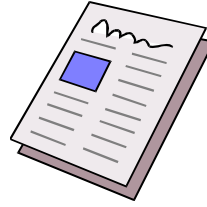


ST. MATTHEW'S ONLINE NEWSLETTER



JULY / AUG, 2009

The Episcopal Church of St. Matthew

TO BE ALIVE

BY FR. RICK WILSON

Recently in an adult education study held between the 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion services, one of the participants shared with the rest of the group, the following comment:

"I believe the Bible is a **living document**. By that I mean that it has to speak to us as people of our own time." I like his perception because it was a reminder that we cannot go back and recreate worlds through which humankind has already moved. We are not the people of Israel in 1000 BCE and we are not the people of the Church in Corinth in 55 CE. We are 21st century human beings addressing questions of our own time. But we do have some connection with our predecessors. It is that connection of being a people on a journey that remains common to us all. Their questions, frustrations, joys may be ours as well - just experienced in a different world through different means.

I see the Episcopal Church as a **living tradition**. I see this particularly evident in the triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Deputies (both clergy and laity) who are elected from each diocese join the Episcopal bishops in addressing a wide spectrum of topics. If a resolution is proposed, the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops must both approve it in or-

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Living document, living tradition, living church



The Online Newsletter is the production of the volunteer staff and the Priest in Charge. Please email all articles before the

1st of the month to:
stmattsnewsletter@hotmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

Evening Prayer—Wednesdays—6 pm

Knitting Group—Aug 26—11:00 am

Finance Meeting—Aug 13 —7:00 pm

Vestry Meeting—Aug 18—7:00 pm

Prayer Circle—Aug 20—10:00 am

Abilities Club—Aug 20—11:00 am

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"A Simple Test for Stroke"

The American Stroke Association does not endorse “The Smile Test,” also known as “a simple test for stroke,” which has been widely distributed through e-mails.

The facts: A scientific poster presented at the 2003 International Stroke Conference titled “Untrained Adults Can Identify Symptoms of Stroke by Directed Use of the Cincinnati Pre-hospital Stroke Scale” suggested that bystanders could identify a stroke by asking a person to:

- Smile
- Raise both arms
- Speak a simple sentence coherently

This presentation by researchers at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Medicine was one of 450 presentations made at the conference hosted by the American Stroke Association. The poster showed positive results but was a very small study. The research was funded by a grant from the American Stroke Association. **However, the American Stroke Association has not taken a position on this topic nor endorsed this test.**

Stroke warning signs are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

**Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience symptoms!
Time lost is brain lost!**

SHELTER MINISTRY

For 10 years St. Matthew's has had a shelter ministry, providing toiletries to several women's, men's, and families' shelters. If you stay at a hotel or motel please bring back any unopened toiletries (soap, lotion, shampoo, etc.) and place them in the marked basket in the narthex. When we have a full box they will be distributed to one of the Tucson agencies assisting persons in need.



Thanks to everyone who has donated items to this ministry.



Tips for Staying Safe Second in a series of three articles



It never hurts to be careful in this sometimes crazy world..

A few notes about getting into your car in a parking lot, or parking garage:

- A.) Be aware! Look around your car, look into your car, at the passenger side floor, and in the back seat.
- B.) If you are parked next to a big van, enter your car from the passenger door. Some predators attack their victims by pulling them into their vans while the women are attempting to get into their cars.
- C.) Look at the car parked on the driver's side of your vehicle, and the passenger side. If a male is sitting alone in the seat nearest your car, you may want to walk back into the mall, or work, and get a guard/policeman to walk you back out.

If someone is in the car with a gun to your head **DO NOT DRIVE OFF!** Instead gun the engine and speed into anything, wrecking the car. Your air bag will save you. If the predator is in the back seat, he will get the worst of it. As soon as the car crashes, bail out and run toward other people if at all possible. It is better than having them find your body in a remote location.

IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY!

Stewardship of our Environment Taking Care To Create a “Green” Church

Practice the ‘5Rs’-Reverence, Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Recycle

REVERENCE for all Creation

REDUCE the amount of waste that is produced by our church by purchasing or choosing:

- ♣ only what we really need
- ♣ durable long-lasting products
- ♣ products with no (or minimal) packaging

REPAIR items that no longer work

REUSE paper, jars and cans, cardboard boxes, paper and plastic bags, paper clips, string, etc. Some items can be used for craft and art projects.

RECYCLE unwanted items: clothing, appliances, books, magazines and many other items may be someone else’s treasure!



CARING CASSEROLES

The Caring Casseroles ministry was put into action a number of years ago to aid parishioners who are temporarily unable to cook for themselves with a simple, nourishing casserole. So many of us go through difficult times: an illness or injury to ourselves or a family member, surgery, a death in the family, the loss of a job. Caring Casseroles doesn’t attempt to say they will fix those issues, but they can take a bit of the pressure off by providing the basics for good nutrition when other things are overwhelming.

If you and your family are experiencing a difficult time and could use a hand, please do not hesitate to contact the church office at 298-9782 or Barbara Hull at 722-0046. They will happily listen to your need and arrange for support.



Of course, anyone wishing to join the group and offer to provide Caring Casseroles from time to time would be most welcome. Please call Barbara Hull and she’ll be happy to explain the details to you. Thank you for being such a supportive church!

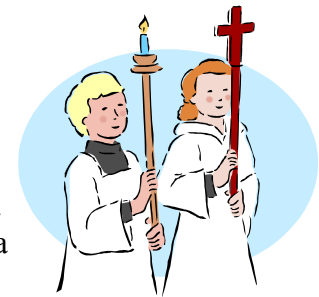
TO BE ALIVE (CONT.)

der for it to pass. One of the most significant resolutions to be approved occurred at the Convention in 1976. Here it was voted on and passed to open the call to the diaconate, the presbyterate, and the episcopacy to women. In the Episcopal Church, thirty years later at the 2006 Convention, Katharine Jefferts Schori was elected as the Presiding Bishop, the first woman in that office. And what a powerful spiritual leader she has been for us already!

The Episcopal Church is a living Church tradition because it does not stop and allow itself to get mired in the past. While respecting the struggles of the people who were in that past, the Church realizes that we are still learning individually and collectively. I recall in seminary a designation for all the baptized. We are the journeying church. This certainly is true for us as Episcopalians.

Keeping true to its identity as part of the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church centers its identity in its worship. We are not a Christian tradition with a fundamentalist understanding of the Bible. We are not a church who has a centralized authority to whose beliefs we must adhere. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the major spiritual leader within the Anglican Communion but does not exercise jurisdiction over all the Churches in the Communion.

Our commitment to Scripture, Tradition, and Reason allows us to ask questions, differ from one another, and still respect each other. We are evangelical, catholic, and open-minded (what use to be referred to as Low Church, High Church and Broad Church). Some of our parishes are more one than the others but each element is part of our identity as a living tradition. How exciting to have each of these energies fuel us as a people of God.



Saint Matthew's is a local **living Church**. We are committed to being a vibrant Christian community of faith. Through our worship, pastoral care, education programs, and outreach we live the message of a people who journey with God especially through the revelation of God expressed through Jesus Christ.

Our worship whether it is the meditative liturgy of the 8:00 service, the celebrative experience of our 10:30 liturgy or our midweek Evening Prayer reflection allows us to realize that God is with us. Our pastoral care provides us an opportunity to address the needs of one another as we come to moments in our lives when the presence of another can help us. Our education programs whether for children or adults remind us of how incredible the mystery of life is and of God's commitment to us. We have the opportunity to keep learning! Our outreach reminds us that we are not a private club caring only for ourselves. Our extended ministries programs engage us with others knowing that we are truly a people united by virtue of being children of God, all of us. These ministries allow us to say to others, "I value you and am here to help." There is no question that none of us asked to be born but we have been given life. It remains our choice to either go through life enduring one day after another or to be truly alive. "The Glory of God is a human person, truly human, truly alive" wrote a second century bishop of Lyons. With a living document, a living tradition, and a living church, we have numerous encouragements in our journey to choose to be alive!

Biker's Prayer

God, I know you are real. Thank you for being in the wind with me even before I ask.
Thank you for your son, JESUS, who died for me.
Forgive me of my sins; for I truly repent and turn to you.
JESUS, I ask you now to come in my heart that we might ride together daily.
I dedicate myself and my scoot to serving you. Thank you Lord for my salvation!
Thank you, for I am now "In HIS Wind." Amen.

From

"His Laboring Few Biker Ministry of Jesus Christ" Thomasville, NC
Thanks to Ann Benton for sharing it with us.

Eagles



Isaiah 40:28 – 31

The eagle is a symbol used many times in scripture in fact, it is mentioned 38 times throughout the Bible. We can learn some important lessons from this majestic creation of God. Eagles have a wing span of 2 meters and are around 90 cm. tall. The eagle mates for life and uses the same nest for life. This nest is built in a safe place, often on the ledge of a sharp cliff. It is built to last and the largest nest reported is 9 ½ feet wide and 20 feet deep.

When the babies are born, both parents assume responsibility for their care. They are gentle parents, sitting on the eggs for one month. The parents bring food up to the nest and feed them small pieces of meat. Within 45 days they can weigh nearly 40 times their birth weight. At three months they get special feather for flying and a new learning experience begins. *** The mother eagle flies into the nest and begins to thrash around causing a great commotion. Eventually one of the babies will fall out of the nest and begin heading for the earth below. Never having used his wings before, he's not really sure what to do, but does do lots of flapping while heading straight down! Just before the baby hits the ground, the mother eagle flies underneath in order to 'catch' the baby on her powerful wings and she flies him safely back to the nest. This continues on day after day until all the babies learn to fly.

There are two verses in scripture that actually mention this routine of the eagle. In

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Deuteronomy 32:10, 11 Moses reminds the children of Israel how God cared for them and guarded them just “like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions.” Again in Exodus 19:4 God says that “He will carry the children of Israel on eagles’ wings.”

We can get very comfortable in our “nest”. Perhaps that could be our way of doing things, our way of thinking, our opinions, our way of living life. Then when God comes and “stirs up our nest” we get upset. We don’t always identify with this as a growing experience. Sometimes if we were really honest, we really don’t want to grow. We get very complacent and satisfied with where we are and any interruptions are viewed as negative. But God wants us to fly – to become all that He intends us to become. He never stirs up our nest without good reason!

The eagle can see a rabbit two miles away. It can soar up to two miles above the ground and can fly at speeds of up to 100 miles per hour. They have a separate eyelid which slides across the eye sideways in order to keep the eye clean and free from dust as they fly. Their bones are hollow and therefore light of frame. Their frame has cross ribs like steel bars in skyscrapers. The eagle has 7,000 feathers. The back feathers are as long as the head feathers. Their beak is black until age of 3 years and then turns golden.

When eagles are about 30 years old they go through a renewal process. *** They find a secret place high in the mountains and begin to claw at their face and tear out the feathers that have been damaged over the years. As a result, it bleeds badly. But this is necessary for the eagle in order to renew its strength. If it did not do this it would not be able to live to its normal 40 years of age,

Psalms 103:5 says “who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.” A time of renewal is necessary for every child of God. A time when we get rid of what is weighing us down, holding us back, aging us spiritually. A time to give up the sinful habits, to give in to the Holy Spirit in whatever way He is convicting us. We need to do this even to the point of renewal with pain! Some things we hold on to so tightly that to let go, actually causes us pain. But in order to have the long, powerful, useful spiritual life that God plans for us, we need to do that. It will renew our spiritual youthfulness.

When the eagle is free to soar in God’s creation, they are the cleanest of birds. They were created to be free and to soar to great heights. They were not meant to remain close to the earth in the lowlands. They were created to soar. When eagles are held in captivity, they become one of the dirtiest birds.

God has created us to remain pure and holy and conformed to his image. Don’t allow

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the freedom we are to experience in Him, to be compromised by spending too much time in worldly thinking, activities, mindsets. Remain clean!

Eagles do not fly like other birds; they don't flap their wings but rather soar. Flapping their wings would use incredible amounts of their own strength and endurance and they would require so much more food as fuel if they didn't soar. Instead they sit on a high ledge and wait for the right wind currents to come. When the time is right, they take off and soar upward, effortlessly, because they have waited for the right time. There is a special 'up going' wind, that they ride as it circles higher and higher toward the sky.

What a lesson for God's children to learn. How often do we waste strength by jumping out too soon and 'flapping our wings', instead of waiting for God's timing. Waiting is not a popular concept in these days of instant everything! But when we wait on the Lord – wait for His timing – wait for His answers – wait for His direction, then we can soar to new heights and fly to new places.

“Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.”

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