

## OCTOBER 2010



We apologize for being late this month, but the weather we have had has just been too beautiful to be in doors working. Well, Fr. Spencer's vacation had a little to do with it, actually. But while we enjoy perhaps two to three weeks of the best weather we have had all year (though we could certainly use some rain), we look forward to the following events coming up in October.

On the **2<sup>nd</sup>** we had our semi-annual highway pick-up day, cleaning the mile of highway we have on route 34.

From the **7<sup>th</sup>—9<sup>th</sup>** the diocesan convention will be held in Denver.

On the **14<sup>th</sup>** the Thursday evening Bible study starts up again, reading in the book of Ruth. Dessert is served at 6:45 with fellowship, study, and prayer to follow.

On the **15<sup>th</sup>** your vestry meets at 6PM downstairs in the commons room.

Save the night of Saturday the **16<sup>th</sup>** for potluck and Fall Music Night at 6PM at the home of Fr. Spencer and Karla. Maps are available at the church or directions by phone.

Do not neglect to turn your clocks back one hour on the evening of Saturday the **30<sup>th</sup>** so that you will be on time for Bishop O'Neill's visitation to St. John's on Sunday the **31<sup>st</sup>**.

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# A Voice in the Wilderness

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

### A Word from the Rector

All of us are liable, from time to time, to slip into ruts. We get used to doing things the way we always have, and we don't look for ways to grow or to expand our experiences. This is true of most areas of our lives, I imagine. It is simply easier to continue seeing the same people and not try to grow our circle of friends. It is easier to go to the same restaurants, do our work in the same old ways, watch the same old programs, etc. Doing new things or doing old things in new ways is always more effort, and it can be threatening as well. And, yet, stepping out of our comfort zones can yield great benefits, enriching our lives and expanding our capabilities and range of activities.

This is true in our spiritual lives as well. When was the last time that you adopted any new spiritual discipline or practice? Even for Lent, when we take on new disciplines, it is usually the same one(s) we have been doing for years. I am extremely pleased that one of our parishioners, Kaye Piper, is offering a new form of spiritual exercise and, in so doing, she is offering us a chance to get out of the rut we may be in, expand our experiences, and even grow spiritually in new directions. And you are invited to participate in it.

This invitation is to join a small group to engage in “group spiritual direction.” This practice has an honored place in our tradition, it is practiced often at spiritual gatherings around the diocese, and it is a favorite exercise when Bishop O’Neill meets with clergy groups. It consists of gathering in small groups, in which the goal is to engage in silence, sharing, prayer, and hard listening to one another in order to discern God’s will for us. There is a formal structure to make this easier, but I will not take the time to lay the process out here. Kaye has distributed descriptions of the process at St. John’s, and you may get a copy from her directly.

One group will meet at St. John’s, on Fridays at 3PM, beginning October the 8<sup>th</sup> and continuing on for the 22<sup>nd</sup>, November 19<sup>th</sup>, and December 17<sup>th</sup>. The other will meet at the home of Jim Cartwright in Fraser at 3PM Thursdays, on October 21, November 4, and December 2. This means you will have a choice of locations and of frequency of meeting. You can also attend, knowing that there is no long term commitment involved. If you find it rewarding, you can continue; if not, there is no presumption that you will attend beyond these dates. It is not necessary to attend every session. Anything shared in

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these meetings is strictly confidential. Sessions will be led by Kaye, who has training in this process, and I will not attend. This is not because I am uninterested or do not support these groups. It is so that my presence will not be an unhelpful one, perhaps by inhibiting lay leadership or free discussion.

So, be brave! Try something new. You may not find it helpful, but in this case you will have lost nothing but a very small amount of time. On the other hand, you may find it a very positive experience, a great reward for that same small amount of time.

Please call Kaye on her cell (719-660-0322) or e-mail her ([kayepiper@msn.com](mailto:kayepiper@msn.com)) for any further information. Directions to Jim Cartwright's home can be obtained from him (726-0255). Please do let Kaye know if you plan to attend. God bless all of you who choose to try this, and a special thanks to Kaye for making it all possible.

Fr. Spencer

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## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Notes about Ministries

### *Our business is picking up*

Twice a year, anyway. Many thanks to all of you who turned out to help pick up the litter from the “St. John’s mile” of Highway 34 on Saturday, October 2. Many hands made light work. The biggest find was by Lynda Parker—a good-sized dead porcupine!

### *Whistle while you work*

Our workday at Cranmer Chapel last month was not well attended, but nevertheless much was accomplished, both outside and in. Special thanks to Kayla and Cassidy who brought mom Nicole Robinson with them to pitch in to help Jim Magill and Beth Collins. Let’s try to get a bigger turnout on Saturday, October 16 at 10AM, when we gather to spruce up St. John’s!

### *A new direction; a new invitation*

The Saturday Men’s Bible Breakfast group is taking a new direction. Rather than reading and discussing a Bible passage or some other spiritual material, it is listening to (on CD) and discussing thirty minute lectures by a professor of Islamic Studies. The lectures are excellent, and the group issues a special invitation for new members who might be interested in an informed and balanced introduction to Islam.

### *Books do decorate a . . . mind*

We haven’t talked about our St. John’s library (downstairs in what we call the Commons Room) lately, but there has recently been a donation of a number of classic works in the field of spirituality that you should know about. Several are absolutely essential classic works like the anonymous *Cloud of Unknowing*, *Interior Castle* by Teresa of Avila, *The Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross, *Revelations of Divine Love* by Julian of Norwich, *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, and *The Autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux*. In addition there are works by St. Benedict and our contemporary (and near neighbor) Thomas Keating.

Our policy used to be an honor policy: If you borrow a book, you are on your honor to return it. But our new policy is less restrictive. If you borrow a book and like it, you may keep it for your own. Replacing it with another library copy is optional. Do not

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forget that the library is there for your use and that it includes CDs, tapes, and other media as well.

**More on the Heart of Texas**

Fr. Spencer forgot to announce earlier that more information on the story of the Heart of Texas, the DVD presented at an Adult Forum in August through the courtesy of Lee and Shirley Siems, is available at the following website: [ksevradio.com](http://ksevradio.com), at which you can scroll down to the right link. The DVD is also available in the parish library.

Peace has settled  
in my heart tonight.  
I know not how it arrived so sweetly,  
softly soothing the angst of my soul.  
Yet now, as one, again, I remember.  
It is I that arrived, settling softly  
into the peace of my heart  
calling me home to my beloved.

Laura Elliot, "Peace Remembered"

\*\*Spiritual contribution from Kaye Piper

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## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

### Sermon of the Month

Sermon delivered on the Feast Day of St. Francis (transferred to Sunday, September 12)

Jesus said “I thank you, Father, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants.” What is *this* about?. Are we not to value intelligence and wisdom? Are the critics right that Christianity is not for smart people but only for those who have not truly grown up? Is Jesus really putting down intelligence and wisdom? And is he calling his followers, from the twelve apostles down through our time “stupid”?

Jesus is, of course, being ironic in this teaching. He is indicating by tone of voice and gestures, I feel sure, that he puts “scare quotes” around ‘intelligent’ and ‘wise’. I believe that he is referring to those who **think** themselves intelligent and wise—people we might call “know-it-alls.”

Unlike children, who are generally open to learning new things and are eager learners, know-it-alls already have the answers; they are not open to learning new things. Remember the line about Harvard men? You can always tell a Harvard man, but you cannot tell him much! Whether this is any more true of Harvard graduates than other people, I cannot say, but we all know the type.

And that type of person is one to whom the truth of the Gospel cannot be revealed. For a conversion experience demands that we be open to change, that we be prepared to see something that we haven’t seen before.

And this is why a conversion experience is such a powerful experience. To move to an acceptance of the Christian Gospel is to reject so much of what we have previously thought to be true about the world. And it is to surrender the illusion that we have it all figured out and that we are on top of things. If Jesus is right—and Jesus **is** right—then much of what we have been taught by the world is wrong. And Jesus is saying that we must have the openness of the child to hear and to accept his message.

We have this Gospel reading assigned for St. Francis’ Feast Day, presumably because he is thought to have had the openness and the simplicity of a child. But Francis’ simplicity is one that came with a fine intelligence and much wisdom. Else he could not have founded an order and attracted so many people to it.

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So, simplicity in this sense can come with intelligence and wisdom. But when we think of why Francis is probably our favorite and most attractive saint of all, it is probably because of the simplicity more than the intelligence or wisdom. I think this is appealing simply because trying to live into the world's sense of intelligence and wisdom can be so draining. It is exhausting, and even soul-killing, to be so hung up on trying to impress people with our intelligence and our wisdom. To pretend that we have all the answers, to fake being always on top of things, to feign being so sophisticated that we become jaded.

When we consider Francis and his values, we can relax into a state of acceptance and of being content without this constant effort to impress. And perhaps this is why animals, especially our pets, are so relaxing and so good for our blood pressure. In being drawn to animals we are drawn to the simple, the faithful, the true, the real.

Remember this joke? I told it here two years ago. If you can get up in the morning and feel good all day without coffee or alcohol; if you can absorb minor aches and pains without complaint; if little slights or the bad humor of others simply slide off your back. If you forgive easily and return love unconditionally. If you trust others and are eager to please, and if you can interact with others completely unselfconsciously. Well, if you can do all these things, then you are probably the family dog!

So we would do well, I think, to emulate the family dog in these ways. But not just the dog. Francis can be our model, for he has this simplicity as well as intelligence and wisdom. Not the intelligence and wisdom of the world, but an intelligence and wisdom that is combined with simplicity that is open to new truths. If we are open, then it is to us that the truth of the Gospel will be revealed.

# A Voice in the Wilderness

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST Updates from the Church Family

### *En fuego!*

Not a joking matter at all, of course, but so far, as of this writing, there are no structures or lives lost in the Church Park fire outside of Fraser. Several St. John's folks have been busy either fighting the fire (Joe Fuqua) or helping with precautionary evacuations (Toby Davis and Nicole Robinson, Lynda and Ted Parker). Let us all send up prayers for good fire fighting weather and safety for all those at the fire and in its path. Parishioner Tom Beckwith, proprietor of High Mountain Lodge off of CR 50 was interviewed extensively on local TV news about the view of the fire from his Julie's lodge.

### *Our heroes*

Once again the Zacek-Smith family shows us a side of law enforcement we don't often think about. It wasn't too long ago that Amy delivered a baby in the line of duty (the famous MacDonald's baby), and now Dan has been cited in the news for saving the life of a man having a heart attack by using CPR after the man had stopped breathing. We are so proud of you both. Also of Morgan, whose coloring of a dog graces Fr. Spencer's study door.

### *Mission just seems to run in the family*

We were graced last month by a visit from Rachel Alexander, granddaughter to Al and Betty Clark, who had just returned from a mission trip to Honduras, through the auspices of the Christ Episcopal Church, Canon City. She was just bubbling over with excitement about the work done on the trip. This is obviously in the genes, as Al and Betty have several children and grandchildren who have done mission work abroad, often for many years. Check out the bulletin board for a news story about the trip. (Also check out the bulletin board for a picture from Haiti, featuring Kesner Gracia, for whose ministry in Haiti we pray for in the Prayers of the People.)

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**Norway? No way! Way!**

J. R. and Marit Faivre are just returned from a lengthy trip to Norway, Marit's homeland. They had a great time, and we are glad to have them back.

**She always was the retiring sort, you know**

Karla Allen announced in church recently that after trying for almost a year, she is partially retiring (will do some part time work for a while) this month, after breaking in her replacement as head of Health Information Systems (medical records) at Avista Hospital in Louisville. It has taken this long to persuade the hospital that it can get along without her!

**Almost, but not quite**

Fr. Spencer is returned from his annual golf week away. The highlight was a shot from the tee of a par three hole into the cup! A hole in one, you say? Unfortunately, it was his second try on the hole after hitting out of bounds. The score card says "3," so we guess it will always be Fr. Spencer's "hole in three."

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SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
					<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
						8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST				DIOCESAN CONVENTION THRU THE 11TH	3 PM CENTERING PRAYER GROUP & SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 10:30 AM GREEN TEAM MEETING * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST				6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY	3 PM CENTERING PRAYER GROUP * 6 PM SUPPER & VESTRY MEETING	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 10 AM ST. JOHN'S WORK DAY * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL * 6 PM MUSIC NIGHT AT FR. SPENCER & KARLA'S HOUSE
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
				6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY	3 PM CENTERING PRAYER GROUP & SPIRITUAL DIRECTION	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST <b>31</b> VISIT FROM BISHOP O'NEILL				6:45 PM EVENING PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY	3 PM CENTERING PRAYER GROUP	

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