

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Newsletter

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Greetings!

Yesterday, I attended the Chrism mass where the oil that is used in baptisms is blessed; that oil is used to anoint the newly baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and to mark them as Christ's own forever. The other priests present and I also renewed our ordination vows.

We reaffirmed our promise to live a life of prayer and study; as priests we are expected to pray the daily offices (Morning and Evening Prayer) and read the daily scripture. We are also to continue to read about the subjects that we studied in seminary, such as theology (the study of God), spirituality and congregational development. We also reaffirmed our promise to obey our bishop and to be loyal to the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ as the Church has received them.

I was reminded of my ordination 7 years ago. My Bishop charged me *to work as a pastor, priest and teacher, together with my bishop and fellow priests and to take my share in the councils of the Church* (pg. 531 BCP). A pastor has spiritual leader of a congregation and a priest is authorized to perform rituals of the church. Part of my work as a priest is working in the diocese and national church committees, task forces and councils.

My Bishop also charged me with the responsibility and duty to preach, teach, study and live the Gospel. I was given the authority to declare God's forgiveness, God's blessing, to baptize and to preside and consecrate at Holy Communion. I promised to live my life as a wholesome example to others.

These promises and vows are a tall order to live into. I consider myself very blessed to have a full time position as a priest in a parish where I have the luxury of the time to pray and study. I also feel blessed to be a rector in charge of a congregation who understands the importance and are supportive of me taking my part in the wider church. It is a privilege and blessing to serve as your priest.

Peace and blessings always,
Rebecca+

Vestry Snippets

The Vestry met on schedule this month. Unlike last month, the weather wasn't an issue. Complete minutes of the Vestry meeting are posted on our website under News/Documents. Here are some of the highlights of this month's meeting:

Some possibilities for an electronic church bell were discussed. This would be a bell sound reproduced through a loudspeaker. More research will be required as to the feasibility but will have more to report next month.

Lise Black will again handle the rummage sale. It will be held at the church, probably in May.

Approval was given to move ahead and have an outside vendor (Dykema Builders) prepare a place in the sanctuary and mount the columbarium on the prepared wall.

Judy Peterson was nominated and elected to chair a committee to oversee the Gross Scholarship.

Judy Peterson brought forth an idea on how we could use the QR code to encourage younger, more technically inclined individuals to join our church. (*Not familiar with QR codes? See article on page 3*)

The Vestry is aware of the difficulty some have in negotiating the stairs going up into the sanctuary and down to the lower gathering area. Investigation into getting a chair lift is underway.

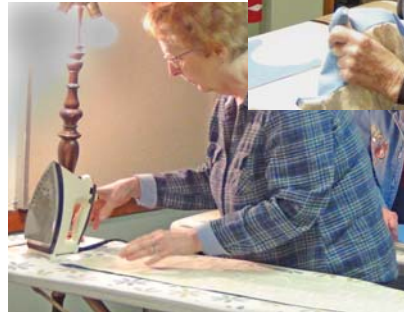
The decision was made to have the craft show and cookie walk at St. Mark's. No outside craft vendors will be invited this year.

Mother Rebecca's contract, which was to expire in November of this year, was extended for three years.



Lee Allen not shown in photo

Here's a riddle for you.
 What has 26 legs, 130 nimble fingers
 and sews? Give up?
 See answer at bottom of page.



Here are pictures of the group that assembled at St. Mark's on Saturday, March 23rd. Armed with sewing machines, irons and ironing boards, needles, thread, fabric, lamps and patterns, (and lots of enthusiasm) they transformed yards of formless fabric into 13 brand new reversible scapulars for St. Mark's choir. Judy Peterson organized the group. They assembled at 9:30am and even after taking time out for a pizza lunch, they completed the task by 1:00 pm. To quote Phyllis Mandigo, "Many hands make light work." See St. Mark's web site "News/Videos" page for a video clip of the event.



© Answer: The group pictured above, of course.



The Rev. Canon Angela Shepherd, Canon for Mission, [Diocese of Maryland](#)



The Rev. Jennifer Adams, Rector, [Grace Episcopal Church, Holland, Michigan](#) (Diocese of Western Michigan)



The Rev. Wayne Houglan, Rector, [St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Salisbury, North Carolina](#) (Diocese of North Carolina)

FINALIST NOMINEES FOR BISHOP ANNOUNCED

One of the three priests pictured above will become the 9th Bishop of Western Michigan. After much consideration by the selection committee, the three individuals pictured above were selected as finalists in the bishop selection process that's been going on for some months.

A letter from each nominee, as well as a summary of their education and experience, is included in a slate announcement booklet. The booklet also includes a report of the Search Team describing the search process. And for those of you who have someone else in mind who you think would make a great bishop, there's a petition process described in this booklet whereby you can nominate your own candidate for bishop.

You can download and view this booklet, which goes into considerable detail on the backgrounds of the three candidates. on the St. Mark's website. See it under "News/Documents."

The Transition Team will host a series of informational events with nominees from May 3rd-5th at three locations in the diocese; these events will include nominees by petition. The electing convention will be held on May 18, 2013, at Grace Episcopal Church, Grand Rapids.

Following the election of the Ninth Bishop, the required consents will be sought from other dioceses of the Episcopal Church.



WHAT'S A QR CODE...

...you ask. No doubt you've seen these codes on products of various types. The term is an abbreviation for "Quick Response code, first designed for the automobile industry but later found many uses throughout industry. Most recently, the code has found application in marketing of products.

Judy Peterson brought up the potential for using the QR code to market our church. Codes can be placed on signs, on business cards, in the newsletter or anywhere text can be printed to display a lengthy message.

QR codes are machine readable. That is, like the bar code scanner in the supermarket, the QR code is scanned and interpreted by a computer program. If all this sounds a bit complex, in application, it couldn't be simpler.

Free QR code reader apps are available for any smart phone. The QR code at the left, for example, will take you immediately to St. Mark's website. That's great for putting on business cards. Unlike a bar code, the QR code can imbed up to 3000 characters, including images.

The younger generation is well aware of this technology and Judy made the point that this may be a way to reach them with our message.

Our new series continues this month with the spotlight on Gerry Stackhouse.



How many of us wish we could have chosen our parents? Gerry Stackhouse did just that. Before she was adopted at age 11, she first spent a year with the couple who were her potentially adoptive parents. At the end of that year-long trial period, both she and the couple who would become her parents had the option to say: yea or nay. The “yea” decision was unanimous and 11 year-old Gerry started a new life with a new mother and father.

She grew up in California spending time in the bay area and elsewhere in the state. She attended the University of California, Davis Campus where she met her husband and graduated with a teaching degree. Her husband joined the army after graduation and the family moved to Alabama where she began her first teaching job. She taught English and PhysEd at the High School level.

Military service being what it is, with regular transfers, Gerry and her family moved quite a bit for a while. After military service, her husband found a job in Michigan where he could work in his profession as an Oenologist. (Oenology is the science of winemaking.) Interestingly, the University of California, Davis, where he and Gerry met, is one of the relatively few to offer degree-granting programs in this field.

Now officially a Michigan resident, and with two daughters to raise, Gerry focused on being a mom. At one point she gave her oldest daughter the option of going into girl scouts or to join the local 4H club. Her daughter chose 4H, so Gerry and her oldest daughter went to their first 4H meeting together.

As often happens in organizations dependent on volunteers, Gerry was “volunteered” to be a sewing instructor at her very first meeting. They must not have had to twist her arm too much to get her involved as she stayed with 4H for over 30 years, long after her girls grew up and out of 4H. Over her 30 year tenure with 4H, she worked with kids raising rabbits, taught cooking and held several leadership positions. She was also superintendent of the dog show at the Van Buren County Youth Fair. When asked what kept her involved in 4H for such a long time, she answered simply, “Because I like kids. I like working with kids.” She says she discovered her liking for kids when, as a teen ager, she taught bible school.

Quote of the month

The purist joy is the malicious joy we take at the misfortunes of those we have envied.

St. Mark’s welcomed Gerry as a new member in 1976, following the death of her 6 ½ year old son.. She’s served on the Vestry multiple times and as senior warden multiple times as well. She’s been very active at the diocese level for many years also, having served on the Executive Council for more than 5 years. She was on the search committee for our current bishop, served on the Commission on Ministry and was on the board for Oaker Hater School for Deacons. She’s now on the transition committee for the new bishop.

Gerry recently retired from a 22 year career with the local court, the last 13 as a probation officer for kids. Her clients included kids aged from 4 to 17 charged with crimes ranging from shoplifting to drug manufacturing. When she started that job she was told to expect no more than a 15% success rate with the errant kids she counseled. She says her experience confirmed that bleak expectation. Despite what might seem to some as a disappointing result of one’s efforts, Gerry says: “Each success energized me for the next challenging case in hopes of another positive outcome.”

Besides the time she devotes to activities at St. Mark’s, Gerry enjoys her retirement by gardening, knitting, crocheting, quilting, cross stitching and making jewelry. She’s made most of her daughters clothes, including a wedding dress for her one married daughter.

Some would believe that being adopted, especially at the ripe old age of 11 as in Gerry’s case, would cause some developmental issues in a child. Gerry says, “I can honestly say that I don’t feel put upon, brow beaten or downtrodden because of my upbringing prior to adoption, because I learned from it. I feel I’m a decent person and my past experiences all have to do with that. We are what we experience.”

Those of us who know Gerry would agree that she’s a decent person and a good friend. She’s generous with her time, her talent and her energy -- the greatest gifts anyone has to give. ☺



Calling all members of St. Mark’s

Would you like to be immortalized in a the newsletter? I’m looking for volunteers to be highlighted in upcoming issues of the newsletter. Let your fellow church members get to know you better. The better we know one another, the closer our church family becomes. Contact me at jlytle@fennvillnews.com or at 269.686.6854. You’re next!