



THE GOSPEL

According to Saint Mark | April 2004

2004 Annual Meeting



The St. Mark's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, April 18. Please plan to attend this special celebration of our community. We will elect new leadership for the coming year, thank those who have served, get updates on church activities and enjoy each other's company.

The following candidates are running for office: for senior warden, Penny Hansen, for junior warden, Jack Burton, and for the vestry, Burton Reist, Susan Thigpen, David Willson. This year we will also consider a proposed amendment to our by-laws to allow the direct election of St. Mark's delegates to the Diocesan Convention (see Stewart Andrews' article in this issue). All members who have submitted a pledge for 2004 at least one month before the meeting may vote. The list of eligible voters has been posted on the Vestry bulletin board in the vestibule. All other visitors and newcomers are welcome to join us for lunch and to attend the meeting as observers.

Please note the schedule for that day and mark your calendar now!

- 10:00 a.m.** One service: Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist
(Note: The nursery will be open from 9:45 am until 2:30 pm.)
- 11:30 a.m.** Free pub lunch begins in the parish hall
(Gourmet bag lunches, drinks, and a special birthday cake!)
- Noon** Registration opens in the nave
- 12:30 p.m.** Annual meeting begins
(Supervised activities for children will begin in the undercroft.)
- 2:00 p.m.** Annual meeting concludes †

Small Change, Big Results

by Stewart Andrews

At the upcoming annual meeting on April 18, we'll vote on an amendment to the St. Mark's by-laws. The amendment is simple. The proposed change will mean that the *parish*, no longer the *Vestry*, will elect the lay delegates to the Regional Assembly and the Convention of the Diocese of Washington.

Why bother? Well, many feel that the delegates' role in representing our interests in the diocese and the region needs to be more pronounced and visible. We need to be a stronger voice in our diocese — a voice of solidarity, a voice of approval or a voice of disagreement. Many of us don't know *Continued on p. 5*

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Holy Week

April 8, Maundy Thursday

5:30-6:45 p.m.: foot washing in the nave

6-7 p.m.: cocktail hour in the parish hall

7:15-7:30 p.m.: move to nave for dinner

7:30-8:30 p.m.: DINNER

8:30 p.m.: Eucharist and Tenebrae

Babysitting provided

Tickets on sale April 4

Dinner \$6, including cocktail hour

April 9, Good Friday

12 noon service

April 10, Holy Saturday

12 noon prayer service

8 p.m.: *Great Vigil* starts in courtyard with fire lighting

April 11, Easter Sunday

9 a.m. service—no incense
11 a.m. service—with incense



Candidate Statements

Penny Hansen Candidate for Senior Warden

*What a year
it has been!*
When I wrote my
Gospel article last
year asking that
you consider me
for the position of

senior warden, I did so with decidedly mixed emotions – excitement and fear predominating. I can tell you truly that this has been one of the best years of my life, and I am grateful to all of you for allowing me to experience it. And now I ask that you let me do it some more.

Being senior warden at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Capitol Hill, is a position of challenges, blessings and honor. A substantial part of the challenge is that much of the job is undefined. The senior warden is first and foremost the lay partner of the rector in setting policy, maintaining membership and financial stability and looking across the entire fabric of the life of the church to determine what isn't working as it should be and devising ways to fix it. That last part is the tough part. The work never stops because the energy and activity level here at times reaches a pace that would be judged frantic even on the stock market floor. Every time a job is completed another one (or two) pops up. The search for people to carry out important functions that all or many of us depend on for our life and sense of community in this church is unending. Hundreds of people devoting untold thousands of hours to a myriad of activities is the norm, not the exception. The senior warden is ever abroad in her leaky boat, trolling for likely candidates.

There are numerous ongoing challenges that the entire community faces and all senior wardens work on – keeping new people arriving and the budget in balance, fixing the tower and the other building problems that will always be with us, sustaining our extensive art and Christian education programs, defining our new goals for work in the wider world and developing expanded youth and caregiving activities.

Every senior warden arrives with a list of things he or she would like to accomplish, areas that you feel need attention and in which you think your particular set of talents will allow you to make a contribution. My goals were in the parish life area, and this was confirmed by the obvious desire for more communal opportunities that was expressed at Shrine Mont. I wanted to strengthen the cross-program cooperation of the pillars, revamp our communication tools, particularly the *Gospel*, increase the number and diversity of our opportunities to be together in fun as well as in work, integrate our activities across generational barriers, continue the progress already made on communication around money matters and foster conversation on our range of spiritual beliefs. To a greater or lesser degree in each instance, and with the help of many immensely talented people, some progress has been made in each of these areas.

My limit of 750 words would not allow me to list all of these folk's names, even if I wrote nothing else. I'd like to keep working on these goals.

The blessings of being senior warden are different every day. To me, a blessing is something that simply arrives in your life and enriches it. The deep sense of common purpose, understanding and fellowship with Paul, the delight in meeting and beginning to know Shearon, the sound of laughter from Baxter House staff and volunteers, the children playing games at the parish fair, the honest and heartfelt sharing at the same-sex forum in December, the incredible turnout of the older generation at the potluck in January, the fun of the two fabulous dances we had this year (well, that wasn't really unexpected - this place loves to dance), the long list of teens and adults going to Honduras in June, the babble of voices at the 10:30 coffee hour – all of these and more have been the kind of delightful surprises that make doing this job so rewarding.

As for the honor of being senior warden, I cannot begin to express how deeply it is felt. Every Sunday I look around and realize that I have daily responsibility to and for this extraordinary group of people – people who choose to go to a church that demands open-mindedness, acceptance, communal effort, comfort with diverse opinions and widely varying spiritual beliefs, not to mention all kinds of mental, physical, and emotional labor. I will treasure the honor of this experience for all the rest of my life. †

Jack Burton Candidate for Junior Warden

*Running again
Already!?!?* You
mean a whole year has
gone by since our last
annual meeting? Okay,
yeah, we have had

some problems to deal with, but being junior warden has been so much fun that the time has raced by! Damn! And now, I can only run for one more year-long term ... and there are so many things I want to do (that is, besides getting the tower repaired!).

These may sound like "campaign promises" offered only to persuade you to vote for me again. But, in truth, this is what I still hope to get accomplished before that second year is up (if you all decide to vote me in again).

1.) I'm eager to respond to the significant number of you who want to see the new columbarium installed and ready (before any of us need it)...Paul doesn't need additional urns in his office, awaiting a proper home. We're trying to solve an engineering problem so we can get a dependable estimate on the cost of installation. Once pre-construction sales have brought in enough money to fund this part of the work, I'll be able to assign the contract for the project and get it underway.

2.) Very soon, the Fabric Committee and I will solicit your advice and opinions on the selection of new chairs to replace the



venerable but aging nave seating. We've had 18 of the broken chairs repaired. Nonetheless, the last two rows facing the Tiffany window are chairs from the parish hall. We plan to gradually replace the older chairs on a section-by-section basis, as money becomes available.

3.) The basement of Baxter House, now successfully water-proofed (and dry!) still needs to have the asbestos tile removed from the front end and new flooring (tile or carpeting) installed this summer.

4.) Also on the schedule for the summer is to coat the hot water lines in the church internally to prevent further leaks like the ones we've had this past year.

5.) If all goes according to plan with the tower repair and the aforementioned projects, I will propose a plan to create storage for the excess furniture in the parish hall. This will make the space more attractive and inviting for the several disparate uses we make of it. Right now, this space is inefficient and an eyesore. Once again, the Fabric Committee and I will solicit your opinions before reaching a decision or taking any action.

I hope to have your continuing support as each of these

projects comes up in its turn. I will always offer the parish the opportunity for input in any "new direction" decisions. As before, there will be occasional calls for volunteers to assist with some of these (and other) projects.

It has been tremendously heartening that so many people have done so much to extend the beauty and the life of our fabric. I hope I have expressed my gratitude adequately to each of you individually and by announcements to the community. I couldn't have gotten as much accomplished without you.

I don't believe our space was designed to be glitzy or dazzlingly showy. I do think our church has an understated, vigorous and deeply satisfying beauty in the thoughtful design of the wooden beams and ceiling, the brick and terra cotta walls, the wrought iron rood screen and colorful stained glass windows. Keeping everything intact and protected from decay feels like the only responsible thing we can do to express our appreciation for the gift given to us by our predecessors. This work has been far more satisfying than I had guessed it would be when I decided to seek this office. Thank you all for the trust you have placed in me.

Please send me back for another year! †

Burton Reist Candidate for the Vestry

The costs and promises of moving forward. When I arrived at St. Mark's five years ago, I was impressed by the beauty and power of our services and our commitment to diverse approaches to religious life. Within months people were encouraging me to get involved. I became a mentor in the Education for Ministry program, taught Sunday school, and began serving as a verger. Assuming the position of worship co-director put me on the flip side of this phenomenon. Admittedly, I was unprepared for the enormous recruiting burden facing those who become leaders in this church. I've done my best to fulfill this responsibility, but it hasn't been easy. It is this experience that forms the core of my message.

In the strategic planning process, one message is coming through loud and

clear: We want to focus more directly on outreach. I find this exciting. Outreach should be a priority for any faith community. I think, though, that for us to answer this call, we need to look honestly at what we can ask of our parishioners. St. Mark's is full of busy people. We work intense jobs, and we're devoted to our families and communities. And many of us don't live nearby. Consequently, it is difficult for us to come together to work on church activities.

Just as we take care to use our financial resources wisely, we must be equally aware of the fact that our human resources are limited. Expanding our outreach efforts is going to mean making choices.

St. Mark's has a long history of congregational involvement in church life. This is evident in worship planning, Sunday and holiday services, Christian education, parish life, and our magnificent artistic endeavors. We need to be open to the idea that finding time to work together on new activities may mean letting go of some things that have been historically important to us. We cannot

do everything, so we need to think intentionally about what we want to prioritize.

This is delicate because we are a church that rightly upholds our parish traditions. It is, therefore, imperative that we make an effort to establish as our foundation those practices and principles that must not be altered. Clearly, open communion, blessing of same sex unions, and our embrace of skepticism are in this category. But many things, particularly activities that take a lot of effort, may not be. If we can identify the things with which we are willing to part, we can better trust each other to develop innovations that harness our energy in the spirit of growth and innovation.

I want to be a member of the Vestry because I think I can help us move in new directions. Progress toward a goal often requires a willingness to change. This is not always easy, but it's important. We have enormous talent in our community, and we can do great things. Together, we can free ourselves to build on our phenomenal history and continue to embrace the promise of our faith traditions. †



Susan Thigpen

Candidate for the Vestry

Washington is a richly diverse community, and one I came to appreciate even more after leaving it and returning. The tapestry of nationalities and social backgrounds, of living environments, of traditions and eras preserved juxtaposed with ideas and ideals pressing forward all seem to be woven together with the strong fibers of histories played out and rippling into a world beyond. It is a rich tapestry, and while I embraced it in the workplace and community, it was not until I landed at St. Mark's that I realized how important it was to my spiritual journey as well.

I visited St. Mark's about 15 years ago. Though I wound up in a different parish, something kept teasing my mind about the St. Mark's community. I left Washington for several years, and when I returned, I kept finding myself back at St. Mark's. It was traditional, and yet it was not. It looked like the community in which I lived. Perhaps most importantly, there was no one there who assumed we had all embarked on our spiritual journey from the same vantage point, that we were following the same path or that we would even reach the same destination. Like Washington, there was room for a diversity of origins and viewpoints. It felt good. It felt like home.

In the past five years, I have moved from the shadows of involvement within the St. Mark's community into one of deeper commitment. I appreciated the opportunities to serve anonymously, as much as the warmth with which I was encouraged to engage more actively. From the soup kitchen to the altar guild, to lay server, to a "greening," a Worship Task Force and the LCF class, my sense of community deepened, and my circle of friends grew. Next steps to pledging, the

Easter flowers, Shrine Mont, and the Fabric Committee seemed a logical and comfortable progression.

How wonderfully rich it feels to have the traditions of the Episcopal Church infused and enlivened by the creative and questioning minds of a diverse community brought together by their collective journeys in faith. When asked if I would consider running for the Vestry—a leap to another level of commitment—I reflected on the old comfort of the shadow. And then I thought about the vibrancy of this community and the light that has spilled into my life. It seemed an opportunity to embrace my faith more affirmatively and in the process, give back to so many of you who have nurtured it and challenged it in the past few years.

Our community is comprised of old-timers and newcomers; of children, parents, singles and Gray Lions; of educators, artists, thinkers and caregivers. It's a good thing I don't have an agenda — you will keep me busy learning more about how and where we channel our gifts and energies. I pray that I will not disappoint in my willingness to listen, to grow and to strengthen the tapestry of this very rich community. †

J. David Willson

Candidate for the Vestry

My wife Gretchen and I first entered the doors at St. Mark's in 1968 and have been pledging members ever since. St. Mark's is a community that nurtured my coming of age as an adult, my role as husband, father, and grandfather and, now, my life as a semi-retired adult of aging parents.

In the early years, I was active as a teacher of Sunday school and short classes for adults, a Vestry member (ran once and lost, ran again a few years later and

succeeded) and Finance Committee chairman (before the job was combined with treasurer). I was also the first coordinator of the 9:00 acolytes, at a time when that service was much smaller than now. The silver crosses worn by acolytes today are patterned after the one I wore as an acolyte in my youth.

There were also years when I was relatively inactive in the church, especially when our two children were teenagers and I was concurrently working in a time-consuming and stressful job on the staff of the House Appropriations Committee.

Two years ago, George Meng asked me to serve as your treasurer and Finance Committee chairman. I was reluctant to accept because I did not believe I had the right skills, and I knew I would face a very challenging financial situation. But I took the risk and found at least some rewards. With the support of many individuals and the community as a whole, we have restructured our financial underpinnings to take us into the future without a series of annual money crises. While the work has been difficult and stressful, it has caused me to become reconnected to this very important community at a time when my work community is fading in importance. I would like to continue serving St. Mark's by being a member of the Vestry. I ask for your support.

I believe that many facets of the St. Mark's community are working very well and, in most regards, I think we should stay the course. I do, however, think we need to pay more attention to stewardship and planned giving, hospitality and community relations (dare I say evangelism?) and our youth programs. I am encouraged by the efforts of the Outreach Board to refocus our activity in this arena. We also still have more to do in the financial arena and I look forward to supporting our new treasurer, Pete Carlson, as he takes on this job.

I appreciate your taking the time to read this. Please attend the annual meeting. †



Highlights of the March 21 Vestry Meeting

by *Surrogate Reporter (Peter Hawley)*

Treasurer's Report: David Willson reported a total income of \$70,359 in February and total expenses of \$70,392. By April, the treasurer will have sent letters about 2004 budget allocations to all parish activity treasurers, with copies to program managers and Vestry liaisons. The Vestry recently voted to require treasurers to submit reports at year's end to their liaisons.

Personnel Officer's Report: For the absent Nathan Monell, Paul Abernathy reported that the Personnel Committee is working on two projects: revision of St. Mark's contract with Green's Maintenance Company and development of a performance appraisal system for paid staff.

Junior Warden's Report: Jack Burton reported that the Fabric Committee's subcommittee on the tower project selected Preservation Trades, Inc., to

be our contractor. Previous clients enthusiastically recommended this company. In other areas: eight "Gray Lions" are volunteering every other Tuesday for various clean-up/fix-up projects at the church. The Fabric Committee is also considering options for new nave chairs and will display samples for the congregation after Easter.

Endowment Committee Report: Janice Gregory, co-chair, reported that the committee manages seven funds (total value almost \$700,000) and approves disbursements according to criteria in the charter for each fund. No funds were disbursed in 2003. A complete report on the Endowment Fund will be made available at the annual meeting.

Tower Fund-Raising: Rod Lawrence reported that \$135,000 had been raised by March 20. Penny Hansen received

additional checks on March 21 totaling \$5,000. To date, 115 of 515 pledging members have contributed. The Vestry will decide at its spring retreat, April 23-25, how the remainder will be obtained.

Proposed Amendment to the By-laws: Stewart Andrews reported on his efforts to inform the parish about the proposed amendment, which will allow the congregation to elect its delegates to the Diocesan Convention beginning at the 2005 annual meeting.

Proposed Mission Statement: The Vestry discussed and edited a new draft mission statement submitted by strategic thinking & planning process facilitators Don Ellison, Dee Hahn-Rollins and Rick Rutherford with a summary of comments on draft language sent out in February by the rector and senior warden. The Vestry will vote on the final draft at its spring retreat. †

Small Change, Big Results

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our current delegates or what happened at the last convention. What was the agenda? How did we vote? In some parishes, delegates can be a huge position, a mighty voice. Do we have anything to tell the diocese right now?

If we have candidates running for the position of delegate who are campaigning and elected in a process much like a candidate for the Vestry, we hope the campaign and election will serve to educate the parish as a whole. If this amendment is approved, the parish will elect delegates at the annual meeting in 2005.

There is good support for this proposed amendment. With your vote at the annual meeting, it will be a change we hope will make a difference to us and the diocese. †

Bring the Family and Wake Up the Earth!

Put Saturday, April 24, on Your Calendar

You are invited to the nave for an evening of entertainment by St. Mark's teens and friends of Honduras, luscious food, festive drinks, foot-tapping music, a raffle and a fun auction (unless you mope when you are outbid). In this informal evening, the children can move freely between the adults and the separate activities planned for them.

Have a great time and support this summer's youth service trip to Honduras. Cost of the evening is \$15

for adults, \$2 for children. To donate an auction item, contact Deborah Yatsko at 703 532-8509 or yatskos@starpower.net.

History for you newcomers: The Episcopal Church has helped the North Coast of Honduras since it was devastated by Hurricane Fifi in 1977, developing a strong presence in local communities. St. Mark's sent the first group to the North Coast in 1989. Annual April Wake Up the Earth fundraisers began several years later. The groups have helped build buildings, teach in the local schools, plant trees—among other projects. But they bring back as much they give: the understanding of what poor people—with tiny houses, rutted roads, nearly nonexistent telephones, and limited education and job options—can teach their wealthy visitors. †

– *NOTHING FUNNY ABOUT IT – A COMMENTARY UNTO ITSELF!* In due deference to the gravitas of the Vestry Elections, *Nevik Sgnillib is taking the month off.* God willing, his column will return in May. †



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April 2004

"1776"— A Potent and Timely Musical Drama

by Larry Cardwell and Jeff Breslow

"1776" is the St. Mark's Players spring musical, a show that reflects on stage the same kinds of issues we face in our own St. Mark's community.

St. Mark's is in the midst of forging new mission and vision statements. This is a community process in which we believe the language must reflect our past and hold out a vision for the future. We passionately believe the statements must capture our core values. This mirrors the situation faced by the framers of the Declaration of Independence.

In our region and our nation, we are just months away from elections. Locally and nationally, differing visions of the future are being fervently debated. The future will reflect the outcome of the elections.

Compromise is often viewed as an ugly word, especially in recent years. After all, if what you're fighting for is "right," anything less than a full victory is a compromise of one's values. Yet, as "1776" demonstrates, the war of ideas fought in Philadelphia resulted in our nation being shaped by many compromises. Elected legislatures across the United States still operate on that basis. However, while compromise may be justified, "1776" also shows that compromise comes with consequences.

Perhaps the most significant lesson from the show is how complex and difficult it was to create the concept of "America". Surely,

in making America, the war of ideas among the delegates was just as difficult, and had just as many casualties, as the war of weapons with the British. "1776" recreates just how perilously close to failure the drafters came. This show reminds us that the document proclaiming our independence from Britain also gave voice to the ideals that led to our Civil War. "1776" by Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone is an unparalleled piece of American theater. It has wonderful songs, romantic lovers and indelible characters, to be certain, but it is not a traditional musical. Instead, it is a play that uses music to punctuate the drama. "1776" provides a window through which to look at where we have been and where we are today.

The cast of "1776" bring a wealth of talent to present this powerful stage experience. St. Mark's parishioners in the cast are Theo Rutherford, Pete Eveleth, Mark Allen, Fairfield Butt, Jerry McKenzie and Rick Rutherford.

Jeff Breslow, director, and J Wickert, music director, have each worked successfully more than 20 years in community theater as performers and directors. "1776" is their first collaboration. St. Mark's parishioners Ellen and Larry Cardwell and Alden Atwood are the producers. "1776" opens Friday, April 30, and closes on Saturday, May 15. Visit the St. Mark's Players Web site, www.stmarksplayers.org for more details.