

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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The St. John's Adult Evening Bible Study group will begin their 2008-09 program year Tuesday, September 9 at 6:30 PM upstairs in the youth group room. We will continue with the Good Ground series starting this fall with For the Love of Earth: Studies in Genesis 1-3. Booklets have already been ordered but we can easily get more if needed. Participants are encouraged to purchase a booklet (\$7) but it is not mandatory. Each booklet contains 5-6 weeks worth of lessons and readings. Our sessions are exciting, informative and FUN! Bring your bible and join us won't you? Don't have a Bible? We have one for you! Our sessions last about an hour. Not sure if this is your thing? Talk to Charlene or Ross Watson, Charlie Shook, Jim Marciniak, Zach Brooks or Greg McClure to get a first person report of what St. John's ABS is all about! Still not sure? Contact Randy Brist at rjbrist@mac.com, 474-2835 for more information.

A View from the Big Pew

Dear Friends,

One of the most formative periods of my ministry was the time I spent on staff of St. Paul's Cathedral in Peoria, IL in the Diocese of Quincy. While the leadership of that diocese is currently positioning itself to take the diocese out of The Episcopal Church for what it believes to be more agreeable and "orthodox" Anglican pastures, when I was there (from 1976-87, and at the cathedral from 1980) Quincy was a small but proud and respected "conservative and Anglo-Catholic" diocese, part of the healthy breadth of diversity within the Episcopal Church. But I don't want this essay to go in *that* direction.

What was formative for me at the cathedral was the prevailing vision of parish and corporate ministry that informed much of our ministry and presence in the community. That vision was of a congregation existing not just for itself, with a primary witness and purpose being to offer programs benefiting the regulars. Instead the cathedral had a real sense of being the diocesan church, the church of all Episcopalians in west central Illinois. In Peoria I came to understand that the ministry of a cathedral is not only to parishioners or even to the larger diocesan community, but also to the larger community, period.

St. Paul's was a congregation, which understood its space as other than private space. We were not just a function of the suburb in which we were located not just a neighborhood church. Our nave was open to larger community events, often but not always associated with the performing arts (there was, famously, the time the Vietnamese community used our parish hall for a celebration of the New Year Tet and built a fire in the center of our parish hall!). Our former parochial day school space was given over to a community mental health clinic – a handy thing to have in your basement, believe me. Our kitchen was given to the Red Cross more than once for mass meal preparation for river flooding victims. The nave of the church – in those days at least – was never locked but was open for prayer 24/7/365! We had a custodian and a half to make this work, but it worked just fine.

St. Paul's didn't just give some money to community causes. It gave itself in a very real sense.

When Pat and I traveled to England on our 1998 sabbatical, I was reminded of the ministry and vision of St. Paul's when we toured the cathedrals along our route. I saw where that vision originated. The overwhelming sense of those very uniquely individual buildings was outwardly directed, not only in their original construction, but also in their activity and self-awareness in the present day. They are buildings aimed to serve the community in which they are located. You could tell this from the material on their bulletin boards, to the ways the chapels were open for prayer, to the moveable platforms and chairs that made the gothic spaces quite flexible, to the medieval "sanctuary" door at Durham cathedral. It was enlightening to look around the location of the cathedrals in the old city centers and realize that by design these churches were central to the community and meant to be community space in a very real way. The witness of these buildings is quite strongly stated: they do not exist for themselves alone.

As a parish priest now serving in a "downtown" location this is a wonderful vision, and one that influences me in a variety of ways. I would hope that every person who worships in and calls St. John's home has a sense of this vision, buys into it and helps to advance it.

I will confess that as we I carry this vision forward I find pride in the openness and the utilization of our space and physical resources that we practice. I am proud that our chapel is open to all on weekdays. I am pleased that we remembered to leave the street doors open as often as we did this past summer. I expect we will continue to do so (hint, hint). I am proud that our Outreach Level is as used as it is, four mornings (and afternoons) a week for the Food Pantry and nine other times during the day and evening hours for twelve-step meetings. I am thrilled that Habitat for Humanity is a regular user of our space. It is gratifying that we continue to push the number of people we can host for Jubilee Christmas.

I welcome the ways we are finding that the nave can be used not only for benefit Evensongs but also for lunchtime concerts and the occasional use by community musical groups. Not many know this but I'm quite proud of those few times when I as rector can consent to the burial in our Memorial Garden of the ashes of someone who did not worship with us but who was drawn to our social witness and outreach and whose family need a place for burial.

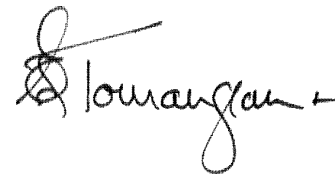
I am especially proud that we don't do this for gain, that we don't do it to make money, or that we don't do it because we ourselves don't have enough program or people to fill the space. This is true of some churches as I'm sure you know.

So I put this question to all of us: "What More?" How is God calling us to do even more, to stretch further, and to make even more room? And what will it take for us to answer that call?

We're just coming into what promises to be a wonderful Fall, and the promise of a fresh and energy-filled program season. I know your staff has been working over the past weeks and has many good things to offer for the feeding and enriching of our hearts, our minds and our parish community. I sense that folk are ready to end the summer interlude and move forward.

I believe God gives us this energy for a purpose. That purpose is most certainly not limited to or primarily for us. God does not give us this energy just so we do great things on Sunday mornings between 8:00 am and noon before we lock the doors and go to brunch. God gives us this energy for the healing of God's world, for the benefit of all God's people, for the entire community.

I would like to know what you think: "What More?" And just as importantly, "What will that require of us?"



New Editorial Board Seeks Your Input!

Last year during the fall parish meetings, members of St. John's identified "communication" as an area in need of improvement. In response to that request, the Vestry convened a communication task force. This group suggested the idea of the Editorial Board and in June the Vestry approved it. The will serve in an advisory capacity and serve as a sounding board for all aspects of communication at St. John's. It will consist of 5 people. I will serve as the Vestry representative, Father Ed will serve as the clergy representative, and there will be 3 members of the congregation. So far, Greg McClure has agreed to serve on the board.

As our first task, we are asking for your help in the area of "outside communication." Specifically we are looking at the St. John's website and *The Eagle*, hoping that members of the congregation will offer their comments and suggestions regarding these two very important avenues of communication. What do you like? Do you have any ideas for changes? Your input is very important to the board and we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to provide feedback. You can speak to any of the board members or email your thoughts to me at rjbrist@mac.com. In addition, if you feel called to serve, you can let me or any editorial board member know.

Randy Brist
Sr. Warden



Youth Group News

St. John's is blessed to have seven adults (Nancy Bowker, Zach Brooks, Steve Byrn, Patrick Schexnailder, Rachael Schexnailder, Charlene Watson, Hilary Cooke) who are eager to work with the youth group this year. Although we don't have regularly scheduled gatherings during the summer, we did have a fun afternoon of tubing with the Murawski family on Lake Shafer—check out the pictures on the bulletin board. Sadly, we also had to bid farewell to Brendan McInerney as he heads off to Birmingham Southern College.

This year we'll continue to nurture a supportive community for our youth in grades 6-12. To that end, we've made some changes to the schedule while leaving some things as they are.

Over the last couple years Sunday school attendance for 6-12th graders has been somewhat sporadic. Keeping this in mind, we restructured the youth group meetings to incorporate the educational piece of our ministry to young people. Therefore, the youth group will now meet on the first and third Sundays of the month from 6-8pm. We'll begin with supper and include both educational and social components for the rest of the evening. With education as a part of Sunday evenings, we no longer have a Sunday morning education class for youth in grades 6-12.

Our plan is to have the youth prepare supper themselves sometimes, and have families responsible other times. If you don't have children in the youth group, but would be interested in providing a meal sometime, please contact Hilary.

In planning for future years, you should know that we are hoping to have a mission trip to either Indianapolis or Chicago in the Spring of 2009 and then a mission trip a bit further afield (though most likely in the US) in 2010. In order to accomplish these trips, there is much work to be done, including a fair amount of fundraising. (Rest assured that the congregation will be well-aware of whatever fundraisers we take on).

Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to serve the young people of our congregation.

Hilary Cooke

September events:

September 7th, 6pm-8pm: First regular meeting of the year. We'll be tie-dyeing t-shirts to wear at the Hunger Hike.

September 21st following church-3pm: Hunger Hike. If you'd like to sponsor one of our hikers, you may do so on-line at lafayetteurbanministry.org/hike or just catch one of them after the service!

Foyer Dinner Groups

It is nearly time to switch Foyer Dinner Groups. I hope that you have had a good year in your current group and that you are looking forward to another round.

Unless I hear from you otherwise, those of you currently in a Foyer Group will be automatically reassigned to a new group.

You must let me know only if you wish to drop out. *Some of you have "Foyer partners" you'd like to keep – please remind me of that* (unless it's your spouse – I will keep married couples together unless otherwise instructed J)

Foyer Kick-Off Wine and Cheese Party is Sun., October 5 at 5:30 PM at St. John's. *Nibbles to share are welcomed but not required.* Lists of new groups will be available there and will be left on the credenza for pick-up later by anyone who cannot make the kick-off. This party is for anyone who has been in/or considered joining a Foyer Group – do come even if you are "opting out" for this round.

If you haven't been in Foyer, consider giving it a try. This is a program begun in England which has become popular in a number of congregations in the U.S. It is a great way to become better acquainted with fellow parishioners. Once a year participants are assigned to mixed groups of 8-9 adults, all ages, couples or singles. During the course of the following year the group meets once at each person's home for a family meal (usually dinner or brunch). Singles often choose to "partner-up" to share their turn at hosting the group. That means you meet about 3 or 4 times during the year at the convenience of the people in your group. You host one and are a guest at the others.

It is also fine for you to make arrangements for a dutch treat (i.e. each pays their own way) meal at a restaurant if you don't have space for the group. Some people have hosted a picnic in a park or had a meal of chili and ice cream sundaes sitting around on the floor in an apartment. A rental movie with a meal of soup and sandwiches has been well-received. The point is to get together and enjoy one another's company, so it is OK to be creative about how you take your turn.



Questions? Call me. Lloyd Brewer 497-3669.



UTO

The United Thank Offering has conceived a new vision, which will be reflected in 2009 UTO grant criteria and awards.

UTO's Vision

We will significantly impact the lives of women and children because of Christ's love.

To achieve this vision UTO will focus particularly on projects that implement significant change toward alleviating profound human suffering that the Millennium Development Goals address.

UTO will continue their historic mission to address compelling human needs and expand the mission and ministry of the Church.

UTO is a spiritual and financial partner in the mission work of the Episcopal Church through every person in every pew.

UTO's mission is to expand the circle of thankful people. To achieve this mission, UTO encourages daily prayers, offerings and awareness of the abundance of God's blessings.

Remember to get your Blue Box

Yours in Christ, Mary L. Davis

Young Voices Wanted!

The music training for our young children will begin soon, and it's not too late to join! Here are some of the benefits of becoming a Chorister:

- 1) SING some of the world's greatest music from all over the globe
- 2) GROW to become a talented musician
- 3) MAKE new friends and be part of a team
- 4) ENJOY special choir social events

No Previous Experience Necessary

Rehearsal is after school – please contact Michael Bennett if you are interested in joining this fun group.

From the Director of Music...

I don't normally contribute a regular monthly column for the *Eagle*, but rather a notice here and there pertaining to recruitment or advertisement for a particular concert or liturgy. A full list of events will be publicized in mid-August when programs are ramped up after school begins. Our program for music continues to grow, but we are still in search of additional children to sing in our choirs, as you'll see elsewhere in this issue. Why, you may ask? An obvious response is that "children's voices are beautiful" (angelic is a term I've often heard). And secondly, while youth are the future of the church, I believe that they are also the "now," and will have a stronger future if they participate at an earlier age than adulthood.

I am just on the heels of a wonderful two week vacation that took me to the North Carolina beaches, to Pennsylvania to visit family and then to New York City. There I sang with the choir and choristers from Trinity Church Indianapolis for three liturgies at three of New York's flagship parishes: Trinity Wall St., St. Thomas 5th Ave and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. I did this on my own for spiritual refreshment and renewal and to also observe the atmosphere, community and accomplishments of a choir that is not much larger than ours.

My call out this year for our own children and youth to participate in our choral program is the strongest thus far. As I witnessed these past days the singing teens that will go off to college this fall after sharing many years of friendship singing in a supportive, Christian environment, my wish for a stronger program at St. John's increases immensely. We have the children to do it! I invite you to consider enrolling your child in this worthwhile program. The level of commitment can only be determined once all interested parties step forward and a group is formed. Every child can be taught to sing, and no one will be excluded. Why not encourage your timid son, daughter or grandchild to give it a try, as they might have the best time of their life!

