



St. Mark's Epistle

September 2007

View from the Mountain...

There once was a bishop trying to raise a million dollars for missions. In the mail he received many discouraging letters, except one from a little boy gave him hope. When the Bishop opened this particular letter, out tumbled a badly battered nickel. In the letter, the boy had written:

"I'm so glad you are going to get a million dollars for missions. I'm going to help you get it, too. Here's a nickel toward it. It's all I've got now, but when you want more, call on me!!!"

A small boy giving a small gift - perhaps But there's something at work here that reflects a more substantial truth: a boy with big heart giving what he could for a big cause.... the redemptive work of Christ in the world.

This story reminds me of the story of Jesus observing a woman's sacrificial giving at the temple treasury. (Mark 12:41ff) A poor widow gave all that she had in thanksgiving to God. She doesn't have much, just a couple of leptons, which in our money system of today would be about 1/8 of a penny. Perhaps the best estimate of what the lepton represented for Jesus' day comes from its literal meaning, "a tiny thing."

In this tiny offering, she didn't hold on to her possessions but lets go, trusting God to provide for her needs. She has no assurance that she will be rescued from the risks of voluntarily presenting her gift to the temple treasury. This woman's sacrifice is of the same kind of extravagant generosity that Jesus would show the world, when he gives up his own life and take up the



cross of Calvary. She not only gives generously, she lives generously. Her tiny thing is an awesomely faithful act of discipleship that pleases God to no end.

And what of your tiny things? Do you give sacrificially, taking the risk of trusting God to provide for your needs? Do you give out of your poverty, much less your abundance? Our tiny acts of devotion or giving - which can truly represents the best we can do or be - is a "big" thing in God's eyes. We each have a "tiny thing" waiting to come forth from us to become a mighty thing. Maybe it is sacrificially committing yourself to give a full tithe, 10% out of what God's providential grace has supplied for your wellbeing - or even a portion of a tithe. Maybe it is getting out of the house and volunteering in a classroom. Maybe it is planting flower bulbs along the roadside to make a beautiful space for a traveler. Whatever it is, you've got a tiny thing in you that can change the world. Maybe it is showing up, being present at a gathering or to support a project which may not particularly meet your needs but serves the needs of others. Your tiny thing is a mighty thing when you give it for God's glory.

*O God, teach us to be generous:
to serve you as you deserve to be served;
to give without counting the cost;
to fight without fear of being wounded;
to work without seeking rest;
and to spend ourselves without expecting any reward,
but the knowledge that we are doing your holy will. Amen
(adapted, Ignatius of Loyola)*

~Pastor Ellen

Sunday Schedule of Services/Christian Formation:

Beginning September 9, 2007

8:00 Rite I Holy Eucharist (spoken service, without music)

9:00 Seasons of the Spirit: Family Style Service of Worship (A Service of Word & Table in the upper level parish hall)

9:35-10:15 Discovery Centers (arts, crafts, and activities for sensory expression of the children's learning experience)

Adult Bible Study (lead by Fred Nicholaev)

Youth (ages 13-18) Catechism Class in Rector's Office

(Coffee and space available for quiet conversation, reading the Sunday paper or a book, or even finding time to pay one's bills...)

Seasons of the Spirit 4th Sundays will have the gathering time of call to worship, song and prayer, minus the Table rite. Instead of the full-but-brief-Eucharistic service, we will have a time for music training with the intention of developing a Children's Choir, for children 2-12 years of age. The singing class will then be followed by Discovery Center activities focused on pre-Catechism training, including preparing children for Holy Communion and other aspects of life in the Episcopal Church.

Following the Discovery Center activity, children will then become part of

the 10:30 service, processing from the parish house with their own processional cross and entering the nave with the Chancel Choir and liturgical team. We are shaping the worship service in the 10:30 service on the 4th Sundays to be more inclusive of children.

10:30 Rite II Holy Eucharist, with music

Coffee Hour fellowship in the parish house, following the 10:30 service

Informational Meetings on Servant Leadership for this September...

Servant Leadership is starting to take off in the Berkshires! Servant and Leadership, are these two words that go together? Yes, they do. Come find out how! This day long workshop will introduce participants to Servant Leadership's key practices: communion, compassion and co-creation through participation in the first three classes of Servant Leadership's ten week

course.

Northern Berkshires: September 8th, 2007
St. John's, North Adams, 10:00-5:00pm

Southern Berkshires: September 15th, 2007
St. George's, Lee; 10-5:00pm

**Lunch will be provided. Donations are welcome.

Registration for the full ten week course, Servant Leadership I, will also be available following these sessions. The Reverend Jenny Greg, Coordinator of Berkshire Servant Leadership School, will facilitate the informational meeting on September 8th and due to a prior commitment, The Rev. Ellen White will facilitate the event on September 15th.

To register please email either:

mail@ststephenspittsfield.org; or

ksulock@ststephenspittsfield.org

Registrants should include their address and phone number. Readings connected with the day will be mailed out in advance.

Harvest the Memories Legacy Stewardship Dinner September 16, 2007 Parish House 3:00 PM

On Sept.16th we will come together to recognize & honor those who have shared their legacy with St. Marks. Our guest speaker will be John White, Missioner for Legacy Stewardship, Diocese of Western, MA.

What is the meaning of legacy stewardship and why are we celebrating it? Let's take a look at the meaning of each of these words separately:

Stewardship:

The careful & responsible management of something that has been entrusted to one's care.

Legacy:

1. A bequest made in a will: money or property that is left to somebody in a will or by some other means.
2. Something from the past: something that is handed down or remains from a previous generation or time.

St Mark's Church is blessed to have received many

legacy gifts in the past. As we step back in time, we realize the significance of these gifts that have been entrusted to our care, and the gift of faith that has been placed in our ability to manage and preserve the integrity of these gifts. Thank God for those generous and caring people who had the foresight to see that we would face financial challenges in the future just as we have in the past.

Yes it is a time of celebration and time we recognize the positive effect that these gifts have made, and continue to make on our lives at St. Marks. Please be there. Take time to browse the memorabilia that will be on display. Make your favorite recipe and share it with your friends at an old fashioned covered dish dinner and best of all, join us in remembering & honoring those people from the past who have helped to make our present possible here at St Marks. See you there!

~JoAnn Gagne

Lectionary Bible Study Group Restarts Sept.9th!

Starting Sunday September 9 at 9:35 AM, the Lectionary Bible Study group, Kerygma Class, will meet in the Parish House for coffee and study of the day's lectionary readings. We plan on meeting for 40 minutes following the new Seasons of the Spirit: Family Service. The goal of the group is to further our understanding of scripture, enhance that Sunday's lessons and worship service, fellowship, and enjoyment of coffee. Gourmet coffee will be provided. This is an ongoing discussion group and there is no commitment to a certain number of meetings. Show up when you can and when the Spirit moves you. All are welcome.

Northern Berkshire CROP Hunger Walk..

The 1st Annual Northern Berkshire CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Sunday, October 21, 2007 at 1:00 PM, starting at the First Congregational Church in North Adams. Registration begins at 12:30 PM

CROP stands for *Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty*, and our Walk engages a broad cross-section of the community in service to the neediest of the world. It is an interfaith, community-oriented event that (1) raises funds to help hungry people, (2) raises awareness of hunger as an issue, (3) engages and trains volunteers for community service, and (4) brings together persons of many ages and backgrounds in a common endeavor.

The CROP Hunger Walk raises funds for hunger

programs in our area and around the world. The Northern Berkshire CROP Hunger Walk will distribute a quarter of the funds raised to local food pantries and meal sites. The remainder of the funds support Church World Service and other designated international agencies and their relief and development programs.

Donations to Church World Service for the CROP Hunger Walk are tax-deductible. Church World Service is a cooperative ministry of 35 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations, providing self-help and development, disaster relief, and refugee assistance in some 80 countries.

Visit: www.nbcropwalk.org or
<http://www.cropwalk.org>

Email: nbcropwalk@gmail.com ,
for more information.

A Note From The Senior Warden...

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.'

1 Corinthians 12:12-21

As you are reading this, members of the parish have recently met with Rev. Len Cowan at a Pot Luck supper to discuss what they have discerned to be the *Vision* for St. Marks. Rev. Cowan has significant experience in helping parishes in their visioning process and we have

already benefitted immensely from his direction and help.

For the four weeks prior to the Pot Luck supper, Rev. Ellen and I were urging parishioners to utilize a booklet to help them pray for, reflect about and discern God's call to us as a parish and as individuals as we become more faithful followers of Christ. We have asked the parish to imagine what St. Mark's would "look like" if we were to actively live out our mission of "bringing the love of God to all". What would that mission look like? How are we to fulfill God's mission for St. Mark's Adams to "bring the love of God to all"? At the Pot Luck supper, (I am writing this in advance of the event) I am sure a number of you have expressed what you have discerned to be God's call to the parish. I also hope and pray that many of you have participated in this event. As Paul's letter to the Corinthians above says,,,, we are all in this together. We are of the same body. We are all important. No one is any more important or less important than the other. We are all needed. We all need to work together as the body of Christ.

The vestry will be listening very intently to the congregation over the next several weeks as we ponder, reflect and pray over what the parish has been called to do. On September 22nd the vestry will meet to develop and solidify a vision statement based upon what was discerned by you, the congregation. This *Vision Statement* will guide us into the future. It will define who we are and what God's call is to us as a faithful community. It will give us purpose and direction. A clear sense of Vision will provide the parish with a guiding star with which the parish will be steered into the future.

*Yours in Christ,
~Fred Nicholaev, Senior Warden*

Knit & Stitch Prayer Ministry News...

The Knit and Stitch group made \$250 on our raffle of the Afghan which was won by Barbara Bennett of Adams, Ma. The Baby blanket was won by Alicia Johnson. We now have enough money to purchase yarn for quite a while. We want to thank all of the wonderful people who came to the St. Mark's tag sale...we had a wonderful time and met many new people whom I hope will see our enthusiasm and come and join us for Sunday Services.

We welcomed Earline Johnson to our Knit & Stitch group in July...Earline is a beginning knitter and is having a good time with it. She is making a scarf for the homeless and it is quite lovely. Now, on the other hand, Rev. Ellen is a new knitter also, but she had a hole in her

knitting big enough to put your fist thru! Needless to say, she had to rip it all out and start again!

Three throws we made were sent to Washington, D.C. for the Veterans in July, and two sweaters have been sent to Guide Posts. We received a lovely thank you card from Guide Posts.

Now about one of those sweaters...Gladys was knitting one, and was trying to get the yarn out of the middle of the skein when it got tangled...well..Jane tried to help by pulling it out and what a mess we had! How we all laughed...it took Jane to pull out all snarls, Gladys to hold the sweater, and then Jane started winding it up, while Sylvia and I stretched and pulled to get the yarn straight enough to wind...needless to say we had a fit of laughing and couldn't stop...everyone laughed so hard the entire hour was spent winding and laughing in wonderful fellowship.

We have such a good time ..why don't you come and join us??? The time flies and the fellowship is wonderful...you will even get a Bible story to listen to...no demands are made on anyone...we have plenty of yarn...just come in on Monday afternoon at 2:30 and stay for a little while to see if you like it...or just stop in and hear the story..we are in the Parish house in Rev. Ellen's office.
~Barbara Fiske

Quote from Erma Bombeck..

"When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would have not a single bit of talent left and could say *I USED EVERYTHING YOU GAVE ME.*"

~submitted by Jane Lebeau

St. Mark's New Approach to Faith Formation...

We are embarking on a new approach to children's faith formation in our parish - really the faith formation program for all age groups that encompass our life in the St. Mark's parish.

- ❖ Last winter we introduced a Sunday lectionary study of the morning's readings geared to the adult membership of the parish. This informal gathering to discuss the readings will again meet, beginning Sept. 9th, 9:30am.
- ❖ During the week we have an on-going prayer shawl ministry group that meets (otherwise known as Knit & Stitch Prayer Ministry) which combines contemplative prayer, the biblical story and mission outreach.
- ❖ On Wednesday mornings at 9:30, we

extend the walls of our parish to include the Millhouses of Adams, where we meet for a weekly Eucharistic service.

- ❖ As we enter into the month of November, we will offer a short-term study called "Singing the Lord's Song: Isaiah 40-55" which will meet on Wednesday evenings and Thursday mornings until early December. The study of the people of God in transition, Israel in exile and their movement back to their homeland, will be a good preparation as we approach the season of Advent. (More information about the class and registration in the next St. Mark's Epistle.
- ❖ On Sunday, September 9th, we are introducing a new program that combines both worship and Christian education with a 9am service called, "*Seasons of the Spirit: A Family Style Service of Worship*." This will be a service that both adults and children will appreciate; one that emphasizes the presence and gifts which the younger members bring to the life of our parish. On the fourth Sunday of the month, our children and youth will infuse the worship of the more traditional 10:30am service. On that particular Sunday, the children and youth will be a more visible part of the worship than they have in the past. This may take some getting used to, but the end result will be a spiritual lift that will invigorate our experience of the presence of God.
- ❖ On Sunday, Sept. 9th we will also begin a Catechism Class for youth 13-18 years of age, which will meet in the rector's office, gathering by 9:40am. Since we are encouraging a later age for Confirmation (around 15-18), the youth will explore with the priest and other designated persons, their faith journey and discovery of their call to be disciples.

Sunday School Rededication...

A rededication of the Sunday School and Worship Space, including the reception of the new free-standing altar and processional cross created by woodcraftsman, Michael Molleur, in memory of James Chenail, will be part of the first Family Service on 9 Sept.

Come Celebrate! Rejoice! Give Thanks!

St. Mark's Commitment to Children...

The following will be on every bulletin which

introduces the Seasons of the Spirit: A Family Style Service of Worship, indicating our commitment to children as they journey in discipleship within the life of this parish family. It is taken from the work of The Rev. Caroline S. Fairless's innovative "Children at Worship: Congregations in Bloom", and adapted to the St. Mark's Episcopal Church:

"We welcome you to St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Family Service.

We're committed to the spiritual growth and nurture of the children of the Berkshires, and you'll see that commitment reflected in this service.

The children set up the worship space for this service.

They participate in the Liturgy of the Word, the writing of the Prayers of the People, the Confession, and most of all, the shared Communion of Christ.

Following the communion, the children are invited to the classroom Discovery Centers to express in art forms and activities the worship experience they've just had.

We're happy you have joined us today."

Toddler's Creed...

If I want it, it's mine.

If I give it to you and change my mind, it's mine.

If I can take it away from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.

If it's mine, it will never belong to anybody else, no matter what.

If we are building something together,

all the pieces are mine.

If it looks just like mine, it is mine!

Come. Remember. Give Thanks.

9/11: Service of Remembrance In Honor of First Responders

Where: St. Mark's Episcopal Church
39 Commercial Street, Adams, MA

When: Monday, September 10, 2007, 7:00pm

St. Mark's is hosting a service of remembrance on the eve of the anniversary of 9/11, with a special invitation to the First Responders, the police and fire departments, ambulance services, EMTs, and selectmen of Adams, Cheshire and Savoy. We welcome others of the Christian faith, those of other religious traditions, as well as those who have no religious affiliation as we gather to offer up prayers and thanksgivings for those who died in the 9/11 attacks, and those who in service to

their communities and country have risked their lives for the common good of those in need.

A reception with refreshments will follow the service.

Come. Remember. Give Thanks.

Lament: Psalm 13

How long, O Lord?

How long, O Lord?

How long, O Lord?

Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long will I wrestle within myself?

Will sorrow be within my heart day after day?

How long will my enemy triumph over me?

How long, O Lord?

How long, O Lord?

Why this service now? It has been six years since 9/11. For some, life has dramatically changed; for others, not at all. Some stay in mourning or live in constant fear. In the past year or so we have had television specials, movies, and documentaries that have bombarded our senses and in a way, desensitized us to the effects of the tragedy, or perhaps have encouraged a sense of despair

and distrust. God calls us to move forward, to live our lives, and to listen and watch for how God is giving us hope for the living now and in the future. God does not desire us to be stuck in our grief, rather God gives us the resources to move in trust that as St. Julian of Norwich so long-a-go stated: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all mater of things shall be well." So in our time of gathering together, we bring not only the remembrance of those who have died on that fateful day, but we come remembering and giving thanks for all those who are on the 'front lines' in service within our communities. When tragedy happens...when there's an accident, a fire, a massive destruction of community and lives, when people's lives are threatened, the First Responders are on the scene, saving lives...giving hope....providing safety. We give thanks for those who risk their lives for us.

~ Pastor Ellen

Two Prayers...

Here are two prayers that can be prayed alone or with your family members, perhaps with grace at mealtime, and ways to help our children when questions of loss, such as 9/11, arise.

Prayer:

Dear God, I/we pray for the families who lost loved ones on this day six years ago. Comfort them and continue to guide them in your hope. Help us all

remember our feelings from that day, but help us also to move on to the hope of the future you provide for us. Thank you for your unending love and faithfulness. Amen.

Table Grace:

Dear God, I/we thank you for this day and this meal. You faithfully provide all that I/we need even amid fear or crisis. Help us rely on you for our tomorrows so that we can live more fully in you today. Amen.

Questions for Younger Children

- * What kinds of things make you feel afraid?
- * What or who helps you stop feeling afraid?
- * What are some things that make you sad?
- * What or who helps you stop feeling sad?
- * How can you help someone else who feels afraid or sad?
- * What can you do to feel close to God?

Assure younger children that God will always love them and take care of them, no matter what.

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Worship website: www.umcworship.org.

Vestry High-Lites: August 2007...

Senior Warden's Report: A reminder of the potluck supper meeting with the Rev. Len Cowan and his wife which is scheduled for August 22. Vestry members were asked to spread out among the tables and act as "note takers". The next leg of this Vision journey is scheduled for Saturday, September 22, from 10 am to 1pm. Vestry members will discuss the Vision process to date and go over any notes that we have collected to date...or as Rev. Cowan stated at our last meeting... "How do you put 'legs' on this whole process".

We have received the check from the Diocese for the Sunday school grant and additional furniture and equipment has been ordered. The amount received was \$3992.

Stewardship and Financial Report: Stewardship needs to be a year-round process and JoAnn's goal is to have the committee break up into subcommittees, which

will include (but not be limited to) the Legacy Dinner (John White from the Diocese will be guest speaker), the Stewardship drive, and a 3-year financial plan. The committee feels that a good part of faithful stewardship is educating the parishioners about their spiritual and financial responsibilities. About \$40,000 has been taken from our reserve funds to cover expenses so far this year.

Buildings and Grounds: Privacy doors were installed in the parish house, which helps to separate the space available in order to have multiple gatherings and still have privacy. Frank has been looking into what we need to do for general maintenance before winter. He plans on contacting Mr. Girgenti regarding plugging the leak in the church so we can fix the inside wall. The Town of Cheshire will blacktop the "apron" in front of the rectory driveway. Also, Don Pause will get some stone for the driveway to replace some what has washed away.

Frank mentioned that he will not be doing the German supper this year and, instead, he and his wife gave a donation toward the Sunday school grant matching fund.

Archives and Restoration: Sylvia Lefebvre is working on preserving the church charter that dates back to 1882. She plans on photocopying the charter for display and placing the preserved original charter in the safe. She and Chris Emerson will be working on other aspects of the archiving of historical documents in the future.

Youth Ministry: JoAnn and Amanda Delisle were thanked by Rev. Ellen and the Vestry for their hard work in making the Tag and Bake sale a success. \$800 was made by the Youth Group and \$300 was collected for the Monday Knit and Stitch group.

Hospitality and Evangelism: Fred has been in touch with Sue Walker from St. John's North Adams regarding the possibility of a joint conference with them, St. John's Williamstown and Blackinton on the subject of "How to welcome First-time Visitors Who Pass Through our Doors". More on this later.

Outreach and Mission: The CROP Walk is scheduled for October 21, 2007 at 1 pm with registration at 12:30. It will begin at the 1st Congregational Church, North Adams and will probably be a 4-5 mile route. More information can be found at www.nbcropwalk.org Other information is dispersed through out the newsletter.

News of Nick Wood....

Nicholas Wood, son of Sharon and Stephen Wood, continues to study at the Institute for Graduate Clinical Psychology at Widener University in Chester, PA. He recently passed his comprehensive exams, elevating him to full doctoral candidacy and earning him a Master's Degree. He has begun his doctoral internship at Philadelphia Fight, a comprehensive HIV/AIDS clinic in center city Philly. Nick has two years left in his program and his dissertation will focus on a new therapeutic intervention for people with HIV/AIDS who have a history of depression. Recently Nick was elected President of his program's Student Forum.

~Sharon Wood

Explore Your Faith...

What if I'm not certain what I believe? Well, my friend, you have just joined a very large club. Particularly if, by the use of the word "certain," you mean "clear." What if I'm not clear about what I believe? You see, too much clarity, too much certainty can lead us to spiritual arrogance, a disease that inhabits many of us clergy types. Maybe we should become less certain. That might make us more open. "Openness" by the way, seems to be the more correct posture for faith. Try putting a gift in a clenched fist. Whew, souls clenched with "certainty" must create headaches for the Godhead.

"Not certain what I believe?" Try asking it this way: "Not certain what I trust?" If we can substitute "trust" for "believe," the fog around faith might be pierced with some new light. Trust is so much warmer, more intimate than belief. Belief sounds doctrinal. Trust implies relationship. I lean toward What and Who and Why I trust. When I approach it that way, it seems to lend more light. When it comes to belief, it's just more fun and childlike to be open than to be adult like and "certain." Try it! The words of this commercial seem to have the ring of the Jesus of the Gospels.

<http://www.explorefaith.org/bio.bailey.html>

The Rev. Dr. Douglass M. Bailey

My Journey with Christ...

As a youth, going to church every Sunday or Holy Day was standard practice. My dad was very strict about that. He was also very strict in his believe about tithing. I can remember whenever he received a raise at work, the amount of his check to the church also increased. I never quite understood that, but I was a kid, I wasn't really supposed to. In the fall of 1977 our

church, St. Helena's in Lenox, held a "Faith Alive" weekend. It was then that I knelt at the altar and asked Christ to come into my life. I had seen the picture of Christ at Hearts Door and always felt that I was a Christian and would be one who would inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, but it wasn't until that night that I really understood what it all meant.

As I grew older, my life became busier and I found more and more reasons to stay away from church. Not an uncommon thing for teenagers and young adults. I found my way back when I got married, and again when Eric was born. Then for the next 6 years, I was like many, a Holy Day only attendee. When I was pregnant with Brendon, I was in need of finding a church to go to so that this baby could be baptized. I ended up at St. John's in North Adams. I started attending Saturday services and Fr. Larry performed the baptism. I continued to attend there, but never really felt at home. Because of this, I again, only attended church on Holy Days, and then it was back at St. Helena's. I attended there frequently enough to get to know Rev. Dunning, and she, me, my boys and my mother.

In the fall of 2000, I found myself a single mother, living in a new town, in a new position totally outside of my comfort zone. My mom received a phone call from Rev. Dunning two weeks before my first major business trip (my first overseas flight). She was retiring from St. Helena's and was going to become the Interim priest at St. Marks. Mom was a member of St. Marks, and had been for 17 years or so but had been attending St. Helena's with me. Rev. Dunning asked Mom if we would either attend her last service at St. Helena's or her first service at St. Marks. Well, because I was in Germany for her last service at St. Helena's, Mom agreed to attend the service at St. Marks.

We became faithful members of St. Marks, and in 2002, I was asked by our Sr. Warden to become a member of the vestry.

Over the past 17 years, I never really considered putting more in the collection plate than I did in 1985. As I starting seeing the financial picture of the church, I felt a bit ashamed of the fact that my pledge was not even 3% of my income. I immediately increased my pledge, actually doubled it. I had been on a major project at work that had come to a completion in 2002 and later that year I received a bonus, equal to 6 weeks wages!

Every year since then I have increased my giving and have found Christ's blessings in many ways. I have had a job change that resulted in an increase in pay of

almost 50%, a tuition scholarship for Eric, a significantly positive change in my health, two healthy children that are my world and a multitude of other intangible gifts from Christ.

Can I prove that all of these changes are a direct result of my gifts back to Christ? No, I can't, but I do believe that ALL of our blessings come from Christ and he asks for just a little, only 10%, back. We can give back in many ways, with our Time, with our Talents and our Treasures. I'm not yet pledging at 10%, but I'm closing the gap with my cash pledge and my time. I truly believe you reap what you sow, in Proverbs 11:25 it is written "*A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.*"

In Genesis 28: 20-22, it is written "*And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*"

In Leviticus 27:30-32 it is written "*And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.*"

I ask you all to think about how Christ has worked in your life, the blessings you have or are receiving from Him and ask yourselves honestly, are you a Cheerful Giver back to Christ? Are you giving back to Him his fair share in Time, Talent or Treasure? If you are, you know the Blessings are plentiful, if not, I challenge you to try it. Christ's blessings are indescribable, indefinable, but without a doubt the most wonderful thing you can receive, and I pray that you may find them in your lives.

*With Love in Christ,
Carol Tetlow*

Girl's Nite Out...

Attention, girls of all ages! St. Mark's "Girl's Nite Out" will start up again on **Thursday, September 13th**. We will meet at **Red Sauce**, across from the Mary Spitzer Center on Ashland St. in North Adams at **6:30 pm**. Mark your calendar now...we always have a

wonderful and relaxing time together.

Please *RSVP* to *the Parish Office at 743-0947* or by e-mail to Terry Molleur: tmolleur@msn.com. Hope to see you there!

~Terry Molleur

Coming Events & Dates to Remember...

Every Week:

Sunday Services: 8, 9, & 10:30 am

Christian Formation: 9:30-10:15 am

Mondays, 2:30 pm: Knit & Stitch Prayer Ministry

Wednesdays, 9:30 am: Worship at the Millhouses

Schedule for 12-Step Groups & Weight Watchers:

Weight Watchers: Monday, 4-6:30 pm

AA: Monday - Friday, 10-11 am

AA: Wednesday: 7:30-9 pm

AA: Saturday: 10-11 am

Al-Anon: Wednesday, 7:30-8:30 pm

NA: Friday, 7:30-9 pm

OTHER DATES:

Monday, Sep 3: Office Closed, Labor Day

Friday, Sep 7: Wedding Rehearsal (Church Bldg.)

Saturday, Sep 8: 10-5 pm Information Meeting, Servant Leadership
(Session 1-3 of Core Curriculum), at St. John's, North Adams

Saturday, Sep 8: 10-12 noon Sunday School Teacher Prep Session
Saturday, Sep 8: 6:30 pm Grande-Supernault Wedding

Monday, Sep 10, 7 pm: Service of Remembrance, 9/11, Honoring First Responders

Tuesday, Sep 11, 12 noon: Clericus

Thursday, Sep 13, 6:30 pm: Girl's Nite Out

Saturday, Sep 15, 10 -5: Information Meeting, Servant Leadership,
(Session 1-3 of Core Curriculum), at St. George's, Lee

Sunday, Sep 16, 3:00 pm: Harvest the Memories Legacy Stewardship Covered Dish Supper

Saturday, Sep 22, 10-1: Vestry Retreat, Visioning Follow-Up
10-12 noon: Sunday School Teacher's Planning Session

Sunday, Oct 21: CROP Walk, North Adams, 12:30 pm Registration, 1 pm Walk
Sunday, Oct 21: Dinner & a Movie at St. Mark's