
THE VOICE



Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 3, Issue 2

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Seminarian's Letter

Landon Moore



I have realized, after my short time at Yale that I am not the intellectual type. I do enjoy studying and learning more about God, but spending hours in the library began getting me antsy. I aspire to do things that are bigger than myself, and I wanted to do something practical with all this new knowledge that I was obtaining. I began exploring possible mission trips that I could do during my upcoming winter break. Eventually I was put in contact with Father Phano, an Episcopal priest in Bondeau, Haiti. He and I talked about a mission trip to Haiti, and I finally decided to buy a ticket.

It was very mature of me to pack all the essentials to go to a foreign country on the day I was leaving. Packing days in advance is overrated, because isn't it more fun to pack one hour before your train leaves for the airport? I was fairly certain I didn't have everything, which I didn't, but got on the train in the nick of time. I, along with Koby Reed, a friend of

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Fifty Years in the Choir Stalls: Part 3

The Winds of Change

Stuart Armstrong

The arrival of new rector Father Thomas Parke and his wife Barbara naturally brought changes to the parish. Fr. Parke had come to us from St. George's in Schenectady, where he had been an assistant to the Very Rev. Darwin Kirby. Kirby's wit and sophisticated tastes had rubbed off on Fr. Parke, as had his preference for high church. Gradually, over the years, Bethesda parishioners noticed the introduction of incense, plainsong, and Evensong.

Evensong back then was a very simple event, and was part of the annual Lenten program. It preceded a dinner and Lenten program delivered by a guest speaker, and lasted no longer than twenty minutes. The settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis were simple plainsong, and out of the back of The Hymnal 1940. And, although the choir was present to lead the congregational singing, no anthem was sung.

The Sunday service began to progress musically, as well. The Communion Service setting, by John Merbecke, was the simplest setting in The Hymnal. The setting by Healy Willan was introduced, and is still sung today. Also added for special occasions were two plainsong settings, Missa Marialis and Missa de Angelis. Also, around this time, Dr. Hannahs composed a setting for us, which was sung with regularity as well.

During the summer of 1968 (right around the time my family moved to Saratoga Springs from Wilton), my voice changed. That autumn, Dr. Hannahs transferred me to the tenor section. Along with this transfer came a doubling of my choir salary: from fifty cents to one dollar for each service and rehearsal. This financial boon resulted in more confections being purchased at the Woolworth candy counter.

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mine who would join me for this trip, headed to Port-au-Prince. When we landed we were greeted by Father Phano. He drove us two hours to where we would be staying. When we arrived we drove down a dirt path and saw a gorgeous church with a big yard that kids were playing soccer on. We then passed the classrooms of the school that provide free education for 90% of the students. The last stop was at the apartment complexes where teachers and families stayed. We stayed in an extra room at the rectory with Father Phano.

The purpose of this trip was to be present with the community. This entailed going to school with the children, playing soccer everyday with them after their studies, and visiting families in the community. When Father Phano traveled to a person's home, he would always invite us, and we were delighted to accompany him. Being able to be part of the lives of the community for a short time was a blessing. As you know, these people have little to nothing, and are still suffering from the hurricane/earthquake damage. Many of the people we saw lived in small one-bedroom apartments that were not big enough to meet the demands of their large families. Nevertheless, they were beyond joyful for what God has given them; as small as it may seem to us.

What I took away from my time in this community was the joy that I felt from each person. They spoke French Creole, and I found myself playing a lot of charades in order to communicate, but there was no anxiety about what the future held. If their basic necessities were met they were blissful. My favorite part of the trip was being with the kids who always had smiles on their faces and would put one on mine.

Thank you to everyone who continues to pray for me and support me through seminary.



In the autumn of 1970, Dr. Benjamin Van Wye was hired by Skidmore College as Professor of Music, as well as college organist. He began attending Sunday services at Bethesda with regularity, and shortly thereafter accepted the position of assistant organist.

Also around this time, various experiments were implemented as well. Rite 2 (*GASP!*) was celebrated for two weeks in a row. A table representing a freestanding altar was set up at the crossing, and the front pews served as the Communion rail. At the first service, the procession was a near disaster. Not only did each pair of choristers have to process around the freestanding altar placed squarely in their way, but since the high altar was not being used, we found that the acolytes usurped our usual spots in the choir stalls. (The choir at this time numbered upwards of twenty five singers.) I had no place to sit, and rather felt like we were playing a game of liturgical musical chairs. Our two attempts at Rite 2 were not deemed a success, and it was Rite 1 from then on.

More successful were the folk masses that were added during the week. Barbara Parke led a group of young parishioners, playing guitars and other instruments.

By 1971, all seemed fine, but behind the scenes, things were not. For unknown reasons, Dr. Hannahs was not happy. Apparently he and Fr. Parke were not getting along; perhaps this was due to further proposed changes in the service. (Dr. Hannahs was an extremely discreet gentleman, and never revealed to anyone any details about the situation.)

Suddenly, in March 1972, everything changed. Dr. Hannahs informed me privately that he had tendered his immediate resignation the day before. I was stunned. But even more shocking was the letter I received in the mail a few days later:

“March 6, 1972

Dear choir member:

Due to the immediate resignation of Dr. Roger Hannahs as organist-choirmaster, it is necessary to suspend the choir program, beginning with this Thursday's rehearsal.

Dr. Benjamin D. Van Wye, a member of the parish and assistant organist, has been asked to serve until the position has been filled.

A choir of men and boys will be formed. Auditions for this and for the gallery choir, for which women's voices are especially needed, will be held on Thursday, March 16th at 7:00 p.m. in the choir room.

Due to the suddenness of Dr. Hannahs' decision, changes must necessarily be made. Your continued support of the musical program at Bethesda will be appreciated.

May I, personally, thank you for your devotion and service to Bethesda and our Lord, through your regular participation in this essential portion of our worship.

Very sincerely yours,

Thomas T Parke” ❖



Parishioner Spotlight: Tate Miller

Jane Agee

Tate Miller is the daughter of Darren and Christine Miller. Her dad is Senior Warden of the Vestry and serves as a Eucharistic Minister. Her mother serves on the Altar Guild. Tate has grown up in Bethesda. She said, “I have attended Bethesda for as long as I can remember. I was baptized at Bethesda as a baby and was confirmed here as well.” For the past few years, she has served regularly as an acolyte at the ten o’clock service, along with her younger sister, Georgia.

Tate is currently in her junior year at Saratoga High School where she is a member of the SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) Club. Outside school she stays very busy. In addition to keeping up with her school work, she works part-time at the newly opened Augie’s To Go on Lake Avenue in Saratoga Springs. She said she loves skiing at Gore Mountain as well as spending “time with family and friends.” At this point, she’s already thinking about college, but has not made a decision yet.

Our church community has been enriched by Tate’s service over the years. She participated as a character in the Christmas Pageant from a young age and then became the narrator. She has volunteered with the Red Cross Blood Drives and with the Annual Pasta Dinner, an event run by the youth of Bethesda as a fundraiser. She recalled, “I started participating in the Pasta Dinner Night about four years ago, when I was in the 8th grade.”

Tate’s strong commitment to Bethesda is evident in her thoughts on being an acolyte: “To me, being an acolyte is being a part of a team and community. It’s a commitment every Sunday that I’m proud to be a part of. I hope others are interested in becoming an acolyte as well.”

A big thank you to all of the staff and parishioners who have helped empty the old parish house! They worked above-and-beyond to haul anything salvageable out of that building!

Radiations

Delos Wampler

Material light
kindles outward nature with delight.

Intellectual light
opens a window to discern the right.

Easter Light
unshadows self and flames it solar-bright.

Fr. Wampler is a resident of the Home of the Good Shepherd on Church Street. He was the founding priest and administrator of the Adirondack Missions and Barry House for over thirty years and is a faithful friend of Bethesda Church. You can meet him most Thursdays at the 9:30 AM Eucharist at the Church St. Home of the Good Shepherd.

Once again, some of your ushering crew can be spotted on the Home Made Theater stage. Rick Wissler is performing in *The Foreigner*, while Tom Moeller helps out (hopefully invisibly) backstage. The show opens the week after Easter, and runs for three weekends through May 5th.

What's going on NOW?!?

Genna Henderson

You have now reached the actual news portion of the newsletter. Hang on to your hats, we've got a lot to cover. (Will it be enough to fill this column and the entire next page? I sure hope so...)

As I write this it is the Wednesday before Maundy Thursday and I was hoping to have gotten this done in time for Palm Sunday which, obviously, I didn't, and the reason for that is because, as some of you may not be aware, I'm actually married, and the guy to whom I am married bought me a new laptop for Valentine's Day and this new laptop, while VERY shiny and fancy looking, did not think much of my painstakingly formatted newsletter template. So there I was on the night that I had to do the ENTIRE NEWSLETTER (granted, poor planning on my part) and it was all coming out gibberish. My spouse arrived home after two hours of me trying to figure out a work-around and gently removed my laptop from my hands and sat me down in front of the television with a cardboard container of Chinese food while he sorted it out but, by then, it was too late.

I just want you to know that actual tears went into the creation of this newsletter, and a certain Mr. Henderson, the existence of whom many of you may have been unaware, saved the day, not just that night but later, when I couldn't get a picture to format correctly, and even further still when I couldn't get New Laptop to save this as a PDF.

On that note, I want to give a shout-out to all of the other married Bethesda folks whose spouses don't come to church but, nevertheless, provide behind-the-scenes support.

BUT, nobody cares about my trials and tribulations. Let's talk about the trials and tribulations of Bethesda.

First off, you may have noticed that our address has changed. We are now no longer 41 but 43 Washington Street and this is because we've given up on trying to inhabit 41 Washington St. The landlords, to whom we'd sold the building and who were very kindly allowing us to stay there rent free, finally needed to take more invasive construction measures in order to fit the building to their own purposes and started construction of an elevator and further asbestos remediation. This filled the air with dust, among other things, and if you've been in church the last three Sundays, you've heard the effects on Dean Vang's usually dulcet tenor voice.

Let's take a moment to appreciate Dean Vang for doing his best to power through.

So it was time to abandon ship, and abandon it we did.

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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

Construction of the new rectory is moving along. Vang has been picking out paint colors.

We will have to move out of the parish hall sooner than expected and are looking for options.

Bonacio has proposed that he serve as a construction manager for the new parish hall and the Vestry resolved to retain him as such. He should be able to help with further fundraising.

A list of commissions were circulated and vestry members indicated interest.

Discussed holding discernment meetings in the near future to determine the goals of the parish as well as general status.

Houde would like to set something up to help spread the word about members needing prayers or assistance (perhaps an email list?)

Boyd has registered Bethesda with NY Grants Gateway, which will allow us to apply for state grants.

The Vestry approved the current board of the Home of the Good Shepherd for another year.

MARCH

Vang expressed thanks to all volunteers, especially Mark Claverie and Barbara Latzko, for helping with and organizing the move from 41 Washington to 43. We are settling in nicely and the rent is very reasonable though, unfortunately, we did not anticipate that we would need to be renting this soon, so it hadn't been budgeted.

As we no longer have access to our former parking lot, we need to make sure that this does not interfere with church attendance.

Income is currently behind budget, and expenses are slightly over.

Church school will meet in the back of the church where Pam Houde has set up a very nice little nook. Coffee hour will also be in the back of the church, and choir will rehearse in the church basement.

If you would like to read the complete un-abridged vestry minutes for any month, they are available on the website at www.bethesdachurch.org/about/vestry-minutes

Certain of us were glad that we took one last whooshing slide down the banister when nobody was looking, though it wasn't as much fun without Mrs. Keech yelling at us. Or, rather, me. Generations of us grew up in that parish house and I, for one, will miss it. It was old and it was full of asbestos and heaven knows what else, and we're all probably lucky it didn't collapse on us, but it was home.

Coffee hour in the Empire Room never quite worked out the way we hoped it would. While the room itself was nice, it was far away and in an unfamiliar building where you needed to dodge past kitchen staff in the stairwell. I know a lot of people just stopped going. This is why the first coffee hour in the back of the church was so glorious. I got to talk to people I hadn't seen to speak to in over a year. I met new people (Hi Glenna!). There were cider donuts. Coffee hour in the back of the church is an excellent thing, especially because it encourages visitors to stay and chat. Remember to chat with the visitors!

Lest you underestimate the Herculean effort involved in getting the parish house cleaned out with very little notice, I'd like to quote an email I got from Barbara in late February:

"About two weeks ago we learned that we had 10 days to get the kitchen and hall emptied. Quite a bit of what remained could go into the dumpster that would be arriving for the gutting of the first floor. However, I learned last Wednesday that the appliances could not go into a dumpster, and that RBC wanted Bethesda to remove them. We kept one refrigerator (it has been moved into the basement of the church), the other was given to the young woman who was preparing the area for demolition. Sharon Boyd came over and she and I moved the stuff from the library area downstairs into the little room next to the meeting space (old nursery). She then moved all 75 chairs from the hall into the library area. I got the RBC people to relocate the pianos to a non-construction area and a bunch of stuff was taken to the thrift shop by Sharon. Then I spent many hours calling community centers and such to offer up

Head over to the next column...

**Update your address books!
The Bethesda Parish offices have
moved to 43 Washington Street!
We'd like to extend our deepest
gratitude to the Baptist Church for
their hospitality!**

chairs, a dishwasher, the range, etc. A rack of folding chairs that were to be dumped were donated to the Charlton Fire District, and the range was donated to the Saratoga Fire District on Lake Ave (Sharon literally stopped by there and asked if they needed it.) It weighed 800lbs and took a lot of manpower to move it. The fire department is so very thrilled to have it as the one they have is really quite old (40 or 50 years old!) I am going to request that they send a picture of it when it is set up in the firehouse. Sharon and I are both so happy that not only were we able to rescue them from the trash, but that they are being used by those who are always there to serve the community."

A huge thank you again to everyone who helped with the move!



The removal of the range from 41 Washington

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