



St. Thomas Tidings

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Contribute Your Thoughts on Our Mission

What is the mission of the Church? Sermons have been preached on this topic. Lenten programs have been given. Vestries wrestle with this question.

Mission involves many things - creating relationships, listening to God and one another, praying and studying scripture together, practicing good stewardship, and creating a welcoming place where all sorts of children, youth and adults can be nourished in their faith. At the heart of it all is being a people who live out our Baptismal Covenant.

Some examples of the church's mission might be -

- An inviting, visible church dedicated to spiritual growth through worship, outreach, and education.
- A community that celebrates God's love through teaching and worship.
- A people of God carrying the Spirit of Christ into the community.

The Catechism, page 855, in the Book of Common Prayer, describes that the "Mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."

Most parishioners have a sense of what they would like to see the Church be and do. What is your vision? I am interested in how God may be speaking to you. No one of us has the whole truth. But each of us has a piece of the truth. Would you be willing to share your thoughts in the newsletter or the Sunday bulletin? If so, contact Mari or me.

Peace,

Vance



This beautiful new photograph of St. Thomas Church was provided recently by Hugh Smith.

St. Thomas Has Paid Off Its Debt to Diocese

St. Thomas is debt free---a great way to be! The following is the text of a letter Treasurer Charlie Stover sent to our Bishop, the Right Rev. G. Porter Taylor:

"Thank you for the active and enthusiastic Diocesan participation in St. Thomas Church's construction of our worship space. We have certainly been blessed while enjoying this space since you consecrated it in December 2006.

We are delighted to forward herewith our final payment of \$541.65 against the \$25,000 no-interest loan that you provided for us. We certainly also prayerfully acknowledge the anonymous \$100,000.00 grant that was provided via your offices. We are looking forward to being debt-free and thereby using our funds for Christ's work in the community and the world."

Hospice Offers Grief Group

The Hospice folks who presented the excellent sessions "Exploring Grief and Mourning" during Lent offer a Grief Group for anyone in the community who is grieving. It meets Mondays from 4-6 PM. There is a library available. Individual counseling related to grief issues is offered also.



Elizabeth Stravoravdis Works to Create Schools in Haiti

By David Johnson

Elizabeth is an interesting young Anglo-Greek citizen living in London and working as a legal translator. She and her husband have two young children. Within several days of the earthquake in Haiti, she flew to the Dominican Republic and made her way to the Haitian border where she worked as a translator for many injured refugees. After two weeks she came home but continued her interest in the needs of these stricken people. I met her in late March, on her second trip and we worked together in one of the camps inside Haiti. The accompanying photograph was during one of our “worm killing” and general medicine clinics. This time she was accompanied by her seven year old daughter and her mother (who was Christian Barnard’s surgical nurse for the world’s first heart transplant).

She came back so that she could learn about specific needs of these camps and how she and her church in London could help. Being a very organized and creative person, in just a few days she financially helped finish a latrine project in one camp, realized that she would need a driver and vehicle for her next trip, and helped plan a multiuse building, and saw how children were educationally devastated.

She is now about to return to continue the latrine and building projects and to start the most ambitious project so far---creating school programs in two camps. While there are a few teachers living in the camps, and a good many educated adults who can also be teachers, there are no supplies, blackboards and other paraphernalia. Before I left, I told two friends of mine (Episcopal nuns) about the need and they have sent some educational supplies but the need is much greater than their donation especially since the teaching material needs to be in Haitian Creole and must be locally purchased.

For me Elizabeth represents the best kind of individual effort, being both diligent in searching out needs that a small group can fulfill, finding the resources to meet those needs and being persistent in carrying out the task.

Many people ask me what will become of the Haitian people who are bereft of a national infrastructure, and I am at a loss for a single answer that fills all the needs. And yet...education is a good place to begin the rebuilding of a country and Elizabeth Stravoravdis is doing just that.



Elizabeth Stravoravdis writes down some ideas

Long Awaited Memorial Garden To Be Completed This Fall

By Tom Bailey

On Saturday March 27th, the Vestry attended an all-day retreat moderated by Reverend Canon Brian Cole, the Sub-Dean at All Souls in Asheville. The primary theme for the day was how to grow our presence in the community by presenting ourselves as a caring and welcoming Episcopal Parish. This proved to be a very enlightening day well-spent.

The proposed Memorial Garden was again in the forefront in the month of April. The architect / contractor attended the monthly Vestry meeting and a number of issues were resolved. The Vestry voted at the last meeting to go forward with the latest proposal and all that remains is to formalize the contract. If all goes as expected, our long-awaited Memorial Garden will be completed

this fall. This will be a landmark move forward for St. Thomas and a significant commitment to our future.

We received the results of our independent auditor’s examination of St. Thomas’ financial records for the year 2009. Final conclusion was that our records are in very good condition. The Diocese requires these annual audits.

The most rewarding financial news is that WE ARE DEBT FREE. As most of you know, the Diocese of WNC granted us an interest-free loan to help build our new home. On June 1st, the last installment payment was made.

St. Thomas Well Represented at M&M Conference

By Patti (Fanning) Smith

Several members of St. Thomas attended the Mission & Ministry Conference in Asheville on Saturday, June 5, 2010. Rev. Vance Mann along with Joann Collins, Jim Haaga, Mari Holland, Jack Kaeck and Patti Smith spent the day in a variety of workshops all related to the theme, “**Reconciliation – A Path for the Decades to come...**”

The Rt. Rev. Eugene T. Sutton, Bishop of the Diocese of Maryland, delivered the keynote address. Bishop Sutton spoke of the need for reconciliation, coming together, to end our world’s addiction to division. Calling upon his African American heritage and prodigious memory of scripture, his lively talk included singing of spirituals, to which the attendees were invited to join, and quotes from pertinent Bible passages. Our church is actively working to reduce fear, strife, anger and separation among us through two on-going church projects introduced by Bishop Sutton.

Repairing the Breach is a program in all Episcopal dioceses whereby we will (1) take an honest look at the ways our church’s history is infected by the sin of racism and slavery, (2) acknowledge our part in this history, so we can (3) move onto a new place of being. Planning is underway for the Presiding Bishop to convene a day of repentance in April 2011 around this issue. Rev. Vance Mann and Jack Kaeck are members of the *Repairing the Breach* parish team and will introduce the program to our parish in the near future.

The second project is *development of a toolbox* to offer to people addicted to division. That toolbox will address all issues dividing people such as the conflict between farmers and developers, peoples of different faith traditions, and issues around sexual orientation.

Elaborating on the need for reconciliation, Bishop Sutton talked about the propensity of our society to put people into different boxes based on their race, sex, sexual preferences, wealth, etc., all of which build walls separating people. He

reminded us that the ministry of Jesus was about tearing down these walls. As the great teacher, Jesus befriended those on the fringes of society such as the leper, the prostitute and other outcasts. Although Jesus became angry about the treatment perpetrated on these souls, he did not let his anger prevent him from doing his ministry. Instead, Jesus put his anger into action and his action lead to healing.

St. Thomas’ attendees sampled a broad range of topics in the workshops they attended, many directly addressing the issues presented by Bishop Sutton. Vance attended sessions dealing with the *Jewish and Christian Reconciliation: Possibility and Promise* and *Finding Reconciliation Around Issues of Sexuality*. Jack chose to attend the full day workshop *Recognizing and Resisting Racism*. The workshop began with a definition of racism, concentrated on recognizing white privilege and how that affects racism and then understanding the iceberg model of racial prejudice. It concluded by teaching how to combat racism. The tools learned in this workshop will be helpful as our parish embraces the work of *Repairing the Breach*. Patti attended Bishop Sutton’s afternoon session on *The Spirituality of Reconciliation* which focused on the personal practice of Centering Prayer.

Mari and Jim attended some “nuts and bolts” workshops designed for parish leaders including church office personal and vestry members. Jim was impressed by the information he learned in the workshop, *From Discernment to Ministry*, and looks forward to sharing his insights with the parish. Mari and Patti spent time in Christian Formation and Life in Faith Workshops, *Daily Practices for God’s People* and *Prayer in the Celtic Christian Tradition*.

All in all, the St. Thomas contingent felt they were exposed to a lot of meaningful information and good ideas. Perhaps being a bit cute, the conference organizers arranged for candy M&Ms to be available as snacks! Over the next few weeks, the conference attendees look forward to sharing with the congregation the information and ideas received.

Mission & Ministry Committee Looks At Volunteerism

By Lutie Culver

Mission and Ministry Committee met on May 12, 2010. We are reviewing current and possible outreach projects and have received the figures from last year’s efforts to reach out to our community! For the year 2009, we distributed a grand total of \$23,425 to various agencies and needy organizations inside and outside of our community. So far this year, we have distributed \$15,990 to various community and Episcopal Church agencies.

In June, we will make available to you a complete listing of the agencies, etc, with specific amounts given to each. We will also be sending out a questionnaire concerning your volunteer interest and projects, as well as suggestions as to future projects that we may be interested in reaching out to in some way. Thanks so much to everyone for the love and support that these gifts represent. God Bless you all!



Remembering George Emerson

Peg Emerson is pictured here sitting on the lovely bench dedicated to St. Thomas in memory of her husband, George Emerson, our faithful parishioner and beloved friend. The bench graces our entrance porch, offering a welcome place to pause and visit. From the gracious outpouring of donations in George's memory, Peg was able to provide us with a superior walnut table, now housed at the rear of our worship space, two smaller service tables at the altar, as well as numerous plants to enhance the landscaping of our church grounds. We give thanks for the life of George among us and for the generosity of those providing for these remembrances.

Save this date:

Friday, October 1, 2010, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Program Day - Spiritual and Religious - Holding Authenticity/Connection/Tradition Together

Facilitator(s):

The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor

Several Items of Interest

By Joann Collins

Consider Cursillo: October 28-31

The original name for Cursillo is "Cursillo de Christianidad," meaning "A Short Course in Christianity." Its title also reflects its beginnings in the Roman Catholic Church in Spain.

Adopted in 1970 by the Episcopal Church, participation in this popular weekend for spiritual renewal quickly spread across the U.S.

Primarily, Cursillo deepens our relationship and commitment to Jesus Christ, which is always Bishop Taylor's primary objective for our spiritual growth. Secondly, Cursillo supports our efforts to live out the Gospel in our practice of prayer, study, and service.

Cursillo has been adopted by other denominations. In the Methodist Church, the program bears the name of "The Road to Emmaus," attended by numerous folks here in Burnsville, including current St. Thomas members: Jack and Betsy Myers and Jim and Margie Haaga. Vance attended Episcopal Cursillo in 1984 and Joann Collins in 1981.

The next Cursillo will be offered at Christmont Conference Center in Black Mountain, NC, on October 28-31. To learn more about Cursillo, please talk with one of the "graduates" mentioned above or go to our diocesan website: www.diocesewnc.org. Click on "Home," then "Episcopal Groups," and then on "Cursillo."

Visit Our Diocesan Website: www.diocesewnc.org

To deepen your connection to our wonderful WNC Diocese, take a trip to our diocesan website. Just under the main heading you will find an invitation to subscribe to the weekly diocesan newsletter. Your participation will bring you our bishop's weekly reflection, which alone is sufficient reason to subscribe. Remember, our Bishop is a former professor of literature and a great word-smith! You are guaranteed to find his writing inspiring. His topics also connect you to the concerns of the larger church.

A Day of Recovery and Renewal

Thursday, September 9th, the Diocese of Western North Carolina will sponsor its first annual Day of Recovery for clergy and lay leaders who are committed to providing resources for those who are addicted or have problems with depression and addiction.

Greg Dill, MD, will discuss the medical implications of addiction and dual diagnoses; a panel will answer questions on the physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of addiction, as well as resources available in WNC and throughout our Diocese, and there will be open 12-step meetings so participants can experience a meeting.

It will be held at Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville, NC from 8am-5pm. Cost is \$40 per person. For information contact Alice Keenan at the Diocesan Office., www.diocesewnc.org

Session Encourages Practice of Christian Virtues In Life

By Mari Holland

“Download a free virtue” invites the flyer on “Daily Practices For God’s People.”

Wow! Would it were so easy.

However, humor aside, the interactive Daily Practices program is one way of helping individuals and small groups incorporate or “download” Christian virtues into their own daily lives. It is a combined work of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina and the Center for Spiritual Resources.

Two sessions at the June 5 Diocesan Mission and Ministry Conference in Asheville provided a segway into a Daily Practices Program Day at Valle Crucis on Saturday, June 19. That seminar is planned to provide more in depth work with the virtues. It will include information on how to start a Daily Practices program at a local church.

Materials for churches or individuals wanting to participate in Daily Practices can be ordered at practicegodsvirtues.com. Additional information is available there also.

The program grew out of Bishop Porter Taylor’s dream of creating a way to help seekers embody and practice the Christian virtues that they understand cognitively.

The Right Rev. Taylor, Rev. Canon Robert A. Boone, Rev. Canon Charlotte D. Cleghorn and Rev. Deacon Ann R. Fritschner are contributing authors to the collection of 12 virtues in three sections. “The Journey Inward” includes Prayer, Reading Sacred Scripture, Repentance and Dying Well. Then Hospitality, Soulful Spending, Doing Justice and Evangelism comprise “The Journey Outward;” and “The Journey Together” is composed of Forgiveness, Observing the Sabbath, Simple Living and Discernment.

“Virtue is a revolutionary idea in today’s world,---and today’s church” said N.I. Wright, Anglican Bishop of Durham England, quoted in a handout for the program. “But the revolution is one we badly need.” While acknowledging that salvation is solely by grace, we are not to sit about waiting for Heaven, he said in his book, *After You Believe*. Character is created by practicing virtue, and it enables believers to do Christ’s work in the world.

The morning session at the Mission and Ministry Conference began with five reasons not to embrace Daily Practices. Most involved desire to partake because “one should” or “in hope of becoming a better person.” These could lead to self-righteousness, piety and pride, which are, of course, not virtues.

“The Virtues are all about relationship with ourselves, our communities and with God,” said Facilitator Robin Whittington, editor and publisher of Daily Practices for God’s People and Director of the Center for Spiritual Resources (formerly the Center for Christian Studies). “It should be undertaken out of joyous desire. Once it’s “should” it becomes legalistic and fear dominated.”

The virtue selected for the day’s exercises was “Discernment.” The tools given were the Examen Prayer, which invites one to examine the moments of the day in relationship to thankfulness to God, a prayer from St. Ignatius, and an eight-point guide for listening. A small group activity, consisting of five questions, provided the session’s focus. Each of the questions involved the perception of God’s will in transformative decision making.

Whittington discussed the Jungian concept of transformation resulting from a conflict of opposites. If one is willing to hold the tension and discomfort of that conflict rather than quickly choosing one or the other, the process leads to transformation, she said, stressing the need to have new language for growth and change.

“Transformation is a journey not a destination,” she said.

She also stressed the need for spiritual honesty.

“In the parable of the adulterous woman, Jesus takes blame and guilt off the table,” Whittington said. “Out of spiritual honesty, we can see ourselves as we are without blaming or judging. That is a turning point in transformation.”

Daily Practices For God’s People at Valle Crucis

Saturday, June 19, 2010, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Daily Practices for God's people - Cultivating Virtues of Christian Living

Facilitator(s): Robbin Whittington and The Rev. Deacon Ann Fritschner

For anyone seeking to more fully embody the virtues through an active practice. You will come away from this day feeling supported, refreshed, inspired, and in good company. Also a great opportunity for clergy to bring interested and engaged lay leaders to learn more about bringing this vibrant program into your parish. Ideal for small group study, discussion, and practice.

This Program Day is sponsored by The Centers for Christian Studies. The main objective of the Center is to provide us with support and guidance in practicing our faith in our daily lives. Please read the description on their website and you will register with them for this Program. www.centersforchristianstudies.org : Cost: \$20 which includes lunch and materials; \$15 each for 2 people from same parish

An Oft Requested Salad Recipe from Patti Smith (once Fanning)

Cranberry Walnut Quinoa Salad (*gluten-free recipe*)

Recipe courtesy Juan-Carlos Cruz from the Food Network

1 cup quinoa (*white or red works*)
 1 cup dried cranberries (*or dried cherries*)
 1 cup frozen green beans, defrosted (*can use one green pepper instead of the beans*)
 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
 1/4 cup green onions, sliced
 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar (*the one I used is flavored with blackberry and ginger*)
 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
 4 cloves garlic, minced
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon pepper

Combine quinoa with 2 cups water in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to a simmer, cover, and continue cooking until all water is absorbed.

In a medium bowl, combine cooked quinoa, dried cranberries, green beans, walnuts, and green onions until well mixed. In a small bowl, whisk the balsamic vinegar, olive oil, and garlic until well blended. Pour over the quinoa mixture. Toss until well blended. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving. Can be served on a bed of romaine or other lettuce.

Prep Time: 25 minutes

Yield: 10 servings

St. Thomas Recycles - - - Please Join Us In This Effort!

We have been recycling white paper, mixed paper, metal, glass, and #1 and #2 plastics for several years here at Saint Thomas in an effort to save our planet and promote environmental stewardship.

If you do not recycle, please consider starting now. It's not too hard and is very satisfying. We have Yancey County Convenience Centers all around the county.

They will take the following:

Cardboard –corrugated only

Newspapers

Magazine

Aluminum cans

Metal all types

Glass (clear, brown, green)

Plastics #1 (soda, juice bottles, plus som clear plastic fruit/take out tubs)

#2 plastics (milk and similar type jugs)

*******Always look on the bottom for the recycle triangle and # inside**

The main recycle center near the Burnsville Elementary School & Vet also takes white paper to recycle.

This means sheets of white paper with black print (small amount of color is OK). No envelopes.

Mixed paper is all other paper beside white. Junk mail, ads, cereal boxes, paper towel and toilet tissue rolls, etc. We have more mixed paper than any other type, and I hate to see this

huge amount of paper go into the landfill. However, it must be dropped off in Asheville. I am talking to the county to try and get a pickup here.

See Margie for directions and any questions.

Margie Haaga 675-9040 H

We Welcome Duncan and Nancy Porter to St. Thomas

By Joann Collins

Duncan and Nancy Porter are new Yancey residents and members here at St. Thomas. Both were born in southeastern Arkansas. They met when Duncan returned to his parents Arkansas home following his retirement from Texas Instruments in Dallas. Duncan has five children, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren, but it was one of Nancy’s three children, her daughter, who has a vacation home off Double Island, that enticed the couple to move here. They are currently remodeling a property they purchased nearby. The Porters celebrated their 17th wedding anniversary in May.



One Third Of St. Thomas 2010 Spending Is On Outreach So Far

The following compares St. Thomas General Fund Year-to-date Actual Income and Spending vs. Year-to-date Operating Budget, as of May 20, 2010. The Year-to-date Budget assumes the money is spent evenly through the year.

	Actual	Budget	Difference
Income	\$37,957	\$40,974	\$ 3,017 Unfavorable
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Expenses	\$58,667	\$44,286	\$ 14,381 Unfavorable

*We are about 7% Unfavorable on income, due mostly to lower than budgeted Pledge Income. On the spending side, we are about 33% Unfavorable. The unfavorable spending is largely due to Outreach activities. We have provided \$18,842 (almost one third of our spending) in Outreach spending this year. We have **prepaid** nearly all of the “monthly M&M Committee” charity recipients, given the massive needs at present. In addition, we spent \$6,876 on repair of the Driveway and Parking Lot. Total balance of Checking and CD’s in the General Fund was \$138,776 as of May 20, 2010.*

A copy of the detailed General Fund Budget Report of May 20, 2010 will be posted on the bulletin board at the entrance to the church.

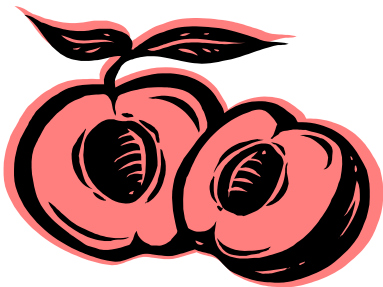
The Building Fund balance at May 20th remained at \$11,574, with no expenditures or contributions during the last month. This report is also posted on the above bulletin board each month.

Charlie Stover

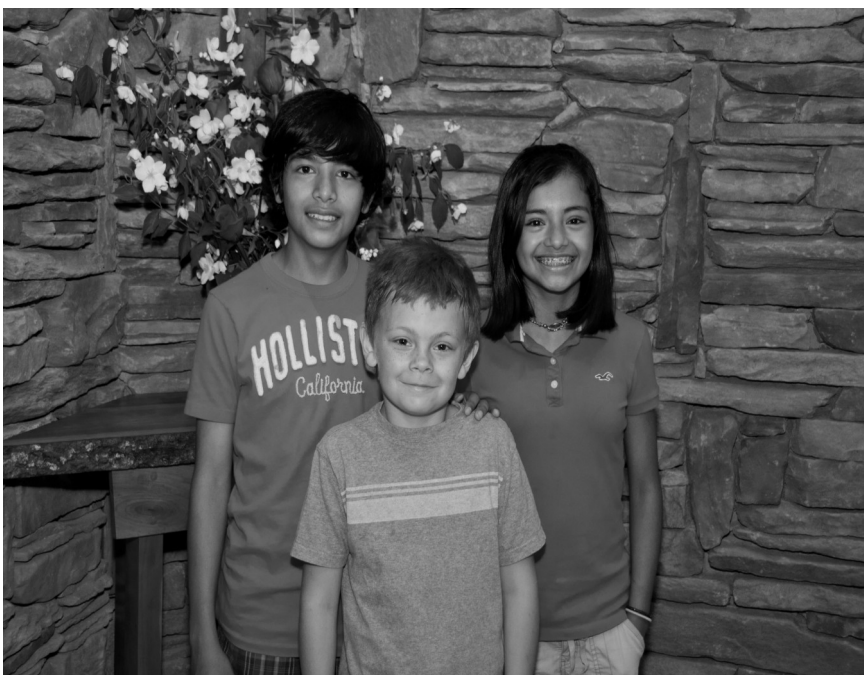
St. Thomas Episcopal Church

372 Reservoir Road "on the hill above Food\$mart"
P.O. Box 591/ Burnsville, NC 28714

www.stthomasonline.org



St. Thomas Sends Three Church Children To Camp Henry



St. Thomas is proud to sponsor Edwin and Evelyn Lemus and Christian Hinds, pictured here, to attend Camp Henry this summer. All three attended last summer and are eager to return! And you can help! Transportation is needed to take campers to camp on the afternoon of June 20 and to pick them up on the morning of June 26. Camp Henry is held at our beautiful Lake Logan Conference Center near Candler, NC, and provides a memorable and fun-filled, formative experience for young folks. Tom Niehaus has served as camp chaplain in past summers; Joseph and Rachel Murray are past "graduates!" We highly recommend this experience for all our children and St. Thomas is happy to offer scholarship assistance, if needed. To learn more about Camp Henry, visit the diocesan website at www.diocesewnc.org. Applications need to be submitted in April each year, although there may still be some space available. To find out, call the camp office at (828) 646-0095.