



# ***THE BEACON***

*THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH*

**May, 2010**

## ***Father Bill's Message***

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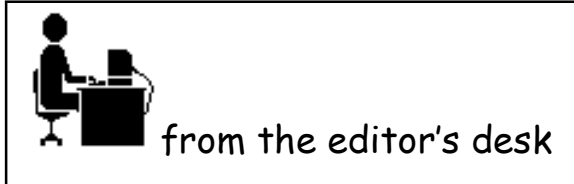
### **Every Sunday**

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

There's a fable about a man who at best was plain looking (some would have called him ugly). He fell in love, but he was absolutely sure that she wouldn't ever be interested in him because of his countenance. He thus came up with a unique solution. With the help of a physician, he designed a mask of a handsome face that could be placed over his own. With this handsome new look, he won the heart of the woman and they were married.

Years later, she discovered what he had done and demanded that he remove the mask. When he did, he discovered that his own real face was handsome indeed. After all the years, his natural face had taken on the contours of the mask. His real face had been transformed in the likeness of the mask.

Isn't the Christian life very much like this story? As we journey on "The Way" from birth to death, our life is hopefully being transformed into the likeness of Christ. When I look back at the way I acted as a child, then as a teenager, and finally as a young adult, I often shake my head in both amazement and sorrow that I treated God's creation (and the creatures within) so callously. It's shameful, but I imagine many of us feel this way. We've grown as we've matured, but this maturation process cannot be separated from our faith experiences. As we have prayed, as we have studied the scriptures, as we have talked with other Christians about their faith experiences, and as we have listened more closely to the "small voice of God", we have been transformed into better people. We're not perfect; we never will be, but we're working at following our Lord and Savior. It's good to know you all as fellow pilgrims.



People today seem to want to address everything in “sound bytes,” a short, succinct group of words meant to convey a great deal of meaning. In these days of hurry-up-get-it-done, speed is everything. Never mind that subtlety gets lost; shades of meaning are ignored. I must get this message across because I have things to do.

And don't get me started on cell phones. They are everywhere, and all ages have them. I saw a boy who couldn't have been more than 9 or 10, riding his bike and talking on a cell phone. And I'll show my age now by saying, “When I was a kid, I'd take off on my bike and be gone all day. All I had to tell Mom was that I'd be home by noontime or afternoon or whenever.” People in grocery stores checking on something they forgot; people jogging and talking; people *driving* and talking on cell phones. And I sincerely hope that the FCC never changes the rules about cell phones on airplanes. Whatever happened to peace and quiet? Can't we be out of contact with people for a little while? Does everything need to be done yesterday?

Anyway, I started talking about sound bytes and the need(desire) to communicate quickly, to always be in touch. There are two sound bytes I can think of that have appeared in Christian circles. Remember WWJD? (What Would Jesus Do?), or “Let go, Let God”? Catchy but fortunately, like a lot of sound bytes, short-lived. Sort of like teen slang. Or some years ago, the whole business of God is Dead. This idea spawned an awful lot of discussion, debate, and even animosity. Books were written; speeches

delivered. I love Billy Graham's response to someone who told him God was dead. Billy responded, “That's funny; I was talking to him this morning!”

But just this last month, while I was reading an entry in *Forward, Day by Day* (written in 1959, by the way), I came across an entry that got my attention. The writer was commenting on Mary's response to God in the Gospel of Luke. She says, “Here I am, Lord...let it be according to thy word.” The writer goes on to remark that these few words had a profound effect on him. He decided to really “Let go, let God”. “I feel more at peace; I'm happier, healthier than I have ever been. My prayer these days has been simply this: God, Whatever, Thank You.” Not *whatever* in the cynical sense that it gets used today, but in the sense that “I am ready to accept whatever God has for me today. I'll accept it and be thankful.”

Now here's a sound byte that has some “bite” to it. Think about it. What a marvelous guiding principle for life. Freedom to live each day as gift from God; freedom from the worries that consume so much of our time; freedom to let God get on with his plan for us. Not an easy thing to do but it really is “letting go, letting God.”

I'm trying to do this; I say this prayer in the morning and, if I think of it, several times during the day, especially when I get a little frazzled by the things that need to be done and the lack of time to do them.

I pass this along for your consideration. Give it a try.

Peace,

*frp*



**The next Vestry Meeting** will be held on Monday, May 17, 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.

**As you welcome spring** and begin your spring cleaning and organizing, please remember to save your unwanted treasures for the **Youth Yard Sale on Saturday, May 8th from 9 AM – 1 PM**. We welcome all donations of household, garden, and hardware items: especially furniture, tools, and baby/children's toys and accessories; no clothing please. You can bring your donations to the church anytime now until the week of the sale. Contact *Amy Reilly* for large items that require transport @ 508.616.0261 or [the\\_reillys@hotmail.com](mailto:the_reillys@hotmail.com). Thank you for your dedication and support of the youth group!

**Thanks to all of you who** continue to support the Westborough Food Pantry. Their needs have continued to increase. Each week the number of families asking for help sets a new record. They are now serving over twice the numbers that they did a year ago. In addition to the usual basic food items they need crackers, cookies, and cake mixes. They also need personal care items such as soap, deodorant, toothpaste,

etc. If you have questions about what is needed, please see *Don Shapleigh*.

**Mike Reilly announces** that Not Your Average Joe's restaurant has announced that St. Stephen's has been chosen as the Not Your Average Cause for the month of June. This means that all day on the five Tuesdays in June, we will earn 15% on all orders that are submitted with a fund raising coupon identifying St. Stephen's as the beneficiary. The coupon and further details will be forthcoming

**Our adopted soldier, Ana Flores**, is a Chaplain's Assistant in Afghanistan. She wants to share any items she receives with her team in order to boost morale. We are asking for basic personal care items such as deodorant (Axe is a popular with the men), soap, toothpaste, tooth brushes, pony tail elastics and barrettes for women; socks, stationary, razors, and shaving cream for everyone. There is a more complete list of items that the troops would appreciate on the Mission and Outreach/Peace and Justice table in Fay Hall. Any help you can give will be very much appreciated by our troops.

**Gemma Kite** send the following note from her Peace Corps duty in Mali.

Dear friends,

Thank you so much for all your love and support during the Christmas and Valentines seasons. I loved receiving all your cards and letters, it makes my days go a little faster reading through all your updates and notes. My time in Mali is coming to a close at the end of this year, it is so hard to believe how fast time flies! On another note, the Christians in Konza have decided to build a church. I am raising just over 200 US dollars to help support them in constructing a beautiful, long lasting building that will support a hopefully growing Christian population in Konza. The money will be used to buy metal roofing, nails, wood, window, and doors. If you are interested in

helping out; you can contact my parents. I wish you all the best in the coming months and see you before the end of the year! *Ala ka aw balo here la. Ala ka an to nyogen ye.* May God give you peace in your life. May we see each other soon.

Peace, Gemma

*Ernesto Ruiz* sent Easter good wishes to all. His e-mail is on the bulletin board in Fay Hall.

**From Fr. Bill:** The Diocese would like me to vacate the rector's office by the time *Gail* and I leave for England on July 28<sup>th</sup>. Over the years, I have collected many books, videos, dvds, etc. and I'd like to give away many of them before I begin to pack the rest. Therefore, feel free to come into my office and look over what I have...I'll be happy to give away such "gifts".

Thanks, *Fr. Bill*

### St. Stephen's Kudos — Spring Edition 2010

The Stewardship Committee of St. Stephen's would like to extend its appreciation to members of the parish family who contributed their Time and Talent to make recent activities a success.

Thank You to the organizers of and contributors to this year's St. Patrick's Day pot luck supper.

To our Youth Group for helping the homeless at Common Cathedral/City Reach in Boston.

To all who help feed the poor by filling the Little Red Wagon for the Westborough Food Pantry.

To the Property Committee and its volunteers for their seemingly endless efforts to battle the water which is always trying to invade the rectory's basement.

To our dedicated educators whose efforts have created wonderfully redecorated and refurbished spaces for teaching God's Word to our youngest St. Stephen's members.

To the Men's and the Youth Groups for hosting our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper.

Our St. Stephen's Family members continue to help one another and many others in the Westborough community and beyond.

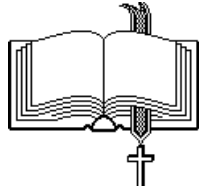
We will be using "Enriching Our Worship", i.e., the white booklets at both services on Sunday, May 9<sup>th</sup>. This is also Mother's Day. **Would any group** in the parish step forward and **expand our normal coffee hour into an informal brunch** for the women of the parish?

**For our seniors:** This year's "Spring Fling" will be on Sunday afternoon, May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 PM. Please reserve that date. More details will soon follow.

The last two-service Sunday before the summer schedule begins will be Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

A **lawn mowing sign up sheet** can be found on the table **in the narthex below the memorial book**. If you are able to volunteer your time at least once during the summer, please help! Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

**Vacation time is fast approaching.** Please let me know what weeks you will be away and/or unavailable for Liturgical Ministry duties and Vestry Person of the Day duties. If we know in advance so we don't schedule you when you are away, it makes it easier for both you and us since replacements don't need to be found. Please let *Nancy Harris* know via e-mail at [ststephch@aol.com](mailto:ststephch@aol.com) or a note in her in-box. Many thanks, in advance. *Bev Boyer* and *Jeff Bartee*



### Prayerful Notes

*Phil. 4 ; 13* - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

This is one of my favorite verses of scripture, especially during those times when I am called to take a step out of my "comfort zone". It reminds me where my strength and courage comes from.

I grew up with a lot of fears and phobias. They were my greatest liabilities, for they held me back from things I might have accomplished. As I grew in my faith however, I found they were also valuable assets, for they gave me a deeper empathy for other people and their fears.

Looking back now, I can see how my fears always kept me in close relationship with God. I have always stayed connected to God through prayer. I have learned that when I really put my trust in Him and surrender my fears, He has always brought me through to the other side. God has helped me over many hurdles on my spiritual journey.

Part of being human however is that we back slide. This is what happened to me recently, when I once again had to step out of my "comfort zone". I accepted an invitation to visit friends in South Carolina. I do not fly often and I would be flying alone. While I don't have a fear of flying or worry about terrorists, I do fear changing planes for a connecting flight in a large airport. For a seasoned traveler, this is just routine, but for me, it creates a lot of fear and anxiety about finding my gate and making it on time.

I was flying out of Providence, a pretty "user friendly" airport, after you learn the new computerized check-in system. I would, however, have to change planes in Charlotte,

North Carolina for my connecting flight on to Myrtle Beach.

After going through security in Providence, I had about a 1 1/2 hour wait before my flight left. I could feel my anxiety mounting, as I headed for the gate area, feeling so alone, amongst the crowd of people.

As part of my prayer time each morning, I write a thank you note to God, so when I reached the gate, I settled down with my coffee and took out my notebook. I focused my entire note on the blessings of this trip, thanking Him for being with me and giving me the opportunity to be with friends and enjoy some warm weather. I continued writing, until it was time to board.

God lifted my anxious feelings and replaced them with His peace. It was a beautiful flight and from my window seat, I stared in wonder at the puffy clouds and thought how amazing it is that we can fly through the air, something our ancestors could never have imagined.

I had no problems at all at the Charlotte airport, flew on to Myrtle Beach and enjoyed wonderful 80 degree weather with my friends.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear" ...*1 John 4: 18* Jesus Christ is that perfect love. We all struggle with fears of some kind but when we surrender them to Him, we are truly set free.

Whatever fear you might be struggling with, trust in the Lord. He is there for you, as He was for me.

Blessings Always

*Phyl Endicott*

