



EUCCHARISTIA = GRATITUDE & LEITOURGIA

= WORK OF THE PEOPLE

Worship is important to Episcopalians because in it we have nothing less than the event of praying, shaping, believing of our strength and courage to love and serve God being formed and shaped by our life of common prayers. Through worship we become a community and as a community we are called to do God's work as God's people.

This is just ONE of the reasons that vestry members and those who are committee chairs and all others identified as parish lay-leaders are asked to be faithful in worship...not only is it good mentoring and modeling for our children and for those new to the church—it is, in part, how we strengthen our corporate and individual spiritual health. Communal worship—or what Episcopalians call 'common prayer' is something we do with all of who we are as human beings. Worship is hearing music and laughter and even sirens going past on Church Street. It is smelling the flowers, the candles and incense, the coffee lofting up from the Guild Room.

Worship is the taste of wine and the texture of our homemade bread. It is the feel of falling to one's knees during Lent, the cool of the silver lip of the chalice, the warmth of a hand grasped in peace and greeting. Worship is in the shape of our windows, the rhythm of the procession, the gestures of our bodies as they move through the liturgy, sometimes wrapped in wool, sometimes

bathed in the white of baptism garments! It is the old, old story of God's immeasurable love and patience with God's people from Sarah and Abraham to Jesus to the squirming child in the soft spaces now provided in our nave for our children and their teachers.

Praying, thus, obviously isn't words alone, but the words do count. The words, after all, are the way we bring to expression the significance of the music and the children and the communion wine—the way in which the stories of the singing of the heavenly choirs over the birth of a child in a stable come to get connected with those of a cup of wine at a last supper, and with love so deep it suffered and died "for us and for our salvation." Our words are important, because through the use of them we shape and form the experiences of our lives into vessels that are capable of holding love like that. Our words are important, because without them we might misunderstand what it is that we do here in worship; we might miss the significance of the ritual, the point of the liturgy, and the whole reason for being here at all. We might forget that IT'S ALL ABOUT THANKS-GIVING.

Common prayer—collecting us into community, addressing God as God's people confessing sins, affirming faith, offering ourselves, giving a Great Thanksgiving—is the primary way in which our believing, our trusting, our wrestling with God's ways with us gets shaped and formed. Worship is 'praying shaping believing'. It is the time we gather from all the places that our lives daily are being lived-out, in order to be fed and nurtured and challenged and sent out again

to do the work that God begins with us here in liturgy—our work as God’s children. Thus worship doesn’t end here, any more than it began here. It began on that first Sabbath day when God rested from creation’ and it will be, our poets and theologians imagine, part of the eternal anthem of the great choir of redemption.

So it certainly doesn’t stop when we pass by the iron gates of our threshold entrance or when the organ falls silent or Godly Play is finished. It begins here and continues as we worship God with our very lives—or it isn’t really the work of God’s people at all. God has brought us here not to be spectators but participants—actors in the great drama of gift and response, of God’s Grace and our Great Thanksgiving. This is the work of God’s people, the liturgy, to which we have been called, beginning again today.

Let us give, thanks, our Eucharistia, to the Lord our God. May God’s grace and peace be upon each and everyone of you this day and always, Nancy Lee+



FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

I am an early riser. In the winter time that means when my eyes open it is quite dark outside. What being an early riser means in the summer time is that I awake to the brightening sky as the sun crests the horizon. I take Allie for a walk in that brightening time and then, upon getting home, pour a cup of coffee and go sit on my terrace and read Morning Prayer from The Daily Office. I find entering the day from a place of prayer a way of grounding myself in God's presence, in relishing the embrace of the Holy Spirit.

Those words repeated over and over again, day after day, with new prayers and psalms and readings intermingled in on a daily basis, makes for an experience that allows prayer and intellect and imagination soar. These prayers and psalms and readings, that have been prayed with for ages, are still so relevant and important today.

Feeling the sun's warmth spread across my back and shoulders as it comes up behind me while I am praying Morning Prayer is a gift of this summer season that helps me become one with the world we all inhabit. I recommend incorporating a spiritual discipline to your morning routine: it will help center your day around what is really important. Occasionally I will use prayers and hymns from *The Saint Helena Breviary*in my morning discipline *.* Their Saturday Matins Hymn is one of my favorites and I am sharing it with you as perhaps a starting point for, or an addition to your morning devotions. The dawn has filled the east with light, day over earth is gliding bright; as shades of darkness fade away, with strength renewed we greet the

day. For of a woman humbly born into a world by evil torn, the Maker's brightness shone ablaze to guide us through our earthly days.

So let this day in joy pass on, our hope spread like the early dawn, our faith like noontide splendor glow, our souls a gentle twilight know. And when the world at last shall end, and Christ appears as judge and friend, may we be welcomed by that light and dwell forever in God's sight.

To you all glory, Trinity, all laud, O Holy Unity; to you on this new day we raise our grateful hearts in songs of praise. Amen

God's Blessings and Peace, John+

Music Notes



Sumertime has come to Saint Thomas' and, as I write this paragraph, the French are celebrating La Fête de la Musique, observed on the summer solstice so that music fills the air on the longest day of the year.

Here at home, our choir has gone on vacation even as the heat of a Washington summer continues to build. Yet behind the scenes, work goes on. Elaine and Matthew Donnelly have been putting green Fridays to use by volunteering for an extensive project to benefit the parish. They are working to create the first ever index of the massive St. Thomas' choral library. When completed, the computerized document will be a tremendous aid in service planning for years to come. Jeff Weisner has just returned from touring China with the National Symphony, and he's offering his talent in providing music for bass on the first two Sundays of July. This summer season gives an opportunity to turn to new endeavors. It's the perfect moment to learn new music, to plan for the coming year, and to compose and to arrange.

A current project involves arranging hymns originating in the Lakota tribe. My goal is to have a new anthem by July 19, the next Open Choir Sunday to which all are invited. Marilyn Haskell, musician at St. Paul's Chapel in New York, compares composing to prayer. So often it is a question of assembling a text, creating an outline, and then waiting for God to speak. That moment may happen as you are walking to work, while you are sitting in front of a computer, or perhaps while meditating in a quiet room, but at some point a clear melody will emerge out of a thicket of possibilities.

Summer has come. May each of us use this season to celebrate creation as it bursts into flower all around.

Timothy Hagy, Director of Music Evangelism

Summer 2009 - Building God's Kingdom at St. Thomas'



Each of us has a role to play in building God's Kingdom through our lives and through the parish. They normally follow summer Sundays and will be devoted to looking at various ways we can participate in kingdom building at St. Thomas' and in our lives.

We will focus on five between July 12 and August 9. Each of those five Sundays, volunteers from within the parish will be presenting a special program.

The schedule is:

July 12, Engaging Our Neighborhood: John Carter and Clinton Anderson

July 19, Sustainability: John Johnson and Anne Van Soest

July 26, Service: Dave Swanson, Dave Kucharski and Brad Latham

August 2, Multiculturalism: Jessie Brewster, Camille Blake Fall and

Jaye Lopez August 9, Ministry to Youth: Sarah Stewart, Barbara Hays and Matt Cloninger

Please feel free to contact any of the folks listed above to learn more or to volunteer.

Survey Invites Episcopalians to Help Shape the Church

Submitted from John Carter, Senior Warden

By Lynette Wilson, June 24, 2009

What do you want the Episcopal Church to look like in 2019? An eight-question survey posted online June 24 asks Episcopalians — lay and ordained—to envision the church in 10 years' time and to prioritize the strategies toward that vision.

Do you favor a multicultural church? Is evangelism "less important," "important," or "very important" to you? Should advocacy and social justice define the church? Or should the church be a combination of mission and worship? "We are looking at where we are as a church today and addressing hopes and desires," said the Rev. Christopher Johnson, a member of the Strategic Planning Committee formed by Executive Council at its January 2009 meeting in Stockton, California.

The committee's mandate is to develop a strategic plan for the Episcopal Church Center and the Executive Council that would address mission and ministry, growth, finance, challenges and opportunities, issues and concerns, and to map a way to address those themes. Executive Council expects the committee to present a draft strategic plan by December 31, 2009. "The survey results will provide us with feedback on the values and priorities of stakeholders ... information that will allow us to be mindful in developing a strategic plan," Johnson added. "Of course one of the things that motivates us is, like most mainline Protestant denominations, we've experienced a loss of membership; we'd like to reverse that and initiate growth." The survey may be completed anonymously. It is composed mostly of option buttons, but also includes text boxes that allow the participant to expand an answer. It can be completed in five to 10 minutes. July 28 is the deadline to complete the survey.

The communications office plans to publish the aggregated survey results in fall 2009. The survey is available in English, with Spanish and French translations to come. It will also be available at the Episcopal Church Center booth at General Convention scheduled for July 8-17 in Anaheim, California. The survey results could help shape how the church raises and budgets its money in the future.

"Program, Budget and Finance begins with program, what shapes the program that's the mission, it's the program that causes the action and it is funded by the budget," said Albert T. Mollegen, a council and committee member, in an interview. In addition to the survey results, the Anglican Five Marks of Mission will serve as a guide to shaping the strategic plan, Mollegen said. Committee member Bryan Krislock said that

to his knowledge, this survey is the first time the church has surveyed all its members on how it should carry out its mission, but that the strategic plan follows the "20/20" initiative adopted by the General Convention of 2000, which called for the church to double its size by 2020. Talk of strategic planning first began during a February 2008 Executive Council meeting in Quito, Ecuador. The committee met at the church center in New York May 27-29 to outline goals, identify issues to be addressed in the strategic plan and to detail steps in their process. Adair Lummis, associate program officer for congregational research and learning programs at the church center, is assisting the committee with its work. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson appointed the committee members and also will serve on the committee. Members of the Strategic Planning Committee are:

Bishop David Alvarez, Diocese of Puerto Rico and committee convener

Bonnie Anderson, president of the House of Deputies

The Rev. Canon Timothy Anderson, Diocese of Nebraska and Executive Council member, chairman

The Rev. Paige Blair, Diocese of San Diego

J. Richard Briscoe, Diocese of West Tennessee, vice-chairman

Jack Finlaw, Diocese of Colorado • The Rev. Canon Anthony Guillen, program officer for Latino/Hispanic Ministries

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori

The Rev. Christopher Johnson, office of domestic justice and Jubilee ministry • Bryan Krislock, Diocese of Spokane and Executive Council member

Sarah Lawton, Diocese of California

Albert T. Mollegen, Diocese of Connecticut and Executive Council member

The Rev. Suzanne Watson, secretary *Executive Council* The Executive Council carries out the programs and policies adopted by the General Convention, according to *Canon I.4 (1)(a)

The council is composed of 38 members, 20 of whom (four bishops, four priests or deacons and 12 lay people) are elected by General Convention and 18 (one clergy and one lay) by provincial synods, plus the presiding bishop and the president of the House of Deputies. -- Lynette Wilson is staff writer, Episcopal Life Media. In the wake of the tragedy of September 11th, thousands of Americans were inspired to serve their country. In this spirit, on Friday, September 11, 2009, more than 2,000 Greater DC Cares volunteers will come together at high-impact projects to transform the day of sorrow into a day of service. At our event last week, Michelle Obama called upon Greater DC Cares volunteers to engage in this national service effort.

This year on 9/11, you could strengthen our community by:

- Revitalizing Playgrounds
- Landscaping and Cleaning up Parks
- Cleaning a school
- Sorting Food and Feeding for the Hungry

Go to <http://greaterdccaes911.kintera.org/> for more information and to sign up. Participants will be asked for a \$25 donation to support service on this day and all year long.

Questions? Email Billy Fettweis at wfettweis@greaterdccaes.org.

Will Your Company Answer the Call to Service? Your company can recognize the National Day of Service by allowing employees to participate during work hours and/or sponsoring the event. For more information about how to get your company involved, please contact Lauren Conte at lconte@greaterdccaes.org. Greater DC Cares | 1156 15th St, NW | Ste. 840 | Washington, DC 20005 | US

My Experience with Foyer Dinners

This was the first season I signed up for the Foyer Dinner program. I have to tell you, I was worried at first.... I was matched with folks I hardly knew and now, I think, that was the wisdom in the matching. I was matched with John White, Gwynne Rogers, Jaye Lopez, Anne Soest and Yvonne Lee.

Now I have to tell you, I was thinking I'd be matched up with gay men... I'm a gay man, I figured I'd be matched up with gay men! I was so delighted at each dinner. Everyone was such a gracious host and I've come to know people I'd hardly had the opportunity to speak to in Church. It has been perhaps the greatest experience I've had since joining St. Thomas' a little over a year ago.

When I go to Church now, and see them, it's a big HUG instead of just a friendly hello. It was actually after the dinners were concluded, sitting on the steps of the Church in the park during the picnic that I thought to myself (as Jackson licked my face), "I wouldn't have had the opportunity to know these people and hang out with them if it weren't for this wonderful program!" I wish I could articulate how it feels now, to walk into St. Thomas' and know these wonderful people on an intimate level. And it doesn't matter if your apartment is small or you don't have a formal table... God found a way for each of us to get together and have fun. We had so many laughs and also began each with thanks to God for the fortune to know each other.

With thanks,

Gregory M.

That's all for the July Phoenix! I'm afraid I didn't have the time for "Faces of St. Thomas'" (but Gwynne & Yvonne you're not off the hook!) Have a happy & safe July 4th. GM

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