

Christ Church Chimes



The Episcopal Church of Swansea
57 Main Street, Swansea, MA 02777
508-678-0923

April 2004

From the *Priest-in-Charge*

Dear friends:

We are in the heart of the Lenten season, one of the most spiritually significant times in the whole Church year. The word "lent" comes from the Latin word for "long" (length) because we begin this season just at the time the hours of light each day are increasing. I, for one, am always so glad when the hours of daylight begin to grow longer, because it surely means that spring is upon us! And spring always means new life.

The new life given to us by both the season of Spring and by the Feast of the Resurrection will be with us very shortly! And even in Lent, and yes, even in Holy Week, as Christians we are called to keep that Good News in front of us always – the Good News that Jesus' resurrection promises us all new life. And when we know that we have life in Christ, we are called to reflect deeply on how we view the world.

This is especially important as Mel Gibson's "The Passion of Christ" continues to affect huge numbers of people, and rank consistently at the top at the box office. I have not seen the film, although I expect I will see it eventually. However, even though I have not seen it, I – like everyone – am not immune to the conversation and controversy which it is generating. Many people have told me how profoundly moved they were by the film, for which I am grateful – anything that gets people thinking about how God is present in their lives and in the world is a wonderful thing by me! The most important thing about this film for me, however, is that it has opened the door for many people to start talking about some very real and sometimes difficult questions about how we live our lives as people of hope and new life, which is exactly what the path of Jesus Christ leads to! I was reading something recently by my friend, the Very Rev. Jeph Streit, Dean of our own St. Paul's Cathedral in Boston, and he reminds us of several issues that we need to remember. First, regardless of what the film does or does not make explicit, it has once again brought to the attention of all of us that Christian history does include some prolonged periods of anti-Jewish feelings. This is even seen in our Gospels. All four Gospels make reference to religious leaders who were threatened by Jesus, but John's Gospel eradicates the distinction between a small minority group and all Jewish persons; and so his references to "the Jews" have unfortunately been used as a locus of anti-Semitism through the years. The Nazi practice of forcing Jews to wear a yellow star was not original with the Nazi party. It was first put into practice by our own Christian Church in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council, called by the Pope of all ecclesiastical leaders, and it mandated that Jews wear these stars to identify them as outcasts. And there is more. What the film has done, however, is to make us aware of this history once again; and once we are aware, we can, of course, re-commit ourselves to stand against anti-Semitism and all oppression of any of God's beloved people. And that is the way people of hope respond!

The focus on the violence done to Jesus is also prominent. One of the things we say we believe in the Church is that Christ is to be found in ALL persons. That's right – ALL persons. And this

means that every time another human being suffers, in some form, God suffers, too. The suffering of Jesus should serve to teach all of us the importance of practicing a life of non-violence. It is also important to point out that for Episcopalians, the suffering of Jesus cannot and does not stand by itself. That is why the crosses in most of our church buildings are usually empty. The suffering of Jesus is highly significant. In it, we know that God offered Godself as part of human life and human suffering. But the story does not end there! For the empty cross symbolizes the victory of God over death - the victory of God over the worst that we can do to one another! And this is why we live our lives as hopeful and prayerful people, in the midst of a world that seems weighed down by suffering. God is beside us and in us as we work to alleviate it.

And that is the great truth that we celebrate once again at Easter. May the remainder of Lent be for each of you a time to prepare with true hope and joy for the Paschal feast! You are always in my prayers!

Faithfully,

Beth+

Good Friday Prayer Walk

The Greater Fall River Council of Churches is sponsoring a Prayer Walk on Good Friday. We will meet at Government Center in Fall River at 12:12, and process to various points around the downtown area to pray for the people and organizations of our lives. All are most welcome.

Senior High Retreat

A diocesan Senior High Retreat is being held for students in grades 9-12 on Friday and Saturday, April 23-25 at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center in Greenfield, NH. Registration information is available on the diocesan Web site at www.diomass.org/youth or by contacting the Office of Youth Ministries at 617-482-4826.

Christ Church Teen Group

All young people between grades 7-12 are invited to join Lori-Ann Bernstein and some of our teenagers every Sunday morning at 9:00 for our Teen Group. We have reflections and activities which help young people to connect the Gospel with their own lives. We are also looking forward to planning some outside activities for fun and for community service. PLEASE join us!

Youth Leadership Academy

The Youth Leadership Academy of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts is now accepting applications for the class of 2005. Our own Caitlin Scott is a member of the class of 2004, and can tell you anything you need to know about the benefits of the YLA! Anyone entering 10th or 11th grades in the fall of 2004 is eligible to apply. The purpose of the YLA is to develop leadership skills and

Christian faith formation among high school youth within the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. The primary goal of the YLA is to help the youth develop their commitment to Jesus Christ, the Church, and their communities at home, at school, and in the areas where they live. For more information, please feel free to pick up a brochure and application from the back of the church, speak to Caitlin Scott or the Rev. Beth Grundy, or call the Rev. Rob Bacon or Suzy Spressert at the diocesan offices, at 617-482-4826.

Christian Education and Youth

Registration for the Barbara C. Harris Camp and *Conference Center*

It isn't too early to begin making plans for the summer – and there is no better way to spend a week than at the Barbara C. Harris Camp in Greenfield, New Hampshire! There are programs for children of all ages, as well as programs for children and parents (or grandparents!) A dedicated and faithful staff, a beautiful setting, and a Christian foundation which stresses the love of Jesus Christ all combine to make this camping experience one which will never be forgotten! There are application forms at the back of the church, as well as a big poster on the bulletin board near the front door. You can also find the link to camp information and an online application at the diocesan website, www.diomass.org or by contacting the Camp Director, Jon Erdman at 617-482-4826, ext. 659.

I Need Your Help

Susan Carvalho

Were you married in Christ Church, were you confirmed in Christ Church, were you baptized or family members baptized in Christ Church. If so I need you to write a short essay on what that experience meant to you. These articles will be published in The Harvester in the Fall. Start thinking and writing now. I was confirmed in Christ Church as well as married in Christ Church so I have warm memories to reflect and write on. You can call me at 508-678-4941 if you are interested, or e-mail me at change2@aol.com. Thanks for your help

Harvest Festival News

Libby and Bob Hawley have agreed to co-chair the Harvest Festival this year, and have already begun some terrific work! Many of the “chairs” of various booths and areas have already been filled with eager volunteers; but Bob reports that there is one very important position still to be filled, that of Manager of Ads for the Harvester. This job involves contacting people in the parish who sold ads last year, and asking them to do the same this year, as well as to look for new local businesses that might want to sign on. It is an important position, but mainly calls for being able to help organize others. This position could be easily filled by two people working together, and calls for a love of God, an enthusiasm for Christ Church, and good organizational skills. I KNOW there are a lot of you out there who meet that description! Please see Beth Grundy if you want to know more; otherwise, Bob and Libby will be home for Easter!

Pep Rally

Susan Carvalho

In high school when I had to go to our schools pep rally for the football team I always dreaded it. It seemed as if unless you were one of the popular ones; the cheerleaders, football players or their friends then you were probably something else, which usually meant you felt like you weren't good enough. Although I was in the crowd I wasn't part of a group. There was nothing worse than feeling like you don't belong.

Now, as an Episcopalian I know I belong and if I ever had a doubt that doubt was erased this weekend. My husband and I went to The Diocesan Convention this weekend in Boston. (Nov7, 8). It was a HUGE pep rally. It was a wonderful experience. I met people from all walks of life. Some were clergy: Black, White, Spanish, Chinese, Gay, Straight, Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed, Short, Tall, Fat, and Thin

Some were parishioners: Black, White, Spanish, Chinese, Gay, Straight, Married, Single, Divorced, Widowed, Short, Tall, Fat and Thin but we were all Episcopalians happy to gather together and hear the mission of our church.

I had never been to a worship service with so many people. What a sense of awe to be in a room filled with spiritual people. There was no doubt that the spirit was in the room with us. We made some new friends and exchanged some ideas over a brown bag lunch. What is important? Growth? Sense of community? The involvement of youth? Stewardship? Evangelism? . God , first and foremost that is what is important, the rest will fall into place .

Open Door Open Heart ***Susan Carvalho***

Every time my grandchildren come to visit the first thing they all do is open my cabinet in the kitchen where I keep all my canned goods as well as dry goods and lets not forget it is also where I keep the snack foods. They open the door, look to see what they like and then proceed to take what they would like to eat. I never really thought about it until last week, when the youngest grandchild who is three and only gets to visit every few months, opened the cabinet and said "TREATS". I then realized that no matter how busy I am or how much I do or don't do for my grandkids it is more important that they know who I am and that they always feel that I have an open door and an open heart.

I can't be everything so I just try to be the best me. Sometimes I am very frazzled in trying to do it all or be it all but I always have time to keep the cupboards full of treats and my heart is always full of love for my family . Sometimes just being who we are is better than anything we could give or do.

Vestry Notes

In an effort to move toward increased communication, we will be noting various vestry issues, discussions, and agenda items in our newsletter. We hope this will help everyone to feel more in touch with us, and to have a greater understanding of the business of the parish. Please remember that vestry meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month, and ALL are welcome!

March 9, 2004

Although pledges for the year are very good, the pledges are slow in coming in. It was thought that the reminder of pledge amounts which accompanied the thank-you notes sent out by the Stewardship Committee would be helpful to people.

Beth noted that the deanery Confirmation Retreat went well, but that the material for confirmation is more appropriate for young people ages 15 or so, rather than 13. She noted that the bishops are encouraging people to wait until they are a little older to make Confirmation; but that she will be continuing to work on how to make Confirmation more attractive for younger youth.

Three people have come forward and expressed interest in being part of a Pastoral Care Team and also serving as Lay Eucharistic Ministers "B" to help distribute Holy Communion to the sick and homebound. Christ Church currently has no LEM Bs. This will be an enormous help and a wonderful ministry for people.

The vestry authorized the purchase of a software package for churches, specifically designed to help us track pledges and organize parish lists and finances.

Now that the parish offices are fully automated (many thanks to Chuck Michaud for spearheading this!) we are looking into the best options for internet access

The vestry gave initial approval to the repair of some of our stained glass windows that are badly in *need* of work. We will decide details at the next meeting.

Some months ago, Beth brought up the idea of having some neighborhood-based coffees to help members of the parish get to know each other and her even better. Chris, Diane, and Beth will present some concrete plans at the next meeting.

Social, Outreach, and Stewardship Committees are in full swing!

The Parochial Report for 2003 was presented and approved.

Beth gave a brief overview of some of the steps that we will need to take in the late fall to prepare to begin the discernment process Christ Church's future with its clergy leadership. Beth's one-year mark was in early March and her contract is for three years.

It was noted that we need to continue working on staying with projects and issues through completion and not letting them drop out of sight (case in point – the moving of the altar). It was also noted that it is important to continue to be vigilant about organization and communication, and that it was time to take a new look at our by-laws, and see if they need any revision.

Schedule of Services and Events for Holy Week and Easter

The following is a list of services at Christ Church or that we are involved with during Holy Week. I strongly urge you to come to as many of these as possible, especially making a special effort to be present on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and at the Great Vigil of Easter. There is nothing like moving through the liturgy (it is all one liturgy, broken up into three parts) to really experience the full joy of Easter Day. You will gain a new understanding of Jesus' passion; it is a truly deeply moving experience.

Sunday, April 4 - Palm Sunday

8:00 A.M. The Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist Rite I

10:00 A.M. The Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Tuesday, April 6

10:00 A.M. Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Wednesday, April 7

7:00 P.M. *Holy Eucharist, Rite II*

Thursday, April 8 – Maundy Thursday

6:15 P.M. *Chowder Supper*

7:00 P.M. *Holy Eucharist, Rite II with footwashing, followed by the Stripping of the Altar*

8:00 - midnight *Watch before the Reserved Sacrament*

Friday, April 9 – Good Friday

10:00 A.M. Good Friday liturgy with communion from the Reserved Sacrament

12:15 – 1:15 P.M. Prayer Walk sponsored by the Greater Fall River Council of Churches

7:00 P.M. Good Friday liturgy with communion from the Reserved Sacrament

Saturday, April 10

6:00 P.M. The Great Vigil of Easter, followed by an Easter Party in the Parish Hall

Sunday, April 11 – The Feast of the Resurrection, Easter Day

8:00 A.M. *Holy Eucharist, Rite II*

9:00 A.M. *Sunday School Easter Egg Hunt*

10:30 A.M. *Festival Holy Eucharist, Rite II with choir*

“Will you not watch with me one hour?”

There will be a sheet at the back of the church for you to sign up to keep watch in the church on Maundy Thursday from 8:00 – midnight. This is to remind us of Jesus request to his friends that they watch and pray with him the night before he died. You can sign up in half hour or hour increments, and it is fine for several people to keep watch together.

The Hippodrome Adventures

By Al Deston

“Where’s ‘The Hippodrome’ from here?” my Grandfather asked the taxi driver as we disembarked his cab in front of our hotel in New York City. The cabbie looked incredulous. “That was torn down more than fifty years ago!” he said. We didn’t need to advertise the fact that we were tourists. There we were, along with our solid genuine cardboard suitcases on the sidewalk, staring up like two country hicks at the tall buildings. So began our first trip alone together in the big city. We were on a great adventure: my Grandfather returning to a city he hadn’t seen in decades, and I as a young teenager ready to take in the excitement of the entertainment capital of the world I’d heard so much about. I just knew it was going to be eventful. My Grandfather always talked of his visits to NYC during the 1920’s and 1930’s, the height of Vaudeville’s popularity, whenever it was time to get new material. And it was always time to get new material in those days.

Grampa, as he told it then, would sit high in the theater balcony with his ‘committee’, having one singular purpose. Armed with pencils and pads, they furiously jotted down as much of the plots, gags and jokes from the likes of Weber and Fields, Eddie Cantor, Jimmy Durante, and W. C. Fields as they could in one sitting. Sometimes it required a return visit. Upon their return home, they shared their notes and incorporated all they had lifted into their next act. [No shame in this group. They were very particular about from whom they stole their material. Nothing from the second billing--- unless it was good--- and useable.]

The frequent balcony patrons were all doing this for a good cause, however, and there was a method behind the madness. Gramps was one half of an amateur ‘vaudeville act’ Dowty and Sellers, and the light of his life was to perform in minstrels and variety shows throughout the southeastern Massachusetts circuit as it were. Even Grandma joined in. Churches, lodges and charities, any place that had a stage, all experienced their talents as the shows moved each week from one venue to another and back again for repeat performances. The Church was the central part of life in those days. Church suppers and entertainments abounded; all social life revolved around the church and its organizations.

But this time, our visit to New York City had none of these purposes in mind. It was the 1950’s. We were there to spend some time together. Grandma had passed on when I was almost nine, and Gramp was now showing his oldest grandson some of what he had experienced in this city as a much younger man. I guess he was trying to recapture some of the excitement he always talked about when he mentioned his past trips and his going to New York, as if he still made them on a regular and frequent basis.

I had always stayed over with my grandparents for extended summer stays when I was little, enjoying my independence as the oldest grandchild and the fact that my younger brother and sister never stayed for these special weeks in the country. Now, it was a bonding time again for the both of us. For my Grandfather, New York turned out to be a very different city than that which inhabited his memories. One by one, the landmarks of his cherished past had disappeared over the years. Even the Hippodrome, to me just a strange word, danced as a long-past memory, and, as it seemed, only in my Grandfather's head. I still wondered what it was. A theater? Really? How big was it? Where was it? Why isn't it there anymore?

There were many things not there anymore. And yet what was there still held the magic for both of us. How the music, though long silent, lingered on in his memory, and was there with us that very moment, to hear him tell it.

That's what is so important about music, isn't it? It has power. It can conjure up so many snapshots of moments passed. A melody can bring one right back to that first dance, that special someone, a graduation, a wedding song.

It is why it has such an important place in the Church's worship service today. It brings another level of meaning to the word praise; it ties the past to the present on the wings of a melody.

I think my Grandfather's love for entertainment, his being both an observer and participant, instilled in me the same wonder and awe. Just as mention of the Hippodrome never fails to remind me of my Grandfather and our time spent together in New York City that year, I am reminded about how important music is in my life now and those within the range of its voice. It has that power for all of us.