
THE VOICE



Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 1, Issue 1

August 2015

FROM THE INTERIM RECTOR'S STUDY

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

Our newsletter is now officially returning as a principal vehicle for parish communication with this issue. I remain forever grateful to Genna Henderson, chair of the vestry's communications commission, for her willingness and excitement to serve as its editor. She possesses gifts: diligence and thoroughness, to cite but two. Both continuity and excellence will be the result.

I am thrilled to announce the appointment of Barbara Latzko to serve as Bethesda's new Parish Administrative Assistant, effective Monday, August third. A resident of Wilton, Barbara comes to us from five years of service at Wesley Health Care Center here in Saratoga Springs. More importantly, the clergy and congregation will be blessed with her ten-year experience as administrative assistant at Saratoga's United Methodist Church. References I contacted were unanimous in their enthusiastic reviews of Barbara: "a real people person, a self-starter, efficient." Farrell, our talented maestro, and Lynne, our *volunteer* office assistant of more than thirteen months, are ecstatic to welcome her as the

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New Parish House and Capital Campaign Taking Shape

*Gordon Boyd, Chair
Building Committee/Capital Campaign*

Plans for the New Parish House (NPH) and developing Capital Campaign are continuing to advance and take shape, thanks to the dedicated efforts of the Building Committee, Wardens, Vestry and the leadership of Dean Vang.

Over recent weeks, Bethesda's exciting Gothic-revival design from John G. Waite Associates has been submitted to the City Planning Board, to general positive response. A few relatively solvable problems will be addressed in coming weeks and, we hope, a final approval granted by the end of this summer.

Meanwhile, interest in occupancy of the new facility continues to be strong. Mission-appropriate non-profit child care and higher education-related operations are, at this writing, interested in a majority of the available space. The child care space would be shared with Bethesda's church school on Sundays. AA is interested in utilizing meeting space in the NPH whenever possible. Other professional space will be available at commercial rates, and interest is strong for that option as well.

Along the way, all parish standing ministries have been consulted, including Altar Guild, church school, music, Service League and others, to make sure that the spaces they will use in our facilities are appropriately designed and outfitted to their requirements.

The Vestry, on advice of the Building Committee, has committed to working with Saratoga National Bank for financing the NPH. The bank's corporate lending staff will help make sure that Bethesda's final plans meet the Vestry's and Building Committee's goals of achieving a

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Bethesda Youth Update

Since my arrival last September, I have been blessed with the opportunity to work with the youth of Bethesda Church. Along with Liz (Griffin) Vincent and Matt Griffin, we have met with the teens most Sundays after church to explore God's Word and how it relates to the lives of our young adults. Since the beginning of March, we have been following the Confirmation Class Curriculum developed by the Diocese of Albany, as we have five young adults interested in being confirmed by Bishop Love when he visits Bethesda on Sunday, December 20th. The curriculum consists of 27 lessons, each one taking about an hour to complete. We just recently completed the twelfth lesson, will take a break over the summer, and resume in the fall. Bethesda parishioners have been tapped to lead a few of the classes thus far and I plan to continue that in the fall; hearing God's word through different human voices is in keeping with the Bible.

The youth group has had a few opportunities to not only hear and study God's Word but to also put it into action. At the end of April, several teens helped with an American Red Cross blood drive held in the Parish House. The youth manned the check-in table, answered questions or directed questions to staff members as necessary, offered refreshments to donors, and sat and chatted with donors after they had given blood. It was quite successful for our first blood drive; we exceeded our goals. We plan to sponsor another one in late October 2015, and thereafter host two a year. In late May, we worked alongside other church groups cleaning up the grounds of the Pine Grove Camp, which houses track workers and their families during the summer. Organized by the Saratoga Race Track Chaplain, this camp allows married track workers and their children a safe and wholesome environment to stay together as families during the track season. And finally, the youth group will be travelling to Harrisburg, PA in late July to participate in a week long mission trip, sharing God's love and care to the people we encounter there. We will focus our lives on being the hands and feet and voice of Jesus in the world for a week, doing whatever is asked of us, be it physical labor, working with children, or visiting with the elderly, to simply serve others in need. Please pray for us as we journey the week of July 26, that we may be blessed with many opportunities to labor with other Christian youth in God's mission field.

In Christ,
Deacon Sweeney

Are you on our mailing list? Please call
the church office at
(518) 581-5980
to make sure we have your email,
address and phone number.

positive long-term cash flow for Bethesda.

The Capital Campaign itself is a critical component of the NPH/Church restoration projects. Our goal is to raise at least \$3 million to supplement the funds from the sale of the old Parish House, Rectory and Ensley properties. These funds have been reserved in Bethesda's Endowment, and the Endowment Committee, headed by Vern Hinkle, has collaborated with the Building Committee and Vestry in deploying funds when needed to meet project development costs.

Restoration plans for the Church building were greatly advanced this spring when we were awarded a matching grant from the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The \$1,500 grant, to be matched by \$8,500 of church endowment funds, will underwrite a condition assessment of the church—i.e. identifying and estimating the high priority projects to keep Bethesda in good shape for the coming century or more. The Waite firm will conduct the survey later this year.

Phase 2 of the Capital Campaign, a feasibility study, is under way now. Members of the parish will receive a tentative case statement about the projects, and will be asked for their response and possible level of support. Once this information is in hand, with the continued guidance of the Episcopal Church Foundation, the Vestry will be able to initiate the next and final phase with a realistic outlook.

The Building Committee (BC) meets at least twice-monthly to guide our consultants, discuss options and make recommendations to the Vestry. BC members are: Gordon Boyd (chair), Geoff Delbridge (fiscal control), Mark Claverie, Darren Miller, Mark Parobeck, Mary Withington, Mark Anspach (owner's rep NPH), and Field Horne (owner's rep Church restoration). Volunteers assisting in the Capital Campaign are Ethel Grisanti and Debbie Harper. When you see these dedicated Bethesdians, please thank them for all they are doing to move us forward! ❖

COMING EVENTS

BUILDING FUND COCKTAIL PARTY

The Annual Bethesda Building Fund Gala, hosted by Marylou Whitney and John Hendrickson, will take place on Monday, August third, from 6 PM until 8 PM, at the Saratoga Golf and Polo Club.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION

Classes to instruct children in grades 1 and 2 are being planned for September and October. If your child has not received such preparation, please contact Dean Vang of the Parish Office. Thank you.

DATES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

Sunday, September 13 [The Solemnity of the Holy Cross]
Sunday, November 01 [All Saints' Day]

From the Interim Rector continued from page 1

newest member of the Parish Staff. Barbara's engagement with Bethesda will be on a part-time basis. Office hours will now be as follows:

Monday – Thursday	9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Friday	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

It should be noted that Lynne's contributions of her time and energy were not only reflected in considerable fiscal savings for the parish budget but also consolidated record keeping and postings in a coherent fashion. For instance, once there were eight mailing lists, now there is one master list, with continuous updating in progress. Lynne, however, will not disappear from the second floor of 41 Washington Street. She loves Bethesda's liturgy and all things associated with it, including service leaflets. To allow Barbara's time to be more focused, Lynne, with Farrell's assistance, will continue to prepare our liturgical guides for all Sundays and Holy Days. In certain instances, she will also be available to support our Bookkeeper. And so we extend to Lynne the familiar salutation, *The Lord be with you.*

The first anniversary of Deacon Sweeney's arrival at Bethesda occurs in September. I would be remiss if I did not convey to this faithful soul our delight in his various ministrations among us. A summation of Peter's diaconal work is found elsewhere in this issue. Please note attentively the new directions in which his leadership with our youth has forged.

This year The Feast of Our Lord's Resurrection and, fifty days later, The Day of Pentecost [Whitsunday] were occasions of great joy and radiance, particularly evidenced by new sets of Solemn Eucharistic Vestments given to our parish in loving memory of John Peter Woods, IV. The generosity of his parents enabled the London firm of Watts & Co. Ltd., official vestment designers to Her Majesty the Queen, to create and execute by hand the various pieces required: nineteen in all, in gold and red. The patterns and fabrics are those of Augustus Pugin [1812-1852] It was this celebrated English architect, designer, artist, and critic whose influence upon Richard Upjohn, Bethesda's architect, was most noteworthy. I continue to find the congregation's reaction to this memorial to be one of gratitude and awe. Not surprisingly, several days after photographs of these vestments were posted on the web, laudatory comments appeared from onlookers world-wide. We are, indeed, very blessed.

A period for summertime recreation continues. May Christ our Lord refresh our lives with his grace and bless the times we share with our families and friends.

Most cordially in His Name,

The Very Rev'd Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector ❖

Bethesda History Project in Progress

Jane Agee

Some of you may not know that a history of Bethesda has been underway for the past three years. We began with the idea for a book in the spring of 2012. By the fall, we had begun to assemble a group of writers. We felt that a collaborative effort that tapped into the expertise and knowledge of different individuals in our church and community would help us produce a richer and more interesting history. The following individuals have been part of the wonderful team contributing chapters or sections to the book: Jane Agee (Editor), Kate Berheide, Gordon Boyd, Sharon Boyd, Jean-Marie Crocker, Fr. Paul Evans, Mary Ann Fitzgerald, John Gilliland, Carolyn Hatch, Genna Henderson, Fr. Bill Hinrichs, Doug Huston, Denise Limoli, James Kettlewell, Mary Sanders Shartle, John Van der Veer, Dean Vang and Mary Withington. We could not have completed this project without the help of editorial assistance from Mary Sanders Shartle, Genna Henderson, and Stuart Armstrong. We also leaned heavily on Diane Robinson (and many volunteers) for her assistance with materials from the Bethesda Historical Archive and on Farrell Goehring who provided his knowledge of the organs and other help as needed.

We are anticipating publication of the book in late 2016. It will be the first and only major history of the church. A small book was produced by Fr. Irving Rouillard in 1930 for the occasion of the centennial of Bethesda, but it was used for multiple purposes, including fund-raising. Moreover, the historical material contains some of the same inaccuracies found in other accounts. We hope that the upcoming book will offer readers a comprehensive and accurate accounting of the fascinating people who have been part of the life of the church; the architectural changes made over the years; both celebratory and scandalous events; as well as the stories behind our exquisite windows and artifacts.

You may have received a letter asking for your support of this project. We sincerely hope you will be a generous participant in creating this exciting story of Bethesda. If you have already contributed, many thanks for your generosity from all who are working on this important project. ❖

Bethesda is looking for acolytes!
If you or your child would be interested in serving at the altar, please speak to Dean Vang or Matthew Griffin

PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

MARY SANDERS SHARTLE, a Bethesda 10:00er, recently published her novel [The Truth and Legend of Lily Martindale](#). It has won four awards: two from the Adirondack Center for Writing for Best Novel and People's Choice; the 2014 IPPY award for Best Regional Fiction in the Northeast and the 2014 National IndieFab silver medal for General Fiction. [The Truth and Legend of Lily Martindale](#) is about a woman who has fled to the Adirondacks to live as a hermit and caretaker of a Great Camp but finds that, even living alone in the mountains, she cannot escape her past. Shartle has drawn heavily on her Episcopal background for this novel, naming the buildings in the Great Camp after hymn tunes and beginning each chapter with a quote from our 1940 hymnal. Shartle makes use of her experience as a poet to paint a stark yet stunning picture of a solitary life in the Adirondacks. She says she was greatly influenced by her time working and staying at Great Camp Sagamore, which is the only Historic Great Camp which is open, not only for tours, but for overnight and weekend guests. Shartle is currently working on a novel that takes place in late 18th century France.

New Bethesda Newsletter!

Genna Henderson

Welcome to the new, updated version of the Bethesda newsletter, which I hope will eventually work its way up to monthly once I get the hang of it, but will likely be bi-monthly for a while. Calling it The Voice (of the turtle) started out as a choir joke but, the more I thought about it, the more appropriate it seemed. It's a reference to the lines from the King James Version of the Song of Solomon. The voice of the turtle symbolizes spring and rebirth. Bethesda has recently entered into a period of transition and rebirth which will both challenge and enrich us for years to come.

"For lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of birds is come and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land"

-Song of Solomon, 2:11-12

We will need to deeply consider what is most important to us in our worship and community and determine how best to achieve our goal of surviving, not just to the third century,

but beyond and for centuries to come.

This newsletter, I hope, will help with those most necessary discussions by keeping you informed, not only of the progress of our new parish hall, but the progress of our mission. Making a newsletter is something completely new for me, so I would welcome help, suggestions, and especially articles. If there's something you want more information about, let me know and I'll try to find the answers and put them here. I'd also like to continue to spotlight individual parishioner's accomplishments, so if you know of any accomplished parishioners, let me know! (I'm the one in the choir with the weird hair) I hope you're enjoying this work-in-progress!❖

Vestry Minutes (abridged)

"The Vestry of an Episcopal Church has three primary responsibilities... to take care of the parish finances and parish buildings [and] to choose individuals to fill various positions of parish leadership"

-Christopher L. Webber

The Vestry Handbook: Revised Edition

The Vestry of Bethesda met on Wednesday, July 22, 2015 at 7:00 PM. Dean Vang called the meeting to order and Geoff Delbridge opened the meeting with devotions. The minutes of the June meeting were presented by Genna Henderson and accepted unanimously.

The treasurer's report, prepared by Anne Van Acker, shows that church expenses are within budget but pledge and plate donations are currently running about \$11,000 behind budget. So far this year pledge and plate donations are more than \$16,000 behind where they were at this time last year. The Vestry discussed notes from a nationwide survey of Episcopal churches' growth and decline, focusing on aspects that may need to be addressed in Bethesda in the coming years, as well as those current aspects which many of us feel are integral to our church identity and should not be changed. (The full text of the report can be found at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/new_facts_on_growth_2014_final.pdf)

Mary Withington provided an update on the Home of the Good Shepherd litigation regarding the Home's tax exempt status.

Gordon Boyd reported that the building projects are moving along, though they suffered some delays in navigating the City's requirements, which the architects and building committee are currently addressing.

Genna Henderson reported that she hopes to have the newsletter out by the beginning of August and proudly waved her current draft.

Mark Claverie reported that we are getting estimates to repair the plexiglass behind the East Window in the church. Dean Vang closed the meeting with a prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 8:49.