

# THE GOOD NEWS OF ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL



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October / November 2004

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## Rector's Thoughts

### Church Renewal: A Deliberate Choice

In this Issue of the Good News, you will find much ink spilled about the things that George and I have learned from the Convergence Conference in Burnsville, MN. Most of what we learned were more reminders than new territory.

Our memories were jogged by those simple truths, which form the basics vital to the life, growth and renewal of a Christian church. The truth about a healthy church is that life, growth and renewal is a conscious choice. The choice to live out mission and vision. Now, while the exact vision may vary from congregation to congregation, the foundational mission is the same.

The mission of the church is not about survival. It's not about paying the light bills, or the rector, or high-pressure stewardship campaigns. It is about spreading Christ's transforming love to one another and to the world. All else must serve this ancient mission. The mission should ring some bells because it is simply a variation of the great commission to go and make disciples of all nations.

This truth was an affirmation of our stance over the past three years: If we are to stand a chance for renew and grow, we must first make sure that we are living the mission. That is, that we are Christians, literally meaning little Christ's, to those inside and outside our doors. To love as Christ loves is the call of the gospel. It is our first call; It is our first choice.

Supporting that mission, we have found several more decisions. We found the decision for lively, meaningful worship that speaks to each generation: a congregation that opens its arms to strangers, sending caring messages from the point of their first experience; we found congregations that actively fight unhealthy behaviors...they battle gossip, passive-aggressive behavior, and backbiting; they promote reconciliation.

## 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

*continued on page 2*

We find willing, team-minded leadership that has a deep level of commitment. They choose a commitment to daily prayer, continuing study of the word, and support of the church.

We also reviewed the many enemies of the life, growth and renewal of a church. And, I can say, that many churches commit slow suicide, and that is a choice, also. It is as deliberate as swallowing a daily dose of poison until the inevitable happens... and it will happen. Choose to swallow unhealthy hateful behaviors, flaccid worship, and a selfish human environment that says to a newcomer "You are not one of us. You are not welcome here," and the church has made a choice for death.

Now, we know it seems that, sometimes, unhealthy churches continue on and on; and, sometimes loving Churches close. But, the former

exists in certain shame and the latter concludes its' time with the dignity of Christ and the very life of Christ glowing from the souls of its congregation.

This article, indeed this issue of the Good News, should be taken as a loving challenge to All Saint's congregation to make a choice and dedicate yourselves to that choice

If you choose dissention, fear, and a host of selfish, unloving behaviors to be passed off as Christianity...your path to the grave seems clear.

But, if you consciously choose to be Christian, you have chosen renewal and All Saints' must be about the saving love of Jesus Christ and all the good behaviors that undergird that love. It is the choice for life and it is the church that George and I fight for and pastor. ja+

# September & October Guests ...



Mark Lesser  
Carol L.

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!

# October & November



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

### October

Mary Saltsman .....	2
Marie Ristvedt .....	3
Wayne & Carolyn King .....	4
Billy & Theresa McEwen .....	4
Denys Powell .....	4
John Smith, II .....	5
Charlie Lee .....	13
Monica Powell .....	16
Rev. George Slanger .....	16
Jim Myers .....	23
Kathy Fillmore .....	29

### November

Jon Bovia .....	1
Bob Lowe .....	3
Cheyenne Long .....	7
Liz Love .....	25
Audrey Burke .....	26
Nan Jacobson .....	27
George & Joanne Slanger .....	28

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

# November 2004

	1 Rector's day off	2 12:00 Lunch & Bible Study  5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer  7:00 p.m. Exegesis course begins	3 5:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Soup Supper & Bible Study  6:30 p.m. Youth Group  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	4 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen  Rector in Devils Lake in the afternoon	5 [ — Commission in	6 on Ministry ----- ] Bismarck
7 9:00 a.m. Christian Education  10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  Bishop visiting  Potluck	8 Rector's day off	9 12:00 Lunch & Bible Study  5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer  7:00 p.m. Exegesis course	10 5:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Soup Supper & Bible Study  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	11 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen  6:00 p.m. Talking Circle	12 [ ----- Diocesan in	13 Council ----- ] Bismarck
14 9:00 a.m. Christian Education  10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  UTO Sunday	15 Rector's day off	16 12:00 Lunch & Bible Study  5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer  7:00 p.m. Exegesis course	17 4:00 p.m. Worship Committee  5:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Soup Supper & Bible Study  6:30 p.m. Youth Group  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice  7:30 p.m. Evening Guild	18 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen  Rector in Devils Lake in the afternoon	19	20 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Worship course in Devils Lake - Rector teaching
21 9:00 a.m. Christian Education  10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  Vestry meeting  In Gathering  Advent Wreath party & Potluck	22 Rector's day off	23 No noon Bible Study  No Evening Prayer  -----	24 5:15 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Soup Supper & Bible Study  7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	25 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer  No Soup Kitchen  6:00 p.m. Talking Circle with a Thanksgiving meal  Church offices closed  <b>Thanksgiving</b>	26 All Saints' hosting Supper with Santa	27 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Worship course in Devils Lake - Rector teaching
28 9:00 a.m. Christian Education  10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  Youth Group Serving breakfast  <b>Advent begins</b>	29 Rector's day off	30 12:00 Lunch & Bible Study  5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer  7:00 p.m. Exegesis course				

*“... America ... the most religious country on Earth ...”*

*“... refocus on the mission of the first century church—which was to witness and proclaim the transforming love of God in Christ ...”*

On Sept. 21-22, at the urging of the Vestry, Jackie and I traveled to Burnsville, MN—most of the way in driving rain—to attend a conference on church renewal. We stayed with my daughter who lives in Lakeville, just a few minutes from the Conference site, at a large Lutheran church. (When I say large, I mean large. It had half-a-dozen separate buildings and covered a city block.)

The Conference was organized by an outfit called Easum Bandy Associates (EBA). Bill Easum and Ted Bandy are mainline Protestant pastors with a track record of renewing moribund churches, and they have gathered a dozen or so pastors with similar experience to form a consulting company that provides training and support for other churches interested in doing the same thing. Besides attending the conference, we signed the church up for a year’s worth of their on-line and telephone consulting services.

The conference was very well run, featuring all the latest wrinkles in digital technology. The “heavy hitters” did general sessions at the beginning and end of each day, while others did more hands-on workshops in between. Jackie and I had some time on the way back to digest the immense amount of information and perspective we had been exposed to.

One significant point is that these are hard times for mainline churches. Church membership has declined steadily since the high-water mark in the 1950’s. The Methodists closed 3,000 churches last year. The rate of decline is increasing and predicted to get worse in the next ten years.

The reasons are complex, of course, but one factor is “secularization of society.” Dual career couples are so busy responding to their work and to the rich mix of entertainment, sports, news, and school activity that they have no time or energy left for church, and do not feel a need for it. In most countries of Europe, regular church attendance is down around 4 percent of the population. In America, which is, amazingly enough, the most religious

country on Earth, the figure is still over 40 percent, but more and more of those folks are over 60. The vast majority of people between 20 and 40 years old are what Bill Easum calls “The Legion of the Lapsed”—ex-Methodists, ex-Presbyterians, ex-Episcopalians, ex-Catholics. Those are what scripture calls the “fields white with harvest.”

Many churches (most of them not mainline) have been able to buck the trend and grow dramatically--doubling, tripling, quadrupling in a fairly short time. These churches have found ways to reach out to the legion of the lost by doing these kinds of things: 1) Most important, refocus on the mission of the first century church—which was to witness and proclaim the transforming love of God in Christ and to bring people to discipleship to Christ; 2) Build strong newcomer programs with well-trained greeters and every visitor receiving 6-10 contacts from clergy AND lay persons in the first month; 3) Build strong Christian Ed and Youth programs; 4) Incorporate elements “of vernacular worship”—varied music (including some that has a beat), digital technology with visual images (video projection, etc); 5) Establish communication patterns that emphasize honesty, forgiveness, charity, support, and hope.

On the other hand, churches that decline and eventually close usually have these characteristics: 1) a “fortress mentality”; 2) A strong orientation to the past; 3) focus on survival rather than mission; 4) Communication patterns featuring gossip, back-biting and factionalism, with a small percentage of grippers occupying a large percentage of the congregations time and energy.

This is what the conference had to say. How much of it is relevant to our situation is another question, of course, and one that the clergy, vestry, and congregation will be wrestling with in the next months, including our “mission and vision” Sunday on October 31. Notes on that are available elsewhere in this Good News. gs+

At its September meeting (and subsequent e-mail meetings) All Saints' Vestry:

1. Approved repairs to the framing of the Rose Window and to some of the other stained glass windows, by Minot Sash and Door. These will be permanent repairs, costing about \$5,000.

2. Looked at a preliminary budget for 2005 and approved raises for the secretary and treasurer.

3. Discussed the Flower Policy.

4. Noted that Jackie had been named "Canon Missioner" by the Bishop, along with Marianne Ell from Williston and John Floberg from Ft. Yates. This will consolidate and extend somewhat the duties they already do for the Diocese, which pays a percent of their salary (in our case, 20 percent). Jackie now travels twice a month to Devils Lake to conduct classes. She will be offering more classes in Devils Lake and Minot through the new Diocesan "North Dakota School for Ministry" and she may be traveling there occasionally on Sundays if their current supply priest, Alan Broadhead, retires.

5. Noted the annual schedule of major events for the coming year, also included in these pages.

6. Noted that the 5K Fun Run sponsored by All Saints in connection with Festival on Main, had gone well. The number of runners doubled from last year, to over 20, and we raised about \$250 for the Humane Society. Margaret Lowe and George Slanger participated as runners/walkers.

7. Noted plans for "Nomination Sunday" on October 17. The new Bishop is encouraging this event annually in all churches. Anyone may nominate (in writing) anyone for ordained ministry (priest or deacon) or licensed ministry (Pastoral Leader, Worship Leader, Preacher, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, or Catechist). A local discernment committee, together with

the clergy, would then process the nominations and clergy would provide training for those selected.

8. Noted that Jackie and George will be attending a conference on church renewal in Minneapolis Sept. 21-22. They will stay with George's daughter who lives in Lak-  
eville.

9. Noted that the Bread Ministry had been revived. Bread is baked weekly in a bread machine donated by Susan Ternes and George delivers it on Tuesday.

At its October meeting, the vestry:

1. Received a written report on the bid (previously approved) from Minot Sash to replace the framing of the rose window and repair the sill (and frame if necessary) of one badly deteriorated ground-floor window, for about \$2,800. A temporary window will be in place while the rose window is removed and taken to the shop, probably over the winter.

2. Acknowledged the fine work done by John Nutt of Liberty Construction, for \$530, of several small jobs: repairing and repainting the south wall in the kitchen, epoxy repairs to several sills of ground-floor windows, repair of the leaks above the main doors to the church.

3. Discussed options for a permanent, water-tight cover over the Rose Window when it is repaired. Such a cover, of aluminum, could cost \$6,000.

4. Approved the budget for 2005. Because of budget cuts, the total budgeted expenditures for 2005 (\$109,000) are only \$500 more than for 2004 (\$108,455) even with some increases in salary for the secretary and treasurer. The budgeted income for 2005 (\$57,000) is \$1,200 less than for 2004 (\$58,200) because we had some gifts in 2004 that we cannot expect in 2005. The budgeted deficit is \$52,000.

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These figures include only All Saints' share of the rector's salary package. The diocese pays 20 percent of the total package for her services as Canon Missioner, which is a kind of assistant to the Bishop, serving Devils' Lake and in many other capacities.

5. Discussed the mechanism for conducting the annual vestry/rector mutual review.

6. Affirmed a policy of sharing the Parish Hall with persons who are connected formally or informally or historically with All Saints and affirmed the Rector's authority to make these decisions.

7. Agreed to contribute \$2,000 toward the Diocesan Fund set up to support Alex Ladu, the Sudanese priest at St. John's in Morehead. The money will be taken from the \$4,500 contributed by the

Rector to the Development Fund in 2004. This money is, in turn, part of a \$15,000 donation received in 2003-04 from a non-parishioner.

8. Previewed the digital slide presentation that will be given after church on "Mission and Vision" Sunday, October 31. November has been designated "Mission and Vision" Month, with Stewardship included in a larger effort to discern the future of All Saints.

9. Agreed to be part of a private-enterprise "Welcome to Minot" service that calls on newcomers to Minot, but only on those who specifically request such a call. It will cost us about \$300-400 a year. gs+

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### Witnessing in the House of God

#### 2 Timothy 3:14-4:4

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus ... proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching ... always be sober, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully."

That was just a small portion of one of the readings we have heard in recent weeks. The underlying message, of course, is quite clear: We all have a responsibility to ourselves and God to act as His personal witnesses. Quite frankly, greeting one another during the Peace is not enough, we need to actively live and work as witnesses for God.

Evangelism, as defined by Merriam Webster's Dictionary, is "... the winning or revival of personal commitments to Christ." However, evangelism can and should be thought of as much more than just the physical act of spreading God's Word. We live as true witnesses when we spread the love He has shown us throughout our church and our community.

For instance ... When was the last time we really opened up our arms and our hearts to one of the many visitors who have arrived at All Saints'? Do we take a chance and step outside of our own comfort zone to make them feel

truly welcomed?

Welcoming new arrivals into our church family is one of the simplest and most important forms of evangelism that we can perform in God's name. Visitors walk through the doors of All Saints' often searching for more than just a place to worship, many are looking to become a part of something bigger than themselves. And if we are not doing our part to welcome them into God's house and His presence, then we are not acting as true witnesses for God or His holy kingdom.

Next Sunday, why not take a personal challenge and spend just a few moments welcoming any new comers into the house of God? The more often we are willing to take a chance and step outside of our comfort zone, the easier it will become. Don't know what to say? That is easily taken care of; ask someone you know to join you. If we all recommit ourselves to welcoming new arrivals, imagine how warm and friendly All Saints' will become!

So, whether you are a senior member of the church, a new member, or somewhere in between, open your arms and your hearts to all of God's people who are searching for a new 'home.' Take the personal challenge and watch our parish grow.

Susan Ternes

*" Welcoming ... one of the simplest ... forms of evangelism ... "*

**Statement by the Rt. Rev. Michael G. Smith on the release of the Windsor Report  
by the Lambeth Commission on Communion:**

October 19, 2004

The Lambeth Commission on Communion yesterday released its long awaited "Windsor Report" with recommendations for ways the churches of the Anglican Communion might avoid schism and move forward together despite divisions over issues of human sexuality. The seventeen member Commission, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury at the request of the Primates, was comprised of people from differing theological perspectives and from diverse geographical locations. The fact alone that the Commission was able to produce a unanimous report deserves our respect and attention. I commend it to Episcopalians in the Diocese of North Dakota for study and reflection. Since several have asked about my thoughts on the Report, I offer some initial observations.

The Report clearly indicates that the controversial actions of the General Convention of 2003 in consenting to the election of a non-celibate gay man to the episcopate and in allowing the experimentation of liturgies to bless same-sex unions were inappropriate and damaging to the Anglican Communion. In light of the clear teaching and position of all four Anglican Instruments of Unity (the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Conference, Primates' Meeting and Anglican Consultative Council), these actions are interpreted as showing disregard for the moral authority of the Anglican Communion.

An interesting contrast is offered in the manner in which the controversy over women's ordination was approached. The Report looks back to 1968 when the Bishop of Hong Kong and Macao brought the issue of the ordination of women to the priesthood to the Lambeth Conference. The Lambeth Conference in turn referred the matter to the Anglican Consultative Council which gave its approval in 1970. Subsequent disagreements over the issue of women's ordination have been addressed through the Instruments of Unity, particularly the Lambeth Conferences.

The Commission presents Resolution

1.10 of the Lambeth Conference of 1998 "passed by the vast majority of bishops" as "the standard of Anglican teaching" on the matter of human sexuality. Included in its entirety in the Appendix, I quote in part:

This Conference: ...

2. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;

3. recognizes that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;

4. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialization and commercialization of sex;

5. cannot advise the legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;...

The Commission calls for moratoria: on "the election and consent to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate who is living in a same gender union until some new consensus in the Anglican Communion emerges"; on the

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authorization of “public rites for the blessing of same sex unions”; and on interventions by bishops in “provinces, dioceses and parishes other than their own.” Whether these requests for moratoria will be honored remains to be seen. Failure to do so, however, very likely will result in the end of the Anglican Communion as we know it.

Although clear about what the current Anglican position is, the Report leaves open the possibility of a new understanding concerning the issues of human sexuality emerging over time. It asks the Episcopal Church to assist in that process by explaining “from within the sources of authority that we as Anglicans have received in scripture, the apostolic tradition and reasoned reflection” how such new understandings “would constitute growth in harmony with the apostolic tradition as it has been received.” Furthermore, it urges “all provinces that are engaged in processes of discernment regarding the blessing of same sex unions to engage the Communion in continuing study of biblical and theological rationale for and against such unions.”

Perhaps the most innovative recommendation of the Report is the proposal for an “Anglican Covenant.” Similar to our ecumenical agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in “Called to Common Mission,” such a Covenant would

potentially spell out the rights, responsibilities and expectations of members of the Anglican Communion. It would also allow each member of the Communion to decide if it wishes to remain a member or not.

The Report reminds us that “within Anglicanism...a bishop is more than simply the local chief pastor. Bishops represent the universal Church to the local and vice versa.” Several weeks ago in my address to our diocesan convention, I stated “With God’s help, I intend to make good on the promises I made on the day of my ordination as a bishop by remaining in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury and with the bishops of the Episcopal Church and with the bishops of the churches of the Anglican Communion.”

Once again I ask for your prayers as we work through the implications of the Windsor Report in the months and years ahead. To that end, I have authorized a simplified version of Evening Prayer which includes a Collect for the Anglican Communion and is available from my office. Pray it alone; pray it with others; but please, pray.

The Rt. Rev. Michael G. Smith  
Bishop of North Dakota

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## **Vision and Mission Sunday**

Changing times require changing strategies. This year, we are putting our traditional Stewardship efforts in the larger context of “Vision and Mission.”

Sunday, October 31, will be what we are calling “Vision and Mission Sunday,” and the month of November will be “Vision and Mission Month.” There will be a light lunch served after Worship Oct. 31 and then a brief digital slide presentation with four parts: 1) evidence that we have many strong, vital ministries in our church, 2) hard facts about our financial situation, 3) Information from the conference on church renewal conference that Jackie and George recently attended (see article appearing in the next Good News), 4) Goals, options and choices before us as a congregation.

There will then be TWO (count ‘em) mailings in November and TWO in-gatherings. One will be the traditional stewardship opportunity to pledge of our “time, talent, and

treasure” for the good of all our souls and the good of All Saints. The official in-gathering of pledge sheets will be on Nov. 21. The other will be an opportunity to help discern the future of All Saints. There will be a questionnaire asking some hard questions, some special prayer-vigil time, and some “public meeting” formats where the clergy and vestry will be present to answer questions and discuss the challenges and opportunities we face at this time in our congregational history. The in-gathering of the questionnaires will be on the first Sunday in Advent, Nov. 28. This will give the Vestry the month of December to compile the results of both in-gatherings and prepare a report for the Annual meeting in January.

It all starts October 31, after worship. gs+

There are two preparation themes that inform the Season of Advent. Themes of preparation for the humble birth of the Christ child and preparation for the triumphant return of the Christ, both are at the core of Christian Advent.

If one explores the two preparation themes of Advent, we find several invitations and opportunities. Now, to prepare for the tiny Christ child asks for an open, tender heart. We are invited to embrace a sense of wonder in the Christmas ancient story of Angels, and humans involved together in the incarnation and birth event.

Our Christian story of Christmas brings into focus the vital partnership of God and man, as well as, the humble beginning of Christ. As part of our preparation, we are invited into a time of spiritual renewal—an opportunity to renew the spiritual disciplines of daily prayer, meditation, and reconciliation with God and our fellow humans.

In our preparations for the Second Advent we are invited to re-examine our lives in the light of Christ's first and Second Coming. Each year during Advent, we are asked to live into accountability as a part of the Christian story. I think we are called to ask ourselves how can we better live out the mission of Christ to spread his kingdom of love on earth? With our preparation of the Second Coming we also led to spiritual renewal and further still, we are led to a renewal and rededication of our Christian life and practice.

Each year the preparation for the baby and the king offer to us the promise of renewal and rededication. Each year we can begin again with our lives as Christians and our hopes for the future. I wish and pray that all of our church family will take advantage of the advent season to renew their lives in and for Christ. ja+

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### The Smile of Bishop Michael

Many of us, including yours truly, are getting pretty excited about the Bishop's visit in November. It looks like we will be keeping him busy with receptions, and even a confirmation on Sunday Nov 7.

Now, many of you have followed my gradual narrative story — given in dribbles of sometimes weeks, or even months apart — of how I first met Mike and Lisa, and the favorable impression they both made on me and Deloris Walters... way back when... and there has been much, much more since.

Now, nearly a year later, and one Bishop's election behind us, I can only report more praise for our New Bishop. His leadership is clear and directed, and he is as warm and downright funny as I remember him a year ago.

Recently, Bishop Michael presided over our North Dakota Convention in Bismarck. He revealed his poise and sense of vision in his opening address to and about our Diocese. His plans, active even now, for education and the stimulation of lay and ordained vocations, are bold steps toward renewed vigor in our Diocese.

Yet, with all the dignity and direction of his leadership, there was this wonderful gentle humor. He is a person possessed of a keen wit, he openly jokes and laughs and invites us with a smile, to get caught up in the reconciling blessing of laughter. It's hard to be critical when busy holding your stomach in spasms of laughter. It's difficult to be aloof when you're holding on to your neighbor's arm, trying to get a breath in-between those spasms.

Laughter disarms almost everyone. It has the power to heal a weary spirit and open hearts. It has often been the sweetest vehicle of grace. And it is a true gift, alive and thriving in our Bishop.

So, Thank you Bishop Michael, we pray for God's blessing on you, and the strong and pleasant work you have begun with us. See you in November. ja+