
THE VOICE

Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 1, Issue 2

October 2015



FROM THE INTERIM RECTOR'S STUDY

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

As the tempo of parish life accelerates, I would like to share with you recent endeavors of the Vestry, the women and men whom you have elected to serve as congregational leaders. Once thought to be a position of honor with a level of modest commitment, a Vestry member in today's contemporary Episcopal Church discovers with alacrity and certainty that such a mind-set couldn't be further from the truth. The time and energy spent in overseeing the life of a parish and its role, both in the local community and diocese, is of immense proportions. In essence, the Vestry is a body of volunteers where individual talents and love of Our Lord Jesus Christ unite for the goodness and well-being of Bethesda. No one shares an easy ride. Like all Christian ministries, there is a genuine sense of the sacrificial even in comprehending the Vestry's work. Oftentimes, a vote is not a simple "yes" or "no". Conversations are not always unanimous in thought, work, and action. An Agenda is not necessarily limited to subjects defined by Church Canons, as numerous and varied as they are. The mission of the Church is at stake. The imprint of Christ's mind and heart upon decisions is not optional. During July and August the Vestry departed from a "business

continued on page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 2 Bethesda Building Fund Party
- 3 Bethesda's Treasures: Altar Crosses
- 4 Parishioner Spotlight
- 6 Home of the Good Shepherd

Building Project Update

*Gordon Boyd, Chair
Building Committee/Capital Campaign*

We continue to reach and pass milestones in the parish's capital projects: church restoration and new parish house.

Survey: Readers of this newsletter should have already received and, it is hoped, returned the feasibility survey that was mailed to all parishioners on September 28. If that survey remains in your In Basket, please extract it and return it in the envelope provided. We will provide the parish with a report on the results of this survey on Sunday November 8, so please mark your calendar now.

Approval: The Saratoga Springs Planning Board unanimously approved our plans for the New Parish House (NPH). They asked us to plant trees on the sidewalk and forecourt, and make a modest set back to keep the sidewalk safe for pedestrians. Our accommodations were well received, and there were compliments voiced by Board members on the look and concept behind the project.

Restoration: Our architects are digging into the needs of the church for restoration measures. This activity is funded in part by the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and a report will be forthcoming shortly, laying out priorities to keep our historic building sound for the decades to come.

Questions about the capital projects may be directed to any member of the Building Committee, the Wardens or Dean Vang.

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, Debbie Harper and Sharon Boyd. When you see these dedicated Bethesdians, please thank them for all they are doing to move us forward! ❖

Sparkling Event Raises Money for Building Fund

Vexilla Regis

A fabulous time was had by all at the Bethesda Building Fund Benefit, held on August 3rd at the Saratoga Springs Golf and Polo Club.

Upon arrival, guests were cordially greeted by Dean Marshall Vang and Deacon Peter Sweeney. Marylou Whitney and John Hendrickson, who graciously sponsored the event, were in attendance and greeted by many friends and admirers. Dean Vang spoke for the crowd when he expressed great appreciation to them for their generosity. He then presented them with framed architect's renderings of the proposed new Parish Hall. Dean Vang also had warm words of thanks for Bruce Solenski and Deborah Harper for their great efforts in planning the event. All received great rounds of applause.

Guests enjoyed cocktails from the bar as well as tasty hors d'oeuvre. While the crab cakes and sesame chicken were particular favorites, there was consternation in some corners because the legendary Swedish meatballs were not served this year.

Spotted in the crowd were: Geneva Henderson; Mary Sanders Shartle and Vernon Hinkle; Field Horne; Father Paul Evans; Jason Thomas; Sharon and Gordon Boyd; Farrell Goehring and Rich Garbarino; Pam Houde; Choir mother Carolyn Hatch; David and Deborah Harper; Mark and Kathleen Anspach; John Van der Veer; and Diane Robinson and Mark Claverie, with a special appearance by their daughter Genevieve Claverie. Representative Paul Tonko circulated and chatted with the guests.

The sparkling event raised \$49,645.00 for The Bethesda Building Fund.

A symposium on "Restorative Justice" will take place at Skidmore College October 21 and 22.

Why is this important to Bethesda? Restorative Justice is a global movement that brings mediation, reconciliation and healing to disputatious situations of all kinds. The Skidmore College Restorative Justice Project has expressed strong interest in relocating to Bethesda's New Parish House, bringing the potential for a mission-connected project to our premises. To learn more about Restorative Justice, parishioners should visit

<http://www.skidmore.edu/campusrj/aboutrestorativejustice.php> and also consider registering for and attending the October 21-22 symposium. A community discussion, led by those involved in the Skidmore event, will also be held the evening of October 20 at Caffe Lena. With Restorative Justice growing as a means of addressing disputes and offenses, and the possibility of Bethesda's involvement hosting this project, now is the time to start learning and reflecting.

Are you on our mailing list? Please call
the church office at
(518) 584-5980
to make sure we have your email,
address and phone number.

Endowment Committee Reporting In

Vernon Hinkle

You must have noticed that, in the past couple of years, Bethesda has been working to improve in all areas of its operation. One of those areas—a very important one—is communications, within the Church, within the community, and within the Diocese. This newsletter is a part of that communication. (Full Disclosure: The editor is my daughter.)

It's time the Endowment Committee introduced itself. We are a Committee of four: Craig Walton, Paul Parobeck (Secretary), David Harper (Treasurer), and myself as Chairman. Dean Vang as Rector and Mark Claverie as Senior Churchwarden are ex officio members.

The Committee was established at Bethesda to oversee the acceptance and management of past and future gifts to the church. We had our first meeting a year ago, and we've been meeting quarterly ever since.

Our primary job during this first year has been the handling of the Endowment Fund, primarily proceeds from the sale of the old Parish House and Rectory, an amount that totaled \$2,200,000, and that had been earmarked for building the new Parish House. Since a new Parish House is not built overnight and all of this money was not going to be needed at once, it seemed wise to put it to work, so that it might retain its value over a period of time (keep up with inflation), and probably make a little more to pay for a little more of the new Parish House. So, with the recommendation of the Vestry, we enlisted the aid of Merrill Lynch's Clore-Kelly Group (Bob Clore and Georgia Kelly).

Clore-Kelly designed a plan to suit our particular situation, covering long-term, intermediate and short-term needs. In the first category, \$1,000,000 would be invested evenly between stocks and bonds; in the middle category, \$500,000 in fixed-income bonds, leaving \$700,000 for Short-term Cash Flow, \$250,000 of which would be money readily available for immediate needs, leaving \$450,000 that, by

Continued on p. 3

order of the Bishop, needed to be held in reserve for a new Rectory. This plan was only a beginning, of course, and it would be adjusted to suit whatever the future proved necessary. It was, and still is, as Bob Clore put it, "about as conservative as you can get." That's what we wanted, to make a little money, and not lose any. And so far we are satisfied that we are accomplishing that.

As the preliminary steps are taken toward the new Parish House, the invoices have been rolling in, from architects, surveyors, city agencies, and so forth. And the checks have been rolling out on a fairly regular basis, following a firmly established protocol.

More recently, we've been giving a lot of attention to eight endowments that existed a long time before there was ever a Committee to consider them. A couple of them go back to the 1920s. Others may be even older, we don't know. And that's the problem. There's too much we don't know. What is the history of these endowments? What stipulations may have been placed on them? We can surmise some of it from about three wills, some old financial reports, and a 1930 centennial Church record. For instance, regarding what is listed as the Beverly Trust held by Bank of America, we know the will bequeathing \$50,000 is dated August 14, 1968, and that the income from that was to be paid annually to Bethesda for general purposes. We also discover that we've been misspelling the name Beverley. But, so far, we have been unable to find the document that set up the Trust. That is the key problem we've been facing generally. And the search for these missing documents is older than the Committee that's playing detective now. Do copies of such exist behind some undiscovered secret door in the old Parish House? Anyway, we do want to know the history of the endowments and, more important, the intent of the donors. If we can't find the Trust documents, we'll have to settle for what we can find in the other sources I've mentioned, so that these Endowments may be handled as responsibly as possible.

So, as you might suppose, in a Church that now strives for transparency and accurate communications with itself, with its community, and with its Diocese, we can now add "with the future." Let the Bethesda Church of the year 2100 never be in doubt about anything we are doing now. ❖

Please mark your calendars for the next Service League meeting: Sunday, October 18. We will meet in the Parish Hall kitchen during Coffee Hour for about 30 minutes to discuss future service projects and fellowship events.

New people are especially welcomed and encouraged to join us and share their ideas. If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Anspach, 583-3549

Bethesda's Treasures The Altar Crosses

Mary Sanders Shartle

Every Sunday we come to church and enjoy the immense beauty of the building's interior, the stained glass windows and the objects of worship so tenderly handled. But did you ever wonder where all this came from? Those beautiful crosses we see on the main and side altars. Whence cometh they?

The largest cross is the most notable stationary object on the High Altar. It was given by Misses Genevieve W. Putnam (1860-1941) and Sarah W. Putnam (1861-1921), daughters of Mary Watrous Putnam and George Rockwell Putnam, and great-granddaughters of Gideon Putnam. The cross was given in memory of their sister, Ellen ("Nellie"), who died at age seventeen of typhoid in 1874. The cross is made of a lustrous brass embedded with amethysts and moonstones, and was likely donated to the church when renovations were done around 1887.

Its sister cross on the side altar is also highly ornamented with semi-precious stones. This cross, referred to as the Jumel cross, is sometimes erroneously supposed to have been given to Bethesda by Eliza or Mme. Jumel--a notorious social figure of New York and Saratoga Springs. She was once the mistress of, then married and divorced former Vice President Aaron Burr following the death of her husband Stephen Jumel, a wealthy French wine merchant. Mme. Jumel was a very astute businesswoman and prosperous landowner--a woman ahead of her time. She owned a house on Circular Street, called "Les Tuileries" (owned later by one of the occasional choir members and organists of Bethesda, Richard Speers). She summered there until 1859. There is no record of who donated the cross to Bethesda. The inscription reads: "In Memoriam to M. Stephen Jumel, died May 22, 1832 and his wife Mme. Eliza B. Jumel, Died July 16, 1865."

These and more familiar treasures of Bethesda will be a part of the Bethesda history book currently underway—a remarkable collaborative effort by a number of parishioners. As we near completion of the final manuscript complete with lovely photographs by Jane Agee, we hope that you will support the final product with your generosity. And, by all means, if you have information on any of Bethesda's Treasures, their provenance or inscriptions please let me know! (cree8mss@gmail.com). ❖

The Vestry is pleased to announce that Eileen Wiebicke, CPA, completed an independent audit of Bethesda for the 2014 financial year, and noted several improvements. A copy of her report is available for review in the Parish Office.

PARISHIONER SPOTLIGHT

A lifetime Bethesda parishioner, STUART ARMSTRONG began his career in the Bethesda Treble Choir at the age of 10 in 1966 and has been with us ever since, barring two brief sabbaticals, one for a year in 1972, following a reorganization of the trebles, and another following The Great Choir Schism of 1992. However, he was tempted back by Farrell Goehring, who pointed out the Schola's desperate need for tenors, in 2004. Although Armstrong has claimed for years that his contract protects him from solo singing, Director Kathleen Slezak has recently managed to convince him to take over some of our favorite tenor solos, and now his dulcet tones can be heard floating through the opening notes of William Walton's *Set Me as a Seal*.

When asked what he likes singing best, Armstrong immediately admits a fondness for Stanford, though he also loves Palestrina, noting that both are "very satisfying to sing" When not in choir, Armstrong owns and operates Reruns Consignment Shop, located at 1 Phila Street, which sells vintage clothing, furniture and knick knacks and which, in nice weather, is a favorite hang-out for the Schola in between services on Evensong Sundays.

The Voice Continues!

Genna Henderson

Hey look! Not only have I done ONE newsletter, now I've done TWO newsletters! Or, well, I will have done by the time you read this. At present I'm still working on it. So, what, you may wonder, is going on at Bethesda? Lots. Absolute buckets-full. Today, in a brain fog from working on this all day (formatting is HARD), I walked down to CVS to buy some Fortifying Chocolate and, as I was in the area, I stopped by the parish house to see if I could meet our new Administrative Assistant, Barbara Latzko. She was there, working away, and what a great job she's doing! She accepted some of my Fortifying Chocolate and we chatted a bit. Reviews coming in from the parishioners, volunteers and employees are glowing. Everybody loves her. She's whipping the office into shape and, rumor has it, recently found a box of \$300 in coins hidden away in a drawer somewhere which, with the state of our pledge and plate income lately, is a Godsend (possibly literally).

The choir started up again and promptly reverted to its usual patterns of silliness. They bid a fond farewell to Will, a lovely baritone whose schedule conflicts with too many Sundays this year. They gave a rousing welcome to Shannon, who just joined up as our new mezzo-soprano. We need tenors,

though. If you have any hanging around, please bring them by the 11:30 rehearsal any Sunday or have them email Kathleen at kslezak1@nycap.rr.com.

Also, you may have noticed that a lot of people I'm related to are writing articles for The Voice. The reason for this is familial obligation, vis a vis, I'm better at guilt-tripping my father into helping out than I am at guilt-tripping people who did not coo over me when I was an infant. However, it is not my intention that The Voice be some sort of font for nepotism. I *want* other people to contribute, but if it's two days before the deadline and I only have two articles, I'm going to pester my Dad. Take pity on Mr. Hinkle and contribute something for the next edition of The Voice! ❖

The deadline for the next edition of The Voice is Wednesday, November 18th! Please contribute so Genna's dad doesn't have to!
Email articles to geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com

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

AUGUST

The Vestry met at 7:00 PM on August 19th, 2015. Mark Griffin began the meeting with devotions.

Dean Vang was effusive in his praise of Barbara Latzko's work thus far.

The vestry voted unanimously to accept a quote from Allerdice Hardware to repair the plexiglass behind the altar window for \$3,399.00.

Mark Claverie requested that those parishioners with keys to the parish house be vigilant in remembering to lock the door behind themselves whenever entering or exiting the building, even if only going in for a moment.

Jane Agee reported that the Bethesda History book is coming along well and that she, Mary Sanders Shartle, and Stuart Armstrong have been meeting regularly to go over edits. She also mentioned that it looks as though someone has been using the archives room for non-archival storage and that this is inappropriate and should be discouraged.

The Vestry voted unanimously to renew our membership with the Episcopal Network for Stewardship, which provides stewardship materials that have proved invaluable for fundraising. There was further discussion of the survey of Episcopal churches (This survey can be found at: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/new_facts_on_growth_2014_final.pdf), specifically how Bethesda can evolve in

Continued on p. 5

order to attract new members. Dean Vang presented a plan for including children in the Advent services which met with resounding approval. The subject of adding another service on Sundays was discussed, as well as other ways to foster community within the congregation. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

SEPTEMBER

The Vestry met at the parish house at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, September 23rd. Genna Henderson began the meeting with devotions. Dean Vang reported that the summer was a very busy time for pastoral care. Ms. Latzko is doing a fantastic job in the office and Gordon Boyd was especially effusive in his praise of her help in getting the survey mailing prepped. As the school year starts up, we're noticing a drop-off in families with children, once again showing that extra-curricular activities are conflicting with church. The vestry discussed ways of changing our schedule to address this issue and agreed that it would be wise to discuss in greater depth with church parents to see what would be helpful from their perspective. Deacon Sweeney reported that the mission trip was very successful and that he is continuing to visit Mary Eddy at Wesley and finds his pastoral care there to be very gratifying. Ms. Henderson reported that the Bishop has approved the new contract for sale of the Ensley property, and we hope to close sometime in October. Mr. Boyd explained the benefits of a General Contractor as opposed to a Construction Manager for handling the building of the NPH, the Vestry voted unanimously to support this decision. Ms. Berheide reported that the personnel committee is working diligently on compiling an employee manual. Mr. Claverie reported that the repair of the plexiglass behind the altar window has been delayed as we negotiate for access. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

The Feast of the Dedication

Fr. Paul Evans

At Bethesda, the first Sunday of each October is kept as a Feast of the Dedication of a Church. A few thoughts seem appropriate.

How does a building become a "real church" a place where a worshipping community can expect to meet and be met by its Lord? A building becomes a house of prayer by being prayed in. A table becomes an altar by having the Eucharist habitually celebrated on it. A basin becomes a font by being used for Baptism. Accordingly, a Christian community inaugurates a church by meeting there, worshipping there, and committing themselves to go on using that place in the future for the ministry of God's Word and Sacraments.

A church is defined as a meeting place for a congregation of the Holy Catholic Church, and not as some private chapel of a local group. There is a great deal of Biblical reference to the principal church in Jerusalem--the Temple. Its construction and dedication are described in I Kings 5-8, and this is expanded upon in I Chronicles 28-29 and II Chronicles 2-7. These texts develop the theme that God is the possessor of all, yet we can, by God's own grace, offer gifts. Similarly God is everywhere, and yet condescends to be especially present and especially accessible in the place where he makes "his Name to dwell."

The New Testament not only provides references to the Temple at Jerusalem, but speaks of our Lord's earthly body as a temple, and of individual Christians and the corporate community of the Church as a spiritual temple in which God is present through the Holy Spirit--a Temple of living stones founded on Christ the cornerstone. The heavenly Jerusalem described in the Revelation to John (the Divine) and elsewhere is also seen as the type of the true Church, the Bride of Christ, of which a physical church building is the visible sign.

So we give thanks for this building in Saratoga Springs, the evidence of our work and the work of those who have gone before, a work which we do not possess but hold in trust for those who are to come. Into it is incorporated the expression of beauty, worship, and hope for celebrating the ongoing life of Christ is the midst of this world and for gaining a foretaste of that heavenly Jerusalem where the followers of the Lord will behold Him face to face.

In the words of the ninth century hymn sung at our yearly keeping of the Feast (Hymnal #228):

*Hallowed this dwelling where the Lord abideth,
This is none other than the gate of heaven;
Strangers and pilgrims, seeking homes eternal,
Pass through its portals.*



Sunday morning stillness
A collective rest felt in the neighborhood.
Quiet
Very few cars hurrying off
Little birds cheerfully chirping in the trees
Crows making their presence known
Dappled sunlight and shadows
peeking through the window
as I sip my coffee at the dining room table.
No other day like it.
Thank you, Lord, for the peace of Your Sabbath
I am grateful for my home, my health, Your love
The ability to rest in you

-Guess Who?

Home of the Good Shepherd

Mary Withington

The Church Aid of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Town of Saratoga Springs, Inc., doing business as the Home of the Good Shepherd, was incorporated by the filing of a Certificate of Incorporation, dated May 28, 1870, with the New York State Department of State. This organization was incorporated under Section 803 of the Not-for-Profit Corporation Law and has as two of its purposes the establishment of a Mission Station in connection with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the City of Saratoga Springs and the establishment, maintenance and operation of an adult home subject to oversight and approval of the New York State Department of Health.

The history of the Home of the Good Shepherd dates back to the years between 1866 and 1869 when three women of Bethesda, Mrs. John Breckenridge Gibson (the Rector's wife), Mrs. Thomas J. Marvin and Mrs. William Bryar White, set about establishing a charity to look after the poor, sick and aged residents of Saratoga Springs. A small hotel located on the corner of Broadway and Walton Street was the original site for the Home of the Good Shepherd, but in the spring of 1869, property was purchased on Catherine Street near North Broadway. The Home of the Good Shepherd moved again to 45 Greenfield Avenue and provided residential care to adult women at that site until relocating to its present location at 390 Church Street in 2004 where both men and women are provided with skilled care.

In 2000, the Home of the Good Shepherd was given the opportunity to expand its mission to the Town of Malta and a second home was first rented, expanded to include a Memory Care Unit and purchased. In 2007, a third facility was opened in the Town of Wilton and in 2013,

the fourth facility opened its doors in the Town of Moreau. Presently, work is underway at 400 Church Street for a new and larger facility (96 rooms) with a plan to renovate the existing facility into a state of the art Alzheimer's Unit.

The Home of the Good Shepherd operated for years with two governing boards, the all-male Trustees and the Board of Lady Managers. The Trustees saw to the finances of the Home and the Lady Managers were responsible for seeing to the actual feeding and housing of the residents. By the late 1980s the Home at 45 Greenfield Avenue had fallen into disrepair and the Vestry of Bethesda was on the verge of closing the facility. In 1987, Denise Coté was hired as a full time administrator and transformed the facility to its former grandeur and built the reputation of the Home of the Good Shepherd for high quality care at less than market rates.

Currently, the Home of the Good Shepherd is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Vestry each year. A board member must be a member in good standing of Bethesda to be appointed. A vacancy has been created with the news that long time board member and former board president Walter "Bill" Read will be ending his service this December. If you are interested in serving on the board, especially if you have any background or experience in health care or finances, please speak with Dean Vang.

Interim Rector's Study: cont. from p. 1

as usual" format to review and discuss an Episcopal Church survey released earlier this year. In particular, members focused on how Bethesda, the parish and its people, might accept, revise, or ignore the survey's conclusions. (I should point out that the interpreters painted a portrait of our American branch of Anglicanism being in serious decline, the Northeast and Middle Atlantic Regions clearly evidencing such a trend. Defining and implementing new ways of "doing church" would be necessary to re-orient the current scene toward a new horizon.)

Subjects which were discussed included the following:

- Liturgy & Church Music (Rites, Hymnals, worship times, worship style, involvement of youth and children, special services for children and the Saratoga Springs community);

- Bethesda as a "destination" parish;

- Congregational Life (new-comers' follow-up ministry, fellowship opportunities, outreach ministries, name tags)

- New Mission Statement

- Bethesda: a city church

- Growing Bethesda (spiritually and numerically)

Vestry members were next asked to specify what areas of congregational life were non-negotiable, which were negotiable. Their responses will become a feature for upcoming issues of our Newsletter. Please feel free to converse with anyone serving on the Vestry or myself about these conversations. They are far from achieving a point of conclusion.

And please, pray for the Vestry and its ministry among us.

The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector ❖

Halloween Blood Drive!

Saturday, October 31 in the Parish Hall
from 8AM - 1PM

Please visit www.redcross.org to make an appointment!

