

THE GOOD NEWS OF ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH



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December 2004

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Rector's Thoughts

Celebrating Christ in a Benedictine Sort of Way

Funny thing...I was thinking that the Christ child, his mom and earthly dad, might have all been safe and warm in an inside room that first Christmas, if only the inn keeper had been Benedictine. Now, despite the obvious historical problems with that statement...I think I can explain.

But before the explanation, let me also say that I would surely not presume to tell any of you how to have a celebration, I am sure you all know how to have a good time without my advice. But, just recently I spent a couple days on retreat at Richardton, the Benedictine Monastery of Sacred Heart. Part of our focus was the Rule of St. Benedict, and part of that rule was the practice of hospitality. And *that* hospitality should season the season of celebration.

Benedictine hospitality, I have come to understand, is much more than simply greeting a fellow Christian, much more than having folks over to dinner. Hospitality is a spiritual state of opening up one's heart to the needs of others. It is a sort of spiritual ethic complete unto itself. Benedictines adopt Hospitality as a life long goal and holy practice. It seems to me to be the practical end of the command to love one's neighbor as yourself.

To be truly hospitable is to practice the radical love of Jesus Christ, not for a day, but till life passes from your body. For a Christian congregation, for example, it may mean nearly eternal dedication to many loving practices, but it most certainly means to welcome familiar faces and newcomers of all ages with joy and an attitude of helpfulness. But, it also means taking them into your company with fellowship and genuine interest.

Now, brace yourself, because this true Christian hospitality calls for deeper commitment still. To be hospitable may mean putting your own needs on hold to help another, or even sacrificing for another's welfare or care. It may mean bending group

See *Benedictine* page 2

Fall/Winter/Spring Worship Schedule

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Christian Education
10:00 a.m. Eucharist

Tuesday

5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer

Wednesday

5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup
Supper & Bible Study

Thursday

8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

“ ... a sort of generosity that goes way beyond lending a pal a couple of bucks ... ”

Benedictine

membership rules a bit, so a fellow human can take part, thus feeling accepted. Further, it suggests a sort of generosity that goes way beyond lending a pal a couple of bucks; it asks for significant giving without the specter of payback. It asks us to fight our personal prejudices without regard to race, creed, gender, politics, sexual orientation and more, in order to see the Christ in everyone, and reach out with the love that heals and saves.

In the light of the divisiveness flowing from the 2003 General Convention, it is so heartening to know that hospitality in a Benedictine way, seems to ask how can we include (not exclude) a fellow human in a loving circle. I would like to think that sentiment represents of the best of Anglican thinking, as well as a

Benedictine Rule.

So, dear friends, I would like to suggest that in this remaining time of Advent, and through the Christmas time (at least to begin with), that we follow a call to this sort of hospitality ... One could begin by welcoming those folks who come through our doors, and treating them as the Benedictine's would, that is, as if he or she were the Christ. Maybe in this way we can celebrate and honor the Christ child, by being the living spiritual Inn from which no one would be turned away. ja+

**November
Guests**



Jan Besse (Canada)
M. Freborg
Daniela, Casey & Emily Look

Thank you for sharing in Holy Communion with us here at All Saints' Episcopal Church! We hope that you will come back and join us again real soon!

**December &
January**



Birthdays & Anniversaries

December

Jean Parish	2
Billy McEwen	2
Matthew Jameson	5
Marianne Wyatt	8
Mary Weber	9
Bob Moore	15
Lonnie Tompkins	26
Amy Myers	27

January

JoAnn Buriak	2
Paul Buriak	10
Margi Lee	10
Rex Parish	11
Stephen Lowe	16
Dave & Nancy Barney	19
Carolyn King	21

If you have a birthday or anniversary this month and it's not listed here, please call our secretary at 839-1037 and ask her to update your information.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>December 2004</h1>						
			1 5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup Supper & Advent Study - <i>When Christ Comes</i> 6:30 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	2 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30-12:30 Soup Kitchen Rector in Devils Lake in the afternoon	3	4 Rector teaching in Devils Lake
5 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Youth Group fundraiser	6 Rector's day off	7 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m. Nominee's meeting	8 5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup Supper & Advent Study - <i>When Christ Comes</i> 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	9 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30-12:30 Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Talking Circle	10	11 Rector teaching in Devils Lake 7:30 p.m. Singing Christmas Tree at First Assembly of God Church (tickets needed)
12 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Vestry meeting	13 Rector's day off	14 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer	15 5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup Supper & Advent Study - <i>When Christ Comes</i> 6:30 p.m. Youth Group Christmas party 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	16 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30-12:30 Soup Kitchen Rector in Devils Lake in the afternoon	17	18 Rector teaching in Devils Lake
19 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Hanging of the Greens	20 Rector's day off	21 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer	22 5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup Supper & Advent Study - <i>When Christ Comes</i> 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	23 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30-12:30 Soup Kitchen	24 7:45 p.m. Children's Concert 8:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist After Glow party Christmas Eve	25 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Christmas Day
26 No Christian Education this morning 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist	27 Rector's day off	28 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer	29 5:15 p.m. Eucharist, Soup Supper & Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	30 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30-12:30 Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Talking Circle	31 New Year's Eve	

“ ... what happens when one part of the Communion does things that other parts find offensive or alarming?”

“...international discussions need not and should not deflect us from our work here ...”

WHAT IS THE WINDSOR REPORT?

Elsewhere in these pages you will find the Archbishop of Canterbury’s response to the “Windsor Report,” but what IS the Windsor Report? Here’s a short answer.

The report was recently issued by something called the “The Lambeth Commission on Communion,” a group of 17 people—bishops and laypersons—appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to sort things out after the Episcopal Church last summer approved Gene Robinson’s consecration as Bishop of New Hampshire. As everyone knows, Gene Robinson is living in a same-sex relationship, and approval of his consecration threw the Anglican Communion into a turmoil.

But what is The Anglican Communion and what happens when one part of the Communion does things that other parts find offensive or alarming? Those are questions the Windsor report addresses. It does not address the issue of homosexuality at all, since that was outside its mandate.

Historically, the Anglican Communion is an association of 38 provinces from around the world who have their roots in the Church of England. The United States is one province. Most provinces, and in fact most Anglicans worldwide, are in Africa and South America. In the Anglican Communion, English-speaking Anglicans are a distinct minority. Each province has a presiding Bishop or Archbishop as its head. The Archbishop of Canterbury is recognized as “first among equals” but unlike the Roman Pope, he does not have any power to make rules for any other provinces. He doesn’t have the power to intervene officially in disputes such as

the present one either, but he does have considerable moral authority and the power to appoint Commissions such as this one.

The Commission report runs about 90 pages and is very well written. ND clergy were each mailed a copy to study for our recent Clergy Retreat in Richardton. We have put one copy in the office, and anyone is welcome to check it out and read it. The part that will get the most publicity is its proposal for an “Anglican Covenant.” This would allow each province (or perhaps even each Diocese?) to declare itself in or out of an agreement that would strengthen the Communion in ways that have yet to be worked out. Various Anglican groups will be studying the Report in the coming months and no doubt issuing statements that the press can distort and sensationalize.

Jackie and I have taken the position from the beginning that these national and international discussions need not and should not deflect us from our work here, which is to love each other and reach out to the needy in the name of Christ. In all probability, when the smoke clears, there will still be an Episcopal Church and an Anglican Communion, and North Dakota and All Saints will be a part of those, just as we are now. But our current international dialogue about human sexuality--though it often makes us uncomfortable--helps us better understand God's kingdom and reminds us of our place in the larger body of the Anglican Communion.

gs+

VISITORS — OR GUESTS?

Our recent Mission and Vision Sunday program helped us focus as a parish on our potential for growth. A recent edition of a national newsletter *Vestry Papers* has some further thoughts on that issue.

The key ingredient, they suggest, is “health,” which they define as having “robust self-esteem, trusting relationships, respected leadership, and life-affirming goals.”

The church leadership must be convinced that “the lives of those [who enter the church] community will be transformed by divine power through efforts of the faithful.” Plenty of evidence suggests that small churches can grow but that “Creating an engaging, open and loving aggressive church culture is a prerequisite for health. It is tough. People have to be convinced that Christians are called not simply to maintain the church, but to build it through discipleship.” Such programs of growth are often unpopular. One pastor even announced to her congregation, “We will grow. And you won’t like. It.”

The articles point out that any church’s greatest asset is not its money, but its people: “The earliest disciples were poor. Yet in the richness of their faith and their

dedication to Jesus’ vision of a Kingdom of God now, their reliance upon the promised Holy Spirit led them into a miraculous expectation that led them on to victory. . . evangelism is not a new program. It necessitates a completely reordered and dynamic church culture whose goal goes far beyond survival to full-blown mission. This is true health.”

The most immediately visible sign of health in a congregation, of course, is its hospitality. Even what we call “newcomers” makes a difference. Like most churches, we tend to call them “visitors,” but we might do better to call them “guests” and treat them like guests. A whole range of things, from the quality of the coffee to the signs pointing to the rest rooms, can influence the way a guest feels when they enter a church. But conversation remains the most important first step: “What’s really needed, of course, are people who will talk to our guests during social times. Once again, members of the vestry can decide to take leadership on this matter.” gs+

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ALL SAINTS’ BEGINS PROCESS WITH NOMINEES FOR LAY AND ORDAINED MINISTRY

Tuesday, evening December 8, 7:00 p.m., marks the first meeting of Lay and Ordained Ministry Nominees. Rector Jackie will discuss with them the process of licensing and ordination. Our Bishop, local guidelines for Lay and Ordained Ministry and the National Canons will be the our guides for the process.

For the Deacon nominees, names for discernment groups will be submitted to the vestry. They may include or exclude names as they see fit.

Next, the groups will be formed and receive instructions from Rector Jackie. The discernment groups meet 4 times ... 3 times with the nominee and once with the vestry in report. If Nominee, Rector and 2/3 Vestry majority agree to support further discernment on the Diocesan level, a letter from the vestry is drafted and sent to the Bishop. An application letter is sent at the same time, which includes a description of the discernment process.

From that point the Bishop may, upon his decision, admit the individual(s) as a postulant (s). The lay ministry nominees will be scheduled for a time discussion for ministry discernment questions and a discussion of their training needs for individual licensure. Please note that education and training sessions for both Lay and Ordained Ministry nominees will follow in the coming weeks.

Please join me in daily prayer for all of our nominees. God bless them as they enter a time of discernment of God's will for their lives, for All Saints, and for The Diocese of North Dakota. ja+

“Tuesday ... marks the first meeting of Lay and Ordained Ministry Nominees.”

Advent pastoral letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury

[Source: Lambeth Palace]

29 November 2004

Primates of the Anglican Communion Moderators of the United Churches

1. As we move towards the Advent season once again, I write with love and concern for the well-being of our Communion and the future of our common discipleship. In II Tim.4.8, the apostle speaks of the Lord's promise 'to all those who wait with love for him to appear' - or, in the older translation - 'all them also that love his appearing'. The Church is - in human terms - the assembly of those who 'love his appearing'. We are drawn together by love and gratitude for what we see in Christ's first appearing - his birth in humility, his ministry, his saving death and glorious resurrection - and by loving hope for his coming again. We look forward, praying (in the words of one of the most profound of the Christmas collects) 'that we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come to be our judge'.

It is in this context that we are called as Anglican Christians to think about the Windsor Report of the Lambeth Commission chaired by Archbishop Robin Eames. As Providence would have it, this task is before us over the Advent and Christmas seasons, so that we constantly have in mind that basic sense of the Church as the community of those who love and long for Christ. This, I have said, is what the Church is from a human point of view; but it is more. It is also Christ's Body. Drawn into the fellowship created by the Holy Spirit, we live not from ourselves, our feelings, thoughts or achievements, not

even from the fullness of our grasp of the faith into which God has called us, but from the life poured into us by God's free grace - so that the common life of the Church becomes a sign in the world of God's life and activity, a sacrament of his love.

God became human, said the teachers of the early Church, so that humanity might become 'divine' - not by any confusion between God and his creation, but by creation being made into a transparent vehicle of God's loving purpose and healing action, and most of all by men and women becoming God's adopted sons and daughters. The Church is the place where such a transparency to God's purpose and action is most fully realized when we worship in spirit and in truth.

Thus the Church is, as the Reformers said, 'the creation of the Word': it is made what it is by the Word of God incarnate, by the Word written in Scripture, by the Word proclaimed in speech and sacrament. As the Spirit makes the Word present and alive again and again among us, the Church is the place where God makes himself heard and seen.

But the Church is also where our failures are most painfully visible. The Church therefore must show God to the world not only in its faithfulness and holiness, but in its willingness to repent and begin again its journey of discipleship. One of the deepest challenges of the Windsor Report is about repentance. And in the Church we can never call on others to repent without ourselves acknowledging that we too in all sorts of ways are sinners in need of grace. If only the Church's renewal were always a matter of other people's

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“God became human, said the teachers of the early Church, so that humanity might become 'divine' ...”

repentance! But God speaks the same words to all and our first (though not our only) duty must be to hear clearly what he says to each of us.

2. Because there has been much talk of apology in the light of the Report, it has been all too easy to miss the centrality of God's call to repentance. Apology is the currency of the world. People in law courts argue about their rights in order to try and extract a satisfactory apology, an adequate statement of responsibility. But I hope and pray we can go beyond that. An apology may amount only to someone saying, 'I'm sorry you feel like that'; and that doesn't go deep enough.

To repent before one another is to see that we have failed in our witness as God's new community, failed to live in the full interdependence of love - and so to see that we have compromised the way in which God can make himself heard and seen among us. When St Paul writes about conflict in the Church, he is concerned above all that we act in such a way that we can be seen to live as Christ's Body together, so that the world may see Jesus.

3. The Windsor Report rightly warns us against an idea of 'autonomy' that simply takes it for granted that every local church does what it thinks is right. There are those on all sides of the current controversy who say that we have little alternative now but to accept that this is how the future looks: churches will go their different ways, even to the point of competing with one another. But in our Communion, God has given us a gift of something more than just a collection of local bodies. We often forget the countless informal links that bind us, parish to parish, person to

person, across the Communion in a way that would be so much harder to realise without our public and official links. It is surely worth working to honour this gift as best we can. It is worth not giving up too easily - as if we felt able to say, 'I have no need of you' (1 Cor.12.21).

So if it is true that an action by one part of the Communion genuinely causes offence, causes others to stumble, there is need to ask, 'How has what we have done got in the way of God making himself heard and seen among us? Have we acted in such a way as to suggest that we do not believe we are under the authority of Scripture - that the Church is not the creation of the Word? Have we bound on other churches burdens too heavy for them to bear, reproaches for which they may suffer? Have we been eager to dismiss others before we have listened?'

We owe it to one another to let such questions sink in slowly and prayerfully. But these are the important questions for our spiritual health, rather than arguing only over the terms and wording of apologies. It is as we deal with these questions that we do our proper duty to each other in the Church by calling each other back to Christ.

And we should not forget those questions that may make us most uncomfortable. In the heat of this controversy, things have been said about homosexual people that have made many of them, including those who lead celibate lives, feel that there is no good news for them in the Church. Remember that in many countries such people face real persecution and cruelty; even where there are no legal penalties, they suffer from a sense of rejection. Young people are driven to suicide by the conviction

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“We owe it to one another to let such questions sink in slowly and prayerfully.”

“We know each other's hearts as believers only when we share each other's prayer.”

that no-one will listen to them patiently; many feel that they are condemned not for their behaviour but for their nature. As I write these words, I have in mind the recent brutal and unprovoked murder of a homosexual man in London by a group of violent and ignorant youths.

The 1998 Lambeth Resolution on this subject declared plainly that the Anglican Church worldwide did not believe - because of its reading of Scripture - that it was free to say that homosexual practice could be blessed. But it also declared that violence in word or deed and prejudice against homosexual people were unacceptable and sinful behaviour for Christians. Earlier Lambeth Conference Resolutions had made the same point. Any words that could make it easier for someone to attack or abuse a homosexual person are words of which we must repent. We are bound to ask, with the greatest care, how we best communicate the challenge of the gospel to homosexual persons and how we may free ourselves from unreasoning fear or even hatred.

4. It is beyond doubt that we stand at a point where the future shape and character of the Communion depend on our choices. What those will be is something that will be settled by various meetings and consultations in the months ahead, especially the Primates' Meeting. The Windsor document sets out a possible future in which we willingly bind ourselves closer together by some form of covenant. I hope we will see virtue in this. No-one can or will impose this, but it may be a creative way of expressing a unity that is neither theoretical nor tyrannical. We have experience of making covenants with our ecumenical partners; why should there not be appropriate commitments which we can

freely and honestly make with one another?

It is in such a context that the proposals for the future of my own office should be discussed. They do not seek to create a central executive, but to create a means to discern what covenantal relationship might mean and to act to restore it when it is threatened. But staying together as a Communion is bound to be costly for us all. To be in the Church at all obliges us to try and discern the difficult balance between independence and responsibility to each other, and to face the dangers of causing others to stumble (Mark 9.42, Rom.14). How can we be true to our consciences, yet aware that the Church as the whole Body needs to reflect and decide - not just ourselves and our friends? The only thing that will ultimately keep us together is a recognition in each other of the same love and longing for the same Lord and his appearing.

How do we do that? Not primarily through public words and statements. We know each other's hearts as believers only when we share each other's prayer. In the months ahead, please do not forget this. Be aware of others praying with you across the world. Take the opportunities that may arise of sharing directly in prayer wherever you can. Let us use the various links of the Communion for this good purpose. Do not forget the good things we have shared as a Communion. Do not think that repentance is always something others are called to, but acknowledge the failings we all share, sinful and struggling disciples as we are.

5. We have been given a working tool of great value and great challenge in the Windsor Report. It will not straight away answer all our questions, but it will help us find out what are the right and the useful questions to ask.

I invite you during this Advent season to devote time and attention in the second week of Advent - the week following what has traditionally been the Sunday when we think about God's gift of Holy Scripture - to prayer around all these matters - prayer for all who have difficult decisions to make, prayer for the whole of our Communion, so that we may together find how we may best honour our God and Saviour and serve his mission in the world.

May God bless all of you in your preparation to celebrate the Lord's Coming, 'as we wait for the blessed day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ will appear' (Titus 2.11).

As ever,

+ Rowan Cantuar