

# THE VOICE



Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 2, Issue 5

October 2016

## FROM THE INTERIM RECTOR'S STUDY

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

On the last Sunday of August, at both Eucharists, we prayed the following:

*Lord, of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

It is a superb Prayer Book Collect, based upon a similar text composed some twelve-hundred years ago and originally found in a cherished, historical liturgical book, the Gelasian Sacramentary. Contained therein is a phrase that captures my attention every time I say or sing it: *increase in us true religion*. "What is that?" one might ask, especially from a Christian standpoint.

To the fashion conscious, True Religion is a premium American brand of denim jeans. Visiting a fashionable establishment like Lord & Taylor or Saks Fifth Avenue will prove the point. Being fashionable, to be very frank, has never been numbered among a list of qualifiers deemed necessary to follow Jesus Christ. There are some who might prefer to define *true religion* as ascribing to a particular set of intellectual propositions or credal formulae with a focus on belief and behavior. This is the source of the one, true Church concept.

In evidence now is the recognizable tempo of Bethesda's corporate life, which picks up again after Labor Day weekend.

So the question, "*What is true religion?*" not only merits our attention, but also summons us to respond with clarity and purpose. Ponder this: *True religion* is the way we respond to God. Through the mediation of his Son, we are summoned to follow His example of losing one's life in order to gain life encourages us to grasp in the Cross of Christ Jesus. To

## Bethesda Building News

*Gordon Boyd, Chair  
Building Committee/Capital Campaign*

Recent developments are important to Bethesda's plans for the New Parish House and Community Center.

First, we may be getting a new neighbor. In September, media reported that the Rip Van Dam was sold to Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG), a worldwide hospitality company that controls hotel and resort brands including Intercontinental Hotels, Holiday Inn and Hotel Indigo. The "Rip" is slated to become an Indigo, and will undertake the infrastructure, parking and traffic requirements that the previous owners agreed to when their expansion project was approved by the City Planning Board in 2015. So we anticipate that, once the closing is complete, IHG will move ahead with the big expansion on Washington Street.

Second, City officials are advocating a public-private venture to develop parking in the middle of our block on the Brause Realty property. A multi-deck garage would be constructed across our south boundary. Financing and management details are not available yet, but it is possible such a facility could be a welcome resource for Bethesda. The Vestry and Building Committee are well aware of the challenges we all face on Sundays finding parking nearby the church. City leadership in making parking available to other-than-Brause tenants would be welcomed.

**CHORAL EVENSONG  
ON THE  
FEAST OF THE DEDICATION  
OF THE CHURCH  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2  
3:00 PM  
RECEPTION FOLLOWING**

(Will there be clotted cream for the scones? We can only hope)

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embrace the Cross shows us that *true religion* is more about who we are rather than what we do.

The Apostle Paul, in his communication with the Romans, stresses specific characteristics defining our identity. Here are several, which I pray you find helpful:

*Let love be genuine.....Rejoice in hope.....Be patient in suffering.....Persevere in prayer.....Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.....Do not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Please join me in making *true religion* at Bethesda a reality which is compelling, contagious, and transforming. We will make Bethesda a home for spiritual refreshment and healing, and this Jesus, who is our Resurrection and our Life, will lead us into the very heart of God.

The Very Rev'd Marshall J. Vang  
*Interim Rector* ♦

## **What Are You Doing Tuesday Evening?**

*Sean Byrnes*

Hopefully the title did not seem too nosy; it really is none of my business what you are doing Tuesday evening. I suppose the title could have been, "Here's something you can do Tuesday," but somehow that did not seem quite as catchy. Anyway, I'm drifting off topic; the purpose of this article is to pique your interest such that you will avail yourself of that under-utilized gem in Bethesda's liturgical repertoire – The Tuesday Evening Eucharist at the High Altar.

The Tuesday evening Mass is a marvelous opportunity to maintain the charge on your "faith battery" as you work your way through the week. The Mass starts at 6:30 pm each Tuesday and, because it is distilled down quite a bit from the Sunday versions, is over by 7:00 pm. Thirty minutes for a Mass you say? How can this be? Well, there are a number of things the Tuesday service does not have: no hymns, no sermon, no announcements, no collection, and no bulletin outlining the Mass. However, what the Tuesday Mass does have is the unique opportunity for a celebration of the Eucharist in the intimate setting of the High Altar. The Tuesday Mass takes place completely on the "other side" of the rood screen. Dean Vang leads the Mass from a portable lectern placed near the opening in the brass rail surrounding the altar, and the congregation sits in the pews normally occupied by the choir. The epicenter of our beloved church is most certainly the High Altar, and it is truly a gift to celebrate the Eucharist surrounded by such solemn beauty.

In my two years at Bethesda, I have mentioned to a number of people how much I enjoy the Tuesday evening Mass and suggested they give it a try. A typical reply has

been, "but that Mass is different from the X o'clock service (insert '8:00 am' or '10:00 am' for X, as appropriate) – I would not know what to do". OK, truth be told, they do have a point. There are differences between the various services, which, by the way, for a newly-minted Episcopalian like me, are a never-ending source of confusion. Fortunately, any potential "liturgical queasiness" regarding the Tuesday Mass will be cleared up with the following: 1) stand for the Collect, 2) stand for the Prayers of the People, and 3) remain standing after the Peace is exchanged (as a lead-in to the Eucharistic Prayer). In case anyone is still concerned about "working without a net" (that is, the Sunday bulletin) Dean Vang very thoughtfully gives Book of Common Prayer page references throughout the Mass. Could it be any easier?

In closing, I would like to make two points, one liturgical and the other logistical. Liturgically, another wonderful aspect of the Tuesday evening Mass is the opportunity to explore The Lesser Feasts and Fasts of the Church. Apart from the Principal Feasts, Sundays, and Holy Days, the Episcopal Church calendar is filled with "Lesser" feast days honoring "men and women whose lives represent heroic commitment to Christ" [from the Preface to Lesser Feast and Fasts – 2006]. From Blandina - Martyr of Lyon, to Augustine of Hippo, to Thomas Cranmer, to Jackson Kemper, the Tuesday evening Mass is your ticket to exploring the rich history of the Church through the stories of those who have devoted (and all too often given) their lives to Christ. Finally, if you do choose to attend a Tuesday evening Mass (and I sincerely hope you will), the Church is open by 6:00 pm and the time before Mass is a great opportunity for quiet reflection. You are also welcome to stop by the sacristy and say hello (it is nice to have someone to talk to during set up for the Mass).

**THE BLESSING OF THE PETS  
SATURDAY OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>  
11:00 AM  
IN THE CHURCHYARD  
IN HONOR OF ST. FRANCIS OF  
ASSISI  
(TEDDY BEARS WELCOME)**

Remember to keep up with your pledges: both Capital Campaign and Pledge and Plate! You can mail checks to the Parish Office or drop them off in the collection plate on Sunday.

If it's a Capital Campaign donation, remember to write "Capital Campaign" in the memo line!

# 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 of Bethesda met on Wednesday, August 17, 2016.

The building fund party brought in less than \$10,000, which is down from nearly \$50,000 last year. While various cost-saving measures were helpful, reduced attendance and reduced special gifts led to a much lower income, which will affect our budget and income for the year. We're currently about \$59,000 behind budgeted income.

The Vestry unanimously passed a motion to approve Landon Moore as a candidate for the priesthood and circulated the necessary form for signatures. We're looking to raise around \$5,000 a year to help Landon with his schooling expenses.

David Wilder will head the Licensed Eucharistic Ministry, which currently has about six volunteers.

Sunday school classes will have to be held in the church. There continues to be difficulty in finding someone to fill the vacancy on the vestry.

Recent flooding in the church basement was particularly bad as heavy rains caused water to infiltrate via window wells and drains. Drainage issues will have to be made more of a priority, especially as we're going to be relying on the basement as a storage area when we start moving out of the parish house.

The Stewardship Committee wants to look into enabling online electronic payments for pledges and donations.

## SEPTEMBER

The Vestry met on Wednesday, September 21, 2016. Eileen Wiebicke, our auditor, was present and presented her findings. Overall, Bethesda continues to improve in its keeping of financial records. There are still some trust documents that can't be found, which makes adhering to the restrictions of the trusts impossible (since we don't know what those restrictions are). We've started keeping a ledger for the rector's discretionary fund. Still need further consistency in record keeping in a couple of the accounts. Some deposits need more detailed notes. On the whole, we're doing MUCH better than we were five years ago. Pledge and plate this month are still running ahead of last year but not by as much (down to about 4% from about 8%). Expenses are about \$11,000 over budget because of the issues with the air conditioning.

Dean Vang is approaching certain potential major donors for the Capital Campaign and soon we'll start the community outreach portion of the campaign. We're about 35% over our congregational goal (clerk's note: Yay!) Reaching out to the new Rip Van Dam owners about the storm sewer agreement.

Landon is now a postulant for Holy Orders.



*The Board of Directors of  
The Home of the Good Shepherd*

*With the gracious sponsorship of  
CAPITAL BANK*

REQUEST THE HONOR OF YOUR PRESENCE AT  
THE DEDICATION OF OUR NEWEST RESIDENCE AT

400 CHURCH STREET  
SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2016 AT  
THREE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

*A reception will follow the dedication.*

There are ongoing issues with the air conditioning and, as a result of that and the recent flooding in the basement, the basement has started to smell like mildew. Will need to mow the field for the blessing of the pets (Boyd volunteered to scythe it). Home of the Good Shepherd tax litigation is scheduled for 11/4/16. The new building at 400 Church will have its grand opening on October 16. All residents from 390 Church have been moved into the new building and HGS is starting the process of renovating the building at 390 into a Memory Care unit.

Discussed various security issues with the parish hall and the church building.

Began to brainstorm about what project to address with the building fund party proceeds. Among the possible investments raised were a hearing loop for the hearing impaired, restoring a stained glass window, beginning to address the drainage issues and restoring the reredos. We'll need to get estimates for these things to see what will work with the budget.

Did you hear that Mark Griffin did a 5K recently? He beat his previous time and raised money to benefit VetHelp and the Malta Fire and Ambulance. If you ask him nicely, I bet he'll keep you posted about other 5K fundraisers!

Dear Friends,

**You made our day!** We received a donation of 26 lbs. of various personal care items to the Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. (EOC) Food Pantry. The EOC Emergency Food Programs consist of an emergency food pantry, community lunch program, rural food delivery project and a summer youth lunch project.

Your donation to this program will help local families maintain food stability. These families turn to us for help in times of crisis and it is only with **your support** that we are able to be there when they need us.

EOC is the designated anti-poverty agency for Saratoga County, dedicated to providing and promoting opportunities for individuals and families to achieve self-sufficiency. EOC has helped hundreds of our neighbors in times of uncertainty and need. Your thoughtfulness enables us to continue and we appreciate your support of our agency.

I am enclosing information about our agency for you to review. Please feel free to call us if you would like more information or if you have any questions about our services.

All my best,



Jo Anne Hume  
Interim Executive Director

The Archive Committee is seeking information on the source of the crèche figures that Bethesda displays during the Christmas Season. If you have any ideas about where the figures may have come from, or who might have donated them, talk to Betsy Cummins,

Mary Shartle, Jane Agee or Diane Robinson



Bethesda and Northshire Bookstore will be hosting children's author Raina Telgemeier, presenting her new book "Ghosts".

Friday, October 21 at 6:00 PM  
Contact Northshire Bookstore about purchasing tickets for this event!

## From the Editor

*Geneva Henderson*

It's October and a chill is in the air. The question on everybody's lips is: Is this winter going to be more like a winter than last winter was? The ongoing election year has some people up in arms and others wanting to hide under the covers in the hopes that, like the monsters of our childhood, everything scary will just go away. Autumn is a time of slowing down, of consideration, of preparation and of meditation.

At church, the choir's getting back into the swing of things with its first evensong of the year. Plans are tentatively in the works for a revamped Lessons and Carols to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birthday of Harry Burleigh. We're starting to think about beginning the process of moving out of the old parish hall and how to weather the interim period until we can move into the new one.

Change is scary, and often difficult. Bethesda is entering an autumn of its own as we withdraw from ministries that we cannot accommodate without a parish hall (like the Halloween Blood Drive). We draw some of our tendrils back towards our core, strengthening our church from the inside and, to some, this might look like death, like a diminishing. Just as the leaves fall from the maple trees in the autumn, things are changing in Bethesda.

But the point of autumn is that it is not a death, but a momentary withdrawal, a pause, a resting through the winter. Things will change, and perhaps some of the changes will be difficult, but even in adversity there is growth beneath the surface. One might lament that Sunday School is being held in the back of the church instead of in the old classrooms, but think of how glorious it must be to learn about the Bible stories, not in workbooks, but by in the jewel-toned light from the windows that portray their heroes!

And we must remember that, while autumn may lead to winter, and winter may be long, eventually it will lead to spring. We withdraw now, in the areas where we must; we tighten our belts to get through the lean times, this is true. But we do these things so that we will emerge, stronger, more vibrant, more alive than ever before.

So prepare for the rough times, because we'll probably have some, but stick together. We may not be able to have a spaghetti supper (though I don't know if that's settled) or a blood drive, but the choir will keep singing, the candles will keep burning, there will be pine boughs at Christmas and, though it may take longer than we expected, eventually, our metaphorical Spring will come. ♦

Congratulations to Eva Goodwin, who's getting married in October! (in California!)  
We love you Eva! Come back and visit!  
(Congratulations to you too, Jenna! Can't wait to meet you!)