



THE COURIER

The Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, River Hills, WI

May 2010

The Rector's Writings

Jamie is now almost seven years old. I have taken her to Puppy Socialization, Basic Obedience, Advanced Obedience, Utility Training, and she is even certified as a Canine Good Citizen, having completed that training and been tested. And still, when I say the words, "Jamie, come" she often takes those words under advisement and I can almost see her thinking, "I'll have my people get back to your people." (As an aside, this is different if I say "Jamie, treat." But that's for a different column. . .)

Jamie does not have what is referred to in the canine training world as a good grasp of the "call command." Really.

I'm sympathetic. Responding to a call command is not easy. If my mother were still alive you could ask her how many times she would have to call my name in vain trying to get me to come into the house for dinner, or come in for bed, particularly on those lovely summer nights when I was outside playing. She could tell you that one call out the back door "Debbie, dinner" rarely did it, even if I was hungry. The lure of play and my friends was just too strong. I might pay for my dallying with no dessert, but it never seemed to improve my call response. I would protest, "I never heard you!" And it would be true.

I wonder if it's not like that between us and God. God, who knows us each by name from before our birth, calls us again and again to God's work, to God's protection, to God's love. Sometimes we listen; sometimes not. But God still calls, as I call Jamie and my mother called me.

Many people, including our Search Committee, have asked me in various ways why I chose to leave my former parish and come to St. Christopher's. The most complete answer is that God planted God's call in my heart for you.

It's risky business to ignore God's call. Jamie misses out on treats if she ignores me. I (often) missed out on wonderful surprise Danish desserts if I ignored my mother. Since I have gratefully answered this call, I am wondering what amazing treats and surprises God has in store for me here at St. Christopher's. Each day more unfold for me. And almost all of them are about each of you. Thanks be to God for God's wonderful, wild, lavish, and surprising calls to each of us! I continue to listen, and God continues to call. Amen. Alleluia.

Debra+

Warden's Words



Our April Vestry meeting went very well. There are multiple issues that we continue to work with every month. Here is just a highlight of what was covered.

Introductions

This was the first Vestry meeting that our new Rector, the Rev. Debra Trakel, attended at St. Christopher's and she expressed great excitement to begin working with us. The Vestry then introduced themselves to help Debra at least put names to faces.

Review of Financials and Minutes

Hannah Pillsbury presented our financial review as she does every month. She indicated that we aren't seeing any anomalies in our income or outgoing cash flow. There is still a concern that we have not achieved 100% participation from all members who pledged last year. A strategy is needed to address those missing pledges.

Buildings and Grounds

Kip reported on the planned installation of a new pendant light fixture for the front entry way. This light will cut down on the number of insects attracted to the door. Last year we incurred some expense to clean the church of all the dead bugs.

Kip went on to tell us that that a new microphone, at the request of Debra, will be installed in the sanctuary. Buildings and Grounds, Debra and Pro Audio will work up the appropriate solution to be presented back to the Vestry at a later date.

Outreach

Jayne Heffron and Debra reported that the Outreach committee had met and discussed the upcoming Habitat project with Christ Church. There was also discussion at the meeting about looking into work with Common Ground. It was also reported that the committee was discerning next steps with all its current ministries.

Celebration of New Ministry

A discussion around the ceremony that officially celebrates Debra's new ministry at St. Christopher's was held. Debra and the office staff are in the middle of planning this event. It was discussed that a committee will need to be formed to manage the party. Names were suggested for this. The Wardens took on responsibility to make the calls to the suggested people. It was discussed that River Hills police will need to be called as an overflow crowd is expected.

Miscellaneous

A brief discussion was had about determining a new location for the sign that was previously on Good Hope Road.

A Vestry retreat is being planned for June 26th. Location is to be determined.

We were informed that Chip Slater had won his election to the Ozaukee County board. Chip resigned his seat on the Vestry as a result.

The next Vestry meeting was planned for the 25th of May at 6:30pm.

Tom Napper
Senior Warden

Upcoming Events

Camp Webb is an outdoor ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee. Campers learn new skills, make new friends, create lasting memories, and explore who they are and who God is in their lives. For more information and to see pictures from last summer, please visit www.campwebb.org.



Camp Webb Summer 2010
Staff Training: June 27 - July 2
Camp Weeks: July 4-9; July 11-16; July 18-23

Safeguarding God's Children Trainings

Safeguarding God's Children is a national program that helps educate and train for preventing and responding to child sexual abuse in everyday life and in ministry. It is geared to clergy, parents, youth workers, Vestry members, church employees, and volunteers active in programs for children and youth. There are two local Safeguarding God's Children Trainings coming up in our Diocese. All adults who work with children in the parish are encouraged to attend:

Saturday, May 15 at Trinity Church in Wauwatosa from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, June 12 at St. Simon's in Port Washington from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

To register for the training, please visit the Diocesan website at www.diomil.org or ask Debra for more information.

Hot Dogs and Hula Hoops

We will be celebrating our annual ALL PARISH PICNIC on **Sunday, June 13** following the 10:00 a.m. service. Hot dogs, brats, and chicken will be provided. Please bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Sign-up sheets are on the bulletin board in the Community Room. SEE YOU THERE!



Welcome, Mason!

A new member of our parish community, Mason House, was born on March 24, 2010. Congratulations to parents Bryan and Rebecca and big brother Carter!

Mason will be baptized at St. Christopher's on **Sunday, June 6** during the 10:00 a.m. service.

LOVE AND FIDELITY

Anyone who has known me for more than 15 minutes knows two things about me – I attended the University of Michigan, and I have dogs. While Ran Hamner can attest to how religious I become during the Michigan football season, often seeking divine intervention on behalf of my team, my musings this morning have to do with my canine companions and what they teach me about God’s love.

On May 2, Mother Debra preached a wonderful sermon about fidelity, in honor of Owen and MJ Perry’s 50th wedding anniversary. As she spoke about how a faithful relationship requires a willingness to overlook one’s partner’s oddities, and a commitment in good times and in bad, I kept thinking, “Hey, that’s my dogs!” When I come home at the end of the day, they don’t play passive-aggressive because I left them alone so long. Instead, they are simply thrilled to see me. If I’ve had a bad day and want to sit in the recliner and glower, they are perfectly content to just keep me company. When I am sick or down, they want to be close, as if to say, “We are here.” It is this constant, steady presence that is the mark of a truly faithful, loving relationship.

So, in many ways, my dogs are living, breathing examples of the kind of faithful love we experience in God. God’s love is consistent, no matter how much or how little we reciprocate. God loves us in the here and now, and that love is not contingent upon us doing (or not doing) anything. As Paul says in his famous letter to the Corinthians: Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful. This is the kind of love I experience in my dogs. For those of you who have experienced the love of an animal, you probably can relate. The old hymn says, “God is love and where true love is, God himself is there.” The faithful, steadfast love I experience from my dogs is a tangible reminder of the love of God in my life every day. Might fidelity have been the root word for “Fido”?

Bonnie Thomson

STICKY NOTES

I realize that there is more wildlife in the North Shore than there is in downtown Milwaukee, where I live. I knew that after the first time a deer crossed my path on my way in, and I was sure of it when I saw a turkey sprint across our parking lot! But when I went on my first bike ride on the Ozaukee County trail last week, I had no idea how close to nature I was going to get.

Not five miles down the trail, there was a frenzy of feathers in front of me, and an owl swooped in next to my face, so close I could feel it! It landed in the grass, just two feet from me, and then it turned around and stared at me. Woah. I kept riding, but the image of the owl stuck with me for the rest of my ride. (As an aside, let this be a lesson to those cyclists who don’t wear helmets - you never know what will come flailing at your head!)

With Pentecost around the corner, that owl and the gust of wind she came in on reminds me of the Holy Spirit (think tongues of fire in place of fluttering feathers). When we least expect it, the Spirit has this wonderful way of completely changing our perspective and inviting us to view the world - and ourselves - in a different way. That owl in my path was both awe-inspiring and a bit terrifying, but I’m so grateful to have witnessed her beauty and grace. May the Holy Spirit fill you with awe and surprise this Pentecost!

Dorota Pruski

Qs from the Pews

Question: I've seen your signature on several things lately and I've noticed that you often have a little "+" sign after your name. What does this mean?

Signed, Curious

Dear Curious,

The "+" sign after my name means that I am a priest. If I had a "+" sign before my name it would mean that I was a bishop. You'll see that Bishop Miller signs his name +Steven Miller (we affectionately call him plus-Sam because his middle name is Andrew. Get it? +S.A.M.)

The "+" sign means that we can bless. Only bishops and priests can bless things. Deacons do not have that privilege extended to them with their ordinations.

I use the blessing sign after my name to remind me and you who I am to you. I am, certainly, Debra. But I am also Debra who is your priest; the spiritual leader of this parish. And each time I write my name and put that tiny "+" after it, it reminds me both who I am and whose I am.

Editor's Note: 'Qs from the Pews' are taken from questions that come up at Coffee Hour or in conversations with the Rector. If you have a Q to submit for this column, please email the Rector or the office.

Question: During the Prayers of the People I notice that we refer to people like Bishop Miller and even the President of the United States by their first names. Why is that? Do all parishes do that? It seems almost rude to do that.

Signed, Wondering

Dear Wondering,

Yes, all churches refer to everyone from our Presiding Bishop, our Bishop, and even the President by their first names, their baptismal names. Those names are equalizers and they are the names by which they are known by God.

This is not a St. Christopher's issue, nor my issue. It's an Episcopal Church way of being clear that we are praying for the person, not the Office that they hold.

Thanks for the questions.
Signed, Debra+

The Faces of St. Christopher's: Little Lambs Day



Congratulations to Mary Jane and Owen Perry for 50 years of Marriage!!



MAY MILESTONES

BIRTHDAYS

1	Matthew Belcher Connor Deuser
3	Michael Gough Elliott Weigel
5	Karlie Allen Juli Coburn
6	Darlene Chase
8	Betty Brown Bill Darling
10	Gholi Darien Tom Gebhardt Pat Lipscomb
11	Patti Brose Emily Roesner Laura Thurow Will Vincent
12	Pam Thickens
13	Bethany Lopez
14	Ella Gotz Joan Seeger Kathryn Sklenar Dick Wythes
15	Erik Andersen Anne Davis
16	Benjamin Bedore Bill Browne
17	Ann Deuser Lizzie Thurow
18	Will Brunner
19	Judy Jones
20	Clement Gelly Lake Schmidt
22	Grace Fischer William Smith
23	Ella McCabe Mary Scott
26	Libby Aik Janet Bate
27	Alexandra Koroscik
28	Mary Kasten
29	Laura Gough Kaitlyn Kennedy
30	Ean Jamel Chris Latterell
31	Jay Miller

ANNIVERSARIES

4	Jacquie Macomber Lyn & Bob Slater
6	Liza & Randy Perry
8	Sarah & Robert Schmidt
10	Laura & Tom Gough
13	Suzy & Byron Foster Michelle & Allen Gotz
14	Nancy & James Barton Judy & Kevin Scharfenberger
16	Linda & Barry Allen Gila & Bruce Holmes
20	Lisa Lindsay
21	Trish & Bob Juranitch
22	Mary Lee Jacobs
23	Beth & Jason Weseman
24	Chilly Braun
27	Jeni & Will Piper
28	Carla & Burt Bartlett Jeanne & Eric Christiansen

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Youth Group: youth@stchristopherswi.org

Caring Ministry: caring@stchristopherswi.org

Website: www.stchristopherswi.org

Parish Office

Open Monday - Thursday, 9:00 am - 5:00 p.m.

Staff

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*

Dorota Pruski, *Director of Administration*

John Beardsley, *Music Director*

Anne Davis, *Youth Choir Director*

MaryBeth Ansley, *Christian Formation Coordinator*

Gloria Bond, *Housekeeper*

Michael Schneider, *Building & Grounds Supervisor*

Vestry – Meets 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

Tom Napper and Jayne Heffron, *Wardens*

Hannah Pillsbury, *Treasurer*

(2011) - Diane Andersen, Darrell Fischer,
Kip Jacobs

(2012) - MaryBeth Ansley, Nick Geimer, Jeni
Piper, Deb Roesner (Jr. Warden-
elect), John (Chip) Slater

(2013) - Ginger Browne, Diane Eisen,
Judy Scharfenberger

Committee and Ministry Contacts

Altar Flowers: Roz Krause

Altar Guild: Roz Krause, Mary Jane Perry

Acolytes: Dee Hodnett

Building & Grounds: Kip Jacobs

Caring Ministry: Lauralee Uihlein

Endowment: Erik Andersen

Finance: Hannah Pillsbury

Flower Guild: Hattie Purtell, Helen Sheen

Gifts Committee: Lyn Slater

Labyrinth: Catherine Davidson

Memorial Garden: Jeanne Tanner

Newcomers: Debbie Roesner

Outreach: Mark Heffron, Steve Petrie

Personnel: Kathleen Stokes

Prayer Chain: Chilly Braun, Kathy Housiaux

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Address Service Requested

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The Monthly Newsletter of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

The Holy Eucharist

Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.
Thursday 7:00 a.m.

Outdoor Labyrinth - open to the public, weather permitting

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*



Christianity is not just a religion...it's a way of life.