



## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

### IT IS GOOD TO GIVE THANKS

#### TO GOD IN & FOR-- ALL THINGS !!!

*Gracious God,*

*We give you thanks this day for all those in our parish community who have shared their gifts with us this program year! For our staff, vestry, our committee chairs...for all those who serve on the committees, we give you thanks.*

*We give you thanks this day for all those in our parish who have volunteered, once – twice—so many times that we can't even count; we know that even our desire to please you does please you.*

*We give you thanks to all those who make our worship 'happen'...those who are visibly 'out in front' active with praying and singing and leading...those behind the scenes carrying out the work of setting the table and aligning our prayer books and hymnals and filling our children's bags with goodies and fresh crayons, all these things and more.*

*We give you thanks for all those who pray for the members of our community, while at home, while at work, during our worship times together. Thank you for these prayers that the Holy Spirit weaves together to further shape our life together, this humble tapestry, the body of Christ in Dupont Circle, St. Thomas'.*

*And lastly, we give you thanks, for all those serving during this time of Discernment, centering their prayers and deliberations about how in our spiritual journey together, we can further deepen our faithfulness as good stewards of all that we have been given. For each person serving on the discernment committees, we ask the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to enliven their imaginations, grant them enduring patience while cheering on their creativity and boldness.*

*All this and more than we can know or imagine, we give you thanks God. NL+*

## LETTER FROM THE ASSISTANT RECTOR

*Greetings!*

*We are now post-Easter, post-Pentecost and post-Memorial Day: I guess that means we are at the start of the long summer months! The liturgical color for this time period (and until Advent rolls around in December) is the color green, a seemingly appropriate choice for late spring and summer and early fall.*

*During this green season there can develop a feeling of sameness, a lack of newness and freshness in church sometimes. But that doesn't have to be the case, for the Body of Christ that is St. Thomas' Parish endeavors on with excitement and newness and growth: excitement, newness and growth in the Gay Pride activities we will be participating in the next two weeks; excitement, newness and growth in the*

*continuing Discernment Process Sub-Committee meetings that will continue to take place in June and July. Many will have vacation plans that will refresh and rejuvenate the soul, allowing for a revitalization of interest, and then summer is over and we begin the church program year in September.*

*There is an excitement and newness and growth that can be found in this long green season. Rarely do things stay the same, even when there is that feeling of sameness. All we need to do is look just below the surface of that seeming sameness to find the Spirit's work energizing us onto the next thing. What a great and blessed time to be a part of St. Thomas'. There are great things afoot here this summer!*

*God's Peace and Blessings,*

*John+*

## **Mid-Year Gathering**

From Jim Naughton,

Canon for Communications and Advancement,  
Episcopal Diocese of Washington

Bishop Chane expressed his desire to have a "mid-year gathering" at each of the last two diocesan conventions. His vision was of a day-long get-together at which members of the diocese could hear from top-notch speakers and discuss ways to respond to some of the challenges confronting our church. It took us a while, to pull such an event together, but we've finally done it, and we are hoping you will not only attend, but will help us to spread the word.

The focus of this first gathering is evangelism, and part of our aim is to make participants feel more at ease with a word that has negative connotations for so many. We'll explore how American culture affects our efforts to spread

the Good News, examine authentic ways to share our faith (without losing our friends), and discuss effective communications and marketing strategies for our parishes.

The gathering is scheduled for June 7, 9 a. m. to 3:30 p. m. at the 4-H Youth Conference Center, 71 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Md. Our keynote presenter is the internationally acclaimed author Brian McLaren, who will give us a preview of the speech he is making on evangelism at this summer's Lambeth Conference. In the afternoon, the Revs. Heather Kirk-Davidoff and Nancy Wood-Lyczak, authors of [\*Talking Faith: An Eight-Part Study on Growing and Sharing Your Faith\*](#), will lead a workshop on faith sharing, and Carol Barnwell, director of communications for the Episcopal Diocese of Texas, will lead a workshop on marketing and communications. Participants will receive a copy of Barnwell's outstanding communications manual.

Registration is now open at [www.edow.org](http://www.edow.org). The cost is \$30 and includes lunch.

## **What Can You Do for Father's Day?**

Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington and House of Ruth need your help in the month of June!

Everyday, Samaritan Ministry Next Step Program participants work to make changes in their lives. Many are homeless and struggling to make their lives better. Your donation of mens' toiletries and personal care articles may be just what the participant needs to inspire him or her to take next steps toward a better life.

Everyday, House of Ruth takes care of women and children who are in need of protection, food and/or shelter for a variety of reasons such as losing their homes, jobs or experiencing the struggles of every day life. Your donation of dry or canned food items may be just what these individuals need to inspire them toward a better life. Please bring donations to the Parish by June 15th.

## Summer Bible Study

Does the Old Testament scare you? All of that slaughter and suffering, all of those rules and prohibitions. and God is so mean!

There's actually much more to the Old Testament than that, as we'll discover in this summer's St. Thomas Bible Study, "Learning to Love the Old Testament." Gathering in the Guild Room on Wednesday nights from June 11 through July 30, we'll read and pray over short passages from crucial books of the Old Testament. We'll discover that those books really tell a love story--the story of God's eternal love for God's people.

The Bible Study will meet for one hour each week, 7 to 8 pm. There will be no homework or "preparation time"; all you'll need to do is bring a study Bible with you (we recommend the "New Oxford Annotated"--and there will be a spare Bible or two on hand for those unable to acquire their own copy).

There also is no requirement to attend every week; but the more times you attend, the deeper will be your understanding of God's rich and boundless love for us.

For more information, contact Dave Kucharski at 202-608-4733 or

[DKucharski@ccdc1.org](mailto:DKucharski@ccdc1.org)

## Shrine Mont

*"Nestled among the trees around the foot of the Great North Mountain in the Shenandoah Valley rests the serene community of Orkney Springs. Since the days when the Orkney Spring Hotel was host to 100's of guests, Orkney Springs has been a place to get away. Since the 1920's, it has also been a home to a respite of a different sort. Shrine Mont...is a place where people are more important than things, where prayer and reflection, rest and relaxation are more important than appointment and tasks. It's a place where people give thanks to God for creation."*



This description quoted from a page [camps.thediocese.net/ShrineMont.htm] aptly introduces the too few days that Wayne and I got to spend with members of the St. Thomas' community and two wonderful guests, together at Shrine Mont.

As we all know, the weather this past Memorial Day weekend was glorious, only accenting that God is an amazing artist—sculptor—creator!

Matt Cloninger, our devout and faithful retreat leader, set our spiritual stage by focusing our attention on a verse from Isaiah: *Cease striving (be still) and know that I am God.* And then established as our theme, **What does it mean to rest in God, to rest in God's favor...and what happens (how do we respond) when something goes awry in our lives (what happens to our "favor"?)**.

Our time together, away from the pace of urban living and the distractions that are particular to each of us, seemed to fall further and further away, the longer we were in the company of one another, while also remaining increasingly aware that God was in the midst of us. The weekend also included ample time for hiking, running, napping, exploring, staring at the night-skies, tasting the bounty of surprises supplied by the master of retreat-goodies, and feasting on the stories of each person present. Let me share just a few of the spiritual desires of your friends in community:

- I wish to deepen my spiritual connections through learning and practicing spiritual disciplines;
- How do I find a way to carve out more and regular quiet time?
- I am glad to have rejoined the St. Thomas' community—and have committed myself to making an effort to meet new people and become engaged in our spiritual lives together;
- I am really glad I came on the retreat, not really knowing anyone-- I've longed for spiritual community for quite a while;
- It was hard to get here...and I've made some spiritual progress...I want to make more.

Are any of these longings yours? Do you wish for 'some of this' in your life? Let John Dwyer and I know; talk with someone who went on the retreat; share some time with a member of the vestry; tell Dave Kucharski and Wayne Floyd, co-chairs of Education and Formation...and most of all, keep your calendar free for next years parish retreat at Shrine Mont. I can't wait to be with you!

Love, Nancy Lee+

## Our Day in the Mountains

From Jerry Donahoe



Fourteen St. Thomas' hikers, two dogs, and another St. Thomas' parishioner (let's call him a wine drinker) headed westward on Saturday, May 3rd for our venture to Massanutten Mountain and the Shenandoah Valley. It was a great day. A beautiful hike. Wonderful comradery. Everyone on our trip met a person they had not met before. For some, nearly everyone was a new person to meet!

We met early at the church, made introductions, photocopied some challenging driving directions, divvied up our hikers amongst our four drivers, and headed out. Hey, 2+ hours of some wide-ranging conversation, hearty laughs, and some very interesting stories were heard during those car rides! And we all managed to find our way to the trailhead parking lot despite some detours by some of the cars! We put on our hiking shoes, lathered on the sun block and bug spray, readied our back packs, distributed trail and topo maps, and set out up the Stephens trail towards Kennedy Peak. Yes, a trail a bit more challenging than ascending the Massanutten trail but one that I knew we all could accomplish and appreciate.

A day hike provides time to ponder thoughts, appreciate nature (with pink and yellow honeysuckle and white-blossomed serviceberry trees in bloom), exercise one's body, and share

conversation (and, yes, share verse celebrating and contemplating the gift of nature at rest breaks along the way). During the beginning miles, we alternately ascended and slightly descended ("Going downhill again? When will we get to the top!?" ) until we reached Kennedy Peak and its observation tower. This tower not only provided a resting stop for lunch but also an unrivaled 360-degree view of the Massanutten and Shenandoah Mountains and the meandering Shenandoah River and Valley below. We all shared in each other's accomplishment in getting to the summit. Most of us a bit more out of breath than the few with fleet feet -- a wonderful group effort considering most of us do not have regular hiking experience.

We lingered over lunch, enjoyed the view, shared our lunch goodies and stories, had another hiker take our group photo ("St. Thomas? Is that Catholic? Oh, Episcopalian? Isn't that the schism church?"), and then psyched ourselves for the easier walk down the Massanutten trail. The descent took us along the scenic ridge of the mountain (views on both sides) before hitting the switchback descent to the trailhead at parking lot. And guess what? We had a welcoming party! A parishioner drove from DC to meet us there for the continuation of our adventure. At this point he was the only dry body to hug in our group of, now, fifteen. Poor guy. Hey, the dogs were less sweaty than we were!

Well, we congratulated each other for a hike well done. Many were psyched to put on a fresh tee-shirt, kick off the hot sweaty boots and put on comfy shoes. No costly injuries, except for one parishioner's broken porcelain cap showing off a chipped front tooth. Not from falling, but from biting into an apple at lunch! Later, many in the group told the individual that it made him even cuter. While his wife did not agree, he just batted his eyes and basked in the "aw shucks" moment.

At this point, most of us headed off to a local vineyard and learn a bit more about that Virginia wine! It was certainly a quirky little place with a bizarre, prickly sommelier, but, hey, it was a place to stop on our way to Woodstock for dinner and wait for the one car-load that was temporarily lost. Following our wine tasting and purchase of more than a few bottles of wine to take home, ten of us continued on to Woodstock's Springhouse Tavern and Restaurant. As a testament to our non-elitist roots, we were psyched to be able to have cold beer in iced mugs and red meat for dinner. It was a great, welcoming place with good food (and cheap pitchers) and just a great way to spend some additional time and conversation with good friends and friends-in-the making! At the end of our repast, we divvied up parishioners amongst drivers, said our good-byes, and departed with fun memories and stories of our day in the mountains. A day of witnessing and living our Christian hospitality. Come join us next time!!

## **Sacred Grounds: BBQ & Film In The Park**

Please join us this Friday in St. Thomas' park for a delicious BBQ (with veggie options), cold drinks, and a movie!

In anticipation of Capital Pride, we will be showing the film *For the Bible Tells Me So* (directed by Daniel G. Karlake), which discusses homosexuality and its perceived conflict with religion, as well as various interpretations of the Bible and what it really says about gays. Featuring: Bishop Gene Robinson, former House Majority Leader Dick Gephardt and many others.

Sacred Grounds, a monthly event held at St. Thomas' (Episcopal) Parish, all Christians and those exploring their spirituality in their 20s & 30s are invited.

Contact Dustin Cole at 202/441-0907 [dustindc@gmail.com](mailto:dustindc@gmail.com) for more information.

## The Society of St. Thomas

You are invited to a party/cookout on June 21st at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Louie Stewart and John Carter, 2349 South Queen Street, Arlington, Virginia. This gathering is for parishioners who are forty years of age or over. We will do the meats and you bring the sides. We hope that this will lead to the formation of a new group of parishioners who can get together from time-to-time to socialize and share our stories. Please let us know if you will be attending by emailing us at [jsclms@verizon.net](mailto:jsclms@verizon.net).

## The Blessing of Couples

From Louie Stewart

Plan to be part of our Second Annual Blessing of Couples living out their lives in committed relationship which will be held in our park on **June 8th at 6:30pm**. For those members who are new to the parish, the participants last year found the service to be a moving and affirming celebration. This was true for both the couples and their friends who attended to be a part of this special day. It reaffirmed the importance of our spiritual community in our lives and provided us with a great opportunity share our radical hospitality with our guests.

I was so impressed last year by the work of the single members of our parish who worked so hard getting the park ready for this event. It is not just for couples but everyone! I recall Dustin

and Brock working to the last minute before the service before they donned their vestments for the procession into the park. They were assisted by many of our other single parishioners.

For those who had their relationship blessed last year, we hope you come back for an annual tune-up. John and I were moved to tears as we affirmed our relationship of over two decades. Couples sometimes forget the blessings that they have living out their lives together and this service provide you with a time for reflecting and rejoicing on those unions. Last year, we had an elderly couple, married couples with children, and many gays and lesbians who chose to affirm their love of each other and their love of God.

We forget sometimes how blessed we are to be a part of the unique family that is St. Thomas'. It is important that we share in this opportunity of parish worship, love and hospitality. See you there.

For more information contact Louie Stewart at [pride@stthomasdc.org](mailto:pride@stthomasdc.org).

## Parish Potluck Before Pride Parade

Come together for food and fellowship prior to marching in the Capital Pride Parade on Saturday, June 14th at 2:30 pm. We'll provide the hamburgers, veggie burgers, and hot dogs, you bring your favorite side or dessert. We'll also have a craft table set-up where you can create and decorate your own sign to carry in the parade. There will be great music, food, friends, and (hopefully) weather. Contact John Johnson for more information.

## Faces of St. Thomas' Parish: Jaye Lopez

From John Trumbo



Jaye Lopez was born and raised in a large family in suburban Los Angeles, CA – she has over 20 first cousins! With degrees in English and Gender Studies from the University of Southern California, Jaye has worked as a fundraiser with several progressive not-for-profit organizations for nearly 12 years. She and her partner Anne own and maintain an 80+-

year-old bungalow in NE Washington which is framed by two towering European Beech trees that are over 200 years old.

Jaye was raised Roman Catholic and Anne is a cradle Episcopalian, which was part of what led them to St. Thomas' in Fall 2007. "This was the first parish on our list," she says, "and we never went anywhere else." An avid reader, Jaye sometimes reads as many as three or four books at a time... when she's not working or volunteering.

As a natural "people-person," Jaye loves developing and nurturing relationships with others. She admits that "the administrative functions of my job appeal to my natural tendency to organize things. I'll go into the

supply room at work to grab paper clips and wind up spending 20 minutes organizing items on shelves, loading paper into the copier or fax machines or busting out my label maker!"

Jaye's interpersonal and organizational skills have led to much committee work in her job as well as at St. Thomas'. She is currently co-chair of the Inclusion Committee and co-chair of the Finance subcommittee of the Discernment Committee. Plus, she and Anne will be hosting a Foyer Dinner this month.

"Anne and I have both been overwhelmed with how completely we've been embraced by St. Thomas'," she explains. "I think we were missing that strong communal and spiritual aspect in our lives. We approach our faiths in very different ways which makes St. Thomas' the right place for both of us – it's okay for us to be in different places. We both feel nurtured in the ways we need to be nurtured."

St. Thomas' is blessed to have Jaye and Anne as part of our family. Thank you for all you do!

# Book Review: "The Kaizen Way"

From Ron Wilson

One of my interests is finding books within the non-fiction category which provide advice/guidance that can be very useful within the workplace, at home, and outside activities. I review the books on The New York Times website of Best Sellers which includes a Best Sellers Nonfiction "Advice" section. Whenever there appears a book to be useful I buy and read it. Sometimes I have found books that not only provide useful but have made a profound difference in my life. One book in this category is [One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way](#) by Robert Maurer, Ph.D. It is a very small book that can be read quickly. Maurer tells his readers that small steps lead to big results. His simple tenet is that we can bring about behavioral change, pursue personal growth, and accomplish large projects simply by starting with small, doable steps, and by making steady progress and continuous improvement. The Japanese have named this concept Kaizen. Maurer believes that businesses, groups, and individuals can benefit from the Kaizen way. His theory is that when humans attempt large-scale, revolutionary change, a fear response is triggered in the brain. As part of our evolutionary, survival mechanism, the brain registers an alarm whenever we deviate significantly from our usual safe routines. This response is the "flight or fight" response associated with stress—and change is often stressful. This fear response shuts down creativity and concentration.

Small changes, on the other hand, sidestep the fear response, allowing the brain to accommodate the new response, laying down new neural pathways while we build new habits. Even when it comes to eliminating our bad habits, like addictions, overeating, or compulsive spending, Maurer recommends that instead of going "cold turkey", we should taper off gradually, thereby avoiding feelings of

deprivation that often lead to relapse. Here are six strategies Maurer provides in the book:

- 1) Ask small questions to dispel fear and inspire creativity:
- 2) Think small thoughts to develop new skills and habits---without moving a muscle. This is tried and true method of mental rehearsal.
- 3) Take small actions that guarantee success. It's easier to take small steps that take little time, effort, or expense, rather than attempt a massive overhaul, all at once.
- 4) Solve small problems, even when you are faced with overwhelming crisis.
- 5) Bestow small rewards on yourself and others to produce best results.
- 6) Recognize the small but crucial moments that everyone else ignores.

*Kaizen Way has been useful in my work and personal life, whether it's dealing with clutter to painting my apartment. Painting has always been something that I just cannot do. My apartment needed painting but with a special paint which would require a lengthy drying period of several days between the coats which most professional painters would not find acceptable except for a high fee. So I decided to apply the Kaizen Way by painting just one wall over one weekend. It worked, and I painted my apartment over a period of time. By taking small steps, I accomplished something that would have been extremely difficult if not impossible.*

**\*\*Editor's Note:** Would you like to review a book you've found particularly inspirational and helpful? If so, please forward your review to [phoenix@stthomasdc.org](mailto:phoenix@stthomasdc.org). This month's book is available through Amazon, and if you use the link on our website [www.stthomasdc.org](http://www.stthomasdc.org) part of your purchase will be donated to the parish.

## Greetings from Dan Maxey

Friends - HELLO FROM SUNNY PHOENIX, ARIZONA! I arrived here just a few days ago after a long drive across the country that took me through 11 states and through the homes of a number of friends and family members. I am keeping myself quite busy getting things in order to begin my Master's program in Higher and Postsecondary Education at Arizona State University.

Also, as most of you know, in less than two weeks I will participate in AIDS LifeCycle 7 - a 545-mile bicycle ride that will take me and a few thousand other cyclists and volunteers from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Thank you to all of you who have contributed to my effort to support the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. If you would still like to contribute, IT IS NOT TOO LATE!!! You can make contributions online at [www.danmaxey.com](http://www.danmaxey.com) through WEDNESDAY, MAY 28. Contributing online is EASY and SECURE - just click on the MAKE A DONATION button under the photo of me in the tight spandex! I am almost at my goal, but would really be thrilled if we can exceed my goal together! Please check out the site and contribute if you have not already done so. If you already have, again, THANK YOU!!! I'll post updates from my ride once I return to Arizona, but you may also review my blog postings from my cross-country trip at <http://gowestdan.blogspot.com>.

And just in case anyone cares, it is 112' F here today and it's not as bad as it sounds.

Peace!

Dan

[www.danmaxey.com](http://www.danmaxey.com)

*Dan has provided me with his new contact info, if you should like his new address send me an email at [phoenix@stthomasdc.org](mailto:phoenix@stthomasdc.org) and I'll be sure to pass it on. That's all for the June edition of The Phoenix. Happy Father's Day to those who are one. Hope to see many of you at the Pride Picnic!  
GM*