



the Gospel

According to St. Mark's September, 2009



Where Do We Stand? St. Mark's and the Same-Sex Marriage Debate

ON THE EVENING OF SEPTEMBER 16, ST. MARK'S will host a community dinner and Town Hall Meeting to discuss the issue of same sex marriage — specifically, whether St. Mark's should promote legislative and/or judicial actions in support of legalized same sex marriage, particularly in the District of Columbia.

Same sex marriage is viewed by many as a civil justice issue and, as such, one on which St. Mark's church may be called upon to speak out. For this reason, the Vestry

wishes to get a sense of the views of its members. To do this, we have designed a process that will facilitate discussion — an introductory letter from our Rector, a posting on the yahoo e-group, and the upcoming town hall meeting.

Same sex marriage is a legal issue so this question is distinct from our role as a faith community in blessing same sex unions, an action we endorsed ten years ago.

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A Treasure: Rosie *By Stephanie Deutsch*

LAST SPRING, ROSETTA BROOKS, director of the St. Mark's Dance Studio, was honored with a Community Achievement Award from the Capitol Hill

Community Foundation for her forty-plus years of providing inspiration and instruction to legions of youngsters and adults as balletmistress and also as a friend. The honor was especially sweet to Rosie because she grew up on Capitol Hill, went to local public schools, and still goes to the church that her grandparents and parents attended, Ebenezer United Methodist on Fourth Street Southeast. This neighborhood is her home.

Her church loyalties are divided, though, because she spends much of her time at Garden Memorial Presbyterian church in Anacostia where she is the



Photo courtesy Andrew Lightman, the Hill Rag

office manager, and here at St. Mark's where she has been teaching dance for four decades and running the Dance Studio since the death of its founder, Mary Craighill, in 1999. Rosie

teaches twelve classes a week in ballet, dance exercise and jazz dance to students ranging from six year olds to teens to adults. Twice a year she directs Studio Open Houses that showcase the work of current students and of the Company comprised of longtime participants in the program. Open Houses always feature food, drink and fellowship as well as lively recitals by her students. Rosie takes the Company to perform at nursing homes and hospitals, has choreographed for productions of the St. Mark's Players, and has led six-week

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Same-Sex Marriage Debate

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Marriage is a state of union recognized legally by a jurisdiction with a specific legal procedure and a license. Though clergy are also empowered to represent the state in completing the marriage act, faith communities can choose to bless or not bless any marriage or union within the context of their belief system.

The issue of same sex marriage has implications for our larger Episcopal Church community and of course we will not be able to separate those issues from our discussion. However, the primary focus of our town hall deliberation will be on the role of St. Mark's in speaking out in the public square on an important civil rights or social justice issue if, indeed, that is how we see it. If legalized gay marriage is a civil rights issue, does it warrant a public stance by our church community? Our discussion must also navigate the sensitive division between our clergy's right to speak out as priests who are called to their ministry, and whose names are understandably linked to St. Mark's.

Thus the issues will be: a) are we, the St. Mark's community, prepared to state support for the legalization of same sex marriage? and b) are we in union with our clergy if they or we speak out in the public square or are asked to participate in activities with other progressive clergy or churches on this issue?

If you are interested in exploring these important questions, please join your St. Mark's community on Wednesday evening, September 16 at 6pm for a community supper and a town hall discussion where all will be welcome to talk and to listen. †

Registration for the 2009 – 2010 Dance Studio season, adults and children

Friday, September 11, 3 – 6 pm

Saturday, September 12, 9 – 12 noon

Registration is in the studio -- turn left up the stairs immediately on entering the foyer from the courtyard.

For a full schedule of classes see

www.stmarksdancestudio.org.

A Treasure: Rosie

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long workshops in liturgical dance that invite parishioners — those who dance and those who don't, young and old, nimble and not-so — to articulate the wonder of worship in movement and community. (See below for details about this fall's liturgical dance workshop.)

Rosie was born with two club feet. The doctor who operated to correct them suggested to her mother that dance would help her get stronger. A positive attitude has become Rosie's defining trait. Whether she is encouraging a young dance student not to neglect her academic studies or reassuring a fifty or sixty-something that, yes, she too can dance, Rosie Brooks brings tremendous talent and vibrant good nature into our midst and for this we are grateful! †

Liturgical Dance Workshop

Saturdays, September 19 – October 31, 2 – 3:45

Dance will be part of both services on Sunday November 1.

From the Jesus Seminar

IN APRIL, THANKS TO THE EFFORTS OF RAIFORD Gaffney, the Jesus Seminar brought together scholars and seekers at St. Mark's to discuss what we know about the historical Jesus. Among those participating was longtime St. Mark's member Evelyn Sinclair who died suddenly on August 25th of a massive heart attack. As a commemoration of her, we offer this excerpt from an article she wrote with Linda Ewald inspired by their participation in the Jesus Seminar at St. Mark's.

Sitting at our table were two enthusiastic people from Oil City on the outskirts of Pittsburgh, from what they described as a very conservative part of the country. The woman was a Methodist who had joined some Oblate nuns; the man was a teacher and student of theology on

the side who had driven all the way to Lewisburg, PA for the Jesus Seminar there and then to Washington for this one. Here is a letter we imagine one of them might have written to a friend after the seminar.

Would you believe I spent Friday evening and Saturday at church? It was a seminar billed as "Jesus from Cradle to Grave." The evidence for Jesus being born to a virgin is pretty thin. It turns out that being born in a special way was just to show that he was THE one that the Jews had been hoping for, the Messiah. But the Jews didn't come up with the idea. All the important Greeks and Romans, like Plato, Caesar Augustus, etc. were fathered by gods like Apollo or Zeus. So Matthew and Luke were trying to

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From the Jesus Seminar

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convince their readers that Jesus was the son of God and was showing us the right way to live. They say that he was literally fathered by God. Poor Joseph!

The afternoon session was about the Resurrection. The death of the man Jesus was at first just a tragic accident. He was considered a martyr and witnesses attested to the power of his teaching. His message was really about turning your life around now and practicing radical justice and mercy. Then in the first century after his death the “defeat” of his death was turned into the triumph of his resurrection. That turned into the inevitability of God’s plan for salvation and how He used Jesus to atone for our sins. So pretty soon Christians were worshipping Jesus

and he had turned into God.

So now these college and seminary professors are trying to get back to the original message – the one about justice and mercy. They were Thomas Sheehan who teaches at Stanford and Bob Miller who teaches at Juniata College in Pennsylvania. And they are both Catholic. They told us that the cross is a late symbol for Christianity, an imperial symbol which Constantine favored. The earliest symbols were fish and bread and the picture of Jonah and the whale.

My head was spinning by the time they were done. Maybe you’d like to go with me next year. It will be in July, but believe me, it couldn’t be hotter than that weekend in April when it was over 90 outside. Luckily they had air-conditioning on in the parish hall. †

Stewardship Time

By Kenn Allen, Senior Warden

AT THE HEART OF EVERY CHURCH ARE PEOPLE who live out its mission through the commitment of their time, talent and money in support of its work. Without their stewardship, their churches would wither and die.

At St. Mark’s the “them” is “us”. We share responsibility for ensuring that our parish has the human and financial resources it needs not just to survive but to thrive. We fulfill that responsibility because of what St. Mark’s gives us and our families and what it enables us to do in the world. We do it because of the message St. Mark’s incarnates in the world.

The “all member canvass” is an autumn tradition. It is the time when, as individuals, we make our financial commitment to the church for the coming year. This year, that tradition takes on a new look. Instead of a “canvass chair” we have a “stewardship team”, convened by Paul and me. Members of the team will share responsibility for our pledge drive, working within a broader framework of personal and collective stewardship. They will have the active support and involvement of the clergy, the Vestry and the Pillar chairs.

On Sunday, September 6, the focus will be on the giving of our time. At the parish picnic, Pillars will offer the opportunity to sign up for the myriad of volunteer opportunities that keep our parish vibrant and alive.

On Sunday, September 20, we will recognize the commitment of our key program leaders when we formally install our Pillar chairs. That same day, we will launch our pledge drive. Over the following nine weeks, there will be multiple opportunities to reflect on the foundations of stewardship, to learn about our parish finances, to understand

Members of the team that will lead this fall’s stewardship campaign

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Paul Abernathy | Cecilia Monahan |
| Kenn Allen | Susan Pinkerton |
| Josie Jordan | Kathryn Powers |
| Katherine Loevinger | John Sedgewick |
| George Meng | Peter Sherer |

what increased giving will mean, to meet with others in small group dinners and to make our individual pledges.

And, on Sunday, November 22 we will celebrate together our commitment to our church and our life in community with one another. †

Megan Courtney

is our new Director of Youth Ministries. A cradle Episcopalian who grew up in Knoxville, Megan graduated from Maryville College in Tennessee with a degree in religion and comes to St. Mark’s from a year of AmeriCorps service in D.C.

She looks forward to getting to know everyone at St.

Mark’s — youth and their parents and everyone else! †





Christian Education is listening

By Nadine Hathaway and Don Lipscomb, Co-Directors of Christian Education

THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR, THE CO-DIRECTORS of Christian Education heard from you — those who had known the program for years, those who arrived more recently, and others who are not so sure what we’re offering or what it could mean to them. We heard some specific requests — for dance, and for reading a book together, for small group discussion. People again asked how we could offer an effective class on outreach.

We sent out the Druthers Sheet in May and received some very interesting comments in return — “I want to teach Catechesis;” “I’d like to have a small group to talk about issues;” “I’d like a multi-dimensional arts offering.”

The exit interviews from two Life Community & Faith (LCF) classes were very positive this past year, with only one person saying “it’s not what I expected — and I want

more on the church and its rituals.” Therefore, this winter Paul will teach “*What’s An Episcopalian?*”

In addition to the introductory or “Gateway” Classes (*Baptism, LCF, Introduction to St. Mark’s and What’s An Episcopalian?*), we hope we are meeting more of your desires. Lower class tuitions, scholarships and some child-care will, we hope, make it easier for you to participate.

Fall Classes: A one-day course called “*Unstuck*” by Dr. James Gordon, renowned founder of the Center on Mind Body Medicine, will address the change from depression to health and happiness using his holistic approach. Rosie Brooks, from the St. Mark’s Dance Studio, will offer Saturday afternoon *Liturgical Dance* classes that culminate in the liturgy on November 1. *Roll Away The Stone*, inspired by Fred Taylor’s book of the same name, will provide a platform for outreach, discussion and creating new relationships with “the other.” The Saturday weekend session will take place in town to lower the cost. Watch for Fred’s sermon on September 27. This year, we are connecting *Beyond The Frame* to several other activities to cross-fertilize ideas and find joy in new ways of applying our creativity.

Our theme for the *Christian Education Weekend* in January 2010 is “How to talk so others will listen and how to listen so others will talk”. We hope many of you will plan on attending.

Please keep sharing your ideas. The Christian Education program is about learning together. †

The new Sunday School year begins on September 13th. Classes and room assignments are listed below.

Catechesis I (3 – 6 year olds)

Classroom A

Leaders: Kim Bayliss, Kathryn Powers
Undercroft, Room 4

Classroom B

Leaders: Suzanne Wells, Missy Smith
Undercroft, Room 6

Catechesis II (6 – 9 year olds)

Leaders: Paul Albergo, Stephanie Deutsch
Helpers: Christy Rumpf, Jeff Kincheloe and Jane Rutherford
Undercroft, Room 1

Materials coordinators: Kristen Keating and Bruce Ritter

Hall parent coordinator – someone needed here!

Catechesis III (10 – 12 year olds)

Leaders: Nora Rumpf, Terri Trissell, David Trissell
Undercroft, Adams Room and Room 7

Junior High

Leaders: Alvin Moseberry, Victoria Doyon, Megan Courtney (part time)
Supervisor: Julie Murphy
Baxter House

Senior High

Leaders: Jim Brooks, Amanda Bechtel, David Talbird, Megan Courtney
Supervisor: Marilu Sherer
Baxter House

Worship Committee Report

Interested in keeping the Liturgy as vibrant as it has been this summer?

Want to help refresh an old tradition, or introduce a new one?

Find yourself in a new role by joining us in our efforts to support the St. Mark’s community (inside and outside of our comfort zone) by making Sunday services meaningful in a refreshing way. We invite new participants to the Worship Committee meetings, starting on Tuesday, September 8th, 2009. Thereafter, the meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7 p.m. — most meetings will be in the parish hall (with a few exceptions — in Penniman room).

Contact Loretta Veney; lwveney@aol.com or Jan Lipscomb; deljan26@cox.net with questions or comments. †



Bob Ewald Selected Crab of the Year

By Bart Barnes

FOR RESISTING AN ENVIRONMENTALLY-CORRECT edict that the preparers of Pub Lunch forego paper and styrofoam in favor of plates, cups and utensils that require washing, Bob Ewald was crowned the St. Mark's 2009 Crab of the Year at our annual Fourth-of-July Crabfest, held on July 26. Bob was cited by the College



of Crustaceans for "sustained, unrelenting crabbiness with small lapses of kindness, a Southern veneer of courtesy and consideration..." He was picked from a field of 20 crab nominees, ranging from "Nemetag Czarina" Michelle Strange to Cecilia Monahan, who won a seat on the Vestry while skipping the annual meeting, perhaps saying more about the annual meeting

than about Cecelia. Gospel Editor Stephanie Deutsch received the Editorial Guillotine nomination for "wielding her editing pencil like a meat axe," and Linda Huntington was nominated for chronic tardiness with the "Get Me to the Church On Time" nomination. Loretta Veney won a nomination and an "Energizer bunny" award.

Reigning Crab Jack Richards spoke of ongoing crabbiness in the congregation, from those who fail to ap-

preciate the organ postludes after services, to others who leave coffee cups on the floor of the nave, to "Crab Wannabees" who pay their pledges late.

All nominations were reviewed and the Crab chosen by the College of Crustaceans, made up of former Crabs, at its annual dinner, which according to tradition is held at an undisclosed time and location. Former Vice President Dick Cheney is not believed to have been present. †

Love in all its complexites is the theme running through the three classic plays that make up the St. Mark's Players' twenty-seventh season, which opens October 23rd.

I think I love you...

The Importance of Being Earnest, by Oscar Wilde is set in England during the late Victorian era. It focuses on two couples who take a very shallow approach to love. It is replete with witty dialogue and satirizes some of the foibles and hypocrisy of late Victorian society. (October 23-November 7)

Love is a battlefield...

The Lion in Winter, a Tony award winning play by James Goldman is set during Christmas 1183 at a medieval French chateau within the Angevin Empire. The play opens with the arrival from prison of Eleanor of Aquitaine for a reunion with her husband, Henry, and their sons. There is a genuine love between them but there is also the war that rages for political reasons. In the end, any affection between them takes a backseat to that battle. (January 8-January 23)

Where is love?

Oliver!, a Tony award winning musical loosely based on the novel *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, is the story of an orphan who is sold to an undertaker and then falls in with a gang of pickpockets. Sharp characters and familiar, toe-tapping tunes such as "Consider Yourself" and "Food, Glorious Food" make **Oliver!** great fun and almost uplifting. (May 7-May 22)

For ticket information, audition dates and volunteer opportunities check out the Player's website at www.stmarkplayers.org or contact Rick Hayes at rick.hayes@yahoo.com. †

Potluck Events for Third Agers

By Tiiu Kera

THIRD AGERS, THOSE AMONG US WHO have reached the age of sixty and above, will have three potluck events this year — on September 19, January 23 and May 8th. Please save these dates!

The program for September will be a talk by our own George Meng with an interesting twist on estate planning. The idea is to present issues for consideration on this important topic, not to give personalized legal or financial advice. We expect this to be the first in a series over time on this important issue, in cooperation with Capitol Hill Village.

Our program begins at 11 and a potluck lunch follows. Please bring a dish or beverage for 8. Sign up sheets will be on the bulletin board in the foyer just to give us an idea of attendance and food. If you forget to sign up, come anyway — just bring food! †



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Adds a Level

By *Nora Rumpf*

BEGUN IN 1996 WITH 3- AND 4-YEAR-OLDS AND gradually expanding to cover all of our children from age 3 through grade 3, the Montessori-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program provides the foundation for our younger children's Sunday School experience. Starting in September 2009, we will add the next level and will base our 4th and 5th grade program (approximately ages 9 – 12) on Catechesis Level III.

In Level I (ages 3 through 6 / Kindergarten), we introduce the main stories of the life of Jesus, the “kingdom” parables (“the kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed”), the major gestures and elements of the Eucharist, and a bit of geography. The central parable is that of the Good Shepherd; through materials and a reading of the central parts of the parable from the Bible, the children are given opportunities to enter into that deep love relationship between the Good Shepherd and the sheep. As they gradually come to understand that we are the sheep, the phrase “I know my sheep and my sheep know me” becomes part of them. They are known and called by name. It's all about love and security.

Children in Level II (ages 6 through 9 / grades 1 through 3) are starting to make their own internal decisions about how they act. So, arising out of the love we explored in Level I, we now wonder about how we respond. We explore some harder parables (Good Samaritan, Insistent Neighbor, Forgiving Father) and read stories around Jesus' death from the Bible. We add gestures and prayers to our understanding of the Eucharist and pull it all together. This age child has a sense of time, so we introduce the first of several sweeping lessons that cover time; the first describes creation, the first humans, the development of societies, the coming of Jesus, and the concept of a “blank page.” That's the future that we write every day with God's help.

You'll notice that there hasn't been much about the Hebrew Scripture so far. Jesus is identified as being the child of faithful Jews, of teaching in the temple himself, of living in the Jewish society in Israel and Palestine. We talk about how the Jewish people were waiting for a Savior, and that they read from their Scriptures about what that Savior would be like.

Children in 4th and 5th grade (ages 9 through 11 or so) are very conscious of social groupings. They look for heroes, and they understand history in a deeper way than the younger children. They can understand that some aspects of the Hebrew Scripture stories are fantastic. We tell the stories of Creation, the Fall,

Abraham and Sarah, the Flood, and the Prophets. The children will explore how the relationship between God and God's people developed over time. They will make connections between aspects of the Hebrew Scripture story and the New Testament and then move to today. For example, Isaac was (almost) a sacrifice in the Hebrew Scripture. Who was a sacrifice in the New Testament? And are there people we know about today who offer themselves for others? Are there connections we can draw? When we tell the story of the Hebrew people, we say that Christians and Jews are united in their waiting for their Savior. The Jews are waiting for him to come, and Christians are waiting for Him to come back.

We'll also spend a lot of time talking about God's plan for each of us; this isn't from the standpoint of figuring out the one path we are destined to take according to God's will, but, in a deeper way, in pondering the question how does God want us to live so that we move closer to unity with God? We'll look at stories from the newspaper today; in which stories are people acting in ways that bring them closer to God? Farther away?

There are many opportunities for group and individual work and resources available for independent study (e.g., atlases, stories of the lives of the saints). We may try to take a field trip to a synagogue and/or a mosque.

We're going to be using the Catechesis program for Level III on a trial basis over the next two years. If you have questions, please bring them to Brock Hansen or Heather Powers, the co-Directors of Christian Education. If your child is joining us this year, please feel free to arrange a visit or direct your feedback or comments to David or Terri Trissell or me; we will be teaching it this year.

Finally, this class is new for us, but has been successfully used in other programs for years. Catherine Maresca, who trained me (several times) over the years, told me about her experience a few years ago as the academic year was coming to an end for the Level III children with whom she had been working. She said, “At the end of the year the kids spontaneously started to talk about what they liked about (Level III). Their gratitude was not so much for particular lessons or materials but about the fact that the materials allowed them to explore their own ideas and belief about God, rather than mine or someone else's. The freedom to do this was deeply appreciated.”

We hope your children have a similar experience. †



Summer Shelter

IN JULY AND AUGUST ST. MARK'S WAS HOME to Jynene Oyebajo and her one-and-a-half year old son, Jermaine as part of the Capitol Hill Group Ministry's Congregation-based shelter project. Over ninety volunteers from St. Mark's provided the hospitality that made this possible by bringing home-cooked dinners each evening and spending the night. Jynene is studying criminal justice at Sanford Brown College and works at First Rock Baptist Church Child Development Center. Jermaine is a good eater and loves to play ball. We will miss them both! †



Jynene Oyebajo shares a laugh with volunteer Sarah Baldwin.



St. Mark's volunteers hosted two lively Family Nights for Capitol Hill Group Ministry.

Vacation Snapshot

By Anne Headley

I RECENTLY VISITED AUGSBURG, GERMANY with two friends from high school. One had lived there for many years, as a lead singer in the opera company. She often attended the Episcopal mission, which holds a Eucharist twice a month on Sunday afternoons. We visited the mission on Sunday, May 3, and I was amazed to see the vicar, none other than our own Dorothee Hahn! We stared at each other, then had a brief chat before the service. Dorothee's gentle and confident manner served her well and the service was lovely.

The coffee hour (china cups, linen tablecloth, a variety of coffee and tea, two cakes!) was the friendliest

I have ever experienced, and it somehow morphed into the annual meeting. In honor of our party, Dorothee introduced a motion that all visitors could speak although they could not vote. It was quickly seconded and passed. What a way to make visitors feel welcome!

Dorothee is a busy person. She has started a Sunday School (I spotted two children in the congregation of 12), she has organized a fund-raising concert, she has presented a Thanksgiving dinner for homesick Americans, and is working on outreach to the English-speaking community. And all this as a vicar to the mission, which is only part of her position at a large church in Munich.

She sends her love to all at St. Mark's and urges you to visit when you are in Bavaria. Save room for the cake. †



W2W – Mark Your Calendars! by Marilu Sherer

THE WOMEN TO WOMEN TEAM – CHARMIAN Crawford, Jennifer Dalzell, Penny Farley, Kristi Kubista-Hovis, Kate McFadden and Marilu Sherer – is busy planning for the coming year. We are trying to move beyond our customary niches and demographic, to frame events that allow maximum “face time,” to become more service oriented, but also to maintain our hallmark elegance and panache!

Friday, October 23, 2009, 6 – 8 pm, wine and cheese at Marlane Liddell and Greg Gay’s home. Business casual or casual chic! Bring a bottle and a nibble to share and enjoy visiting with each other in a fabulous setting on Lincoln Park.

Sunday, November 15, 2009 Household Goods and Furniture Drive, Parish Hall during the morning. We will collect everything from pots and pans to sheets and towels to canned goods to donate to Capitol Hill Group Ministry for families transitioning into apartments. Special arrangements can be

made with Kristi Kubista-Hovis to pick up furniture and large items. We will post a list of specific items needed on the list serve.

Sunday, January 24, 2010 Ice Skating on the Mall 1-4 pm.

Bring daughters, nieces, and girlfriends to the Smithsonian Sculpture Garden Ice Skating Rink, and dress warmly!

Friday, March 5, 2010, 6-9 pm International Women’s Day Celebration with a program TBA, St. Mark’s Nave.

Saturday, April 24, 2010, 6-8pm. Celebrate spring with wine and hors d’oeuvres in Stephanie and David’s Deutsch’s house and garden. Bring a bottle and some food to share – and come casually chic.

Mark your calendars now! †

If you would like to submit an article or photo to the Gospel or have suggestions, please contact Bart Barnes or Stephanie Deutsch.

www.stmarks.net



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