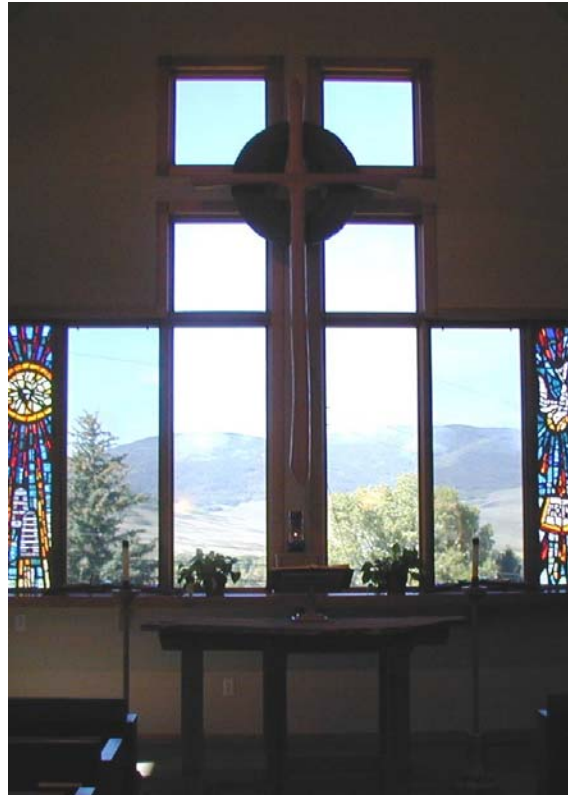


A Voice in the Wilderness

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST



OCTOBER 2009

After a very busy late summer and early fall, St. John's takes a bit of a breather in October with a very quiet month. We'll have lots of time to enjoy what we hope may be an extended Indian summer.

Thursday through Saturday the 1st—3rd your clergy and lay delegates will be attending the annual diocesan convention in Pueblo.

On Friday the 9th funeral services for Jean Cartwright will be held at St. John's at 10:30 AM.

And as an early heads-up, All Saints Day is Sunday, November 1st, the service at which we remember all those who have died. .

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A Word from the Rector

As I began to write these words, I was thinking about hurrying off to this year's diocesan convention in Pueblo, and feeling a little frantic, to be honest. So I did what I really should do more often (and I recommend it!). I stopped to take a deep breath, and then a little quiet time to ponder just what I wanted to share with you this month. And, lo, there seems to be no special crisis, no over-riding concern, no call-to-arms leaping to my mind. Oh, next month we will be worrying about our pledge drive and how the results of that will drive our mission here. And there are always the daily concerns and pressures—liturgical, pastoral, administrative, etc.

But, when you get right down to it, things are good here at St. John's. We continue to grow in membership and in the breadth of ministries and activities that we offer. We continue to be a generous, caring, worshipful, learning, and celebrating community. That is to say, we continue to live into our core values in Christ. We continue to love each other and even to actually like and enjoy each other. We can do better, and we should always strive to do so. But—bottom line—we are blessed, and I know that I am blessed to be able to serve you here at St. John's.

I remember a conversation I had over lunch last summer with a visiting bishop. Apparently in a less optimistic mood, I expressed concern over the problems facing the Episcopal Church and its role in the Anglican Community. He urged me not to worry. His view was that the Anglican Community will be much challenged to remain a true community, but that the Episcopal Church would be fine. Oh, we might be somewhat smaller, but we will be healthy, strong, committed, and faithful. He reminded me of our history, of past quarrels in the 60s (we lost up to a third of the church for our stand for civil rights) and in the 70s over women's ordination. Compared to those days, our current situation is nothing.

And just the other week at our regional meeting in Grand Junction with Bishop O'Neill, we heard his up-beat report on General Convention, which he described as a breakthrough meeting in consciousness raising about world poverty and the commitment of the church to addressing it. We are, he said, becoming a more cohesive, truly global body, and the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Community are becoming increasingly important in delivering relief and development aid to the third world. A representative of the Obama administration at the convention told the bishop that other aid groups even governmental ones worked with Episcopal Relief and Development because it has "reach, credibility, and accountability."

(By the way, I heard for the first time that we are no longer supposed to utter the words "national church." This is because the Episcopal Church is not just the church in the U.S., but includes other nations as well.)

And in thinking about our own convention in Pueblo, I remember that while many dioceses will come together to argue and pass resolutions, that our own will emphasize

workshops and growing our congregations and our ministries. I remember that having had restored to us our properties in Colorado Springs, we no longer will be expending resources for legal bills there. And I remember that we have an exciting new congregational plant in Frederick—St. Bridget’s—that is thriving.

Like the poor in the well-known adage, problems to face will always be with us. But it is important that we occasionally stop to take that deep breath, to take some quiet time, to recognize all that is good in our lives, in our Christian ministry local and worldwide, and to take—if not pride—at least an honest pleasure and satisfaction in what we do and what we are.

God bless you all,

Fr. Spencer+

Notes about Ministries

CALLING ALL WOMEN: Church of the Eternal Hills has invited St. John's women to a weekly Bible Study beginning on Sunday, Oct. 11 from 4 PM-5:30 PM at CEH. Kerri Simmons will be leading the study of "Bad Girls of the Bible" (sounds fascinating). The book is \$10 and you can call the church at 970-887-3603 to register.

TABLE FELLOWSHIP: On Tuesday, Nov. 10th Church of the Eternal Hills will host their annual Soup Supper. Mark your calendars.....more details in the next newsletter.

NEWS FROM PETIT TROU: Paul Casey, the Executive Director of the Colorado Haiti Project, was delighted to learn that Outreach had approved \$2,000 for the school children of Petit Trou de Nippes. In his thank you letter he stated that our gift would cover 6.66 % of the total line item in the budget for student lunches for the year. At school the students receive the traditional simple meal of rice and beans. Each child gets a large plateful and some of them take the food home to share with their families. The kids message to us--- "mesi anpil" (thank you very much!)

News from the Outreach Committee

The committee met in August to review recent activities, disburse money and look forward to 2010. On Socks and Skivvies Sunday, June 21st, three large trash bags of socks and skivvies were collected for St. Francis Center in Denver. On Loaves and Fishes Sunday 393.6 pounds of food were collected from St. John's parishioners for the Mountain Family Center. Our third activity was the fund raiser brunch for the CO Haiti Project; a total of \$386.00 plus the \$200.00 from the outreach account was donated.

For the rest of 2009 we agreed to continue to donate to international, national, state, and local organizations. We voted \$3075.00 to international organizations (CrossLink, Kenyon Children's Foundation, American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, CO Haiti Project). Our support to national organizations went to Homes for Our Troops and Episcopal Relief and Development for a total of \$3500.00. We gave \$150.00 to Mary's Hope Workshops in Colorado. Finally we distributed a total of \$450.00 to two local organizations, Heart of the Mountain Hospice and Samaritan Ministries. (The committee remains committed to balancing local and non-local giving; it is just during this particular time period that more is given to national and international causes.) If you have questions about details of the disbursements please contact Terry McFee, chairperson.

Our final focus was to looking forward to giving in 2010. The committee decided to continue to support Cyndi Karnoscak's missional work at CrossLink for \$75.00/month and to reevaluate if she changes her missional work. The committee decided to increase our support for Samaritan Ministries to \$60.00/month.

Our next meeting will be Sunday, January 17, 2010. During this meeting we will disburse the rest of the 2009 outreach money (5% of plate and pledge).

To your health

As we enter the flu season, and with special fears this year of the so-called “swine flu,” St. John’s is adopting the policy that during the Eucharist clergy will have used a hand sanitizer before distributing the bread. We hope that this will enable people to participate in the Eucharist without fear. Reception of the wine is, of course, always optional, but in any case chalice bearers will continue to use the purificator on the cup to protect against transmission of germs.

Sermon of the Month

Sermon delivered Sunday, September 20.

Did you enjoy reading the OT lesson from Proverbs as much as I did? “A capable wife, who can find?” Well, if the capable wife does all that this passage says, why does she need a husband? Oh, yes, to be known in the city gates and to sit among the elders of the land. I knew there had to be something.

There is something else besides a capable wife which is hard to find. That is anyone who in the words of James is wise and understanding, with a gentleness born of wisdom. Gentle, peaceable, willing to yield, and full of mercy. In the past week there has been a lot of discussion nationally about the state of our national manners and decorum. A congressman yells ‘You lie!’ interrupting the President of the United States during a speech in the House chamber. A performer rips the microphone from an award winner to explain to her and to all how she didn’t deserve the award. An athlete screams threats and obscenities to a judge. (Actually, this seems to me to happen all the time; I suspect that this made an impression only because the athlete was a woman.) People shout down their representatives and their neighbors at town meetings; people bring guns, threatening signs, symbols of communism and fascism, and ape-like caricatures of the president to public gatherings.

And the political airwaves continue to be poisoned by mean personal attacks, dishonest partisan and hypocritical “commentary,” name-calling, etc. I am reminded of a conversation between the child Calvin and his imaginary tiger friend, Hobbes. “I am thinking of starting my own talk radio show,” says Calvin. “I’ll spout simplistic opinions for hours on end, ridicule anyone who disagrees with me, and generally foster divisiveness, cynicism, and a lower level of public dialog.” “It would seem you were born for the job,” Hobbes says. And as he walk off Calvin adds “Imagine getting paid to act like a six year old!”

And in the last day or two comes the backlash. What are we so excited about? This is just normal healthy democratic debate. We have always had the rowdies among us on both sides (true enough). To attack people for bad manners is just a way of trying to silence opposition. And certainly people on both sides welcome bad behavior on the other because they can use it to discredit, yes to silence, opposing views.

I think we can agree that there is much in our public discourse that is ugly, crude, and despicable. Whether it is really any worse now than it has been is another question. It seems to me that it is, but I am not sure. And it surely makes a difference whether the rowdiness comes from the extremes or whether it has now found its way into the mainstream figures or real importance.

But regardless of what others believe the appropriate standards for political debate may be, our epistle this morning tells us what our attitude as Christians should be. James could almost be writing about our own time. I think we could all name some people who could be described as boastful and false to the truth, as partial (read partisan) and hypocritical. And where are the voices he calls for, those of gentleness, peace, willing to yield, merciful. Where are those?

They have to be ours. They have to be ours because we have to start someplace. On one level, it is important that we have the integrity to embody our own values. Gandhi once said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” And partly this is about being true to ourselves and partly it is about starting to make a difference in the world.

And by making a difference in the world, even very small ones, at a deeper level—at a theological level, we are about the work of the kingdom. Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. God’s reign is near to us. By living in God’s presence and by God’s values, we bring the Kingdom of God closer to hand.

As in all things, we do not have to be perfect in ourselves in order to hold up the ideal and to work toward it. Occasionally, like this morning, I will preach on a topic that I recognize as a weakness of my own. And I have to remember the response of a minister years ago, when he was accused to preaching something that he himself couldn’t live into. He said, “If I preached only on topics that I got completely right, I would never preach at all.”

Let others worry about what values they wish to bring to political debate or whether things are worse than they used to be or whether the current style of debate is OK. We know the standards we are called to. We are called to peace, gentleness, willingness to yield, mercy. We are called to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Updates from the Church Family

A loss to mourn; a life to celebrate

Our condolences, prayers, and warm wishes go with Jim Cartwright who lost his mother Jean last week. Word of her death came to Jim by phone during the coffee hour after Sunday services of September 27. Supply priest Nina Stasser led those present in a time of prayer that was a rich and powerful experience for all present. Jean was 93 years old, and—as a measure of her energy and spirit—was the only 93 year old that I know that was working to learn Spanish. Another hobby she had was reading presidential biographies. Even as she was failing, she always greeted visitors with a huge smile and eyes of joy. Services will be at St. John's 10:30AM Friday, October 9, with a graveside service at Kremmling Cemetery and reception at Kremmling's hospital, where Jean lived for her last years, to follow. Jim and his mother were very close; please keep Jim in your prayers.

Here we go again

Please keep Betty Clark in your prayers as well, as she will undergo shoulder surgery (appropriately in “shoulder” season) on Thursday, October 8, at the hospital in Steamboat Springs. She and Al have been trading off various joint surgery dates for a couple of years now, and they are getting far too much practice at this. We all hope that they will stop this practice very soon now. God bless you both.

On a lighter note

Fr. Spencer is back from his annual Boys' Golf Week. His visitor Alan, golfing companion and friend of over 40 years, insists that divine intervention had to be involved in several of his shots, so apparently your prayers for his golf game were helpful. (Many thanks!)

And on a much happier note

On Saturday, September 26, Cyndi Karnoscak was married to Jim Wigdahl of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Betty Cranmer represented us all at the service and reports that the day was beautiful and wonderful in all respects. Cyndi and Jim are currently honeymooning in France. We are all so happy for a wonderful couple.

Passing the torch

Gene and Sally Ackley are returned from an extended stay in Wisconsin during which they celebrated both the 100th birthday of Sally's mother Bea and the birth of great granddaughter Emma Cady O'Hearn, who came into this world on September 15th at 8lbs, 9oz. A highlight of the trip was taking of five generations family picture. Congratulations!

Making beautiful music together

Our late summer music night was a great success, with good fellowship, good food, and great music, both sacred and otherwise. Thanks to all who brought the food, to our sterling musicians—Kay, Tom, Lisa, and Bill—and especially to our hosts, Mike and Kathy Hulley.

October 2009

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
				1	2	3
				DIOCESAN CONVENTION, PUEBLO	DIOCESAN CONVENTION, PUEBLO * SPIRITUALITY GROUP 2:45PM	DIOCESAN CONVENTION, PUEBLO * 8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM EVENING PRAYER AT CRANMER CHAPEL
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST					JEAN CARTWRIGHT FUNERAL 10:30AM * SPIRITUALITY GROUP 2:45PM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * 10:45 VESTRY MEETING				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	WOMEN'S TRINITY GROUP NOON * SPIRITUALITY GROUP 2:45PM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	SPIRITUALITY GROUP 2:45PM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	SPIRITUALITY GROUP 2:45PM	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL