

THE PHOENIX

FATHER HARDING'S MUSINGS

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!

A new year has come upon us and each of us will celebrate it in our own way. Some will go to a smashing party with big bands, lots of booze, and noise makers; and everyone will smooch everyone at the stroke of midnight. Others will celebrate with friends in one form or other, and some will celebrate quietly. And so it goes.

However the night will come to an end and the new year begin and then the real question comes to light; "What will this new year bring?"

Our hearts and minds will be filled with a myriad of thoughts and we will wonder which of them will be real. When we think like this it is too easy to fall into pessimism because we think it will never happen the way we want it too; we are just dreaming, it's not real, and so on. When we lose the ability to dream and hope then our new year will never happen.

I have great thoughts for Church of The Resurrection! Some are dreams and some are hopes.

I dream that one day in 2008 we will have 150 families worshipping on a Sunday morning! I dream that one day you will have a rector who will work with you in building your ministry in Christ's name and bring a peace and joy to many you do not even know! I dream that your ministry together will bring a joy and happiness to you that will go beyond your understanding.

It is my hope that what you believe will bring a joy and peace into your life that gives your life a richness well beyond your understanding.

God's blessing be with you this new year, and I hope you have a blast!!!

Father Harding

TRANSITION TEAM

This season holds two promises, the birth of Christ and in January the delivery of the list of candidates for the Priest-In-Charge position. The Transition Team will conduct the interview after we review their applications, a request for a short essay addressing the parish goals and a recorded sermon. If in the event you see any of the Team members walking around with glazed eyes, it would probably be safe to conclude that we had just listened to a less than rousing homily.

Perhaps the first point of interpersonal contact will be a 60 minute telephone interview. The telephone interview will be scripted and we have agreed upon a methodology to evaluate the results of the interview. The questions that we have are open-ended with the goal of allowing the candidate to give us a sense of how they perceive themselves. As always, if you have questions, you can ask any of the Transition Team members (except for that low life Mike Spillum who will be hibernating in Florida) immediately after Christmas.

Here are the questions:

Tell us about yourself.

What is your motivation for changing parishes at this time?

Describe a typical work week within the parish and your interaction with your congregation?

What has been your greatest success and your greatest unfulfilled opportunity at your current parish?

What has been your greatest success and your greatest unfulfilled opportunity in your entire journey as a priest?

How do you maintain your own wellness?

What are the things you can do to help us in this parish? How can we help you in that process?

What questions do you have for us?

I know that, except for the Vestry, who are required to be able to recite the Parish goals if asked at 2:00 in the morning, a number of you have a nagging voice that is saying, "What Parish Goals?" Since I do not want you to lose sleep, here they are:

1. Christian Formation and Education attracting all ages
2. Stewardship driven financial stability
3. Strong community of faith expressed thru and in a Dynamic/Quality worship experience
4. Strong pastoral care and support

I hope that you all have a blessed Christmas season and please continue to keep the Transition Team in your prayers as we begin the truly difficult road of determining who we will call to be our Priest-in-Charge. *Submitted by Dan Allison*

A Prayer for the New Year

By Pamela

Oh, Holy Father, cognizant of my insignificance and mindful of my frailties, I persist in requesting your attention. Forgive me.

Help us to understand those who blow themselves up with explosives in your name. Forgive them.

Help our leaders to accept the responsibility inherent in their positions of leadership and not to make excuses or create barriers to justice. Forgive them.

Help us to choose leaders this year who will put aside politics for the right way, lead our nation toward productive justice, and not use your name to thwart cooperation with their opposition. Forgive us.

Help us to remember that your people all around this planet are hungry and scared and desperate. Forgive us.

Help us to acknowledge our responsibility toward the stewardship of this planet, our home, and to show reverence to it as your creation, your gift to us, and not as a backdrop for our selfish use. Forgive us.

Help the nations of the world to realize the impotence of their efforts unless they promote concord and harmony and genuine relationships with all peoples of every color, culture, creed and philosophy. Forgive them.

Help us to eliminate the barriers to the growth of our knowledge and to promote learning, scholarship and the wonder of your universe. Forgive us.

Teach us to honor those who willingly go into harm's way in the name of justice and freedom. Help us.

Teach us to be mindful and loving and open to finding Jesus in every face we see. Help us.

Teach us to accept the bounty you have provided to us individually, and to temper our ambition with compassion. Help us.

Teach us to use the gifts you have given each of us not only for the benefit of those around us, but also as a heartfelt tribute to you, that all we touch may experience the love you have for us. Help us.

Teach our clergy to be intuitive, our parish leaders to be humble, and our congregations to be engaged. Help us.

Teach our teachers to be mindful of the youthful exuberance and potential they hold in their hands and to guide the generation of the future toward integrity of spirit. Help us.

Teach us to respect the probity of the saints around us and to learn by the example of the saints who've already entered into your kingdom. Help us.

Teach our doctors and shaman, nurses and healers, to focus on the hurting and pained among us and not on the business of their craft. Help us.

Teach our clergy and bishops and diocesan representatives to seek a cooperative stance that reflects your love of our differences. Help us.

Teach every one of us to hear your voice and follow your ways throughout each of our days. Help us.

Holy Father, Lord Jesus, and Holiest of Mothers: Please guide us through the new year with your love. Amen.

Bible Study News

Come and explore the greatest treasury of wisdom and love ever written. Wednesday nights, 7:00 - 8:30. We're currently in the Acts of the Apostles and would love to add your voice to the discussion. We are on hiatus until January 9, however.

Acts is a fascinating study of the formation of the early church. We've made our way from the coming of the Holy Spirit in a new and spectacular fashion on Pentecost through the first Christian preaching, to the arrest of Peter and John, to their further preaching, and to their second arrest and angelic freeing. Along the way we've been treated to some difficult teaching about how Christians should view material goods.

Luke can be troubling. My parents' preacher made many snide comments about Luke's gospel when it dominated our liturgical readings not too long ago. My father was reporting on this, with an air of pride that his priest was so "with it" and didn't pay attention to Luke's apparent distaste for material wealth.

I was unhappy with this teaching, and tried to adjust the light a little bit, but not even Jesus could teach his own family and friends, so I had no luck whatsoever.

Luke's teaching is hard for most to accept, because it presupposes a complete trust in God that a 1st century Christian would have found easier to maintain, inasmuch as they expected the end of the world as they knew it at any moment. From a 21st century perspective, such absolute trust that God will provide for our needs through the good offices of the community is borderline insanity. Indeed, the beautiful part of the Bible is that Acts also shows those 1st century Christians having problems with the communal system, and the church's first administrators were selected to deal with the issue. The Bible shows real people dealing with real problems, and their problems are almost always instructive for our own problems.

This year, set aside two hours a week to explore the world of the Bible. It is an investment that will reap uncountable rewards in the future.

Thank You....

...to everyone who submitted articles to this issue of The Phoenix; special blessings to those who beat the deadline!!!

Lay Ministry Schedule

Lectors

January 6 Cristal Martin
January 13 Russ Philbrick
January 20 Bob Simpson
January 27 Michele Peters

Eucharistic Ministers

The Eucharistic Ministers for the Month will be announced at Sunday Sevices.

Greeter

Lynda Forbes

Altar Guild

Barbara Bolden & Judy Roeser

News 2 Know

Wanted:

Someone of faith to work with the Vestry and Priest and congregation to create this monthly newsletter. No special skills are required, although one must slightly know how to operate a computer and email. Writers already exist to support and assist. *Please prayerfully consider this ministry.* Contact Pamela at pamela.todoroff@gmail.com or any Vestry member for additional information.

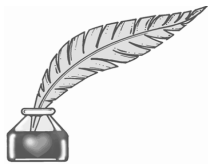
Choir

The choirs are on hiatus while the leadership of our music ministries is being reassessed.



Sunday School

The Sunday School children truly enriched the December 23 Sunday service. The parents and other adults who created costumes, the Sunday School teachers who taught and sang with the children, and the children themselves deserve our gratitude. Their contribution to our worship is prodigious. Thank you so much.



A Note From the Interim Editor

I believe that any newsletter is an opportunity for considered communication. And communication is critical to all relationships—healthy relationships, that is. Therefore, this newsletter is critical to the relationship of our parish. It is my ministry while I'm here. But as a critical component in the parish life, it will need to be nourished and perpetuated, no matter who is contributing, no matter who is reading, no matter who sits on Vestry or who our rector is.

Please consider your own, personal role in the creation and maintenance of this important vehicle of communication to our parish family. And then talk to me or anyone on the Vestry so that together we ensure and continue the communications. ~Pamela

From The Record

I look at Diocesan Convention as an opportunity for a family reunion. I like when we gather folks from all across the diocese—not just delegates and clergy, but also those who take the time and energy and effort to come to convention to set up tables and booths, to share with us what is going on in their various ministries, to encourage us in our own ministries and make suggestions about other ways we can do ministry. ...It is an opportunity for the whole house to be together."*Bishop Wendell Gibbs*

How our Church Works by Louis Beer

Five years or so ago, Church of the Resurrection did a congregation wide survey. One of the results of that survey which most impressed me was how overwhelmingly local our interests were. Our top priorities were quality of worship, Christian education, and charitable outreach, but all were expressed as being most important at the local level.

That's fine with me. I agree with that. This is where we live, and it is here that we are called to do God's work. But in the last three years, I have found myself becoming more and more involved with matters at the Diocesan level. As I have done so I became aware of how amazingly ignorant I was of how all of these levels of the church fit together, and why.

As my spiritual journey took me more and more into the workings of the Diocese and the National church, I began to realize how much our history and our structure affect our religious outlook. I have also come to believe that if we are going to fulfill our mission as Christians and Episcopalians, which we sometimes refer to as our Baptismal Covenant, we really need to know how our fellow Episcopalians "play the game".

So this essay is intended to be "Church Governance 101", a basic course on how the components of our church fit together. Since I doubt anyone but a hard core "politics junkie" could stay awake through the whole thing, I have divided it up into 3 parts, which I will submit to the Phoenix one at a time. I hope you find it helpful.

The Parish and the Diocese (Part 1)

We are part of the Diocese of Michigan, which has 91 separate congregations. The Diocese's office is at 4800 Woodward Avenue, in Detroit. The Diocesan Center is next door to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. We have a Bishop, the Rt. Reverend Wendell Gibbs. The Bishop is elected by Annual Convention. Once elected he serves until he resigns or retires. He can be replaced under very extraordinary circumstances.)

Every Congregation has three delegates to Convention, which are elected by that congregation's Vestry. All clergy who are "resident" in the Diocese are also delegates to the Convention. Convention also approves the budget for the Diocese, elects members of a number of other bodies, such as the Trustees and the Standing Committee, and acts as the basic policy maker for the Diocese.

The Bishop is the Chief Executive of the Diocese as well as its spiritual and religious leader. He works with the "Diocesan Council" also called "the Executive Council", which is in effect a Board of Directors for the Diocese. The Diocesan Council recommends the budget to Convention, handles property matters, supervises relationships between the Diocesan Office and the congregations, oversees the Whitaker School of Theology, and the missions and programs that are handled directly by the diocese.

The congregations of the Diocese are organized into eight geographic groups called "deaneries". Convention delegates and the clergy are members of the deaneries. Church of the Resurrection is part of the Oakland Deanery. The deaneries meet from time to time to discuss common concerns, and particularly to elect representatives to the Diocesan Council. Each Deanery has two representatives to the Council, one clergy person and one lay person. The Council may also have up to eight representatives appointed by the Bishop to promote diversity within its representation. In an effort to maximize participation throughout the Diocese, the Bishop has currently exercised all of his appointments.

The Bishop and the Bishop's staff are responsible for seeing that most of the work of the Diocese gets done. This includes clergy and lay training and education, including youth education and family camping opportunities, communications (The Diocese supports "The Record" but it has its own editorial board), maintaining chaplaincies at the major public universities within the Diocese, and helping individual congregations with staffing problems and issues, especially when it is necessary to call a new priest.

The diocesan office also provides many other forms of support for congregations as they need it. This can be everything from help with building systems and issues, religious education materials, assistance for music programs, provision of building insurance, etc. for parishes, and all manner of crises intervention. The Diocesan office also serves as staff for various committees which offer loans and grants to congregations, and provides many other specific services.

(to be continued next month)

ECW News

SAVE THIS DATE – Sunday January 27 after the 10:00 a.m. service – for an ECW Planning and Business Meeting in the Conference Room. (In case of conflict with annual Parish meeting, this will be rescheduled). Come with your ideas for programs for the spring and summer months. Remember to bring your calendars.

Christmas Bake Sale a big success!

We made \$538 at the one day bake sale held in conjunction with the Greens Market on December 1. Thanks to Michele Peters for chairing this and to everyone who baked goodies, worked the sale, or bought baked goods.

Donations to Fight Poverty

The ECW members voted to donate \$200 to Lighthouse North to assist their efforts to meet needs in the Clarkston area. Another \$200 donation was authorized for the Baldwin Center in Pontiac to help with their services to the poor and homeless.

Service Projects

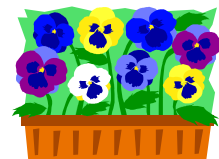
Members of the ECW volunteered their time to help set up the Lighthouse North Christmas Store at the Knights of Columbus Hall on December 20. Others assisted at the Christmas Store Distribution on December 21.

32nd Annual Spiritual Journey Retreat

Church of the Resurrection is the host church for this year's Diocesan ECW retreat, THE SOUL WITHIN, to be held January 17- 19 at the Colombiere Conference Center. Several of our ECW members have worked all year planning this special retreat. Many of our members will be taking advantage of this opportunity to deepen their faith and nurture themselves.

Garden Corner

By Judy Roeser, Master Gardener



January has arrived and along with it comes winter weather. This means on any given day the temperature can go from a balmy 40 degrees to a freezing zero in a matter of hours. Sometimes an ice storm coats our outdoor shrubs and trees with a coat of ice that can bend them over to the point where they appear they will break. Our instinct is to go out and free the plants from the ice. However, the plant can be damaged by our well meaning act of kindness. It is best to let Mother Nature run her course and defrost the plants with her warmer temperatures and sunshine. Sometimes, a branch can be propped up to prevent it from breaking but do so very carefully. With any kind of luck we will escape without a serious ice storm occurring this season.

Spiritual Journey
By Daniel LeBoeuf

Being a good steward

For about three years now I've written about my own spiritual journey, in the hopes that by sharing it I may come to a better understanding of my perceived call to ordination, and that you may benefit in some way by my own experiences. Along the way I've received numerous positive comments, and no negative comments. So I've kept writing.

Over the past few months it's become more difficult to write to my intention. As my own spiritual gifts have developed and come into better focus, I have found the urge to write exhortations and sermons almost unstoppable. So, this year, I'd like to make some changes.

For one change, I'd like this to be more interactive. I'd like to tackle some of your questions, or post some of your comments. For another change, I'd like to concentrate more on my other passion besides Bible study - stewardship.

This doesn't mean I'm going to write about tithing and pledging and money every month. Stewardship encompasses what we do with ALL of God's gifts to us. 1 Corinthians 12 outlines what I mean by spiritual gifts - those abilities and resources God has seen fit to bestow on each of us, and how we use them to further the kingdom of God on earth. "In each of us the Spirit is seen to be at work for some useful purpose." (1 Cor 12:7)

One of my gifts is putting the deepest knowledge into words. Though I do some pretty thorough research for the Bible study, it's clearly the Holy Spirit at work guiding us through. I am not given all the knowledge necessary for these sessions, and it would be foolish for me to proceed along those lines. Another of my spiritual gifts is enough humility to encourage everyone else to contribute during the Bible study, and create an environment in which that can happen. Only through that universal sharing can we hope to unravel some of the nuances of our Bible.

Each of us have gifts that complement and expand everyone else's gifts. This is why we are in community, and why Christians have gathered in community since the earliest days. Together we are the body of Christ. Alone we are merely pieces, our usefulness limited. Good stewardship is using our gifts together for some useful purpose.

Do you have a question about the Bible? Do you know of acts of stewardship you would like to share? Do you have questions about stewardship? I will endeavour to answer any questions you send me. You can email me at DLLEBOEUF@JUNO.COM, or write them down and give them to me at church, or put them in the Bible Study mail box. You can be anonymous or quoted, as you wish.

I cannot give advice, nor can I counsel anyone. For personal advice and/or counsel you should see Father Harding or another clergy or counselor of your choice. What I can do is try to find some answers for questions you may have about stewardship and/or the Bible. Failing interactivity, I'll just pick a topic that month and write about it, but I really hope I'll be hearing from you.

Online Now!

There are many wonderful online resources that describe, reflect, explain and deepen our understanding of the Episcopal Church. Quotations from our Bishop, our Presiding Bishop and other clergy will come from one or more of the following sites: www.episcopalchurch.org, <http://ecusa.anglican.org>, or www.edomi.org. Check them out for yourself.

A fifth grade teacher in a Christian school asked her class to look at TV commercials and see if they could use them in some way to communicate ideas about God. Here are some of the results:

God is like.

a FORD He's got a better idea.

God is like.

COKE He's the real thing.

God is like.

HALLMARK CARDS He cares enough to send His very best.

God is like.

TIDE He gets the stains out that others leave behind.

God is like.

GENERAL ELECTRIC He brings good things to life.

God is like.

SCOTCH TAPE You can't see Him, but you know He's there.

God is like.

DELTA He's ready when you are.

God is like.

ALLSTATE You're in good hands with Him.

God is like.

VO-5 Hair Spray He holds through all kinds of weather.

God is like.

DIAL SOAP Aren't you glad you have Him? Don't you wish everybody did?

God is like .

the U.S. POST OFFICE Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet nor ice will keep Him from His appointed destination.

God is like.

Chevrolet...the heart beat of America

God is like.

Bounty He is the quicker picker upper.. can handle the tough jobs and He won't fall apart on you!

Thanks to Judy Roeser and her uncle for this!

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Resurrection**

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We're on the Web!
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*Our mission is to proclaim
the power and love of Jesus
Christ, through our worship,
fellowship and service to
others.*



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