



A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Prayer –An ongoing conversation, a never-ending Journey

As I promised in the February edition of The Phoenix, I will share with you the remainder of the forms of prayer that can shape our prayer lives. In the February column I wrote about Petition, Intercession and Penitence. For this March column I'll finish up sharing a bit with you about:

- Thanksgiving
- Oblation
- Praise
- Adoration

THANKSGIVING: There are moments each of us has been pushed to utter the forth kind of prayer, prayers of thanksgiving... especially when all the blessings of this life come to us in abundance. But in the Great Thanksgiving at the center of the Eucharist, for example we also focus on thanksgiving “for our redemption”. And mature Christian prayer, according to the BCP, also should give thanks “for whatever draws us closer to God.”

OBLATION: Prayers of thanksgiving are, at least in corporate worship, intimately linked with prayers of oblation—“an offering of ourselves, our lives and labors, in union with

Christ, for the purposes of God.” That’s why the Great Thanksgiving is sandwiched between the offertory that precedes it and the bidding of the post-communion prayer: “Send us now into the world in peace and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart.” If we really mean that, it’s oblation.

The final two kinds of prayer mentioned in the catechism of the BCP are, in my experience, more rare—or at least I’m more rarely conscious of focusing on them in my prayer life.

PRAISE: The BCP defines prayer “not to obtain anything, but because God’s Being draws praise from us.” It isn’t something we do; it can’t be contrived or coerced. It’s something God draws from us, if we are available to utter it. Being available is hard!

ADORATION: I like to imagine adoration as “the lifting up of the heart and mind to God, asking nothing but to enjoy God’s presence.” Personally, it’s the one I embrace the most—running, playing with my dog and family, working in the garden, drawing and writing, it’s at the center of ordinary time—not specific times of need, of giving gifts or giving thanks for gifts received, of the sorrow of penitence, or the joy of adoration, or the wonder of praise, but of the ordinary graces of ordinary days. To lift heart and mind to God for no other reason that to enjoy god’s presence is for me the purest form of prayer, and the one I wish to cultivate to learn to do and be without ceasing.

May you take advantage of this Lenten season as an opportunity to deepen your own prayer life. I invite you to examine these seven ways of speaking with God, to open yourself up with increasing vulnerability and invite God to ‘come and see’ life with you, as you’re encountering life... You may learn that God is already there with you!

Love,

Nancy Lee+

A LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

March 2009

Looking at the liturgical calendar hanging on my wall I see a consistency: the color purple. Purple is the traditional liturgical color associated with the season of Lent, although some churches use a burlap color instead. Whatever the color scheme, we are gifted with more than a solid month of time affording us a wonderful opportunity. This is a gift of time that allows us to purposefully reflect upon how we can better live into the kingdom Jesus proclaims through his birth, life, death and resurrection. How do we shed that which is not necessary to effectuating the more clear creation of the kingdom? How do we order our lives so as to be that loving creation God has made each of us to be? How do we deepen our relationship with God?

There is no set way to deepen our relationship with God. We have many tools at our disposal to help us deepen that relationship, for that is what a Lenten discipline is all about. Whether we are “giving something up” or “taking something on” or changing how we act, or purposefully slowing down, all of these have to do with trying to make ourselves more available for God to have a greater place in our lives. In the midst of the sea of purple, we need to remember to take time to keep ourselves open to God’s voice and presence in our lives.

God’s Blessings,

John

Our Continuing Conversations About Growth: The Final Stage of the Discernment Process



Over the last several years you and we have prayed, discussed and participated in a conversation about growth and change. Our discussions led us as a parish to conclude that we are growing and that sustaining growth means updating our physical structure. We then undertook a deliberate discernment process to determine whether or not we should embark

on a capital campaign to raise money to support construction. During the first stage of the discernment process, a large committee of parishioners articulated a vision for a worship and program space that would meet our needs as a growing congregation for many years. We are now in the final stage of the discernment process--of a formal Feasibility Study to ascertain the willingness of you and other members of the Parish to support such a campaign.

You should have recently received in the mail the tentative plans prepared after many months of work by the Discernment Committee, Vestry members and you. After reading this material, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it promptly in the enclosed envelope by Wednesday, March 11, 2009. All replies are confidential.

On Sunday, April, 26th following the 11:00 am service, the Episcopal Church Foundation, our consultants for the feasibility study, will present the results of the questionnaire.

Your views and comments about our proposed expansion and renovation are a critical part of this final stage of the process. We are relying on you to help determine whether this proposed project will be a success.

Thank you,

John Carter

Senior Warden

Clinton W. Anderson

Discernment Committee Chair

and the impact you have had! Service includes anything from painting, planting, cleaning, weed pulling...whatever the site needs. We'll be able to pick our site early in April.

Registration is easy, but the deadline is Friday, April 24th (earlier if the Servathon fills up)! Just go to www.servathon.org to join "The Bells of St Thomas." There's a \$25 registration fee to cover t-shirts, water, and project supplies like paint, mulch, and tools. On the website, you may be asked for a separate donation, or to garner pledges, but you need not give anything above the \$25 registration fee in order to join.

If you have any questions, please contact any Outreach member, or David Swanson at dswansondc@comcast.net, or 202-607-8972. Please sign-up today!

2009 Greater DC Cares Servathon



On May 2, 2009, join the Outreach for Servathon 2009, presented by Greater DC Cares. Connect with thousands of other volunteers in service at area nonprofits and public schools and help make our community a great place for all who live here! If you've ever been interested in helping with an Outreach project, Servathon is a great way to get started, or just have a fun day! Service at area nonprofits and schools usually goes from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

After the service, it's time to party! Come to the after party in your paint-stained, muddy t-shirts and celebrate your day's accomplishments

News from Samaritan Ministry



Samaritan Ministry Opportunities

Applications being accepted for Summer Casework Internships "Working at Samaritan Ministry has opened my eyes to the injustices and difficulties faced by a population that I had studied but had never had direct contact with.

This has taught me that some of the most important lessons cannot be learned in school, but only from interacting with others." - Ashley Weech, casework intern, summer 2008.

Applications are now being accepted for summer casework associate internships with Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington. Casework associate interns support homeless individuals and others in need as they take steps towards life improvement and self-sufficiency in our unique Next Step Program. Applicants should be at least 20 years old or have completed the undergraduate sophomore year. For a job description visit www.samaritanministry.org<<http://www.samaritanministry.org>>. For more information contact Catherine Rodman at 722-2280 x 324 or crodman@samaritanministry.org.

Summer Volunteer Opportunities

Make the most of your summer by volunteering at Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington. Your time will be of great service when many weekly volunteers are on vacation. We'll train rising juniors and seniors in high school; college students at home on break or teachers on summer vacation to help participants with computer applications, answer phones, sort mail, and more. It's also an opportunity for students to fulfill community service requirements. Four-hour shifts from 8:45 am - 1pm are available Monday-Friday at all three office locations. At Samaritan Ministry we work with homeless people and others who are trying to change their lives for the better. Through this work, our lives are also enriched. Come and help in our ministry. For more information on these and other volunteer opportunities, contact Dianne Lewis at dlewis@samaritanministry.org or 202-722-2280 x 319 or visit <http://www.samaritanministry.org>>

Hear from Program Participants at Samaritan Ministry's Next Step Experience

How do homeless people and others make changes in their lives through Samaritan Ministry's Next Step Program? Attend a Next Step Experience and find out. At this complimentary one-hour event you'll hear from program participants, staff and board members and tour the program office. You'll also hear about Samaritan Ministry's vision for the future and learn about homelessness in Washington, D.C.

Refreshments 1:15 pm

Next Step Experience 1:30 - 2:30 pm

Tuesdays, March 3 and April 28

Northern Virginia Office - 2207 Columbia Pike, Arlington, 22204

Thursday, March 19

Make your reservations by contacting Mary Belknap at 202-722-2280 ext. 327 or by email at mbelknap@samaritanministry.org

Meal Program Volunteer Training Scheduled

Get to know meal program guests at Loaves and Fishes, Charlie's Place and Church of the Epiphany's Street Church and help them connect with local resources and programs like Samaritan Ministry's Next Step Program.

If you have good interpersonal skills and a desire to work with people who are homeless, hungry and poor, attend a training session on Saturday, February 28 from 9:30 am-2:00 pm at St. Stephen and the Incarnation Church (1525 Newton Street NW).

Volunteers will receive specialized instruction including information on issues relating to homelessness. This is a good opportunity for those looking for a weekend volunteer position.

For more information or to register, contact Catherine Rodman at crodman@samaritanministry.org or 202-722-2280 x 324.

Next Step Breakfast Planned for National Press Club

Join us for Samaritan Ministry's Third Annual Next Step Breakfast at The National Press Club, 529 14th St., NW (metro accessible) on Tuesday May 5th from 8-9 am.

With NPR's News Analyst Juan Williams as master of ceremonies and Next Step Program participants sharing remarkable true-life stories, the event promises to be moving and inspiring. We'll also share our vision for addressing homelessness and poverty in our region and our commitment to helping people believe in their ability to transform their own lives. This is a complimentary fundraising event with no expectations for minimum or maximum giving. We're changing lives at Samaritan Ministry. Please join us to find out how.

Visit www.samaritanministry.org <<http://www.samaritanministry.org>> for more information.

Please contact Diane Aten daten@samaritanministry.org or 202-722-2280 x304 to RSVP.

Samaritan Ministry Wish List

Samaritan Ministry needs the following items for program participants. Bring your donations to 1516 Hamilton St., NW, 20011, 1345 U St,

SE 20020 or 2207 Columbia Pike, Arlington 22204. For more information visit <<http://www.samaritanministry.org>> or contact Dianne Lewis at 202-722-2280 x 319.

- * \$10 gift cards to Target, grocery stores, restaurants, coffee shops
- * Reading glasses, all powers from +1.00 to +4.00
- * White, button front dress shirts for men and women, all sizes
- * Black or Khaki Chino pants for men
- * Dress socks for men and women
- * New men's and women's underwear
- * Deodorant - regular sized stick deodorant
- * Toothpaste
- * Shaving Cream
- * Soft pack or canned ready-to-eat tuna or salmon
- * Peanut butter and jelly in squeeze bottles
- * Rice (1-2# bags) and dried beans
- * Pasta
- * Canned spaghetti sauce and canned tomatoes
- * Canned beans - kidney, pinto, black (no garbanzo beans)
- * Day planners
- * Small folding umbrellas
- * Brief cases or portfolios for carrying papers

Other needs

- * Lawnmower for Southeast office
- * Small step stool for Northern Virginia office
- * Large clay flower pots for spring flowers for Northern Virginia office
- * Working vacuum cleaner for Northwest office

Financial donations are always appreciated and accepted!

That wraps up the March Phoenix, please continue to submit your articles by mid-month for posting in next month's edition. We'll soon put up several photos from our "Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner" in the website Gallery -- it was a fantastic event. Next month we'll be bringing back our "Faces of St. Thomas" feature... volunteers? (I promise not to make anyone cry during the interview). Here's hoping everyone enjoys a peaceful (and warmer) Lenten season. Looking forward to an evening with the Society of St. Thomas' this weekend! Please remember to set the clocks ahead Saturday night, and we switch to the 10am Sunday schedule. GM

Trivia Returns!!

March 20, 2009

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Guild Room

Celebrate the first day of spring by matching wits with your fellow parishioners. Teams will compete in two rounds for prizes and glory. Pizza & beer provided. Donations accepted. Includes religious, biblical, Christian, Anglican, and Parish questions.

Everyone is invited. For more information contact jeanholman@gmail.com

Updated Parish news can always be found online at www.stthomasdc.org/news/index.html

Send Phoenix articles to
phoenix@stthomasdc.org
Send Parish announcements to
announcements@stthomasdc.org