



The Grapevine

A Publication of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Methuen, MA

Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church
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November 2004 Issue

LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

My Dear Friends,

There are numerous opportunities for new beginnings in the church year. The first Sunday in Advent (November 28) is also the first Sunday of the Christian year. I invite you to commit yourself to coming to church on that Sunday to begin your preparation for the coming of our Lord's birth on Christmas morning. Over the past several years the leadership of St. Andrew's Church has been looking ahead to the future of our parish. I am convinced that the future of St. Andrew's is mostly dependant on the parishioners who call St. Andrew's their spiritual home. There is a wonderful prayer that begins with the words "revive the church beginning with me". Yes, the hope for the future of St. Andrew's is dependent on you.

One might ask where do I begin? A simple answer is we begin by a commitment to worship God regularly each Sunday. Worship of Almighty God should be central to our commitment to Him. As I look over attendance in past years I am aware that parishioners need to rededicate themselves to worship of God in His church. If we grow spiritually we will grow in many other ways. As I talk with so many people today I am convinced a majority of us have lost our spiritual center and we are looking for an anchor to our lives. The church needs you to grow in the future but I am more convinced that we need the church so that we can survive spiritually.

St. Andrew's is a good place to worship Almighty God. There is a good mix of the old and the young. All are sensitive to each other. There is concern for one another. It is my prayer that all who read this newsletter and have had a relationship with this parish will recommit themselves to the worship of Almighty God in St. Andrew's.

I realize that all of you want St. Andrew's to continue as a viable parish and what I am suggesting to you is that renewal of any parish begins with the dedication to worship. I recently preach that the church is a place for sinners - - each of us separated from God and each other by "what we have done or left undone" and God forgives us. We come to church as sinners and we are forgiven and made whole by the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Let us begin anew in our commitment to worship of Almighty God this Advent. Let us not only prepare our hearts for the coming of the baby Jesus on Christmas morning but to prepare our hearts for the spiritual renewal of minds and bodies every day of our lives.

Sincerely and faithfully
Roy A. Benjamin

CONTACTING THE GRAPEVINE

You can contact us in the following ways:

Mail to: The Grapevine
c/o St Andrews Church
90 Broadway
Methuen, MA 01844

Phone: 978-689-0463 for our Parish
Administrator Gloria Schwarz

E-Mail: admin@standrewsmethuen.org

DAY BY DAY BOOKLETS

The new Day by Day booklets are available in the Parlor (2nd floor). If you know anyone who would like to receive them please contact Betty Feugill at 978-682-9341. Thank you to all those who have donated to this outreach program. Your donations are appreciated.

PLEASE NOTE: "We are sending Home Devotions to fifteen shut-ins. The cost for this is \$15.00 per month. If you would like to support this important ministry, please note "Home Devotions" on bottom of your check, or see Betty Feugill."

MUSIC PROGRAM

We still need more folks to sing with the adult choir. This doesn't need to be an every-week commitment. You're welcome whenever you're able to sing with us. We rehearse at 9 AM each Sunday. We will soon be rehearsing some beautiful Christmas music. If you like to sing, it's a nice way to use your talent, enjoy the company of other singers, and perform some great songs of praise and thanksgiving. Check us out! Questions? Contact anyone on the Music Committee:

- Jody Bowes 978-683-7525 or Joanna.Bowes@Smith-nephew.com
- Sue Foster 978-683-8747 or Activity38@aol.com
- Elaine Morrisette 978-683-8841 or REMOR20@aol.com
- Elizabeth (Liz) Boulter 978-686-0840 or EABoulter@Yahoo.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

This year's Christmas Pageant is "Operation Baby King." Both children and adults are participating - characters include "Agent Double-Oh Heaven", that famous trumpeter "Gabe", agents "Boris", "Jane", "Agatha", "Joe", "Flo", and a supporting cast of thousands (well, OK, several).

Requirements: a will to have fun! You do NOT have to know how to act or sing. This pageant follows a pre-recorded CD that leads us on the exciting Operation to discover who this little baby is that's about to be born, and who he belongs to. The congregation joins in all singing - we just need the spies and other characters. Rehearsals are immediately after church starting November 21, for about 20 minutes. You can also help by putting together (or donating) "spy" costumes and accessories. We have a complete list of props and costumes. The Pageant coordinators are Liz Boulter, Sue Foster, and Jody Bowes. Please see one of us or talk to Val Carey who will direct you to the right person. Let us know today how you're going to help, so we can start collecting all the fun stuff we need!

ST. ANDREW'S 100th ANNIVERSARY

We're going to be 100 in September of 2005! It's going to be a year filled with celebrating where we came from, who we are, and where we're going. Everyone gets to share in this yearlong event! We need people to help with historical information, events planning and advertising, events participation, and in giving thanks for this parish and the opportunities we have to reach out to each other and to the community. Please continue to keep St. Andrew's in your prayers as we start our 100th year.

Please speak to anyone on the Vestry, Worship Committee, or Music Committee and give them your ideas for how to celebrate all that we are. Tentative plans include a festival weekend in September that would have

a fair on Saturday, and a glorious anniversary service on Sunday. We hope to have the Nottingham Brass play for our church service; the fair will have outdoor and indoor activities for adults and children, crafts, music, games, food, raffles, etc. We'd like to design a commemorative item (an ornament or other beautiful memento) to offer for sale during the year to help support our efforts. We want to invite participation from many other groups in the Methuen area - and WE NEED YOUR IDEAS and INVOLVEMENT. More information will be available by the beginning of the new year. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to let people in our community know who we are and what St. Andrew's has to offer; at the same time we get to come together and celebrate our faith and fellowship. Go St. Andrew's!!

IMPORTANT KICK OFF CELEBRATION

100 YEARS OF MINISTRY

PLEASE SET ASIDE SATURDAY DECEMBER 18th ON YOUR CALENDAR TO CELEBRATE WITH BISHOP GAIL HARRIS THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND CONSECRATION OF ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

**THIS IS A SPECIAL SERVICE !!!
PLEASE HELP TO MAKE THIS A SUCCESS
WE ARE COUNTING ON YOUR SUPPORT AND ATTENDANCE**

Happy Birthday

NOVEMBER

*James Sulesky 11/3
Erin Hill 11/26*

DECEMBER

*Frank Worthy 12/8
Christopher O'Keefe 12/8
Reginald Weisenborn 12/9
Dora Atkinson 12/11
Kathleen Hill 12/17
Sarah Regan 12/28
George Driscoll 12/31*

COMMUNITY OUTREACH PANTRY



- Peanut Butter
- Canned Tuna
- Pasta
- Canned Fruit
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Boxed Cereal
- Canned Vegetables

\$Money\$ (to purchase perishables)

**ST. ANDREW'S COMMUNITY
OUTREACH PLEDGE FOR THE PANTRY**

The Food Pantry for the Arlington Neighborhood has really depleted. Would you be willing to pledge \$12.00 or 12 one-dollar items of food from the super market,

- i.e.:
- 12 cans tuna @ \$1.00 each
 - 12 jars jelly @ \$1.00 each
 - 12 cans vegetables @ \$1.00 each
 - 12 jars of spaghetti sauce @ \$1.00 each

If every family participated with a pledge, we would have enough food for the remainder of the year. I would only need to purchase the 6 gallons of milk each week and six loaves of bread from our mission account.

Thank you Len Brown

**ADOPT A FAMILY FOR
CHRISTMAS**

CHILDREN'S WISH LIST AVAILABLE

SEE LEN BROWN

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

TEACHERS and OTHERS NEEDED

Some of our wonderful teachers retired at the end of last year and many will be retiring over the next two years. With this in mind the Sunday School Staff would like to see new people step up and join the program. This will allow a smoother transition as teachers leave. Most of the teacher's at St. Andrew's church have taught for many years and have participated in creating what I feel, is a Wonderful Sunday School Program. They all want to see the program continue and improve. They would like to work with new volunteers so that the program will do so. Contact Valerie Carey or Mimi Falk if you would like to be part of this program.

ST. ANDREW'S PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For the Church: For **Frank Griswold**, our Presiding Bishop; **Tom Shaw**, our Diocesan Bishop; **Bud Cederholm** and **Gayle Harris**, our Bishops Suffragan. *For those of this parish, especially **Rene Morissette; Dick & Sue Lorenz; Joann Moran; Dick Fraser; Agnes Gourdeau; Lawrence Barnes**, husband of Peggy Barnes; **Laurie D'Addario**, Betty Mac Kay's daughter; **Niall Fleming**, long-time member of Saint Andrew's; **James Johnson**, Susan Foster's brother; **Adolph Medelinskas**, Carol Elliott's father; **Al Willmore**, Deb Wunderlich's father; **Kylie McGurn**, Susan Foster's cousin; **Erin Feugill**, Granddaughter of Betty Feugill; **Nicholas Gayhete**, great-grandson of Harriet Hebsch; **Judy Makin**, cousin of Gail Ratcliffe, **Linda Hernandez**, Niece of Dora Atkinson; **Mary Durant; Ava Elizabeth Medeiros**, newborn at Children's hospital, daughter of Melanie & Troy Medeiros friends of the day-care center; **Florence Mignault**, Aunt of Carol & Mandy Couture; **Rev. Diane Bragg**, at **St. David's Church**, from Dora Atkinson; **Shane McKallagat**., 2 week old grandson of Dan & Nancy McKallagat; **Irene McLeod**, mother of Krista McLeod; **Ruth Miller**, daughter-in-law of Ella Miller.*

If you are submitting a name to be put on our prayer list, please include along with the name of the individual, the relation to you or parish family and your name.

Thank you

MEMORIAL FUNDS

IN MEMORY OF:

MEMORIAL FUND

Doreen R. Landers

Mary Riely

ELEVATOR LIFT

Should you find it difficult to climb the stairs to the sanctuary or Parish Hall, the elevator/lift is available for your convenience. Please contact an usher or member of the vestry and they will assist you.

Stewardship Homily November 14, 2004

Laura Walta

You all should have received your pledge letter and commitment card in the mail this past week. I hope you are praying on your pledge, and mentally re-committing yourself to St. Andrew's. As a member of the Stewardship Committee, I agreed to provide a homily today. Please don't compare me to Fr. Roy. But I do have a few thoughts to share with you today.

The readings kind of cooperated today with the theme of stewardship. Paul is clear in his letter to the Thessalonians, that God expects us to carry our own weight. Disciples of the Lord, Christians, are not supposed to be slackers. We are each responsible to support the functioning and work of the church. That's the idea of stewardship. Taking care of the things left in your care. This is God's church. But he expects us to take care of it for Him. It's just like your own home. Everyone in the family has chores. Everyone together makes the household run properly. No slacking allowed.

Opportunities for stewardship abound here at St. Andrew's. Think of it as the "housework of the church". They are all the tasks and chores that we do to support the church itself. Things like Altar Guild, Vestry, Ushers, Lectors, Acolytes, and LEMs. They make the service possible. They create a place of worship, fellowship, and joy.

This year, we are not asking for the impossible. We just want to be able to pay the bills. To hold regular services. To feed the souls of our members. To have a place to share, to teach, to learn. We want to be able to search for a permanent rector or Priest in Charge to teach us, mentor us, help us become a true community of Christians.

There's a miracle involved in committing oneself to the work of the Lord. I remember being a young, single mom, working two jobs. I didn't think I could afford to donate to the church on a regular basis. So I made a deal with God. I promised him that I'd give 5% of my weekly income to the church. BUT, he was supposed to make sure that we never went hungry. That was 15 years ago. And amazingly enough, He has made it work. Through the ups and downs of life, we have always had enough. My daughters have never been hungry. The electricity was never shut off. We always had a roof over our heads. Through two years of unemployment, we have not suffered. I'm not saying that life is easy. It's hard work. It only works when I do my part. When I commit myself not to be slackers, but to be doers. There have always been opportunities to work and earn something. And there has always been enough to keep up my pledge.

Part of the miracle of being committed to God is the way it changes the way you look at things. For example,

Is the glass half empty? Or half full? The answer depends entirely on your perspective. If you're looking to find fault, it will never be full enough. If you're looking for reasons to be thankful, it's close to overflowing!

When I was first married, twenty five years ago, I thought life was great. There was me, my husband, my new little baby. What more could I ask for? But my husband constantly talked about someday. Someday we'd have a bigger house. Someday we'd drive a better car. Someday we'd belong to the country club. And then he started using credit cards to create that world for himself. I warned him that he was putting the children's future at risk. I knew that someday was going to catch up to us. He lived in an imaginary world of the future. I wanted to love the world I was in. Obviously, it didn't work out for us.

That's how I like to look at life here at St. Andrew's. We can spend our time mourning the past, and waiting for a wonderful future. There will always be things we want. We could always have more, do more. But from another perspective, we have so much here. Look around- you see people who really care about you. You see a great group of people teaching our children about God and the church. You hear the magic of Berkely's fingers on our beautiful organ.

We have so much to be thankful for at St. Andrew's. Most of all, I'm thankful for the love. Here at St. Andrew's I can feel God's love. I can actually feel the Holy Spirit. During the hymns, the Peace, the Eucharist- I am filled with such peace and love- it's like God is giving me a hug!

And love is another part of the miracle. Love is a wonderful thing. As you all have experienced, you don't give love away. You don't lose it just because you give it. It's like God is piped in and His love just flows through us. When we reach out to people in our community, when we do things to help others, when we get involved in volunteer activities- that is all a manifestation of God's love in us. We are living God's love. And that's why ministry feels so good.

According to the dictionary, to minister is to "attend to the wants and needs of others". Life is full of opportunities to do that. We minister to our children, our parents, our friends. But God would have us love our neighbors as ourselves. And so we also minister to our neighbors, our schools, our communities. Opportunities for ministry are endless and they are all around us.

St. Andrew's has a few ministries. Things like the Friday night dances for the handicapped. The food pantry for the Arlington neighborhood. Sunday School for our children. Many people don't think of their volunteer work in the community as ministry, but it is. Because we do it as an extension of God's love for us. And as I look around, I see a church full of ministers. All spreading the love!

So as Paul says, "Do not be weary in doing what is right." Let St. Andrew's be known as a place that supports ministry. A place to worship God together. One that feeds it's members souls. That nourishes the spirit. That celebrates the love. Amen.

CHRISTMAS AND FLOWER ENVELOPES

Christmas and Flower envelopes will go out with a letter from Father Roy later in the month. While we encourage donations in memory of loved ones, we have decided to do away with individual names being recognized at Christmas and Easter. Instead, there will be a notation in the Bulletin that flowers have been given in memory of deceased family and friends of St. Andrew's and to the glory of God.

HANGING OF THE GREENS:

NOV 28 (after church). Many hands make light work and we will do this right after church. Please see Beth Regan if you have any questions.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:

*6:30 pm and 11:00 pm
Carol Sing 11:00 to 11:15 pm. There will be an organist at both services.*

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT:

DECEMBER 19 (during the service)

MITTEN TREE:

*The First Communion Class will sponsor
Please knit or pick up some loves or mittens*

HUNGER SUNDAY:

FAMILY SUNDAY:

The first Sunday in every month. There will be a children's sermon. This is also the day that everybody should bring a can of food to church for our pantry.

GO NOW IN PEACE is again part of our service. It will be sung after singing 3 verses of the recessional. Holding hands is optional. This is already being used in the service.

SERMON DELIVERED AT NOVEMBER 7th MASS
BY JIM BEAGAN

My friends at Saint Andrew's,

I was asked to speak with you regarding this year's stewardship drive. So far you have heard many reasons for stewardship, in Father Roy's letter and sermon, and you will hear more when you receive the pledge letter this week.

So far we have stressed two things: giving in gratitude for the blessing that Saint Andrew's is in our lives, and giving to meet the needs and missions of the parish. As a member of the vestry, I have experienced how your wardens have worked so hard to obtain a rector, while worrying about the means to pay for one. I have also been exposed to the hard work of those involved in the things that make Saint Andrews work so well for us: in the physical upkeep of this wonderful worship space, in the liturgy that sustains us, the religious education that bring the joy in faith to our youth, and in the outreach to the community. All of these things receive a huge commitment of your time and talent, for which we are very grateful, and of course they all impact the budget. The sad fact is that the current level of pledging can't pay for everything we want our church to be.

Although my participation in the life of Saint Andrew's is relatively small, I have many reasons to be grateful to it. But these reasons also extend to the Episcopal Church at large, something we seldom mention at pledge time. Admittedly, there may be some hard feeling with the church and the diocese. Some may feel that the diocese hasn't helped us do what we need to survive, and some may strongly disagree with the direction that the church has taken on some social issues. We just went through a bitter, and divisive presidential campaign. No matter who won, many were bound to be disappointed in the results, and left feeling the country is taking the wrong path. But, at the same time we celebrate our country and our ability to vote for its future. We don't love our country any less for these disappointments and concerns, and we certainly don't withhold our financial support, as if the IRS would allow that. Some people have used their disagreements with the church as reason for not pledging - please don't do that.

Back to my reasons why I am so grateful to the Episcopal Church and to Saint Andrew's. I was not raised an Episcopalian, but found a home in the church. I was raised a Catholic, and find comfort in the similarities of the liturgy, although I still occasionally slip a rosary into my private prayer. But what I am most grateful for is that the Episcopal church is more lenient on issues of conscience, treating them as matters for individual decision and not matters of dogma which is imposed on us. It accepts us for who we are, not what we are. The news is full of the trouble over church closings in Massachusetts, often pitting parishes

against their diocese. Although there is the same canonical ownership of our assets by our diocese, I don't think any of us fear being told to close. I like to think that is due to a benevolent diocese.

I am grateful for the welcome I have received at Saint Andrew's. Although I don't feel like I am a scary person, I generate a lot of fear. Once, in Demoula's, a elderly woman knocked over a display trying to turn her shopping cart around and get away from me. At a former church, where I was a Eucharistic minister, people avoided receiving communion from me. When people saw me, they misjudged my multiple sclerosis as AIDS, and sadly reacted negatively. However, the people of Saint Andrew's have never been anything but totally welcoming to me. They accept my spotty attendance, and lack of involvement. They make me feel that they are happy when I come, and appreciate anything I do. That makes me want to support the church, our church.

In closing, I want to apologize for not linking this call for stewardship to today's lessons . I could not find anything to draw on. So, I will just repeat the words of the psalm ' God, I call upon you, for you will answer me. Bend down your ear to me, listen to my words. Show me how marvelous is your unfailing love'. Let us respond to that love in stewardship.