



THE COURIER

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

October 2011

THE RECTOR'S MUSINGS

Okay, I'm short. To be precise, I am 5 feet 4 *and a half* inches tall. Those of us who are vertically challenged will tell you that those half inches matter.

I have always been short. When I was in first grade I was a very short little tow head. Then, through the wisdom of educators of the time, I skipped from the first half of first grade to the second half of second grade. This meant that I went from being a small first grader to being a miniscule second grader almost overnight. It was not fun.

Back then on the south side of Milwaukee, as I suspect is still true now, the playground and after school life of kids could be rough. If you were not known then you had to prove yourself. One day, as I was walking home from Hayes Avenue School, some of my second grade classmates pushed me down on the sidewalk. I tore my dress (and knew my mother would kill me for that), and scraped my knee. I ran home and when I got there I sought the comfort of my grandfather.

After my parents were divorced my mother and I moved to Milwaukee and lived across the street from my grandfather. I remember burying my head against him, taking in his particular grandfather smell of equal parts pipe tobacco and Danish pastry. Grandpa was a baker. I wailed that I did not want ever to go back to that school. Those kids were mean and I hated them! He held me and let me cry a little bit, and then he took me off his lap, set me firmly on the ground in front of him and holding me by the arms said, "Debbie, you cannot hate them. And you have to go back. You cannot give up. This is life. You have to do this."

My grandfather was first generation Danish. He came across "on the boat," as they used to say, and made a life for himself and his family first in Racine and then in Milwaukee. His life had been hard but he had always bounced back from everything that life had thrown his way. He was now teaching his granddaughter about that kind of resilience. You do not give up.

Psychologists know that, among the most important traits that we teach our children, it is resilience that is likely to help them best weather the vicissitudes of life. Perhaps you have seen the poster of the legs of a frog sticking out of the mouth of an alligator with the caption, "Don't ever give up." My grandfather would have liked that poster and I think that Jesus would have, too.

Jesus never gave up. Not on the disciples, not on life, not on us. Thank God.

If we look to the Gospels to mine gold from Jesus' life from which we might model our own, then we will find them replete with examples of Jesus' resilience. He bounced back from everything thrown at him, stayed in the game and remained loving while doing so.

And then, of course, his final resilience was to break the bounds of the tomb.

(Continued on p. 2)

My grandfather died when I was in high school. But before he did, he taught his granddaughter not to give up on school because some other second graders were mean to her. And he taught me that sometimes life requires that you just hang in there and keep coming back. And Jesus taught me that you stay loving while you do. Well, I guess my grandpa taught me that, too. I am grateful for them both in my life. Debra+

Children's Christian Formation

Dear St. Christopher's:

I would like to start off by thanking all of you for being so warm and welcoming to me! It has been a pleasure getting to know each and every one of you. I am excited that so many of you have enrolled your children in the Sunday school program this year, and these first few weeks have been a lot of fun. We kicked off the Sunday school year on Sunday September 18, 2011. Unfortunately Debra wasn't able to be there, but all of the children processed into the church with balloons, and we were all blessed by Father Wayne Fehr. That first week we spent a lot of time getting to know each other, and building a sense of community within the classroom. In addition, every child made a paper person that he or she designed to look like themselves, and I displayed them on the bulletin board near the Community Room. On the board it also states the theme for this year's curriculum from *Weaving God's Promises* which is, "Once we were no people, now we are God's people."



Last week, Sunday September 25, 2011, we started working on a lesson dealing with Abraham and Sarah, and we will continue working more with this story this Sunday October 2, 2011. We have been focusing on the importance of loving God, and believing, trusting, and having faith in the promises He makes to us and the ones we make to Him. We will continue with that discussion this week, along with talking about the birth of Isaac. In the coming weeks, we will be talking more about God's promises, the faith He has in us and us in Him, and His unwavering love and commitment to all of us.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of the parents who have volunteered to help out in the Sunday school classrooms. If there is anyone that would like to help out at any time during the year,

please contact Gust in the office and he can add you to our volunteer calendar. I'm truly looking forward to getting to know everyone better, and helping your children learn more about the Christian faith.

Warmest regards,
Katie Madlung

Warden's Words



When I agreed to serve as Senior Warden for St. Christopher's, I called my father who lives in North Carolina. Being a lifelong, devout Episcopalian, he has served the church in numerous roles. He has been a Senior Warden twice, served on Vestries, chaired Liturgy Committees, been in charge of acolytes, been an acolyte, served on Search Committees—you name it, he has probably done it. His knowledge and experience are both awesome and awe inspiring.

I too am a cradle Episcopalian so I also have had my share of "church" experiences: I've been an acolyte, served as a treasurer in another parish, been a Vestry member and was the Junior Warden. But becoming the Senior Warden was a different matter.

So when I called my father, I asked him to share his perspective on what it meant to serve as Senior Warden. I felt a bit like George Bailey in the classic movie "It's a Wonderful Life." There is a scene early in the movie when a young George Bailey is a delivery boy for the drug store. The pharmacist insists that he deliver a prescription that would be deadly if taken. George doesn't know what to do. There is a sign

hanging in the shop that says "Ask Dad, he knows best." And that's just what I did. I asked my father for guidance. I asked my father all kinds of questions about being the Senior Warden. He had all kinds of answers about being the Senior Warden.

I should have asked him about Rectors falling down stairs.

It has been quite a September for our church community. I have been humbled and awed by how our parish community has not allowed Debra's absence to put the many great things that are happening at our church on hold. Our members have faithfully filled their roles with the Altar Guild, Outreach Committee, Finance meetings, Vestry meetings, Caring Ministry meetings, Sunday ministries as ushers, lectors, prayer leaders and Christian Formation volunteers. The members of St. Christopher's have been present and accounted for. That has been and will be the best medicine as Debra heals from her surgery and as we head into Stewardship and the holidays.

Yes, I said the "Stewardship" word. Shortly you will be hearing from the members of our Stewardship Committee about the financial picture of our parish and how you can be a part of ensuring that St. Christopher's continues to be all that it is and all that it can be. We have an incredible community and there are great things ahead Stay tuned.

My father shared some great wisdom and experience with me. I can't wait to share the answer as to what happens when a Rector falls down the stairs. It's a great story.

Peace,

Debbie Roesner,
Senior Warden

Qs from the Pews

Dear Priest, Someone told me recently that it is a recent thing in the Episcopal Church for women to be ordained priests. But I thought you had been a priest for a long time. What's the story? Signed, wanting to know.

Dear wanting,

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.

Well, this is a both/and answer, not an either/or. The first women to be ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church were ordained in 1974. They were ordained by men who were retired Bishops. The church called these ordinations "irregular" (meaning the women were qualified to be ordained but the church had not yet changed its Canons, or laws, to make this happen "regularly.") In 1976 General Convention changed its laws to make the ordination of women normative in the Episcopal church and these ordinations were then "regularized."

However, there were three dioceses that still refused to ordain women regardless of church law, and many Bishops simply did not believe that women should be ordained and so sent their female candidates to other dioceses to seek ordination.

Within the whole of Anglicanism, the majority of provinces ordain women as deacons and priests. Not all will ordain as Bishops. In 1989 the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris became the first woman to be elected and ordained as a Bishop. Only four other provinces in the Anglican Communion have elected women as Bishops: The Diocese of Dunedin (New Zealand), The Diocese of Toronto (Canada), The Diocese of Perth (Australia), and the Diocese of Cuba, which is really part of the Episcopal Church.

On June 28, 2006, our church elected the first woman to be the Presiding Bishop of a Province (The Episcopal Church). That woman is Katharine Jefferts Schori. She is called the "Primate."

I was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood (six months apart) in 1995, almost twenty years after the first women were ordained in our church. However, it was not until **October 16, 2010**, when the Rev. Margaret Lee was ordained to the priesthood in the diocese of Quincy (Illinois), that all 110 of the dioceses in the Episcopal church had ordained women.

We continue to struggle in our church with issues of sexism (alongside other prejudices) and those kinds of sinful attitudes die very hard. It took thirty-six years for all dioceses to ordain women. Some would argue that's too long. I would be among them.

Thanks for the question.

Signed, the Priest (who just gratefully celebrated the sixteenth anniversary of her ordination to the priesthood!)

A Walk through The Book of Common Prayer

One of the things I love about being an Episcopalian is that, no matter where I go, I know I will find The Book of Common Prayer waiting for me in the local Episcopal church. Even when I was pony trekking in the Exmoor National Forest in England, when we stopped into a very old church, sure enough there was the prayer book. Granted, the English version was a little different, but the services were all there. The prayer book is one of the things that has bound Anglicans together since Elizabethan times. So, for the next few months, I'm going to take us on a journey through the prayer book. I have no formal training in Anglican (or any other) theology, so view this very much as the average pew-sitter's walk through The Book of Common Prayer.

As Maria says in *The Sound of Music*, "Let's start at the very beginning... a very good place to start" by taking a look at the Table of Contents. This gives a great overview of what is in the prayer book, and includes everything from who is responsible for what is in the prayer book, to the various services that are part of our Anglican tradition, to the Psalter (which are the psalms), and ends with the lectionary that we use for readings in years A, B and C. (You may have heard Debra talk about the readings cycling through every three years – how those readings cycle can be found on pages 888 – 927.) Simply looking at the Table of Contents is a great insight into how rich our tradition is.

The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer gives insight into how we, as Episcopalians, view our worship – both in terms of tradition and in terms of change. While reading the entire Preface is interesting, I like how it begins:

It is a most invaluable part of that blessed "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," that in his worship different forms and usages may without offense be allowed, provided the substance of the Faith be kept entire; and that, in every Church, what cannot be clearly determined to belong to Doctrine must be referred to Discipline; and therefore, by common consent and authority, may be altered, abridged, enlarged, amended, or otherwise disposed of, as may seem most convenient for the edification of the people, "according to the various exigency of times and occasions."

Stay tuned – next month I'll take a look at the Daily Office – Morning and Evening Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Compline and Daily Devotions.

Bonnie Thomson,
Junior Warden

Blessing of the Animals



Keeping Up to Date on Outreach

The Outreach Committee is in the process of receiving applications from the organizations we targeted in our efforts to reach hungry children. We met September 25 to create a format for reviewing these applications. This is the first time that we have had a formal process for requesting and reviewing applications for grants and we are really excited about this new development in our parish!

The Outreach Committee has had some great discussions about our priorities and how to be good stewards of the monies of the parish that go to Outreach. We are looking forward to continuing those discussions and encourage any of you who might have an interest in talking about issues of need that are outside the parish vis-à-vis our life as Christians, to become part of this Committee. Our next meeting is October 9 following the 10 o'clock service (about 11:20AM).

As the grant process continues, we will keep the parish informed regarding the organizations we find which fit our funding criteria out of our new process.

If you would like more information about this Committee you can talk to Steve Petrie, Chair, or Jayne Heffron, Harry Ansley, Diane Eisen, Carolyn Davis, and Hannah Pillsbury

Upcoming Events Highlights

Sunday, October 9 - 11:20 AM Outreach Committee

Monday, October 10 - 9:30 AM Caring Ministry

Friday - Saturday, October 14-15 - Diocesan Convention in Racine

Tuesday - Monday, October 18-24: Gust away (in Brazil!)

Tuesday, October 25 - 6:30 PM Vestry Meeting

Sunday, October 30 - 10 AM: Emma Holbrook Baptism

Tuesday, November 1 - 7 PM-8:30 PM: "Teach Us To Pray" (and the next three Tuesday evenings).

Sunday, November 6 - All Saints' Sunday

Next Date for The Gathering

Our next opportunity is on Saturday November 12th—it's usually every other month on the second Saturday, but look for information 2-3 weeks in advance in Sunday inserts, Weekly Updates and on the Community Room bulletin board.

Contact Harry Ansley (hfansley@yahoo.com ; 414-731-8350) or MaryBeth Ansley (meansley@mac.com) for more information.

October MILESTONES

BIRTHDAYS

1	Tim Aik
4	Barry Allen
5	Linda Allen Jordan Napper
6	Jack Latterell
8	Sybil La Budde
9	Heidi Brunner Byron Foster
10	Randy Perry
11	Rob Gleeson
13	Kendall Coburn George Walker
15	Maddy Fischer Bob Kloppenburg
16	Elizabeth Casey
17	Brian Casey
18	Alex Greeley Kathleen Stokes
19	Dennis Evans Julia Uihlein Jack Ziskind
21	Brent Martin
22	Claire Schmidt
23	Heidi Freydank Beth Sande
24	Casey Brunner Meghan Casey Peggie Baumann Hunter Klas
26	Jill Jacobs Laura Wigdale
27	Annie Kipcak
29	Ellen Gough
31	Joan Stein

ANNIVERSARIES

7	Carrie & Jim Bedore
12	Elizabeth & Brian Casey Diane & Erik Andersen
23	Darlene & Jim Chase
26	Laura & Jay Wigdale

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 - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Staff

The Rev. Debra Trakel, *Rector*

Gust Olson III, *Parish Administrator*

John Beardsley, *Music Director*

Gloria Bond, *Housekeeper*

Michael Schneider, *Building & Grounds Supervisor*

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

Debbie Roesner and Bonnie Thomson, *Wardens*

Florence Parnegg and Susan Hackl, *Clerks*

(2012) - MaryBeth Ansley, Jeni Piper

(2013) - Ginger Browne, Diane Eisen,

Judy Scharfenberger

(2014) - Diane Andersen, Darrell Fischer

Committee and Ministry Contacts

Altar Flowers: Roz Krause

Altar Guild: Roz Krause, Mary Jane Perry

Acolytes: MaryBeth Ansley

Building & Grounds: Diane Andersen

Caring Ministry: Mary Jane Perry, Helen Sheen

Endowment: Erik Andersen

Finance Subcommittee: Charlie Krause

Flower Guild: Hattie Purtell, Helen Sheen

Labyrinth: Catherine Davidson

Memorial Garden: Helen Sheen

Outreach: Steve Petrie

Prayer Chain: Chilly Braun, Kathy Housiaux

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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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.