



The St. John's Banner



Mount Rainier, MD

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP

July/August 2009

COMING SOON
TO A CHURCH NEAR YOU

less than a week until ...

CHOIR SUNDAY

August 2, 2009

**Celebratory Choral Eucharist
at the 10 AM service**

+

Concert Service at 5 PM

**Featuring selections from
Handel's**

Judas Maccabaeus

St. John's Annual Picnic

Saturday

August 15th

Noon to 5 pm



"Third Sunday" Services

**One service at 9 AM on:
Sunday, August 19th**

Guest preacher:

**Rev. Prince Decker
and Sunday, September 19th**

Guest preacher:

Rev. Bob Gillespie

**Monthly Birthday &
Anniversary Celebrations following**

National Day Celebrations



**Jamaica on August 9th
Trinidad & Tobago on
August 30th**

from the Priest-in-Charge

Jesus – The Perfect Expression of God in Human Form

Jesus Christ came into the world so that all people would know that they are included in God's love, especially those at the margin of society. Those who do not seem to have what it takes to succeed in life.

Christ was not born into a privileged family. His earthly parents were common people.

The circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ prove that God's love extends to everybody, irrespective of their family status or the color of their skin. God's love transcends ethnicity, culture, language or social status.

It is our responsibility as Christians to have a deeper knowledge of Christ, and make Him known.

When you know Christ and the power of His love, He will put joy in your heart.

Joy is not the same as happiness. Dr. Charles Stanley said, "Joy is something you experience within; it comes from God, but happiness is due to external circumstances."

Joy and contentment come when you walk in obedience to God's commandments and extend yourself to others in love, even if that love is not reciprocated or appreciated.

Love is never alarmed or intimidated by the valleys of life. And love never ends.

The Bible states that "The generous prosper and are satisfied; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed." (*Isaiah 58:10*)

Have a blessed and a refreshing summer.

I love you all.

The Reverend Canon Daniel D. Darko
Priest-in-Charge

New Organ Ordered

For the past several years, St. John's has been asking parishioners to pledge toward an Organ Fund dedicated to the expense of purchasing a new organ for the sanctuary. As of the end of 2008, the Fund had a balance of a little over \$14,000. This is, however, only about ten percent of the cost of a modern electronic organ. If you have been in church during the last couple of months, you have no doubt heard Fr. Darko's plea for money to buy a new organ ... he has suggested dedicating your "stimulus from Obama" to this purpose!

There are two factors that contributed to Fr. Darko's plea to take action at this time. One is that the current organ is, as he says, "dying." Organist Sonny Junisa has reported that the organ occasionally drops out or its volume changes for no apparent reason. As St. John's choir has become more active, the organ gets more usage than ever before. The technology is now obsolete, so parts for repairs are expensive and repair is labor-intensive.

The other factor is that one organ manufacturer had a promotion going on this summer and has offered us a new unit at approximately 50% off regular price. However, the offer was only good until July 10th ... hence, the need for haste.

After considerable discussion, the Vestry met in emergency session on July 2nd and accepted the offer to purchase a unit recommended by Sonny and choir director David Cole. The

manufacturer is Johannus organ builders, based in the Netherlands. The price to us will be \$72,000 including both the manufacture and installation. The unit will be under a 10-year warranty for parts and labor, and the manufacturer suggests it should operate satisfactorily for 50 years. It will be an electronic unit using state-of-the-art digital technology, and the speaker cabinet will feature simulated pipes.

The current organ, built by Rodgers Instruments, was dedicated on Easter Sunday in 1983. Construction of the new organ is expected to take about four months, so installation around Christmas of 2009 is possible.

A Look Back

Number 7 in our Centennial Series of reprints of past articles

While we're on the subject of music, it's interesting to note that the current edition of the Episcopal Church's standard Hymnal is about the same age as our current organ, although St. John's did not begin using it until 1986.

Here is an article that was written for the January 1986 issue of The Banner by Kim Allen Kluge, our organist and choir director at the time.

"THE SPIRIT OF MUSIC"

There has been a feeling of great expectancy over the arrival of *Hymnal 1982*. I am confident that St. John's will receive it with great joy as the new hymnal promises to be a leading contribution to the literature of Christian song in the Episcopal Church as well as the larger Christian community. The newer aspects of the hymnal will

become apparent soon enough, but it's worth mentioning here that the most popular hymns of *Hymnal 1940* form more than half of *Hymnal 1982*.

I ask your prayers that *Hymnal 1982* will:

- deepen our spiritual life
- help us appreciate the Book of Common Prayer more fully
- help us learn more about our tradition
- strengthen the congregational singing

May the Holy Spirit guide us to a deeper experience of His presence in our worship together.

(Mr. Kluge is currently serving as the Music Director of the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra)

We're All Americans Now

The Centennial Committee has vowed that during 2009, we will mark the national days of all of our parishioners' native lands, even if there is only one parishioner who hails from that land. It's understandable, though, that the more people there are from a country, the bigger the event will be.

Now if you count only adults, the representation of parishioners at St. John's born in the United States is probably third or fourth largest group. But if kids are included, US-born makes up a bigger proportion. And in any event, born here or not, most parishioners are now US citizens.

In the early years of our international celebrations, we had taken our current country of residence for granted. The first parish observance of "USA Day" was only in 2007.

The St. John's Banner

Brian Roman, Editor

On July 5th, the Sunday closest to the Fourth of July in 2009, we held a celebration in grand St. John's style. The service included a mix of American national hymns and spirituals, with the Prayer Book's "Thanksgiving for National Life," and the choir contributed a rousing rendition of "When the Saints Go Marching In" that concluded with the choristers "flying" little American flags.

As usual the service was concluded with a feast of national dishes. This year, we went for heartier fare than just the "picnic food" served up the last two years. Included were baked chicken and Midwestern stewed potatoes, with ice cream, ambrosia fruit salad and cakes for dessert.

Hmm ... in 2010, the 4th of July falls on a Sunday. Fireworks, anyone?

Children Go Underground (Grown-Ups, Too!)

A bus left the St. John's parking lot on Saturday morning, July 25th, bound for Virginia's Shenandoah Valley and filled mostly with our kids ... but with a surprisingly large contingent of adults (including some who came by car). The actual destination was Luray Caverns, a world-famous limestone cave about two-and-a-half hours from St. John's that was discovered in 1878.

Although recognized by the US park service as a Registered National Landmark, the caverns are privately owned. They contain many multi-colored classic cave features – stalactites and stalagmites, flowstone curtains, underground mirror lakes ... and even a formation that resembles sunny-side-up eggs.

In the midst of all this natural beauty, however, a most interesting object is one that was installed by people in the 1950's – the "Great Stalacpipe Organ." Along one side of a large gallery known as "The Cathedral" there sits an organ console, which is connected to plungers that strike stalactites around the chamber to produce organ-like musical tones.

The trip was organized by the Mothers' Union and conceived as something to offer the kids, since their August 29th bus trip to Atlantic City is geared to adults. Nevertheless, about a dozen adults made the trip and it is they who probably enjoyed the cavern the most. Some of the children admitted to boredom after a few minutes of gazing at oddly shaped rock formations.

But, another attraction on the site was a Garden Maze. Although not originally planned for, the kids got together and rounded up over 20 people (the number needed to get a group discount) and off they wandered into winding corridors of 8-foot-tall evergreen hedges. The idea was to try to find four "goal stands" and then, the way out of the maze. Even kids who had concluded that the caverns were just a hole in the ground had a blast in the maze (thanks, in part, to blasts of mist that kept them cool as they worked their way through).

Vacation Bible School Teaches Exodus Story

St. John's 2009 Vacation Bible School was held over five weekdays from July 13th through 26th. (Wednesday, the 22nd, was skipped because of a funeral service.)

For the second year in a row the classes used lesson plans and instructional aids supplied by Group Publishing, but simplified for use by our small staff. The theme this year was "Crocodile Dock," in which songs and stories played on the video monitor were located around a bayou, in which supposedly lurked a giant croc. Actually, the croc turned out to be a guy in a costume. Turns out, he had to be rescued from real alligators by brave friends whose motto "fear not!" tied into God's promises to His people as described and fulfilled in the story of the Israelite's escape from Egypt in the Book of Exodus. Beginning with Moses' encounter with the burning bush, the lessons proceeded through the plagues, the Passover story and the escape from Pharaoh's army. On Day 4, the Passover story was tied to Jesus' introduction of Holy Communion and His promise of life.

Each day's Bible story was illustrated by a skit performed by Sandra Bramble and Brian Roman. (On day 2, your editor graciously played the role of Pharaoh, only to be inflicted by plagues acted out – quite enthusiastically – by the kids!)

┌ Vestry Corner ┐

Highlights of meetings held on July 2nd and 12th

The Vestry met twice in July ... but had already decided in June that it would not hold a regular monthly meeting in August.

Fr. Darko called an "emergency meeting" for July 2nd to consider an opportunity to purchase a new organ at a discounted price. (See previous article.) The Vestry, around much discussion, considered three formal motions. The first was simply a resolution agreeing that a new organ was

needed; this allowed the meeting to take up the question of how to go about it. A second motion was to make the initial payment of one-third the total sale price via direct disbursement from the savings account. If we were to proceed with the purchase, a bank loan would be required later. However, this motion failed. The financing arrangement that was agreed to, on the final motion, was to expend the entire balance currently in the Organ Fund. The remainder of the initial one-third would be included in the bank loan that would also cover the remaining balance when due.

Fr. Darko also brought up a second item on July 2nd. He had arranged for the purchase of a check scanning machine that will allow contributions, and other payments received by St. John's, to be electronically transferred into our account with SunTrust, subject to Vestry approval. The bank charges a \$50 per month fee for the electronic deposit service. Although it would save her a trip to the bank to physically deposit checks, Treasurer Fredericka Ortiz said she was content to continue to do so in order to save that money. The Vestry took no formal action but Fr. Darko said at the time that he would cancel the purchase based on Fredericka's advice. But more on this later.

The regular monthly meeting for July was held on Sunday the 12th.

At the monthly meeting in June, the Vestry had approved a motion to make our one week of use of a time share property in Ocean Pines available to individuals for \$800. The actual fees the parish pays each year on this property are \$680 so this action would generate a small profit. Fr. Darko brought the Vestry's attention to the fact that this is a commercial property; as a non-profit

organization, a church would have tax consequences if it made a profit on commercial property. The Vestry therefore reconsidered its June decision. The main purpose that the late Fr. Tom Engram had in mind in donating his time share to St. John's was that parish groups could use the property for conferences or retreats. The Vestry agrees this is still the priority and that groups making "official" use would not be charged. However, a motion was accepted to make the week available to individuals if no group or committee has made arrangement to use it. We would only ask the individual to cover our actual cost (\$680 for the full week). It could also be used for only part of the week. Parishioners can speak to Leslie Rogers-Wright if interested, either personally or on behalf of a parish group or committee.

Then, the Vestry took another look at the purchase of the check scanning machine. A motion was approved to obtain the machine and accept the monthly fee, but to consider canceling the arrangement with SunTrust in the future if the fee should rise. **Parishioners: be advised that once the machine is in use, your contributions on Sunday will be scanned and the funds electronically transferred from your bank immediately, so you won't have a day or so to make a bank deposit to cover a check you've already turned in to St. John's!**

Fredericka Ortiz submitted the Treasurer's Report for June, noting that the parish had a deficit for the month of \$522.98. Pledge contributions are down and she thought that some people may have made contributions to the Organ Fund at the expense of paying their regular pledge

Senior Warden Leslie Rogers-Wright distributed a report to the Vestry that proposed specific

assignments to individual members for responsibility of overseeing progress in meeting the parish goals of the five-year plan. The members are to review the proposal and adopt a final version at the next meeting in September. He also urged members to meet with groups they are associated with and start consideration of their financial needs so that the 2010 budget process can begin.

Junior Warden Kojo Dixon reported on a number of maintenance issues. Electric lighting upgrades are completed. He has contacted contractors regarding carpentry and flooring in the lounge and replacement of the chair lift. He also discussed the water seepage along the west wall with a contractor, but the contractor needed to observe the problem during a rainstorm in order to determine what needs to be done. Later in the meeting, a problem with the floor drain in the kitchen was reported and discussed; the vestry approved a motion to authorize the installation of a commercial garbage disposal, since the problem results from food that is allowed to wash down the sink drain and clog the pipes below.

The Vestry graciously accepted a letter from Mr. Fredrick Ebenezer Quasie-Woode thanking the parish for the celebration of his 90th birthday, in which he included a contribution. Fr. Darko said that the contribution is thankfully received and will be thankfully applied.

Because of ongoing problems with the current copier, Fr. Darko contacted the previous copier supplier, who has installed a brand new machine and new fax. The new equipment will save the parish \$50 per month.

The next regular monthly Vestry meeting will be held on Sunday, September 13.

July & August Birthdays

July:

- 1 - Kimberly Palmer
- 2 - Charlotte Thomas
- 3 - Sulaiman Bah
- 3 - Peter Johnson
- 4 - Donnell Eleady-Cole
- 5 - Amira Thomas
- 7 - Leslyn Aaron
- 7 - Cyrilla Anthony
- 7 - May Bramble
- 7 - Geneveive Forster-Jones
- 7 - Jasmine Okafor
- 7 - Vanessa Johnson
- 11 - Arthur Kojo Dixon
- 11 - Julius Morrison
- 11 - Lily Williams
- 13 - Ndi Asasboro
- 14 - Julie McNewman
- 15 - Salma Dove-Edwin
- 15 - Gloria Thomas
- 22 - Vida During
- 25 - Chuku-Dinka Spencer
- 25 - Rachel Thomas
- 28 - David Cole Sr.
- 28 - Ephraim Sanu



August:

- 1 - Anthony Woodward
- 4 - Nardlyn Gabbidon
- 4 - Elnora Scott
- 6 - Amelia Williams
- 7 - Andrew Asasboro
- 8 - Christopher Kaloko
- 8 - Daniel Ablorh
- 15 - Pam Brown
- 16 - Annie Harris
- 17 - Deborah Ablorh
- 17 - Lois Palmer
- 19 - Durene Edwards
- 21 - Ollyne Gabbidon
- 21 - Sarah Junisa
- 23 - Gilani Frazier
- 24 - Hawa Kamara
- 26 - Waltina Spencer
- 28 - Sean Ogundimu
- 29 - Khalil Wilson
- 30 - Olayinka Eleady-Cole
- 31 - Diamond Johnson
- 31 - Het-Heru Sloan

July & August Anniversaries

July:

- 4 - Hannah & Leslie Rogers-Wright

August:

- 15 - Olayinka & Donald Eleady-Cole
- 25 - Samuella & Patrick Kaloko
- 27 - Princess & Winston Cole
- 28 - Leslyn & David Aaron



A Stewardship Minute

JULY 2009

“A Stewardship Minute” is a brief reflection on one of the articles appearing in the *Stewardship* newsletter, distributed monthly by Parish Publishing, LLC. Copies of the newsletter are available in the tract rack at the front door of the church.

Have you ever been in a quandary about how much to give to your church? Of course you have. Each of us has had to struggle with how much we will or can give to our church.

Ted Knutson was a farmer dealing with just this problem. He and his wife gave their time and talent to God, but while considering giving resources to his church he was perplexed by the issues of a typical farmer ... income comes at once after the harvest, but the church has monthly needs. Sometimes it is a struggle to come up with a plan we can live with.

Ted wondered what he could do about it personally. He and his wife took the situation to the Lord. As the two prayed and thought about it, they came to the conclusion that just as they paid regularly for the necessities of life: food, clothing, gasoline, and utilities, they too could give weekly to the church. They also concluded that if they had a bountiful harvest and their income swelled, they would be able to give a full tithe or more.

The full story is in the July 2009 issue of *Stewardship*, but with that plan, they were able to find inner peace regarding their stewardship. The trouble was that when only small amounts were given weekly to the church, the church sometimes had to borrow from the bank to meet current expenses. As others learned of the Knutson's new approach to financial giving, perhaps they would follow suit.

What does the Knutson story say to us? Surely it says that every Christian family must work out their own stewardship plan. And it says that praying seriously about it will enable each family to find guidance as to what they should do about their own stewardship.

Prayer: Almighty God, you open your hands and all of our needs are met. Guide us in the use of all your gifts to us that we

may please you completely in our stewardship. **Amen.**

This midsummer issue of *The Banner* covers two months ... July and August 2009

"A Stewardship Minute"

AUGUST 2009

Faith is often a powerful countervailing force to the ravages of worry. People who worry and take on the world's problems often have little faith. Partnering with God, however, can lighten your load. It was Christ who said: "...do not worry about your life..." (Matthew 6:25).

In the absence of faith, many people worry about the challenges of life and have difficulty meeting them by themselves. When we seek God's will and work on behalf of the kingdom of God, however, everything begins to fall into place. Is not God capable of showing us how to handle problems in life that each of us may be facing? And will not God lead us to victory if we love and trust him? God holds each of us in the hollow of his loving hand. The Bible tells us so. The book of Revelation has God speaking to the church in Smyrna these words: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10).

The August 2009 issue of *Stewardship* emphasizes that members of a congregation should trust God to lead them as they deal with the needs and challenges of their church, as well. God wants every church to be throbbing with life, to preach Christ, and to give and serve on behalf of the Kingdom everywhere.

After all, if God is for us as individuals and as a congregation, who or what can be against us ultimately? Worrying about problems facing our church will only work against us, but faith in God concerning such matters will work amazingly for us.

Prayer: Loving God, Jesus taught us that you are for us and never against us. Make our faith strong and vibrant so that we may live as you would have us live, individually and as a congregation as well. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

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