



St. Thomas

TIDINGS

JUNE 2008

YEAR 2008 ISSUE 4

The Rev. H. Vance Mann A New Rector for New Times

Left to his childhood dreams, Harold Vance Mann III would have been a train engineer. He was fascinated by his dad's work for the Seaboard Railway. Following his grandmother's dream, he would have become a minister in the Missionary Baptist Church, which nurtured him during his earliest years.

Somewhere along the way to his being called as priest at St. Thomas Episcopal Church, things changed.

An epiphany? A moment when lightening flashed, or a big voice boomed?

No, says the Rev. Mann. The route to his becoming Episcopalian and growing a spiritual life was much simpler than that.

"A friend invited me to church."

Vance Mann could have had an epiphany at age six, when a

VANCE MANN. *continued on p. 9*



The Reverend Vance Mann and Louis

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN . . .

I'm reminded of a Chinese saying, "May you live in interesting times." Though this is actually a curse, I think we've seen the opposite here at St. Thomas.

Almost a year ago things were humming along when Augusta announced she had decided she really wanted to spend more time with her growing family and would be leaving us. So we were off to search for a new rector.

About this same time the diocese implemented a new search process, which involved a consultant and a very detailed, step-by-step process. Luckily, our own Rev. Barry Kramer helped write this search manual and offered to be our consultant. The search committee was formed and the work started: they created a parish survey, compiled the results, and then used that data to create our Parish Profile. A couple of months later the profile and other church data were sent to the national and diocesan church databases for open positions listings. The search committee also placed an ad in *Episcopal Life* magazine. From the databases, the committee received lists of names that matched our survey goals. Each of these folks was sent an information packet and asked to apply for the job. In addition, packets were sent to all whom our congregation recommended, and to those who responded to the magazine ad.

SENIOR WARDEN'S UPDATE. *continued on p. 8*

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Rector Interview

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Sr. Warden

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Major Grant

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Dave Zurbrick

REMEMBERING DAVE

Let us take time to give thanks for the life of Dave Zurbrick, who died in April, and to celebrate all his good works, which brought the parish of St. Thomas to life. He served us well. He brought us joy.

Dave played so many vital roles in the life of St. Thomas. Commissioned by Bishop Johnson along with his beloved Maggie to organize an Episcopal congregation in Burnsville, Dave served as chair of the Bishop's Committee for four years—from the time we were declared a mission in 1993 until we became a parish



Dave Zurbrick with his wife, Maggie

at Diocesan Convention in 1997. And then he became senior warden. I remember Dave standing in front of Convention surrounded by about 20 members of our congregation saying, "Sometimes I was a doubting Thomas; I questioned whether we would really make it. But here we are, Lord, ready to be declared your parish." It was a wonderful moment for every member of our church community.

Dave recruited the Reverend Barry Kramer to lead us through our early years. When Dave and Maggie and Maryallen and Bruce went to deliver our call in person, Barry replied, "You don't want to take on a sick priest." Dave responded, "Oh yes we do, we're going to be your prayer support team." And then he recruited Bill Thomsen to be our first deacon. We were off to a great start with a really fine clerical team.

DAVE ZURBRICK MEMORIAL. *continued on p. 4*



Maryallen Estes presents the check from St. Thomas to Brian Peterson, chair of the Senior Center's board of directors, and to Nina Hughes, director of the Senior Center.

Photo courtesy of Yancey Common Times Journal

St. Thomas Makes Challenge Grant To Build New Yancey Senior Center

Maryallen Estes, her smile as bright as the royal blue dress she wore, presented a St. Thomas check for \$2,000 as a "challenge grant" to jumpstart a building program for a new senior center in Yancey County.

Seniors now gather for crafts, food, fellowship, and outings in a building that once was the county hospital, then was home to the Health Department, and now has been condemned.

Maryallen and several other St. Thomas parishioners who have been strong supporters of programs for seniors were on hand with dozens of others on a rainy Thursday afternoon, May 8, when county commissioners dedicated land next to the Blue Ridge Medical Center for the new senior center.

All that is needed now, said Commission Chair John Renfro, is a building design, so that Yancey County's nonprofit Committee on Aging can apply for grants to get construction going. The Committee on Aging oversees the senior center as well as the Adult Day Care Center, which will move to the senior center once it is built.

St. Thomas is challenging other local churches to match or exceed its gift to get the senior center project rolling.

On a suggestion from parishioner Julie Niehaus, the St. Thomas vestry agreed to take \$2,000 from the church Mission and Ministries fund and contribute it to the cause.

Nina Hughes, director of the senior center and day care center, visited the St. Thomas congregation on May 18 to thank them for the \$2,000. She said she was extremely grateful for the personal support St. Thomas has given over the years.

SENIOR CENTER GRANT. *continued on p. 5*

Blooming Grounds

Next week when you attend church, take time to look around and enjoy the Kousa dogwoods and the laurel and rhodies in bloom. The iris put out a few lovely blooms and the daylilies are budding. This is our first season for blossom and it is a good omen indeed. It's great news that our plantings are beginning to establish and are happy in their surroundings.

We staged two gardening Saturdays in May and had wonderful attendance and many helping hands. Grateful thanks go to Fiona Doctor, Mike Foster, Beth Kelly, Diantha Stevenson, Jodee Storrs, Jack Kaeck, Carol and Tom Bailey, Jim and Margie Haaga, David and Alice Johnson, and George Emerson for weeding and fertilizing all our plantings and laying soaker hoses to help us economize on water. George will be installing more drip irrigation in preparation for what looks like a continuation of drought conditions again this summer.

The next major project is to spray the exuberant poison ivy along our boundary with the apartments, and to clean out brush and dead trees in our surrounding woody perimeter. This enterprise is both time consuming and costly because we must hire someone young, strong, and agile with a chain saw to do the job. It is a task that we will need to continue to work at over the next several years in order to create attractive and easily manageable grounds.

We will weed and feed again in late July or August and will do some native shrub planting in September. Helping hands are most welcome. We could use several volunteer to handle the watering efforts during the summer months and we also need regular garden weeders. I am hopeful that individuals might adopt a section of the garden or of the plantings around a specific rock to tend for June / July / August. That way we can keep things neat and attractive without overburdening anyone. Give me a call at 682-4223 if you are willing to either weed or water for a month or for the whole summer. Help our garden flourish. Many thanks.

—Peg Emerson

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Children's Corner

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Eucharist in the . . .

The memorial service for Dave will be Saturday, June 14 at 1:00 pm.

DAVE ZURBRICK MEMORIAL. *continued from p. 2*

Dave led the search for our land on Reservoir Road, and negotiated the deal . . . weren't we fortunate to have a Realtor as our senior warden! He served on two search committees for new rectors. And he always shared his fine baritone voice with our choir and congregation. But perhaps the most important work he did to advance our growth was to serve as the perpetual greeter during our years at the American Legion Hall. Sunday after Sunday he hovered near the door. His welcoming smile and his warm handshake reached out and enfolded everyone who entered.

And if you paused just a moment, he would tell you just why St. Thomas was an extraordinarily special parish and how you could find a good church home here. He made everyone he encountered feel welcome and wanted. Through these past fifteen years, Dave loved and served his Lord with an open heart and a joyful spirit. Every member of St. Thomas is the blessed recipient of his many gifts. Dave had that rare kind of loving, life-giving spirit that convinces us of eternal life .

We know his powerful spirit will live eternally.

—Peg and George Emerson

Children's Corner: Snapshots from Godly Play



Jeannette and Paloma Soto with the bread



Evelyn Kline and Isabella Davis share the chalice after Jeannette's lesson on the Eucharist.

Let us continue to pray for the victims of violence of all kinds, whether at the hands of beings or of the environment. As we do so, let us particularly keep in mind the world situations of need and war. Let us pray that soldiers, peacekeepers, activists, and leaders be inspired to listen with love, act with love and justice, and be given charisma to lead us all through these dark times. A good way to pray for this cause is through Counting Prayer (see April 2008 newsletter).

OUR CURRENT PRAYER LIST

Sick or in Need

Aidan Seymour	Jack Wilson
Helen Marsh	Kelly Wood
Allyson	Mark
Gracen	Billy Donovan
Debra Thomas	Doug Hawkins
Corbin Laws	Suzy Edwards
the Scott Family	Dani
Kate	Carol
Steve	Ashton Villars
Oscar Murphy	Betty Getz

Safe Travel

Alice & David Johnson
5/27-6/24
Peg & George Emerson
6/4-6/14
Joann & Paul Collins
6/1-6/7
Stacey

SENIOR CENTER GRANT. *continued from p. 2*

In a later interview, she singled out Maryallen, Charlie Stover, Mike Foster and—with special fondness—the late Dave Zurbrick. “Dave was a marvelous supporter for years,” she said.

“People don’t realize that among other things we deliver more than 100 home-cooked meals a day, on more than nine routes. Even when Dave was ill, he was so dedicated that he still delivered meals—and he always did it with a special smile. He was an absolute inspiration to me. For some people who can’t get out, the person who delivers the meals provides their only opportunity to talk to someone—perhaps all week. Dave, Maryallen, Mike, and Charlie have provided a lot of emotional support to people, in addition to taking them their meals.”

The senior center provides nutrition programs, in-home aide services, cleaning, grocery shopping, art tours, tax preparation classes, and other support. “July 1 we are hoping to start a voucher respite program,” said Nina. “We can give caregivers a voucher so that one day a month they can leave their loved one at the adult day care center . . . and take a break. We also are starting a program for grandparents who are raising their grandchildren. We are going to make up book bags that will help the grandparents organize what kids need to start to school.”

Last October, the senior center took over operation of the adult day care center, which has 16 clients signed up. This program is open to people who are having trouble dealing with their daily lives because of mental handicaps, including dementia. It is designed to help them until the time comes that they need skilled nursing care.

“In this area of the country, people are hesitant to ask for help,” said Nina. “They think they should be able to take care of their loved ones. We need to help them understand that it is all right to receive help. With a new facility, and with caring people such as those at St. Thomas and our many other supporters, we can continue to make good things happen for our Yancey County seniors.”

Continuing with her own personal support, Maryallen announced at the senior site dedication that she has written a book based on personal interviews with 30 Yancey seniors. The book, entitled *Their Lives Made a Difference*, will be offered for sale for \$25. Five dollars will cover printing costs; the rest Maryallen will donate to the senior center building fund.

Harvey Sharp, associational missionary for the Yancey Baptist Association and a major player in getting the county to set aside land for the new senior center, said several things will be done to take advantage of the St. Thomas challenge grant.

“Our association represents 22 of the 114 Baptist churches in the area, and we’re going to write about the challenge in our next newsletter,” Harvey said. “We are also going to talk to Brian Peterson, head of the Yancey County Committee on Aging, and get him to write a letter to all area churches. Then we are hoping for even more good publicity from the *Yancey Common Times Journal*.”

“St. Thomas has issued a real challenge, and we want our churches to meet that challenge,” he said.

—Carol Thomas

May Lecture Series

Untangling the Roots of Religion and Violence

Courtesy of Trinity Institute in New York City

The lectures we shared in May, thanks to DVDs, were much appreciated by attendees, several of whom were from places other than St. Thomas. Conversation after the taped talks was lively and thoughtful and respectful of views that differed.

The largest attendance was on May 27, when Imam Zachary (Zack) Abuasba, from the Asheville *masjid* joined us, along with his friend, Dr. Bashir. After the taped talk by Tariq Ramadan, Mr. Abuasba explained some aspects of Islam “on the practical level,” as he said, and fielded questions for 45 minutes beyond our normal time to break. Before doing so, the two men took a few moments to perform their ritual washing and then their evening prayer. I was embarrassed

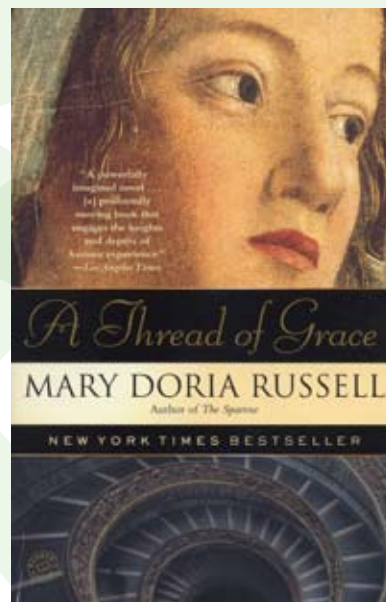
that I had forgotten to bring a quilt for them, but they were graceful about praying quietly in our sacristy.

Several attendees asked if he would come again and both men stated openness to this. Perhaps we might yet get together an interfaith panel sometime this fall.

As is often the case with offerings like this, the main value seems to have been new and strengthened ties between people who don't normally “hang out” with each other. Several attendees commented in surprised but pleasant tones about the openness of Christians in our church. Another form, perhaps, of outreach.

Thank you, St. Thomas, for supporting this series. Especially David Johnson, who offered his projector, and Charlie Stover, who let us all in to watch the movie *Constantine's Sword* after I locked us all out!

The DVDs are in the church office, and available to be checked out for personal use. —Diana Donovan



Book Review *A Thread of Grace*

If you don't yet know Mary Doria Russell's work, it's time to get acquainted. In this novel that will be hard to put down, she tells the story of Jews fleeing the Nazi advance into western Europe from September 1943 through the liberation of Italy in May 1945. Before you say to yourself, “Oh, no. I cannot read another depressing war story,” let me warn you: this is *not* a depressing story. It is a story of hope and encouragement. It is based on a thorough understanding of Italy

(the author has roots there) and of Jews (the author is a convert to Judaism) as well as of fact (the author is also a paleoanthropologist). This is a good counterstory to the tales of how the Catholic Church should have done more to protect Jews, like those we encountered in two of the five sessions of our May lecture series on religion and violence. It tells of Catholic Italians who risked life and livelihood to hide foreign Jews in the mountains of northern Italy. The story also steps back and depicts Nazis as human beings, without defending their horrific actions.

What the story comes down to, then, is one of faith regardless of the tradition upon which that faith is built. It's a story of how faith can be put into action on behalf of others (grace), even when understanding of God and God's creatures is sorely tested. I highly recommend this book for your own faith journey and for an increase in your understanding of what history can teach us.

Oh! And if that's not enough reason to give the book a try, try this: the author is from Cleveland—where my own dear husband was born ☺ —Diana Donovan

seemed to have lost meaning and her longing for a hasty escape from the pain yielded to a discipline of ‘active waiting.’ Rounded in personal experience and bolstered with classic spiritual disciplines and Scripture, this book offers an alternative to fast-fix spirituality.” Books may be obtained from Jane Stover.



On Sunday, June 15th, a morning discussion group will meet at 9:15 AM at the church with reading and discussion focused on the book by J. Matthew Sleeth, MD, entitled *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action*. Books may be obtained from Jack Kaeck or Jane Stover.

If you can attend only some of the meetings of either group, you are most welcome to join us. Scholarships are available for the cost of the book. —Jane Stover

New Discussion Group Details

A “Seekers Discussion Group” will start meeting on Wednesday, June 11th at 10:30 at the church. We will be using Sue Monk Kidd's book *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions* as our shared reading. From the book's blurb: “Blending her own experiences with an intimate grasp of spirituality, Sue Monk Kidd relates the passionate and moving tale of her spiritual crisis, when life

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Bob and Jeannette Reese

They May Be Leaving Us But They Won't Be Forgotten

The Rev. Bob Reese and wife Jeannette leave their official posts at St. Thomas this month after eight months of service—Bob as interim priest; Jeannette as deacon.

They are taking the admiration of a grateful vestry and well-served congregation with them.

Bob was selected last September to serve in an interim capacity while the congregation searched for a new priest after the Rev. Augusta Anderson, who had become beloved during her four years of service, left to have her fourth child.

“Bob came in during a big transition. We hated to lose Augusta,” said Neal Culver, who was senior warden at the time. “Frankly, I thought we could make the transition without having an interim priest, but Bob came in and served us well. He and Jeannette have especially meant a lot to Lutie and me.”

Lutie Culver was quick to second that sentiment.

“They are exactly what the church needed at the time,” she said. “They’ve been a blessing. They grew on us and it couldn’t have come out better. Now we are going to miss them, too.”

An interim priest is not just a placeholder. He or she is charged with doing much more than just delivering the Sunday homily. The interim priest can make changes and deal with problems, and must minister to the personal and spiritual needs of the congregation.

In his short time with St. Thomas, Bob Reese found himself many times at the bedside of Lutie Culver as she fought a life-threatening illness. Jeannette, a licensed massage therapist as well as a deacon, visited Lutie numerous times and performed gentle massages that helped ease her pain. Jeannette did the same for parishioner Robbie Robertson, when he suffered a herniated disc. She even brought her massage table to church one day to work on Margie Haaga’s bad neck after service.

“She was wonderful. It helped me so much,” said Margie.

Bob ministered to Dave Zurbrick and wife Maggie as they dealt with Dave’s terminal illness. He was a frequent visitor to Jim Peek, who is valiantly dealing with Parkinson’s Disease. He made visits to parishioners in nursing homes.

He became involved in St. Thomas’s Latino ministries, encouraging members to follow up swiftly after the recent confirmations, to make those confirmed feel welcome. He has been open to including the Spanish language in part of regular service.

Bob led adult conversations about the Gospels in Sunday morning classes before church service, and attended other sessions where parishioners initiated a study of current issues.

“And he delivers great sermons,” said Jack Kaeck. “He has a talent for delivering a natural sermon, without notes. He is thoughtful and compassionate. I learned a lot from him. For a man who follows traditional views of scripture, he has wonderful insights into the modern world.”

Interim priests often enter doors behind which are more than a few skeptics.

“When I heard from the bishop that we had to have an interim rector, I was concerned about how that rector would fit at St. Thomas and how he would be able to keep us on track spiritually and also assist during our search process,” said John Davis, current senior warden. “After spending time with both Bob and Jeannette, those worries quickly evaporated. I was impressed with their spirituality and leadership.

“In working with Bob on the vestry I was always impressed with his ideas and energy level. Though his time with us was to be short, he was truly concerned about us and spent whatever time we needed. Through Bob and Jeannette’s able leadership we were able to grow physically and spiritually in a time that was potentially challenging after the loss of Augusta.”

Congregations have to balance the basic need for long-term pastoral care with the need for occasionally having a fresh voice. In this interim period, the St. Thomas congregation found that Bob Reese provided guidance, a lot of caring, and a firm, fresh voice.

—Carol Thomas

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... Mann (cont'd)

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Rev. Vance ...

SENIOR WARDEN'S REPORT. *continued from p. 1*

Working with the diocese, the committee evaluated responses and conducted in-person and phone interviews, and reference checks. Sermons were evaluated. The committee then narrowed the search to a small group of final candidates out of which, after much deliberation and guidance from the Holy Spirit, it presented the Rev. Vance Mann to the vestry. We interviewed Rev. Mann, and we too were very impressed with him. All the members of the vestry, I think, have come away excited about Rev. Mann and our future. Now, in a few weeks, we will all get to meet the Rev. Vance Mann. His first Eucharist will be on June 22nd.

While this whole search process was playing out, we were blessed to have the Rev. Bob Reese and his wife, Jeannette, as our interim rector and deacon. I was a bit concerned at first about who the interim rector would be, and how well he or she would fit in at St.

Thomas, but after meeting Bob and Jeannette the concerns vanished. I am so thankful for their time at St. Thomas. They have both put more effort and energy than expected at boosting our spiritual lives and keeping day-to-day issues running smoothly. While it's exciting to welcome our new rector, I'm really sad to see Bob and Jeannette go. I hope they will come to visit us and that life will bring them more blessed adventures in the days and years to come.

So it's been a busy and interesting year. I didn't think we could have much more excitement after the previous year, when we started and completed the building of the church, but we have . . . and what an experience it's been! We've said good-bye to Augusta, whom we know and love, come to love Bob and Jeannette's time with us, and now we usher in a new era where we can get to know Rev. Mann and see where God takes us all in this next year. It really has been an interesting time!

I couldn't wrap this up without saying a heartfelt thank-you to the members of search committee for all their hard work. Jim Haaga spent many hours as the able-bodied committee chairman, as did Lynn McLure, Kerstin Davis, Tom Bailey, and Diana Donovan. Joann Collins, too, put in many hours as vestry liaison and hardworking committee member. Last but not far from least, Dave Zurbrick, despite his illness, also served on the committee and inspired us all by his work as long as his health permitted.

—John Davis, senior warden

Profile: Karen and Bob Miller

When Karen Miller graduated from high school in Milwaukee she attended DePauw University in Indiana. Her older sister was at Duke and invited Karen to come down for "Joe College Weekend." The trip was rewarding for Karen because she met her husband Bob there. He was a pre-med student at Duke and went to Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond for medical school. When they married, Karen transferred to VCU. Bob completed his medical studies in Chicago and then practiced orthopedic surgery there for thirty years.

Karen and Bob raised four children. Amy is a stay-at-home mom who has blessed the family with their first grandchild, Evie. (Karen has pictures.) Their son Bobby is a Buddhist monk and lives in India. He translates and interprets Buddhist texts and teaches English to the young monks. Some of you may remember Bobby from previous visits to St. Thomas. (See calendar on p. 12 of this newsletter for his upcoming visit this week.) Dan is on the faculty at the University of New Mexico Medical School in Emergency Room medicine. Their youngest son, Andy, graduated from law school this year and works for the St. John's River Public Trust.

As Karen and Bob's children grew up, Karen pursued careers as a teacher and a writer. She taught middle school reading, English, social studies, and math. Her published writings were mainly articles for the *Chicago Tribune* and for children's magazines. The highlight of her writing career was the publication of her first hardcover children's book, *Monsters and Water Beasts*.

Karen's early memory of church is of a Lutheran pastor who was called "Wild Bill." He had blessed the bomb dropped at Hiroshima. Karen said his eyes went in different directions and she was afraid of him. She found religious education to be rigid. Her family attended church only sporadically but she was confirmed.

After Karen and Bob married, she attended various churches—first the Methodist, then the Presbyterian, and finally the Lutheran church. Bob is agnostic and never attended church as an adult. Karen continued on a spiritual journey and studied Buddhism, among other religious traditions. When she returned to the Lutheran Church, she taught Sunday school and Vacation Bible School.

The Millers moved to Burnsville in 2004 with plans to retire, but Bob quickly realized he was not yet ready to retire. He has joined the orthopedic practice of Dr. Russell Flint and works part-time. In his spare time he pursues his hobby of photography. Karen has been involved in volunteer work that matches her life-long interests. She tutors at Clearmont School with the Literacy Council and is active in the Literary Festival. At St. Thomas she teaches in the Godly Play program on Sunday mornings. Karen recently became a member of the vestry. We in Burnsville and at St. Thomas are blessed to have the Millers in our community.

—Julie Niehaus

Editor's Note: There was no available photo of Karen and Bob for this issue. We'll put one in the next issue, but wanted to print this profile anyway.

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VANCE MANN. *continued from p. 1*

freak accident almost cost him his life. Playing with friends near his boyhood home in Miami, Florida, Vance jumped up on a big truck, and was crushed between its wheels when the unknowing truck driver hopped in and drove off.

“They initially told my dad I was dead. I remember nothing except waking up and looking into my grandmother’s face.

“I know my mom and dad made a lot of promises to God over this.”

Vance spent months recovering in Miami’s Jackson Memorial Hospital. He missed so much school, he was held back to repeat the first grade: “It was devastating, to be held back from my friends. I felt shame . . . embarrassment. I hid my back brace under big shirts. I refused to listen when my folks told me to be careful, not to do things. They were so afraid I would hurt myself.”

He was a small boy, but he had great determination, and that has served him well.

When Vance Mann arrives at St. Thomas on June 22 to take over from the Reverend Bob Reese, the congregation will see a strapping, vigorous man who hikes and bikes and soothes his soul with prayer and more. He and his wife Peggy—trained in Zen Meditation—participate in yoga sessions three days a week at Asheville’s Grace Episcopal Church.

“I’m not that great a bike rider,” he says. “I only go about 30 miles. . . .

“Bike riding saved me from burnout about 15 years ago. When you are biking, you think about nothing else but that sense of freedom. I am eager to do that here, but I don’t know about all these curving mountain roads. . . .”

Vance’s route to the Episcopal Church and to priesthood was as meandering as North Carolina’s back roads.

“Grandmother Carrie Bell used to tell me that one day she would see me in the pulpit at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church,” Vance says. “Sadly, I preached there only one time—at her funeral.”

From Grandma Carrie Bell, Vance learned all the great Bible stories and developed his favorites, like the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Jacob series in Genesis.

From his dad, he learned about Methodism and attended that church until graduating from high school in Hamlet, NC, south of Raleigh.

Like many young people, however, Vance drifted away from church when he got to college. Instead, he focused at Randolph Macon on his philosophy studies and on making new friends.

“Then, in my third year of college, a friend asked me to go to church with him. We went to an evening service at his church—an Episcopal church. I went. I stayed. I got involved.

“College kids loved the priest, McAllister Marshall. He would invite us to his home for dinner and beer. He came to campus on Wednesday mornings to celebrate Eucharist and 20 students would show up—at 7 o’clock in the morning. Unbelievable!”

Despite his new love for the church and his appreciation of Episcopalians, Vance went on with what he thought would be a life



Vance Mann . . .

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& Peggy (cont’d)

Vance and Peggy Mann

in the business world, following the footsteps of his dad, who had been a purchaser for Seaboard. Vance became a sales representative for Esso, the predecessor of Exxon. He was responsible for sales in several parts of Virginia. He then moved from oil to insurance, working in administration at Allstate.

At one point, he felt the priesthood calling him and became a divinity school postulant:

“But I pulled out. I decided I didn’t want to get stuck in a clergy job,” Vance says.

Yet, times change. He was married and the father of two children—Leslie six and Christopher eight—when the call came again. He moved his family to Tennessee and attended Sewanee: The University of the South. There he spent “three delightful, financially austere, years” and emerged with his master’s in divinity.

“It all started with somebody who invited me to church,” Vance says again.

“Nobody made me go. Nobody said I had to go. My friend invited me. I learned so much from that.

“You can’t make people believe. You can’t make them come to church. But you can be gracious and invite them. Sometimes they don’t come back, and that’s okay, but it’s important to issue the invitation. If the priest had invited me

VANCE MANN. *continued on p. 10*

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Recipe

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Celebrations

Food for Tummys . . .

CAJUN COWBOY COOKIES

- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 tsps. baking powder
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 4 cups rolled oats
- 1 pound butter or margarine
- 1 12-oz. pkg semi-sweet chocolate bits (2 cups)
- 3 tsps. vanilla
- 4 eggs (large)
- 1 6-oz. package butterscotch bits (1 cup)
- 4 cups flour
- 2 tsps. baking soda
- 4 cups finely chopped nuts (walnuts, almonds, and pecans)
- 1 tsp. salt

Freezes well. Makes 12 dozen 2½" cookies.

Preheat oven to 350°.

In a very large bowl with a heavy-duty electric mixer, mix the sugars, butter, vanilla, and eggs until the mixture is fluffy. In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, salt, and baking powder. Blend this into the sugar-egg mixture until none of the flour mixture is showing. Stir in oats, chocolate bits, and the butterscotch bits. Place chopped nuts in a small bowl.

Shape a rounded teaspoon of dough (it will be moist) into a ball, roll it in the nuts, and place on ungreased cookie sheet, allowing 2 inches between cookies for spreading. Bake for 18–20 minutes or until cookies are lightly browned. Cookies store well in tins or can be frozen in plastic bags.

Notes from Julie: Make half a recipe unless you have a heavy-duty mixer. Dough keeps well in the refrigerator for several days. Nutritional value can be enhanced by using egg substitute, Smart Balance spread, part whole-wheat flour, and small amounts of other grains and seeds.

—Julie Niehaus

VANCE MANN. *continued from p. 9*

back then in college, I probably wouldn't have gone. But a friend invited me. I went. And here I am today."

A priest's life is not always an easy one. Vance had served three parishes in Virginia for a total of almost 24 years when his marriage failed.

"I was serving as interim rector at St. John's Church in Midland, Michigan, when we separated," he says. "I tell you, St. John's ministered to me as much as I ministered to them."

It was during his second turn as an interim rector, at Trinity Church, Watertown, NY, that he met Peggy Northrop, a lifelong Episcopalian. Friends in the church "put them together," the Manns explain with an almost teenaged shyness.

Peggy had been single for 20 years.

"I was very cautious," she says, "but I knew he was meant for me."

Along with his marriage to Peggy came Louis, her Bassett hound. Last fall, the three of them moved to a home just north of Asheville, to the "beautiful solitude of the mountains." Neither Vance nor Peggy could bear the thought of full retirement, however.

Peggy is trained in crisis counseling, specializing in alcohol intervention. She wants to find a position in that field. In the meantime, she works in sales at Coldwater Creek in Asheville.

"I officially retired and went on Social Security in September '06," laughs Vance. "I no longer want any kind of full-time position. The part-time position at St. Thomas is perfect for me."

But it isn't just the part-time nature of the job that attracted the Manns to St. Thomas.

"I like where St. Thomas is in its spiritual life. It fits where I am in my own life," Vance says. What I really appreciate about St. Thomas is its diversity and willingness to get out of the box. We Episcopalians can be a staid lot. When people want to do something different, that excites me.

"I intend to spend the first three months getting to know the church and the parishioners and to assess what they want and need most. I shall have my own agenda, but I also want the congregation to help shape what kind of worship we have.

"Outreach and social justice are where my heart is, and my picture of St. Thomas is that, within the limits of church canons, innovative worship can go on there," he says.

Vance is known for his efforts to reach out in the communities

VANCE MANN. *continued on p. 11*

June & July birthdays

Rev Bob McMillan—6/1
 Julie Niehaus—6/2
 Charles Stover—6/2
 Lillian Kline—6/4
 Rob Cann—6/7
 Judi Ewing—6/17
 Emma Jean Peterson—6/18
 Lutie Culver—6/25
 Caroline Clark—6/26

Joe Liggio—6/26
 Noah Davis—6/29
 Meredith Liggio—6/30
 Carol Bailey—7/10
 Kerstin Davis—7/17
 Miles Henry—7/20
 Rob Storrs—7/24
 Peter Bobbe—7/28

CELEBRATIONS

June & July Anniversaries

Tom & Carol Bailey—6/2	Bob & Karen Miller—6/21
Ron & Mary Helms—6/13	Reid & Jinni Peterson—6/22
Tom & Julie Niehaus—6/13	Barry & Beth Kelly—6/26
Neal & Lutie Culver—6/15	Rob & Margaret Cann—7/31
Bill & Jean Hanes—6/20	

VANCE MANN. *concluded from p. 10*

he has served. He has been responsible for everything from establishing food closets and homeless shelters to setting up literacy programs and establishing lay ministries.

He respects and honors church tradition in his worship services but also seeks to expand the liturgy—for instance, “going outside the prayer book to get ‘prayers of the people.’”

Vance is especially fond of the New Zealand prayer book and is glad to see that St. Thomas already uses many of its writings.

His view of the Bible is a joyous one.

“The Bible is full of metaphor. Its truth is much more than literal truth. I shall tell people what I believe. If they accept it, fine. We are all on a journey together.”

—Carol Thomas

Treasurer’s Snapshot as of May 20, 2008

The following compares year-to-date Actual income and spending vs. year-to-date Operating Budget, as of May 20, 2008. The year-to-date budget assumes the money is spent evenly through the year.

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$35,230	\$36,968	\$-1,738 Unfavorable
Expenses	\$32,711	\$36,233	\$ 3,522 Favorable

We are about 5 percent Unfavorable on income, with most of the difference in the Giving vs. Current Year Pledges area. Letters to contributors will be going out in June to advise each parishioner of his/her status year-to-date.

On the spending side, we are about 11 percent Favorable. About \$4,800 of this is due to spending not yet incurred for rector search, and for hiring and relocation of our new rector. After considering the rector items, we are close to budget spending year-to-date. The vestry is working hard to manage the budget now that we have a rector coming on board, and are able to figure out what those costs will be.

—Charlie Stover

St. Thomas

JUNE 2008 TIDINGS

Latino Relations Report June 2008

Following several meetings of the newly formed Latino Relations Committee in April and May, the following issues emerged for action to expand St. Thomas’s involvement with our Latino community:

1. Formalizing the Confirmation service. Rev. Bob Reese’s organization and rehearsal made this a special and noteworthy event.
2. We would like St. Thomas to have an ongoing relationship with the Latino community, which should be driven by the community’s needs. We want to welcome everyone into our congregation without pressure. Involvement of Rev. Austin Rios (the diocesan Latino contact) will be valuable in discerning such needs in the future.
3. We recommend that any meeting with Latinos involve music and food. (Direct invitations to the St. Thomas 15th Anniversary Service brought about 12 Latino participants, and helped us learn the confirmation song in Spanish, “Una Espiga” (A Grain of Wheat).)
4. We recommended Spanish language copies of Hymnal and Book of Common Prayer. We are also looking for copies of the service in Spanish as prepared by Rev. Tom Niehaus for use by Latinos. The vestry has purchased several copies of a Spanish language hymnal and BCP for future distribution by the ushers on Sunday mornings.

—Charlie Stover

CONTACTS (all phone numbers listed are area code 828):

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Deacon: Bill Thomsen

Senior Warden: John Davis, 682-6043; email: johnd@data-tech.com

Junior Warden: Joann Collins, 675-5645 (h); email: mjcllns@juno.com

Other Vestry members: Neal Culver, Charlie Stover, Stacey Lane, Karen Miller

Treasurer: Charlie Stover, 675-9595 (h); email: cfsquartz@gmail.com

Building Fund Treasurer: Charlie Stover

Buildings and Grounds: John Davis and John Sterr

Stewardship: Joann Collins, 675-5645 (h); email: mjcllns@juno.com

Adult Formation: Jane Stover; Simple Suppers: Joann Collins

Pastoral Care: Alice Johnson, 682-3957 (h); email: alicewjohnson@gmail.com

Healing Ministry: Maryallen Estes, Margie Haaga, Jim Haaga, Alice Poltrock

Prayer Chain: Diantha Stevenson, 682-3188 (h); dwstevenson@trconline.net

Ministry & Mission: Diana Donovan, 675-5918 (h); email: diatoday@msn.com

Visitation of the Homebound: Maryallen Estes, 581-4310

Secretary (on-site Tues. & Thurs. morning): Kristi McGrath. Send requests for announcements to her by Thursday mornings at: secretary@stthomasonline.org.

St. Thomas

TIDINGS JUNE 2008

St. Thomas Parish Family is a joyful, warm and ever-widening circle of God's people prayerfully committed to serving Jesus in our community and our world. Through prayer, study and intellectual discourse on God's Word we seek Truth. Through Eucharistic fellowship we celebrate the gift of abundant new life. Through mutual care of one another and vigorous service to all of God's people and creation, we proclaim God's love and hope in Jesus.

Calendar

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Events

Come to the . . .

- ☛ Sunday, June 8, at 10:30 AM and after. Bob's last service and thank-you's to Bob and Jeannette Reese.
- ☛ Tuesday evening, June 10, at 7 PM. Karen and Bob Miller's son, LozAngZopa (known to us as Bobby), will speak about his experience of the Buddhist practice.
- ☛ Wednesday, June 11, at 10:30 AM. "Seekers Discussion Group" begins. *When the Heart Waits: Spiritual Direction for Life's Sacred Questions* by Sue Monk Kidd. Come for some or all sessions. Jane Stover has details. (See also p. 6 of this newsletter for details.)
- ☛ Saturday, June 14, at 1:00 PM. Dave Zurbrick memorial service.
- ☛ Sunday, June 15, at 9:15 AM. Sunday adult study hour begins focusing on J. Matthew Sleeth's *Serve God, Save the Planet: A Christian Call to Action*. Come for some or all sessions. Jane Stover or Jack Kaeck has details. (See also p. 6 of this newsletter for details.)
- ☛ Sunday, June 22, at 10:30 AM. Rev. Vance Mann celebrates Eucharist with us for the first time.
- ☛ Wednesday, June 25, at 6:30 PM. St. Thomas Vestry meets.
- ☛ Friday, August 1, at 12:00 noon till 1:30 PM, by the altar. First Friday silent prayer for peace. Come for a few moments or longer, or join us in your hearts, wherever you are (no first Friday prayer on July 4!).
- ☛ St. Thomas Latino committee. Next meeting not yet scheduled.
- ☛ St. Thomas Ministry and Mission committee. Next meeting will be in August.

Ongoing . . .

- ☛ Choir practice. Sunday mornings after church, for about a half hour, downstairs.
- ☛ Centering Prayer. Tuesday mornings by the altar, 9:00 AM. Takes about thirty minutes.



St. Thomas Episcopal Church

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