

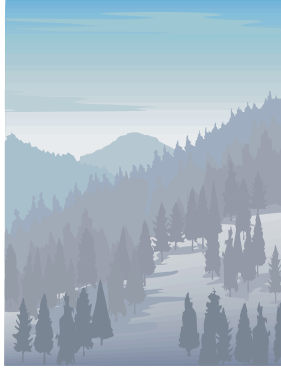


St. Mark's Epistle

May 2008

View from the Mountain...

Have you been wondering what's happening at St. Mark's Episcopal Church? Here's just a sampling...



St. Mark's has actively taken on projects to broaden our understanding of stewardship. As a recipient of a diocesan grant, we are able to engage in assisting people's financial decision making processes through the Three Simple Rules Workshop (held April-May), led by Bob Norcross, of St. John's Church, North Adams. In April we gathered for an Earth Day celebration, featuring a potluck meal and viewing of the film, *An Inconvenient Truth*. We recognized that as stewards of the natural order, we are ethically bound to be good stewards of God's gifts to us, which includes our earth. On Tuesday June 17, 2008, 6:30 pm, we will host a special seminar on Alzheimer's disease, and invite parish members and the general public to come and gather new information on the nature of the disease, share stories of living with a disease that has affected family and friends, and to ask questions. We recognize that illness especially chronic and catastrophic illness has a definite affect on all our resources.

On Saturday, June 7th, we will have our first major fundraiser in well over a year. The *Spring-into-Summer Festival* will feature: a plant sale; bake sale (cakes, pies, artisan breads, cookies/bars); Chinese Auction (for adults and children); and food (hamburgers/hotdogs/drinks/popcorn). In particular, we will be raffling a beautiful quilted throw/wall hanging, titled, *The Window Box*, and a crocheted afghan, as well as other fine crafted items created by members of the parish. For members of the parish,

this is an opportunity to demonstrate your various talents, offer the gift of your time, and be with friends for fun and laughter. *The purpose of this fundraiser is to help support our Mission & Outreach ministries and to make others more aware of the presence of St. Mark's Episcopal Church in the Adams community.*

As you may be aware, our parish is taking this year as an opportunity to live with the question of what it means for us to be a welcoming people, offering an open invitation to Christ's welcoming table at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. I hope you are noticing that we have a new banner placed on the churchyard facing Commercial Street saying, "**Come Join Us**", along with the time of Sunday worship and Children's Church School. We are grateful for the stitching talents of Michele Pause, who created the new banner, making our inviting spirit more visible to the community-at-large.

In early April, members of St. Mark's met with folks from North Adams, Williamstown and Lee to think about the challenges our particular parishes face in regards to evangelism, and in particular the way we extend hospitality and how we can be better equipped to share the good news of Christ to others. Because of the Assessment to Common Ministry (the funds each parish sends to support the ministry of the diocese), we were able to have the expertise of the Rev. Bill Coyne, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Western MA, to lead us through this exercise of assessment and future goal setting.

In the fall, we will begin Godly Play as the basis of our approach to children's spiritual formation. Godly Play teaches children the art of using religious language - parable, sacred story, silence and liturgical action - so that they may become more fully aware of the mystery of God's presence in their lives. Jo Ann Delisle and Julie Krzanik participated in a training program in Exeter, NH in early April and are very excited about offering this deeply spiritual and highly

creative program in our parish. Our efforts last summer to renew our upper level parish hall for spiritual formation, worship and fellowship (made possible largely because of a Congregational Development grant from the diocese) has released a creative energy in our ministries here at St. Mark's - especially our ministry to children and youth.

Also, in the fall term St. Mark's will be a site for *Servant Leadership I: Foundations for Growth and Transformation*, the initial 10-week course for Servant Leadership. Servant Leadership offers a compelling model for contemporary Christian living and a spiritual path that connects faith with daily life. Joe DeOrdio of St. Mark's, as well as a few others from the northern deanery, has taken part in this offering of The Berkshire Servant Leadership Center.

I realize that we have big questions as to our future at St. Mark's. I want to encourage you to let go of your anxiety as to what we will be like a year from now, or five years from now. I think our biggest challenge is less about parish finances and more about our commitment to Christ Jesus, and trusting God in Christ Jesus to shape, mold and make us into the church that God desires us to be. Like you, I'm on a journey to and with God and daily I have to release fears, anxieties, and worries over to God. One thing I do know is that as we give our lives and concerns over to God and live into the purposes of God for our individual and common lives, God quickens our hearts and minds with the Holy Spirit's creative energy. Whenever we look to God for strength and guidance, God provides for us in abundance.

So how do we do this? How do we begin to step up to this challenge?

- ❖ **We pray. I am asking you to pray about all I have mentioned, making an outpouring of prayer the most important thing you do for the life of this parish.**
- ❖ **Gather for worship, study of scripture, and fellowship around the table.**
- ❖ **Name your blessings to and for each other, especially those with whom you come in contact day by day.**

Basically, we engage in what the church calls the holy habits of tithing (of time, talent and financial resources), daily personal prayer and study, Sabbath

time, and weekly corporate worship. Practically, holy habits mean we use our time intentionally rather than just letting time or activities dictate to us what we will do. And at the center of our intentional living and practices is our personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

In a recent Youth Catechism class, the class members made images with modeling clay, reflecting images of God that is, crafting visible metaphors for understanding God. One person shaped what he described as a "brain", indicating that God the Creator is the mind behind all things. Another shaped a cross with symbols engraved on its surface, as a sign of God's self-giving love. In a variety of places in scripture, God is described as a rock or stone, conveying the understanding that God is the source of our confidence, bestowing strength of heart and mind, as well as offering a sense that God's providential grace is in each of our lives and in the life of God's people.

As this parish enters into another phase of transition, a new phase we began to talk about during the January parish annual meeting, I believe the rock/stone metaphor for God serves to remind us that we can trust God through Christ Jesus to care for us, to be with us, to guide us in all aspects of our common life. Part of living in this in-between time is creating a sense of openness to the future. Our reliance on God to be our strength for the journey makes all the difference.

The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Psalm 18:2

Ellen+

*God's loves you,
God is your refuge and stronghold,
You can trust God to provide for your needs and for
the needs of this parish.
You are hewn from the rock of God's saving Grace.*

Berkshire Episcopalians...

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 3:00 PM

Benefit Concert: Royal Hartigan Ensemble

Ancestors - a jazz concert in honor of our loved ones, with Blood Drum Spirit: the [Royal Hartigan Ensemble](#), will take place on Mothers' Day, Sunday, May 11, 2008 at 3:00 pm at St. Stephens.

A free will offering is requested and all proceeds will be donated to the Elizabeth Freeman Center and Hospice Care in the Berkshires.

Mr. Hartigan, a percussionist and Pittsfield native, will be joined by bassist Wes Brown, saxophonist David Bindman, and pianist Art Hirahara. For concert information, please contact Mr. Hartigan at (508) 999-8572.

Money: From Cultural Addiction to Spiritual Freedom

This one day workshop will be an introduction to a larger ten week class scheduled to be held this fall. During this workshop we will begin to step back and examine our relationships with money and how our patterns of earning, spending and acts of service. With the use of Lynne Twist's book *The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of our Inner Resources* and other resources, participants will be introduced to some of the cultural messages of scarcity and guilt around money and what happens when we shift towards experiences of sufficiency, freedom, and purpose in relationship to resources.

"To be dependent on ourselves, our own wealth, our own skills, our own goodness, the approval of others, that is dependence and bondage. To be dependent on God, absolutely dependent, that is independence. Dependence on God is the only independence. Insecurity in God is the only security."

-Richard Rohr, Ministry of Money retreat

Led by: Dr. Ruth Anderson, Director

School of Servant Leadership, Greensboro, NC

May 17th; 10:00-3:00pm

St. Helena's Episcopal Church, Lenox

Suggested Donation: \$15.00

(Copies of Lynn Twist's book, *The Soul of Money* will also be available for purchase.)

Contact & Registration Information

Rev. Jennifer E. Gregg

The Berkshire Servant Leadership Center

c/o St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

67 East Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

Phone: 413-448-8276

Email: jgregg@ststephenspittsfield.org

Make checks payable to St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Please put Servant Leadership in the memo field. Scholarships are available. Please contact The Rev. Jennifer E. Gregg for more information.

Berkshire Servant Leadership Center

Servant Leadership Schools believe that every church in the world is called to prepare servant leaders to follow Jesus Christ and serve God's dream for a transformed world. A school of servant leadership invites its students to explore both an inward journey of personal transformation and an outward journey of discerning their own particular "call" and giving expression to some form of life-giving service in the world.

The Berkshire Servant Leadership Center is modeled after the Servant Leadership School of Greensboro, NC. We are very grateful for the material and resources they have made available to us. If you would like to see where the Berkshire Center is headed, please visit the Greensboro website <<http://www.servantleadergreensboro.com>>.

BEMENT CAMP - It is time to sign up for the 2008 summer sessions. There are camp brochures available at the parish office if you have not received one in the mail. Scholarships are available.

ALLELUIA FUND - Please support the 2008 Alleluia Fund with a generous offering to support our ministry in Southwick and in the Dioceses of Liberia and Kumasi (Ghana). There are donation envelopes available on the table in the Parish Hall & narthex. For further information see Fred Nicholaev, Alleluia Fund Representative.

Dear God,

So far today I've done alright: I haven't gossiped; I haven't lost my temper; I haven't lied, or cheated; I haven't been greedy, grumpy, selfish or overindulgent. I'm very thankful for that! But, in a few minutes, Lord, I'm going to get out of bed, and from then on, I'm probably going to need a lot more help!

Amen

(Author Unknown)



Sunday School News

Last month Julie Krzanik and I went to a 3-day workshop to become accredited teachers of "Godly Play." Godly Play is a method of teaching children (and adults) about God and His people. We were lucky to have the opportunity of meeting lots of people who have been working with Godly Play. All of our questions and concerns were answered. We are very excited to say that in the fall we will be doing Godly Play with the Sunday School. Just so we don't forget everything we've learned, we have already done a Godly Play lesson with the children and will be doing one or two more before we break for the summer.

If anyone is interested in participating in a Godly Play lesson, (don't let the word participate scare you), we will present one following coffee hour on Sunday, May 4th. If you would like more information about Godly Play, just ask; we're more than happy to talk about it and our experience at the workshop.

~JoAnn Delisle

2008 Egg Hunt & Movie...

This year's "Egg Hunt and a Movie" was a great success. Twenty-four children signed up for the event. While some were hunting for eggs downstairs, others were taking turns trying to smash open the Easter chick piñata. After that everyone sat down for chicken nuggets, macaroni & cheese and mini cupcakes. Between the meal and the movie, the children also decorated Easter cookies. We would like to thank Brian Johnson, our AV guy, the parents who held up the piñatas, and all those people whose help made this party a success.



~St. Mark's Youth Group

Knit & Stitch...

The group welcomed Nancy Main in March, along with her talent of knitting with 4 needles while making socks. We were all thrilled to see how it was done, and several of the ladies remembered making argyle socks

when they were younger and now feel inspired to begin trying once again to knit socks with 4 needles.

Our basket of items is filling up once again and will need to be blessed before we pass along the items. A thank you from the Veterans in Washington, D.C. arrived, along with several other notes from those who have received shawls, sweaters or throws. We are making a scrap book of our cards and that book will be placed on the back table in the church, for all to look thru.

Don't forget the homeless box is still in the back of the church for warm hats, mittens and scarves.

~Barbara Fiske

Alzheimer's Disease: What, Who, How?

Unfortunately, many of us have a friend or family member who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. There are so many questions about this disease: What exactly is Alzheimer's? What are the symptoms? Is it hereditary? How fast does it progress? What are the stages? What progress are they making toward a cure?

If you are interested in the answers to these and other questions, please join us for a seminar on Alzheimer's Disease presented by your Stewardship Committee. Our guest speaker will be Beth Hinkley Moogan; and we will meet at St Mark's Parish House at 7 PM on Tuesday June 17th. Look for more information in your church bulletins and on posters that will be distributed.

~JoAnn Gagne, Stewardship Committee

Safe Church...

I am pleased to announce that I have completed all required training to become a "safe church trainer" for our parish. "Safe Church" isn't about keeping the physical aspects of our church property safe from disrepair; it's about keeping our family in Christ safe. By my becoming a trainer, I am able to offer more flexible training dates that will fit into our busy schedules. The training is for anyone who volunteers, or is thinking about volunteering, their time and talents in this parish. In the coming months I will be talking to some of you about taking the training and come up with some dates & times that will work for everyone. If you're interested in taking the training, stop me on Sunday or email me at stmarksedu@verizon.

~JoAnn Delisle

Know You Church: Aspects of the Season...

EASTER- The Easter candle, symbol of the presence of the risen Lord, blessed at the Easter Vigil, remains in a prominent place beside the reading stand (ambo) or near the altar for the entire season. It is the central symbol of the season and is often the focus of festive decoration. Alleluia is the Easter song. It is added to acclamations and antiphons and may be used as a refrain for the Responsorial Psalm and Communion Song. It is the song of the Church's rejoicing and simply means: Praise the Lord! Acts of the Apostles is read at all celebrations in place of the Old Testament which, by an ancient tradition, is not read during the season. The reading of Acts presents the life, growth and witness of the early Church. Initiation, Confirmation and First Eucharist find their proper place for celebration during the Easter season, especially at the parish Sunday Eucharist. This year the parish will be part of the Berkshire region's Ascension Day service for Confirmation/Reception/and Renewal of Vows. Special Easter texts are used on the feasts of martyrs and in the funeral liturgy. The constant joy of the season continues throughout the 50 days and should be reflected in the festive decoration of the church building. As far back as the Council of Nicaea (325) the Church reflected Easter joy by a prohibition on fasting and kneeling (a sign of penance) throughout the season. Our norm is to omit the Prayer of Confession during the season of Easter.

ASCENSION - The Ascension is celebrated "forty" days after Easter. We frequently transfer our celebration of Ascension to the Sunday following Ascension Day. The (nine) days between Ascension and Pentecost are kept as days of prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit; this is the original novena. The prayers that were formerly used in the week after Pentecost are now the Mass texts for these days. We use them to prepare for the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PENTECOST - The Easter season (Paschaltime) was previously extended through the Saturday after Pentecost (Octave of Pentecost). Today, the season closes on Pentecost (after Evening Prayer) as the celebration of the Paschal Mystery is brought to its close with the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Easter candle is lighted at Sunday services and then placed by the baptismal font, where it is displayed with due

honour. It is used during the celebration of Baptism, and the candles of the newly baptized are lighted from it. The Easter candle is also used in funeral Burial Offices, standing near the casket.

Outreach...

We have received eight cell phones and have sent them to ReCellular in Michigan. Each of the phones will provide an hour of talk time for a soldier abroad. Keep those used cell phones coming in! This is such an important contact for our soldiers away from home. Recycling your old cell phone thru our parish is a wonderful gift.

The can tabs jug in the narthex was pretty full, so we put all the tabs into a large plastic bag, and Herb Roemelt delivered them to the Masonic Lodge in Adams. The tabs will go toward programs benefitting children at the Shriner's Hospitals for Children in Springfield and Boston. Even things as small as the can tabs help someone!

Congratulations to those who took the time to help others! Keep up the good work! God will bless you with such a warm, loving feeling.

~Nancy Main

Ladies' Tea Party...



The ladies of our parish are cordially invited to a Tea Party on Saturday, May 10th, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, at St. Mark's Parish House. The event is open to all ladies, young and old: moms, daughters, grandmothers, granddaughters, aunts and nieces! WE are planning on food, tea and lots of fun! Please sign-up on the sheet in the back of the church.

~Amanda Delisle



*St. Mark's Marchers'
Northern Berkshire Relay for
Life Team...*

So far we have held two fund raising events: Tastefully Simple & Tupperware parties. If you haven't already purchased your cancer awareness magnet; they are still for sale. We also have afghan raffle tickets. For more information on how you can help, or to purchase a magnet or raffle ticket, see Carol Tetlow, Nancy Main or JoAnn Delisle. Relay for Life is Friday, May 30 - Saturday, May 31st, Noel Field, North Adams



Each Week in our Parish...

Sunday, 9 am: Worship with Holy Eucharist
Children's Faith Formation

10:30 am: Youth Catechism Class (following the coffee fellowship on alternating Sundays)

Monday, 2 pm: Knit 'n Stitch Prayer Ministry*

Wednesday, 9:30 am: Morning Worship at the Millhouses in Adams

6:30 pm Wednesday, Lectionary Bible Study*
*in the Parish House

Saturday, May 3, 10 am: Lay Reader

Training/Refresher Course: If you are interested in becoming a Lay Reader, please speak with Pastor Ellen prior to the training event. **All LEMs are expected to have this training as well as those who only serve as Lay Readers. Inquirers are invited to observe and check out what being a Lay Reader requires and to see if this is something you'd like to give your time and attention to as a ministry in the parish.**

Sunday, May 9, Annual Parish Breakfast:

This year the Annual Breakfast falls on Pentecost, which is also Mother's Day. The breakfast will follow our 9 am service. If you are interested in helping with the food preparation for this event, please call Frank Palano at 743-0363 or by e-mail:

fpalano@roadrunner.com.

Sunday, May 18, Dinner and a Movie

5:00 pm, Bring a covered dish to share.

Movie: THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Thursday, May 22, 6:30 pm Girl's Nite Out at the Freight Yard Pub in North Adams. NOTE: They have an elevator! Please call Jean Palano at 743-0363 to make your reservation by Monday, May 19.

Friday/Saturday, May 30, 31, Relay for Life at Noel Field, North Adams.

Saturday, June 7, St. Mark's "Spring into Summer Festival:" On this day we will host a celebration of spring and coming summer season. As a fund raiser for the parish, we will feature a sale of plants; baked breads, cakes, pies & pastries; a "Chance Auction" (otherwise known as a Chinese auction); quilt raffle; arts & crafts; food & drink; and activities for children.

Saturday, June 29: St. Mark's Annual Parish Picnic Mark your calendar now, details will be coming along at a later date!

Good Samaritan...

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan, in which a man was beaten, robbed and left for dead. She described the situation in vivid detail so her students would catch the drama. Then, she asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

Newsletter Submission Deadline: Please

remember that the deadline for submitting items for the newsletter is the **15th OF THE MONTH!**

Hardcopy can be left in the Newsletter Mailbox in the parish office; snail mail to Karen DeOrdio, 14 Bradford St, North Adams MA 01247, or e-mail to both of the following:

k.j.deordio@mcla.edu & stmarksadams@verizon.net.

If you are a pledging member, the St. Mark's Epistle will be mailed to your home each month. The St. Mark's Epistle is also available on our web page at www.stmarksadams.com and in the rear of the church.

The financial report will go on this page!

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
PO Box 191, 39 Commercial St.
Adams, MA 01220
The Rev. R. Ellen White, Priest-in-Charge

Spring-into-Summer Festival
Saturday, June 7, 2008
9:30 am - 2:00 pm
St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Featuring

Plant Sale (including herbs)
Homemade Breaks, Cakes, Pies & Pastries
Chance "Chinese" Auctions for both Children & Adults
Food & Drinks (hotdogs/hamburgers/popcorn)

"Colors of Summer" Raffle

Handmade Quilt, "Window Box" Pattern (throw/wall-hanging size)

And/or

Handmade Crocheted Afghan

\$1.00 per ticket for each

Purchase Tickets: Church Office 413-743-0947 or from Church Members

Proceeds are designated for Missions & Outreach

