

Together

DECEMBER 2009

A Word from the Rector

The Church of the Holy Spirit, Orleans

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The Mission of the Church of the Holy Spirit is to proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, welcome all people and serve one another with love.

Dear Friends,

We begin this month with a celebration of new ministry at the Church of the Holy Spirit. I'd stress, especially, that what this celebration intends to lift up for God's blessing is not mine, but **ours**: the ministry that we share here together. A new pastoral relationship involves getting to know one another—as an ongoing process. It takes time to grow into different dimensions of connection. And it also takes conscious investment of energy. I am profoundly grateful for all your efforts and energy in this process—and seek to be mindful of all that is involved for a congregation in its first months with a new Rector.

For myself, I continue to much enjoy getting acquainted in these first months of new pastoral relationship. It's really more than enjoyment—my sense is one of profound blessing, too.

(continued next page)

In the service of this process, I thought that I'd offer elsewhere in this issue of *Together*, a somewhat more expansive article—as a contribution of my own to help with our getting acquainted process. It's titled, "A Little Something of Everything."

I'll ask you to bear with me there, if my thoughts meander a bit. And my writing style can sometimes be rather heavily packed, I'm told! But even in these, there may be some opportunity to get to know me a bit better! From time to time, I will be making such additional writings of mine available in various ways. (Don't worry: None of them are that long—and none of them "required reading," either!) I also like to recommend books; not just those we may use in a formal series.

In my preaching, teaching, and writing, I seek both to provide resources as well as foster engaged reflection. By "engaged," I mean both thoughtful and participatory. I really do value questions; in groups and also one on one—so I encourage folks not to hold back.

Growth in relationship with one another is one of the essential ways we grow in fellowship with God. Even in spite of the fact that it seems to take so much work—and in spite of the fact that because we are what we are, all relationships will have their moments of challenge—this is how God has arranged it.

As we grow in fellowship with God and one another, may we find ourselves fine-tuned and readied for service—to God's Glory, and the furtherance of God's Reign in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanks, again, to all. Blessings be on all our conversations, our fellowship, and on the ministry we share in this place.

Yours in Christ,

Adam Linton +

The details of my office hours are still being fine-tuned. The best way to reach me from Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., is through the Church Office: 508-255-0433.

*The following is my direct e-mail address: **holyspitorleansrector@verizon.net***

Friday is my customary "Day Off"—which, both for my own sake and as a good example, I committed to keep. However, I am also always available for emergencies such as hospitalizations, deaths in the family and other similar situations for which immediate pastoral response is called. For these, I much want parishioners to feel that they may call me directly at my home phone number: 508-255-2182.

ENTERED INTO ETERNAL LIFE



Richard Carroll

Celebration of New Ministry
and Institution of Father Adam as Rector

Sunday, January 3 at 2:00 p.m.

Bishop Bud Cederholm will preach and preside at the Church of the Holy Spirit's Celebration of New Ministry and the Institution of Father Adam Linton as Rector on **Sunday, January 3, beginning at 2:00 p.m.** Reception will follow in the Parish Hall.

To accommodate this special event, the Epiphany Trope, Presentation of Gifts, and the Youth Hosted Breakfast will all be switched from that date to the following Sunday, January 10.

Prior to the Institution on January 3, the Church of the Holy Spirit will offer a simplified two-service worship schedule: 7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I (spoken service), and 10:00 a.m., Holy Eucharist with Carols, Rite II.

Likewise, to facilitate the participation of young people and their families in the Institution, Sunday School will **not** be held on January 3.

Need transportation to the Celebration on January 3?

Please call Patti LaBranche (508-255-3532) or the Parish Office.

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord

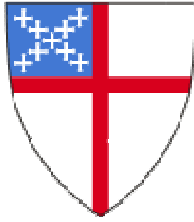
This year, as every year, members of our congregation have volunteered to write meditations on the scriptures appointed for the 26 days of Advent. This is a challenging but not overly difficult spiritual exercise, and gives each writer a chance to think ahead in seasonal preparation for Christmas. This year's writers came from present and past EFM classes, and from parishioners who have written before. They include Ellie Brainard, Celia Calhoun, Kathy Chapman, Bev Dehjer, Rusty Funnell, Nat Goddard, Peggy Hammer, Jill Holmes, Sharon Inger, Jane Nixon, June MacDonald, Hedy and Richard O'Hara, Edith Petty, Charlie Reihnhardt, Miriam Ridgeway, Brooke Skea, George Trimble, Kathy Udall and Bob Winter, adding this time Nancy Ludewig, Wilma Morris, and Helen Richardson.

Particular thanks go to Sharyn Laughton, who in addition to "writing a day," created, as always, the wonderfully strong cover art.

We thank each of them for their time of preparation, and hope that our contributors list will grow for Lent. If you would like to join us, know that you will be warmly welcomed. The task is not onerous - you will have all the "coaching" you need, and the chance to share your own interpretation of scripture with a parish which is faithful in prayerful sharing.

—Dilys and Frank Smith

Update from the Senior Warden



What a year 2009 was! We lived through so much uncertainty during the first half of the year through the interim and yet we stayed strong and vibrant – thank you so much for being who you are and for keeping the Parish alive and in a good state for our Rector-to-be. Then we had the excitement of the Search Committee’s decision on July 27 on the final candidate for Rector, the Reverend Adam S. Linton; followed by the Vestry’s unanimous vote on July 30 to call him as our Rector pending Parish Meeting approval, followed by the Parish’s unanimous vote on August 16 to call Father Adam as our new Rector. I was deeply moved to see the show of hands for this unanimous vote. In early September we said goodbye to Mother Sue Lederhouse and Bruce in a very loving way, giving thanks for their very pastoral presence with us through the transition and interim, and we were very fortunate to have Father Charles Morris to lead us through the month of September. In October we experienced the excitement of the arrival of Father Adam and his wife, Lori, and their family, and we have had three months to get to know them which has been a joy.

Now we enter a new year, a new decade, a new phase in the life of this Parish beginning, most fittingly, with the service of Celebration of new Ministry on Sunday, January 3, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. Bishop Bud Cederholm will be presiding and will lead us through the institution of Father Adam as our Rector. We will try to find drivers to bring those who cannot drive themselves, so please call Patti LaBranch (508-255-3532), or the office, a week ahead if you need that help. I do hope you will attend if at all possible. It promises to be a splendid service!

Then we have the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31, at 11:20 a.m. (with only two services beforehand at 7:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.). There will be coffee and goodies (please bring some cookies or other good stuff if you can) at 11:00 a.m. Please note this new time for the Annual Meeting. Again, it is important that we have a quorum, so please come. Again, if you need help getting there, please call Patti LaBranche or the office.

A brief note to encourage you to send in a pledge if you have not already done so: the Vestry is voting this evening (as I write) on the Budget for 2010 and I know there will either have to be some cuts or else we will have to run with a deficit. These are tough times for all of us but please consider carefully what you are able to give to the Church. Thank you.

Lastly, thank you to all of you who participate in any of the many ministries in the Parish. This is almost every member of the Church! Thank you, thank you! There is much that we could do better but there are so many good things happening and it is all of you who make it all happen. Thank you for making 2009 a wonderful year – I have really enjoyed being Senior Warden and I am not sure that all Senior Wardens can say that!

Now we step into the new year and the new decade, led very ably by Father Adam, with Father Charles assisting – may it be a fulfilling time for all of us.

—Celia Calhoun

How can Howdy, Chris and I ever thank the Church of the Holy Spirit for all of the love and support that we received after Dave’s death? Your calls, letters, food, and love sustained us during a sad time.

Our thanks to Father Adam for following Dave’s directions so kindly and thoughtfully – and my thanks to the “calling committee” for finding such a good man.

For the “joyful songs to the Lord,” we thank Darlene, Sandy, Frank, Bruce, the Bell Choir, and the Choir. I know that you made Dave very happy.

Marj and the generous women did such a beautiful reception. Thank you for your loving work. (I think that Joshua, Kayla, and Andrew had lots of cookies while their parents were distracted.)

Dave has always been passionate about liturgy and youth work. I do hope that the generous gifts that were given in his memory will be used for the youth of the parish. Our future is and will always be our children. I believe it would be a fitting memorial to one who loved this parish so much.

—Donna White

Proclamation

Vestry Highlights – December 2009

Treasurer's Report: Bill Gardiner noted that as we approach the end of the year, he expects a five digit deficit. Bill Gardiner presented a draft 2010 budget which the Vestry thoroughly reviewed. The budget presented is based on receiving pledges for 2010 totaling \$409,000. We need to receive an additional \$50,000 in pledges to attain that goal. The budget will be revised and finalized in January, when the Vestry has updated 2010 Pledge figures. The Vestry also voted that the 2010 budget it approves will be balanced. As required by the Internal Revenue Service, the Vestry approved motions concerning the housing allowances for both our Rector and Assisting Priest.

Rector's Report: The plans are finalized for The Celebration of New Ministry and Institution of The Reverend Adam S. Linton as Rector which is to be held at 2:00 PM, Sunday, January 3, 2010. A reception will be held in the Parish Hall after this festive service. There will be two services on January 31, 2010, the day of our Annual Meeting. The services will be at 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM, with coffee hour at 11:30; the Annual Meeting will be called to order shortly after that.

Warden's Report: The Warrant for the Annual Meeting was presented to the Vestry and approved.

Old Business:

Policy on Accidents and Loss will be reviewed at the January meeting

Nominating Committee Report: Brian Skea presented the committee's final report with a full slate of candidates to stand for election at the Annual Meeting. The committee's report is included in this issue of the Together.

Next Vestry Meeting: The next Vestry Meeting on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Fireplace Room. The 2010 Budget will be finalized at this meeting.

Please note that the Vestry meetings are open to Parish members. Your attendance is welcome! Minutes of Vestry Meetings are available in the Parish Office.

Page McMahan, Clerk

Blessed is the leader

Blessed is the leader who knows where to go, why to go there and how to get there.

Blessed is the leader who knows no discouragement, and presents no alibi.

Blessed is the leader who knows how to lead without being dictatorial.

Blessed is the leader who leads for the good of the most concerned; not for personal gratification.

Blessed is the leader who develops leaders while leading.

Blessed is the leader with a head in the clouds, and feet on the ground.

Blessed is the leader who considers leadership an opportunity to serve

Christopher News Notes

WARRANT

KNOW ALL PERSONS BY THESE PRESENTS:

That the **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**, in the County of Barnstable, Village of Orleans, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, will be held in the Parish Hall at 11:30 a.m. on **SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2010**, to act on the following:

1. To receive the Minutes of the Parish Meeting of The Church of the Holy Spirit on Sunday, January 25, 2009;
2. To elect a Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Parish Treasurer, and Clerk for one (1) year terms; to elect three (3) members to the Vestry for three (3) year terms; and to elect delegates to the Diocesan Deanery and to the Cape Cod Council of Churches.
3. To receive the Fiscal Year 2010 Budget adopted by the Vestry;
4. To receive all Reports that are presented;
5. To conduct any other proper business that may come before this Meeting.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I do hereby set my signature this seventeenth (17th) day of December, 2009.

Page McMahan, *Parish Clerk*

Nominating Committee Report

Committee Members:

Brian Skea (Chair), Cynthia Wieboldt, Jack Gentile, Kathy Goddard, Don Bragdon.

Candidates for Officers: One Year Term

Senior Warden- Celia Calhoun

Junior Warden- Phil Suraci

Treasurer- Bill Gardiner

Clerk- Page McMahan

Candidates for Three Vestry Positions : Three Year Terms

Mary Anne Bragdon, Bev Dreher and Nat Goddard

Candidates for Two Convention/ Deanery Delegates and One Alternate: Three Year Terms:

Cynthia Wieboldt, Jane Nixon and Jodie Mines (alternate)

Candidates for Delegates to Cape Cod Council of Churches : Three Year Terms:

Marge Colwell and Bob Winter

Submitted, Brian Skea

Biographies of Candidates for Vestry

Mary Anne Bragdon

Mary Anne has been an active member of CHS since her marriage to her husband, Don, in 1992. She has been a special needs teacher for 21 years, serving the last 15 for the town of Harwich. Service to CHS includes helping with the Sunday school summer program, nursery care, and church school special events. For the past three years she has served with Don as an usher at the 9 am service. She has recently finished serving a one year term on the Vestry. Mary Anne and Don have two daughters, Katie and Maggie who are active members in the church school program and serve as acolytes. She says it would be a joy and an honor to serve on Vestry.

Bev Dreher

The church has always been a significant part of my life. For twenty eight years I was a member of St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church in Sudbury, Massachusetts. I was married, raised four daughters, became active in the church, sang in the choir, taught Sunday school and served as church school coordinator. I served as the chair of the evangelism committee, founded "*Lighthouse*", a lay counseling course modeled after the chaplaincy program taught in seminaries. I went back to work as a technical illustrator and graphics supervisor until my husband was diagnosed with cancer and passed away in 1985. As a way of working through my grief, I returned to college, received a degree in Human Service Management at Lesley College and was employed as a Case Manager in Elder Services. The following three years I was a member of the vestry, serving as liaison to the newcomer's committee. In 1991, Wes Dreher entered my life and in 1993 we were married, combining our families, his seven children with my four. We moved to Cape Cod, settled in Orleans and became members of the Church of the Holy Spirit. The Church family has been an integral source of prayers, love and support for me. I am honored to be nominated to the vestry and hope to serve and give back in a meaningful way.

Nathaniel Goddard

Nat was born and raised in Massachusetts, attended South Kent School (along with a good number of other parish members), received an AB from Harvard and then an M.Ed from the University of Virginia. He went into the Army for two years and then became a teacher in Connecticut, ending his teaching career as Headmaster of Stuart Hall (School) in Staunton, Virginia. In he has worked as a Permanent Seasonal Natural Resources Officer for the Town of Eastham, Massachusetts. Nat is a life-long Episcopalian, with responsibilities ranging from Sunday School teacher to choir member, to Vestry member, and Junior and Senior Warden; and he was Junior Warden here a few years ago. He says he is committed to the mission of the CHS and is thrilled with the new Rector and his Assistant. He is looking forward to the next years as the Parish heads into directions guided by the leadership.

Annual Report Deadline:

January 4, 2010

Please send your reports to [holyspirit@orleansadmin@verizon.net](mailto:holyspirit@orleansadmin.net)

Overnights of Hospitality Program

The Overnights of Hospitality Program needs your help. As we go into our sixth year, we continue to host six or seven men twice a month. It takes an army of staff to make the program function without overworking any one person. To accomplish our goal of assigning you once a quarter, we need additional help in the following areas:

Drivers: A driver goes to the Salvation Army in Hyannis in Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. and picks up three to four men and drives them back to The Church of the Holy Spirit for the night. You are invited to have dinner with the Overnight staff and our guest, or you are free to drop off the men and go home. We need six additional drivers.

Cooks: Cooks work in teams of two or three. You choose the menu, purchase and prepare the food, and serve it. We ask you to prepare enough for 15 people. The 15 includes the six or seven guests, the two men who stay overnight with our guests, the kitchen helper, the coordinator for the month, and yourself. There is a kitchen helper who sets the tables and helps clean up the kitchen, which includes running the dishwasher. We need three additional teams of cooks to cover for the current staff who sneak away to warmer weather in the winter.

Please consider joining this ministry, and contact me at 508-240-3146 or arjr761@comcast.net. with any questions or to volunteer to help keep this vital ministry running smoothly

—*Al Rogers*

Pastoral Care Committee

Happy New Year—

Please make a resolution to notify the Parish Office or the Pastoral Care Committee if you or someone you know is in the hospital or ill at home. We depend on you to keep us informed.

The Women's Lunch groups have been well-attended. The next one is scheduled for January 11 at 11:30. Please bring a sandwich and beverage; dessert will be provided. This is a wonderful opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones. If you need transportation, please call Sara Fry (508-896-7023 or Ellie Brainard (508-255-6908).

Jane Nixon has temporarily replaced Jinni Fraser on the transportation team with Patti LaBranche. Call either of them if you are in need of a ride to medical appointments or other activities.

Soul Food meals are available, but in a different way. Call Dilys Smith if you need a meal or two, and will make certain the needs are met.

Our next meeting is January 14, at 2:00 p.m.

—*Ellie Brainard*

Serving

Acolyte Schedule

January 3 at 10:00 a.m. Doug Delano

January 3 at 2:00 p.m. TBA

January 10 at 9:00 a.m. Cathy Doyle

January 17 at 9:00 a.m.

Sarah Kimbal and Katie Bragdon

January 24 at 9:00 a.m.

Margorie O'Reilly (also Lector)

January 31 at 9:00 a.m.

Sarah, Wildman, Ben Schneider and

Lucas LaBranche



Pleasant Bay Shepherds Group Meeting

Sunday, January 17
5:00 p.m.
at the home of
Janet and Bob Winter
32 Towhee Lane, South Orleans

Towhee Lane is directly off Route 28, and we are the first house on the left past the second speed bump.

After a pot luck supper, we will have a brief presentation by church member Chris Hardman about her work in Haiti. Chris has made several trips there helping at a medical clinic and school. Her group has been supported by our Outreach Committee, and was recently successful in bringing a clean water system to the tiny town where the clinic is located. It will be interesting to hear all that has been done.

If you would like to come, please call Janet Winter (508-255-9085), and let us know what you would like to bring to the pot luck.

Brewster-Dennis Shepherd Group Meeting

Sunday, January 17
5:00 p.m.
at the home of
Herb and Cynthia Wieboldt,
76 Forest Pines Drive, East Dennis
For directions and questions,
please call Cynthia Wieboldt
at (508) 385-6928.

Thank you all for the past year of care so lovingly administered during my surgeries and falls. The love, empathy, cards, rides, food, and books continued week after week.

I am most grateful to be a member of such a loving community.

Mim Ridgeway

Serving

First Fruits



Our December Christmas Sale was very successful! Our “Evergreen Elves” produced an abundance of sale items the preceding week, so everything was fresh and inviting. Hand-made crafts, gift baskets and kitchen goodies disappeared in a trice.

Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make it happen, particularly Dorothy Walsh, who did so much of the advance planning and who was a super saleswoman. Thanks also to those whose purchase helped us gross more than \$1,900., making it possible to aid those in need during this trying year.

—Joan Howe

Artist of the Month

The featured CHS artist for the month of January is LEE TUPMAN.

Lee is a native Vermonter who lived 40 years in northern Virginia before moving to Orleans in 2005. A class at Snow Library helped her to focus on writing poetry, an early interest that had been overwhelmed by family life, community activities and a fulltime career. She enjoys workshops at Castle Hill in Truro, and has been lucky enough to be recognized for her work, including first prize in the Writers Digest national poetry competition in 2008 and third prize in the *Prime Time Cape Cod* contest, to be published in the January issue.

Enjoy this show in the CHS Gallery and look for Lee's poetry in the January issue of *Prime Time*.

Questions? Comments? Call me at - 508 255 7277.

—Sharyn Laughton

Parish Shawl Ministry

Dear ladies of the Prayer Shawl Ministry,

Many thanks for your kind gift of a prayer shawl. It received many favorable remarks at MGH during my treatment. It also provided for my comfort, both physically and spiritually. Thank you.

Judith Reppucci's dad, Chet Reppucci

I'd like to add my own thanks to my dad's note. The prayer shawl which Father Adams so kindly blessed was a true symbol of the comfort, support and understanding which this wonderful Parish offered during this terrible time. I feel truly blessed to be a small part of your Parish family.

And to those who provide these meaningful gifts, I'd like pass on something from my sister. Cathy is a veteran nurse in Florida, and she told us that hospital staffs are always glad to see prayers shawls, because they cover their patients' shoulders perfectly, in just the spot where they get cold. Wrapping them in the shawls is a loving way for both staff and visitors to show they care.

Bobbi Nickerson has a great need for the shawls, which are distributed to both nursing homes and hospitals, so if you are able to help, please bring your washable contribution to the Parish Office.

With much gratitude, *Judith Reppucci*

Church School News

Dates to Remember:

January 3, 2010

Father Adam's Institution - 2:00

No Church School Today

Nursery care will be provided. Children will process and sing at this celebration.

January 10, 2010

Epiphany Trope/Gifts to the Christ Child

Children will attend church with their families and go to their classes after the Trope.

In the Classroom:

Preschool Story Hour will be lead by Janet Winter and Donna Kalinick.

Godly Play - K through 5th grade. We begin January with the Epiphany story - the gifts of the Wise Men and then "Parable" stories for the rest of month.

Parable of the Good Shepherd

Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:1-7

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:30-35

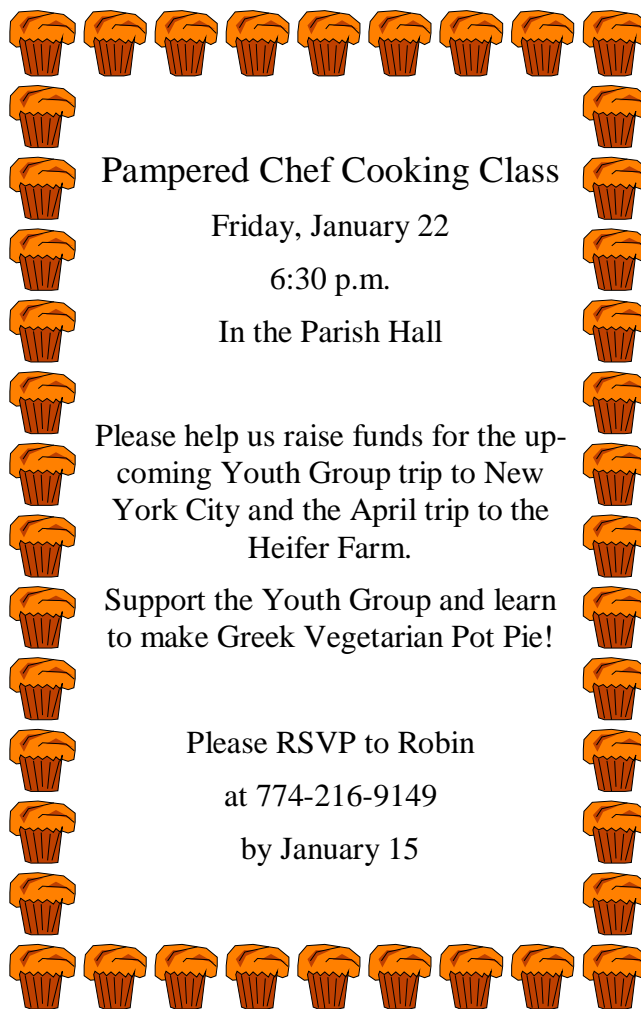
Parable of the Great Pearl

Matthew 13:45

At home, read the scripture verses with your child.....we "wonder" what you will learn!

Middle School Class

In January, the class will follow the lectionary as usual! One of the reasons for using this curriculum is that the scriptures we read in class are the same as those read in the service each Sunday. This provides an opportunity for families to discuss what they have learned and experienced after they leave the church building and how it may be applied to their own lives. First we will study the baptism of Jesus and our own baptism as a call to love and service; then the wedding at Cana and how we can identify and celebrate God's gifts to us; the meaning of the Church as the Body of Christ; and finally, the importance of speaking the truth.



Pampered Chef Cooking Class

Friday, January 22

6:30 p.m.

In the Parish Hall

Please help us raise funds for the upcoming Youth Group trip to New York City and the April trip to the Heifer Farm.

Support the Youth Group and learn to make Greek Vegetarian Pot Pie!

Please RSVP to Robin

at 774-216-9149

by January 15

Recipe for a Happy New Year!

Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate, cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, ensure these months are freed from all the past—have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of Time.

Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot this way) but prepare one day at a time.

Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, prayer, meditation, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing—don't do it), and one well-selected resolution. Include about a teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor! Serve warm!

Serving

Stewardship

Health

True health is being well in body, mind and soul. Like a three legged stool, we can not be strong and healthy if we neglect any part of this trilogy. For a healthy body, we need to eat right, get enough sleep and exercise, and, in today's H1N1 environment, be extra careful to avoid germs. To have a healthy mind, we need to continue to learn, read and challenge ourselves.

A healthy soul is achieved through daily prayer, study of scripture and related material, regular church attendance, a deep and abiding faith and giving from our time, talent and treasures in support of God's mission.

During this winter season, may we all strive for true health in body, mind and soul.

Let me hear of your loving kindness in the morning,

For I put my trust in you;

Show me the road that I must walk,

For I lift up my soul to you.

Psalm 143:8

If you have not returned your 2010 Pledge, please do so. If you need a pledge packet of 2010, please contact the church office. Don't forget to pick up your 2010 Offertory envelopes in the parish office Reception Room and to use them whenever you make a pledge offering.



Come Join Us For the Women of the Holy Spirit Get-Together

January 14
12:00 p.m.
in the Parish Hall


Bring a sandwich to share; dessert and beverages will be provided. If you need transportation please call Patti LaBranche at 508-255- 3773 or Jinni Fraser, 432-7451. Any questions about the event please call Sandy Marshall at 508-255-9971.

The December luncheon was a huge success thanks to those who planned a festive Christmas setting, cookie exchange and caroling. The women who volunteered to work on the luncheon preparation in January are Helen Jones, Lori Linton, Pat Carroll, Bobbie Nickerson and Cynthia Wieboldt.

Hope to see you on January 14!



**Don't get snowed out...
the deadline for the
February issue of Together is
Monday, January 18**



Please send your news, items and articles Judith Reppucci at the Parish Office at

holyspirit@leansadmin@verizon.net

Thanks!



**“A LITTLE SOMETHING OF EVERYTHING (OR, AT LEAST, OF MANY THINGS):
REFLECTIONS ON JOHN NEWTON, CHURCH POLITICS,
MY PERSONAL FAITH COMBINATION, AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES”**

From the Rector

Among the films I’ve enjoyed the most in recent years is *Amazing Grace*—a representation of the story of William Wilberforce’s campaign, in England two hundred years ago, to end the slave trade. That slavery should have been abolished seems so very obvious to us now. We’re probably inclined to wonder how anyone really could have thought otherwise. (I’d note, however, the chilling truth that slavery continues to be a terrible reality in today’s world.) And “back then,” the basic, necessary justice of abolition was very far from being generally self-evident. Before success, Wilberforce’s work was long and frustrating. Anyway, one of my favorite portrayals in the movie was that of John Newton, played outstandingly by Albert Finney. Newton (1725-1807), author of the beloved hymn for which the movie is named, a converted slave trader, in time ordained an Anglican priest, and who became one of the great figures of the Church of England’s Evangelical Awakening in the eighteenth century. He played a key role in Wilberforce’s life.

Perhaps inspired by this, shortly after I saw the movie, when I saw a new publication, *The Letters of John Newton*, I couldn’t resist. In my initial thumbing through of the volume, I fell quickly upon a passage in his correspondence that much caught my attention. I still find it compelling. Here it is:

“Conversation with most Christians is something like going to court, when, except you are dressed exactly according to a prescribed standard, you will either not be admitted or must expect to be heartily stared at... ..I think my sentiments and experience are as orthodox and Calvinistical as need be, and yet I am a sort of speckled bird among my Calvinist brethren. I am a mighty good churchman, but pass among such as a Dissenter in principle. On the other hand, the Dissenters (many of them, I mean) think me defective, either in understanding or in conscience, by staying where I am; while there is a middle party called Methodists, but neither do my dimensions exactly fit with them. I am somehow disqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party.” (July 13, 1778; to the Rev. William Bull)

The parties and their titles have changed. But at least for me, personally, I find the dynamic strikingly enduring. And partisanships have a way of insisting on full allegiance to their comprehensive package deals. To me, it seems almost idolatrous. They all have their way of asking, “Are you with us or against us? Are you ‘in’ or ‘out’?”

However, in faith we cannot offer to other things (even if these be pious) the ultimate devotion that we owe to God alone. “No one can serve two masters.” (Matthew 6:24) It is in godly service that we find liberty. “For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1) Therefore, life in our present mode, even—and maybe especially—in realms of faith, will be bound up with paradox. In all our earthly dealings, there will be a measure of provisionality, qualification, contingency. This doesn’t mean (or shouldn’t mean) that we’re false—or incapable of loyalty. This doesn’t mean that we never take a stand. In the end, however, the kind of awareness that I’m talking about is a needful acknowledgement of creatureliness. So, I find something quite authentic in Newton’s personal “disqualification.” Blessed are those who never quite fit in.

I hope it not presumptuous to count myself in that category. There is in me enough to connect with many camps—but also other stuff to make me, in different ways, generally suspect with all of them! Too theologically liberal for most conservatives; just too theologically traditional, though, for much current, “big-brand-name,” total-package-deal liberalism. A old friend of mine recently compared my position to the short lived, ill-fated Kerensky government, which made its brief appearance in the midst of the Russian Revolution, fatally squeezed from opposing sides in that traumatic period of history. In that world, I guess, there could only be room for Tsarists or Bolsheviks. Needless to say, I would certainly hope for a better destiny—for myself, for our church, and for our world.

Among the progressive aspects of my approach I would include:

1. where I come down in the present controversies concerning human sexuality with which our broader church is engaging;
2. my accent on the need for theological humility, generosity, and space-giving, my respect for a broad range of authentic appropriations of faith, my underscoring of on-going process as a key part of our spiritual journeys, and my sense is that God in Christ is often working in ways far beyond our awareness or recognition;
3. my rejection of the simple equation of “true” with “literally factual”; my underscoring, especially in Biblical studies, of the importance of sensitivity to literary genre and the context of the canonical whole; and,
4. my distrust of reductionist moral absolutisms in the midst of the complexities of life in this fallen world of ours—my recognition that, here and now, dealing with ethics will propel us, not infrequently, into ambiguous spheres.

To expand, briefly, on this last-mentioned item—this does **not** mean that I don’t think that ethics truly intersect with the transcendent; that everything, then, would be a matter of mere situational expediency, morally “up for grabs.” It **does** mean that I think that we need to admit that the translation of ultimate values into the questions of this present life will always be imperfect.

On the other hand, among my rather more traditional sensibilities, I would mention:

1. my enduring centeredness and nourishment in classic theological expressions and Christian devotion;
2. with all acknowledgment of the need for serious institutional self-critique in the church, and awareness of our calling to on-going renewal and reformation, my belief—as well—that there is a profound, irreplaceable gift to be received in core Christian continuities;
3. my commitment to the uniqueness and centrality of Jesus Christ; his incarnation, life, sacrificial death, resurrection, and on-going mission in the Spirit; and,
4. my study of the Holy Scriptures (especially the New Testament) leading me often to more traditional readings; in other words, my critique of an automatic, naïve—and ironically uncritical—hypercriticism that, in my view, is too much in evidence in contemporary scholarship.

And now, to expand (maybe this time not-quite-so-briefly) on *this* last point:

All who read Holy Scripture do so in contexts—whether these be acknowledged or not. The Anglican/Episcopal context for reading Scripture is conscious engagement with both the church’s historic *tradition* and the faculty of human *reason* (the combination of these often called the “three-legged stool”). This doesn’t mean, however, that Scripture is merely “one among many.” The Bible, in all its variety of writing, does remain unique for us. It contains our enduringly constitutive, foundational (and, we believe, God-inspired) expression of faith—to which we are meant to be attentively listening, and with which we are meant to be in on-going conversation. To affirm this does not (and should not) pre-commit us to any one particular interpretive system. Nor does it easily or quickly “settle” the various new questions each age needs to face.

But with all the work, personal investment, and struggle involved in many years of studying the Bible, I’ve found the Holy Scriptures to have a renewing freshness, persistent relevance, and compelling authenticity not quite like anything else. Long before I “liked” the Scriptures—long before I personally assented to the faith to which they testify—I was enabled to recognize (although with less than full enthusiasm at the time) that they bear the presence and authority of Jesus Christ.

So, in the midst of all our needful, God-intended particularities, the enduring power of the Scriptures is a pledge and instrument of gracious—and God-intended—connection. Perhaps, then, the Holy Scriptures—along with the Creeds and the Church’s historic worship traditions—can be seen as a special encouragement for all those whose sense of belonging is more complicated than usual.

So, once again: Blessed are those who never fit in.

—Adam Linton +

WINTER FILM SERIES

What better time for us hardy folks who tough it out on Cape Cod during the winter season, to gather together for " food, friendship, and film?" There will be six films and they will be shown on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, beginning on January 14 at 10:30 am in the Parish Hall. Please bring a bag lunch (beverages will be provided). During and after lunch there will be an opportunity to discuss the film. We will finish no later than 1:30 pm. It is not necessary to register; however, it would be helpful to know how many are coming. Please speak to Father Ken Campbell (508-240-5169) or Scott Daniels (508-925-0204) if you plan on attending the first film. Everyone is welcome, so bring a friend if you wish. The films are the best we could find on important issues we face as human beings and as Christians. A brief summary of the films follows. The first film is one that our rector, Father Adam, highly recommended. Salim, Shalom, Peace

Peace & Justice Committee

"Topahdewin: The Gladys Cook Story," A story of a native American born on the Sioux Valley Reserve, west of Brandon, Manitoba and the little known history of the Dakota people in Canada and the United States. It is a story of how she overcame a life full of strife and heartache, rediscovering her faith and using her gifts of healing to help others.

"Making Whiteness Visible" This film is a brilliant documentary featuring the experiences of white women and men who have worked to gain insight into what it means to understand and challenge hidden ideas of race, racism and white culture in the United States. There is a strong spiritual dimension to the film.

"Black Gold," This is a film about coffee, about small producers in the global south and the lives of consumers in the global north. We are shown how we can make a difference. The Los Angeles Times says, "This film is as riveting and jaw-dropping as anything starring Leonard DiCaprio."

"Food, Inc." This is the best of a number of films that have been produced in recent years on the subject of food. It shows what has happened to our food in the lifetime of most of us and what we can do about it! A revolution is brewing in our country concerning our food!

"Call Me Malcolm" The true story of a transgendered man which begins during Malcolm's last year of seminary. Malcolm travels across the United States visiting people with various perspectives about identity, faith and love. This film is being cosponsored by the Orleans Federated Church since the film was produced by the United Church of Christ.

"Beyond Hatred Lies the Path to Forgiveness: A Family's Gay Son Murdered by Skinheads" This film is set in France (with English subtitles) in 2002. In this deeply moving film, a family is able to move beyond hatred and a desire for revenge to the gift of forgiveness and understanding. A moving testimony to the power of reconciliation which lies at the heart of the teaching of our Lord Jesus.



If you remember that there is no single act of greatness, just a series of small acts done with great passion or great love, then in doing what you see needs to be done—taking dinner to a sick neighbor, helping a child learn to read, writing a letter to the editor of your newspaper, being an advocate for the homeless in your city—you will discover a life filled with the experience of having a purpose worth living for.

—Vicki Robin & Joe Dominguez, [Your Money or Your Life](#)

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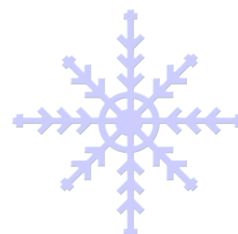


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Together

JANUARY 2010

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Our Mission as The Church of the Holy Spirit is
 to proclaim Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord,
 welcome all people and serve one another with love.

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