

The Messenger

A newsletter of

St. John's Episcopal Church **Randolph, Vermont**

March 2011

Building for the future with thanksgiving and praise

Sr. Warden's Message

Unconventional Wisdom

We live in a time of uncertainty. Of nations rising against dictatorial rulers. Of turmoil and foment. Of violence and hate, divisiveness and distrust. We feed off an ever-increasing diet of suspicion and contempt which chokes our airwaves and poisons our civic discourse. The logical course is to increase our certainty—to arm, to be defensive or even offensive, to seek first one's own welfare and safety. To protect ourselves, our families, friends, interests and opinions. But when in the history of mankind has there ever been a time of certainty? Probably only confined in the mists of a past that never was, or a present falsely manufactured.

Even in the comparative tranquility of central Vermont we worry about our health, our livelihoods, the safety of our communities, the weather... In our parish family we wonder when our Interim Rector will arrive, who we'll have for Supply this Sunday, how long before we have our replacement Rector, what will St. John's be like years from now?

What is it that guides our lives—fear? What do we seek for comfort—stability and strength?

What is it to be a people of Faith?

I've become a big fan of the TED Talks, a series of recorded lectures by a small nonprofit founded in 1984, dedicated to "ideas worth spreading". Their annual conferences bring together the world's most fascinating thinkers and doers, who are challenged to give the talk of their lives. The best of these brief lectures are made available for free on the Internet.

One of my current favorite lectures is entitled "The Power of Vulnerability" by

(continued on Page 2)

(Sr. Warden's Message, continued)

Brene' Brown, a research professor in social work. I heartily recommend finding her lecture on-line. In her lecture, Ms Brown defines "connection" as what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. But while researching connection, she found that shame and fear... fear of not being found "good enough", of being accepted; is what prevented most people from feeling connected with one another—of feeling disconnected; a fear of feeling "excruciating vulnerability".

What then of those persons who don't feel disconnected; those she termed "wholehearted"? These are people with a strong sense of worthiness—of love and belonging. She found these persons to have the courage to be imperfect. They have compassion to be kind to themselves, and possessing that compassion, are able to share it with others. The wholehearted have connection as a result of authenticity—the ability to let go of who they think they should be, and accept who they actually are. The wholehearted embrace vulnerability, realizing that despite the discomfort it is often necessary to do things without guarantee of the result, noting that vulnerability is the birthplace of joy, creativity, belonging and love.

From a Christian perspective, Jesus IS love and there is no story that greater symbolizes the embracing of vulnerability than the story of His Passion that we remember in this coming season of Lent. Indeed, His Crucifixion defines excruciating vulnerability. Despite all our imperfections, He validates our worth by His sacrifice—the gift of love and belonging, of mercy and grace.

So, how should we live in a world full of uncertainty? As the birds of the air, or the lilies of the field. How should we act in a world full of fear and hate? As those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, are merciful, and wage peace; as those who go the second mile—for we are God's servants, working together; God's field, God's building.

This Lent, let us each take time out to buck convention as disciples of Christ—to open ourselves and embrace vulnerability, to trust and exercise a vibrant faith. To dare, to risk, to have courage—to tell the story of who we are with our whole hearts as children of a Loving God.

Peace.

Steve

Transition Update

The last Vestry meeting (Feb 8) was both long and productive. Laura Hunter was with us and, after the Vestry took care of immediate business, Laura outlined for us the next step in the transition process. This is to form a Ministry Discernment Committee (MDC). Don't forget that acronym. We will be using it frequently in the months to come.

(continued on Page 3)

(Transition Update, continued)

The Vestry, with Laura's guidance, will form the MDC by invitation. Laura emphasized the "deeply spiritual" nature of the MDC's work. The MDC will have a broad representation of our parishioners. Its responsibilities will be determined by the Vestry. At least one Vestry member will sit on the committee and act as a liaison between the MDC and the Vestry. The MDC will begin by discerning "who we currently are" and "who we want to be", This may sound redundant but, remember that as we work all through this process we are constantly evolving, as we have already grown in the past several years. This is a necessary step in discerning a search for a permanent situation, whatever that may be.

In general terms the charge of the MDC is threefold in nature:

1. To study and reflect on the ministries of the congregation;
2. To discern which model of clergy leadership best facilitates and supports our next phase of ministry;
3. To identify the clergy candidate(s) having the gifts and skills to partner with the parish in these ministries.

Laura will work with the MDC and the MDC will recommend one or more final candidates to the Vestry. There will be more to come as the Vestry works to determine guidelines and responsibilities with which to charge the MDC.

On behalf of your Vestry,
Susan

St. John's Episcopal Church 15 Summer Street Randolph, Vermont 05060

Vestry of St. John's

Steven Eubanks, Senior Warden
Ray Mayer, Junior Warden
Linda Nagy

Nancy Wright
Susan O'Malley
Ellen Baker

Treasurer, William Arnold

Receipts Treasurer, Jane Eubanks

Clerk, Pat Mayer

Delegates to 2011 Diocesan Convention – Gay Gaston, Ellen Baker, Mickie Richardson
Alternate Delegates – Susan O'Malley, Neil Richardson, Marcia Stone

Phone 802-728-9910 mail address: P.O. Box 278 Randolph, VT 05060-0278
Our website <http://stjohnsrandolphvt.org>

Our e-mail info@stjohnsrandolphvt.org

The Souper Bowl Sunday results are in...

The CORRECT team* won! Thanks to all of you—despite some challenges by Mother Nature, we filled two boxes to overflowing. Thanks to Bill for helping to drop off all the donations. Let's make the third Sunday of each month Food Shelf Sunday along with our regular prayers for Healing.

*The Food Shelf, that is.

St Margaret's Guild

We met on February 11 for a lively potluck and meeting. The altar continues as our priority, with purchases of candles, sanctuary lights, Easter lilies and poinsettias. We plan to buy new cassocks and surplices for the altar servers, ones that fit! We will finally get the kneelers done and contribute to the repair of the trefoil window over the front door of the church. The carpet cleaning is being booked for March or April.

Carol Doss agreed to be treasurer, replacing Pat Lawrence, who will remain on the Board, along with Linda Runnion and Anna Sease.

Finishing Fridays will continue, the next one on Friday February 25 after lunch.

Our next event is CLEANING THE INSIDE OF THE CHURCH (floors, vacuum cushions, clean the pews) on SATURDAY APRIL 9.

Our EASTER BAKE SALE is SATURDAY APRIL 25.

If you did not receive the minutes by e-mail and would like a copy, please let Pat Lawrence know.

Outreach Committee

We will continue, as in years past, our Lenten focus on the Millenium Development Goals. Parishioners will speak during announcement time about local or international groups involved in this work. Included will be: Randolph Food Shelf, Brookhaven Initiative, American Friends of Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, Safeline, Lwala Community Alliance (a medical clinic in Kenya), and the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti.

A special guest on Sunday March 13 will be Schneida Gruny, a VTC student from Haiti.

On Palm Sunday we will vote for 2 groups to receive our Lenten offering. Boxes are available for those who wish to use them to collect their offering throughout Lent.

Respectfully, Pat Lawrence.

Finishing Fridays—How to Achieve Inner Peace?

I am passing this on to you because it definitely works, and we could all use a little more calmness in our lives. By following simple advice heard on the Dr. Phil Show, you too can find inner peace. “The way to achieve inner peace,” Dr. Phil proclaimed, “is to finish all the things you started and never finished”.

So I looked around my house to see all the things I started and hadn’t finished and before leaving the house this morning, I finished off the bottle of White Zinfandel, the package of double think Milanos, the Baby Watson cheesecake, the rest of the Glen Livet scotch, the box of chocolate truffles, some Doritos, the bottle of Bailey’s Irish Cream, and the remainder of my old Prozac prescription. You have no idea of how freaking good I feel right now.

(Anon)

Pastoral Care Committee

Pastoral Care February meeting was conducted via the telephone. This due to the absence of two members and the big snow storm.

Several phone visits were made, notes sent, and Friendship bread offered to a new parishioner. Beth and her daughters are making and sending birthday cards, which have been very much appreciated.

Your Pastoral Care Committee

Betsy Arnold

Ellie Streeter

Pat Mayer

Ginny Cantlin

Mickie Richardson

Beth Pelletier

SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER – TUESDAY MARCH 8

We will have our pan cake dinner beginning at 5:30. The sign up list for ingredients is in the kitchen. Cooks and set up people are needed. Come and enjoy fellowship and good food with the whole parish!

Foyer Dinners – “a way into the church”

We wish to revive a tradition from the past by which small groups of parishioners (say 6 people) will get together at each others homes, on a rotating, monthly basis, over a three month period, to have dinner and fellowship. After each group gets together in each others homes, a new group would form, and the sequence would begin anew. We believe this a good way to get to know each other in a more informal and personal way, and to build our relationship with each other and with the community of St. John’s.

If this sounds like something you might enjoy, please contact Gay Gaston or Pat Lawrence

Lenten Breakfasts at Bethany Church

Again this year Bethany Church will host the Lenten Ecumenical Breakfasts on Wednesdays beginning on March 16 through April 20. The breakfast begins at 7 am, each week will include a talk by a local area clergy. On April 6 the speakers will be Mickie and Neil Richardson on behalf of St John's.

Episcopal news from around the world

Water and Justice

(Excerpt of article in Episcopal News Service by Christopher Morck, a priest and missionary of the Episcopal Church who lives in Quito, Ecuador, where he works with the Diocese of Central Ecuador and the Latin American Council of Churches)

The Ecumenical Water Network, based at the World Council of Churches, works on issues of water and water scarcity through raising the awareness of churches, collaborating with church-related organizations and promoting ecumenical responses to these issues.

On a clear day, from my apartment window in Quito, I can see tropical glaciers disappearing, Cotopaxi and Antisana are two of Ecuador's glaciers in retreat, while the permanent snow and ice cover on other mountains I see as I look out—Corazon, Sincholagua, Illiniaz Norte, Pichincha—have already disappeared. Just like for so many people in so many places in Ecuador, the water I drink, I wash in, I water my plants with, comes from these glaciers.

We all are connected in intimate ways with our water and its sources. Yet it used to be easier for me to ignore this interrelationship. Maybe this is why I was so surprised when I moved to Ecuador more than four years ago. It seemed that everyone here was somehow conscious of the environmental crises and how these affect our life and living and, in this case, our water.

In the buses and the taxis here, walking on the street and reading the paper, the crises, its root causes and the future scarcity of water are openly acknowledged and discussed. That which in the United States is hotly contested and seems open for perpetual debate, here is commonly accepted and taken seriously. In part, maybe this is because in Ecuador it would be difficult to not think about where our water comes from. Sometimes, even from places on the coast and in the Amazon, you can see the high Andean glaciers.

In conversations on the bus or with people on the street, I often realize that I am in an interesting position. I am from a place, a system, a worldview, which carries with it a tremendous responsibility for these crises at the forefront of minds and conversations here. I am part of a people who share responsibility both by what we have done (our excess and an economy based on extractivism and contamination) and by what we have left undone (Copenhagen, Cancun, intentional and self and communal limitation).

(continued on Page 7)

(Water and Justice, continued)

As a result of this experience, I see through different eyes. The vulnerable and indigenous communities do not share the same responsibility, as they suffer for sins which are not their own. In some way, those high Andean glaciers and the life that depends on their water suffer for my sins as well.

Issues of water and water scarcity are issues of environmental and social justice, from the melting tropical glaciers in Ecuador and Peru to the “once every hundred year” droughts in the Brazilian Amazon of 2005 and 2010. And from the Ecuadoran indigenous communities who struggle for water rights in the midst of massive extraction and contamination by flower and mining interest to the communities in India who lack water for basic household and agricultural needs as Coca-Cola monopolizes common groundwater reserves and then pollutes the water and soil.

Water is life. It is a gift of God for the whole earth, a visible sign of God’s grace, and a vital, non-negotiable part of the abundant life which God desires for us all. We are called to proclaim this desire; glorifying God through our lives lived on behalf of God’s people and the whole of God’s creation. Part of this proclamation certainly involves water, as an issue of justice and a fundamental human right, as we work so that it might be managed and equitably shared for the good of all.

Presiding Bishop to join Obama administration as advisory council member

President Barack Obama announced on Feb 4 that Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori would be joining his administration as a member of the President’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The council “brings together religious and secular leaders as well as scholars and experts in fields related to the work of faith-based and neighborhood organizations in order to make recommendations to the government on how to improve partnerships” a White House press release noted.

Also announced as one of the 11 new members to join the council is Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which shares a full communion partnership with the Episcopal Church.

The council is charged with: identifying best practices and successful modes of delivering social services; evaluating the need for improvements in the implementation and coordination of public policies relating to faith-based and neighborhood organizations; and making recommendations to the president and the administration on changes in policies, programs and practices.

Sunday Bulletin Announcements, including Intercession Prayers

For the foreseeable future, if you have announcements, meeting times or any other items you would like to appear in the Sunday Bulletin, please leave them in the appropriate shelf above the desk, in the work room office by each Thursday afternoon. If you are not able to get to the office please call me or e-mail me with anything you'd like to share. Additionally, if you have concerns or prayers for the Intercessions for Sunday Service please let me know. Last minute items of this nature may be written in for the Intercessor on Sunday AM before the service begins. Our home phone is 802-276-3372 and my e-mail is pat@hearthlink.com.

Thank you all for helping to make this flow well.

On behalf of the Worship committee
Pat Mayer

Anniversaries March 2011

Birthdays:

Mar 7	Sandy Malanchuk	Mar 22	Bill Arnold
Mar 9	Neil Richardson	Mar 25	Harry Plavin
Mar 14	Louise Clark	Mar 25	Kate Mayer
Mar 21	Alex Gilbert	Mar 27	Joan Sax

Baptism:

Mar 29	Bill Arnold
--------	-------------

Sunday ministries

	Eucharistic Minister	Readers	Ushers
Mar 6 10 am	Christine Gilbert	Gay Gaston	Mickie and Neil Richardson
Mar 13 10 am	Pat Mayer	The Richardsons	Anna and Lee Sease
Mar 20 10 am	Ray Mayer	Nancy Wright	Betsy and Bill Arnold
Mar 27 10 am	Gay Gaston	Pat Lawrence	Susan O'Malley
Apr 3 10 am	Steve Eubanks	Linda Runnion	Ken and Carol Merrill

	Oblations	Intercessions	Coffee Hour
Mar 6 10 am	Pat and Ray Mayer	Neil Richardson	Carol Merrill
Mar 13 10 am	Lincoln and Louise Clark	Gay Gaston	Gay Gaston
Mar 20 10 am	Susan O'Malley	Pat Lawrence	S. O'Malley – G Cantlin
Mar 27 10 am	Betsy and Bill Arnold	Joe Pelletier	Pat Lawrence
Apr 3 10 am	S. O'Malley – N. Wright	Neil Richardson	Louise Clark