

The VOICE



of Bethesda

Advent 2018

Building Committee News

As the Building Committee proceeds in a careful and deliberate way to develop Bethesda's new parish house, urgent needs have arisen, to which we are responding. We must thank God that we have the resources and expertise required to meet these unplanned challenges.

Our most urgent priority has been roof repair. We have accepted a proposal from an expert contractor for an inspection and repair of both exterior and interior around the east transept. Water infiltration is evident, and a piece of trim fell onto the pews recently, so roof repair moved rapidly up the priority list. We were deeply thankful in October to have several parishioners make generous gifts anonymously that will cover this critical work.

The doors on Washington Street are also in the process of receiving much needed investment. At press time we are awaiting approval from the City to reverse the swing to outward, which will be more code compliant, while maintaining the historic character. Once that is done, we will install glass entry doors on the interior that will enable passers-by to see the altar and reredos whenever the wooden doors are open.

Furthering the new parish house project, the Vestry has established Mercy House of Saratoga, Inc., a non-profit, nondenominational affiliate of Bethesda, to manage our housing resources. Initial directors have been appointed (more

are welcome), and a new capital funding and outreach mission will begin in the coming months.

Inquiries may be directed to Gordon Boyd, Building Committee chair, or Darren Miller, Senior Warden, and now President of Mercy House. *Gordon Boyd*

Christian Education News

We have commenced a new Christian Education program! Bethesda has joined with the First Baptist Church to combine our church school classes. We have a regular group of participants from Bethesda and have even had some visitors' children join us recently. Corina Stampalia is our returning teacher and there are a couple of teachers helping out from the First Baptist Church as well. We're excited for this new endeavor!

Sara Manny

Bethesda Forms New Mission Committee

We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.

Fred Rogers, a.k.a. Mr. Rogers

The Vestry recently authorized the formation of a new Mission Committee to facilitate practicing our

Christian faith through charitable works in the Saratoga community. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." (1 Peter 4:10)

The Mission Committee will focus on helping those in need in collaboration with the five organizations partnering with Bethesda in the New Parish House and Community Center project:

- ◆ Wellspring, which helps victims of domestic violence;
- ◆ Veterans and Community Housing Coalition (VCHC), which helps homeless military veterans;
- ◆ Transitional Services Association (TSA), which helps homeless individuals with mental illness or substance use disorders;
- ◆ In Our Name, which is part of Skidmore College's Restorative Justice project; and
- ◆ Backstretch Employee Service Team (BEST), which helps race-track workers who are either injured and recuperating or have substance use disorders and are participating in recovery programs.

By collaborating with these other charitable organizations, Bethesda is abiding by Jesus' commandment of loving thy neighbor by helping those in need. For example, the Veterans and Community Housing Coalition is seeking gift cards to provide to homeless veterans for the upcoming holiday season. You can donate gift cards, such as pre-paid Visa cards or Walmart gift cards, so that homeless veterans can purchase gifts for their families. On Veterans' Day, November 11, Bethesda will have a secure box in the rear of the church to collect donated gift cards. The gift cards will then be delivered to VCHC to provide to homeless veterans to purchase Christmas presents for their families.

Another instance of how we, as a congregation in Christ, can help those in need is by donating a gift card, toy, or other item during Bethesda's Advent Lessons and Carols service on December 2 at 3:00 p.m. Those donations will then be provided to Wellspring and TSA for distribution to local homeless families to brighten their Christmas holidays.

These are two current examples of how Bethesda's new Mission Committee - and you - can help others in need. "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)
Darren Miller

From The Interims Rector's Study

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

As we gathered for the Eucharist on the day following the murder of innocent worshipers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, the church directed our attention to words of the Apostle Paul. First, the Saint reminds us that our world was a world without hope and without God. How easy it was on October 28, the Feast of Saint Simon

and Saint Jude, to identify with his declaration. Immediately Paul switches gears. "You who were once far off have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood. For he is himself our peace." [*Ephesians 2:13-14*] Peter had similar words to share. "You are now the people of God, who once were not his people; outside his mercy once, you have now received his mercy." [*1 Peter 2:10*]

The sting of Pittsburgh is still with us. Amid our nation's disarray, we were urged to cast our vote, and, hopefully, we did. Veterans' Day falls this year on Sunday, November 11. Our custom at Bethesda is to offer the Eucharists as Requiems, Masses for the Faithful Departed, with the deliberate intention to remember those who have given their lives in service to our country. In addition, our Mission Committee has invited us to bring a gift card to the liturgy to assist homeless veterans in our community to acquire clothing and food items for the upcoming holidays. Thanksgiving Day is just around the corner. It is more than an American observance. Rendering thanks in a community of faith demonstrates our commitment to share the manifold blessings which the Lord has bestowed upon through the heart of Christ Jesus.

Praying for our nation and its people continues to be a rich part of our Anglican heritage. Please join me in offering the following from *The Book of Common Prayer*.

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: we humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought

hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of our prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Most cordially and gratefully,



The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang
Interim Rector

Property Management News

Here is a sample of October accomplishments: We installed three smoke alarms, three luminescent exit signs, and the seating capacity certificate. We have now passed the fire safety inspection for another year.

Mark Griffin worked with Tom Remington to move the air conditioner from Barbara's office to storage in the church basement. They also finally eliminated the water pipe from the old bellows room ceiling. We were then able to turn that part of the heating system back on. The old bellows motor and blower can now be removed to convert that space into a dry storage area. The sagging ceiling in the choir room was repaired

Faithful, hard-working members of Bethesda continue to work every day to keep our beloved, but aging, facility working. We could use your talents too. The simplest way to help out is by coming to our next work day, November 17. The principal project will be finally cleaning out our basement, now

that the old organ casing is gone. We will need people to haul out trash, both light and heavy, as well as cleaning. Other projects can be completed depending on time and the number of volunteers. Got a project to suggest? See Mark Griffin, Tom Remington, Steve Rucker or John Van der Veer.

Steve Rucker

Help Needed!

The Altar Guild is looking for help at the 8 am and 10 am Sunday services. Please call Mary Withington at 518- 584-0253.

Parish Finances

Weekly averages

Aug. plate and pledge	\$3,075
Sept. plate and pledge	\$3,000
Oct. plate and pledge	\$3,646
Three month average	\$3,222
To meet budget in 2018	\$4,500

Offering Envelopes

Beginning January 2019, Bethesda will be using a different Offering Envelope company. If you use offering envelopes you will be able to pick them up in the rear of the church in December. *Do not be surprised if you have a new number.* If you cannot pick up your envelopes please call the Parish Office so arrangements can be made to get them to you. If you would like to start using envelopes, please call 518-584-5980 or email office@bethesdachurch.org to make these arrangements. There are always blank offering envelopes available in the back of the church.

Advent Wreath

An opening exists for a parishioner to make the gift of this year's Advent Wreath as either a memorial or thank offering. Please speak with Dean Vang or Barbara in the Parish Office.

The Rector Search Process

As reported in the last newsletter, the Ministry Portfolio for Bethesda has been on the national church's website for the Office of Transition Ministry (OTM) since July, thereby making it nationally known that we are searching for a new rector. In addition, we have advertised in the Living Church and on the Episcopal News Service (<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/jobs/rector/>).

Unfortunately, we have only received three applications as of the end of October, two internal to the diocese of Albany and one external. We are disappointed in the number of applicants. We suspect that the low number is due to the uncertainty surrounding what the bishop will do in response to the recent resolution allowing same gender marriage. He has indicated that he will announce his decision in early November. We should have a pastoral letter from him available for us to pick up after church on Sunday, November 11. We can then decide whether we need to change our approach to attract a larger pool of candidates. We had originally posted a deadline of November 15, but we are committed to keeping the search open as long as it takes to find the right person.

Please help spread the word about our opening through your networks. Asking people you know, especially priests, to tell others about the position may help us generate a larger pool of candidates. If you have any in mind, direct them to the announcement on the Office of Transition Ministry website of the national church and they can apply through the regular procedures on that website.

In the meantime, the vestry is working on winnowing down a lengthy list of questions to ask candidates in the preliminary

phone interviews. In addition, we are working on materials that will be part of the stewardship campaign. As you know from talks given by Senior Warden Darren Miller, we need to raise approximately \$50,000 more to pay for a new rector. The new rector's stipend will be over \$16,000 more than the interim rector's and his or her medical insurance and pension costs could add another \$24,000 or so. (Because Dean Vang is a retired priest, his stipend is capped, we do not pay into the church pension plan, and his medical insurance costs are minimal.)

Please feel free to contact me or any other member of the vestry if you have any questions about the search process. More importantly, please pray for the success of our search.

Kate Berheide

Order A History of Bethesda Episcopal Church for Christmas Gifts!

Within its pages, you will find fascinating stories and photographs that document the life of Bethesda in the midst of wars, social upheavals, and celebrations. A diverse group of people, including Bethesda communicants and others in the community, authored the chapters. This beautiful 11 x 8.5 hard cover book, with a dust jacket, sewn binding and acid-free paper, includes 336 pages plus an 8-page color insert. It also includes many historical photos from the church archive as well as more recent photos. Copies will be available for Christmas purchases after services beginning on November 3. You may also order from the church web site - bethesdachurch.org - or by calling 518-584-5980.

Bethesda Episcopal Church
43 Washington Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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If you no longer wish to be on our mailing list, please contact the Parish Office at (518) 584-5980.

Weekly Parish Schedule

Sunday

7:30 A.M. Morning Prayer
8 A.M. Holy Eucharist
10 A.M. Sung Eucharist
11 A.M. Church School, *First Baptist Church*

Tuesday

6:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist

Wednesday

12:10 P.M. Holy Eucharist with healing, *Transept Altar*
10:00 A.M. (1st and 3rd weeks)
Holy Eucharist: *Home of The Good Shepherd Wilton.*

Thursday

9:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist, *Home of the Good Shepherd, Saratoga*
10:00 A.M. Holy Eucharist, *Home of the Good Shepherd Memory Care, Saratoga*

Upcoming Bethesda Celebrations

Thanksgiving Day

Thursday, November 22
8:30 A.M. – Morning Prayer
9:00 A.M. – Holy Eucharist with Hymns

The Solemnity of Christ The King

Sunday, November 25
7:30 A.M. – Morning Prayer
8:00 A.M. – Holy Eucharist
10:00 A.M. – Solemn Eucharist

A Service of Lessons & Carols for Advent

The First Sunday of Advent,
December 2 at 3:00 P.M.
A reception will follow.

A Bethesda Christmas

An invitation to the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ will be mailed to the parish in early December.