



THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

May, 2011

Father George's Message

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

Dear Friends,

Through Lent, Holy Week, and a glorious celebration of our Lord's Resurrection on Easter a sense of personal and collaborative essence of His love and mission for and with us was sought. As always, the culmination of Jesus' mission was observed in liturgical drama, comprehension, and thoroughly focused attention during Holy Week. As we learn and grow during our Spiritual Journeys these observances help us to realize the full potential and awesome power of God's love for us. We thank all who contributed to this most meaningful time. The guest speakers and all who prepared the Wednesday evening Soup and Bread suppers; the confirmation classes, the scripture study groups; the youth group's Good Friday "modern" rendition of the Seven Last Words from the Cross; the Church School children's weekly presentations at Sunday Eucharist; the magnificent preparations of our choir; all the behind the scene preparation for the Lent, Holy Week, and Easter celebrations couldn't have been done without the love and commitment of St. Stephen's community. Your new rector will be joyfully accepting of such a parish as this one.

We now look forward to Bishop Scruton's visitation this coming Sunday. How wonderful to be able to present a well prepared class of Confirmands on May 1st. We pray for their continual growth in the love and service of the Lord and His church. We pray that we shall prosper in such a way in the days, months, and years ahead. As mentioned in the Easter Homily "Prepare for your finals! Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the Bible". In this journey the love, devotion, guidance, and mission of the Lord will be realized within and through us.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
The Rev. George H. Warren



from the editor's desk

Hope everyone had an enjoyable Easter. Sharyn and I had a good one. Not only did we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord, but we were able to spend time with family. Dawn and Nick came down from Millbrook, NY, to visit and also to pay back Sharyn and me for the sweat equity we had put into their house as it was being built.

Thanks to them, we got all the ratty-looking bushes pulled up in the front of the house and got the back yard raked, two chores that Sharyn and I had been dreading for quite some time. Also Nick trimmed some branches off the blue spruce in our front yard. So many branches drooped down to the ground that I wouldn't have been surprised to discover that a hermit had been living there for years. Thanks, guys.

Then Easter afternoon, the four of us went over to Holliston to have dinner with family. It was a nice family gathering. Paula's mother and sisters were there along with some of their children. The high point of the afternoon was a magic show put on by our 10-year-old granddaughter Alex. She performed several tricks, some of which were rather mystifying. A couple of them required a second take but she got them right eventually. We asked her if there was any charge for the show. She said, "No, but a tip would be appreciated!" She's a funny kid.

Dawn and Nick left at mid-afternoon for Millbrook; Sharyn and I stayed a little longer, enjoying the company of friends and relatives.

On the way back to Northborough, Sharyn and I commented once again how blessed we were to have all these people in our lives. Sometimes I tend to get a little grouchy when

things seem to go awry, but then I remind myself of the many people who don't have family, or enough to eat, or suffer from illness. And I have to admit, God is good and I really have nothing to complain about. Thanks, Lord.

Peace,
frp



Bulletin Board

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, May 16. 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.

The following people were confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church by *Bishop Scruton* on Sunday, May 1, 2011:

Olive Anne Giorlandino; Helen Mary Gross; Anita Marlien Para; Amy Margaret Pawle; Jennifer Brook Reilly; Janette Isabelle Sabin-Gavini; Liliana Maria Urso; Michelle Anne Goodwin.

We welcome these people into the fellowship of the family of God.

Just in case you are going to a Quiz evening this spring, here are two possible questions and answers for you:

Q. When did Easter last fall as late in the year as 24th April?

A. 1943

Q. Can Easter be celebrated even later?

A. Yes, on 25th April. This last occurred in 1859 and next occurs in 2038.

Despite efforts in parliament in the twentieth century to legislate for a fixed Easter, we still follow the rules set in 325 AD: Easter is the first Sunday following the first full moon after the spring equinox. The earliest date is therefore 22nd March (but Easter last came that early in 1818).

The gospels link the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus with the Jewish festival of Passover and the reason that the date of Easter varies so much is because the church wants to celebrate this greatest of Christian festivals as near as possible to Passover but always on a Sunday. This reminds us that the foundational events of the Christian Church are history not legend and we know both when and where they took place.

It's our way of having a Baby Shower.

Looking for a way to connect with people who are struggling? Each year for Mother's Day we gather supplies for young single mothers who are part of the *Frances Perkins House* Program in Worcester. If you've checked the price of a diaper pack, baby wipes or a bottle of baby oil lately, you'll know what these Moms face. Let's share our blessings and gather useful baby care products, clothes 3 months and up and toiletries for the mothers. It's a wonderful way for all of us to share Mother's Day with them. Please no toys, baby carriages or stuffed animals. Donations should be delivered by **May 10th** please. Questions *Bev Boyer and Liz Moss.*

Japan Relief – Thus far, *St. Stephen's* has been able to send \$745 for Japan's relief efforts. If all 11 churches in Westborough sent \$500.00 each to this effort \$5,500 will have been given just from us. It is certain that every parish in every city, town and hamlet throughout the U.S A. has made contributions. Do the calculations!! Thanks be to God. Any further donations from *St. Stephen's* can be made to *The Episcopal Church World Relief Fund*. It would be helpful to send cheques via *St. Stephen's*.

The Adopted Soldier Project is moving forward quite quickly. I am very happy to have *Linda Johnson* on board with me. I do need help in packing and mailing off packages. The Church has sent out 12 care packages in the past year and I would like to send out more. *Courtney* is a name I received from AnySoldier.com. He is willing to pass items through to the troops and he is a Chaplain's Assistant in Afghanistan. He writes:

"I am *Spc. Courtney Pool* the 5-25 Chaplains Assistant. My Chaplain and I provide religious and moral support for our soldiers in the outlying COPS. We travel regularly to meet, counsel, and provide services for the units (**mostly men** since they are a combat unit). We would also

like the opportunity to bring these soldiers some morale boosters. Our soldiers have two hot meals served daily and MRE's for lunch. Their meals are prepared on MKT's (portable kitchens). Most of them have no access to a PX/BX. The one we do have on our FOB is poorly stocked and is often out of even basic hygiene items. Some of the things that our soldiers go through are Fire Retardant Patrol [gloves](#) (Black or OD Green), Batteries AA and AAA, Quality Basic Hygiene items for men, Muscle Magazines, sports Magazines, Common Interest Magazines like *Popular Science*, *Popular Mechanics*, *National Geographic*, and some news magazines. Some times we don't get to hear what's going on back home as far as news goes. [Treats](#) and snacks are always welcomed. Also popular books are appreciated, as well as popular music on CDs and current [movies](#). Some of our soldiers don't get many care packages from home because they come from unsupportive families. Please keep these soldiers in mind when preparing care packages. These soldiers are just looking for anything to brighten their day and bring a piece of America to Afghanistan. Thank you for what you guys are doing. All of us appreciate it and are thankful to have supportive citizens that "Have our Back" while we are deployed so far from home and living in less than ideal conditions and often running on little to no sleep.

By the way, *Courtney* is a male. He asked that you address letters to ANY SOLDIER and NOT to him (*Courtney*).

ANY SOLDIER
HHB 5-25 FA
FOB Shank
APO AE 09364

The parish has committed to writing at least one letter of support a week and sending a minimum of one or two care packages a month. The soldiers love to receive these gifts and letters, which help keep their spirits up. A list of suggested items to go in the "care packages" which consists of the most requested supplies such as toothpaste, Frisbees, sunscreen, etc., although almost anything is appreciated by the soldiers. The list is

available at the Peace and Justice table set up in Fay Hall. Please contact *Ruth Beck* at 508-485-5338 with any questions.

Many thanks to those who helped make the Lenten Soup and Bread Series a success. The soups were delicious; the bread tasty, and the programs were interesting and informative. Thanks to *Chris Scheffil* for organizing the Lenten Series.

Prayerful Notes

On the third Friday of every month, I attend the Jewish Shabbat Service, held at Whitney Place, an assisted living facility, here in Westboro. It is a joyous service of thanksgiving, conducted by Cantor Jeff Stockman, to welcome in the Jewish Sabbath, which is Saturday. A few of my Christian friends also attend with me and Jeff very kindly makes a point of explaining different parts of the service, expressively for our benefit. I find this service especially meaningful, as I envision Jesus growing up worshipping with Mary and Joseph in this tradition.

Given that the most recent service was close to their holiday of Passover, he explained the significance and meaning of Passover and shared some of the customs that they observe. It is a time of remembrance for Jews as they recall their story as told in the book of Exodus, in their Torah (what we know as the Old Testament). It is the story of how God chose Moses, to lead the people out of bondage in Egypt and God's faithfulness to them on their 40 year trek across the desert, to bring them to the Promised Land.

As Christians, we have certain hymns that are attributed to the Easter season and so too, the Jewish people have many songs that relate to the season of Passover. We sang a couple of them at the service. My favorite was entitled Dayenu. It is a Hebrew word, which translated in English means: *It would have been enough*. It is a lengthy song, which tells the story of their journey to the Promised Land. There are many verses and at the end of each verse, they

sing the refrain Dayenu, Dayenu. (it would have been enough)

A few of the verses were as follows:

1. If He had brought us out of bondage in Egypt - Dayenu, Dayenu.
2. If He had fed us manna in the desert - Dayenu, Dayenu.
3. If He had given us the Torah - Dayenu, Dayenu.
4. If He had brought us into the land of Israel - Dayenu, Dayenu

Reflecting on it later, I thought of how our Christian story might be sung in a similar fashion.

1. If God had loved us enough to humble himself by coming to earth as a vulnerable little baby, to live among us, as one of us - Dayenu, Dayenu (it would have been enough)
2. If He had cared enough to reach out in love to those that society had rejected; tax collectors, those who suffered from demons in their minds and a women caught in adultery, to teach us how to love - Dayenu, Dayenu.
3. If He had loved us so much, that while we were still sinners, he suffered and died on a cross for us - Dayenu, Dayenu.

Yes, it surely would have been enough but God always exceeds our expectation! We see that big time, as we remember the empty tomb on that first Easter morning. *Matt. 28 : 5 & 6* : The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, he has risen, just as he said."

God led the people of Israel out of Egypt to the Promise land and through Jesus, He leads us to new life in Him to eternity. We all, Gentile and Jew worship a gracious, loving and very generous God, who loves each one of us, as if there was only one of us.

May God bless each one of our Confirmands, as they commit their lives to Him.

Blessings Always,
Phyl Endicott

