

# ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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## Choral Evensong for the Feast of All Saints'

**Sunday November 4**  
**4 o'clock in the afternoon**

If you find that music provides a safe and powerful means for which to connect with God, then Choral Evening Prayer (the official term for *Evensong*) will provide an opportunity to "increase your faith." This service and its style were created miles away and long ago, but are transformed into the present through modern day music, the playing and singing of hymns and by the support of a local mission.

A representative from CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) will share with us their work in the community. We will sing the familiar Psalm 150, hear the Revelation text "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth..." and will remember all the saints, from whom their labors rest. The organ prelude will begin at 3:45 and a reception follows

**J**UBILATE DEO  
Shout joyfully to God,  
all the earth, sing a psalm  
to the glory of his name.  
Alleluja

## ***A View from the Big Pew***

Dear Friends,

I hope those of you who are interested will attend one or all of the sessions planned by Jo Roberts, Caryl Matthews, Linda and Arliss Jeffries, Pat and myself to hear of our Israel trip. The dates are yet to be finalized but it looks as if there will be at least one Sunday morning Adult Forum session and one Thursday Evening Dinner-and-Discussion session. We hope to do this before Christmas. Look for the details soon.

This month I'd like to share one insight from the extra week Pat and I spent in Jerusalem touring United Thank Offering (UTO) grant sites on the West Bank. I don't think this will steal anyone else's thunder.

While we all traveled to the West Bank when we visited Jericho, Bethlehem, Deheisheh Refugee Camp and the illegal settlement of Efrata (both near Bethlehem), Pat arranged to visit the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Nablus during our extra week.

Ramallah is about 16 miles north of Jerusalem. The seat of the Palestinian Authority, it has a relatively lively economy and even a nightlife, benefiting from all the "governmental" offices and commercial activity. The compound where Yasser Arafat was confined and bombarded by the Israeli Defense Force, and where his body is now buried, is in Ramallah, as is the best Chinese restaurant on the West Bank, owned by Mr. Nikola Akel. Nikola is the Bishop's Director of Diocesan Affairs and was our guide this day and our host for dinner at his restaurant on the late afternoon of our visit.

The auto traffic in the city is terrible because there is little or no traffic control. You cannot enter or leave the city without going through an Israeli checkpoint. There are primitive (but permanent) Israeli settlements – tents and Quonset huts, all defiantly flying Israeli flags – scattered about on the fringes of the city. These settlements are, of course illegal, but are nonetheless protected by the Israeli military and mostly ignored by western states including our own. They only exacerbate what most Palestinians refer to as "The Situation." Ramallah is a relatively new town, only about 500 years old, so there are no biblical sites there. There is a church – St. Andrew's – that started as a mission for British soldiers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and continues today as a lively Palestinian parish. St. Andrew's is building a community day care center with partial funding from a UTO grant.



This will be a new floor added to an existing building. I don't know what all of the new space will be used for, but it was interesting to learn some of the use of the existing space. In addition to parish use it is available for wedding celebrations and funeral gatherings. Many Muslims are quite comfortable meeting in a building with a cross on it if it gives the opportunity for many to gather safely in one place. The thing that makes St. Andrew's attractive is that it has a walled garden/courtyard well off the street, so teenagers (teenaged Palestinian boys are quite suspect if they gather in any number) can socialize without their parents worrying and without fear of being hassled by the authorities.

Ramallah is also home to a school operated by the Diocese of Jerusalem, with programs for pre-school through High School. Though not the recipient of any UTO money it was interesting to tour the school and see the program and space. Again, the "auditorium" is available for a fee to outside groups, and some unused land is being developed for retail development (= income to the school). Most of the students are Muslim because the Christian community is severely diminished in numbers. The witness of the church to these Muslim children and their families is superb. The Church is well respected by its neighbors.

Nearby is a satellite facility, a former orphanage that belongs to the diocese. It houses a Technical School to which the UTO did make a grant a few years back, and visiting was a blast. The students were working on some computer programs that controlled various little devices and also on their version of the Rube Goldberg machine-to-end-all-machines. The original UTO grant provided the initial equipment to get this computer program started. We would say it is bearing fruit a hundredfold. Classes are also offered in drafting, ceramics (the school was given the gift of a kiln and all related supplies from a tile factory), cooking and restaurant/hotel management, all of which reminded us of Purdue. Something Purdue doesn't have, though, is the Yamaha franchise music and performance program offered in space on the upper floor (= more income!). We visited just about 1:00 pm, and as the majority of children were Muslim classes were just wrapping up because during Ramadan the school day is shortened.



On a second day we visited Nablus, where the diocese operates St. Luke's Hospital, the largest (and most comprehensive) hospital in the northern West Bank. About 60 miles north of Jerusalem Nablus is a hardened, far more tense and depressed city than is Ramallah. Set in a valley between Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Ebal (Nablus is biblical Sychar and the location of Jacob's well where Jesus met the Samaritan woman), the city is ringed by illegal settlements and military installations. The Israeli authorities regularly enter the city at night searching for persons of interest, and the Palestinian resistance pushes back strongly here. There is little private auto traffic in the city. I would opine from the looks of the cars I saw that repair parts are hard to get and bailing wire will only go so far. There are plenty of taxis (all with radios blaring) but, again, very little traffic control. It would appear that the normal person cannot drive through a checkpoint into the city, but must walk. We were told there are two lines at the checkpoints: one for women, old men and young children, the other for men between about eight and fifty. It might take two hours or more to pass through the checkpoints depending on the crowds, as documents are thoroughly checked and the soldiers don't hurry. We were driven to Nablus in the bishop's car and on arrival at the checkpoint Abu Aziz, the bishop's driver, pulled up behind an ambulance from St. Luke's and told us to get into the ambulance. We then were driven through the checkpoint in the front seat of the ambulance, having only to show our passports. We went straight to the church on the edge of the old city, about a block from the hospital. School was still in session at the parish school, so we enjoyed the children for a bit before going to the hospital.



St. Luke's has 54 beds but was almost empty because of Ramadan. Muslims (there are only 700 Christians in this city of about 75,000) prefer to delay hospitalization if possible so as not to have to "reschedule" their Ramadan fast. There are local nurses and doctors on staff, plus other hospital support persons, and several doctors from Tel Aviv or other Israeli cities also serve to St. Luke's. The bishop and director of diocesan health programs would like to develop St. Luke's into a trauma center for the West Bank and Gaza. They would like to specialize in neurological services and head and spinal injuries. They need the proper equipment; they are financially strangled because no one has insurance. There is no such thing as Medicare or Medicaid and the Palestinian Authority, when it has money, allocates it toward more political (or more nepotistic) ends. There is, of course, no financial support from Israel.

Our day in Nablus ended with a special *nif 'ta*, the feast to end the Ramadan day of fasting. Bishop Suheil came from Jerusalem to meet with the hospital staff and encourage them. It has been many months since they had been paid full salaries, and even though he has been bishop only since April he is underwriting as much as possible out of diocesan funds the hospital salaries (this particular day he announced he could meet the September payroll of about \$45,000). To further show his commitment and to honor the staff he gave this *nif 'ta*, inviting local Palestinian Authority officials and Muslim religious leaders to join him and the staff.

The feast was lentil soup, rice with peas and carrots, chicken legs with thigh attached, chopped salad, pita with hummus, special desserts of pastry wrapped around sweet cheese, soft drinks, coffee or tea and bottled water. After dessert, you could smoke if you had them (and many did!) There were several speeches, all in Arabic, then the Palestinian Authority official left with his armed guards, the staff dispersed, the clerics embraced and formally parted. The bishop told us he had to attend a special meeting because one of the speeches had been very negative and he wanted to respond. We walked back to the church and waited with Martina, the Dutch nurse/missionary who had been our guide all day. In about an hour the bishop's car pulled up and we headed back to Jerusalem with Abu Aziz at the wheel of the black car with diplomatic plates and the diocesan flag on the fender.



At the checkpoint out of town Abu Aziz stopped at the appropriate distance and turned the headlights off and the interior lights on. "It makes the checkpoint guards less nervous," Bishop Suheil said to us, "if they can see who is in the car." Then we passed the checkpoint and drove through the night to Jerusalem.

#### *And my insight?*

One hears often about the exodus of Palestinian Christians from the West Bank and their ancestral lands, because of the lack of a future that so many of them feel. This is certainly the case. After our visits we marvel at the constancy, faith and courage of those who stay and the witness that they make. If you have space in your heart, perhaps you will join Patty and me in holding in your prayers, on behalf of all Christians in the land of Jesus' birth, Father Naum of Ramallah; Deacon Ibrahim and nurse Martina of Nablus; and Bishop Suheil, his assistant Nikola, and his driver, Abu Aziz, of Jerusalem, and their families. And perhaps you will join in sharing more intentionally in the Holy Week / Good Friday offering for the work and witness of the Church in Jerusalem as well.



*Stoumangan +*

# UTO

Sunday, November 11, 2007 will be St. John's Fall UTO Ingathering at both services.

In 2007 the United Thank Offering Committee approved 104 grants. There were 30 grants awarded outside the United States, 3 regional grants and 71 grants awarded to dioceses in the United States. I encourage you to look through the new 2007 booklet of grants. I found it fascinating. I think you will find it most interesting. There are pictures and clear descriptions of each grant given.

Our gifts of daily prayers and coin, given in Thanksgiving for our myriad blessings, support and strengthen the mission and ministry of the Episcopal Church throughout the world. Each year these gifts from each individual and family are combined with others at the parish and diocesan celebrations and finally within all the Episcopal Church to be given as grants for projects throughout the Anglican Communion.

Yours in Christ,

Mary Louise Davis

September 18, 2007

Dearest Friends – members of St. John's Episcopal Church – 8:00 a.m. congregation,

This Sunday, past, September 16<sup>th</sup>, I was privileged to attend the early morning services, along with my daughter Charity and son Aaron, who is a student at Purdue University.

We were made to feel at home from the time of our arrival, through the moment of our departure, after coffee and cake in the parish hall. It was "Family weekend" at Purdue and attending church in such a warm accepting atmosphere provided a beautiful closure to a magnificent weekend along with a positively bright start for the journey to come!

On behalf of myself and my family thank you for this exceptionally warm and kind experience.

Sincerely yours,

Gwendolyn C. Brydges



*"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude. Don't complain."*  
Maya Angelou

Our words are powerful indicators of our thoughts, and our thoughts shape our reality. When we complain or criticize, we draw to us negative things because we put out negative energy. One of the most important things we can do is to learn not to complain or criticize. Scientists believe it takes 21 days to form a new habit and complaining and/or criticizing are habitual for most of us. However, a small church in Missouri (actually it's smaller than St. John's) has developed a program called A Complaint Free World to help us delete this negative habit and foster a more positive one. They send purple bracelets for you to wear. The goal is to have the bracelet on the original wrist at the end of 21 days. The "rules" are simple:

- Begin to wear the bracelet on either wrist.
- When you catch yourself complaining, gossiping, or criticizing (it's ok, everyone does), move the bracelet to the other wrist and begin the 21 days again. (Each "switch" begins a new 21 day cycle.)
- If you hear someone else who is wearing a bracelet complain, you may point out their need to switch the bracelet to the other wrist; BUT, if you're going to do this, **you must move your bracelet first.**
- Stay with it. It may take many months. When you reach 21 consecutive days, you will find that your entire life may be happier, more loving and more positive. A new habit will have replaced the old!

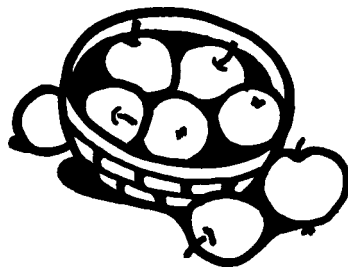
Can you imagine a world where there is less complaining and criticizing? It may seem like an impossible goal, but it can be done. It just takes one person at a time deciding that he/she wishes to be a more positive and gracious individual.

I have received a dozen bracelets which I would enjoy sharing with anyone who wishes to do this personal challenge. Contact me and let me know. I'll bring one to church for you. There is no accountability here – except to yourself. I have mine on and am still moving it. I'm sure it will take me a long while to achieve 21 consecutive days. I'd love to have company on this journey. Won't you join me?

E. Linda Jeffries  
477-1574

Gandhi said, *"Be the change you wish to see in the world."*

If you wish to check on this for yourself, go to their website: [AComplaintFreeWorld.org](http://AComplaintFreeWorld.org).



**St. John's Book Club—Wednesday November 21st**

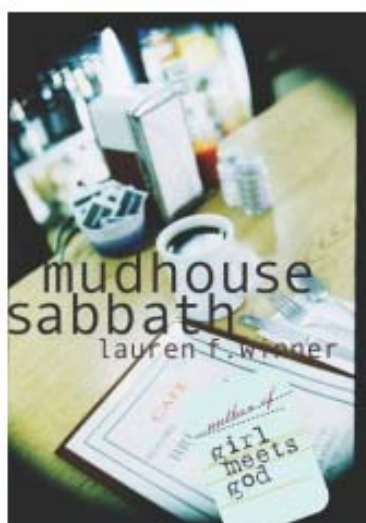
**MUDHOUSE SABBATH**

**Lauren F. Winner**

**Paraclete Press**

**Nonfiction/Spirituality**

**ISBN: 1557253447**



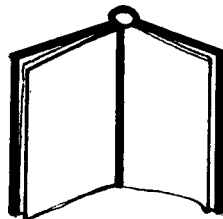
As we prepare for Advent, we'll turn reflective and read ***Mudhouse Sabbath*** by Lauren Winner. It's a series of charming, yet thought provoking essays on how the Orthodox Jewish rituals that shaped the author's young adult life are rediscovered in her life as a Christian today.

"In her memoir, ***Girl Meets God***, journalist Lauren F. Winner talks about her conversion from Orthodox Judaism to Christianity and her attempts to bridge the two religions by letting her Jewish faith inform her new Christian faith. After seven years as a Christian, ***Mudhouse Sabbath*** finds Winner exploring eleven Jewish spiritual practices and traditions that she finds indispensable to her Christian life. In short, she finds herself returning to her roots. "This is a book about those things I miss," she writes. "It is, to be blunt, about spiritual practices that Jews do better. It is, to be blunter, about Christian practices that would be enriched, that would be thicker and more vibrant, if we took a few lessons from Judaism.

"This slim volume, noteworthy for Winner's engaging voice and lucid prose... is full of personal anecdotes mixed with spiritual musings. For Jews, action is the heart of faith, she writes. She acknowledges 'spiritual practices don't justify us. They don't save us'. She realizes that the practicing of the spiritual disciplines "teaches us how to live as Christians." — Cindy Crosby.

Lauren Winner, the former book editor for Beliefnet, has appeared on PBS's *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly* and has written for *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Washington Post Book World*, *Publishers Weekly*, and *Christianity Today*. Her essays have been included in *The Best Christian Writing 2000* and *The Best Christian Writing 2002*. Winner has degrees from Columbia and Cambridge universities and is currently at work on her doctorate in the history of American religion. She lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

We'll meet in the Commons at 7:00 pm for an hour of conversation and reflection. Do join us! Questions? Contact Amy Paget at [pagets@gmail.com](mailto:pagets@gmail.com).



## **Reflections**

Some of you may be aware that during Fr. Ed's recent travels with the EFM group the worship committee was charged with the task of making sure the intercessions for our weekly bulletin were prepared. As a member of the committee I volunteered to take on this rare opportunity after a brief training session from Fr. Ed. While executing this duty I found myself pondering this part of our corporate worship in a new way. I hope your prayer life may benefit in some way from the sharing of my reflections on this process –one that I am humbled to have undertaken.

I must confess to you that for some time the intercessions during the service had become a matter of rote for me: a simple marker of where we were in an otherwise corporate activity. They became less rote a few years ago when I became a LEM and began sharing in the responsibility of reading the intercessions in our services. I contend you have an entirely different connection to the text when you read it aloud and lead some 100+ persons in their delivery. (Or at least you should!) Individual LEMs bring their own delivery style to the prayers, each with their own merit. For what it's worth, my tempo, inflection and timing are intended to indicate I am performing a deliberate act with particular focus. (I hope it comes off that way.) Recall this is not how I would summarize my intercession experience prior to being a LEM. I am happy for the change. For those of you who might privately (or publicly) moan that the prayers take too long, consider the Cathedral in Cincinnati which pauses a minimum of 20-30seconds between EVERY name on the prayer list, no matter how long the list. I consider that an appreciation for those for whom they pray rather than a bad way to do the prayers.

I have had the good fortune to now take my appreciation gained from leading the prayers to writing them. On day one of my tenure as author I was taken by what it felt like to walk into the chapel in the late afternoon and collect the names of those for whom we are to pray. The chapel has the remarkable ability to remove the external noise of thinking about what's for dinner, that project you didn't get done at work, the noise of traffic and the occasional iPod music headphones to allow you to focus on one task. In this case what started as a matter of collecting data turned toward privately considering the wellbeing of many of you. I found the experience transformative. How often do you sit quietly and read through the prayer list for the parish? Don't wait for a Lenten quiet day – try this at home or in the chapel. To go deeper than that, visit [www.prodeathpenalty.com](http://www.prodeathpenalty.com) where Fr. Ed collects information on the state execution schedule. Consider as I did what it's like to write down the name of someone whose hour of death is specifically known. Or what it might be like to witness an execution. I found this challenging. On one hand we pray for those we suspect God is about to take and on the other hand for those we're sending his way. Opinions vary about the inclusion of this line in the intercessions, but I offer that once you read the process by which lives are ended and the crimes committed the sum of the situation cries aloud for God's mercy and healing for all involved in whatever capacity. Again, until I had done this myself I did not have such an appreciation for what it means to pray for the condemned and their victims.

You don't have to be a LEM or the intercession author to seek a better connection to the prayers, that's just how it played out for me. Consider what you might do in your prayer life to elevate the depth and meaning of our intercessions. I am serious when I say try saying them aloud at home in lieu of just reading them. Pick up the New Zealand Prayer book which has a wealth of fine collects both Fr. Ed and I have used for inspiration. Take the bulletin with you (Please Recycle!) and lay it next to your desk at work where you can pray the intercessions in a spare few moments. Make it a point to sit in the chapel for even 20 minutes during a fall afternoon off and read through the cards on the prayer desk. I am open to hearing about your experience if you decide to do so.

In her March 2007 letter to the diocese Bishop Waynick wrote, "We (Episcopalians) insist that the things of this world are to be used by God to connect us to the deepest truths of the Spirit."

There's a lot being said in that sentence. When I read this I am reminded of God's voice in the late afternoon sun as light comes through the blue stained glass in the rear of the nave, by the particular pleasure of hearing meaningful music, by the thoughtful sermons prepared by clergy and indeed by the simple instrument of the printed intercessions giving us a corporate connection to Christ Jesus and His people.

I leave you with the following concluding collect I wrote for September 16<sup>th</sup>:

"Gracious God, you blessed us with senses with which we experience your presence in our world. Let these senses not be dulled by the invitation to a busy and frenetic life. Manifest yourself in our looking, our thinking and our speaking so therein our understanding may be representative of your will. We pray in Jesus' name."

Amen.

Jay Mermoud  
Worship Committee Member



## Mom's Morning Out

### Parent's Night Out

Parent's Night Out is a ministry that is offered once every semester. The focus is to allow parents several hours of unstructured time without their child(ren). While you, the parents, are enjoying uninterrupted time with your spouse, your child(ren) will be having a wonderful evening with their peers. The children will be offered a light dinner and the opportunity to play games and work on a craft. This ministry is free but advanced registration is a must so we can provide an appropriate child:sitter ratio. The next Parent's Night Out is Friday, November 16<sup>th</sup> from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. If interested, please contact Nolie Parnell, Kelley Bailey, Susan Chandler, or sign-up in the nursery.

Mom's Morning Out (MMO) is offered once a month (except for the months of June and July) to any parent in the St. John's congregation. Childcare is provided to allow a parent time to accomplish as much (or as little!) as they want without the loving support of their child(ren). This ministry is free to all but we appreciate being told in advance if your child is coming so we have an adequate child:sitter ratio. The next MMO is Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> from 9am until 11am and childcare is provided by Susan Chandler. If interested, contact Nolie Parnell, Kelley Bailey, or Susan Chandler.



Bless O Lord the Earth and  
her gifts to us

### Liturgical Calendars

Follow the course of the church year at home with the Episcopal Church Calendar for 2008. The calendar is edited to conform to the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*, with the calendar dates in the proper color for the day.

On the back of each month's calendar sheet are printed the lessons and psalms for each Sunday and major feast days, along with liturgical notes and suggested concluding collects for the Prayers of the People. Under the calendar pad is found Tables of Feasts and Fasts, together with useful information about lessons and psalms.

Call the parish office by November 19<sup>th</sup> at 742-4079 to reserve your calendar at the cost of \$5.00 each. Calendars will be ordered **only** for those who request them.

## Mark Your Calendars

### Eagle Deadlines

**November 19, 2007**

**December 10, 2007**

**It is imperative that submissions be on time during this very busy and joyous time!**

