



Church Mouse

News & Events from St. John's Episcopal Church • Oakland, California

April 2010

Calendar – See Parish Guide for Holy Week services descriptions

March 28 - Palm Sunday
7:45 - Early Eucharist
9:00 - Family Eucharist
10:45 - Choral Eucharist

March 31 – Wednesday of Holy Week
7:30 p.m. - Tenebrae Service

April 1 - Maundy Thursday
6:30 p.m. - Dinner & Service

April 2 - Good Friday
7:30 p.m. - Ensemble Prelude & Service

April 3 - Holy Saturday
7:30 p.m. - Easter Vigil

April 4 - Easter Day
7:45 - Early Eucharist
9:00 - Family Eucharist
10:45 - Choral Eucharist

April 11 - 2nd Easter
7:45 - Early Eucharist
9:00 - Family Eucharist
10:45 - Choral Eucharist

April 18 - 3rd Easter
7:45 - Early Eucharist
9:00 - Family Eucharist
10:45 - Choral Eucharist

April 25 – 4th Easter
7:45 - Early Eucharist
9:00 - Family Eucharist
10:45 - Choral Eucharist

May 2 – 5th Easter
7:45 - Early Eucharist
10:00 - Choral Eucharist

Pick up the new Parish Directory in the Narthex.

Look for the pink cover.

Rector's Reflection



A few years ago I preached a sermon entitled “Blah Blah Blah”. Not surprisingly I remember the title more than what I said. Not long after I gave that sermon Gray Cathrall and Anne Beeson were on vacation and saw a T shirt with those words on the front and bought it for me as a gift. I enjoy wearing it from time to time. I enjoy it because it connects with a deep awareness that words often fail in their attempt to capture our thoughts and feelings.

But it's more than that. Sometimes words become empty and useless and even divisive. Clergy often feel this at their core. We are asked to write articles, offer quotes, speak at events and give sermons challenge by the goal to fill them with lively thought and fresh perspective. Truth be told, sometimes we simply can't stand the sound of our own voice. This article may be a case in point. Here I am again, writing something for a publication, not because a word came to me but because it's part of what I do. Gray and Anne will be happy to know that I am wearing my Blah Blah Blah shirt for some inspiration. But I suspect that this experience is

not clergy centric. All of us enter times where we lack direction, inspiration and feel a kind of writers-block in our soul.

Annie Dillard provides a little hope when she writes, “One of the few things I know about writing is this: spend it all: shout it, play it, lose it all, right away, every time. Do not hoard what seems good for a later place in the book: give it: give it all: give it now. . . The impulse to save something for a better place later is the signal to spend it all. Something more will arise for later. These things fill from behind, from beneath, like well water.”

I believe this. But what I have learned is that even though things fill from beneath, sometimes it takes time. It also takes silence, reflection, patience, action, experience and everything else that inspire words.

Lent is the hardest time to write because Lent is about experiencing life more than writing about it. It's about letting go of words and ideas and putting your raft out into life's river. Holy Week, in particular, must be approached not with preconceived ideas and expectations but with an open heart. Jesus himself seems to run out of words in the stories of this amazing week.

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Senior Warden Message

Another month has passed and we are well into the Lenten Season. The big news this month spins around the arrival of our new Interim Associate Rector, Ann Hallisey. Ann, with great excitement and anticipation, has been welcomed into our community and has already become a creative addition to the ministry at St. John's. Between now and Scott's sabbatical starting in May, Scott, the Vestry and Ann will be working on a Parish discernment process that will continue during the four months that Scott will be away. Working with developing parishes has been an aspect of Ann's ministry that has her traveling all over the country. We are fortunate to have her leadership during this time of reflection in determining how best we are to continue with our development as a “program church”. This process will include the involvement of all of the Ministry Catalysts, the Staff, the Vestry and you. The actual timing and

process of involvement will become clear in the weeks ahead. Plan on becoming engaged with us. St. John's has not done a parish wide discernment process in a long, long time and we were a very different church back when we did. So, I am anticipating an active period ahead of us.

In the meantime the City required Environmental Impact Report has been completed and submitted to the City for review. This will not be made public nor will any public hearings be scheduled until they are satisfied that they Report is complete and comprehensive. The Conditional Use Permit process continues to move slowly forward.

The solar project, although slowed by the much needed rains, is finally complete. In the months ahead we should begin to see the value of own-

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Rector's Message

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Some stories have Jesus short on words. On one occasion he has no response when questioned. Even his last seven sentences are appropriately called the last words by the church; some of them as brief as “I thirst”, “Behold your mother”, and “It is finished.” Holy week, at its core, is a reminder to listen to your life, to step back and look at your life anew, to feel what is going on. It's an invitation to let go of words.

Just imagine our city, nation and world giving up words for a week and instead simply paying attention.

So I hope you excuse the brevity of this article. It goes with the territory. Let me simply invite you to let Holy Week become a time of listening, a time of letting go, and a time of experiencing the week with an open heart with each other.

Scott+

Senior Warden

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ing our own “energy production facility” here at St. John's. Watch the Mouse for reports on our consumption and cost savings.

I hope you all have a wonderful Easter and, with the Spirit of New Life, commit yourselves to being creatively involved in all of the activities and programs you can as part of this vibrant community of St. John's.

Robert Davidson

Lectors Wanted

Any congregant interested in training to become a Reader at St. John's should contact Mary Kimball (510-482-5478) or Betsy Robinson (510-339-6849). We give individual training by appointment.

In May or June there will be several Saturday training sessions for all **current lectors** – so that we are all “up to the minute”. **Attendance at one review training session is required!**

Thanks to all who serve in this ministry.

The Worship Committee



Richardson New CDSP Dean

Great news from Church Divinity School of the Pacific. At the CDSP Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday, March 11, the Rev. Dr. Mark Richardson was unanimously elected as the next President/Dean of the Seminary. Mark will begin his term on July 1st, 2010, when Donn Morgan, who has brilliantly led the Seminary for some years, retires. Mark and his wife, Brenda, and their children, HP, Caroline and Mark, Jr., are well known here at St. John's, as they worshiped here for several years when Mark was working for his doctorate at the GTU. We heartily welcome the Richardsons back to the Bay Area. (Mark has been on the faculty of General Theological Seminary, New York, for some years.)

Donn Morgan and his wife, Alda, will take a lengthy sabbatical in 2010, but Donn will return to CDSP in 2011 again to teach -- that's MORE great news!

The Year in Worship

Eucharistic Lectionary: Year C
Daily Office Lectionary: Year Two
Advent 2009 to Advent eve 2010

St. John's Episcopal Church

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*It ys a sotyll mouse that slepyth
in the catly's ear.*

—Hilles *Commonplace Book*, 1530

Theological Reflection (TR) Defined

Theological Reflection (TR), in the context of Education for Ministry (EfM), is a group exercise in which a theme or aspect of our Christian tradition, such as justice, faith, mercy, or creation, is explored through the lens of our culture and practices, using a variety of literary, visual and meditative tools.

For instance, in the EfM group I count myself blessed to be a part of, we recently watched a snippet of the movie *The Ref*, as a springboard for discussing Judgment. In *The Ref*, a husband and wife blame/hate each other for everything wrong in their lives. We then explored what might have led to this judgment/blame game. Like all of our TRs, it was a lively discussion with no right or wrong answers. We came up with several possibilities, including, but not limited to, jealousy, insecurity, not accepting responsibility, and fear.

A TR involves both personal searching and group grounding. Each TR takes on a life of its own, depending upon the theme and the tools used to explore it (poem, song, movie, letter, quote, artwork, with reflection, mediation, observation, personal experience, etc.). After we finished with this portion of this particular TR, we explored how our culture may (or may not, again, depending on the issue) exacerbate or minimize the issue. We then looked at what Judgment means in our Christian tradition vis-à-vis our cultural norms and how our tradition might help us to overcome/embrace whatever issue(s) we're facing.


Finally, as always, we took what we reflected upon and created our groups collect for the week. In this case, Oh God who is present in our disappointment and anger, we pray for your grace so that we may grow in understanding and compassion and learn to forgive as we are forgiven.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TRs are liberating exercises because they often help you name something inside that has always been there but you didn't even know to look for, let alone recognize and work on, while at the same time, giving you comfort to know you're not alone facing these challenges and that as Christians, in community, we have been given the love and grace to do just that.

Michelle Inama

Rebuilding Together Time

 We are weeks away from starting our April 2010 project for Rebuilding Together Oakland. We have a great house to work on this year and a sweet home owner. Mildred Duffy is 82 years young, and when you meet her you immediately feel her warmth. She lives alone in a house which needs a lot of TLC. Among other things we will be repairing the broken kitchen sink, residing half of the house, "starting over" with the cramped and poorly functioning bathroom, and replacing some rotted stairs and porch. (If you would like to see the complete list, just let me know.)

Once again St. Johns will be working with other East Bay Episcopal Churches to take the lead in repairing this house. It will be an outreach opportunity for all who feel so inclined. Please be aware, we welcome anyone over 14 years old, no matter what the level of your "skills". If you have never tried this I encourage you to do so this year! It will be fun, and you will be helping someone who needs it.

Here are some details which may help:

Location: 1132 85th Avenue (cross streets are C & D). Easy to find, a couple of blocks below International (Alan Temple Baptist Church is on 85th).

Work Days: Every Saturday in April

Time: We will sign in at 8AM each day. Work will start at 8:30. Coffee will be provided in the morning, lunch mid day, and water at all times. Work stops at 4:30.

Restrictions: We seek anyone who is over 14. Those under 18 must have a signed release from their parents. In addition, we will need a medical insurance form when they sign in. All others just sign a release form that morning. Forms are available at www.rebuildingtogetheroakland.org or on site.) We are pleased to have anyone who wants to help. Of course we need skilled volunteers, particularly a plumber and electrician. However, anyone who is interested we will be pleased to have come. We prefer for people to come at 8 and work the day until 4:30. Special time needs can be accommodated, if known in advance. Because of the size of our project, we will be "reserving" work spots this year. Thus, it doesn't work for people to "drop in". Anyone who wants to work should notify me or Charlie Stebbins, our Volunteer Coordinator.

Advice: Wear old clothing; bring work gloves if you have them. If you have tools please bring them, but leave them in your trunk until we know we need them. Please be sure to put your name on anything you bring.

Contact: David Brown, House Captain
510-410-0847 (cell) or

Charlie Stebbins, Volunteer Coordinator
415-760-5906 (cell)

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you

We at St. John's Church would like to acknowledge with appreciation the following groups and their members for their dedication and service to the life of our church. Detailed descriptions of the purpose and function of these groups are printed in the Parish Guide. If you have any questions please contact the chair listed below.

Altar Guild

Team Members: Laurie Bennett, Mary Lou De Lauer, Pauline Felder, Judith Fleming, Ken Fuller, Amy Kennon, Karen McGuinn, Bonnie Moran, Katherine Schaffer, Loretta Sheridan, Rosemary Bristow. Judy MacIlvaine (Wedding Coordinator) Auxiliary Members: Ted Milhous, Jerry Moran (assistance with banners)

Chair: Judith Fleming Phone: 510-523-9448
judithfleming@sbcglobal.net

Church School

Laurie Bennett, Joan Bonsey, Theo Cavanaugh, Jeannie Church, Karen Gleason, Sarah Jones, Jennifer Kitt, Jim Kroger, Jana Lane, Kim Liljquist, Shirley Saunders, Christy Simons and Nancy Walker.

Chair: Annie Pierpoint 530-902-7539
afpierpoint@gmail.com

Communications

Team Members: Dennis Reeve, Ray Craun, and Michelle Ziegmann

Chair: Laurie Bennett 510-562-5666
lebennett1950@yahoo.com

CVC – Vocation Ministry

Team Members: Theo Cavanaugh, Bryan Culp, Elizabeth Gallagher, Karen Gleason, Jim Hasler, Rev. John Kater, Delia O'Hara, Maggie Phillips

Chair: Suzy Tindall 510-451-4985
stindallsloane@msn.com

Your Money or Your Life



Recently I got a surprise that reminded me of the mugger who accosted Jack Benny with a gun and the demand, "Your money or your life!" The crook shook his pistol and became impatient waiting for a response from the notoriously cheap tightwad. "I'm thinking, I'm thinking..." Benny begged.

Who would not give up their money to save their life! Yet both are at our disposal—our money AND our life. We are stewards of both, our dollars and our days.

My recent surprise was the way that one parishioner has chosen to leverage these gifts of life and wealth. Since she will soon have to begin taking out minimum required distributions from her retirement plan, she decided to use these taxable distributions to pay the annual premium on a \$100,000 life insurance policy that will benefit both her parish and Episcopal Charities.

Here's the next wrinkle in her charitable strategy: by making the Diocese the owner of the policy and by contributing annual checks to the Diocese to cover the insurance premiums, she will gain a tax deduction for the amount of the premium—which will help to offset the income taxes due on the required distribution.

If this sounds complicated, it is not at all. It is perfectly straightforward, perfectly legal, and perfectly beneficial for both the church and the donor.

There is a simpler way of turning a life insurance policy into a significant charitable gift: just make the church the beneficiary of either the whole death benefit or a percentage. To do this with an existing policy, request a "Change of Beneficiary" form from the insurance company. But if premiums are still due on the policy and you are interested in tax deductions, please give me a call.

Shrewd stewards may be generous stewards.

The Rev. Richard L. Schaper, CFP
(415) 869-7812

Gift Planning Officer
RichardS@DioCal.org
Episcopal Diocese of California
EpiscopalGift.org

St. John's Women's Retreat

"I'm exactly where I want to be." "I want to enter into Sabbath in a deep way..." The prayers in the Seder have spoken to me..." "I hope the person who's wearing my cross is blessed..." "Act beyond what is expected..."

These are some of the comments about our retreat at the Ranch this year. Close to forty St. John's women and some of their friends, joined together in early March to pass over into Easter on a mystical exodus from Old to New Testament. Our retreat was led by Andrea Bryck, partner of Maggie Phillips, and an accomplished teacher and artist. Andrea is an Intra-faith Spiritual Director, and a lifelong student of the mystical traditions of East and West. She offered us a spiritual journey using the frame of the Seder dinner, with its various foods and cups of wine. Andrea offered a succinct history of the Jews: They tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat. And so we did! We also laughed, cried, danced, sang, had massages, and we created an art-as-meditation activity under the able guidance of Suzy Tindall.

"I cannot label anything good or bad anymore: The two worst things that have happened to me turned out, years later, to be good..." "After the darkness comes the light..." "Do you love me? I love you, God." Amen.

Ray Riess



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Thanks to the donation of one of our parishioners, St. John's has new recycling, composting and garbage containers - all of which travel together, eliminating the temptation to simply use the nearest receptacle to get rid of whatever is in your hand to be disposed. Not to imply St. John's parishioners aren't thoughtful about trying to be good stewards of Creation, it's just going to be easier with the recycling, composting and garbage containers located side-by-side to (1) use the right one and (2) easily distinguish between the three.

Like the residential containers used in the City of Oakland, these containers are brown (garbage), gray (recycling) and green (composting). And, like the City, we hope to have very little garbage and much more compost and recyclables. Coffee cups, napkins, paper towels, pizza boxes, paper plates, and, of course, any and all food, are compost. Anything plastic that keeps its shape, as well as soda cans, glass, and metal, are recyclables. Between the compost and the recyclables, there is very little left at St. John's that is actually garbage meant to go to a landfill and sit there for all eternity.

Our new containers will be located in the hallway outside the kitchen, when not rolled out to wherever they're needed most - as events at church dictate. They're labeled, lined with biodegradable bags, and waiting to be used. Thank you, as always, for your support in helping our parish be a good steward of our environment. As the bumper sticker says, A Good Planet is Hard to Find. Thanks for helping to take care of the one we've been given!

St. John's Ecology Group

Soloman



When you look at Soloman's round and smiling face, you would never know the tragedy he has seen in his 15 young years. Soloman lives at the Manna Rescue Home, run by Carol

Adams in Fort Portal, Uganda. He has seen more death and suffering than we will see in a lifetime and his story reminds us that the gifts and compassion St. John's and other congregations around the world have shown over the years make a huge difference.

Soloman was born into a large polygamous family. It was clear he had AIDS early on, transmitted in his mother's womb. Before the age of two he had lost both parents to AIDS, and over time he also lost three of his father's other wives, who took care of him after his parents died. Like so many orphans of AIDS, he was sent to live with an uncle who had seven children of his own, and had also taken in other orphan children in the extended family. The uncle was simply not able to provide for this large family, and hunger was Soloman's daily companion. Like many children with AIDS, Soloman was stigmatized, shunned, made fun of by the children in the family and in the village because of the visible symptoms of AIDS.

When Carol learned of Soloman, he was very sick. His blood count was ominous, and he had skin lesions in several places on his body. He was convinced that he was going to die soon. He did poorly in school, probably related to his illness. The school's Headmistress wanted him to repeat the "Primary 6" year of school. He begged her to allow him to go into the next level of school so he could die having completed "Primary 7." His emotional and physical condition was poor.

Soloman was one of the first of the children to arrive at the Manna Rescue Home when it opened more than two years ago. He receives Anti Retroviral Drugs (ARV's) and regular medical care, has regular meals, attends school, and has a warm and safe home where he is accepted and encouraged.

His health has returned and his grades have improved. His personality has blossomed.



Women's Retreat, Bishop's Ranch, 2010

In The Garden



The recent rains are having quite an impact on the grounds at St. John's. The native plants in the Meditation Garden and on the Gouldin-side hill are thriving. The Coast Live Oak planted on the hillside below the Rectory in honor of Hugh and Leigh Gourdin's son, Andrew Stark, a year and a half ago is also doing very well, along with a number of California natives placed around it.

The Weeds -- On the downside, several invasive plants and weeds are also enjoying all the moisture. Keeping up with the maintenance in this area is a real challenge. Any hardy soul with a couple of hours to spare can contact me for ideas on where such available time might be best spent laboring in the garden!!

The Courtyard -- Ron Richards is looking for someone (more than one??) to whom he can pass along his knowledge of trimming and pruning of the Rhododendrons and Azaleas. These plants don't need a great deal of attention, but timing and skill are key. I'm sure there are some avid gardeners out there who could "adopt" the courtyard.

Plant of the Month -- As a way to highlight opportunities to be more water-wise in your own garden, this new feature will highlight native plants that thrive in our area. While visiting the UC Berkeley Botanic Garden recently, I came across a beautiful *Sambucus mexicana*, or Western Elderberry. As luck would have, a one gallon specimen was available at the gift shop. In honor of our great Elderberries group, that plant is now on the Rectory hillside. The Elderberry is a deciduous shrub with clouds of fragrant yellow flowers at the tips in Spring. Its small berries are glossy, blue-black and grow in large clumps in Summer, particularly when planted in full sun. These attract a large variety of birds. They can also be used to make jam. It tolerates full sun to part shade, and it can be pruned to keep a manageable size or to grow as a tree. The Elderberry typically grows to 8'-25'. Occasional summer water helps the Elderberry hold its leaves longer in hotter inland locations, but it should require little watering once established on the grounds at St. John's.

Special Thanks -- Michael Webster and Tess Freidenburg donated a couple dozen native plants that Michael (and Quinn!!) grew from collected seed. These have been placed on the hillsides along Gouldin and below the Rectory.

Parish Work Party -- Plans are underway for another parish work party on Saturday, May 1. While most of the top priority projects involve the buildings, there is always some work for those who prefer to play in the dirt. In addition to battling the invaders, I am planning to work some more that morning on the path leading to the Gourdin Oak. Look for more details to follow.

Tim Inama

The Power of a Focused Heart:

Eight Life Lessons from the Beatitudes

I Are you interested in learning more about the Beatitudes, Jesus' opening remarks to the sermon known as the "Sermon on the Mount?" Would you like to explore the meanings of the Beatitudes and how we might apply them to our daily living? Mary Lou Redding, the editor of the Upper Room daily devotional, has written a new book on the Beatitudes titled, "The Power of a Focused Heart." We will use Redding's book as a guide for a study of the Beatitudes beginning Wednesday, April 7. Come join us!

When: 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM
Wednesday - April 7
Thursdays - April 15, 22, 29,
and May 6, 13, 20
Wednesday - May 26.
Where: The Reception Room

Books are available for \$11.00. Please call Sandra Ahn at 510-290-2850, or send an email to sjahn_vienna@yahoo.com to register or if you have any questions.



All Parish Work Day

On Saturday, May 1, St. John's Church will be alive with our second annual APWD. Last year we accomplished a tremendous amount in one day. And this year we will be out there again. Like last year we will have teams, and folks can choose to volunteer for morning or afternoon, or stay all day. We will furnish coffee in the AM, lunch in the mid-day, and a barbecue at the end of the day. Projects include restaining, patching, painting the parking lot with stripes, staking the parking lot bumpers, painting the Education Building, and organizing the storage room. We will also lovingly shave/shim/re-align all the stained glass windows.

I am looking for two things:

1) When you walk the grounds of St. John's, when you sit at The Service, what do you see that could use some loving care/cleaning/replacement? Perhaps when you go to kneel you find that the kneeler in front of you is broken or missing? Please let me know your thoughts on what can be done to repair/clean/refresh our Parish.

2) I need you to sign up to claim a spot. Are you available to take the lunch and organize it? Have you always wanted to take one of those paint sprayers and paint a parking lot? (Unlike Ken you must be able to draw a straight line). Would you like to take the lead in painting the Education Building, creating a path to The Memorial Tree, or doing the evening BBQ?

Please let me know your thoughts on what you would like to have repaired, refaced, or corrected. Also let me know your availability or sign up in the narthex or drop by for all the fun.

Ken Fuller, Operations Catalyst.
thunder572002@yahoo.com

Soloman

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He is known for his smile and his kindness, and "gets along with everybody" at the home. Soloman is a warm and welcoming "elder brother" to frightened, ill young children when they first come to Manna Home. He enters his second year of Secondary School this month.

Soloman would love a pen pal from the U.S.

Martha Helms and Carol Adams

Becoming a Family of Five



I One Sunday morning late last spring, our family of four headed to church as usual, without the slightest notion that we would return home with a commitment to soon become a family of five. But that's the way it happened. In retrospect, I guess we had been priming ourselves for the opportunity, as we spoke often about adopting a child or becoming foster parents. After Rosemary made the transition to a stay at home mother last year, it seemed something we ought to explore, but we just never had the time or energy to go down that path.

But that Sunday morning, the path came to us when Reverend Frank asked for families to host college-aged youths who were former foster children. It seemed to us that morning that as we sat in our pew that Reverend Frank was speaking directly to us and our answer was almost immediate. Although I'm sure our decision may have appeared hasty, we gave it serious thought and discussed it with our children. While we thought of a million reasons to do it, we couldn't think of one reason not to.

Beyond Emancipation is a program that focuses on youths who grew up in the foster care system but had now aged out of eligibility for most of those services. A particular need centered on young men and women who were college-bound or already enrolled. Once reaching the age of 18 many of those that were living in group or foster homes could no longer stay in those homes. When the Fall semester arrived there would be scholarships, grants, loans and other resources that could be used for housing expenses, but for the summer these young men and women were without a place to live. The Faith Advisory Council was asked to appeal to the faith communities to host these youths for the summer.

Within the next week or so, we were introduced to Salvador and he came into

our home. Salvador was getting ready to start his senior year at UC Berkeley in the fall, studying social welfare. He was born in Mexico, and lost both parents when he was 8. Soon after, his older sister married and moved to California, bringing Salvador and his younger brother with her. Unfortunately, the situation in the house became unsafe, and Salvador and his brother were removed from the home and entered the foster care system. Despite the adversity he faced, Salvador made a commitment to achieve a college education, so that he may be better able to provide for his brother and sister.

An immediate bond was formed between us, and especially with our children, Bailey and Cameron, ages 10 and 3 at the time. Salvador is a natural with kids, and they adore him. As we got to know him, we came to discover and appreciate what an amazing person Salvador is, and a treasure to have in our lives. He is an inspiring role model for anyone, always positive and cheerful, a hard worker and dedicated to his studies, and a loyal friend and brother. His friends and family have welcomed us into their lives, and so our family has been extended even further (his sister is happily remarried). We have enjoyed exchanging cultures, learning more about the Mexican culture and delighting in his sister's cooking. He learned from us as well, enjoying his first Thanksgiving turkey dinner last November. We found we had more in common than we could have imagined.

As the Fall semester was approaching, Salvador began looking for a room to rent on campus. It didn't take Rosemary and me long to consider making him an offer to stay with us, and we were overjoyed that he accepted the offer with happiness. However we needed to consider a change in our housing situation to accommodate a more permanent addition to our family. We didn't have a spare room at the time we offered to host Salvador. Our children had eagerly agreed to share a room for the summer so that Salvador could have a room to himself. But for a longer-term situation, we decided to move to a bigger house so everyone could have his own room. And as a testament of the two-way giving street between us, it was Salvador, his brother and friends who did all of the moving!

And so we are now a family of five, enriching each other's lives. It was with pride that we sent out Christmas cards with this family photo. Salvador is giving Bailey Spanish lessons and I look forward to next month when my mother will visit and get to meet Salvador. Although we could write endlessly of the blessings we have received by having Salvador in our lives, we would be remiss to not also share what our simple act of providing him with a safe place to stay has meant to him. It's best relayed in his own words, taken from a letter he gave to us at Thanksgiving:

"I am taking this opportunity to thank you for everything you have done for me... You are part of my success. Your continued support has become an important part of my life and it has helped me to continue working toward my dreams... You have made a huge difference in my life. Your name and your actions have been written in my heart... I just want to remind you that everything you sow is what you harvest and you have sown blessings and this is what you will harvest in the future."

The experience has touched us so much so that we are being called to travel further down the path. Rosemary is now charged with leading an effort to promote awareness and involvement in supporting foster programs within St. John's community. We have started the process ourselves of becoming a licensed foster care home, and hope soon to be able to bring a child in need into our lives. We plan to share our experiences with you, and invite anyone who is interested to walk down that path with us. In a way, we hope to bring the path to you, as it was brought to us last summer. We hope through this effort that more families of St. John's can experience the joy that we have by welcoming these youths into their homes, and at the same time bring hope and fulfillment to the many children of Alameda County that need us.

Michelle Ziegmann and Rosemary Bristow



The Story of North Oakland Village (NOV)

I North Oakland Village, a fee-based, membership organization, commits to provide trustworthy services to support aging in place with grace and confidence. Our Village envisions priority services such as reliable transportation to shopping and appointments and interesting activities, home repair specialists, and home healthcare providers, all vetted, safe resources at our fingertips.

A task force of interested elders in the Piedmont Avenue area began meeting in early 2008 to discuss the formation of a Village to provide these services in their neighborhood. A task force of elders with the same interest at St. John's Episcopal Church in Montclair began its explorations in late 2008. These two groups met, merged, established a Board of Directors, and formed the North Oakland Village (NOV) on July 28, 2009. Since then, we have continued meeting, have established our by-laws, received our incorporation as a California non-profit corporation, written a business plan, and are in the process of obtaining our 501c3 status. We hope to begin providing services in January, 2011.

Our Model

Most older adults prefer to stay in their homes and neighborhoods where they have long resided. Aging in place provides a cost effective alternative to moving into a retirement community. While most elders remain active, healthy and independent, there comes a time when we may need outside support.

Our vision is to support elders so they can maintain dignity and independence. North Oakland Village is modeled after Beacon Hill Village in Boston (www.beaconhillvillage.org), which started in 2001 when long-time residents created a membership organization to provide services that would allow them to stay in their homes as they age. According to a recent article in the Wall Street Journal, Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities or "NORCS" are springing up across the country. These communities are one way that people are grappling with how to remain independent and in their homes for as long as possible.

If you have any questions, call Sandra Davidson at 652-4924. Also, watch for the announcement of an open house on May 13th.

As you age, do you want CHOICES?

The Board of Directors of North Oakland Village invites you to hear the story of our commitment to aging in place and what we've done so far to make this happen in these zip code areas: 94609, 94610, 94611, 94618.

Why: • Share the excitement about North Oakland Village

- Help spread the word about North Oakland Village
- Thank those who have helped us get this far
- Learn more about the Village movement

When: Thursday, May 13, 2010: 5-7 pm,
Gather, chat: 5:00 to 5:30 pm
Program: 5:30 - 6:15 pm
Questions/answers: 6:30 to 7:00 pm

Light refreshments will be served.

Where: Fireside Room, Plymouth Church
424 Monte Vista Ave. (at Oakland Ave.)
Oakland

(Our thanks to the church for donating the space.)

RSVP: Please mark this date on your calendar and let me know that you are coming!

Sandra Davidson 652-4924



A Prayer from Elderberries

This prayer comes from the New Zealand Prayer Book and we offer it as an uplifting meditation.

For People Ageing

Lord of the unknown,

As age draws in on us, irresistible as the tide, make our life's last quarter the best that there has been.

As our strength ebbs, release our inner vitality, all you have taught us over the years; as our energy diminishes increase our compassion, and educate our prayer.

You have made us human to share you divine life; grant us the first-fruits; make our life's last quarter the best that there has been.

Elderberries Alert

I It has come to the attention of Elderberries that many folks, particularly seniors, are being unfairly targeted by charitable giving scams. Here's how it works: You send a check to a charity or cause you believe in.

The Problem – They send you a thank you note and enclose an envelope hoping you'll send another contribution.

At the same time, they sell your contact information to other, similar charities.

Soon your mailbox is overflowing with bulk mail solicitations. Mail may pile up in your living space.

The Solution – You are not obligated to any of these extraneous charities.

When you send a check to a charity you support, write in large letters that your name is not to be shared.

If a charity sends you a gift in hopes of collecting money from you: It's a gift, you may keep it. You have no obligation to pay for it or to send money.

If the unwanted solicitation includes a return envelope, especially postage paid, enclose their payment slip with Delete Addressee written in large letters. If that doesn't work, some folks simply write Deceased on the bulk envelope and drop it in a mailbox. You may also simply tear their packet in half and dump it into your recycling bin.

Getting off these extraneous lists will save trees, your time and will enhance your peace of mind.

If you'd like help sorting through the solicitations you receive, please contact Elaine Reichert through the church office.

Are you in a job search? Need encouragement?

Join us for Eucharist and prayers any Wednesday at noon.

Bring your lunch and join us for conversation and support afterward.

If you can't attend but would like prayers, please let Elaine know. These can be kept confidential or shared at the altar. Let us be part of your success team.

Slow Down: It's Time to Mark your Calendars!!



It's that time again: Spring School is gearing up for end of the year activities, sports tournaments are taking off, and Spring Break is right around the corner. Auctions, bake sales, birthday parties, BBQ's... they're everywhere, in each facet of our lives, much like the pollen that has spread around. And like the pollen, all these events can make us tired, groggy, and generally feeling like our heads are floating far from our bodies.

Church School is buzzing and blooming as well, and there are a lot of events coming up. In the interest of trying to keep your head firmly attached to your neck, try it this way with these 2 events. Maybe you can apply it to your other activities!

Step 1: Go get your calendar, a pencil, and a candle. Settle down in a comfortable chair and light the candle. Close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths, noticing your breath.

Step 2: Open your eyes. Consider each of the following events individually, asking the following questions: Can my family and I participate? How does it fit into the larger scheme of that day? Can I manage it, and still find time to rest? What course of action will lead to the greatest sense of balance, grounding, and joy? **Remember to breathe!**

Horace Mann Clothing Drive – Now Through April 11th

New or gently used clothing will go directly to needy students at Horace Mann School. Drop off donations at the boxes below the Education Building sign upstairs.

Doorperson Training and Intro to Godly Play April 11th, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

This will be a brief workshop for anyone interested in getting involved in Godly Play. We will discuss the general philosophy of the program and how it fits into all our education programs at St. John's. We'll also learn how to be a Doorperson – the adult responsible for greeting the children and getting them ready for their Worship.

Step 3: Pencil in the events if you can participate. If not, let them go. Blow out the candle, and notice the smoke swirling up into the air. Let your anxiety be like that smoke, floating up and away to God.

Annie Pierpoint

Youth Mission Trip

Thanks to all the Mission Trip Youth families for hosting an outstanding Pancake Dinner/Auction on February 16. And thanks to those of you who bid, won and donated to the auction. We are so appreciative.

Mission Trip Youth: Colleen Bazeley, Ellie Brumbaum, Laurel Crocker, Katie Ferguson, Celia Fong, Tom-Erik Haugen, Katie Kroger, John Landstrom, Keyara Milliner, Max Oldham, Nate Oldeman, Elizabeth Anne O'Neil, Andrew Robinson, Elizabeth Sloane, Allison Sooter, Matt Tiemstra, Robbie Tiemstra, Catherine Vegis, Angie Williams-Von Sternberg and Natalie Wynne.

Mission Trip Adults: Sarah Jones, Lucas Denman, Annie Pierpoint, William Berkeley and Kellor Smith.

Testimonials from previous Mission Trips

My first mission trip (to Puerto Rico) was amazing. I loved helping the people, meeting new people, trying to buy chicken with broken Spanish, all of it. But the thing I thought really made the mission trip worth doing again was the people. I enjoyed meeting new people, getting to know old ones better, and helping all of the local people. The memories were a main part of it, too. Every time one goes someplace special, the memories are some of the best parts. I'd look at the paint on my watch and say, "I got that from Puerto Rico." It was a blast, even when we were working.

Robert Tiemstra

When you wake up at some ungodly hour to go to some ungodly place helping some people, you probably will feel the most charitable thing to do would be to fall asleep to spare these people of dealing with your morning face.. That is how it always starts. Then, after you get your three hours of sleep on the plane and you start socializing with people, you may think that this is a bunch of laughs away from your parents. You step off the plane and you are in a different world. It is unlikely that someone you know will be at the work camp. It is even more unlikely that you will enjoy sweating out in the extreme heat/cold. However, once you see the peo-

ple you are helping, the faces that really appreciate that some Episcopal church in California cares about what is going on with the world, you get the whole point of a mission trip. It's not about the plane flight or the work camp or the annoying songs they play in the morning to wake you up. It is about making a statement to the world. A statement that everyone means in his or her own way: We care. It is not enough to say that God cares. We have to care. With every breath we take, every day we spend worrying about taxes, bills, laundry, school or whatever, we have to care. The money is not important. There are a lot of people who will kill over green scraps of paper. Can't we keep lives with money and a little work?

Matt Tiemstra

 ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
 YOUTH CHOIR
 PRESENTS

ANGELS
 &

DEMONS
 WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY
 SARA EVINGER
SUNDAY, MAY 16
5:00 P.M.
 PARISH POTLUCK FOLLOWS

Events around the Diocese

(taken from *Diobytes*)

Beyond Acceptance: LGBT Theologies for Ministry: a CALL online course with the Rev. Dr. Jay E. Johnson



After exclusion comes tolerance. After tolerance comes acceptance. Then what? Does a welcoming posture toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people change the dynamics of a congregation? Even more, do LGBT people offer any new, unique, or just interesting theological insights for ministry? In this course we'll consider what it means to answer yes to both of those questions. We'll survey some of the latest LGBT-related theologies and consider what kind of constructive theological proposals they make for some of the classic touchstones in Christian theology, such as creation, Christ, and spirit. We'll also consider to what extent, if at all, these theological contributions reshape the patterns of Christian ministry. All people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender expression, are welcome to participate.

When: Monday, April 12 through Sunday, May 30

Where: Center for Anglican Learning & Leadership (CALL)

Cost: \$185; \$145 for groups of 3 or more

Deadline: Monday, April 5

Contact: www.cdsp.edu/call

A Safe Haven: Bayview Mission documentary screening



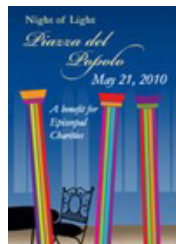
Bayview Mission is pleased to announce the premiere screening of its documentary *A Safe Haven*. We would love for you to join us and ask that you please save the date.

When: Thursday, May 6, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Where: Delancey Street Screening Room, 600 Embarcadero, San Francisco

Contact: the Rev. Nina Pickerrell,
ninap@gracecathedral.org

Piazza del Popolo in Grace Cathedral: Episcopal Charities' Night of Light



The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus and Episcopal Charities invite you inside Grace Cathedral for a sensory evening of celebration. The Italian-themed evening will begin with a ricevimento (reception) in the nave of

Grace Cathedral (with antipasti by RISTOBAR Executive Chef Angelo Auriana. Following the ricevimento, Real Vocal String Quartet and their special guest, Jeremy Kittle of the Turtle Island String Quartet, will offer a concert of world-fusion chamber music, combining the textures of a classical string quartet with intriguing vocals. Immediately following the concert will be a *cena e ballo* (dinner and dancing) featuring a three-course dinner prepared by Ruggero Gadaldi, Executive Chef, Antica Trattoria, Beretta, Delarosa and Pesce; Suzette Gresham-Tognetti, Executive Chef, Acquerello; and Gary Rulli, Proprietario di Ristorante and Pastry Master, Emporio Rulli Caffè & Ristorante. Dancing in the nave will be to the music of Larry Lynch and the Mob. Support Episcopal Charities' work in the Bay Area and join us for this spectacular Night of Light. Corporate and individual sponsorship opportunities are available.

When: Friday, May 21, 6 p.m. ricevimento; 7 p.m. concerto; 8 p.m. *cena e ballo*

Where: Grace Cathedral, 1100 California Street, San Francisco

Cost: Tickets must be purchased in advance. For reception/concert tickets, visit www.episcopalcharities.org

Contact: Deborah Mann Productions,
demann@pacbell.net, 415.563.6451

Standing on Holy Ground: an inter- faith conference to empower faith communities in the work for a sus- tainable world

In anticipation of Earth Day, Wellspring Retreat Center and Interfaith Power and Light invite you to the magnificent redwoods of Mendocino County. The purpose of this conference is to empower and connect individuals and communities of faith for the next significant steps in creating a sustainable world. We will engage practical information and resources from religious and organizational leaders, share time for collaboration, contemplative practice, as well as learn from and honor our faith traditions.

When: Friday, April 9 through Sunday, April 11

Where: Wellspring Renewal Center, 18450 Rays Road, Philo

Cost: Two nights of lodging, program fees and meals (Friday dinner through Sunday lunch), \$199 for rustic cabins, \$229 for improved cabins/lodge

Contact: the Rev. Laurie Adams, Director of Programming and Outreach, Wellspring Retreat Center wellspring@pacific.net, 707.895.3893, or Jennifer Toth, N. California Outreach Director, California Interfaith Power and Light, jennifer@interfaithpower.org, 415.391.4214



St. Monnica's Guild of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church

Presents

Breakfast for "Women Connecting with God"

HONORING WOMEN WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Guest of Honor: Eva Paterson, President, Equal Justice Society

Saturday, May 1, 2010 at 10:30 a.m.

525 29th Street at Telegraph Ave. Oakland – Bakewell Hall

Donation \$25 Call (510) 302-4453 or email Office@St.AugEpiscopal.org

Lent, Death and Wads of Cash

I The countryside has always scared me. Where others see beautiful, rolling hills, I see a terrifying void. As I child, I slept on the outside balcony of my parents' flat, where the noise of city traffic wooed me to sleep.

In stark contrast, the silence of the countryside keeps me wide awake, alone with my buzzing thoughts and fears. Suffice it to say, I was not looking forward to my retreat at Hilfield Friary in the deepest, darkest shire of Dorset. Hilfield Friary is my idea of Room101.

On the train to the retreat site, I ran into Canon Lucy Winkett. We discussed her book, *Our Sound is Our Wound* (Continuum, 2009), which this year is the Archbishop of Canterbury's suggested reading for Lent. One of the book's themes, she explained, was the way we use noise as a way to drive out the fear of death. Was that why I sleep with the radio on, I wondered.

The first thing I did when I got off the train was to find a cash machine and take out a large wad of cash. The community at Hilfield is Franciscan, and vows of poverty are taken very seriously there. I would need some cash as security, I reasoned, and the more the better. I might have to find my way back to the bright lights on my own, after all.

At the same time, I cheerfully recognized how absurd it was to take a wad of cash to a Franciscan residence: what was there to buy, other than bars of Fairtrade chocolate? But I wanted to preserve the sense of having options, the palpable peace of mind that cash represents.

I am not sure I fear death as much as author Canon Winkett suggests. For me, the fear is of abandonment – of not counting, not mattering, being rejected. The terrifying thing about Hilfield is that there your ego is asked to rely almost exclusively on the fact that you matter to God. Everything else is stripped away. To my mind, those who are not afraid of this sensation have not understood it.

Augustine of Hippo wrote: "God longs to give you the precious gift of himself, but you are not able to receive it because your hands already are full." That is the perfect thought to start Lent with, I think.

Although there is a style of Lenten sermon these days that pooh-poohs the idea of giving things up, there is a great deal to be said for recognizing that our lives are full of expensive junk and pointless noise. We think all the junk shores up our sense of self; but most of it is as useless as a wad of cash on judgement day (or at Franciscan Hilfield). Lent is the time to face our demons and give up our false comforters. Lent is when we prepare for the one thing we really need – the gift of new life.

– *The Revd Dr Giles Fraser is Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral, London*

Annual Parish Retreat

Friday May 7th – Sunday May 9th,
Bishop's Ranch at Healdsburg, Sonoma County

This is one of the biggest intergenerational Parish events of the year! Come join in the fun and games, or rest and relax. We have a great time together, whether it's going on a hike to wide open spaces, enjoying scrumptious meals, playing a friendly game of softball in the cow pasture, swimming in a unheated swimming pool on a hot day, taking part in a creative and unique worship experience, or just plain sitting back and relaxing. Everyone is welcome! Registration forms are available in the narthex or at the website.

Registration and payment due by Sunday April 25th. Partial scholarships available - ask Melissa about details.

If you have any questions, please contact Melissa Brauer at melissabrauer@comcast.net or 531-8849.



Men's Retreat, Bishop's Ranch, March 20-21, 2010

St. John's vision is to manifest God's love through invitation, inclusion, faith and action



St. John's Episcopal Church

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