

# THE GOOD NEWS OF ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL



301 South Main Street  
Minot, North Dakota  
Phone: (701)839-1037  
Email: Church—allsaint@minot.com  
Rector:—jbernacc@minot.com  
Online at: www.minot.com/~allsaint

June 2004

## Rector's Thoughts

### Pentecost: A Most Convincing Event.

Like most Christians, I have, over my life, wrestled with my faith. Most of the wrestling had to do with faith in Christ. I have asked such questions as....Did Jesus really do those miracles? Did he really die for us, or was he just some nice guy caught in the wrong place at the wrong time? And, did he really rise from the dead? Was he really the Son of God???

Now, I can tell you that certain parts of the gospel story certainly lent credibility to the story of Christ. It rings very true that the disciples remained somewhat ignorant and skeptical of their holy friend even to the day of his death. I am not sure what exactly they believed of him, but I do know that after his death they fell apart with the fear of winding up on crosses like their pal.

The post resurrection appearances were also a help to my questioning. The gospels told stories that made sense to me, because ultimately the disciples responded to the risen lord in very human ways, usually with a mix of fear, doubt and joy. On the part of Christ, he seemed to be doing everything he knew to put them at ease, and aid their faith in his reality. The gospels said he walked through walls, yet demonstrated a flesh and blood body. He invited touch, let them feel his breath. He did such mundane things as eat fish with them and even cooked them a shore breakfast. All that rang out as being very believable, if one accepted the premise of his resurrection and divinity.

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## VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

At its May meeting, All Saints Vestry:

1. Noted that the nursery had been found in disarray some Sunday mornings. A notice will run in the bulletin asking for cooperation in keeping it neat. There will be no nursery attendant over the summer, but the Cry Room will be tidied up for use by parents.
2. Noted that the hot water heater had been replaced.
3. Directed the Jr. Warden to get a second bid on repairing the deteriorating framing around the rose window. We have one bid at \$1200.
4. Noted a break-in last month through the front door, but nothing was taken. Properly securing the latch at the top and bottom of the right half of the door should prevent a recurrence of that type.
5. Noted that new purple altar hangings had been received. They will be paid for from Kemper memorial funds.
6. Authorized George to put a summary of the monthly financial statement in each month's Good News.
7. Noted plans to fill in the "slump" on the south side of the church so water drains away from the wall to see if that reduces blistering on the wall of the kitchen.
8. Jackie discussed the state of the Church endowment fund in conjunction with the need to rebuild a solid financial base for the Church.
9. Heard George make a presentation on Institutional Life Cycles. (See separate article.) gs+

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It seemed logical to me that when St. Luke's story related Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit and his ascension into heaven, the group of believers would once again stay pretty much in one place. It was Jesus' request to wait for the Spirit, but they also fell into their pattern of hiding from the outside world when they were without their leader. They had demonstrated, to date, no desire to put themselves at risk for the message of Christ.

Then came this miracle of the Holy Spirit on a Jewish Holiday and the 120 believers were never the same. Their behavior so radically changed. Take Peter, for example. For all of his brave talk at the Last Supper, of dying with Christ, Peter lied and ran for his life when the going got warm. His actions in denying his friend, were perhaps understandable in the light of self-preservation, but it was still cowardly.

What happened to that man that he could walk out of a room on Pentecost morning with the confidence of a great orator and the courage of lion? Armed with the understanding of language and a calm strength Peter had not demonstrated previously, he made the conversion speech of a lifetime. Acts relates that 3,000 were baptized on that day. Of course the crowd thought they were drunk...Peter was drunk. The Jews hadn't heard a substantial peep from them or him since the execution of Jesus.

I had to admit that something so remarkable touched the early believers that day, that they became a fiery missionary torch of the new religion. They had changed, become fearless, convinced, poised. Early Church witnesses and tradition tells us that most of the disciples died a martyr's death. Why would they dedicate their lives...give up their lives for a lie when previously they wouldn't even leave their apartment for fear of their own safety?

To me, it was the radical changes occurring on that Pentecost that caused me to stop in my tracks and say, "My God, it's all true, every bit of it, the birth, the cross, Easter ... It's all true". Nothing I could think of, nothing that was ever suggested, such as mass hypnosis or big lie theories, could (to me) explain away the powerful witness of human turnabout.

Today, as we celebrate, I invite you all to reexamine the witness of Pentecost. I invite you to feel the holy fire of true inspiration; let its strength fill your body and soul, and then enter the dance that changed the world. ja+

## Institutional Life Cycles

A couple of months ago, the Vestry began devoting the first few minutes of its monthly meeting to examining some issue in church governance, using information drawn from national sources. In April, we examined wills and bequests. A digest of that information was presented in the May Good News. In May, we looked at institutional life cycles and drew two important conclusions and one important question.

According to this theory, institutions, like people and trees, have a life cycle. The first stage is obviously birth, and the second is growth. Then comes a stage of stability, which is marked by vitality, health, and strength, where people have feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction, mixed with some nostalgia for the period of growth.

Then—inevitably—begins a period of decline, which may or may not be followed by renewal and a new cycle of growth, depending on what choices the people in the institution make. If we looked only at numbers, it would be easy to say we are—or were—in decline. As recently as 1984, we had over 60 pledges; and 200 plus members. Now we have about half that in each category. (Those numbers do not tell the whole story, however. In 1985, our total budget was \$47,000 and the average pledge was just over \$500. Since then, the average pledge has tripled, but the budget has increased five-fold.)

Everyone has their favorite explanation for the decline in numbers: The daycare, the new prayer book, the personal failings of this or that past rector, factionalism and bickering, and so on. No doubt all these contributed. But our theory would suggest our first conclusion: that we might well have declined even if none of these things had happened, because that is what institutions do. Unless.

Unless they renew themselves, through redefinition, redevelopment and rebirth. Renewal requires more than new information and more even than fresh commitment. It requires new purpose and direction, which will be felt as loss by some. Again, according to the theory, once the leadership makes a commitment to renewal, they must be prepared to face complaints, but they must not turn back.

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Over the past three years, All Saints' HAS made a commitment to new purpose and direction. We now have a weekly Soup Kitchen, Native American Outreach, Talking Circle, a Youth Group, a mixture of contemporary and traditional music, television advertising—none of which we had three years ago. We also have made serious progress on improving our level of trust and communication. There is a higher level of trust and support among the parish members than I can remember in my 30 years at All Saints.

These efforts have brought new life and health to our congregation—even though the financial situation has not yet begun to move into the black. The question is, have we done enough? If we are to enter a new cycle of growth, we may have to do even more. And it will take time for the things we have done to show up in the numbers. But we are doing all we can. We need to feel good about that, and to persevere. gs+

## Your help is needed

**Under God's Canopy** is in need of 15 health kits to be given to the children who will be participating in the summer program.

### Each kit should include:

- 1 bottle shampoo
- 1 bar soap
- 1 comb or brush
- 1 toothbrush
- 1 tube toothpaste
- 1 hand towel and 1 washcloth

If you can help, please put the items in a zip lock plastic bag and deliver the health bags to your church representative.



"Uh oh! I think we turned the wrong way during the processional."

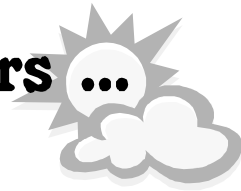
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## Wanted Director of Saintly Fun



We are looking for someone who is enthusiastic about having a great time. This person will coordinate with Clergy and Vestry on the promotion of recreational events for All Saints'. If this sounds like a job for you, please contact Rev. Jackie or Rev. George at 839-1037.

# May Visitors



Heather Bogden  
Margaret Lathrop

Jacob Watson  
Celeste B.

Thank you for sharing Holy Eucharist with us here at All Saints' Episcopal! We hope that you will join us again real soon!

**Summer Services:**

Sunday 10:00 a.m.

Tuesday 5:15 p.m.

# June



## Birthdays & Anniversaries

Jim & Sandi Myers . . . . .	2
Barbara Fairweather . . . . .	8
Bruce Jacobson . . . . .	9
Dick & Mo Parrish . . . . .	12
George Stroh . . . . .	18
Gary & Margi Lee . . . . .	29

*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.*

## Fun is Holy Business

The other day, I bumped into a gal pal who was feeling guilty about her upcoming vacation with her husband of 5 years. As she finished her remorse, I hugged her tightly, then playfully, softly tapped my fist on top of her head a few times. She began laughing as I started in, "Mary, for heaven's sake, your fun time is at least as important as your work...your fun feeds your ability to work." She nodded and laughed again. Okay. Mission accomplished, I think she got the point. The rest of our visit was dedicated to the happy details of where she and Tommy were going and what they hoped to do.

**B**ut, let me reiterate for my wonderful congregation... Summer is the perfect time to get away, even if it is in to your own back yard, and recharge your batteries. **PLAY!** I have to believe that God created fun along with his many other gifts and wants us to have it. Enjoyment of nature, added rest, nourishing relationships and more are all holy things that should be done on a regular basis.

**S**o I wish all of you four seasons of God's will...not just to work, but also to play and feel his desire for your pleasure. Happy...Holy Summer fun to you all. ja+



Sunday      Monday      Tuesday      Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday

# June 2004

		1 Rector's Day Off	2 5:15 p.m. Eucharist/ Soup Supper/ Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	3 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen (Devils Lake - Rector)	4 [-- Rector out]	5 of town --]
6 10:00 a.m. Eucharist	7 Rector's Day Off	8 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Bible Study 5:30 Evening Prayer	9 5:15 p.m. Eucharist/ Soup Supper/ Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	10 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Talking Circle	11 [-- Rector out]	12 of town --] 4:30 p.m. Eucharist
13 10:00 a.m. Eucharist with Baptism	14 Rector's Day Off	15 5:15 p.m. Eucharist & Soup Supper	16 6:00 p.m. Under God's Canopy @ VFW Park 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	17 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen (Devils Lake - Rector)	18	19 Rector out of town
20 10:00 a.m. Eucharist	21 Rector's Day Off No Vestry	22 5:15 p.m. Eucharist & Soup Supper	23 6:00 p.m. Under God's Canopy @ VFW Park 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	24 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Talking Circle	25	26 4:30 p.m. Eucharist with Native American Expressions
27 10:00 a.m. Eucharist	28 Rector's Day Off	29 5:15 p.m. Eucharist & Soup Supper	30 6:00 p.m. Under God's Canopy @ VFW Park 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice			