

The Grapevine

April 2008

Why go to church?

There is a growing segment of the population that considers themselves, “spiritual but not religious.” There are many who find spiritual growth and nurture a worthwhile pursuit, but who don’t find it necessary to belong to a church. I’ve had many conversations about the Church with my “Spiritual-but-not-religious” friends and here is one of the main questions that come up:

If you can talk to God directly, why go to church?

Yes, we can talk to God directly. We do not need a prayer book, a priest, or a church to encounter the Divine. Setting aside the fact that I have priestly duties every Sunday, this is why I go to church: I go to Church because it is a time, especially set aside, for me to make time for God. I go because I like praying with people. When I’m distracted, worried, sad, scattered or anxious, and just can’t seem to get my mind in the right place to pray, I can go to church and be surrounded by people who are able to put their heart and soul into it. They pray *for* me. Similarly, when I am centered, focused and present in the moment, I can pray for those people who have the strength to show up, but not much more.

I go to church, not for what I can “get out of it,” but I go as a devotion to God. There are times when we may not feel like we *get* a whole lot out of church, but the fact that we’ve shown up, pleases God. It’s a gift we *give* to God.

Yes, we can talk to God without going to church, but when the words don’t come as easy, it’s nice to have a prayer book in hand and to be surrounded by other praying people. Going to church on Sunday is renewing. From communal worship, I am strengthened to talk to God more during the week, to trust more and to hope more. I am inspired to do the work of God in the world when I leave the building. Doing the work of the Gospel is not easy. I feel like I need some time at “home base” (church, for me) to fuel me up for being Christ’s Body in the world.

Community is the basic unit of Christianity. A personal relationship with God is important, but our faith is lived out in community. God chose the *community* of the Israelites. Jesus served his earthly ministry with a *community* of disciples. *We* are the Body of Christ. There is no way that one person alone can live out God’s kingdom on earth. We were made to be community. Even as far back as the first few centuries of Christianity, when godly people were so opposed to the secular culture, they would retreat into the wilderness to live as solitaries. But they never stayed alone. Christianity is communal by nature and eventually, communities of faith would spring up around these holy men and women. These became the first expression of monasticism.

We do not need to go to church to talk to God. We don’t need to be around other people to live a good life. But I thank God that the Church is there. Alone we can’t do nearly as much to make this world a place of love and peace as we can when we’re together. Together we encourage each other. Together we challenge each other. Together we pray for one another and together we form the only body that Christ has in the world right now.

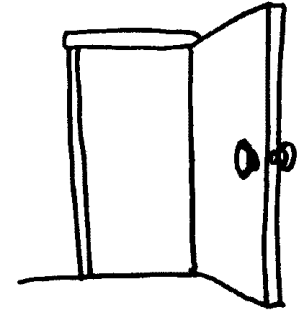
“You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19

In Peace,

FROM THE WARDEN.....

In colonial times, distances in New England were measured from Boston stone. In Liverpool, our “Boston stone” is the church with the purple doors. Who needs MapQuest?

Doors are significant, especially church doors, and color is not a definition of their effectiveness. St. Matthew’s doors, like most, swing both ways. They swing inward to welcome us each Sunday, as they also welcome strangers and guests. They also swing outward bringing St. Matthew’s into the community. We label that Outreach, one of our most effective comMissions (there is nothing wrong with the spelling – it is about Mission). We are particularly good at outreach; the Samaritan Center, blood drives, CROP Walk, The House at 807—oh yes, The House at 807, a ministry that needs wider participation.



There are other Missions related to doors; property is concerned with doors in the most literal sense, along with all of the other physical elements of our parish. Another “wider participation” Mission.

Education is all about doors, of the spiritual type. Opening doors for our young members into the teachings of Jesus and the traditions of our faith. The doors of worship are many. I think of the Jewish tradition of a minion of members being required in opening the doors of the Ark to access the Torah. While we tend not to think of physical doors when it comes to worship, the opening doors are spiritual.

There are also some welcoming worship Mission doors too; the choir, the lay ministry, the altar guild, and the acolytes all have doors with large welcome mats before them. I think you have figured out where I have been going.

Yes, it’s about walking through new doors and having new experiences within our community of faith. Each of our ComMissions offer new doors for us to pass through and all have welcoming mats before them.

I haven’t forgotten another door, that of your own home. Perhaps you’ve noticed a small case before the doors of your Jewish friends’ homes. It’s called a mezuzah and contains verses from Deuteronomy. Among them;

“You shall love your Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart...you shall write them on your doorposts and on your gates.”

Yes, our homes are also a testament of our faith.

Peace, Shalom, God bless,
Gordon

P.S. A bit of “door” humor. Do you now why the priests were mad at Martin Luther when he nailed his theses to the door of the cathedral at Worms?

Get ready for this; it’s a real “groaner.”

Because they covered their Bingo announcement.

‘FIRST FRIDAY’S’



Please join us for our “First Friday” Bible Study program at St. Matthew’s. **Please note this change for April; we’ll gather on the “Second Friday,” April 11th, from 12:10 – 1:00 pm** in the Conference Room for a discussion about our sacred scriptures. Bring a friend!

ADULT EDUCATION FOR THE WINTER

Our Adult Education theme for the 2007-2008 program year is:

A Year of Exploration

Upcoming Offerings:

***April 15th, 7:00 – 8:30 pm * Date Change**

Exploring the Bible: The Book of Ruth

Join us for a discussion of the Old Testament book of Ruth.



May 13th, 7:00-8:30 pm

Patterns of Prayer: Exploring Prayer as a Pattern in our Daily Lives

We find ourselves busy, distracted – yet longing for a rich prayer life. We’ll discuss practical ways to fit prayer into our often hectic lives.

Please look for sign-up sheets posted near the kitchen. There is a minimum class size of 5 for the classes. There will be no sign-up sheets for the Stations of the Cross.

“COLD, SUPREME, LEMONADE FOR LIFE”



You may have noticed the sign hanging in the Parish Hall for “Cold, Supreme, Lemonade for Life.” As part of the Millennium Development Goals, children in the Pre-K through 2nd grade classes came up with this very creative name for a lemonade stand that will benefit those less fortunate. The children are very excited to begin selling lemonade during coffee hour, beginning April 6th for 50¢ a cup. Please support this wonderful endeavor and enjoy some “Cold, Supreme, Lemonade for Life,” just in time for spring.

God Bless,

Kim Mathews, Lee Wheeler, Stacey Balduf, and Karen Atherton

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

If you have an e-mail address you would like added to our parish records, please complete the following and put it in the collection plate or the secretary’s mailbox. Thank you.

Name _____

E-Mail: _____



Choir Notes

With the Lenten season past and the Easter season present, I would like to thank all who helped make our Lenten and Holy Week services and Easter Day services particularly meaningful this year. The Parish Choir worked very hard to prepare the Meditation on the Passion of Christ on Lent 5, in addition to preparing the extra services required in the respective liturgical seasons. I would also like to thank the readers who helped with the Lent 5 service. I had many favorable comments from people about the beauty of the service. On a personal level, I especially enjoyed being able to sing some very familiar Holy Week hymns during the Meditation. Special appreciation is extended to the Parish Choir members who sang at both Easter Day services, and to Sandy Davis who sang a solo during the foot washing on Maundy Thursday.

I would be remiss in not thanking also our Family Choir that sang on the 2nd Sunday of Easter, with special thanks to Mallorie O'Brien for playing the "church bells" on our digital organ. She was very excited about finally being able to try out the organ.

Items of note for the month of April:

- I will ask the Parish Choir to come in on **Sunday, April 6th, at 9:30 am** rather than 9:15 am in case the Easter Egg Hunt needs to be in the church because of inclement weather.
- There is a **Healing Community Eucharist** scheduled for **Thursday, April 10th**, and I am asking any Parish Choir members who plan to attend the service to sit up front and help lead congregational singing.
- There will be **no Wednesday choir rehearsal on April 16th**, because I will be on my school spring break. The choir will, however, be singing for the Sunday service on April 20.
- There will be **no Wednesday choir rehearsal on April 23rd**, as I will be taking students to Quebec very early the following morning and will need the evening to prepare. For **Sunday, April 27th**, when I am in Canada, there will be **no choir warm-up**, but I am asking that the choir members vest and process and lead congregational singing while I am gone. Gordon Davis has graciously agreed to fill in for me at the organ. (Thanks so much, Gordon.)

All other rehearsals and warm-ups for April will be regular. Choir members will need to consult their rehearsal calendars carefully to keep up with all the changes this month.

Sue Parsons
Music Director

BOOK CLUB

After her conversion from Orthodox Judaism to Christianity, Lauren Winner found that her life was indelibly marked by the rich traditions and spiritual practices of Judaism. She set out to discover how she could incorporate some of these practices into her new faith. Winner presents eleven Jewish practices that can transform the way Christians view the world, and God. Whether discussing attentive eating, marking the days while grieving, the community that supports a marriage, candle-lighting, or the differences between the Jewish Sabbath and a Sunday spent at the Mudhouse, her favorite coffee shop, Winner writes with appealing honesty and rare insight. **Join us on Thursday night, April 24th from 7:00-8:30 pm** to discuss:

Mudhouse Sabbath: An Invitation to a Life of Spiritual Discipline by Lauren F. Winner. Bring a friend!



FAMILY ROOM EUCHARISTS RETURN



When I first got to St. Matthew's, we hosted a series of Family Room Eucharists so that I could get to know the parish better. They were so much fun; we thought we'd do it again! One of the challenges of parish ministry is that we only get to see each other (usually) once a week. So, Family Room Eucharists are a way for us to:

Build Community by getting to know one another better Practice the Christian virtue of hospitality Share in Eucharistic fellowship in our homes Family Room Eucharists are usually held in the evening at a parishioner's home. About 8-10 people gather for a little light refreshment and conversation and then Mother Carrie sets up the Eucharist on a

coffee table, or at the dining table. We follow an abbreviated liturgy, pray together, have conversation and share Communion together. They are supposed to last about an hour and a half – but sometimes when we get talking, we can be there for a little longer! Folks can sign up for any group they'd like to. Often date and location are a factor. It's nice when the groups are made of people who know one another well and people whom they're getting to know better. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend a Family Room Eucharist. Look for sign-up sheets soon. If you're interested in hosting a Family Room Eucharist, you can sign-up on the sheet near the kitchen. Please contact Mother Carrie for more details and for specific dates and times available.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

What are the Millennium Development Goals? The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. The Episcopal Church has adopted these goals as a top missionary priority for the Church.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Create a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief.



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EUCHARISTS

Mark your calendars! We have some exciting Community Eucharists coming up:

Thursday, April 10th - 7:00 pm - COMMUNITY EUCHARIST HEALING SERVICE - The music and prayers of the evening will focus on the great need for God's healing in our lives, in our communities, and in the world. Holy Communion, healing prayers, and anointing with holy oil will be offered. Please join us for this special service and stay for the reception following. A cure isn't always possible; but healing is always possible.

Thursday, May 22nd – "U2charist"

Featuring the music of the Irish rock band, U2, this Eucharist draws our attention toward global reconciliation, justice for the poor and oppressed, and the importance of caring for our neighbors.

Things to know about U2 for the uninitiated...

The one paragraph version: They have always been a Christian band, but avoided signing with a Christian label because they didn't want to preach to the choir. "You" in their songs is often God. Sometimes it is God addressing us. There was an on line attempt recently to come up with one song by U2 that wasn't referring to things spiritual and no one was able to do so... The image of God as lover, luring us closer, or our desire and hunger for God are regular themes. So are themes of social justice and doing our part to bring about the reign of God.

Good Books To Read:

Get Up Off Your Knees: Preaching the U2 Catalog (Maynard, Whiteley, Eds. Cowley Publishing)

One Step Closer: Why U2 Matters to those Seeking God, Christian Scharen

Walk On: The Spiritual Autobiography of U2 (Steve Stockman, Relevant Press, re-released)

Conversations with Bono (Michka Assayas)

A CHRISTIAN RETREAT OPPORTUNITY



For many years, people from our diocese and from all over the country have gone to "Cursillo" retreats for a time to refresh their spirits and renew their faith. The Cursillo group in our Central New York diocese is working with the Bishop to provide meaningful retreat experiences for people in our diocese. The next Cursillo retreat will be held May 1st — 4th at the Casowasco Retreat Center, located on the west shore of Owasco Lake near Moravia NY.

"I can say that my Cursillo weekend was truly a faith building experience for me and a major stepping stone on my Christian journey. I met some wonderful new people, ate way too much food, learned some great new music, and got not nearly enough sleep. I wouldn't change anything for the world and I wish I could do it again." – Marge Newhart, Lay Director of Cursillo #48, St. Matthew's, Moravia. From our parish, Deb Smith, Stacey Balduf and Debbie Miller have all gone on this retreat. If you're interested, they'd be happy to talk with you about their experiences.

Please see Mother Carrie for more information.

MINISTRY AND MISSION FAIR

Saturday, May 17, 2008
Bishop Grimes High School, East Syracuse

Workshop topics in Christian Formation, Congregational Development, Youth Ministry, Music Ministries, Vestry Leadership, Stewardship, and much, much more. Something for everyone! More details will follow soon.

We would like to have as many people as possible go from our parish. Mark your calendars.

OFFER TO GOD



**Presentation by Terry Parsons
“The Stewardship Guru”
From the Church Center, New York
Friday and Saturday, April 18th/ 19th
(Friday: geared toward clergy)
10:00 am – 3:00 pm
All Saints, Johnson City**

The Binghamton District invites you to a very special event. Terry Parsons will be our guest sharing her wit and wisdom on that always sticky church subject, stewardship. Ms. Parsons is a dynamic and captivating speaker and she will share some of her amazing wisdom on stewardship of God’s gifts of time, talent, and treasure. Friday will focus on the issues for clergy on stewardship. Saturday is open to everyone – gather up a crowd and join us for a seminar that will change how you view “stewardship” forever.

Questions? Talk with your clergy person or call Rev. Susanna DesMarais at St. Paul’s in Endicott, 607-748-8118. Brown Bag Lunch on Saturday – bring your own. No need to sign-up. And, it’s free!!!

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO ON A FRIDAY EVENING?

Join us at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Syracuse for a thought provoking film shown in our sanctuary. Enjoy a cup of tea or fair trade coffee. Admission: \$5.00 goes to the Millennium Development Goals. Help end extreme poverty by 2015! Onsite childcare provided: \$2.00 per child (come a little early).

2008 Schedule:

April 18th FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO 7:00 pm

May 16th THE PAINTED VEIL 7:00 pm

For more info go to <http://nooutcasts.org/?page id=41> and click on the movie titles for movie descriptions and trailers.





SOUND BITES



ALPHA AND OMEGA - Some concepts are so difficult to grasp in concrete terms that they are better expressed symbolically. Certainly one such concept is the infinitude of God. Temporally, God was before anything else was and will be long after everything else is not.

The early Christians used the Greek letters alpha and omega in conjunction to express this notion. Because alpha is the first and omega is the last letter of the Greek alphabet, they were probably used colloquially in the 1st century to stand for “the beginning and the end,” much as a modern retail establishment might advertise that it has “everything from A to Z.” Early Christians understood the letters to connote “from the beginning of all things to the end of all things” or “from creation to the eschaton. When used to describe God, alpha and omega implied “more than all” in the sense that God transcends both the beginning and the end of time.

This idea appears in the Old Testament (Isaiah 44:6) where God is described as “the first” and “the last.” St. John employs the idea and the symbol three times in Revelation — in 1:8 and 21:6 to describe “the Lord God” and in 22:13 to describe Jesus Christ.

When the Greek letters alpha and omega are seen together on a crest or shield or on the pages of an open book in Renaissance art, they refer to Christ and derive from Revelation 22:13. Likewise in Christian heraldry, alpha and omega are used as a device signifying Christ.


One of the emphases of the season of Advent is “first and last things,” thus the alpha and omega are appropriate symbols for this season and are frequently used in liturgical art (banner, bulletin covers, stoles). In this sense, they refer to Christ as the pre-existent creator of all things and to Christ as the one whose Second Coming will conclude all things.

Alpha and omega are also part of the Christmas liturgy, when the 4th century hymn “Of the Father’s love begotten” (82, Hymnal 1982) is sung. Its first verse described Christ as both the source and the ending of all that was and is and will be.

Sung in every season, the 7th century Eucharistic hymn “Draw nigh and take the Body of the Lord” concludes with a reference to Christ as “Alpha-Omega.” (327-8, v.8, Hymnal 1982)

The Christian use of alpha and omega is in some sense related to the Jewish use of the word “emet.” This word means “truth” and is composed of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It is used in Jewish symbolism in roughly the same manner in which Christians use alpha and omega.

Reprinted from *Church Words*, by Stephen E. Moore
Published by Forward Movement Publications
412 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 USA





APRIL

Ayres, Violet	25	Muller, Robert M.	24
Booth, Elwood	03	Parsons, Susan	14
Brown, Andrea	12	Reale, Lindsay	06
Brown, Ryan	12	Rose, Jay	24
Christie, Elvie	20	St. Denny, Christopher	14
Greco, Tyler	29	St. Denny, Katherine	24
Jacques, Nancy	06		

(If anyone has been omitted from this list, please call the office)

In Our Thoughts and Prayers...

Sue Allidi	Pete Hudson	Edythe Reardon
Andrea	Sheila Hughes	Rebecca
June Balduf	Jodi and Amelia	Paul Rill
Sylvia Boylan	Joell	Robert Roach
Thomas E. Boylan	Bobby Kayne	Victoria Roach
Bill Campbell	Joanne Kepley	Lorene "Doug" Schneider
Betty Clarke	Terri Kobo	Herb Smith
Melanie Clay	Samuel Kovac	Stockwell Family
Marie Corl	Karen Kreis	Maureen Suatoni
David Delaney	Gloria Miller	Jennifer Sullivan
Eleanor Duke	Howard Miller	Mary "O" Taber
Jason Garafalo	Rena Miller	Angelo Taglioni
Nancy Geaslen	Mardie Ninno	Richard Walter
Henry Family	Joe Piraino	Kristen Wildrick
Laura Jean Hoyt	Ellen Pugsley	Emily Zemenz



SHOPPING CART SUNDAY

April 20th

**NON-FOOD ITEMS,
PLEASE**



**May Grapevine
Deadline**

April 20th

APRIL 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 7:30-10:30 PM Creative Memories I Mother Carrie on vacation	2 12:00 Noon HE+ 7:15 PM-Choir Rehearsal	3 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers 6:30-7:00 PM Outreach Commission Meeting	4 Parish Office Closed	5 8:00-4:00 PM Cub Scout Pinewood Derby in Parish Hall 9:30-3:00 PM Diocesan Youth Ministry Adult Workshop
6 <u>Easter Egg Hunt</u> 8:00 AM-HE+ 9:15 AM-Sunday School 9:30 AM-Choir Warm-up 9:30 AM-Adult Forum 10:00 AM-Nursery 10:15 AM-HE+ Mother Carrie On vacation	7 *6:45 AM-AA 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers	8	9 12:00 Noon HE+ 7:15 PM-Choir Rehearsal	10 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers 6:30 PM Choir Warm-up 7:00 PM Community Eucharist Healing Service	11 Parish Office Closed 12:10 – 1:00 PM “First Friday” Bible Study	12
13 8:00 AM-HE+ 9:15 AM-Choir Warm-up No Sunday School 9:30 AM-Adult Forum 10:00 AM-Nursery 10:15 AM-HE+	14 *6:45 AM-AA Mother Carrie’s Day Off 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers SPRING RECESS	15 7:00-8:30 PM Adult Education	16 12:00 Noon HE+ No Choir Rehearsal	17 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers 7:00-9:00 PM District Mission Council All Saints’, Fulton	18 Parish Office Closed Stewardship Event in Johnson City	19
20 8:00 AM-HE+ 9:15 AM- Choir Warm-up & Sunday School 9:30 AM-Adult Forum 10:00 AM-Nursery 10:15 AM-HE+ 11:30 AM-Family Choir Shopping Cart Sunday Grapevine Deadline 12:30 PM-Maloney Bridal Shower	21 *6:45 AM-AA Mother Carrie’s Day Off 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers	22	23 12:00 Noon HE+ No Choir Rehearsal	24 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers 7:00-8:30 PM Book Club	25 Parish Office Closed	26 9:30-3:00 PM Diocesan Children & Youth Choir Festival @ St. Paul’s Cathedral
27 8:00 AM-HE+ 9:15 AM- Sunday School No Choir Warm-up 9:30 AM-Adult Forum 10:00 AM-Nursery 10:15 AM- HE+	28 *6:45 AM-AA Mother Carrie’s Day Off 5:00-7:00 PM Weight Watchers	29 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting	30 12:00 Noon HE+ 7:15 PM Choir Rehearsal			

*A.A. Meets Monday – Friday – 6:45 – 7:45 AM in the Conference Room

°HB: Holy Baptism

+HE: Holy Eucharist