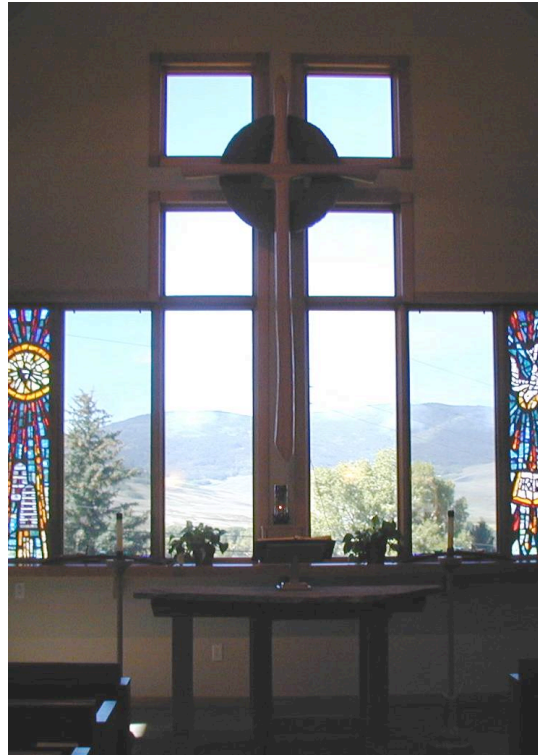


A Voice in the Wilderness

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



JUNE 2008

We are still not entirely sure when it will be safe to leave flowers out overnight, but we are hoping that by July 4 we will be through all the hard frosts! But the days are warming and we are getting a taste of what we trust will be another lovely Rocky Mountain summer. We all feel that we have deserved it. While we wait, we have a nice mix of worship, service, and play for June.

St. John's will make its semi-annual contribution to keeping Grand County roadsides litter free when we gather at the church at 9:30 on Saturday morning the 7th to clear our section of U.S. 34.

On Saturday the 14th many parishioners will participate in the 7th annual Habitat Hobble to support Habitat for Humanity.

And on Saturday June 21th we will have our annual early summer music night at 6PM in the home of Walter and Loretta McLaughlin.

Sunday the 22nd will see the first of our three summer Compline on the Lake services at 5PM. And on Sunday the 29th we will observe the feast day of St. John the Baptist with the unveiling of a mosaic representation of our patron saint, executed by the artist Kathy Thaden.

A Word from the Rector

*“Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.”*

John Keats wrote these words at the end of his poem “Ode on a Grecian Urn.” Einstein also thought there was a powerful connection between beauty and truth. He believed that beauty was an important criterion for judging the truth of physical theories about the world. And mathematicians often marvel at the beauty of the most powerful mathematical proofs.

When I was wavering over whether to make a commitment to Christ, I remember being struck by the great moral beauty of the Sermon on the Mount. I am sure that the beauty of Jesus’ teaching must have helped me to see that they were also very true.

Throughout history, the church has always sought to link beauty with the truths of its teachings. Think of all the great cathedrals, the great traditions of religious painting and sculpture. Think of the liturgical beauty of a well-planned and well executed service.

Whether we can follow Keats or Einstein, we believe it is important that we worship amidst beauty, and in the last ten years or so, St. John’s has made a great commitment to beauty. The new building is not only beautiful in itself, it by design opens up a vista onto the beauty of the mountains and hills across our valley. Care was taken to preserve and to show off our stained glass windows more effectively. Money was raised to commission a well-known sacred artist, Tim Hinz, to create beautiful liturgical objects—the altar, baptismal font, altar cross, and several other smaller pieces. And our own parishioners have certainly contributed. Deacon Sally has lovingly made many spectacular banners to hang in the sanctuary to mark the liturgical seasons. Al Clark has personally made many beautiful objects—including my kneeler at St. John’s and the altar and font at Cranmer Chapel. Most of us have over the years donated monies specifically for beautiful flowers to brighten special church days. Kathe Morck and her family have beautified and continue to beautify our grounds. And the Art, Architecture, and Landscape Committee under the direction of Terry McFee continues to look for ways to add beauty to our church buildings. (Notice the newly hung artist’s renditions of several of our sanctuary furnishings in the small meeting room.)

It is in this great tradition, that we are about to make the next major commitment to beauty at St. John's. On Sunday, June 29th, when we celebrate the Feast Day of St. John the Baptist, we will unveil a mosaic of our St. John, to hang in the narthex to brighten it, to remind us of our connection to our patron saint, and to welcome guests and visitors to our worship space. The mosaic is being executed by Kathy Thaden, who has done previous work for the diocese and the Colorado Episcopalian Foundation. Her design has been carefully reviewed (and re-reviewed) by AAL Committee so that it reflects well our vision of St. John, our mountain environment, and even our sense of humor. I believe that the addition of this art to our narthex will have a powerful effect on who we are and how we are perceived by our visitors.

The AAL Committee does not wish this work to be sponsored by one or two families or by any perceived group of "insiders." If you consider yourself a member of St. John's—even only a part-time member—we want you on board too. The cost of the work is \$2700. The committee has divided this sum up into 27 \$100 shares. If you believe in St. John's; if you believe in beauty; if you believe that the truth of our Gospel is best presented in the context of beauty, please sit down just as soon as you can and write a check for a full share (or half or quarter) in support of this work. Be sure to write "mosaic fund" on the memo line.

And join us on Sunday, June 29, for the unveiling. Somewhere Keats, Einstein, Jesus, and St. John will be smiling. And so will we all.

Fr. Spencer+

Notes about Ministries

With a little bit of help from friends

The Grand County Council on Aging has announced a new county resource: the 211 Special Needs Registry. Anyone who through frailty, disability or any other reason will need help to evacuate their homes in case of disaster/emergency can register their need and help will be available through the Office of Emergency Management. Anyone who might need this help should call 211 and register. All information will be kept strictly confidential.

With a “litter”bit of help from friends

If you can, please join us at 9:30 Saturday morning June 7th as St. John’s does its part to keep our highways clean. We will meet at the church before proceeding to “our” mile of roadway along U.S. 34 to pick up the litter that has accumulated since last fall. Bags and safety vests will be provided; bring your own gloves and wear appropriate shoes. Then adjourn to celebrate a good work at brunch!

Library update

We have just received a donation of a copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. This novel, loved by adults and younger readers, was recently cited in one survey as the best American novel ever written. And of course it was made into a fine motion picture starring Gregory Peck. And if you are into taking books without having to return them (!) we have two extra copies of *The Episcopal Church in Colorado, 1860-1963: The essential history of the introduction and spread of our church in Colorado*. If you are interested, we have two copies to give away.

Don’t miss the boat

And you won’t need to do your own row, row, rowing when you join our Compline on the Lake group for our three Sunday evening outings this summer. Save the dates of June 22, July 20, and August 17 for a cruise around Grand Lake, the lovely prayer service of Compline, and picnic dinner afterward. We meet at 5PM at the Grand Lake Marina. This year there will be a charge of \$5 per person. (Did you know that the term ‘compline’ comes from the same Latin root as the word ‘complete’? This service was the last prayer of the day in the monastic tradition, and so it “completed” the daily devotions.)

What a spectacle!

We continue to collect old, no longer usable, eyeglasses from the backs of drawers to donate to the poor in Latin America. Our Lutheran friends at Lord of the Valley Church will take and deliver them on a mission trip they are planning for this summer. If you wear glasses, surely you have a few old discarded pairs lying around somewhere!

Sermon of the Month

Sermon preached on Sunday, May 25

“Look at the birds of the air . . .”

The lesson we have is from the Sermon on the Mount, which has always been for me one of the most powerful passages in the entire Bible. And this passage matters to me because of an event in my own discernment about going into the priesthood. I had just taken a week’s silent retreat to read and to pray about ordination and I felt that my vocation had been confirmed by this experience. I drove back into Boulder to meet a friend for lunch. I was a little early, so I parked my car and sat down on a park bench near the restaurant. And as I sat, I started worrying. I worried about the future. I worried about giving up my job. I worried about paying for three years of seminary. I wondered about all the security I was giving up. And I felt a sense of “Oh my, do I really want to do this?” And then I heard from behind the bench some sort of flurry of activity, a rustling sound. And when I turned to look back over my shoulder, I saw some birds fluttering on the grass, pecking it for food. And immediately what came to mind were the words of this passage: Look at the birds of the air; your heavenly father feeds them, are you not of more value than they? And as I reflected on the passage, I felt a peace, a sense of reassurance, that all would somehow be well, that God would somehow work it out.

It is easy to misunderstand this gospel lesson. It is possible to hear the words “they neither sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns” and think that Jesus is teaching that we are not to work, that we are not to take steps to provide for tomorrow. But the greatest emphasis in the reading is not about not working or planning for the future. The emphasis is upon worrying. We are not to be distressed or to worry about the future. It is not about not working; it is not about not taking care for the future; it is about not being anxious. It is about trusting that the God who oversees the birds of the air and the lilies of the field will care for us as well.

And of all the instructions Jesus gives us, this may be one of the most difficult to follow. Don’t worry; be happy! This may be easy enough when things are going well; or if we are well provided for. But what if we face truly difficult or uncertain futures? The advice not to worry can seem so glib, especially when it comes from someone who doesn’t have to face the uncertainties we do. And we do need to make provisions for the future. We are not being called by the Lord to be irresponsible.

Some of you know that I have just returned this week from a week at CREDO—an eight day conference/retreat for Episcopal clergy to deal with issues of clergy wellness. For a full week I have been talking to experts about health, spirituality, work, and finances. And we talked a lot

about future contingencies and how to plan for them. It was a wonderful week—I learned a lot, got a lot of exercise, rest, good diet, and returned refreshed, invigorated and set for a healthier future. (Thanks to vestry for helping to support this week!) I do not believe that in thinking and planning for the future, we were in violation of Jesus’ teaching in this gospel lesson.

For the lesson is about worrying. As Jesus says, by worrying I cannot add a single hour to my span of life. But by eating better and exercising and taking other steps, I can add to my span of life.

There is a paradox here, I believe, if we take the passage to be about planning for the future. We are not to be concerned about the future, about what to eat, drink or wear. But we are to do God’s will. The paradox is that only by watching what we eat, drink, and wear can we maintain the health to be able to do God’s will as powerfully and as faithfully as we can. So when we are told not to worry, we are not being told to ignore what we eat, drink or wear. Nor does this mean that we should not be concerned about immediate threats to our wellbeing and—by extension—to our ministries, to our service to God. I think that it means that in taking care of these threats, we never surrender to the anxiety or despair about the big picture. Yes, we can wonder and even worry about our income next year, or some immediate threat to health, or about someone dear to us. But we do not worry about the ultimate triumph of God’s will in our lives. We know that whatever threats, worries or concerns we may face, that God will take them and make everything work together for good—in Paul’s words. We can sweat the small stuff; we don’t have to sweat the big stuff. God will provide that.

So lately I have been thinking and providing for my own health in the areas of physical health, spiritual health, work habits, and finances. And I have found that this has strengthened me for ministry.

So I encourage you to do the same; to take stock of your life style and habits and how they act upon your health—physically, spiritually, your work, and your financial security. This is OK; I am convinced it is OK by Jesus to take care of yourself for ministry, to be as healthy as you can be to be as faithful as you can be. And then, give it up to the Lord. This is so freeing, so liberating. We can then be as free from worry as—as the birds of the air.

Updates from the Church Family

In the “Are you sure you know what you’re getting in for?” department

On Tuesday, July 8, Catherine Volland will be ordained a Transitional Deacon in the Diocese of Minnesota. We call it “transitional” because she will not remain a deacon, but will be ordained to the priesthood in six months. Catherine is a very gifted and faithful person who will make a strong priest. Her full time home is at the Cathedral in Denver, but she attends St. John’s when she is in Grand County and helped Fr. Spencer with the confirmation class of two years ago. She has also been serving as editor and formatter of this newsletter for several years. We have not seen much of her lately because she has been recovering a bout of hepatitis. We hope very much that she will be returning to the Diocese of Colorado. Well done, Catherine, good and faithful servant!

Whatever happened to . . . ?

When we last saw Bob and Nancy Borberg and daughter Maureen, they had sold their Winter Park Restaurant, Randi’s, and moved back east to facilitate Bob’s training to make the 2008 Olympic sculling team. Bob’s training went well and he rowed well at the trials, but unfortunately he finished 13th, just one place out of making the team. So close! But Bob is not disheartened and will be competing in the nationals later this year. They are currently living and helping with family in Kansas City, and Nancy reports that Maureen has not yet decided where they will be settling permanently. We sure hope that it will be back here in Grand County.

Slowly but surely

David Moen continues to recover from his stroke of last fall. He still needs to be very careful in getting around, but he continues to improve. Fortunately, he is as mentally alert as always—which is very mentally alert indeed, and remains active in the Episcopal Church on Bainbridge Island in Washington State including work on a new capital fund program. We especially regret that for this year we will not be seeing David and Fran in Grand County. Maybe next year?

Welcome back

It was a special treat to welcome Jim Cartwright back to church on Sunday, May 25th, for the first time in many months, as Jim has been house-bound for a long rehabilitation from a shoulder surgery. It was great to see you, Jim, and we look forward to your being a regular part of our church life again.

Congratulations

It was graduation week for Nichole Fuqua, and she was busier than most graduates for sure. At the Awards Banquet Thursday night, Nichole received eight different local scholarships, including one from St. John's, to lead all graduates. This support is in addition to strong scholarship support from her chosen university, The University of Nebraska at Kearny. (You are not going to start rooting for the Cornhusker football team, are you, Nichole?) She was also the only member of the senior class to belong to the National Honor Society. On Friday evening she delivered the invocation at Baccalaureate on behalf of her classmates. She graduated Saturday and celebrated all afternoon with a large gathering of parishioners and other friends in our Parish Hall. Whew! Here's hoping you recover in a week or so, Nichole.

At the same Thursday award show, Makenna Morck and Tyler Orr were honored as sophomores with perfect 4.0 grade averages on their high school record so far and as members of the Knowledge Bowl team. No, you don't have to be really smart to be a young person at St. John's, it only seems that way.

Birthdays

Donna Evleth	10
Jeanie Kemp	29
Peter Hronek	30

Anniversaries

John & Terry McFee	4
Karla Allen & Spencer Carr	8
Betty & Al Clark	8
Lee & Shirley Siems	9

June 2008

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST				2 PM BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 9:30 HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST * 10:30 VESTRY MEETING				2 PM BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST						8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL * 6 PM MUSIC NIGHT AT THE MCLAUGHLIN'S
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST * 5 PM COMPLINE ON THE LAKE				2 PM BIBLE STUDY		8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCHARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
29	30					
9 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, INCL. ST. JOHN'S FEAST DAY & UNVEILING OF THE MOSAIC						