



Spring 2012 Newsletter

Rector's Message

Dear parishioners,

As Holly and I prepared for the move to our home, we have been busy spring cleaning, sorting from the attic to the basement. We found ourselves discovering things old and new, as well as making sometimes difficult decisions about what to keep, to give to family and friends or away to those in need. We have gained new appreciation for movements toward a more simple and less cluttered lifestyle.

Spring is a great time to re-examine our lives, our routines and our habits and to discover or rediscover what is most important in our lives. Where we put our time, our energy and our dollar reflect what we value most. Being part of the parish family of St. John's is a gift none of us should take for granted. Starting in 1753, our fore-bearers built and grew the church. It made a difference in their lives in community. Following the fire, the parish rallied together to restore its beauty and dignity. Our generation and our young families have a unique opportunity to reconnect with our spiritual home. The parish council is examining those things that make for a healthy and vital parish. At the heart of it all, are lives that have been touched by love – the love of Christ, which changes a person's life and focus. It is following Christ that makes all the difference and gives renewed strength and energy for living each day. The continued life and ministry of the parish depends upon each generation passing on the faith and taking an active part in parish life. It is a challenge today, but I suspect, it always has been. As we pray for one another and find ways to reach out, I believe we are up to the task.

We will shortly begin our fellowship time on the Church Plaza after the 10:30 a.m. Service. It is a relaxing way to meet and greet other parishioners and to welcome the many visitors who join us at this time. If you have not stopped in other years to enjoy a treat and chat, why not plan to include this as part of your Sunday?

Many concerts and other activities are taking place at St. John's throughout spring and summer. You don't have to go very far to enjoy wonderful music and educational programs. Do take advantage of them for yourself and visiting family and friends.

Again this year, we will have a tour program led by student guides, and later in the fall, by parish volunteers, who present our church to the thousands of visitors who come to visit our church. They are drawn to the beauty of the church and the story of faith and commitment which led to its restoration. Most importantly, the peace and beauty of our church often leads our visitors to worship and an experience of encountering the Holy and Sacred One in this place.

Your friend in Christ,

Michael+



Music At St John's

A note from Barbara

My appreciation goes out first of all to our Chancel Choir and St. John's Ringers for their added commitments over the Easter Season. It's a busy time and your dedication is always deeply appreciated. Members from the Chancel Choir even managed to attend a choral workshop with the South Shore Chorale on Monday of Holy Week. Two major choral happenings were indeed special for all of us here in the week following Easter. Paul Halley conducted the King's College Chapel Choir and instrumental ensemble for Bach's B Minor Mass and Nick Halley conducted the awesome Earth Mass a few days later. At St. John's we were also delighted to welcome violinist Kate Cash and Rev. Norm Freeman to the April 29, 10:30 am service. Norm is a percussionist and also an Anglican priest with a wealth of knowledge and experience, particularly on the topic of spirituality and jazz ministry. As well as treating us to their music that morning, Norm was also our guest preacher. It was also an occasion to celebrate the organ at St. John's and on May 4 Paul Halley gave an organ recital which included a loving tribute to Jim Morrow.

Two other concerts are also part of our outreach program in May. One is with the Canadian Dutch Choir from Calgary on Thursday, May 31 at 7:30 pm. The choir will be visiting Lunenburg for about 3 days. Proceeds from ticket sales will support our music program at St. John's.

Many of you may be aware of the 'Keys to Caring' project. Musique Royale is working in partnership with the Dalhousie Music and Medicine program to provide a new digital Yamaha keyboard for Harbour View Haven and other nursing homes in the province. To date \$1,400 has been raised for Harbour View as a result of a breakfast event at my home on April 14. The male singing group the 'TestosterTONES' also performed for the residents at Harbour View Haven in the afternoon. These students are a delight to be around – following their performance they took time to share a few moments individually with many residents. The final leg of the journey for HVH will be a concert with the students from the music program on Wednesday, May 23 at 7:30 pm. This concert was originally planned for May 26 but had to be changed.

Other exciting news for us includes the celebrations planned in honour of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on June 3. Music for a special evensong will focus on music from her coronation service in 1953 as well as other royal events.

Warm regards,

Barbara

Important Lessons

The obstacle in Our Path.

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the King's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand!

Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

More Important Lessons on Page 8

A Regional Celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II

**Traditional Choral Evensong
Featuring Music from the Coronations of
Elizabeth I, Victoria and Elizabeth II**



June 3, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.

St. John's Anglican Church, Lunenburg, Nova Scotia

Guest Preacher: Bishop Sue Moxley



Rural Rogation Days Making a Comeback in Cities by Janice Kenefick

The Rogation Days of May 14, 15 and 16 in 2012 pass without fanfare for most of us, but in the early Anglican Church, Rogation Days were a major agricultural observance that included fasting, feasting, boundary marking, and crop blessings. Although Rogation Days lost their importance by the end of the 20th Century, they are making a comeback, not in rural areas, but in major cities such as Toronto and New York.

Rogation Days are separate from Rogation Sunday, the fifth Sunday after Easter. Rogation Days immediately precede Ascension Day - the fortieth day of Easter. They were observed by the early Anglican Church as well as the Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches.

"Rogation" comes from the Latin "rogare," which means "to ask." In early Christian times, society depended on small farms which in turn were vulnerable to the uncertainties of nature. Therefore, Rogation Days became a time to ask for blessings on new crops and farm animals in anticipation of a successful harvest. By Anglo-Saxon times, Rogation Days observance reached Britain.

In addition to praying for newly sown crops and livestock, parishioners walked the boundaries of their parish i.e. "beat the bounds," while carrying crosses and singing psalms. They later used willow branches to touch boundary markings. The purpose of beating the bounds was to ensure private landowners weren't encroaching on parish lands, which were also public lands for communal grazing and firewood gathering. Obstructions, unlicensed fences, counterfeit markers and other boundary violations were promptly dismantled.

When the procession stopped at a boundary mark, the priest read the Gospel. Boundary marks could be anything from a large rock to a venerable tree. Some of the tree landmarks, called "Gospel Oaks" still exist.

It became a matter of great pride to beat every marker, although this could be challenging. For example, at the church of St. Clement Danes in London, one of its boundary



Rogation procession in Bedford, 1952

markers fell below ground level, so that every year a choirboy was held by the ankles and lowered down in order to strike the boundary marker. Another London Church's boundary marker disappeared underwater when the Thames River changed course. No mention is made of how parishioners reached the sunken boundary marker!

Resolving boundary issues led to the tradition of reconciling personal relationships during Rogation Days. At the end of each walk was a meal which included specially brewed ale and biscuits. In some parishes, beating the bounds took several days with many picnics and much drinking. By Henry VIII's reign Rogation Days included so much revelry that one preacher declared "these solemn and accustomable processions and supplications be nowe grown into a right foule and detestable abuse."

As Rogation Days started out as a Roman Catholic tradition, inevitably, some early Protestants disapproved. However, parishes wanted to establish and maintain exact boundaries publicly. Therefore, a modified form of the Rogation Days custom, minus its blessings and other "Catholic features", was established under Elizabeth I.

By the 20 century, Rogationtide observance declined and was regarded as obsolete by many. Society had become urbanized. Maps and



Beating the bounds in Lambeth, London, England, in 1961

surveys provided accurate boundaries. Public lands for grazing animals and gathering firewood were no longer needed. Rogation Days were listed as "Days of Optional Observance" in the Book of Alternate Services. The Roman Catholic Church dropped Rogation Days altogether from their liturgical calendar in 1970. Harvest festivals such as Thanksgiving were celebrated at the end rather than the beginning of the growing season.

Rural Rogation Days Making a Comeback in Cities Continued by Janice Kenefick

However, with increasing concern over the environment and the growing popularity of growing your own food at home, or in community gardens, Rogation Days are making a comeback in surprising ways and places. Some churches move the dates to Rogation Sunday or even Earth Day.

“Christians today are rediscovering the ancient meaning of the Rogation Days, seeing responsible stewardship of all the gifts of creation as a special concern of the Church,” says the website of the Church of St. James in Toronto. They observe Rogation Days with a short procession and morning services where they pray for God’s protection of creation not only from natural disaster, but from human destruction, and ask His help for reconciliation “not only with our fellow human beings, but with the entire created order.”

The Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches have also encouraged a renewal of Rogation Days, as a time to pray not only for the fruits of the earth, and the labor of those who work not only in agriculture but also in environmental protection.

Community gardens are becoming popular in urban areas (Bridgewater, NS has one). The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) which fosters cooperation among religious communities and civic organizations also has a community garden. They celebrate Rogation Days with a procession and interfaith Blessings. They moved the date up to Earth Day.

With increasing recognition of Rogation Days, some churches now ask parishioners to bring their seed packets for blessing, or they give away free plants. Others focus on the environmental impact of our stewardship of creation.

With Nova Scotia being the “most rural” of Canada’s provinces, many of us have our own gardens and some keep chickens and other farm animals. The Full Homily Divinity website which provides “resources for Anglican Parish Life” offers more information on the history of Rogation Days and prayers for everything from garden tools to our skill at growing plants.

Blessing of Tools

O God, who in your Holy Word has revealed to us your continual love and care both in this life and in the life to come: Guide and direct us in our labors here as stewards of your creation. [We ask you to] Bless the tools of our work that by their good use we may bear fruit to your glory and be diligent in our vocations; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing of Gardens

O God, who has given each one of us the opportunity to share in the cultivation of the land: Give us also such skill and patience in digging and sowing and planting that fruit and vegetables and flowers may sustain our bodies and gladden our hearts by their usefulness and beauty. [We ask you to] Bless with a healthy and plentiful crop this garden. Endow with skill and endurance those who work here, giving them rich yields and an assured livelihood; in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Blessing of Animals

O God, who created all beasts and cattle in a wonderful order and gave them into our care: [We ask you to] Bless these animals, that they may be a joy to humankind and sharers in the feeding and nurture of the world. Make us good shepherds of all your creatures, we pray, in the Name of our merciful and Good Shepherd, your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.



Rogation Procession and Interfaith Blessings on the St. Mary’s Urban Farm (Earth Day, 2012). Participating were the Rev. Chloe Breyer (executive director, ICNY), representatives from Union Theological Seminary, Jewish Theological Seminary and Boy Scouts

Why go to Church

This came as an email and has been adapted for print here. The content is small but the message is really big and important for all who are declared Christians. When I read this I just felt you might enjoy it also. I hope you do. If you're spiritually alive, you're going to love this! If you're spiritually dead, you won't want to read it. If you're spiritually curious, there is still hope!

Why Go To Church?

A Church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday...

"I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 203,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

"I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this. They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!" *When you are DOWN to nothing... God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible, and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical AND our spiritual nourishment!*

All right, now that you're done reading, pass it on! Everyone should read or hear this! *When Satan is knocking at your door, simply say, Jesus, could you get that for me?" Amen!!*

Remember we are the treasure of the church, as St. Lawrence said. If we leave our treasures in a dark box they tarnish, and need cleaning before they can shine again in the light of day. Now would be a good time for us all to look in the mirror, and remember that as the treasure of the church we should be shining in the light of day. So shine for the world to see. If you doubt it can be done take a look at William Swinimer, the Grade 12 student who sees his faith in black and white, and wears the yellow tee shirt with the slogan, *"Life is wasted without Jesus."*

Trinity Sunday

The Celts saw both the natural world and divinity in Trinitarian terms. A threefold cycle of life *birth, death, and rebirth*, and the three elements of the cosmos *earth, air, and water*. The Celts were confident that the gods cared about creation and creatures and were involved in day-to-day life at every level. Thus, there were prayers for every activity, invoking the assistance and the blessing of the gods on everything from starting a fire to going on a journey, from shearing sheep to weaving cloth, from birth to death. For the three-thinking Celts of Ireland, the leap from three-in-one in creation to the Three-in-One Creator, must have been relatively natural. There was certainly skepticism about leaving behind the old gods, but once the transition had been made, translation was not at all difficult.

Trinity Sunday is June 3rd this year.

More Important Lessons

Cleaning Lady.

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student, and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one:

"What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?"

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the Cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50's, but how would I know her name?

I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade.

"Absolutely, " said the professor.. "In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say "hello.."

I've never forgotten that lesson.. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

Pickup in the Rain

One night, at 11:30 p.m., an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rain storm.. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride.

Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car.

A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960's. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance, and put her into a taxicab.

She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man's door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached.

It read: "Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you, I was able to make it to my dying husband's' bedside just before he passed away. God Bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others."

Sincerely, Mrs. Nat King Cole.

Always remember those who serve.

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

"How much is an ice cream sundae?" he asked.

"Fifty cents," replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it.

"Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?" he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient..

"Thirty-five cents," she brusquely replied.

The little boy again counted his coins.

"I'll have the plain ice cream," he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away.

The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies.

You see, he couldn't have the sundae, because he had to have enough left to leave her a tip.

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