
THE VOICE



Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 2, Issue 2

April 2016

Restoration Report Details Church Building Needs

*Gordon Boyd, Chair
Building Committee/Capital Campaign*

The Building Committee and Vestry have gratefully accepted and approved a report from our architects, "Existing Conditions Report, Bethesda Episcopal Church." This plan will guide us as we secure the church building for coming generations.

The report, funded in part by the New York Landmarks Conservancy, and authored by our architects at John G. Waite Associates, details across nearly 50 pages the physical needs of our historic 1842 structure.

This report will be an invaluable resource as we plan and prepare our capital projects, and set priorities based on available resources. The conditions are analyzed from the narthex and entrance, to the undercroft, tower, transepts and sacristy. Photographs of existing conditions are included, along with recommendations organized into the most efficient work phases and priority sequences.

Some of the measures will be undertaken contemporaneously with development of the New Parish

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From the Interim Rector's Study

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

As we anticipated the commencement of the Lenten Season, a vital piece of information was shared with us. The source: our Deacon, The Reverend Peter Sweeney. His news was unexpected. Peter shared with us that he and his wife, Stacey, would be moving to a suburb of Pittsburgh during the summer, allowing their children to be in closer proximity to a new home. Because of his employment with General Electric, relocation would pose no problem. Many of you have responded, "Bethesda will miss him and his ministry here. Who will take his place? Will our parish be able to have another deacon?"

Yes, Peter *and his family* will be missed, but we shall continue to treasure them in our hearts and prayers. It is necessary for me to express, however, that each deacon brings a particular skill-set to the congregation he or she serves. Peter has, without question, had a positive influence through his ministrations to our youth as well as on our outreach to residents at the Wesley Community. Bethesda's presence there is stronger and better acknowledged than ever before. A deacon who follows will not be a duplicate; this ordained servant will offer other gifts which will build up the Body of Christ in this place.

As with Peter, the Bishop of Albany will determine

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**The deadline for the next edition
of The Voice is Monday, May 16th!
Please contribute!**

Email articles to geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com

Shepherding Bethesda's Future

Darren Miller

You may recall the "Parable of the Three Servants" (Matthew 25:14-30) in which Jesus illustrates the Kingdom of Heaven by the story of a wealthy man going on a long trip and entrusting his servants with his money while he was away. The master gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last, and then he departed. The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more. The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more. The servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money. When their master returned from his journey, he asked each servant to account for how they had used his money.

The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more. This greatly pleased the master who praised him as a faithful servant and told him he would therefore bestow many more responsibilities upon him. The servant who had received the two bags of silver advised the master that he had earned two more. This too pleased the master who similarly praised him and promised to entrust him with many more responsibilities. Then the servant with the one bag of silver came forward and said something to the effect: I knew you were a harsh man, and I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the ground; here is your money back. This upset the master who ordered that this servant be thrown out, and that the money be taken from him and given to one with the ten bags of silver. The master reasoned that to those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.

I am not a preacher and will not pretend to be one by trying to draw profound religious insights from this parable. I will, however, share with you how this parable came to my mind when a few years ago the Vestry and some members of our parish started discussing how Bethesda Church could build a new parish house. I thought of how Bethesda Church was - like the servants entrusted with bags of silver by their master - blessed with many gifts: gifts which God has entrusted to our stewardship. These gifts included a glorious historic church building centrally located in one of the more vibrant cities in the northeast; other property like the land next to the church that was not used to its potential; and most importantly, a brilliant congregation that opens its arms to all.

Fast forward to now, and here we are on the verge of building a New Parish House and Community Center and renovating/restoring our beautiful church to its full splendor. Through these endeavors Bethesda Church is on the path toward further realizing its gifts by fostering its ministry and mission for us and future generations. Through the New Parish House and Community Center and restored church,

Bethesda will provide more service, greater hospitality and a fuller spiritual life. While we have made great strides, we still have much to do. The Capital Campaign is in full swing and funds must still be raised for us to reach these goals. Just as the "Parable of the Three Servants" applies to Bethesda Church as a whole, it equally applies individually to each of us. What will each of us do with what God has entrusted to us? ❖

CALENDAR GIRLS

See Usher Rick Wissler in Home
Made Theater's production:
weekends from April 15-May 1!
(Tom Moeller is working
backstage, so you won't be able to
see him, but he'll be there, too)

Interim Rector's Study: cont.

which deacon will best serve Bethesda. One has already contacted me, and we have mutually agreed to explore further a Saratoga Springs placement. My radarscope is active, scanning the diocesan landscape. Yet, in this preliminary stage, I cannot avoid posing the subject of how appropriate it would be for the laity of the congregation to be raised up to serve Our Lord and Bethesda's people. Like a deacon, parish members can be prepared to bring the Sacrament of the Eucharist to the sick and homebound. Like a deacon, a parent or young adult can provide leadership in shaping the lives of our youth. And the list goes on. If these concepts for ministry spark interest, please let Deacon Sweeney know at your earliest convenience. He will actually be providing orientation to these and other expressions of outreach before his departure this summer. If we can do these things, then a new deacon's presence can only broaden our love of God in new and exciting ways.

I offer these thoughts for your contemplation and prayer.

The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector

❖

Have you always meant to go visit chorister
Stuart Armstrong at Reruns?
Now's the time!
Reruns is going out of business.
Everything is at least 40% off.
Vintage Treasures Waiting to be Found.
1 Phila St

Bethesda's Treasures: Little Ones Lost

Mary Sanders Shartle

There's nothing like a broken ankle to set one's mind thinking on the frailty of the human body. These last several years, working on Bethesda's church history one notices how the church is filled with stunning memorials to our lost parishioners. The healing springs of Saratoga and the image of Christ at the pool at Bethesda: no wonder people flocked to this town and this church as a source of comfort and hope. How unfortunately easy it is to find reference to the youngest of our parishioners who were so vulnerable to the prevalence of dreadful illness and the lack of modern medicines. Recently I got a TDAP vaccine which protects against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, since one of our new parish babies was born premature. I would like to be able to hold him at some point without posing a threat. Had only Katrina Trask had that opportunity in 1888.

Spencer and Katrina Trask lost all four of their children. Two of them are memorialized at Bethesda. The chancel window of the healing pool at Bethesda was given by the Trasks in memory of Christina Trask, age twelve. The brass eagle lectern was given in honor of the baptism of young Spencer Trask Junior, who also died in 1888 at the age of five years. Both children contracted diphtheria from their mother who had the disease. Her physician thought she was dying and the children ought to say their goodbyes. In fact Katrina lived only to bury them within days of each other--a cruel twist.

The designer of the chancel window was Francis Lathrop (1849-1909), a well-known American artist who specialized in stained glass. He is said to have based his design of the Christ on the suggestion of Katrina Trask after the style of Michelangelo. Lathrop studied with James Whistler and also worked in the studios of Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, and William Morris of the pre-Raphaelite Brethren in England.

Here are some other items given in memorium to the very young folk of the church who died:

The staff of the brass processional cross was given in memory of Rhoby Francis Sague, who died at the age of ten months in 1888. Father, Francis Sague, was a purveyor of supplies to the local big hotels.

Mary Dewey Fowler is one of two names engraved on the brass baptismal ewer. Mary died in 1869 at the age of one year and eight months.

The reredos behind the altar has a number of names, one of which is Grace Carryle Marvin who died at age sixteen. The Marvin family were local bankers and the owners of the United States Hotel.

Typhus, typhoid, flu, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles, etc. So many of these diseases are now easily preventable. So in memory of all those little ones, go get your children, grandchildren and yourselves vaccinated, so that we will never see more recurrences of these terrible illnesses and any more sad memorials in our church. ❖

Inspiration for the Choir on Easter Morning, Following a Long and Exhausting Holy Week

With apologies to Mr. Shakespeare from Ms. Henderson

Once more unto the church, dear friends, once more
or close the wall up with our Schola dead.
In Lent there's nothing so becomes a choir
as minor keys and soft polyphony.
But now with blast of trombones in our ears
must imitate their cadence, alleluia.
How brave we were when first Palm Sunday dawned
when sweet hosannas tripped forth from our tongues.
Then Maundy Thursday with its verdant mass
We sang with scent of lilies of our Lord.
By Friday noon our strength began to flag
But faithfully we came to church again.
By Easter vigil, like the walking dead
We staggered once again to take our place
And sing the vigil of our dying God.
We stood so long and knelt in silent prayer
and sang with our last vestiges of voice
and limped at last, all homeward to our beds.
But now it's Easter and we must arise
scant hours after our leaden eyelids closed
and back to church we go this one last time
to sing for glory honor and renown.
Gather your high notes, summon up lost moxie
Disguise fatigue with tripping eighth-note runs.
Plaster a cheerful smile upon thy face
And let fly trills too high for dogs to hear.
Open your too-tired throats to sing once more.
Breathe deep, oh noble choir, and with support
Lest our fortes wither halfway through the nave.
Pray God our voices last us til the end
Once more sing out those grating major chords.
Rouse this last time your spirits and once more
Sing Hallelujah, Jesus Christ arose!

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

Restoration Report: Cont. from p. 1

House and Community Center next door. These include heating systems, safety concerns and items aimed at halting water and moisture infiltration. Needed roofing, glazing, chimney removal and time sensitive work is also detailed.

A special appendix drafted by J & R Lamb Studios, Inc., details the condition of every stained glass window in the church building. Lamb began work for Bethesda more than a century ago with the installation of the altar window and reredos next to the High Altar. Still in business, Lamb has already restored two of our windows from the old parish house, and provided this condition assessment as well, thereby setting the stage for a new investment to preserve the parish's unique and beautiful windows.

While it is intended to move ahead as aggressively as possible with the church restoration, resources may require that the time period to execute these plans be staged out over several years. The plan acknowledges that possibility, and sets forth the work in a logical order.

The entire report may be found on the parish web site, www.bethesdachurch.org/. Printed versions are available on loan from the parish office. A slide presentation of the report will be scheduled for a Sunday morning after the 10 AM Eucharist. ❖

Capital Campaign Progress Report

Members of the Vestry, Building Committee and gift worker volunteers continue to make contact with parishioners to fulfill or perhaps surpass the goal of Bethesda's Capital Campaign. Our pledges continue to increase. This effort will continue through Easter and beyond. When you are called upon, please open your door and your heart to this effort to renew our church building and establish Bethesda's mission and ministry for future generations. Mary Withington and Gordon Boyd are co-chairs.

If you wish to learn more about Bethesda's capital projects and campaign, please leave your name with the clergy, sign the book in the Narthex, or speak with a member of the Vestry. We will follow up!

Vacation Bible School: Plan Ahead!

Gear up for a great adventure with Cave Quest: grounding kids in the rock solid foundation of God's love!
Christ Church, Ballston Spa
June 27-July 1

Jerry MacDonald

May 30, 1938 to February 13, 2016

Sharon Boyd

Bethesda lost a devoted friend on February 13, 2016 with the passing of Henry "Jerry" MacDonald, 77, in Fort Meyers, Florida, with his beloved wife, Marcia at his side.

Born in Chicago and raised in Erie, Pennsylvania, Jerry attended The Taft School and the University of Virginia, where he was an ROTC student, followed by six years in the U.S. Army, both active and reserve, specializing in communications and security.

Beginning in 1962, Jerry enjoyed a 35-year career with General Electric Co., focused on corporate finance and working in Schenectady, New York City, Cleveland, Florida and France. Retiring to Saratoga Springs, Jerry was deeply involved in supporting Saratoga Hospital, Skidmore College, Homemade Theater, Proctor's Theater and Universal Preservation Hall, as well as being an officer of the Sacred Order of Inniscarra Investment Club.

His service to Bethesda included his appointment by the Vestry as Assistant Treasurer. He was also a founding member of the Endowment Committee, and helped recruit the investment management team now advising the parish. His financial acumen and leadership provided each ministry with needed strength and credibility, and his advice on strategic financial direction was timely and significant.

In addition to Marcia, Jerry leaves a son, Christopher, a daughter, Katherine, stepsons Jeff and Peter, and stepdaughter Ashley, along with twelve grandchildren.

The memorial service at Bethesda February 25, Dean Vang celebrating, was attended by nearly 300 friends and was followed by a festive reception at UPH.

SOMEONE SAID...

"You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation."

-Guess Who?

October's Guess Who poet was...

Sharon Boyd!

*Can you guess who it is this time?
(If you'd like to submit a Guess Who poem, talk to Carolyn Hatch.)*

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

FEBRUARY

7:00 PM on February 24. Deacon Sweeney began the meeting with devotions.

Ms. Van Acker reported that pledge and plate are up vs. this time last year, but that the increased diocesan assessment as well as other expected increases in expenses have taken a large bite out of the surplus.

The Vestry interviewed Landon Moore and voted unanimously to approve his candidacy for the priesthood.

Mr. Miller summarized the updated lease for the old parish house, which will have our landlord covering most of our expenses for the building (such as property taxes) and will provide a room over Starbucks for coffee hour, etc.

The vestry voted to accept Orkin's estimate for removal of squirrels from the church.

The closing for the Ensley property is scheduled for Feb 25 and expected to take place without complication. (Which it did)

Ms. Manny, Ms. Henderson and Mr. Miller will attend the diocesan convention in June.

MARCH

7:00 PM on March 16, Catherine Berheide began the meeting with devotions.


Ms. Van Acker reported that we're seeing a significant increase in pledge and plate vs. last year and, with the new parish house lease, expenses are down.

Mr. Boyd reported that the Capital Campaign has reached 2/3 of the parish goal, which is good, but there is still great need for further pledges.

Dean Vang asked that we pray for Fr. Evans in his post-surgical recovery. He has been approached by a deacon who would like to come to Bethesda.

Mr. Boyd explained the necessary timeline for building the NPH, which depends on each step being completed before the next one can be undertaken.

The Personnel Committee has completed the Employee Handbook, which was met with great praise.



**Parker Clifford
designed this month's
turtle! Note the bunny
ears! We love it!**

From the Editor

Genna Henderson

I would generally consider it Not My Place to discuss liturgical seasons, usually leaning on Dean Vang or Fr. Evans to supply something pensive about the Meaning of Easter. I work in a law firm (not as a lawyer), where it is often my duty to remind clients that I am not a lawyer and, thus, am not qualified, or even allowed, to give a legal opinion. I can talk to clients about “In my experience” but I cannot say “Legally...” and, in most cases, I have to repeat the refrain “I am not a lawyer but what I tend to see is...” or “My non-legal just-a-normal-person opinion is...”

I am not a priest, or a deacon, or a lay-Eucharistic minister. Heck, I'm not even an acolyte. I've been an usher, a lector, a chorister, a Sunday School teacher and a vestryman, but I've never stood beyond the communion rail in any sort of official capacity. As the things I tell you on the phone at the law firm are my non-legal opinions, here is my non-clerical opinion.

I love Holy Week.

That may come as a surprise to those of you who hear me gripe about it and, it's true, as a chorister, Holy Week demands a LOT. From Palm Sunday to Easter we're at church five out of eight days, clocking in (including rehearsal time) probably about fifteen hours of singing around our normal working hours. It's grueling. It's also completely worth it.

But I love drama. I love pathos and tragedy, and you don't get much more dramatic than Holy Week. A lot of you, like I did for many years, probably just come on Palm Sunday and enjoy the Hosanna songs, the reading of the Passion and then, BOOM, you're back a week later and it's Easter Sunday with its lilies and trombones and bunny pops. Let me tell you, you're missing the best part.

See, the thing about Holy Week is that God dies and Thursday, Friday and Saturday are all about that. On Thursday, Jesus knows he's going to die. He's scared. Like I get when I'm scared, he wants his friends around him. He just wants them to be there for him but he's talking in parables and riddles and they just don't get it and it's late and they're tired so they fall asleep. Have you ever been really mad at your spouse, or afraid about something, but you haven't said anything about it and then your spouse has the gall to fall asleep and lie there peacefully at you while you're awake and terrified? That's sort of how I picture Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. He gets mad at his disciples because, well, he's going to DIE tomorrow and that's TERRIFYING and they're ASLEEP, like they don't even CARE. So he wakes them up yelling (in my imagination he's yelling) “Can't you even stay awake ONE HOUR, people?” But they have no idea why he's mad. It's four in the morning. They were walking all day yesterday and they're exhausted. Jesus As Human has never been more relatable to me than he is on Maundy Thursday. Maybe he's part God, but he's also a large part Human, and tomorrow he's going to be tortured to death and he's scared and his friends keep falling asleep. On Maundy Thursday the church smells like lilies and the choir sings (in

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Your children's bulletin unlocks ONLINE FUN at home.

We're excited to announce a **NEW feature** of *Children's Worship Bulletins* that will have children lining up to get their bulletin this Sunday! They'll be looking forward to the secret code on the front of the bulletin that unlocks hours of fun learning at home.

This secret code is unique to our church and allows **SAFE** and secure access to online games that reinforce the message for the week.

Children's Worship Bulletins@HOME!

Latin) "Sad is my soul and sorrowful, even unto death. Stay here and watch with me a while." The service ends without ending, leaving the congregation sitting in the dark while the priest and deacon put everything away, fold the linens, and wash the altar. Nobody tells you to go in peace, but other people are leaving so eventually you leave too.

Like Maundy Thursday has no ending, Good Friday has no beginning. Good Friday is the day that Jesus dies. Think about that for a minute, not from the point of view of an Episcopalian two thousand years later who knows how the story ends, but as if you were his disciple at the time. Here's this guy you've been following around for years. He really had you convinced that he was God, the Messiah, the one who was going to kick those stupid Romans out of Israel and lead your people to victory. You've seen him do miracles and any minute now, any minute now he's going to come down from that cross and blast those Romans with lightning and laugh and then... instead... he dies. While Good Friday centers on the death of Jesus, the gut-punch of it is, for me, what the disciples must have felt. Here was their hope, their friend, their savior, and now he's dead and there is no hope and no salvation. That's got to be shattering. The choir sings "Sweetest wood, sweetest iron, sweetest weight is hung on thee." Again, the congregation leaves without being told.

Holy Saturday, though, is probably the most interesting service. It begins in darkness. The world is in darkness because God is dead. Hope is gone. Everything we have waited for, everything we have hoped for, was just killed yesterday. The world has killed its savior. The world has failed. But then, in the back of the church, there is a light, a spark, a great fire leaping up, lighting the acolyte's faces. There is, perhaps, hope, even in this, the worst possible death. The choir chants "Surely it is God who saves me, I shall trust in him and not be afraid." And then, as Advent turns to Christmas in the middle of Midnight Mass, Lent turns to Easter in the middle of Holy Saturday. The choir switches from minor keys to major: "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection," and then, later "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo the winter is passed."

Our God died, yes, and he was afraid and we were afraid, and while he was dead we thought all hope was lost, but he rose from the dead and, at long last, we are given permission to go in peace to love and serve the lord, Alleluia. ❖

NAME THE TURTLE BALLOT

(Circle your favorite, cut out this bit and put in the box at the back of the church)

Amon

Augustus Pugin Turturibus

Beth

Bob

Cool

Fred

Methuselah

Ninja Turtle

Peter

Solomon

Theodore

Tripod