

The Messenger

A newsletter of

St. John's Episcopal Church

15 Summer Street PO Box 278

Randolph, Vermont 05060-0278

802-728-9910

The Rev Mark Preece, Interim Rector

March 2012

Building for the future with thanksgiving and praise

Message from our Interim Rector

Please be part of the MDC's History event after church this Sunday (March 4th) if you possibly can be. It's an important step in the process, a process that needs your involvement. Besides, it should be fun. Please join us!

Dear Friends—

One of the joys of being in my line of work is that people sometimes ask you to say a prayer, often at the beginning or end of something. If they ask me on the spur of the moment, I usually pause long enough to remind myself of God's presence, then open my mouth and just wing it. But if I have a minute or two to prepare, I often choose something from the *Book of Common Prayer*, not because I think God likes well written prayers better than my stream of consciousness (though that's not impossible), but because hearing a prayer that has stood the test of time can help us think both about who God is and about what it is we really need from God.

Over the years, I have noticed that a few prayers from the BCP are greeted as old friends—people will smile in recognition when I start to say them, sometimes they'll even join in. There are at least four that almost always get a response.

First, the prayer the BCP carefully labels "A prayer attributed to St. Francis." Although it is generally believed actually to have been written in the early 20th century in France, the fact that so many people have associated it with Francis is testament to its Franciscan Spirit:

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

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(Interim rectors message, continued)

where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen (*BCP*, page 833)

Second, from the just-before-bed service of Compline, a prayer by St. Augustine, the fifth century African bishop who included it in a sermon:

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen (page 134)

Next, a prayer by John Henry Newman, the 19th century priest who is in the process of being declared a saint by the Roman Catholic church (this prayer gained popularity when it was featured in the movie of John Irving's *The Cider House Rules*):

O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. Amen. (page 833)

And finally, again from the service of Compline, the words of Simeon in the Gospel of Luke, when he sees the infant Jesus and recognizes him as, quite literally, the answer to his prayers (this prayer is known by the first two words of its Latin version, the *Nunc Dimittis*):

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen (page 135)

These four are among the best loved in the whole BCP; certainly, they're among my favorites. The first two do what many great prayers do: they gently refocus our gaze beyond our own limited horizons. It's easy to pray for peace, but the Francis prayer leads us into praying, as the saying goes, "to the peace we want to see." It's easy to pray for a restful night's sleep, but Augustine's prayer reminds us that our rest time is somebody else's work time, and that our experience of the world isn't the whole story of the world. The last two prayers present a vision of completeness, where the roller coaster of our day to day life is all part of our life with God, and where there comes a time when we can only say, "Right, for better or worse I've done what I can do; now it's time to offer it all up and say 'good night'". In praying these prayers, we ask for what the prayers ask for, of course,

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(Interim rectors message, continued)

but not only that. We also open ourselves to the prayers' larger perspective.

What are your favorite prayers, and why? Good prayers can act as a sort of spiritual Rorschach test. They grab us in ways we don't fully understand. If you don't have a list of favorites at hand, try this experiment: take some quiet time and flip through the BCP, reading prayers at random. Some will seem stodgy, flat, lifeless. But one may strike you as particularly beautiful or wise or compelling. Ask yourself why that prayer seems alive to you right now. Asking the question may draw you deeper into your ongoing conversation with God, may even reveal a hot topic in that conversation you weren't aware of.

Or, maybe not. In any case, it's a promising way to do a little informal spiritual digging during this monthful of Lent.

Peace,

Mark

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 – Mickie Richardson, Marcia Stone, Neil Richardson
Alternate Delegates – Gay Gaston, Susan O'Malley, Nancy Wright

Please visit our website <http://stjohnsrandolphvt.org>

Our e-mail info@stjohnsrandolphvt.org

>>>>>>>Special Appeal for New Doors at Church<<<<<<<<

The Vestry has announced an appeal for parishioners to make donations, over and above funds already pledged, for two doors that are needed in the church. The two doors are the one into the parish hall, and the one into the church itself. Both are required to be "fire" doors and are expensive. Please forward donations to Jane Eubanks, and make sure your name is with the donation so it will be properly recognized and recorded.

Thank you

St. Margaret's Guild

FINISHING FRIDAYS will continue through March and April in the afternoon, except April 6 (Good Friday). A great time to finish those UFO's and enjoy each other's company. Men and women welcome! If there is a group in the parish hall, we will meet in the Canterbury Room or middle office.

CHURCH CLEANING DAY - SATURDAY MARCH 24

Young and older invited to join us as we spruce up for EASTER and spring! We will start at 9 am, likely with cleaning the rafters/fans above, then progress to vacuuming, dusting, floor cleaning. Believe it or not, it will be fun. And so satisfying to see our beautiful church gleaming again. See Anna Sease for details. If weather is too bad on the 24th, the cleaning day will be the following Saturday, March 31st.

BAKE SALE and BASKET RAFFLE – SATURDAY APRIL 7 – 9am to 2pm

We need people to help and lots of baked goodies. There is a basket in the kitchen for items for an Easter Basket raffle.

Please see Linda Runnion, Ellen Baker or Pat Lawrence to volunteer.

Thanks for all your help and support,

Pat Lawrence, President, St Margaret's Guild

Outreach Committee

Lenten Series – UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

During Lent we will explore the 8 UN Millennium Development Goals with a series of talks during the 10 am service.

If you are involved with a non-profit working towards one of the goals and would like to give a short (less than 10 minute) presentation, please see Gay Gaston or Pat Lawrence. At the end of the series, we will choose 1 or 2 non-profits to divide our special Lenten collection. There are boxes in the parish hall (we are recycling UTO boxes for this purpose) to put your contributions in through Lent. The date for voting and ingathering will be announced when the schedule is finalized.

We currently have speakers coming to talk about Brookhaven Treatment and Learning Center, and Interfaith Power and Light.

Lenten Series – UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) continued on page 5

The 8 Millennium Development Goals are:

- 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**
- 2. Achieve universal primary education**
- 3. Promote gender equality and empower women**
- 4. Reduce child mortality**
- 5. Improve maternal health**
- 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**
- 7. Ensure environmental sustainability**
- 8. Create a global partnership for development**

More information on the goals is available at the UN web site, www.un.org , or watch the bulletin board at church.

Outreach Committee – Gay Gaston, Pat Lawrence, Nancy Wright

Pastoral Care Committee

Our meeting was held on February 15th. Present were Pat Mayer, Ginny Cantlin, Mark Preece, and Mickie Richardson.

One of the agenda items required a review of the parish membership list to insure that we had not missed anyone and to make any necessary changes to addresses and phone number. In order to help those responsible we are putting out a sheet for all to complete their information and also to inform us if they wish to receive the newsletter by e-mail, which will help reduce both postage and paper costs.

Members were advised that a new supply of cards and envelopes are available. We also reprinted a small card that any person can complete and put in a special box (still to be determined and placed, so bear with us while we figure that out) if there is someone they wish to have added to the prayer list or visited. Meanwhile the names and phone numbers of the Pastoral Care Committee members will be placed on the bulletin board downstairs so you can call whomever you wish to inform of requests.

Jane Eubanks has told us that she will join our ranks as a Pastoral Care Committee member starting in March. Thank you and welcome, Jane!

We are working on revising the small grief book that used to be given out as needed. The former publisher is no longer available and we are going to write our own, If any of you have particularly beautiful, very small, messages that will help the grieving, please feel free to pass them on to anyone on the committee so we can include them in our new book.

The members of the Pastoral Care Committee are:

Pat Mayer

Ginny Cantlin

Beth Pelletier

Lee Sease

Mickie Richardson

**Respectfully submitted,
Mickie Richardson**

Community Notes

>Randolph Community Suppers<

The Community Supper for March will be held on Tuesday, March 27th at the Brick Church, Main St., Randolph – Pot Luck. Doors open at 5 pm

>Lenten breakfasts at Bethany<

The long-standing tradition of breakfast each Wednesday morning during Lent at Bethany Church is being held again this year. Clergy from various churches in the area will be the speakers each Wednesday. The breakfasts begin at 7 am. The first one will be held on Wednesday February 29th and will continue through April 4th.

Anniversaries – March-April 2012

Birthdays:

Mar 7	Sandy Malanchuk	Mar 9	Neil Richardson
Mar 14	Louise Clark	Mar 21	Alex Gilbert
Mar 22	Bill Arnold	Mar 25	Harry Plavin
Mar 25	Kate Mayer	Mar 30	Lilly Myrick
Apr 2	Joe Pelletier	Apr 11	Jim Gilbert
Apr 13	Gary Crothers	Apr 30	Aubrey Pelletier
Apr 30	Olivia Myrick		

Baptisms:

Mar 29	Bill Arnold
Apr 1	Sandy Malanchuk
Apr 2	Jonathan Osha
Apr 2	Benjamin Osha

Sunday ministries (for 10 am services)

Please note that there are 8 am services each week also

	<u>Eucharistic Minister</u>	<u>Readers</u>	<u>Ushers</u>
Mar 4 10 am	Linda Runnion	Christine Gilbert	Pat & Ray Mayer
Mar 11 10 am	Christine Gilbert	Joe Pelletier	Carol & Ken Merrill
Mar 18 10 am	Pat Mayer	Anna & Lee Sease	Susan O'Malley
Mar 25 10 am	Ray Mayer	Nancy Wright	Lincoln & Louise Clark
Apr 1 10 am	Gay Gaston	TBA	Pat Lawrence
Apr 8 10 am(Easter)	Steve Eubanks	TBA	Anna & Lee Sease

	<u>Oblations</u>	<u>Intercessions</u>	<u>Coffee Hour</u>
Mar 4 10 am	Nancy Wright/Susan O'Malley	Linda Nagy	Louise Clark
Mar 11 10 am	David & Gay Gaston	Neil Richardson	Anna Sease
Mar 18 10 am	Anna & Lee Sease	Ray Mayer	Pat Lawrence
Mar 25 10 am	Christine & Jim Gilbert	Louise Clark	Louise Clark
Apr 1 10 am	TBA	Pat Mayer	Pat Mayer
Apr 8 10 am(Easter)	Mickie & Neil Richardson	Mickie Richardson	Ellen Baker

THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

The moon had climbed to its highest peak
As Jesus and His friends, tired and weak,
Climbed the hill to the Garden of Gethsemane.

Peter, James, and the favorite, John,
Found a blanket of grass to lie upon,
And our Lord started alone into the garden.

“Watch and pray,” he commanded the three,
And He opened the gate to Gethsemane
As He went in alone to pray.

Under the olives on bended knee
Against a great rock, He prayed for me,
And His body broke out in a bloody sweat.

The Agony pierced His mind clear through,
That bloody sweat – for me –for you;
This pain of His, one cannot perceive,
Oh! Watch and pray! His agony relieve.

By Lois (Mickie) Richardson