

## **The Chimes**

**The Newsletter of Christ Church  
in Swansea, MA  
January/February, 2008**

### **From the Rector**

Dear Ones:

We are in the season of Epiphany, moving, quite quickly it seems, into the season of Lent. Epiphany - the season of recognition of the Christ among us, the time when we once again seek to understand how it is that God has appeared to us in Jesus Christ. And then Lent - that time in our church year when we reflect fully upon how it is that God moved in the life of Jesus Christ, as he moved towards the cross - and then to what happened after that!

Which is, of course, resurrection. But that seems like more of a discussion for Easter, doesn't it? And it is - but as we approach that joyful time in our lives, I ask you to reflect on the fact that there is no resurrection without the recognition of Christ, and the transformation that comes with following Christ to the cross. And that is what our lives as Christians is about - seeking to be transformed, so that we might truly know the truth of

resurrection in our lives. And this is what church is about, too.

You know, we think of church as a place of stability, of sameness - and through our traditions, it is those things, and we need them. However, the very concept of church was a huge and radical change - as was the manifestation of God in Christ - as was the work that God did on the cross, and three days beyond! All of us have different ideas of what it means to be church together. And that is OK - what we sometimes forget is that God has always made new and unexpected and transformative movements in the world and in the church, and one of the things we are called to do, in the midst of our need for stability, is to TRUST GOD as we realize that we may have different views. God is, after all, at the center of who we are, and God has promised us resurrection always - which gives us hope to move ahead together.

I say this often, but there is a lot going on here. Some of it is new, and some of it is different, and some of it is confusing, and some of it is as comfortable as my favorite old seminary sweatshirt. And you know what? It strikes me that is exactly right. For what is understanding and transformation and journey, except a mixture of old and new, comfort and risk,

expected and amazingly new? But the end result is always the same - resurrection!

May these lengthening days of hope and introspection lead each one of us to a fuller understanding of the presence of Jesus Christ in our lives and in one another. As always, you are constantly in my prayers.

Faithfully, Beth+

## **Worship and Liturgy**

### **Ash Wednesday**

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 6, Ash Wednesday. We will have two services of Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of the Ashes, at 12:00 and at 7:00 pm.

### **Prayers for Strength and Healing**

We will continue to have a brief service of prayers for strength and healing at the altar immediately following services on the first and third Sundays of the month.

### **Adams House Service**

Beth has been asked to preside at a service of Holy Communion once every month at Adams House in Fall River. These services take place at 2:30 pm on a Sunday

afternoon, and you are most welcome to attend. Please see Beth if you would like to go along. The next one is Sunday, February 10.

## **Christian Education and Formation**

### **Lenten Series on the Gospel of Mark**

There will be a Saturday Morning Lenten Series on the Gospel of Mark in the Parish House, beginning on February 9. We will meet from 9:00 - 10:30 over coffee and breakfast. In particular, we will look at the spirituality of this Gospel and how it can help us ask questions Jesus asked to frame our own lives and ministries. Please sign up in the church or call the office to reserve a place.

### **Confirmation**

Deanery Confirmation for the Mount Hope/Buzzard's Bay Deanery will be held on Saturday, May 10, 2008, in Fall River, and will be done by the Right Rev. M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE, our diocesan bishop. If you are interested in being confirmed or received, please let Beth know by **February 1**. Confirmation is especially appropriate for those who are at

least 16 years old, and the bishops are encouraging folks to wait until they are at least 14 or 15, but you may speak to Beth about this. We will begin classes in February, and they will be held on Sundays immediately following the 10:00 service. There will also be a Pre-Confirmation Retreat on March 28/29 up at the Barbara C. Harris Camp. Anyone who has already been confirmed in another tradition, but would like to be received into the Episcopal Church is also welcome to speak to Beth and to make arrangements.

## **Fellowship and Outreach**

### **Troops Receive Packages In Time for Christmas!**

The Knitting Group is grateful for the generous outpouring of Christmas gifts donated by parishioners for our servicemen and women serving in Afghanistan! Three large boxes filled with wonderful items were mailed and received by the troops just before Christmas! The troops were overjoyed to open the boxes and find soccer balls, a football, 23 International Calling Cards, board games, books, playing cards, candy, cookies, snacks and bottled water flavoring, along with many other items that they do not have

available to them! The generosity of the parishioners of Christ Church has been greatly appreciated by the troops and the Knitting Group was happy to be the catalyst for this very successful project. Thanks again to everyone who participated in making Christmas away from home a Joyous One for our military.

The Knitting Group continues to meet every other Tuesday at Esther Mello's home, and you are always welcome!

*Lorna Gregory for the  
Knitting Group*

### **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**

We will have our traditional Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday, February 5, beginning at 6:00. There will be pancakes, bacon, sausage, juice, coffee, and dessert. Tickets are tentatively set at \$5.00 for adults and \$3.00 for those under 12. Please mark your calendars now and plan to attend! You can call the parish House for your reservation or sign up in the church. We will also burn old palms for the next day, so please bring them along.

## **Communications**

### **Monthly announcements**

We are trying to make a monthly booklet of announcements now, rather than passing out a different set of announcements every week in church. We would ask you to do your best to get any announcements you may have to the office before the first of the month, so that we may include them. Thank you.

### **Newsletter**

If you feel you can offer your talents of any kind to the newsletter, especially in gathering articles, or layout, such as Microsoft Publisher, please give Beth a call in the office.

### **Vestry Notes**

In November and December, the Vestry attended to, reflected on and discussed the following matters pertaining to our parish life:

- The need to revisit the possibility of handicapped accessible restrooms, as raised by the Outreach Committee

- Plans for the Stewardship Breakfast
- The development of better guidelines for committees as they seek the best way to handle budgets
- Appropriate use of money received for the Rector's services as Dean
- Hearing and receiving the Audit Committee's Report
- Ongoing update of pledge income
- Report of the newly formed Grantwriting Committee

• Full minutes can be found at the back of the church, or through the office, along with financial reports, and please remember that you are welcome to attend vestry meetings at any time - the second Tuesday of the Month at 7:15 pm, unless otherwise announced!

## **Reflections**

### **Not Our Will but Thine Own, Lord**

One of the mysteries of this world, and often the most difficult to accept, is the things we hope and pray to either spare someone from or to spare ourselves from do not always come to fruition.

How many times have you heard, or maybe even said yourself, "how could God let this happen?" In the secular world, people use this statement of argument to determine their belief or non-belief in God.

The answer is not a simple concept, and I believe that some day these mysteries will be revealed to us in a way that we can really understand, but for now, I would offer the following commentary. **FREE WILL** is the route of the answer as to why God does not intervene at every instance and even though he could he does not. What is free will, and why is important. Think about if you were the Creator and you could create man, you have the power to have your creation love you without any free train of thought, no ability of choice, just the nature to love only you. Now think about how God created us - we are created with free will, so we can either seek out God, and choose to love and serve him or not. In comparison with which love is worth more value than the mindless reaction or the free will choice.

Because of Free Will conflict exists and as preachers preach sin exists in the world.

I once heard a minister preach at a funeral service about a young

man who died in tragic car accident say that God was the first to cry. Can you image the sadness that God deals with when death, disease, and tragedy affect us - his creation? Only God could handle such a burden, the flip side is the joy God receives when we accept him and through our actions care for each other.

The simplest answer cannot comfort our grief and fears, but my hope and prayer for all of us is that our belief and desire to be connected to God can sustain us. We need to continue to pray to God for our needs and hopes and we need to continue to give him thanks for all the blessings in our lives, and help minister to people in the times of trial and doubt about God's love for them.

### **With my Free Will -**

**A.....**

The following poem was submitted by a parishioner who hoped we would enjoy seeing what one young man wrote for his mother's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Written by Nick...read and enjoy...

### **Mom**

Mom is not all you are,  
But it is what you are to me,  
And not only to me.

How much of you is Mom I will  
never know,  
But you are an awful lot of Mom to  
me,  
And not only to me.

You have, and always had, a life  
separate from my own,  
But I will never have a life  
separate from you.  
You created me, allowed me to be,  
And allowed me to become myself.

You live with me, and not only me,  
You fear with me, rejoice with me,  
Love with me, but never hate or  
envy,  
Nor entertain malicious thoughts  
of any sort.

All good and happiness in my life I  
owe to you.  
I am able to love others because  
you love me,  
I do the things I do because of  
you.

When I am near you, I feel safe  
and warm.  
When I am far from you, I feel  
you still.

I am no offspring of unknown  
source,  
No river welling from secret  
spring.  
I am a tributary, flowing away,  
But ever drawing from its origin.

Your voice shall echo in all my  
deeds,  
Reverberating unmistakably  
through my life.  
Your shadow shall follow me, and  
not only me.

You are my Mother, you are my  
Mom.  
You are the thrill of my laughter,  
The melody of all my songs.

You are my source, and my end.  
My limit and my bound,  
To me your power shall you lend,  
And with it I shall win renown.

You are my voice and my ears,  
You are my sight and sound,  
Toward you I shall ever steer,  
You are what I shall have found.

You are as strong as tears,  
As wise as years,  
As joyous as snow,  
And I hope you will always know.

To me you are all of this,  
Unmatched in deed and bravery.  
A legend, a hero, a Mom.  
All this to me, and not only to me.