

NEVERTHELESS

Newsletter of the Church of St. James the Less, a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia
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May 2008

With generous hearts we give thanks for the ministry of Barbara Blakemore among us these last months. At my request and with approval of our vestry, Barbara agreed to fill in 10 hours a week at SJTL as a paid staff person for a limited amount of time out of her retirement. As many of you know, her main task has been working with the ministry of the Sunday school teachers and programs. You have also seen her regularly serving with me at the altar each Sunday at the 10:00 service.

Now the time has come for Barbara to step back into her retirement life to be once again more fully with Bill and her family and grandchildren. It has been nothing but a joy and a delight for me, and I know you too, to work with Barbara during this time. I am so grateful to her for sharing the gift of her time, talent and many years of experience with our parish family.

Even though we will not see Barbara at the altar each Sunday, that does not mean she is leaving. *Barbara is not leaving SJTL.* She and Bill will remain, as they have been the past couple of years, members of SJTL. Actually Barbara will in some ways be even closer, for you will see her sitting next to Bill and perhaps you too, in the pew on Sunday. She has also graciously offered to continue to cover services or pastoral emergencies when I am away or on vacation. I am most grateful for her offer to do so.

On June 1, at our Annual Parish Picnic, we will give thanks and recognition to Barbara for all she has done for us and continues to do in her ministry at SJTL.

The last few months at my request, Barbara has headed up a small group to reflect and help prepare to begin a search for a Director of Children's Ministry to work about 10 hours a week. In that group we discussed the current curriculum as well as some possible future curriculums. Other churches were visited to see their experience with different programs. We also discussed the time we hold Sunday school and Adult Education and the challenges that present to many of our younger children and their families. After exploring this and other visions for the ministry of all God's children at SJTL, we had a much clearer idea of the direction we needed to go.

The committee, composed of Barbara and myself, along with Susan Hubbard, Dani Petitt, Kendra Shifflett, Laura Baker and Melissa Roberts, has now completed its work. *I am excited to say that we have started our search process for a part time Children's Ministry Director at SJTL!* We have advertised for the part time position through the diocese and other religious educator venues and have already had a few inquiries. Our hopeful prayer is to have someone on board before the fall. I want to thank all those who helped on the committee as well as others who have offered their input about our Sunday school program.

With Barbara stepping down from staff, the next step is to begin looking for a part time priest to assist me in ministry with our parish family. The vestry finance committee is crunching numbers to see what kind of part time package we can offer. That will determine how many hours we might be able to provide. I have already made our diocesan office aware of where we are in the process and that we will be looking for a part time ordained person to join our staff.

Finding a good part time clergy person can be challenging, as there are not many available. Our vestry's longer-range goal is to be able to hire a full time clergy person. That would open up a much wider window of candidates of all ages.

I believe very strongly that God is calling all of us at SJTL toward new and exciting directions. A direction toward growth, exciting and new programs for all ages as well as leading us in continuing to carry out the gospel of Jesus Christ into our community and beyond. Along with your generous hearts I have no doubt God will surprise, delight and bless us richly with his Holy Spirit in the days ahead!

Ed



A Special Blessing

On Sunday, April 20th, I was asked by some of you for a copy of the “blessing” that was the conclusion of my sermon. It was used at A Service of Resurrection for The Right Reverend Frank Vest who died on April 5, 2008. It is copied from the service bulletin. *Barbara Blakemore*

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, hard hearts,
half-truths, and superficial relationships.

May God bless you so that you may live
from deep within your heart where God's Spirit dwells.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression,
and exploitation of people.

May God bless you so that you may work
for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain,
rejection, starvation and war.

May God bless you so that you may reach out your hand
to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in this world,
in your neighborhood, so that you will courageously try
what you don't think you can do,
but in Jesus Christ you'll have all the strength necessary. *Amen.*

CHRISTIAN FORMATION NOTES FOR MAY

It's hard to believe that we are fast approaching the end of the Spring Sunday School Term. Classes for all ages begin immediately following the 10 o'clock service

May 4- The Seventh Sunday of Easter- The Senior High Youth Service at 10:00

Adults – To be determined.

Children's Classes will hear about Jesus' Prayer for his friends, John 17:1-11 and explore how we can pray for others.

May 11- The Day of Pentecost! Wear Red and celebrate the promised gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. Acts 2: 1-21

Adults- Mother's Day – No Adult Ed.

Children and Youth-Will hear the story of this day we also recognize as the Birthday of the Church.

May 18- Trinity Sunday- The last day of regular classes until Fall-Jesus gives The Great Commission, Matthew 28:16-20, that his followers in every age are to make new disciples.

Adults-Environment and Faith. Speaker: Pat Watkins.

Children and Youth – Hear Jesus commission to spread the Good News and his promise that he will be with us always.

May 25- Pentecost 2-Memorial Day Weekend-Regular services but no Sunday School.

June 1 - Pentecost 3-The 10 o'clock service on this day will be a service of thanksgiving for the ministry of Christian Formation and will give special recognition to all classes and those who have been leaders and teachers. A Parish Picnic will follow immediately after the service.

COLLEGE MINISTRY

Six years ago, St. James the Less received a generous "Mustard Seed" grant **from** the Diocese which enabled us to fund a staff position for College Ministry. The Rev. Hilary Smith was hired to fill this position. When Hilary was called to her own parish, Carol Sutton-Abaire very enthusiastically took on the ministry. Carol expanded on Hilary's excellent groundwork. She has created and developed an invaluable ministry, not only for St. James the Less college students, but also for the students who attend Randolph-Macon College. We have been very fortunate to have received the grant. We have been even more fortunate to have had the time, talent and energy Carol has been so willing to provide.

Regretfully, the grant was not intended to be a source of continuing support for this position. Because **it** is an important outreach for the church, we **hope this mission** can be perpetuated by the efforts of volunteers committed to college ministry. Carol has very generously offered to train those who are called to serve.

If you feel you can help in any way, please contact Sylvia Spagna (752-6513), Lou Flanagan (798-3246) or Susan Hubbard (798-7927), who serve on the Ministry Commission of the vestry.

We are extremely grateful to Carol and ask for your prayers and support as we continue in this ministry.

College News

Congratulations to our wonderful students graduating this month!



May 3

Alex Gillette, BA in Recording Industry, Middle Tennessee State University

Tim Holt, Master, James Madison University

Emily Kay, BS in Business Administration with concentration in Marketing,
Ferrum College

Elizabeth Williams, BA in Marketing and Management, Radford University

May 9

Miranda Longaker, BA in Music, University of Colorado at Boulder

May 11

Anne Sprinkel, Sociology, William and Mary

May 17

Whitney Shank, Virginia Commonwealth University

J.D. Skelton, Virginia Commonwealth University

May 18

Whitney Ham, Psychology and History, University of Virginia

May 23

Scott Feeley, BS in Mechanical Engineering, U.S. Naval Academy

May 31

Randolph-Macon College

In other news, plans are being made for some of our current college students to meet with next year's college freshmen this month to share some tricks of the trade of being college students. Our current students can offer

prospective students insights on important things like the roommate game, where to get the cheapest textbooks, and where to find the best neighborhood pizza place!

Care Packages were mailed out to our SJTL students in mid-April – in time for exams! See the sample Beach Party package in the Library.

We'll be packing R-MC Care Packages here at the church on Saturday, May 10, at 10:00 am. All help is welcomed!

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP

Don't miss the opportunity to worship with the teenagers at the senior high service at 10am on May 4th. Please join us as we celebrate the youth of the parish.

The graduating seniors include: *Tahira Abaire, **Devon Ericksen, Emily Green, *Hunter Fines, *Olivia Hoar, **Chandler Hubbard, Sacha Kinser, Katy Pierce, Parke Pleasants, *Clair Purmasir, *Billy Rison, *Erik Rison, Andrew Tarbox, and *Blake Wehman.



- * Acolytes
- ** Eucharistic Ministers/Acolytes

There are eleven teens scheduled to go to the summer work camp in Petersburg July 20th – 26th. We MUST have one female and one male adult to chaperone for the week; we have neither at this point. If you would consider this ministry or you know a young adult who might be interested, please call Jane Jones at 798-6919 or e-mail at janejhones@comcast.net.

\$\$\$ FOR DARFUR

Nearly \$25.00 was raised by the Senior High Christian Ed class during Lent which was sent to Darfur through the Relief and Development program of the National Church. At 25 cents per pair of shoes in their closets, there were clearly a lot shoes there. That was a good effort, y'all.

St. Cecelia's Choir

"The St. Cecelia Choir is a go for revival! The St. Cecelia Choir is open to all rising 2nd through 5th graders. We will be recruiting through the spring and summer and hope to debut in the fall. For more information, please contact Dan and Danah Massey at masseycrew@comcast.net or 550-7420. Please help spread the word!"

Yeah for the newly resurrected St. Cecelia's Choir! Dan and Danah Massey, along with loving and supportive friends and family, gently guided this precious choir for their premiere on Easter Sunday. Let us celebrate and encourage their joyful noise! Thank you, Dan and Danah! We can't wait to "hear" from you again!
--Ministry Committee, Susan Hubbard, Chair (798-7927)



MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH UPDATE

The weekend of 4/11 – 4/13 we took our group to Shrine Mont for a retreat. It was a wonderful time, especially after making it through a terrible rain just past Mt. Jackson back to Shrine Mont. Saturday we couldn't have special ordered a better day for our planned activities. These activities included a trust walk (trail found by Philip Morison), photographic scavenger hunt (do you know where to find the bathtub graveyard?), a face-to-face getting to know you, miles and miles of running, walking and playing. We spent time with Mary Moomaw and helped her with some yard work; yes these kids were raking and filled the entire back of a pick up truck with leaves and limbs. Feel free to chat with any of the kids about the experience. We will post some weekend pictures on the bulletin board soon.

Just a reminder to bring the newspapers for our on-going recycling project.

Thanks to all the parents for their continued support of the youth group. If anyone has questions about the group, feel free to contact any of the advisors.

PK Kinser Vicki Morison Steve Pace Christin May

IS THIS MINISTRY FOR YOU?

St. James the Less in Ashland, a parish of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, is seeking a Christian Educator to coordinate and strengthen parish ministries with children. This is a part time staff position averaging 10 hours per week (approximately four hours of which would be on Sunday mornings). Candidates should be familiar with Episcopal worship and theology and have creativity, organizational and people skills, and energy, experience and enthusiasm for the ministry of Christian Formation. For a job description, compensation and details contact The Reverend Ed Tracy at 804-798-6336 or e-mail etracy.sjtl@comcast.net.



Lost and Found

There are several items in our "Lost and Found" basket, located on the credenza opposite the office. Please check to see if any of these items is yours. We also have a ring locked in the office. If you think that it may be yours, please contact Sylvia Spagna at 798-6336.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ECW: The Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese will hold their Open Board meeting here on Tuesday, May 20 from 9:30am-2:00pm. Registration begins at 8:30. Please **READ** the information posted on the bulletin board and **VOLUNTEER** to help.

Thank you for the gift of your old cell phones. Our ECW has delivered close to 300 of them to Safe Place. The phones were deprogrammed, reprogrammed for making 911 calls and distributed where needed. Please continue to donate. They may be placed in the box located in the hallway near Brydon Hall.

--Lula Hopkins (798-5401)

Don't forget to mark your calendars. **OUTREACH DINNERS** will be held here on the last Sundays of June, August, October and December. Remember also that we provide non-perishable food and toilet articles (these cannot be purchased with food stamps) for ACES and Peter-Paul Development Center-Church Hill. These are collected on **FOOD OFFERING SUNDAY, the first Sunday of every month.** Many thanks to all who so generously contribute!

Adventurers: Will venture forth on Thursday, May 15, to Roslyn Episcopal Conference Center in Richmond, VA. Kass Lawrence, Roslyn's Director, will lead a workshop in computer scanning and printing which will

include reduction and enlargement of images. There will also be ample time to tour Roslyn's beautiful grounds...at our own pace.

We'll all meet at 10:45 a.m. in the SJTL parking lot. Ron Pettitt will drive the church van for those who prefer not to drive. Lunch will be available at Roslyn for \$13.50 per person and is served at 12:30 p.m. The computer imagery workshop will begin at 2:00 p.m. I, for one, am very excited about this day. Let's get out of Dodge and have some fun! Feel free to call me with any questions.

--Katherine Tinker (798-5978)

Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church is offering a Summer Outreach Program for children in the Ashland area in need of this ministry. This program needs the gifts of many, as we will be providing meals, activities, field trips and mostly, compassion and love to each of the students that will attend. Please prayerfully consider how your church or you as an individual can share your gifts and talents to become a part of this exciting ministry this summer. The program will be offered from June 23 through July 10th. Please plan to attend our April 16th meeting, which will be held at Duncan Memorial United Methodist Church at 4pm. For more information, please contact Sandra Stanley at 798-7224, or Tonya Sikkar at 365-7292.

CARITAS CONFUSION

The CARITAS homeless program IS coming to St. James the Less in May. Originally, it was scheduled to be at St. Ann's for two weeks, one of which, St. James the Less would be hosting. But that has changed. It seems there was a schedule mixup at St. Ann's, and they are unable to house the guests the week of May 31-June 7. So the guests will be living here in Brydon Hall, and then move on to St. Ann's on the 7th of June. The meals, overnight, breakfasts, and lunches scheduling won't change, so there will be many churches covering that part of the program while it is at St. James the Less.

Really the only issue for us is that Brydon Hall will be off-limits to the parish for the week of May 31-June 7.

If you have any questions please contact:

Don Bruce 798-0922, Sandi Shirey 798-6926, or Sylvia Spagna 752-6513.



May 2008

Last month in this space I started sharing with you some thoughts from our clinic volunteers. I would like to continue that exploration this month by hearing from folks who work at the front desk. These volunteers are "The keepers of the gate". They set the tone and the environment that receives each patient and the feeling with which each leaves the building.

Susan Chambers:

I am grateful for the opportunity to greet new patients, welcoming them and calming their concerns, establishing lasting friendships with patients who come often, sympathizing with persons in pain, and rejoicing with those who regain their smile, or their health. Their laughter and their hugs are my reward.

Mary Anne Harris:

Working at the front desk on my first night at the clinic was an eye opener. When I saw the smiles on their faces and how grateful they were, made me feel humble with God's love in my heart.

It has impacted my life to know that I can be a part of this wonderful outreach in the community. A particular moment that stands out for me was when I took a patient home and when she got into the car she said: "I truly feel the love of God in your clinic (she shared that she had never felt like this before) and God Bless Everyone".

Jenny Bruce:

Working at the front desk of the free clinic has touched me over and over again. Our official role is to prepare patients' folders for the medical professionals, but what we place particular emphasis on is to try to warmly greet every patient as they sign in. Patients are often surprised when we greet them by name, ask how they've been, inquire about their families, or otherwise remember and recognize them as friends.

We try to create a "happy place" in the waiting room, where we begin each clinic night gathering in a large circle, holding hands and praying. There are magazines to read, toys and books for the children, but most of all, there is laughter in the waiting room. Dr. Hubbard sometimes asks me what we were doing out there; when his dental patients got to the treatment room they were laughing and having such a good time.

One patient told us that she loves coming to the clinic because we don't treat her like she's poor. The thing that I think about often is that I thought I could be of some help to people in need, but what happens night after night is that our patients give to me.

One lady told me that she had been praying for months for help to restore her teeth. She heard about the Free Clinic and decided to come. She told us that the clinic was a "gift from the good Lord" for people who couldn't afford to pay. Another man told us that now that he had a new smile, he could apply for a job without feeling ashamed.

Patients, many of them younger than 40, often arrive looking sad and worn. When they get their new dentures, their smiles transform them! We call the night they receive their dentures "graduation night"; Susan Hubbard often takes pictures, sometimes with the dental professionals, and sometimes with others of us who volunteer. I never fail to cry. When I realize that a few hundred dollars can change a life, I am overwhelmed.

I'm so proud of St. James the Less for sponsoring the clinic. Personally, it is one of the greatest things I have ever helped to accomplish.

If you are interested in making an ongoing pledge to the clinic or have any questions about making a donation, you can call our Board president, Lee Chambers at 798-6647 or send us a note with your intention. Checks can be placed in the collection plate payable to "Saint James the Less Free Clinic" or mailed to us at "Saint James the Less Free Clinic, PO Box 117, Ashland, VA 23005". Thank you.

If you would like to call the clinic for an appointment, a question, or to determine eligibility for services, please call 798-8890 to leave a message and we will call you back.

-- Julie Ericksen