



THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

April, 2010

ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH
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Every Sunday

8:00a Holy Eucharist
9:15a Church School
9:30a Service w/ Eucharist
and music

Father Bill's Message

Author Tom Skinner in *Words of Revolution*
states:

If you let Barabbas go and he starts another disturbance or another riot, you can always call out the National Guard, the Federal troops, or the Marines to put his thing down. All you have to do is push a few tanks into his neighborhood, and you can squash whatever he's up to. You can find out where he's keeping his guns and raid his apartment. You can always stop Barabbas. But the question is: How do you stop Jesus? How do you stop a man who has no guns, no tanks, no ammunition, but still is shaking the whole Roman Empire? How do you stop a man, who—without firing a shot—is getting revolutionary results? They figured there's only one answer—get rid of him. Barabbas would never really ask to run your life. Barabbas would exploit you, but he wouldn't ask to run your life. Jesus would ask to run your life. Jesus would ask for the right to rule over you! And that's the problem. Men and women would rather be enslaved to tyranny than let Jesus rule their lives. They would rather be exploited than let Christ determine their lives. So they said, "Give us Barabbas."

My friends, is this the way it will be for all times? I sit and ponder the answer.

Fr. Bill



Lent is ending; Holy week is upon us, and it's time for the C&E Christians to make their bi-annual appearance. You know C&E's – those Christians who show up at church only on Christmas and Easter. Some time ago at Easter there was a cartoon depicting a family of four being greeted by the minister after the Easter service. "Why," the pastor wondered, "why haven't I seen you on other Sundays?" The little boy of the family said, "You mean the church is open on other Sundays?" Hmm. Sound familiar?

As for me, I'm glad when this time of year comes around. First, I can shed some of the guilt I feel for not following through with my Lenten resolutions. But more importantly, I can prepare to greet the Risen Lord as he proves once again that he died for me and rose again to atone for my sins.

Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter are all part of a package for me. On Palm Sunday, we celebrate the arrival of Jesus into Jerusalem, with the crowds proclaiming him king of the Jews. But how quickly they turn on him and shout for his crucifixion. "Give us Barrabas!" they shout. "Crucify Jesus!" they exclaim, thus establishing a pattern that perseveres unto this day.

I can't say that I enjoy Holy Week particularly – at least till we get to the Resurrection. But I also realize that without the events leading up to Easter Sunday, there would be no celebration, no rejoicing.

I think the C&E's really don't get it. What do they celebrate Christmas for? Presents, parties, time off from school, a break from work? And what about Easter? Is it a time to dress up (do

we still do that? I remember that Easter was a time for new clothes, clothes that were practical and not necessarily fashionable, Oh well...), a time to celebrate the arrival of spring? Time off from school?

How much more meaningful this season would be if we took the time not only to celebrate Easter, but to accompany Jesus from Palm Sunday through Gethsemane, Good Friday, and the crucifixion. How much more joyful our celebration when we greet the Risen Lord on Easter morning.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And the people shouted. "AMEN!"

frp

Prayerful Notes

I recently visited a friend recovering from shoulder surgery. The first thing I noticed was the sling holding her arm secure, allowing the healing to take place. While that is the most obvious purpose of a sling, it also serves as a visible sign of an injury, a caution sign to those around us.

I recall a time, many years ago when I had broken a tiny bone in my arm. I too, had to wear a sling for a while. After it was removed, I remember feeling quite vulnerable. My wound was not fully healed and I feared someone might accidentally bump into me, without the visible sign of my sling.

As human beings we are, every one of us, very fragile and vulnerable. In our life's journey, we have all suffered emotional wounds that are not always obvious to those around us. We have no way of knowing how deep those wounds may go or how far the process of healing has progressed.

While we exercise compassion and caution around those with obvious physical injuries, we can, without meaning to, add further pain to

another's emotional injury, through our actions or more often our words.

While we cannot know the emotional wounds of those around us, we can seek through prayer and meditation to become more sensitive to the needs of others. A smile, a loving embrace, a kind word or a listening ear, can be a healing balm for those unseen wounds, that so many carry within them.

As we move forward this year at St. Stephen's, many changes await us, as we bid farewell to Fr. Bill and Gail, welcome a new interim priest, and begin the long and arduous process of choosing a new rector.

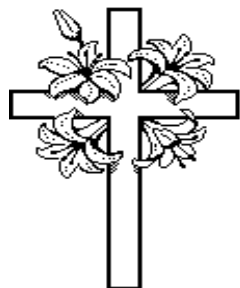
Change is always challenging but it is especially hard for those who are also suffering personal loss within their own family, whether through death, divorce, illness, job loss or other life changes.

In my 32 years at St. Stephen's, I have seen a lot of changes, a couple of major ones happened when I was in personal crisis in my own family. Through it all, I felt the strength and unity of our parish all around me.

Now as change is upon us once again, I am drawn to St. Paul's words of guidance, which I offer up for our parish. *Ephes. 4: 2-3* "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Happy Easter everyone!!

Blessings Always,
Phyl Endicott



Easter



Announcing

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, April 19, beginning promptly with Evening Prayer in the Church at 7:00pm. All vestry meetings are open to the entire parish. Parishioners wishing to include items on the agenda are asked to contact one of the wardens or the rector no later than two (2) weeks before the meeting. Vestry meeting agendas and minutes will be regularly posted on the bulletin board between Fay Hall and the narthex.

Holy Week Services are as follows, all beginning at 7:30 pm:

Wednesday, March 31st –Tenebrae – a liturgy of lights and shadows, signifying the victory of the forces of darkness which are ultimately defeated by Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Maundy Thursday, April 1st – The Maundy Thursday liturgy with the stripping of the altar. The choir will provide music.

Good Friday, April 2nd – The Good Friday Ecumenical Service at 12 noon with music will be at *Good Shepherd Lutheran Church* this year. There will also be a Good Friday liturgy in the evening with choir music here at *St. Stephen's*.

There will be NO Easter vigil this year.

★ **The Women of Faith Bible Study Groups** meets twice a month on the following dates:

Tuesday, April 6th, 7:15 P.M. at *Jean McPherson's home*

Wednesday April 7th, 9:00 A. M. at *Phyl Endicott's home*

Tuesday, April 20th, 7:15 P.M. at *Jean McPherson's home*

Wednesday, April 21st, 9:00 A. M. at *Phyl Endicott's home*

Tuesday May 4th, 7:15 P.M. at *Jean McPherson's home*

Wednesday, May 5th 9:00 A. M. at *Phyl Endicott's home*

Tuesday May 18th, 7:15 P.M. at *Jean McPherson's home*

Wednesday, May 19th 9:00 A. M. at *Phyl Endicott's home*

We meet for approximately 2 hours and each meeting is preceded by coffee and a snack. For directions or more information contact *Jean* at 508-355-2022 or *Phyl* at 508-366-9227. Our summer hiatus will start the first of June and continue through the summer

★ **Let's fix *Don Shapleigh's* "little red wagon"** by donating canned goods and non-perishables for the **Westborough food pantry**. If you have questions about what is needed, please see *Don Shapleigh*.

★ **The EFM class** will resume on **Wednesday, April 7:00pm** at 6:30pm.

★ **Our meditation room** (in place of the old library) is furnished with items brought back from the Lawton Chapel at Bement. Several of those items were either made or donated by parishioners here at *St. Stephen's* in memory of the *Rev. Jack and Nancy Lawton*. Please feel free to use the room for prayer, thinking, and rest.

★ **Many thanks to all of you** who attended the *St. Patrick's Pot Luck Supper* on March 19th. The food and fun were just terrific.

And thanks to *Chris Scheffel* for putting it all together.

★ Basic **Safe Church training** sessions for both church employees and volunteers will be held on **Saturday, April 24th** at *St. John's Church* in North Adams. This session will be from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, cost \$25.00, and includes lunch. The deadline for registration is April 17th. Registration forms are available at www.diocesewma.org/parish_matters/safechurch.html.

Thank you for your kind thoughts, prayers and cards. The doctors say I'm healing nicely and I'm sure that's due in no small part to your encouragement and prayers. I give God thanks and praise for you and your many ministries. May God continue to bless you. *Bob Williams*

★ *Don Zereski* is receiving treatment on his eyes and eye nerves at the *Bascom/Palmer Institute* in Florida for the next two to five weeks. If you'd like to send him a get well card, it can be addressed to :

Don Zereski
13950 Crosspointe Court
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418