class. For 30 weeks, these folks have read, studied and inwardly digested the greatest story ever told...and have come to know one another through a different lens...and this unique lens will continue to shape how they see one another and the communities they 'live in'. Join me in thanking this extraordinary leadership effort...as well as the faithful 'students'. NL+

Vestry Notes – June 2007

At the Vestry's June meeting, Barbara Hayes lead an exercise as part of the vestry's reflection of the book *Healthy Congregations*, in which members were asked to offer their own ideas for ways to promote congregational health. Some of the ideas offered included promoting transparency, finding ways to support and empower the parishioner as the hands and feet of the congregation, and promoting a balance of work and play in parish activities.

Dan Costello, in his treasurer's report, explained that a new bookkeeping consultant has been hired for the parish. The firm, Garner and Gore, will assign a bookkeeper to the parish who will consult with Cindy Pettigrew in executing his or her duties.

Members praised the parishioners who worked so hard to make Pride Weekend so successful. They emphasized that it was a very enriching weekend for all involved. Members discussed ideas for next year's Pride Week including: the establishment of a Pride Task Force in early 2008 to plan and organize the 2008 Pride Week events and possibly scheduling the Blessing Ceremony on the Sunday before Pride Sunday.

Nancy Lee requested that the vestry name the new Godly Play Room the "John Johnson Godly Play Room" in honor of John's work and dedication through the years to build our parish's children's education program. The vestry unanimously agreed to adopt her proposal. A discussion ensued about various ways the vestry could raise

funds to cover the Godly Play materials, and an agreement could not be reached. The vestry unanimously agreed to postpone discussion to a future meeting.

Knight Champion, serving as the Finance Committee liaison, discussed the committee's desire to meet with our investment advisor to help develop a set of goals for our various investment funds. He reported that the Committee is pursuing this and will report back on progress in a month or two.

Barbara Hayes also reported that Jack Reiffer had developed an inventory of all the chairs in the sanctuary in an effort to better organize our chairs for services. The vestry praised Jack for his work on this much-needed task.

Committee Reports

The rest of Washington may slow down during the hot summer months, but the committees of St. Thomas' Parish are alive with activity as the following reports suggest.

Worship Committee

Remember that Labor Day weekend is the last of our summer services at 10:00 am and 5:00 pm on Sundays. Beginning September 9 we return to our regular Sunday schedule:

Weekly Eucharistic Services at 9:00 & 11:00 am, as well as 5:00 pm Taize Services and a potluck supper on all third Sundays of the Month.

If you are interested in helping with worship services, please contact Jack Reiffer at jreiffer@aol.com or 202-861-2220. We are looking for more people to take turns with all the tasks required for effective worship including setting up the sacrament (Altar Guild), ushering, carrying the cross in procession (crucifer), presenting the offering, reading the lessons and prayers, serving in the altar (Eucharistic minister). Let Jack know if you want to be included in any of these scheduled tasks or if you have questions about what is involved. Your turn would typically occur once every 6-8 weeks.

Building and Grounds Committee

The Building and Grounds Committee is looking for new members and would like your help! Whether you know a little or a lot about buildings or just enjoy doing things around this sometimes challenging place, we can use your help. We meet once every month as a committee and help with different projects around the church to maintain the building and grounds. We will have a planning and organizing meeting during the first two weeks of August (date TBA). Please contact David Perez at Perez.DM@gmail.com for more details.

Stewardship Committee

The following article was written by the Reverend Canon J. Hugh Magers and was published in the July 2007 issue of *Networking* (the newsletter of The Episcopal Network for Stewardship). Canon Magers starts out with a rather blunt assessment of the relationship between parishioners and the amount of their giving. But, as you'll see, there's a purpose to his approach. By the end of the article, you'll see the profound connections he draws among giving, witnessing and evangelism.

"It's not just that you have more money if you have more people. In fact, it's just backwards from that. I was working with a large parish in the southeast. It was in the middle of a giving crunch. I ran the numbers. The generation of folk born between 1962 and 1985 were averaging \$145 per household, per year. They made up 22% of the members of the parish. It costs about \$27 on average, per person, in the pew,

per Sunday. If one of these folks came to church every Sunday, the parish lost \$1259 per year on that person.

"My hunch is we can't stand a lot of that. In the same parish, though, there were people born in that generation who gave very generously. Many of those tithed. Some gave beyond the tithe. Without exception, those people were able to talk about their personal faith in very powerful ways. They were not afraid to use

the "I" word. They could tell about how God had blessed them. They could talk about joy and peace in their lives coming as a consequence of their relationship with Jesus and they were grateful. They expressed some of their gratitude in money. Some of them talked about God giving them the opportunity to tithe and giving them the freedom from financial anxiety.

"My second hunch is that these grateful, obedient and blessed ones look like they are from a different planet to those who don't get it. Well, they are. The new world they are from is called Planet God. That parish's stewardship program this fall will include opportunities for those who get it to tell their stories to those who don't.

"Historically, we have called this witnessing. It is an essential part of evangelism. Evangelism is telling someone our story and then inviting them to respond. Asking folks to give money at the same time is an evangelical act. Jesus said it: "Where your treasure is, your heart will be also." I believe that if I can be part of a work that leads people to tithe, then the church is blessed with funding and I am blessed with a friend for eternity. At a minimum, 10% of that person's heart will be in heaven.

"Money is such a power and source of anxiety in our lives that thinking about it is scary. Changing what we do with it calls for major change in our way of being and doing. We need help. Our help is in the name of the Lord. Stewardship work is primarily evangelism."

The Phoenix

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