



THE MESSENGER



Parish News of St. John's Episcopal Church, Saginaw, Michigan.

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Shocking News!

Too many times we find ourselves with news that we're certainly not anticipating and find ourselves unprepared to take-in fully, but with Easter, that's what we are confronted with: shocking news, unexpected and certainly perplexing! Consider our more recent history. This day has all too often come amid situations and news we feel ill-equipped to receive. Ten years ago this past week, in my first year out of seminary, came the shocking news of Columbine. Silly me, I must have missed the class that was supposed to provide answers to the questions that come from senseless violence! I recall Easter in 2002 after the aftermath of 9/11 as workers were still literally pulling pieces of lives from ground zero, being confronted with shocking news. In 2005 there was another school shooting, and the news we have been confronted with even in this past Holy Week has been no different. Too many situations, far too much news that is shocking, that we cannot fully comprehend. Whether about natural disasters or the numerous shootings reported on, we stand in the midst of an emerging Easter trying to make sense of intense tragedy involving so many people. Aside from even what the media scramble to display for us, one can see just how difficult and challenging life can be in our own community and too many individual families. Apart from the violence, the challenges, changes and grief that come with our daily lives is difficult and can leave us trying to make sense of it all. This Easter, alone, finds us once more in the midst of wonder, reflection, and perhaps even anxiety about what is to come in the near future. While Easter is and should be a time of intense joy and exhilaration, recent events illustrate for us that Easter is at the same time a profound moment of grief, uncertainty and even bewilderment. While the first feeling is rather natural and even expected, the latter feelings are not what we typically expect when we think about Easter. We might wonder how life has changed in 2,000 years. But if anything, we should find the accounts of those first witnesses to the empty tomb, as different as they might be, a wonderful companion to each of us as we hear the shocking news: He is not there! He has risen! The story has not ended!

In an article he wrote a few years ago, Edmond Browning, the former presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, reminded us that Easter is, itself, about *mystery* and that we, as well as those first witnesses 2000 years ago, could not fully understand. Bishop Browning writes, "The gift of *Easter Faith* is not up to us [we do not create it or control it]. Easter is a *gift* from God. And it comes to us precisely at the disappointed places: at the empty tomb. This tomb can also be figurative – in our deepest sorrows, in the bitterest disillusionment, in what feels like simply an ending. In short, in the places we need it most."

In contrast to the news that we are bombarded by the media with is our faith – our Easter faith that says the story has not ended. Faith is not simply something we can occasionally do when it's convenient, it is a part of who we know ourselves to be. That part of our being provides hope, strength and courage for what is seemingly otherwise devastation. It is this faith that in turn creates the power to not only cope with the situation, but make it simply another passage in our lives. Browning writes, "We do not know why things happen the way they do, but we know that God can bring life out of the darkness and silence of death... [even when] we do not know how [or understand the mystery]." All of the saving works of God that we celebrate are more than a good story, more than history, the saving work of God is what makes "*our* story." Each year in Holy Week we come to the story as if for the first time, allowing the story to unfold for what it is. Thus, Good Friday remains what it is – the day our Lord was crucified – and yet we know that God was not done that day, the events of that moment in time wasn't the *end* of the story. So we must remind ourselves that God is not done with us as well, and that our story continues. This is where we are now...standing at the empty tomb...anxious about what this great mystery means for our own life.

Today, the shocking news is that New Life has begun – in all of us! Part of this great and mysterious gift of Easter is the invitation from God, the gift giver, to allow Easter to be more than an event or holiday, but rather the invitation to what it promises: new life and hope that can dispel the darkest of times. To accept this invitation is to accept new life, but that's not all. To accept this gift also requires that we release the hold of what has passed – the events of the past that have seemingly placed a hold on our lives. I believe we must trust God and release our fears, the old life – releasing the burdens and sorrows that accompanied it – making room for new life to take hold and flourish. Together with God's help, the faith and joy of this Easter faith will grow and make all things new – just look at our parish! Behold, all of us can say to those close to us, "I have incredible news!" I know the world needs to hear it. "He has risen!"

Jason Clint



Happy Birthday

- 1 David Corcoran
- 2 Tom Donaghy
- 3 Carrie Barshaw
- 5 Susan Beckley
- 6 Chuck Stuart
- 11 Dorothysue Campbell
- 11 Kathie Smith
- 13 Clarence (Bud) Blodgett
- 13 Eleanor McLaughlin
- 16 Leon Koeplinger
- 17 Natasha Coulouris
- 19 Stephanie Zientek
- 21 Patricia Jackson
- 21 Nancy Wilson
- 22 Helen Needham
- 23 Hannah Oravitz
- 24 Michael Rump
- 26 Katherine Trogan
- 28 Susan Beckley
- 28 Kaylee Cittel
- 29 Betty Grills
- 31 Barbara Roberts

Happy Anniversaries!

- 1 Marcia & Dan Hoffman
- 10 Clara & Bill Vlassis
- 11 Carrie & Todd Barshaw
- 12 Kerrie & Tom Blackney
- 13 Marcie & David Winters
- 17 Jan & Jerry Young
- 17 Kathi & Herb III Spence
- 18 Sue & Jack Luxton
- 21 Lorraine & Ron Swarthout
- 23 Barb & Ray Ilkka

Thank You

Thanks to Sue Brigham, Pat Lynes, and Bill Fredrick for all of your dedicated service folding towers of Messengers and Holy Week bulletins!

Thank you Ida Smith and Janet Cosenza for helping with the continental breakfast on Palm Sunday.

Thank you Connor Shinaberry for your help serving at the coffee hour after the 10:30 service.

A BIG thank you to Sue Luxton and everyone who helped serve, set-up, clean-up, or brought a dish last month at meals and receptions!

Thanks to Sarah Elin for helping set up the beautiful candle atmosphere and Jan Young for donating materials and helping tidy-up at the Easter Vigil.

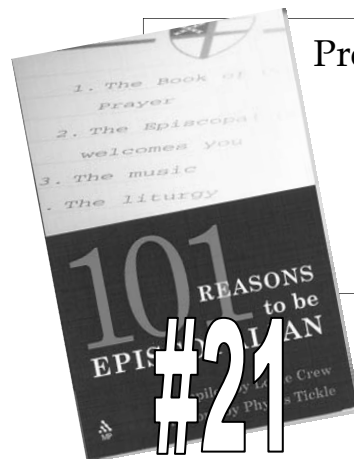
Is there someone in our parish who has gone above and beyond? If you would like to offer thanks, please call the office at 793-9575.

Good Samaritans:

Apr 19 - May 2	Joan Wendland	686-8363
May 3 - May 16	Diane Grigg	793-1669
May 17 - May 30	Linda Buzon	790-2164
May 31 - Jun 13	Sperry Garber	790-4940

Pregnant priests, Celebrating!

*The Rev. Dr. Deborah Galante Seles
Diocese of Chicago*



Cf. 101 Reasons to be Episcopalian, compiled by Louie Crew. © 2003 by Louie Crew/Morehouse ISDN 0-8192-1925-8 e Publishing.

Outreach News

The Annual Ingathering for the *United Thank Offering* will take place during the month of May! If you or your family participates in this mission please turn in your contribution in the enclosed envelope and/or “blue boxes” (found in the Community Room) as part of our Eastertide thanksgiving and to assist the work of the UTO with their efforts both in the US and world-wide.



About the UTO – United Thank Offering

The Mission of the United Thank Offering is to invite people to offer daily prayers of thanksgiving to God and outward and visible signs of those prayers which will benefit others.

God calls each of us to grow in awareness of God, our own relationship with God, and our relationship in community with all whom God has created. As habits of daily thankful prayer mature, our personal relationship with God grows. Daily prayers of thanksgiving strengthen our being and doing. The blue box can be a reminder of our many blessings. Uniting our own gifts of thanks with those of others keeps us in thankful relationship them and with all of creation. In sharing our thank offerings with those throughout the Communion who seek to address compelling human need and extend the mission of the Church, we deepen our sense of participation in the lives of others. The shared prayer and money offerings help others to respond to God's call and to grow in their own deepened sense of living within the greater Christian community. Through our shared stories, God calls us to continue to grow into the fullness of the Kingdom.

The UTO Path to God Prayer

Source of all creation, all love, all true joy, accept we pray these outward signs of our profound and continuing thankfulness for all of life.

Bless those who will benefit from these gifts through the outreach of the United Thank Offering; and keep each of us ever thankful for all the blessings of joy and challenge that come our way; through him who is the greatest gift and blessing of all, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Hope Totes & ERD Review:



This year St. John's collected \$106.91 for the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund and 22 Hope Totes for the City Rescue Mission. These totes contained a variety of personal care items such as: new socks, soap, toothbrushes, lip balm, and much more. The City Rescue Mission delivered these totes to some of Saginaw's neediest men, women, and children on Easter Day and thanked St. John's for being the second highest contributor!

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Presents the...

Steiner Chorale

Brahms Requiem

May 3, 2009 at 4:00pm



For more information visit www.stjohns-saginaw.org

Look for "Wedding Day!" beginning in June

Be sure to tune to TNT this June and look for the new reality TV show "Wedding Day." St. John's will be featured as host church to one of the deserving couples this season, so don't miss our episode where you can "meet" the couple and see St. John's transformed.



Along with DreamWorks Television Presents

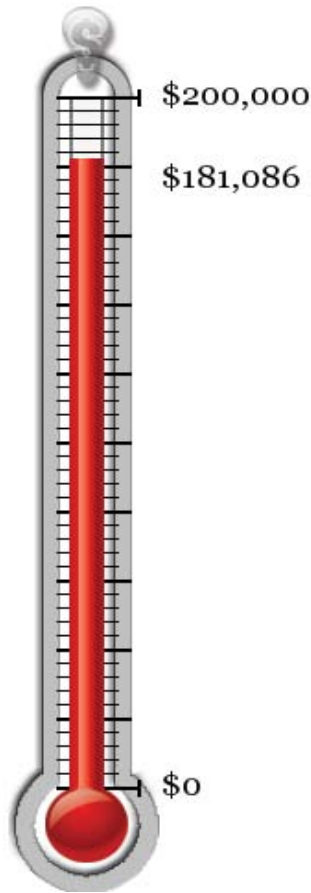


Blitz Build 2009

Saginaw's twelfth Habitat Blitz Build will take place June 12 - July 3. St. John's has requested to be a part of the painting team again this year (a job we both enjoy and excel at) so keep you're eyes open for a weekend near the end of June to help participate in this very meaningful community outreach opportunity!



***Are you someone who is helping to make our goal happen?
Thank you! By your commitment, 2009's goal is within reach!***



We know you are trying to fulfill your commitment and it shows! We are hopefully in the final days before we reach this year's goal with over an 85% response rate for this year's annual giving appeal. We trust that these final remaining commitments will come in as we all continue to offer what we can to help turn our parish around and make a difference!

With so many things changing around us all, the commitment we continue to share represents the hope that makes St. John's stand out; not unlike our proud steeple which was the first to be "lit" by a dedicated community effort, led by our own Robert Maul (1954-2009). Driving past the church at night, the steeple of St. John's stands in such contrast to the night with its tall steeple brightly lit for our community. As great as it is, the steeple is only a symbol of the message of hope and stability that the ministry and mission we share continues to be. We know that your share of that commitment is important and is clearly evident! So thank you for continuing to offer your time, talent and your treasure!

You can do your part! If you have yet to return a pledge card, you can help us close the gap and fulfill our goal. Make your pledge by returning a commitment card or simply contact Jan Young in the parish office by email at jan@stjohns-saginaw.org or by calling 793-9575.



Greening our Church

Does the church look a little brighter to you? Well yes, Spring is here and the sun shines brightly, but we have also replaced the bulbs in the church with a brighter and more environmentally friendly option! Now, not only are we saving the Earth but a few dollars, too!

 <p>TRI-STAR TRUST BANK</p> <p>1004 N. Michigan Ave. Saginaw, MI 48602 www.tristartrust.com</p>	<p>Is your financial life too complex?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Financial Planning ◆ Brokerage Services ◆ Retirement Plans ◆ Trust Services ◆ 401 (k) Plans ◆ Investments
	<p><i>Let Tri-Star Trust Bank help you Simplify Your Life.</i> Contact Jerry Young, Vice President: jerry@tristartrust.com</p>

○ Simplifying Life.

Navigating the Storm

Diocesan Leadership Conference: May 16th, 2009 10:00am - 3:00pm



Navigating the Storm is a leadership conference open to all members of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. The conference will be discussing:

- What a healthy church looks like
- What a healthy individual looks like
- How our churches work together (and sometimes apart)
- How we can be better leaders within our church

Would you like to be a part of the group from St. John's who will be attending?

- Contact Jan Young in the parish office by Wednesday, May 6th. (793-9575)
- Cost: \$10.00 per person
- Location: St. Dunstan's in Davison

Presiding Bishop's Easter Message for 2009

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it (John 1:5).



The light returns and the days lengthen, even if it remains startlingly dark as we rise these days -- daylight savings time is not always a blessing so early in the year! Christians, however, look for light even in the midst of darkness, for we know that darkness will not overcome it. The rising of the Son brings light into lives filled with grief, agony, and despair. Are you searching for the light of new life?

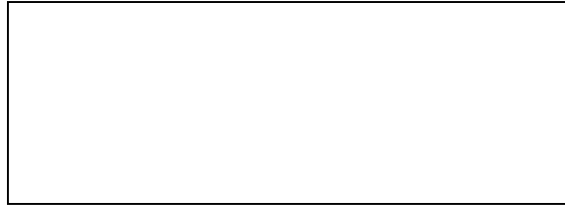
Easter recollects us and reorients us toward God's eternal light of truth and peace and love. The resurrection is the ultimate proclamation that nothing can separate us from that light, not despair or destruction or death. We see hints of that resurrection all around us once our eyes have learned to look, and we continue to hope for its fullness, for the blessing of a light so encompassing that there can be no darkness or separation. Lent has been a willingness to experience the darkness of our current separation and tune our yearning for that light. Carry that yearning into Eastertide, and beyond, that we and the world around us may know the blessing of the light of Christ.

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop
 The Episcopal Church

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
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Parish Potluck



May 3, 2009

Plan on eating lunch with us Sunday
May 3rd following the 10:30 service.

If you'd like to bring a dish to pass,
last names starting with A-L please
bring a hot side or salad. Last names
beginning with M-Z consider your
families favorite dessert!