



The St. John's Banner

Mount Rainier, MD

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

February 2009

Lent 2009

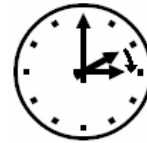
Ash Wednesday Service

**Lent begins on
Wednesday, February
25th. A service of Holy
Eucharist with
Distribution of Ashes will
be held at 7 PM.**

Lenten Evening Program

On the Wednesdays in Lent between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, St. John's will offer a program at 7 PM. Each week, we will walk the Stations of the Cross, and the service

will be followed by *Revival*. The first led by Father Lydia Murray, Carol Eugene Wright subsequent



a talk on discussion will be Darko, with Hazlewood and leading sessions.

**Third Sunday
in February**

One service at 9 AM on Sunday, February 15th.

Guest preacher:
Rev. Norma Blackwell

Monthly Birthday & Anniversary Celebration following the service.

A little advance notice...

Daylight Time begins at 2 a.m. on Sunday, March 8th. Be sure to set you clocks *ahead* one hour – preferably at bedtime the night before!

from the Priest-in-Charge

Who is a Christian?

What is Christianity?

A Christian is someone who has accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior and has been baptized in the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Christianity means adhering to Christian principles, beliefs and practices by following the example of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels. So Christianity is **NOT** the fidelity with which we come to Church, but the compassion and love that compel us to care for the most needy in society, thereby continuing the ministry of Christ which advances the purposes of God in the world

Anybody can claim to be a Christian by participating in our weekly experience of God called "worship." But Christianity is

really what we do in between Sundays. In Matthew 25, Jesus spoke of the sick, the hungry and the lonely, and said for as much as you reach out to one of these, you have done it to Him.

One parishioner took food to an old lady in her nineties who lives alone on Thanksgiving Day, to give her a sense of family, joy and love.

That is **CHRISTIANITY**.

Another parishioner went to the grocery store after Sunday worship and met a young lady with three small children begging for money to buy food for her children. That parishioner obliged and saw the lady going into a fast-food restaurant to buy food to feed her children.

That is **CHRISTIANITY**.

Christianity is compassion that puts the needs of others at the same level as one's own needs. It means seeing the face of Christ in the lonely and frightened individual you meet in the dark corner of the world and watch the light of Christ come to life in his or her eyes by your compassion.

Work in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us an offering and sacrifice to God.

In Christ's love and peace,

The Rev. Canon Daniel D. Darko
Priest-In-Charge

Annual Meeting Held; New Vestry Begins

The 2009 Annual Parish Meeting was held on Sunday, February 1st. To accommodate the entire parish, a single service was held at 9 o'clock and the meeting immediately followed

This being an odd-numbered year, the meeting elected a Senior Warden, along with three Vestry members. Eugene Wright had served on the Vestry for six consecutive years – the last two as Senior Warden – and thus was ineligible to continue, as our Bylaws impose a six-year "term limit" on Vestry service.

Prior to the meeting, one name had been placed in nomination for Senior

Warden by petition: Leslie Rogers-Wright. There had also been four persons nominated for the three-year Vestry term. All three persons whose terms were to expire in 2009 were eligible to continue and had been renominated: Bridget Benjamin, Avril George and Neil Knights - but Neil withdrew his name because of other commitments. The "new" nominee was Shittu Williams. That left three announced candidates for the three positions.

All candidates were introduced to the meeting to express their thoughts about serving on the Vestry. There were no additional nominations from the floor. Since the number of nominees was equal to the number of positions to be filled, all candidates were

elected by motion carried on a

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voice vote.

The meeting also elected a Youth Representative to the Vestry, and a delegation to Diocesan Convention. There had been no advance nominations, so candidates were nominated from the floor and confirmed their willingness to serve; in each case the candidates were then elected by motion on a voice vote.

Congratulations to the following individuals who have been elected to serve:

Leslie Rogers-Wright as Senior Warden, serving until 2011.

Bridget Benjamin, Avril George and Shittu Williams

Williams, as Vestry members until 2012.

Cheryl Thomas, age 17, as Youth Representative to the Vestry for one year.

Judith Davies and **Donald Eledy-Cole** as Delegates, and **Brian Roman** as Alternate Delegate, to Diocesan Convention. These individuals will represent St. John's at the Region 5 Assembly in October of this year and at Convention on January 29-30, 2010.

Attendees at the meeting received a packet of reports from some of the parish committees, the Treasurer and the Junior Warden. Outgoing Senior Warden Eugene Wright opted to give his report verbally.

He noted that 2008 held both accomplishments and disappointments, but wanted to concentrate on the positives. He mentioned increased membership, improved financial management, development of the Centennial plans, kitchen remodeling and a new television for the classroom as specific accomplishments, and spoke of greater activity and involvement by several parish organizations. In particular, Stewardship, Evangelism and Outreach have been reconstituted under one busy committee.

A couple of "down" sides that Eugene did mention were that we were unable to sustain our paper recycling program due to the vendor's withdrawal, and the damage done to the Parish Hall roof and offices from heavy rains. But the "up" side to that last one was that insurance paid for the interior damage, and a contract has been let to replace the flat roof within the coming month.

Eugene also presented the Financial Report and the budget for 2009 – both of which were included in the information packet.

Father Darko followed up with a report of his first half year as Priest-in-Charge. He noted that the Diocese has assigned him to St. John's as a "part-time" pastor, but he does not believe in part-time ministry. He called the meeting's attention to the responsibilities of the parish priest as outlined in Episcopal Church and Diocesan canons. He wanted listeners to understand that at some point, we will need to call a Rector and we need to prepare ourselves for the financial impact; for example, as he is a priest who has reached retirement age, St. John's does not need to contribute to his pension. He said that he will stress stewardship and reminded the congregation that "fund raising is *not* stewardship."

The meeting closed with the singing of the first verse of the hymn "O Worship the King, All Glorious Above."

The Vestry held its first meeting after the Annual Meeting on Sunday, February 8th, and welcomed the new members. Fr. Darko announced that **Denise Bentick** has been appointed as Director of Christian Education, and **Shona Bramble** is her assistant.

New Senior Warden Leslie Rogers-Wright had formerly served as a Vestry member with one year remaining in his term. The Vestry therefore needed to select another person to serve until the 2010 Annual Meeting, and chose **Sandra Bramble**. Sandra has served on the Vestry before; her last term – as Senior Warden – was completed in 2003.

Fr. Donathan Pays Return Visit

The first Centennial year visit by a priest who served the parish in the past took place on January 25th, when the Rev. Larry Donathan came and delivered the sermon at a single service at 9 o'clock.

Fr. Donathan was the last full-time Rector at St. John's, serving from 1997 to 2003, and it is fair to say that he is fondly remembered.

His sermon was on the subject of "discipleship." In an attempt at humor (successful!), he drew an analogy between discipleship and employment, listing some "intentionally ambiguous" referrals someone might give a former employee. For example: a referral saying "I cannot recommend her too highly" could really mean "I can't recommend her *at all!*" But, he went on to note that Jesus did not rely on job applications or referrals to select his disciples. In fact, he did not select anyone who was a respected religious leader, but rather, ordinary working people who were teachable, courageous and decisive (they were willing to accept their new "job" immediately), and people of integrity. He concludes that St. John's will remain, as long as we, the disciples of today, are able to exhibit these qualities.

Fr. Donathan wrote to us following his visit; here is his letter:

**Dear Canon Darko &
St. John's Family:**

It was indeed a pleasure to be

with you on Sunday, January 25th in your continuing centennial celebration. I am most grateful to Fr. Darko for sharing the pulpit with me. Thank you very much for the warm welcome home I received. It was good to be home! It was truly a day filled with joy and celebration. The worship was inspiring and the food in the Fr. Brown Room was delicious as usual! Thank you for sending me home with a week's worth of lunch and dinner!

I frequently reflect on our ministry together during those 6 years as your rector. Though I am not in your presence very often I hope you know that my love for you as brothers and sisters in Christ is as strong as ever. I remember our time together with fondness and a grateful heart. You will always be a part of my life and I hope I will always be a part of yours.

I look forward to being with you again this year as you celebrate and in the years to come.

May God bless you always.

*Love in Christ,
Fr. Larry+*

A Look Back in The Banner

Second in our Centennial Series of reprints of past articles...

**An article submitted by
Carol Hazlewood for**

The St. John's Banner
**August/September 2000
issue**

FILLED WITH HIS PRESENCE

**"Blessed are those who
hunger and thirst after**

righteousness: for they shall be filled."

- Matthew 5:6

He actually comes into our spirit by His Spirit to reside. He is the living Christ who, very much alive, arises to become the dominant person in our experience. He fills our life.

This "filling" by God's Spirit of which Jesus spoke and about which much has been said in the New Testament appears to confuse many. It really does not need to be so if we understand in simple terms what is meant.

To be filled with the presence of God is to enjoy His company and companionship in all of life. It is to know Him as our life mate, exactly as in a beautiful marriage. Two people never really "know" each other until they become fully open and available to each other. It is only when each has invited the other to come into his or her life and fully share all their experience that their days are "filled" with the other's presence and person.

This is why Jesus referred to Himself as the groom, and His church (you and me) as His bride. He comes into our lives to fill them continuously with His own person, His own presence, His own influence. Jesus' promise to us is this: "they shall be filled."

A Stewardship Minute

FEBRUARY 2009

"A Stewardship Minute" is a brief reflection on one of the articles appearing in the *Stewardship* newsletter, distributed monthly by Parish Publishing, LLC. Copies of the newsletter are available in the tract rack at the front door of the church.

While we are spiritual beings, we live in a physical human body and in a physical world; all made by God. We are meant to be fully responsible for the totality of our existence. The old story of Adam and Eve makes the point that they meant to live in fellowship with God and were placed in a lovely environment, which they were meant to till and keep in good shape.

Like them, we too are spiritual creatures living in physical bodies and dwelling in what is meant to be a lovely physical world, which we are to maintain and enjoy. Taking care of our total existence - our spirits, our bodies, and our world - is what the Bible calls stewardship and St. Paul once said; "It is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy." (1 Cor. 4:2)

The story of the prodigal son in Luke is about a young man who was not worthy in this regard. He decided that he would spend his life as he wished, not as his father wanted him to do. So the Bible says he "traveled to a distant country and there he squandered his property in dissolute living." (Luke 15:13) He ended up broke, hungry, and miserable, not to mention alienated from his family.

You probably know the rest of the story, but the February issue of *Stewardship* uses an interesting analogy to point out that God expects us to live in the spiritual world, but also be careful managers of our physical world. We have an enormous responsibility!

Prayer: Dear Lord, help us always to be trustworthy stewards of every gift you have given to us. May we please you always. **Amen.**

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