

The VOICE



Michaelmas (Fall) 2018

Garden Party Yields Funding for Church Door Restoration With Boost from Mrs. Whitney and Mr. Hendrickson

A lively group from Bethesda filled the main dining room of the “Little Club” on Monday, July 30, for the annual Garden Party, whose proceeds are designated for restoration projects on the historic structure. Partygoers were excited to learn that a very generous gift from Marylou Whitney and John Hendrickson had arrived that very morning. Along with individual contributions, it brought the party’s income (before expenses) to just over \$20,000. Dean Vang took the microphone and explained that the Building Committee is hard at work planning restoration and adaptation of the historic doors to allow greater visual access to the beautiful sanctuary by passers-by, in effect making Bethesda more welcoming to those who have never ventured inside. The entire parish thanks event chairs Marcia MacDonald, Pam Houde and Debbie Harper.

Rector’s Message

Dear People and Friends of Bethesda: When an individual accepts a full time position on a church staff, one’s energy and efforts define a position which is more than simply a job. It is a *ministry*. This is surely true of a priest. But it is equally true of a church musician. With worship as a congregation’s highest priority, an organist and director of music assists

the Rector, the choir, and the people to express our praise of Almighty God in the finest ways possible. For the past twenty-five years, Farrell Goehring has blessed Bethesda Church through his ministry of music. Arriving in Saratoga Springs in 1993, his noble work began on the Feast of the Dedication of the Church, which, by tradition, is observed on the first Sunday of October. I have designated October seventh of this year to be kept as Farrell’s Silver Anniversary. He has articulated his desires for the occasion without fuss or fanfare, and I am pleased to share them with you. The music we will sing and hear at the morning Eucharists and Solemn Evensong for Dedication Sunday will, for the most part, be composed by Farrell. These will include both choral and organ selections. Following Evensong at three o’clock, there will be a champagne reception in the parish hall of the First Baptist Church, to which members of the Saratoga community and other musicians from near and far will be invited. It will be a memorable occasion indeed. I know Farrell will approve of sharing words which he wrote to me recently.

Please let the parishioners know how much I have enjoyed working at Bethesda all these years, and how grateful I am for the support that you, Father Parke, and all of them have provided to our music program. That support is what has allowed us to sustain and expand Bethesda’s traditional sacred music repertoire and has provided me the opportunity to make

a living doing something which I love.

Well-stated.

Please reserve the date of October seventh now. Let each of us honor our Director of Music and Organist in this most fitting way.

Most faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marshall J. Vang".

The Very Rev’d Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector

What is the purpose of a Choir?

It’s not to perform difficult music before a silent and intimidated (or irritated) congregation. It’s not there to impress the faithful. It’s there to encourage the faithful to find their voices to praise God in his holiness. It is there to give the people their voice. It is what we call a ministry: it’s what St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians means when he says: “I entreat you then ... as God has called you, live up to your calling ... each of us has been given his gift, the due portion of Christ’s bounty. You heard it read today (Ephesians 4:1-11). The ministry of music is to get the people’s imagination going, to offer God something they perhaps hadn’t realized they had in them. Music can take them out of themselves. It makes some people cry, when they feel overwhelmed by the sheer force of

its beauty. I know it's true. I confess to being vulnerable to this when a great hymn or its descendant's majesty sweeps me off my feet. Just ask the boy choristers. I don't apologise for it. That's not cheap emotion. It's God's people finding their voice, their response with their uplifted hearts. *The Rev'd John Andrew, Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue, August 2012*

The Rector's Search Has Gone Live!

The Search Committee is pleased to report that, on July 24, the Ministry Portfolio for Bethesda was published on the national church's website for the Office of Transition Ministry (OTM), thereby making it nationally known that we are searching for a new rector. The seven-page long portfolio advertises the position, providing details on our worship services, the compensation package, our last three rectors, our church school, and the names of various people to contact about the position, from the bishop to past and present wardens. The profile asks for very specific information—what is our average at-

tendance, what will the stipend be, and even who were the last three incumbents in this position. I doubt there are very many churches where those three names take you back to 1953! If we hadn't included Dean Vang as the most recent one, we would have gone back even further.

The portfolio also asks 11 questions that require a written narrative of no more than 1200 characters including spaces. That is a very stringent limit with which to describe our liturgical style, our involvement in the wider community, our stewardship, etc. It also includes the four skills we identified as the most important ones for our new rector based upon your responses to the parish survey: Effective Preaching, Pastoral Care, Attracting Members, Empowering Lay Leadership. Finally, it directs those interested to our website, our Facebook page, and several YouTube video about parish events.

The deadline for applications is November 15. We need your help to spread the word about our opening through your networks. Asking people you know, especially priests, to tell others about the position will help

us develop a pool of strong candidates. If you have any possible candidates in mind, you can direct them to the announcement on the OTM website and they can apply through the regular procedures on that website.

The Search Committee consists of the lay members of the vestry and, as junior warden, I chair it. We work with Elizabeth Strickland, the Diocesan Transition Minister. We first met with her last November at which time we agreed we needed to meet with the Bishop. We met with Beth and the Bishop in January. In April, Beth met with us again to go over the search process.

As you know from the last newsletter, one of the first steps in the search for our new rector was a survey of the parish. We launched it in April. We thank all of you who responded to the survey. Your answers provided vital information that we used to complete the OTM portfolio.

The graph below provides the mean score for every skill that was on the survey. The mean was calculated by adding up all the numbers associated with the answers (ranging from 1 for



very important to 6 for very unimportant) and dividing by the number of parishioners who responded to that question. The skills that had means below 1.5 were rated as very important by the majority of respondents. The skills with means above 1.5 but below 2.5 were more likely to have been rated as important than as very important. Only two skills had a mean higher than 2.5, which indicates that parishioners rated them as only somewhat important: a commitment to outside Diocesan, National, and/or international church ministry, and the ability to chant. As I said at the church meetings we held, it doesn't surprise me that parishioners regard all the skills as at least somewhat important. They would not have been included on the survey if they were not skills involved in ministry. But as no one person is going to be strong in all these areas, these data helped the Search Committee identify the most important ones for our parish at this time in our history.

As the graph indicates, parishioners who answered the survey rated most important the following skills: ministering to the sick, dying, and bereaved/establishing an effective program to visit sick, homebound, hospitalized, and bereaved members, providing effective leadership for parish growth, working well with the vestry to achieve parish mission/promoting lay leadership in all aspects of parish life, and effectively delivering sermons that tie the scripture readings to life and world issues. These were identified as the most important skills for a new rector in the areas of parish growth and lay leadership respectively.

To give just a sense of some of the other results, 30 percent of the survey respondents attend the 8 am service on Sundays, 65 percent attend the 10 am service, 3 percent switch back and forth between the two, 7 percent attend the 6:30 pm Tuesday evening service, 9 percent the Wednesday noon one, and 3 percent a weekday service at the Home of the Good Shepherd. You will notice that those numbers add up to more than 100 percent, which means that some of us go to more than one service during a week. Sixty-one percent prefer the service

they attend because the time is convenient, 54 percent choose it because of the music, 14 percent because the service is shorter, and 8 percent because their children are in Sunday School. Nineteen percent listed other reasons ranging from fellowship to tradition to time conflicts, and in the open-ended comments some mentioned parking.

The typical respondent attends services nearly every week (42%) and almost one quarter (24 percent) attend every week. Over 60 percent report that their attendance has remained the same over the last five years, while 25 percent say it has decreased and 15 percent say it has increased.

Please feel free to contact me or any other member of the vestry if you have any questions about the search process.

Catherine White Berheide
Junior Warden
cberheid@skidmore.edu

Parish Finances

Weekly Averages

April plate and pledge	\$3,648
May plate and pledge	\$2,876
June plate and pledge	\$5,591
July plate and pledge	\$2,684
Three month average	\$3,637
To meet budget in 2018	\$4,500

Endowment Committee Report

There have been a couple of additions to Bethesda's endowments since the last report of the Endowment Committee. Both of them, like most endowments, began with donations from single parishioners.

One parishioner, especially interested in the church's restoration, designated a Capital Campaign contribution specifically to that. This gave birth to the **Church Restoration** account, which welcomes contributions from anyone.

Another parishioner's donation created the **Parish History** account. This one has been very active recently, financing the publication of the par-

ish history book and receiving income from its purchase. Ultimately, this account will support the creation and upkeep of church archives in the new parish house.

There is also a **Rectory Reserve** account, created by order of the Bishop, which paid for our new Rectory, and for one year of its taxes before it became officially tax-exempt.

Otherwise, we continue to oversee the General Endowment account that includes money from the sale of church property, as well as contributions to the Capital Campaign. Our overall portfolio—which is very conservative—has been experiencing 4% earnings.

And we also continue overseeing the five trust funds established between 1911 and 1999. Our investigation into their histories and handling has been successful but is not quite finished.

If you have specific questions about the endowments, please let the Committee know. For starters you can email me at vhinkle@spa.net, or corral one of the Committee members (David Harper, Vernon Hinkle, Paul Parobeck, Craig Walton) in church.

Shelter and Housing Mission Advances

The Vestry and Building Committee continue to pursue a mission for the New Parish House as a resource of supportive shelter and housing. Agreements are being developed to house homeless military veterans, victims of domestic violence, individuals in alcohol or substance recovery, and workers from the Race Course backstretch who are in programs with Backstretch Employee Service Team (BEST). The opportunity to serve such a diverse community is inspiring to all concerned. The City has extended our planning approval through March 2020. Building Committee minutes are on the parish website. We are grateful for God's guidance as we pursue this pathway.

Gordon Boyd
Chair, Building Committee

Bethesda Episcopal Church
43 Washington Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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Weekly Parish Schedule	Parish Autumn Calendar	
<i>Events are in the church nave unless otherwise noted.</i>		

Sunday 7:30 a.m. Morning Prayer 8 a.m. Holy Eucharist 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist 11 a.m. Church School, <i>begins September 9</i>	The Solemnity of The Holy Cross Sunday, September 16 Church School classes resume Holy Baptism at 10 am	The Feast of Saint Simon & Saint Jude, Apostles Sunday, October 28
Tuesday 6:30 p.m. Holy Eucharist	The Blessing of Pets in honor of Saint Francis of Assisi Saturday, October 6 at 11 am in the Churchyard	The Solemnity of All Saints Sunday, November 4
Wednesday 12:10 p.m. Holy Eucharist with healing 10:00 a.m. (1 st and 3 rd weeks) Holy Eucharist: Home of The Good Shepherd Wilton.	The Feast of The Dedication of The Church Sunday, October 7 Choral Evensong at 3 pm Silver Jubilee of Farrell Goehring as Organist & Director of Music	Remembrance Day Sunday, November 11 Solemn Requiem at 10 am
		Thanksgiving Day Thursday, November 22 Holy Eucharist at 9 am
		The Solemnity of the Christ The King Sunday, November 25