



The Severn Light

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
Severn Parish
Crownsville, Maryland

March 2007
Holy Week-Easter Edition

IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Pastor's Desk
Page 1

Group Activity
Page 2

Diocesan Surveys
Pages 3-5

Property Update
Page 6

Easter Flowers
Page 7

Foyer Groups
Page 8

Cemetery Update
Page 9



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Holy Week and Easter

The Paschal Mystery—Christ's dying and rising for us—is the heart of the Christian Faith. From Palm Sunday through Easter, we will walk this path with Jesus. Join us for worship.

April 1, Palm Sunday

8 and 10 a.m.—Holy Eucharist; Liturgy of Palms; the Passion according to St. Luke

April 2, Monday of Holy Week

9 a.m.—Morning Prayer
5 p.m.—Evening Prayer

April 3, Tuesday of Holy Week

9 a.m.—Morning Prayer
5 p.m.—Evening Prayer

April 4, Wednesday of Holy Week

10 a.m.—Holy Eucharist
5 p.m.—Evening Prayer

April 5, Maundy Thursday

9:30 a.m.—Morning Prayer
6 p.m.—Agape Meal, Holy Eucharist, and Liturgy of the Stripping of the Altar
Prayer Vigil begins after the evening service & continues until Good Friday at noon

April 6, Good Friday

12 p.m.—Good Friday Liturgy from the Book of Common Prayer
7:30 p.m.—Stations of the Cross

April 8, Easter Sunday

8 and 10 a.m.—Holy Eucharist

Group Activity-Happenings at St. Stephen's



St. Stephen's Circle

The Circle will meet on Wednesday, April 4 at 7:00 PM. We will be making final plans for another family bingo night and discussing other on going projects. Please join us. All are welcome.

The Circle will be holding **Family Bingo** on Friday, April 13 at 6:00 PM. There will be dinner and snacks for sale and lots of fun for everyone. Join us for another great evening and bring the neighbors!

Carol McNemar, President.

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ST. STEPHEN'S GUILD

The ladies of St. Stephen's Guild meet on the first Thursday of the month from September through June. In April, they will travel to the Naval Academy in Annapolis for a tour of the newly renovated Chapel and then on to the Officer's Club for lunch. For details, see Guild President, Jean Cox.

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We would like thank all the folks that share our Pancake Supper with us. We hope the food was as delightful to eat as it was to prepare. It's always a good time for the teens.

"ET" Tourney...To all you duffers and hackers out there! Come share another first with the ET group. Our outing is scheduled for 1 pm Friday April 27th at Bay Hills Club in Arnold, Maryland. We are looking for a field of 36. We will have food, prizes and as always "FUN!" Bring your golf partner with you and enjoy the afternoon with us. If you would like to sponsor a hole please give me a call. 410-703-6710.

As we near our ASP trip to Russell, Virginia, ETeens will be working hard to meet our monetary objective. Our calendar is full of fun events and raisers. From Donuts to Car Washes to Golf Tourney's, this spring and summer prove to be full of excitement and fellowship.

Sheri LaFleur, Advisor

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On **E.D.G.E.**

EVERY DAY GOD EXPECTS

Our prayers and good wishes are with EDGE Advisor, Lisa Eliot, as she continues in her recovery from surgery. Thanks to all the parents who have stepped forward to help keep things moving along.

EDGE, for Middle School students, meets the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall.

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FFR☺G's

Fourth & Fifth Graders Relying On God

FFROGs will be busy this Spring with some group outings and different service projects to help the community and world. We look forward to seeing you come out and join us! All boys and girls in grades 4 and 5 are welcome (friends too!)

Meredith Kelly, FFROG Advisor



Our parish is cordially invited to a *Dessert Reception* celebrating the ministry of ***The Right Reverend Robert W. Ihloff and Nancy Ihloff*** on *Sunday, April 1, 2007* from 3 - 5 o'clock in the afternoon with special presentations at 4 o'clock at **The Bishop Claggett Center, Buckeystown, Maryland.**

If anyone would like to attend, please let the church secretary know by March 26.

SURVEYS

As you know, Bishop Ihloff will be retiring on April 10. In the search process for his replacement, the Standing Committee of the Diocese conducted surveys, soliciting information that will help them establish priorities for the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland. Thank you to all who returned the individual survey. The results of the Vestry and Congregational Surveys taken earlier this year are as follows:

Response to the Diocesan Standing Committee from the VESTRY

1. *What strengths can your congregation celebrate in its life and mission?*

- St. Stephen's is blessed with a variety of outstanding social and outreach ministries [notably the St. Stephen's Guild, the Circle, My Brother's Keeper, the Appalachian Service Project and the Crofton Christian Caring Council] whose works are aimed toward to helping others in the larger Christian Community and the world.
- We live within a caring environment in which parishioners are fully engaged in doing the work of the Lord in many loving and caring directions through their involvement in the various lay ministries, prayer chains or some other informal crisis support system (i.e.; Altar Guild, Chalicists, Acolytes, Choir, Ushers, Lectors, Lay Eucharistic Ministers, Vestry Members, or as members or leaders of any of a dozen committees).
- St. Stephen's is a community of love that is graced by the Holy Spirit, centered on Jesus and blessed with a membership who are strengthened by faith, guided through prayer and envision a future as a unified, growing congregation spreading the word of Christ to others.
- Our Christian Education Program demonstrates the commitment of the Parish to nurturing a worship environment where our members continually grow in the knowledge of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and maturity of the Spirit – 'Soup to nuts'.
- We are a proactive and supportive congregation who enthusiastically get things done.

2. *What circumstances or conditions are most challenging to your life and mission as a congregation?*

- Like the rest of the Episcopal Church USA, St. Stephen's is experiencing difficulty related to attracting and retaining new members, especially young adult members, and in retaining current members and families who have decided to leave the church in search of other worship options.

Continued on page 4

SURVEYS Continued from page 3

- We are also finding it difficult to find creative ways in which to engage our youth members (middle and high school age), who are growing up in a stressful world with many scheduling conflicts that divert their attention away from Church activities. Since we see our children as our future, we need to become more creative in finding ways to make Christian life more rewarding and enjoyable for our youth members.
- It is also the predominate view of the Vestry of St. Stephen's that the controversial positions held by the leadership of the National Church have poorly served the interests of Jesus Christ and his Church. The failure of the National Convention to adequately address and resolve the issues identified by the Windsor Report as they relate to the consecration of an openly gay and cohabitating Bishop by the Diocese of New Hampshire, coupled with numerous public comments made by the new Presiding Bishop that seem to call in question the divine authority of Holy Scripture, work to undermine the evangelism efforts of our Parish.
- The cornerstones of faith on which the Episcopal Church rests are Scripture, Tradition and Reason, with each complementing the other as each of us struggle to reconcile the diversity of views that shape our lives in God's service. By their actions and adopted policies, the leadership of ECUSA seems to be projecting the dogma that Reason trumps both Scripture and Tradition and that one need only determine what seems right in their eyes and ignore what either the Holy Word or the Book of Common Prayer have to say on a given issue. We find this apparent theological inconsistency difficult to explain to our children.

3. *In what ways has the diocese been most supportive and affirming of your life and mission as a congregation?*

- Bishop Rabb has demonstrated strong support for the work of St. Stephen's in many ways; such as by his assistance during the Search process and with consummating the call of our Rector. We are very grateful for his continued support.
- The responsiveness of the various ministry leaders at the Diocese is typically timely, thorough and professionally done. This is a great comfort to those of us in Severn Parish who have had occasion to call on them for technical assistance. Of special note have been the assistance provided by Archives staff and the Diocesan Historian, the Chancellor and legal staff, and Legacy Planning seminars, to name a few.
- The facilities and assistance provided at the Bishop Claggett Center have been a great resource to call on in support of Youth Programs and Women's Retreats.
- However, it is a widely held opinion among Vestry Members that the annual level of funding required to support the Operating Budget of the Diocese and the associated Allocation process and formulas are all in need of substantial review. A parish the size of St. Stephen's is challenged by having limited resources with which to fund critical programs and the level of support required by the Diocese places a heavy burden on these scarce resources. A strategic review of both the size of the Diocesan Operating Budget and the allocation methodology would mitigate the effects of the burden placed on our Parish in future years.

QUESTIONS FOR CONGREGATIONS

(Data was gathered at the Annual Meeting that took place on February 4. About 50 people participated.)

*What are the issues facing **The Episcopal Church as a whole** that are important to and/or significant for you? St. Stephen's responses in rank order:*

1. The need for the Episcopal Church to reaffirm that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the light.
2. The aging population of the Episcopal Church signals a need to engage increased youth participation, as well as reach out to young adults. In so doing, make clear that those with minimal fiscal resources can make meaningful contributions to the Church's ministries.
3. The need for a time of healing across the Episcopal Church, in particular to reconcile the array controversial views. The national Episcopal Church needs to emphasize what is positive.
4. Concerns about the direction of the National Episcopal Church and the need to return to more traditional values of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.
5. The need for a better articulation of the Baptismal Covenant. In particular, the need to reaffirm that the Episcopal Church is centered on the Trinity.
6. The need to convey clearly what it means to be an Episcopalian, and therefore to explain how the Episcopal Church is different from other Christian denominations, but also how we work together with other denominations.

*What are the issues facing **The Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Maryland** that are important to and/or significant for you? St. Stephen's responses in rank order:*

1. The need for the Episcopal Diocese of MD to reaffirm that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the light.
2. The aging population of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland signals a need to engage increased youth participation, as well as reach out to young adults. In so doing, make clear that those with minimal fiscal resources can make meaningful contributions to the Church's ministries.
3. The need for a time of healing across the Episcopal Church, in particular to reconcile the array controversial views. The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland needs to emphasize what is positive.
4. Concerns about the direction of the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and the need to return to more traditional values of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.
5. The need for a better articulation of the Baptismal Covenant. In particular, the need to reaffirm that the Episcopal Church is centered on the Trinity.
6. The need to convey clearly what it means to be an Episcopalian, and therefore to explain how the Episcopal Church is different from other Christian denominations, but also how we work together with other denominations.

*What issues are facing **St. Stephen's Parish** that are of particular concern?*

- The adverse impact that strife in the national Episcopal Church has had on membership and member pledging at St. Stephen's. Key leaders and participants in many ministry areas have left the Parish. As a result too few are doing too much.
- Concern that St. Stephen's has diverged from the Diocese of Maryland.
- Ensuring that St. Stephen's has a proactive and effective strategy for growth, including (but not limited to) ways to better engage our youth and young adults. How do we best "catch people" and encourage broader participation in St. Stephen's ministries?
- Ensuring that St. Stephen's has the resources (the time, talents and treasure of its membership) to enhance its Christian Education Program.
- Ensuring that St. Stephen's has the resources (the time, talents and treasure of its membership) to expand

What Is Happening at St. Stephen's

The Property Committee met Sunday between services to discuss current issues and contracts. The committee decided to recommend the contract for the brick work on the old part of the church building to be let by McAfee Masonry. The work will begin sometime in April. All of the old mortar will be removed and replaced with new. Any of the bricks which are damaged will also be replaced. *Pete Coakley* is donating \$6,000 toward this project. The money given in memory of *Alan Mace*, approximately \$2,000 to date, will also be added to defer the cost of this project, as well as the replacement of needed parts for the columns on the breezeway. The names of the contributors will be put into a frame and will hang in the Narthex. I will keep the parish informed as to the total amount donated for these projects. I don't have the total cost of these two projects at this printing. The initial contract for the brick work is \$13,000 but if we have to get more bricks than estimated, the additional bricks will be approximately .50 per brick.



If anyone is interested in donating toward this project, please indicate the money for Capital Improvement and make a note as to whether this is in memory or in honor of someone.

We also voted to replace the storm windows with new storm windows rather than repairing the old ones. The installed price will be \$275 per window. The Guild and the Circle will share the cost of the windows. The Circle has agreed to get the carpet cleaned the first of April.

We will be having a work day the end of May or 1st part of June. I will let you know when, what needs to be done, and what tools to bring with you. The Rectory porch is first on the list to be painted. If anyone is interested in this project, please call Lucile Seborg at 410-721-2108. We need at least three people for that job. The Sexton will begin working on getting the metal doors sanded and painted as the weather gets warmer. If you would like to help him, please let Lucile know.



LIMBS ARE STILL ON THE GROUNDS FROM THE ICE STORM! We need all able bodied persons in the parish to start picking up any wood that has dropped on the ground on the entire grounds. The wood can be thrown into the woods behind the cemetery or stacked next to the dumpster.

Work on the nave windows is nearing completion. Renew Restorations estimates the installation will be either the week before Holy Week, or the week following Easter. Because the stain, glazing, and paint has to dry between applications, we should count on the week following Easter. The dedication is set for April 15 at the 10 o'clock service.

"Thank you" to everyone who has helped with the property projects. Those of you who have contributed money toward Capital Improvements have been very generous to the needs of the Parish. Mack Young will be my Assistant and will be available from April 19 to May 9. Hugh and I will be on a cruise through the Panama Canal and will end the trip in Seattle.

Lucile Seborg, Junior Warden

EASTER FLOWERS

Each year at Easter, you can help usher in the Paschal season with flowers. Your donations allow us to purchase Easter flowers to decorate the church. After a few weeks, you are free to take home your flower and plant the bulb in your yard - a Spring treat for next year!

So, order your thanksgiving and/or memorial Easter flowers using the form found below. Lilies are \$10.50, hyacinths and tulips are \$10.00. Make your check out to St. Stephen's Church. **Sunday, March 25, is the last day for ordering.**

***Order your
Easter Flowers***



NAME _____

QUANTITY

PRICE

LILIES _____ @ **\$10.50 EACH** = _____

HYACINTHS _____ @ **\$10.00 EACH** = _____

TULIPS _____ @ **\$10.00 EACH** = _____

ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY March 25, 2007

IN MEMORY OF:

IN THANKSGIVING FOR:

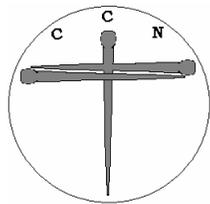
FOYER GROUPS

(A.k.a.; *Dinner for Eight Groups*)

The English word *foyer* is derived from foier, the French term for hearthside and projects an image of warmth and comfort. For untold generations it has been customary for Americans to welcome old friends, family members and newcomers into our homes by gathering at the central hearthside to celebrate special occasions, to enjoy times of fellowship and share moments of camaraderie. In tune with this time-honored tradition of hospitality, the Anglican Community has for many years encouraged the formation of small informal Parish gatherings called **Foyer Groups**—small, close-knit groups of parishioners sharing a common bond of Christian love and concern for one another.

History of Foyer Groups

The idea originated at the Cathedral of St. Michael, in the Diocese of Coventry, England – born of the massive devastation inflicted at the height of the German Blitz on London and Coventry during World War II.



During one of the many air raids conducted in 1940, the city's 14th century cathedral was completely destroyed as a result of the aerial bombardment. Rather than dwell on the violent loss of his beloved place of worship, the local Provost was inspired to found a ministry of reconciliation that he called the *Community of the Cross and Nails*. While sifting through the rubble of the cathedral, he gathered many of the old nails that had fallen among the ruins and was inspired to have them twisted together to form a cross. This cross of nails and the words "Father, Forgive" became the unifying symbol of the *International Ministry of Reconciliation*, a group of devout followers who believe that understanding between peoples, nations, and ideologies can come only when human beings meet and know each other as individuals.

They truly live out the maxim "Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

In 1967, the staff of the Coventry Cathedral began meeting together in small informal groups as a means "to bridge the divisions which subtly separate us one from another"; as a result of the meetings they noticed a powerful bond forming among the staff members who joined what they came to call the *Foyer Group*. Two years later, the Foyer movement spread to the congregation of Coventry Cathedral and then beyond. In time, *Foyer Groups* began springing up in parishes all over Britain and in America. Today, many Episcopal churches throughout the United States have foyer groups that promote fellowship amongst members and encourage the informal exchange of ideas, experiences and common problems within friendly home surroundings and in a Christian context.

So, what exactly are *Foyer Groups*?

Foyer Groups are a fun and easy way for parishioners to gather together on a regular but informal basis for purely social reasons – to enjoy one another's company, to strengthen bonds of community, to meet new members and just to get to know other people who share a common interest in Grace but with whom we might not otherwise interact. They provide a means to develop new friendships and deepen old ones and are a way to make our sometimes-too-large-seeming parish feel smaller and warmer.

There is no agenda or plan – just casual fellowship and a refreshing meal. Groups are made up of singles, couples, young people, retired folks, etc., in other words a cross section of the parish. Out of the meetings, friendships develop among people who might not have any other opportunity to meet and get to know each other. Newcomers are especially invited to join one of the groups at any time.

Continued on page 9

FOYER GROUPS– Continued from page 8

Each small group of eight to twelve people meet once every four to six weeks during the church year, beginning in September and continuing through May, in the home of one of the members of the group. Generally, the host provides the main course while the other members fill in the rest of the meal such as appetizer, bread, salad, veggies, dessert, etc. Some groups have enjoyed gathering for a picnic lunch during good weather or even meeting at a local restaurant. Some groups have elected to study and discuss certain books, or incorporate an evening devotional into the gathering, while others gather for a purely social experience. The choice of available options is limited only by the collective imagination of the group, but the main idea is for the gatherings to simply focus on Christian fellowship, a refreshing meal and relaxed conversation.



New groups form each fall, and new members are always welcome. The groups are put together randomly in order to add an element of spontaneity, such that each of us might have the opportunity to get to know others in the parish who may be outside our normal circle of acquaintance. In other words, this is a great way to meet and get to know those you might not have a chance to visit with otherwise.

Sound interesting to you? Want to learn more about Foyer Groups? If so, keep your eyes open and your ears to the rails in the coming months to join one of the groups that are

for more information and a special invitation planned to be formed in the fall.



– The Church Growth Committee

UPDATE ON CEMETERY

CEMETERY SURVEY

The Vestry approved the contract for a professional surveyor to mark the cemetery grave lots. The "flagged" stakes located throughout the cemetery are temporary markers for the permanent spikes to be installed. This survey updates the previous one of May 1938 and will greatly assist in identifying the individual plot locations.

COLUMBARIUM

The proposed date for the installation of the cemetery columbarium will be May 2007. Prior to the delivery, work will soon begin to prepare the foundation and ground work associated with placing the pre-assembled columbarium. Persons interested in making a contribution or purchasing a niche, please contact Jean Sunday, 410-672-3680, or email: sundayofodenton@verizon.net.

Jean Sunday, Cemetery Administrator

PAROCHIAL REPORT: Membership Numbers

The National Episcopal Church asks each parish to count their *active baptized* membership on an annual basis. This is one of the items that is compiled for the Parochial Report and reflects the dynamic of the living Body of Christ.

In 2005, our active membership was reported at 498; in 2006, we are reporting 482. The following will give you an idea of how we arrived at that number:

INCREASES

Baptisms in 2006

9 members

Transfers- In

1 family unit (2 members)

New and Active

7 family units (13 members)

Inactive to Active Status

6 family units (18 members)

DECREASES

Active Member Deaths

4 members

Transfers- Out

2 family units (8 members)

Moved out of area

10 family units (33 members)

Left Church or Otherwise Inactive

4 family units (13 members)



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Lenten Program 2007

Growing in Prayer

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

*A meditation and prayer exercise will be offered in church, on each week's topic
in a service of Evensong/Evening Prayer*

March 21st **Petition and Intercessory Prayer:**

Love On Its Knees

March 28th **Penitential Prayer:**

Forgive Us Our Sins As We Forgive Those Who Sin Against Us

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Severn Parish

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Phone: 410-721-2881

Fax: 410-721-0043

Email: st_stephens@verizon.net

Office Hours: MON-FRI 8:00 am to 5:00 pm

www.ststephens-severn.ang-md.org

SUNDAY SERVICES

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
traditional language

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
contemporary language with music

10:00 a.m. Church School (Sept-May)

Pre-Kindergarten through High School Classes

NURSERY AVAILABLE FOR ALL SUNDAY SERVICES

The Rev. Steven W. Hagerman, *Rector*