

A Voice in the Wilderness

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



AUGUST 2010

And we are now over halfway through this summer! How can this be? We just got started, didn't we? But the calendar doesn't lie, and as we hope for a fine August, and perhaps even an Indian summer, we look forward to these activities at St. John's. Sundays are particularly full this month.

On Sunday the 1st, we welcome the Rev. Sandy Boyd, who will celebrate and fill the pulpit in Fr. Spencer's absence.

Paul Casey, executive director of the Colorado Haiti Project, will visit us on Sunday the 8th to bring us up to date on the work of the Diocese of Colorado in Haiti.

The annual Faith Day at the Rockies will see a contingent of St. Johns folk trekking to Coors Field in hopes of a Rockies' win after services on Sunday the 15th.

There will be a brief Committal service for John Hudelson, whose ashes will be enurned in our columbarium at 1:30 Sunday the 22nd. And on this same day, we will have an adult education program, "The Heart of Texas," led by Lee and Shirley Siems.

And on Saturday the 28th the Diocese of Colorado will offer a workshop on ministry in resort areas in Vail from 10AM—2:30PM.

Finally, our last Evensong on the Lake will be held Sunday the 29th. We meet at 5PM at the Grand Lake Marina.

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A Word from the Rector

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” is probably the single best known teaching of Jesus, but it is not always clear how to follow it. For one thing, other people may have desires or needs different from yours. You might like a nice juicy steak, but if you are having a vegetarian over for dinner, it won't do to serve them what you would like to be served. So perhaps it should be interpreted more generally; you would like to have your desires met, so you should try to meet the desires of others.

But then, sometimes the desires of others, as with our own, are not in their best interest. Do we want other people to treat us as we want to be treated, or do we want them to act in our best interest? Presumably we always want things in our best interest, but few of us want others deciding what is in our best interest, especially when we may disagree about it. If your head is spinning about now, then you are right with me, because so is mine.

I am having these reflections because of my brother and I are in the position of having to make some decisions for our mother, and we do not always agree with her on what is in her best interest. She wants to continue living alone and on her own, and we believe she would do better with help. She doesn't want to lose her car, even though she no longer has her driver's license. We want to remove the car so that she will not be tempted to drive when it is convenient for her to do so.

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” If the positions were reversed, how would we want to be treated? One important difference between these two decisions is that her driving affects, or could well affect, others and not just herself. Whereas, the only person likely to be harmed by her refusing help at home is Mom herself. And perhaps this is a clue to making reasonable decisions for another when we must. When it affects only themselves, err on the side of honoring their preferences; this seems to treat people with more respect than would simply running roughshod over

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their desires. And my brother and I have pretty much decided to allow her to stay on her own just as long as we possibly can, even if it might cause her some harm. But when it affects others, then of course we have to consider that we are deciding how to treat *them* as well. And if we put them at risk, we are not treating them as we would want them to treat us. So it seems we must insist upon removing the car, despite her objections.

Forgive this personal reflection on family matters, but as I write these words, I am preparing to fly to California to work with my brother to arrange these matters for Mom, and these issues are much on my mind. Please pray for our mother, Shirley, and for us during this time.

Fr. Spencer

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Notes about Ministries

A little discretion, please

Fr. Spencer is still trying to replenish the church's discretionary fund, money used to help people in need who may need a meal, a place to stay, or transportation. This money is given out at the rector's discretion. Right now there's not much in the fund, but just modest donations from most of us would solve this problem. If you have not yet done so, please write a check for, say, \$10 or \$20, to St. John's with "discretionary account" on the memo line.

Directions, please

On Sunday, July 25th, we were treated to a presentation on group spiritual direction, an increasingly popular way for people to come together to be present to each other and to God, by Meg Greeley. The program was well attended and well received. At the end Kaye Piper, who is also trained in this process, announced that she will be offering facilitation to small groups like this beginning in September. Be sure to be in touch with Kaye (726-5928) if you have any questions.

The hall truth

Work on the parish hall insulation project is now complete. Kirk Lietzke's team, augmented by many St. John's volunteers (thank you!), completed the insulation and the construction of a new ceiling last week. And it looks great. Within three or four weeks the new lights we have ordered will arrive, and we will finally have really good lighting in this space, which will make it much more usable for meetings and other activities.

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Still giving

Some of our long term members may remember back to 1981 when the developer Vic Vestman donated a modest log cabin to the church, which was accepted and developed by the Rev. Chappell Cranmer, and which has seen many significant upgrades in the last few years. Originally named St. Columba's, and then renamed Cranmer Memorial Chapel after Chap's death, it has been used continuously for Saturday evening services and other events for almost 30 years now. We are delighted to report that last fall we were contacted by Mary Jane Vestman, Vic's widow, who expressed interest in supporting the chapel and its work. Since then Mary Jane, who confesses to not being an Episcopalian, has been a regular donor. Thank you, Mary Jane, for this continuing help. Perhaps someday we may even persuade you to attend a service there!

School days, school days

Missing having kids in school? Looking for a way to liven up family life for a time? Consider welcoming a foreign student into your home. The Council on International Educational Exchange is looking for families of any size or couples to be a host family in their USA High School program. Contact information is posted on the bulletin board outside the kitchen.

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Sermon of the Month

Sermon delivered on Sunday, July 18

One of the most powerful and popular passages in the entire Bible is the prologue to the Gospel of John. It is magnificent and, of course, a favorite passage for many of us. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. . . . All things came into being through him, and what came into being through him was Life, and the life was the light of all people.” John begins at the level of creation, at the cosmic, the mysterious, the realm of principalities and powers. And then, from the mystical and the cosmic, John goes right down into real daily life: “And the Word became flesh and lived among us.” Right here, on this earth, in the daily life of those who lived in Jesus’ time. John insists upon linking God’s plan of creation to what is going on in daily, ordinary, life.

And in case we are tempted to forget this connection, Paul does the same thing in the reading from Colossians that we heard this morning. “Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation,” and so on. These words were a hymn that was read or sung in Christian worship. And as in John, the setting is all of creation, heaven and earth, things visible and invisible, and it is beautiful theology and inspiring and all that. But Paul, like John, does not leave it there. He also insists upon the connection between this mystical, cosmic, creation theology and the ordinary, humdrum, daily lives that we live. In what we have heard, he tells his readers in Colossae what this means for their lives and what it means for understanding his, Paul’s, ministry.

The passage rewards much more study than we can give it here, but I want to point to one especially interesting and difficult verse. When Paul refers to his own suffering and the joy he takes in it, he says that he is

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“completing what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions” for the sake of the church (i.e., for all believers). Think of that. Paul is completing Christ’s suffering. He clearly sees his own suffering (and we can do the same) as an extension of Christ’s suffering. We commonly say that our own ministry is an extension of Christ’s ministry so, odd as it sounds, we really shouldn’t resist this next step: our sufferings, our struggles, our joys, our disappointments, are all extensions of those of Christ. This is to insist upon the connection between God’s plan of creation—the BIG picture—and our daily lives, and to do so with a vengeance. Do we see what we do, day to day, as working out God’s plan in creation, his aim, which we can call for the sake of convenience, the building up of the Kingdom of God? John did, and so did Paul. The Kingdom of Heaven is not something that is waiting for us somewhere else. It is something that Jesus worked and suffered for, and when we work for it, we are taking on his work and his suffering, and we are building God’s kingdom here.

In a presentation I made almost fifty years ago to my high school graduation class, I told the following story. A man is walking down the street and passes by a large construction site. He comes to a worker and asks him what he is doing. The man looked up and replied, “Oh, I am laying bricks.” The man moves down the block, and comes to another man, also laying bricks. “What are you doing?” he asks. “I am putting up a wall,” was the response. Finally, he comes to a third bricklayer, working on the same wall, and asks what he is doing. This third man looks up, and with a glow of pride and enthusiasm, he answers, “I am building a cathedral!”

He is building a cathedral. And we as Christians need to have that same breadth of vision to know that in our daily lives, in the regular day to day routine, that we are building the Kingdom of Heaven. And we build it just like the workers build a cathedral—brick by brick. Every act of kindness is brick that we are laying in the construction God’s kingdom.

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Every expression of love, every act of forgiveness, every generous gesture, every prayer, every time we treat another as we would be treated ourselves; every time, that is to say, that we are Christ to another person, that as Paul says, Christ is in us, we are building up the Kingdom. That is the big picture that we need to keep in view. That is the big picture that both John and Paul insist is present in the acts of our daily lives.

We are not just taking care of business in this life. We are building the Kingdom of Heaven. Brick by brick.

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Updates from the Church Family

A thoroughly modern one

We are excited to have Millie Schrader back with us for a few months. Millie moved away to Arkansas about nine years ago, after having filled in to run the church office during the time between Fr. Kelsey's and Fr. Spencer's tenure here. She is back visiting family in Grand Lake and has attended services both at St. John's and at Cranmer Chapel. Welcome back, Millie!

Making beautiful music together

Two of our members, Lisa Von der Haar and Michele Simmons, are members of "Cellobration," a cello class being led by Roger Shaw. Cellobration practices at St. John's and has played for us at a recent service. Lisa and Michele, with the rest of the class, participated in a workshop recently, led by professional cellist and teacher Karen Terbeek, who has played with a number of prominent city orchestras over the years. Karen and Fr. Spencer met at a recent reunion of college classmates, and their conversations led to a delightful time for both students and teacher.

Conventional wisdom

St. John's will be represented at this year's Diocesan Convention by three wise layfolks, Walter Wilson, Michele Simmons, and Karla Allen. When you see them, be sure to thank them for donating this time on behalf of St. John's.

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August 2010

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
				2:45 PM CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER * 6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST * 10:30 ADULT EDUCATION				2:45 PM CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER * 6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST * FAITH DAY AT THE ROCKIES				2:45 PM CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER * 6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY	6 PM VESTRY MEETING	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 8 AM HABITAT HOBBLE * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10:30 ADULT EDUCATION				2:45 PM CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER * 6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
29	30	31				

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9 AM HOLY EUCCHARIST * 5 PM EVENSONG ON THE LAKE						
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