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# THE VOICE

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Bethesda Episcopal Church: Volume 2, Issue 4

August 2016

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## Hospitality and Welcoming the Stranger in our Midst

*Heather Hill, Rector of All Saints in Parma, OH. Printed in [www.episcopalcafe.com](http://www.episcopalcafe.com) Reprinted with permission of the author.*

I wanted to share a few stories of experiences I have had visiting other worshipping communities, both good and bad. Before I moved to my current parish, but after I finished serving at my last parish, my fiancé (now husband) and I worshipped with two other Episcopal churches. We decided to go without any indication that we were priests (incognito – no collars, etc.) so that we could just participate and worship without drawing extra attention. We chose the first church because they worshipped in a higher style than we usually did and thought it would be an interesting experience. The second church we chose because it was not far away from where we were and they had a service late enough for us to sleep in a little. Before we went I thought that we would experience people being too eager for us to become involved. We were, on the surface, what many churches said they were looking for – a young couple who obviously knew and loved the liturgy.

Boy was I wrong! At both parishes nobody spoke to us except for the priest! (One of them knew me because it was not far from the parish I had been serving.) The first service we sat through not knowing much of what was going on, but no one offered us help to understand. They worshipped in a very high church style and had extra special actions, because a bishop was visiting, that neither of us had seen before. The second church had worship similar to what we knew and we participated fully. The second one even had a time at the end for visitors to stand up and introduce themselves. The priest who knew me looked at me and I shook my head, “no”. My husband and I are both introverted and neither of us wanted to make a spectacle of ourselves. We just wanted to worship. So maybe nobody said hello there because we did not stand up in front of 100 people we did not know to introduce ourselves. At the second parish we then spent 15 minutes wandering around

*Hospitality: cont. p. 4*

## Landon Moore Goes to Seminary

Near the end of my sophomore year at Marist, Father Vang and I had a conversation about pursuing Holy Orders. He directed me to an informative meeting that was taking place in Albany. Roughly thirty people attended the meeting, including the bishop and some clergy. I was the only college-aged person in attendance, and 75% of the attendants were there to learn more about applying for the Deaconate. The meeting lasted almost an hour, but informed us of the steps one needed to take in order to pursue either the Deaconate or the Priesthood. At the close, I received paperwork and roughly forty questions to be filled out for the Diocese of Albany.

Just as I was entering my senior year of college, I received word that I had been accepted as an Aspirant (one seeking ordination) and that I could move to the next stage of the process. I had two meetings with the bishop, one in January and the last one in June. These two meetings were largely for the bishop and me to get to know one another, and to ask questions of each-other.

As of now, I have not yet received the bishop’s blessing to go to Yale because I am not a postulant, that is, I have not completed all of the steps required for ordination. I hope to receive this title sometime in October. Nonetheless, the Bishop did support my decision to attend Yale. I also met with our own Bethesda Vestry, who asked me many robust

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

# The Gilded Age: Summers at Bethesda

Mary Sanders Shartle



“Madge (Margaret Gibson) Brandreth” at ease at Brandreth Park, 1890s.

The Saratoga season is underway. Here is a lovely quote from 1889 found in one of our church’s archived documents:

“It is a restful change to step from the hurry and the heat, the glare and gayety of the street into the cool and seclusion of this Church, to see the form of angels on the painted glass, and to walk with reverent tread down the long alley towards the altar and the shining cross.”

George Wolf Shinn, *King’s Handbook of Episcopal Churches*,  
“Bethesda Episcopal Church,  
Saratoga Springs” (1889)

Saratoga Springs was the summer place for visitors in the Gilded Age to gather, take the waters and watch the horse racing. And to go to church—a *spiritual* place of healing as well as a social center. Some of our artifacts were given by people who were drawn to Saratoga in the summertime. We know from the Bethesda archives that the marble baptismal font was donated in memory of Samuel A. Willoughby (1800-1882), a Brooklyn banker and merchant who later became a vestryman at Bethesda. Samuel is buried in Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn.

Saratoga was a summer way-station on the way to the Adirondacks. William West Durant (1850-1934), was the son of robber baron and railroad builder, Thomas Durant

(1820-1885). In the late 1800s, William designed a number of camps, the most famous of which were Pine Knot (bought by Colis P. Huntington, also of railroad fame, now owned by SUNY Cortland), Great Camp Uncas (bought by J. P. Morgan, now privately owned) and Great Camp Sagamore (bought in 1901 by Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt) now a National Historic Landmark with tours, educational and intergenerational programs and a site for Road Scholars. (And, yes, you can stay in the original buildings!)

The on-going archival work in the old parish house has shown that William West Durant and his wife, Janet Lathrop Durant, were communicants at Bethesda in the 1880s. Their son, Basil Napier Durant, was baptized in June of 1889 at Bethesda by Dr. Joseph Carey. Also, the coffin of Durant’s father, Thomas, who died in North Creek in 1885, was accompanied by Dr. Carey on the train to Brooklyn, where he was buried in Green-Wood cemetery.

Another Bethesda/Great Camp connection was the daughter of rector, the Reverend John Breckenridge Gibson (rector from 1866-1869), whose wife was one of the founders of the Home of the Good Shepherd. In 1883 The Gibson’s daughter, Margaret (Madge) married into the Brandreth family, owners of the oldest Adirondack great camp (1851), which remains in the family. ❖

## Summertime at Bethesda

Denise Limoli

For many, summer means a rejuvenating vacation; for others, it’s a time to pick up extra work; for some, summer is simply a hotter version of the “daily grind.” Whatever your summer experience may be, the church never goes on vacation.

It’s important for us all to continue our regular pledge payments during these beautiful summer months, whether we actually attend or are away. Bethesda’s operating financial needs continue year round, and the church depends on each one of us to fulfill his or her pledge. If you are away, please remember to make up missed payments when you return or plan to double up before you leave.

This is an exciting time as we parishioners anticipate the growth and expansion resulting from our new parish house/community center. It is crucial that we also continue to honor our annual commitment to support the daily work of Bethesda’s ministry, not just in the future but right now.

As a member of the Vestry newly charged with Stewardship, I look forward to getting to know many more members of the congregation. Enjoy the summer, wherever you may go, and remember that Bethesda Church is always here!

## Make a Joyful Noise

Denise Limoli

If you are downtown in Saratoga Springs, you hear Bethesda's bells chiming on the quarter hour with an hourly strike from dawn to dusk. There is also a regular 9pm ringing of the "De Profundis" or curfew bell, which calls us to pray for the departed. These bells are sounded electronically.

However, did you know that Bethesda's bells are actually played by hand by teams of bell-ringers on Sunday mornings? The Bethesda Church bell tower has a four bell chime that is played in the traditional English style of "change ringing" and a larger bell for the call to worship. After the 8 AM service and before and after the 10 AM service, two ringers pull down on the ropes to play the traditional sequences. The sequences followed are an ever-changing pattern of four numbers, with traditional names, like "Plain Bob Minimus."

Example: 1234; 2143; 2413; 4231

Bethesda's bells, ranging in weight from 500 lbs. to 3,000 lbs., were cast by the Meneely firm of Troy, NY and installed in 1887. The Putnam Family donated and named each of the bells after generations of family members. Individual bells are inscribed with quotes from scripture or from hymns. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the bell tower was closed due to structural weakness. Fr. Thomas Parke began reinforcing and restoration efforts in 1968, and the tower was reopened and re-dedicated on the Sunday of All Saints, 2001.

As a "ringer," I have enjoyed the practice and challenge of doing it well. More importantly, it is an honor to be a part of such a long-standing tradition in the Anglican/Episcopal Church.

There is an excellent informational pamphlet in the Narthex. If you are interested in joining us, please speak with Fr. Paul Evans, who is in charge of the teams of ringers.

Ringling the bells is fun!

### 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**

May 18, 2016

Pledge and plate is up about \$8000 over this time last year.

Changing our insurance carrier has saved about \$5000. Squirrel infestation of the church led to unexpected expenses.

Discussion of the difficulties inherent in meeting operating expenses while simultaneously running a capital campaign, when both are vital.

We are seeking public funding to assist in our share of the cost of replacing the storm drain on Washington St.

Landon will need the support of the parish in attending Yale divinity school.

questions. One member of the vestry asked me, "Why do you want to be a priest?" I stated that, in today's world, God may not be the focal point of our lives. I hope to assist people in building relationships with God. Some may think "I have a relationship", but what are they doing for that relationship? Living a Christian life is hard and at times you may ask where God is in your life. To whom can you go with these questions? Going to church is a great way to remind yourself that you're not alone in your struggle; there are others trying to live the Christian life as well.

I realize I do not have all the answers (I especially struggle with the nature of the Trinity) but I believe that the goal in life is to build a relationship with God, similar to the ones we share with friends, family or loved ones. This is the main reason that I feel called to become a priest. I want to help people build relationships with Christ. I leave for Yale Divinity School on August 21<sup>st</sup>, where I will work towards a Masters degree in Divinity. In writing this, I ask for your prayers and continued support throughout this process.

Best,  
Landon

#### *Vestry Minutes continued*

June 22, 2016

Pledge and plate continues to rise vs. this time last year. Office supplies and building expenses are running high.

We're now close to \$400,000 in Capital Campaign pledges

Shifting attention from finding a new deacon to training parishioners to fill the various duties.

We will probably have to vacate the current parish hall in the spring of 2017 and will need to start looking for temporary office space.

The communications committee is considering putting together a brochure to be placed in local hotels so visitors know they are welcome to join us at Bethesda

July 20, 2016

Capital Campaign pledges have reached about \$420,000 and the committee will be approaching members of the greater Saratoga community soon.

The vestry voted to approve a memorandum of agreement regarding division of expense of replacing the Washington St. storm drain.

We are still having difficulty identifying someone to fill the vacant spot on the vestry and to replace Anne Van Acker as treasurer

Stewardship committee is going to work on issuing quarterly giving reports again

Home of the Good Shepherd has received its Certificate of Occupancy for the new building and will have a grand opening sometime in the fall. Litigation regarding property taxes has been pushed back to November, and they have had to raise rates to meet this expense, but will lower them again if successful in court.

*For a copy of the official (and unabridged) minutes of any Vestry meeting, speak to Genna or Dean Vang.*

## *Hospitality: cont from p. 1*

trying to find a bathroom and still no one said hello or asked if they could help. Leaving the second week in a row with the only hint of welcome coming from the priests, I couldn't help but think that it's no wonder the Episcopal Church is losing members. I would not have returned to either place to worship.

In direct contrast to that experience was a worship service I attended recently at a convent in Tiffin, OH. I was attending a retreat there and as part of our schedule we had the option to join the sisters for Vespers, an evening prayer service. I enjoy praying with others in new ways so I went. Two of us from the retreat stepped into the door of the chapel looking around trying to figure out what we should do. Within a minute two sisters who had been sitting at different places in the sanctuary came over and offered to sit with us and help us through the service. Though a little unsure of being approached and wanting to blend in the back (I was at a Roman Catholic convent and was not sure how they would greet me), I agreed. The sister handed us their prayer books and pointed to numbers on a wall. They were code to find the different parts of the service. She turned to me and the other retreatant at each turn of the page to make sure we knew where we were. I finally experienced how even a heart desiring to pray can have trouble navigating multiple pages throughout a book without a guide. After the service, the two sisters thanked us for praying with them and invited us to come to another service they had. It felt so good to be thanked for praying with them, especially because half the time I had no idea what was going on.

I share these experiences with you to help all of us to work together to be a church with genuine hospitality, sharing God's love with those who honor us by praying with us. What can you do to help someone who you do not recognize to feel welcome at your parish? How can we as a community make it so everyone feels like they can be included in prayer at our church? The first steps are introducing ourselves to our guests, wearing our name tags so those who have attended a few times don't feel badly about not knowing people yet. How about our bulletin, our website, our building? Let's work together to welcome the stranger as a guest who honors us with their presence when they come to pray with us.

The next edition of The Voice is due out in October! Start thinking about what you want to write now! The deadline is, as always, somewhat fluid (I'm finally being honest about that), but please get articles in sometime in mid-September so I don't have to beg people in coffee hour.

[geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com](mailto:geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com)

Sherryl Moore wishes to thank all who called, visited and sent cards, notes and gifts to her during her recovery from surgery!

## From the Editor

*Genna Henderson*

It's summer at Bethesda, which means everything's just a little bit slower. The choir's on break, which means that often they don't appear at all, though sometimes you might find yourself hearing an unfamiliar bass line coming at you from a couple of rows back. Regulars are away on vacation. Summer people have followed the sun north from Florida or East from Arizona. Tourists come for the races and wander, blinking, into the glorious church building that many of us have grown so accustomed to that we hardly notice.

Here at The Voice, we're also taking things a little bit easier. It's a shorter version than usual, as some of the regular writers have begged a break, explaining that the articles they REALLY want to write would be much better in, say, October. That's fair.

I would like to remind you, though, that the newsletter is a group effort. Obviously I can't write the entire thing myself, and with the time that goes into formatting, I'd really prefer not to write most of it. It's true that I have an established group of people I can generally guilt-trip into writing something for me, and those are the people I whine at when it's two days after the deadline and I only have three things so far, but I would love it if you (yes, you) would write something.

I also want to remind you that this is here for YOU. Are you going to be in a play? Is your band playing a gig? Are you having an art exhibit? Is your kid selling girl-scout cookies? This would be a great place to spread the word. Just email me and I'll put an announcement in here.

Here, if you're wondering, are article guidelines:

1. Probably not more than 1,000 words. 500 words is about a column. 1,000 words is about a page. This article, to exactly this point, is 319 words, for reference sake. Note that lists and photos take up extra space.
2. Times New Roman, 10 pt font.
3. Please send as an .rtf attachment if possible. You CAN send it in the text of an email, but that means I have to copy and paste it into a word doc because... it's a long story involving Linux. Ask me in person if you care.
4. Please save it with some distinguishing file name, like "Limoli Bells August". It's hard to remember which newsletter.rtf file is which.
5. Pictures are fine, but keep in mind they take up space, so if you send me a 1,500 word article with a picture, I'm going to be grumpy.
6. Leave spaces between your paragraphs but don't indent.
7. Email to [geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com](mailto:geneva.k.hinkle@gmail.com). You can hand something to me in person, but then I have to retype it.
8. Ignore literally any and all of the above guidelines if that's what it takes to get me an article. ❖

My Dear People and Friends of Bethesda:

Recently someone asked me, “How many summers have you spent in Saratoga?” My response: “Four.” Time passes swiftly in this modern age. If I were to offer an observation regarding the past four summers, I would comment that each one outdoes the other in terms of a population increase, patronage of restaurants and shopping venues, and, of course, the track. There is another facet of summer in Saratoga which I find expressed by visitors and residents alike. It is visible upon a face or in one’s speech: how the intensity of activity often diminishes one’s ability to relax and savor the wonder of God’s creation. Vacation agendas are jam-packed. There is little opportunity planned for genuine leisure and play. Perhaps you have witnessed this trend or experienced it yourself.

Over the past several months, I have enjoyed re-visiting the monastic tradition, together with its foundational documents, inevitably making distinctions between work and leisure. There is a fount of wisdom to be derived from this manner of community living, even helpful to us so enrapt with contemporary expectations and styles. A clear distinction is made between a daily routine of work and occasions to indulge in recreation. Leisure, for example, is never perceived as lack of work, or something we fill with forms of entertainment. Nor is it especially to be focused on recharging or replacing one’s batteries. Real leisure occurs when we empty ourselves or, as those who embrace the religious life have often suggested, vacate ourselves for the Holy One.

When was the last time you considered your leisure time to be *holy*? It is helpful not only to sit still, but to be still as well. As the Psalmist reminds us, *Be still and know that I am God.* [46:11] Let each of us revisit our Christian approach to the summer season. God will always make available those times to be amused, to revel in fun. Let’s keep the Author and Giver of life in the midst of this delightful season.

Most cordially and faithfully yours,

The Very Reverend Marshall J. Vang  
*Interim Rector*

Hi! My name is...

**AUGUSTUS PUGIN TURTURIBUS**

(YOU CAN CALL ME GUS)



Here’s another one of those small spaces. Did you know you can follow Bethesda on facebook? Search for “Bethesda Episcopal Church”. Also, if you’re interested in what the choir’s up to, you can join the “Bethesda Schola Cantorum Groupies” Facebook group, run by The Voice’s own Vexallia Regis.

As the sun sinks slowly in the West, Bethesda bids a fond farewell to Deacon Sweeney and his family. Though they have only been with us for two years, they have helped to set us on a course towards more effective outreach and greater inclusivity. Deacon Sweeney ministered to our youth, our elders, and many others. We wish him and his family all of the best in Pittsburgh, and hope they’ll come back to visit us soon!

## Social Column

*Rexilla Vegis*

As my sister, Vexilla, was unable to attend the annual festivities at the Saratoga Golf and Polo Club this year (her angina is just HORRIBLE this time of year), it falls to me to update all of you lovely people.

First off, I know that LAST year there was great wailing and gnashing of teeth that the greatly anticipated Swedish meatballs were mislaid and had been replaced by some sort of fancy salami (and, my dears, I love salami, but when one attends a party, one seeks out the meatballs. The heart wants what the heart wants). WELL, let me tell YOU. THIS year there were meatballs. They were not, alas, Swedish, but were nevertheless delightful. However, the meatballs paled, absolutely wilted, in comparison to the shaved pork sliders drizzled with honey. Never had I thought that I would betray my love of meatballs, but this delicately flavored pork, thinly sliced, moist and marinated, drizzled with clover honey, was to DIE for.

Attendance was a little slim, but that only made the party more intimate, my dears. The wine flowed like wine and there was no valet parking this year, which was met with relief by most and by gales of laughter from Ms. Henderson, who had walked to the party specifically to avoid having her car valet parked.

Mr. Goehring and Mr. Garbarino were dashing, as always, and Dean Vang’s pocket square was immaculate. Ms. Hatch greeted everyone with a smile and great was the rejoicing at the arrival of Ms. Moore, who arose from her sickbed and looked the absolute PICTURE of health and vitality. Mrs. Harper and Mrs. MacDonald surveyed the fete they had planned with gazes that can be described as nothing short of maternal.

A glorious time was had by all. I hope to see you there next year!