



## **FEBRUARY 2010**

Half way through winter (we hope) and we continue to experience very cold weather with very little snow here in the banana belt of Grand County. But our hearts are warm, as reflected in our recent Annual Meeting—the focus of this month’s newsletter. And for February, please keep in mind the following events.

Our annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper is Tuesday evening the **16<sup>th</sup>** with service from 5 to 7PM. Bring a friend and donate to aid our local needy.

And we inaugurate the Lenten season with our Ash Wednesday service on the **17<sup>th</sup>** at 6PM.

Beginning on Sunday the **21<sup>st</sup>** we offer five adult education sessions on various topics in Anglicanism. This series will be especially useful for those new to the Episcopal Church.

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**The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist**

**Granby, Colorado**

## Notes about Ministries

### Doing what we can

The devastating earthquake in Haiti has sparked a huge response from millions of Americans. St. John's has responded, predictably, very generously. Under the oversight of Deacon Diane, we raised in two Sundays over \$3,000 and more is still coming in. This will be matched by the Anschutz Foundation which agreed to match whatever the Diocese of Colorado matched up to \$75,000. Thanks to the Foundation, thanks to all of you for your generosity, and thanks to Diane for inspiring us all to make a difference.

### Looking back to 2009, financially

The briefest way to summarize the church's finances for last year is to say that we budgeted about a \$6,000 deficit, fell short in pledge income by \$15,000, made it up in greater miscellaneous income, and in unpledged "plate" income, kept expenses well in line with budget, and ended up with . . . . about \$6,000 deficit. We had hopes that the deficit would be temporary and that we could return to a balanced budget for 2010, depending upon the results of the year's pledge drive.

### And the results were . . .

At the annual meeting held Sunday, January 31, Fr. Spencer announced the results of our annual financial stewardship pledge drive. We received 43 pledges (up from 41, as a result of losing seven pledges and gaining nine) for a total of \$122,320 (up from \$110,000). Our average pledge is \$2,844, well above the national average. This is an extremely gratifying result, a gain of over 10% in a very difficult economic year. It is due both to generous new pledges and to generous increases by eighteen renewed pledges. This clearly reflects a commitment to St. John's across the entire range of our membership. Congratulations! And thanks to you all for your commitment to St. John's and to our ministries here.

### Looking ahead to 2010, financially

With the increase in pledging, your vestry was able to adopt a budget for 2010 with increases in ministries and outreach, as well as with several other budgetary improvements. There was room for a 5% raise for Fr. Spencer. We have for the first time budgeted for maintenance of our grounds, travel for parishioners to conventions, and bookkeeping services. In each of these cases the church is undertaking to pay for essential church business without asking individuals to do it at their expense. And, finally, we were able to budget for deferred maintenance and for sabbatical reserve. Each of these steps means that we have a more responsible and a more professionalized church that we have had before. If you wish to see more details, they are available from the church office or directly by e-mail from Treasurer Eric Mowrey ([hurtdance@comcast.net](mailto:hurtdance@comcast.net)).

## Sermon of the Month

Sermon preached January 10

The ancients didn't think about names in the same way that we do. We tend to think of names as pure signifiers and not as having any special meaning in themselves. A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. I might have been named Stephen or anything else and have been the same person as I am with the name that I have. We can get attached to our names even though they do not have any meaning in themselves. When I was a boy I once said to my mother, "Mom, I'm really glad you named me Spencer; it's a neat name," and she responded, "Spencer, you'd like your name if it were mud!"

Of course one can give a name that has a special meaning. Parents may name a child 'lawyer' or 'judge' to give them a leg up professionally. A character in *Catch-22* was named Major Major Major Major. I don't know whether it works or not.

But the Hebrews among other ancient peoples didn't think of names this way. They invested them with meaning and significance, and it made a difference what one was called. My favorite naming story is the one of the angel wrestling with Jacob. The angel wouldn't tell Jacob his name, but he gave a new name to Jacob. Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but rather 'Israel', for you have wrestled with God. 'Israel' means "one who wrestles with God". Isn't that wonderful?. So forever Israel is known as the people who have this intense intimacy with God, not untroubled or without strife, but deeply involved and committed.

And according to this understanding of names, to know the name of another person is to have power over them. To know who they are and to know something about them, knowledge that might be used against them. So the angel wrestling with Jacob would not give his name. When Moses was confronted by God in the burning bush, he asked God's name, and God says "I am who I am"—which was transcribed in the Hebrew as Jahweh. As has been suggested, God told mankind his name, and He has not known a peaceful minute since. A little like giving your phone number to the wrong person, I suppose.

But of course the ancients were on to something. When we know someone's name we do have some sort of power over them. We can do things that we couldn't otherwise do. How many times have each of us been in situations where we really didn't want people to know who we are. We say something clumsy on an answering machine, say, and hang up without giving a name thinking, "Boy I hope they don't have caller ID."

Sharing names opens up possibilities of intimacy and vulnerability. When Isaiah has God say "I have called you by name," he is emphasizing the intimacy and knowledge that God has with us.

For the ancients, naming is all caught up with identity, with knowing who we are. And therefore it is very much about power. And not just power over another; for any of us to be empowered we have to know who we are. But for us, we can experience the same kind of thing around roles or positions. To make it really personal, I have to know more than that my name is Spencer; for me to exercise my ministry effectively, with power, I have to know that I am called by ‘priest’. And I must accept this and own it. And the same is true for any other profession or relationship. For a woman to raise children effectively, with power, she must own the name ‘mother’. And so on and so on. A general rule is: to exercise power, effectiveness, we must know who we are. If we do not have a strong sense of identity, we will not be effective at anything.

In the Gospel reading, we hear the story of Jesus being baptized by John. People often ask why Jesus had to be baptized. It seems strange to us because we think of baptism, not incorrectly, as being for the forgiveness of sins. But it is also about identity. Historically baptism, christening, has always been intimately tied up with naming and identity. And in Luke’s Gospel, this is made clear. As Jesus is baptized, he the Holy Spirit descends on him, and a voice is heard, “You are my beloved son; with you I am well pleased.” Jesus is baptized, I believe, because in the act of baptism his identity is revealed, certainly to those present at the time, and perhaps even to himself. He is named, and he takes ownership of this identity, and in doing so he is empowered for his ministry.

And as in so many other things, we are to follow Jesus in this. On this occasion, our observance of his baptism, we renew our own baptismal covenants, and in doing this we revisit and we renew our own identity as his disciples and as children of God.

And if we do not do this, we cannot exercise our ministries as Christians with power or effectiveness. If we do not embrace our baptisms, our baptismal covenant, our identity as Christians, then we are not empowered for ministry. I might be the same person if my name were Stephen, but I cannot be the same person if I am not called by the name ‘Christian’. None of us can be. That identity is far more crucial to who we are than the names our parents bestowed upon us.

So as we ponder Jesus’ baptism and his ministry, let us prepare to renew our own baptismal vows. As you respond to my questions about what you believe and how you intend to act, I invite you to focus on these words and to be reminded that in saying them, you undertake to understand your own sense of identity as a Christian and that in taking on this identity you do so in order to be empowered for ministry. You follow Jesus in having been baptized, you follow Jesus in being empowered for ministry, and in accepting Jesus’ ministry as your own.

You will do all these things—with God’s help.

## Updates from the Church Family

### *Changing of the Guard*

Ken Von der Heiden announced in church on January 10<sup>th</sup> that he had resigned as chair of the Standing Committee. He made it clear that he was not resigning over any dissatisfaction, but because he felt he just wasn't able to keep up with the demands of the position. Congratulations and, above all, thank you, Ken, for your years of service to the diocese.

### *A mighty Rohr*

Kaye Piper and Sharry Erzinger (along with Trinity, Kremmling, vicar Michael Mortvedt) attended a two day conference on spirituality in Albuquerque at Richard Rohr's Center for Action and Contemplation over the week-end of the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. They were part of a gathering of 1100 people to hear Fr. Rohr and other speakers. They report—no surprise!—that it was wonderful.

### *Caring about care*

Jim Cartwright has developed a new ministry of speaking to the elderly, or soon to be elderly, about the various living options—retirement home, assisted living, nursing care, etc.—available to them. This is important work; congratulations to Jim and his good heart for taking it on.

### *Saying goodbye*

We lost two good friends this past month. Reggie Black died in Denver on January 1, and Pauline Friend passed on the tenth. Pauline's funeral was held at St. John's on Friday January 22. Donations in her memory are still being received by St. John's. We did not see too much of either Reggie or Pauline these last few years, but both were long time members and loved and missed by all.

### *Til we meet again*

And Taylor, Tracy, and Abby French attended their last service at St. John's on the 24<sup>th</sup>, as they are moving to Chappaqua, New York, to take advantage of a new job opportunity for Taylor with better prospects for Tracy as well. We wish you well, and we hope you will be back to visit.

### *A voice from the past*

Laura Shaffer was in touch with the church office recently. She sends her best wishes to all her old friends, along with the good news that she plans to visit Granby this summer. We really look forward to seeing you, Laura!

## February 2010

SUN.	MON.	TUES.	WED.	THURS.	FRI.	SAT.
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
					2:45 PM COMTEMPLATIVE PRAYER	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	2:45 PM COMTEMPLATIVE PRAYER	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM EVENING PRAYER AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST	MISSION CONVERSATIONS AT JAVA LAVA 8:30AM			2 PM BIBLE STUDY	2:45 PM COMTEMPLATIVE PRAYER	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL
<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * 10:30 ADULT EDUCATION				2 PM BIBLE STUDY	2:45 PM COMTEMPLATIVE PRAYER * 5 PM OPENING OF VESTRY RETREAT AT HIGH MT. LODGE	8 AM MEN'S BIBLE BREAKFAST * 5 PM HOLY EUCARIST AT CRANMER CHAPEL * 9 AM—2 PM VESTRY RETREAT CONTINUES
<b>28</b>						
9 AM HOLY EUCARIST * 10:30 ADULT EDUCATION						