



THE GOSPEL

According to Saint Mark's / November 2003

Vestry Selects Budget Priorities for 2004 *By Penny Hansen, Senior Warden*

AT ITS MOST RECENT MONTHLY MEETING (OCTOBER 19), the Vestry discussed spending priorities for the 2004 budget. The goal of the discussion was to give the Finance Committee direction and advice in constructing next year's budget. The Finance Committee, chaired by the Treasurer, is the body charged by the by-laws with proposing a draft budget for Vestry consideration in December and passage in January. The Finance Committee begins its deliberations this week.

Clergy and Staff Raises: This year there was unanimous support for ensuring that, as a top priority, that raises are given in 2004. Neither clergy nor staff received increases in 2003, other than increases in health insurance funding. The Personnel Committee is charged with making recommendations to the Finance Committee as to the amount of increase to be considered. Once again, substantial health insurance increases will also be required.

Outreach Programs: The Vestry also voted to increase funding for outreach programs. Funds for our charitable contributions were reduced from previous levels in 2002 and 2003 and are

quite low compared to other churches of our size. The need is great, and we'll try to restore them to their 2001 level next year.

No Cuts to Youth or Building Programs: The

Vestry is instructing the Finance Committee to "hold harmless" (make no cuts in) those budget line items that impact either children or our physical plant, no matter what the canvass produces. Children's programs remain a very high priority at St. Mark's, and the new Associate Rector will require adequate funds to implement a revitalized youth program in the new year. And as we all know, the last year has seen numerous "challenges" to our physical plant, the gusher of water into the nave from the roof last week being only the latest example. The repair and maintenance budget, as well as the replacement reserve to support larger projects such as the tower, must be maintained. A good canvass could also result in increasing these items.

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The Link with Lichfield is All about Friendship

By Stephanie Deutsch

David and I arrived in Lichfield on an overcast October Saturday and were met at the train station by Anne and Tony Barnard, our hosts for the weekend and the couple whose friendship with Jim and Ginny Adams initiated the link between our congregation and theirs over 20 years ago. I had entertained Anne and Tony for dinner the last time the Lichfield choir visited but did not know them well. The trip was really, I thought, about David as verger accepting a verge* as a gift to St. Mark's. I had not grasped the extent to which the link is a real friendship.

But a friendship it is. As she was showing me into her large, square kitchen Anne touched my arm and said, "I am so glad you're here!" She then prepared the first of many cups of tea we would share around her kitchen table, and she and Tony laid out

*verge: a staff that symbolizes the verger's role in managing a church service. In the old days, I believe, it could be used to clear the way of chickens and sheep.

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A Seed Fund for New Programs: Finally, the Vestry hopes that funds will be available to support new initiatives that are sure to come as our Strategic Planning process shifts from the thinking phase to the planning phase. Although the specifics of new initiatives have not yet been developed, we anticipate they will begin to emerge in 2004 and will therefore need support from the 2004 budget.

While these priorities are important, the Finance Committee will also be considering the input recently received from the Parish Managers on their budget requests and the realities confronting the church, such as a projected, and substantial, increase in energy costs.

If you have questions or opinions about these priorities, please contact me or Dave Willson, our Treasurer, or your favorite Vestry person. †

Not Getting Your Mail?

If you have not been receiving the e-mail notification about the Web site posting of the Gospel, it may be that your e-mail address was among over 15% that are currently out of date. With our new strategy for distributing the newsletter and our increasing reliance on e-mail for communication, your e-mail address has become ever more important. If you wish to remain in the loop, let the parish office know when your address changes. Please notify Susan Block (stmpadm@covad.net) and copy me (ndc20003@yahoo.com) as Communications Coordinator. If you wish to become a member of the St. Mark's e-group, please send a message to StMarksubscribe@yahoogroups.com. If you have questions, please ask our e-group guru, George Meng (meng@chesapeake.net). Finally, if you haven't already done so, check out the wealth of information on the St. Mark's Web site: <http://www.stmarks.net>

—Matt Senger

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The Link with Lichfield is All about Friendship

our schedule for the weekend. We would have Saturday lunch with Chris and Claire Craddock a few doors away on the cathedral close; there was a dinner party that night in our honor at Hazel Baker's and another Sunday evening given by Peter and Mary Parsons. There was evensong both days in the cathedral and a service Sunday morning. We sipped our tea, nodded and said it all sounded wonderful. her kitchen table, and she and Tony laid out our schedule for the weekend. We would have Saturday lunch with Chris and Claire Craddock a few doors away on the cathedral close; there was a dinner party that night in our honor at Hazel Baker's and another Sunday evening given by Peter and Mary Parsons. There was evensong both days in the cathedral and a service Sunday morning. We sipped our tea, nodded and said it all sounded wonderful.

Which it was. All the people we spent time with were warm, friendly and interesting. They wanted news of their friends at St. Mark's; Anne and Tony told us about the links they maintain with churches in New Zealand, Indonesia, Germany and Canada. Chris Craddock described what it's like being

head verger (among four) and also shared his fascination with Antarctic exploration. Don Crocker talked about making the verge from a branch of Tony Barnard's walnut tree, and his wife told us about their son, a priest at the conservative Truro congregation in Fairfax, Virginia. We talked about recent developments in the American church and where they might lead. Charles Taylor and his wife Katherine joined us at the Barnards' for a quick glass of sherry and chat about life on the Close. We compared notes on children and schools and weddings.

There was more to the visit, of course, than these conversations. Lichfield is a lovely town with a duck-filled pond and museums devoted to Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles, and to Samuel Johnson, author of the first English dictionary, who was born and grew up there.

The cathedral itself is stunningly beautiful. The candlelit evensong services, sung by angelic-looking boys in red robes and starched white collars, with sunlight brightening the stained glass, were memorable. And they were, it seems to me, a manifestation of the grace that takes strangers in the world and, through faith, makes them into friends. †





More from the Stewardship Committee...

WHAT IS STEWARDSHIP? This is a central question facing the Stewardship Committee as it communicates on this subject. In St. Mark's tradition our goal is to provide a spectrum of answers for folks to ponder.

One author defines stewardship as the responsive practice of making proper use of the gifts God has given for the sake of God's work in the world. Another definition focuses on caretaking, i.e., taking care of that which we've been given, with the goal of handing it off in an improved state. And yet another author defines it as everything we do after we say, "we believe."

The implication behind many of these definitions is the thought that we don't really own anything, it all belongs to a Divine Creator, and our role is to manage what we've been given. So, when we choose to use our gift of time to

help fold bulletins, or use our intellectual gifts through teaching an adult class, or sing in the choir or serve on a parish committee, these could all be considered acts of stewardship. Making this church newsletter available online, instead of using reams of paper to print and mail it out, is an act of stewardship. And responding to the canvass with your pledge is an act of stewardship.

What will stewardship look like for you? The answer will be different for everyone based on what you believe and what lens you view life through. Are you gifted? Do you believe yourself to be blessed? What have you been given to take care of/manage/pass on? What/Who is at your source? How do you use your gifts of time, talent and resources? These are just a few questions to ponder as you think about what stewardship can mean for you. †

To Those Left Behind *by Cara Gerhard*

I'VE BEEN ATTENDING ST. MARK'S for almost six months now, and I've got to tell you, the Liturgy of Departure of three people at the 11:00 service this morning (October 19) threw me. I was...shocked. Not in the usual cringing, embarrassed, avert-your-gaze-to-that-fascinating-spot-on-your-shoe way. I was more...

IMPRESSED. By the stark honesty. By the unflinching realization that one environment CANNOT be right for every single person. And by the open willingness to allow those departing to air their grievances in the hope that, where appropriate and necessary, wrongs can be righted and lessons can be learned.

I was grateful. Because that was REAL. And reality is something we lack in every arena today—political, social and religious. I understood and related to every

thing that was said in the departing messages. I empathized with the frustration and anger and vulnerability because I'VE FELT IT. I had that perfect picture in my mind of what I expected my church to be, and when I was confronted by the all-too-human reality—an extended high

We're all human, and we could always stand room for improvement. But the point of such a "liturgy of departure" isn't—or at least shouldn't be—to INDICT, it should be to INSTRUCT..

school scenario complete with cliques, backstabbing and gossip—I felt betrayed. But when I experienced these emotions, MY first reaction was to walk away—from the church, from religion and from God. No explanation, no glance over the

shoulder for a mournful farewell. It took six years for me to return.

I don't know St. Mark's well enough to determine the validity of any of the claims made about the congregation today. But I don't need to in order to know that at least SOME are true. Could this be a stronger, more open and loving community? Yeah, I'm sure it could. Has it been, and will it always be, a struggle to DEMONSTRATE love towards people with political views you don't even understand, let alone agree with? Yup. We're all human, and we could always stand room for improvement. But the point of such a "liturgy of departure" isn't—or at least shouldn't be—to INDICT, it should be to INSTRUCT. I, for one, left that service invigorated. Thankful that these three people felt they could talk about their problems so openly... and excited by the challenges that lie ahead for all of us who remain. †

Editors' Note: Cara recently volunteered to coordinate Pub Lunch on Sunday mornings.



Highlights of the Oct. 19 Vestry Meeting

From the Vestry Mouse (a.k.a., Raiford Gaffney)

Junior Warden's Report: Jack Burton reported building maintenance and repair costs in September of approximately \$5,000. He also led discussion of the approach to contracting for the tower repair. The Vestry voted to go sole contractor rather than have a bidding process, giving Jack the authority to select the contractor based on informed input from the fabric committee and the Manciple, Charlie Rupp. The Vestry had already approved the hiring of Robert Silman Associates (an engineering firm) and Bell Architects for an extensive site survey, preparation of construction documents and cost estimates, which will provide valuable assistance in the decision making process.

EDITORS' NOTE: If you want to read the "Repair & Replacement Reserve Report" or the "Tower Conditions Assessment Report" call or e-mail Jack Burton (301-205-0045 or jbburton39@aol.com).

Treasurer's Report: David Willson reported that we had total income of \$40,635 and expenses of \$44,046 in September with a negative cash flow of \$68,612 for the year.

Music Director: Director of Music, Dr. Keith Reas, reported that there are nearly 30 people in the 2 adult choirs and 4 children in the children's choirs. At the St. Mark's Music Studio, over 25 sets of toddlers and parents attend "Music Together" classes on Friday mornings. Only two are St. Mark's parishioners. The studio receives 15% of the tuition for these classes. All 9 of the studio's private voice students are from St. Mark's families, as well as 3 of the 14 piano students. The studio receives 8% of this tuition, plus the full \$10 registration fee a semester. The studio pays \$1,200 rent a year to St. Mark's for the use of space.

St. Mark's has sponsored many concerts over the last ten years. Keith presented proposals for two future events. One proposal is for an early music festival to be held over four days with up to eight concerts in mid -to late-June, 2004. The Vestry moved to approve this in principle, pending details on requirements for space and Ed Green's services. Keith also presented a request from instrumentalists in the Marine Band. The band is on tour, so Keith did not have a written proposal. The Vestry said it is open to the idea but decided to wait for a formal proposal.

2004 Budget Priorities: *Editors' note: Please see Penny Hansen's article, page 1.*

2004 Canvass: Penny reported that as of October 17, 118 pledges have been received totaling \$388,000. This represents one-third of the 2003 pledging units and about one-half of the proposed 2004 goal. All Vestry members and officers have pledged. †

New Book Reveals St. Mark's Past

By Jo Ellen Hayden

Ever wonder about those nude dancers? Or how about how the pews got sold? And was there really a miracle healing at St. Mark's? How did we come to have that mural in the Parish Hall? Did Bill Baxter often visit LBJ at the White House? Over the past year, I have been working with Bill on an oral history project to record his memories of the years that he was Rector, 1954-1966. On November 23, Bill and his wife Jean will be at St. Mark's to launch the book that resulted from our efforts. As Mary Cooper says, "He's a great storyteller, isn't he? And he was there during such a dynamic period. Nobody tells a story like he does."

When I joined St. Mark's Church in 1974, Bill Baxter was already a legend. People spoke of Bill as someone from the past, from the "early days" when the church was rough and ready and exciting. Bill's arrival in 1954 coincided with a period of white flight from the city and particularly from Capitol Hill. The Hill was a rough area, with a mixture of "original" white families, blue collar workers, Naval officers stationed at the Washington Navy Yard, a black working class now newly able to be homeowners and a large contingent of poor, mainly black renters. St. Mark's was an inner-city parish whose parishioners had largely moved to the suburbs. Then 65 years old, the parish was dying. The Bishop of Washington accepted





A Modest Question: How Much Diversity Does St. Mark's Really Want?

By Don Lipscomb and Bill Jordan

EVERY SUNDAY OUR CLERGY ANNOUNCES THAT we offer an open communion and welcome everyone, no matter where they are on their faith journey. We legitimately enjoy a reputation as a parish where many gay members participate in all aspects of parish life. We have called a black man as Rector and a gay woman as Associate Rector. Yet at most Sunday services, there are fewer than 20 people of color (of whom a third are children) among the 200–250 people present. Although people of color are not merely members, but active parish leaders, their small overall number suggests our community may not be as welcoming as we would like to believe. So, consider: how committed is our parish to becoming as diverse racially as we are in religious views?

Several years ago, after watching “The Color of Fear,” a small group talked about how St. Mark’s came to be, and continues to be, an overwhelmingly white church. We concluded that white members of St. Mark’s, like most white folks, probably had little awareness of the daily struggles of being black in America and scant understanding of whether their own behaviors added to the challenge.

We began with ourselves, in a half-dozen lengthy conversations involving black and white parishioners. We saw how uncomfortable it still is to talk directly about issues around race. White participants recognized that, while they may have worked hard to reach out to people of color at work and church, they

still harbored unconscious biases that shaped their behavior toward people of color. And they came to appreciate how cautiously many people of color feel they have to act around white folks.

We, along with the other leaders of the Racial Reconciliation Committee, Peter Sherer and Peter Eveleth, decided to expand the conversation to the congregation. We have shown “The Color of Fear” in large and small groups and had many valuable, even inspiring, discussions. We have invited others to join the committee to deepen the conversation and expand the work to other congregations.

But, not much has happened. The dozen plus committee members gather for occasional meetings, and we can still stage a big event like the August showing of “Last Chance for Eden.” However, the committee’s work has not translated into a groundswell of interest from the community.

It will take Vestry leadership to place on the parish agenda the issues of how much racial diversity we really want and what in our common life might need to change so a newly arrived person of color feels at ease in our company. And, for these issues to stay on the agenda, it will also need broad-based parish support. This dialogue will be hard work.

We believe the theology of hospitality calls us to include everyone. What do you think? †



this as an inevitability, something that was caused by the changes in demographics and economics in post-war Washington. It was into this scenario that Bill and Jean Baxter made their way.

Bill says: “My strongest feeling when I entered the nave for the first time was that the church was too beautiful to be empty. The tales told in the book describe the spirit of that regeneration. There are entertaining moments: comedy and tragedy and pathos. Little men and women became giants and heroes. Of course there were rascals, and grotesque mistakes were made, but our acts were for the most part accomplished and lived out with religious concern, even passion. As my wife says, church could sometimes be burdensome to a clergyman’s wife, but so much was going on she did not feel she could miss even a week of the community’s life. Members and visitors were not just being entertained; they were being included as participants, as servants of the story — as important as the figures in the stained glass windows.”

Join Jean and Bill Baxter for a festive Pub Lunch and an afternoon of storytelling, movies and the launching of their new book, *Building a Church: Stories of St. Mark’s on Sunday* November 23, 12:30–3:00 p.m. in the nave. For information or to help with the lunch, please contact Jo Ellen Hayden, 301-855-7047 or e-mail at joellen01@comcast.net. †

A Few Words from Our New Seminarian

By Betsy Bagioni

I WAS BORN MARCH 17, 1979, IN HARTFORD, CT. I loathe corned beef and cabbage with a burning passion, as it was force-fed to me every birthday in the name of St. Patrick. (I mean, the whole thing with the snakes was cool, but I have serious issues with the choice of foodstuffs.) I began a formal discernment process for Holy Orders in my senior year of college, leading to my studies at the Virginia Theological Seminary. My primary call is oriented towards assistantships and chaplaincy. I continue to serve as a police chaplain through this year.

Vocational aspirations? I plan to search for an associate position, where I can do some chaplaincy work, preferably coming into an established chaplaincy (as I will be a new clergy person). In the not too distant future, I hope to return to school to pursue graduate work in psychology, concentrating on critical incident stress management.

Why am I at St. Mark's? My rector in Connecticut told me to go somewhere totally unlike anywhere I had ever been, and unlike a place where I would be after seminary. That's sure St. Mark's! I wanted to find a place where I would not be entirely comfortable, so that my thinking could not stagnate. I considered both ultra conservative and ultra liberal sites. St. Mark's has a liturgical style that captures my imagination, but that very

style also has several elements I question or disagree with. Basically, there are things I love and things that drive me nuts about St. Mark's. It was a place where I felt safe to challenge and be challenged. So long story short: I chose St Mark's because it is not your typical Anglican church.

Other random facts: hobbies include music (I'm a violist and enjoy playing carillons), biking as much as I can, and rescuing hard-up animals. I recently put down my beloved yet psychotic yellow Lab, and adopted a black kitten, who is now my parents' kitten, named the Reverend Mother Miss Cat.

I'm a Mac person, and love my iBook. I prefer to try and eat vegetarian, but know my manners, and if served meat by a person who did not know, I will eat it. I do try weird meat occasionally, like ostrich. I love cooking and baking, but I'm not so fond of recipes. I'm a pinch cooker—a pinch of this and a dash of that..

Oh, yes, I have a cochlear implant. I don't mind talking about it. But for your purposes, I began losing my hearing at age 5 and went through school with a loss that declined from 90% to total loss, and decided to get a cochlear implant at age 20. It's on my left, so fair warning if you try talking to me during the service while seated on my right. †



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