

The Messenger

A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR + + + + + + + + The Reverend Pathiann Bennett

I found a small black notebook recently under a stack of papers that I had placed in a beautiful old basket known as the ‘to be dealt with later’ corner. Opening at random I read a note my daughter wrote dated 1/1/98 ‘It’s a New Year and we back to school!’...Turning the next pages brought me to other notes telling what was happening all those years ago at St. Michael. The wish lists had already begun. Paint doors cardinal red, new roof, gutters, wash wood upstairs, cross on church, French drain, chimney down, repair rot behind, plumb kitchen, paint downstairs, ramp to basement, new door downstairs, remove oil furnace, new propane furnace, build room around, sand floor, paint upstairs, small chalkboard, vestment closet, storage shed, stained glass windows.

Another turn of pages shows a little later list: new altar rail, bell, soup kitchen, prayer chain, garden, phone, sound system, new keyboard, discretionary fund, wheelchair access, rail down sidewalk, screen door, historical register, redo kneelers, fire escape, prayer shawl ministry.

Another note says: bring small nails & hammer to fix pews, kneelers and book-racks. There is no list for move altar out, pew cushions, railing at top of steps, new sign, memorial trees, new siding, new kitchen or 100 year celebration & booklet. A recent list shows new stairs, St. Michael cookbook, stained glass booklet, pension fund, newsletter, Christmas bazaar, garage sales, Free Soup Café & Wood Bank. We’ve been busy.

Almost all of these wishes and more have been accomplished by now and St. Michael & All Angels has become the most beautiful sacred space with the most wondrous outreaches in this community. We take seriously Jesus’ word, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” Mt 24:40 The opening acclamation Sunday mornings, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord,” become holy words of wisdom and welcome as the sun pours in through the stained glass windows onto each one there. All the projects we’ve devoted ourselves to over the past 20 years have helped form St. Michael & All Angels into the beautiful, safe, inclusive and vital church it has become and will continue to be for many years in the future.

A note in that small black notebook dated 2/24/01 says, “I hope a day will come when there are more people yearning to worship in this church Lord.” Since that day, many more people have yearned and have come to worship, to be fed Holy Food, have come to pray and serve and love. Many more people have come to comfort, to be comforted, to share what they have, to make music, make prayer shawls, give firewood, sit by the dying, include and welcome the stranger.

The Episcopal Church Welcomes You. Come and See.

A View from the Pew – Editorial

Sometimes Rev. Pattiann rings a bell to get the congregation to return to our pews. I call passing-the-peace “half-time!” We greet each other, hug, meet new people... and visit.

This leads me to tell you about our Christmas Eve visit to a large church in downtown Portland, Oregon. We chose Grace Memorial Episcopal Church (*A parish for all people in the heart of the city.*) from the menu of 12-15 Episcopal Churches because its write-up hit several notes for me: 1) We hold that discrimination is incompatible with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; 2) Our community finds joy in the beauty of traditional worship but we are also pretty relaxed: you’ll see as many T-shirts as neckties; and 3) Grace takes the Bible seriously but not literally. Plus they do outreach to the homeless and have a children’s art academy. I knew we’d feel at home here. The Christmas Eve service started at 9:30 with choral and bells, the mass included incense. Well, we were an hour early (allowed for traffic) so we got to enjoy the chorus practicing and were welcomed by a homeless woman. The service was beautiful with LOTS of incense!!! But when it came time for passing the peace, no one left their pew; greetings were only with those in the pews in front or behind. What fun is that?!

Seasons of the Church Year

The Episcopal Church observes the seasonal telling of our foundational narrative of God working through Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. These seasons and their meanings are an important rhythm of our spiritual life and are one of the many reasons that a complete representation of the Faith requires regular attendance all year around. The thousands of years old observance of the church seasons celebrates God’s participation with us in time and immerses us again and again in our stories of faith that we might move faithfully with God into the future. The church year is anchored in time on the days of Christmas and of Easter each year, and begins with Advent. This quarter has two seasons: **Epiphany** and **Lent**.

Epiphany - The third season of the church year is Epiphany. The word means *making God manifest*. This season begins on the **Day of the Epiphany** and lasts until Ash Wednesday at the beginning of Lent. The number of weeks depends on the date of Easter Day, which is a function of the date of the spring equinox. The Epiphany season is seen as a continuation of the Christmas season, and together they last 40 days. The three main events focused on during the Epiphany season are the visit of the Magi, the baptism of Jesus, and Jesus’ miracle at the marriage at Cana. One of the oldest Christian feasts, all of the various events celebrated by the Feast of Epiphany are revelations of Christ to man. The liturgical color is generally green, representing the green things of God’s earth and in response to His coming at Christmas tide.

Lent – Things did not go well for Jesus as he began to teach. People began to feel threatened. He challenged their ways of thinking and doing and they killed him on a cross. This is a reality in our world. We, too suffer and die. The marvel of the Faith is that God makes that journey with us as well. Our seasonal observance of this reality is called Lent. It begins with the ashes of **Ash Wednesday** at the dark end of winter. (The word *Lent* means, literally, *springtime*.) Lent is 40 days long (not counting Sundays, which are always feast days) reflecting the 40 days of rain for Noah, the 40 years of school of the people, Israel, in the Exodus, and the 40 days of testing of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism in the Jordan River. Liturgies during Lent are subdued, introspective, and penitential in nature. The *Gloria in excelsis Deo* is omitted on the Sundays of Lent as is the *Alleluia*. The color used is deep purple, signifying penitence and the mood of Lent.

Op Ed – Jenny Bartlett

The Advent Quiet Day

In the spirit of the Season of Advent, as we awaited and anticipated the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Christ Church Episcopal in Kalispell hosted an Advent Quiet Day on Saturday, December 8, led by our very own Rev. Pattiann. Nine of us from the Eureka area made the trip over. We were joined by parishioners from Holy Trinity in Troy, as well as members of Christ Church, and visitors from Big Fork and the surrounding area. Rev. Pattiann's theme for the day was "Stepping through Advent – the Way of the Star."

The purpose of the Advent Quiet Day was to slow down in the midst of what is so often a busy, hectic, and even overwhelming time of year. It was a time to quiet our racing minds and put ourselves in a contemplative mode, where we could be still and take in the Holy Presence. The day was divided into three meditations: Presence, Mary and Ponder. Each meditation was followed by a quiet time, where we could read, pray, ponder in silence, or walk the outdoor labyrinth in the courtyard of the church.

In the first meditation, we considered Presence. Following a brief introduction, Rev. Pattiann invited us to slow down, breathe deeply and welcome the few hours of quiet we had come to experience. She talked to us about spiritual practices that could help us stay sane in what can be such a stressful time. She shared that "The Good News is that an intentional, devotional Advent can help us step through it in calm, beauty and sacredness." The goal was to be present in the moment, to experience mindfulness to "be still and know."

The topic of our second meditation was Mary. Rev. Pattiann shared a beautiful description of the garden at her home that was so detailed you felt like you were talking through it alongside her. She introduced us to the four-foot tall guardian angel of her garden and to the gatekeeper of her garden, a statue of the Blessed Mother Mary holding the Christ child. Our Lady of Guadalupe was given particular attention during this meditation. And Rev. Pattiann ended our meditation on Mary with the following: "Mary, Morning Star, as we find quiet from the daily strife of life today, help us to remember that you too found quiet to ponder things in your heart. Amen"

Following the second meditation and quiet time we enjoyed a delicious soup lunch downstairs provided by the Christ Church worship committee. The soups were accompanied by Panera bread and some of the niftiest little desserts!

Our third meditation invited us to Ponder. Rev. Pattiann encouraged us to give ourselves permission "to be quiet, do less, think deeply, calm down or take on something new that will feed us spiritually." She reminded us that Jesus himself took time to be alone and to pray. And we know the familiar words from Luke 2:19: "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." Rev. Pattiann shared lovely descriptions of the collection of Mary statues and icons which adorn her home, each and every one of them quietly pondering.

We closed our time together with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist and departed Christ Church Episcopal in Peace. Thank you, Rev. Pattiann and Christ Church Episcopal for a much-needed and welcome respite in this otherwise hectic season.

Editor's note: The purpose of this column is to invite our readers to participate, share, or bring something to our attention. Although letters or articles can be political, they should not be about politics. Send submissions to Sharon or Rev. Pattiann.

A Look Back...or Around

We all comment on the beautiful stained glass windows that grace our church. But there are other works of art that you may have wondered about, for example the banners or the pictures? Personally, I am fascinated by the Russian icon of St. Michael. A Russian icon in a small Anglican church in Northwest Montana is puzzling. So I decided to ask.

Carol Gibbons says the icon was purchased by John Gibbons, her husband Joe's brother. During his travels, John saw and purchased the icon of St. Michael and donated it to his hometown church.

What is an icon? According to Henri J.M. Nouwen in his book The Road to Daybreak, "Icons are not just pious pictures to decorate churches and houses. They are images of Christ and the saints which bring us into contact with the sacred, windows that give us a glimpse of the transcendent. They need to be approached in veneration and with prayer. Only then will they reveal to us the mystery they represent. Iconography has come to the West mainly from the Orthodox tradition, especially from Russia and Greece. Since the Russian Revolution of 1917, many Orthodox Christians have fled to the West, and through them the holy art of iconography has gradually become more known and appreciated in the Latin Church. Icons are certainly one of the most beautiful gifts of the Orthodox Church to the churches of the West."

This column is designed to answer some of our questions. Let us help answer those questions – or better yet, you do the research and we'll print it. . Rev. Pattiann will be writing one about the vestments. Are all Episcopal Church doors red?

Vestry Views

The Role of a Vestry Member:

Vestry Members:
Sr. Warden: **Doug Merrill**
Jr. Warden: **Bruce Bennett**
Clerk: **Claudia Evans**
Treasurer: **JoAn Cuffe**
Julia Pruett
Beth Sanderson

The vestry of an Episcopal church has three primary responsibilities. The first two are managerial: to take care of the parish finances and parish buildings. The third responsibility is to choose individuals to fill various positions of leadership and representation: the election of a rector, the choice of delegates to the diocesan convention, and the selection of other individuals as the diocesan canons and parish bylaws may stipulate. All these responsibilities are defined by the laws of the church that are called "canons."

St. Michael's Book Corner

Man Does Not Live by Bread Alone Food for Thought
An honor system "take & return" book library.

As a starter: Please meet Henri J.M. Nouwen, a contemporary Trappist monk who died in 1996. He was a prodigious spiritual writer whose words were simple and humble. Among his many books, the little booklet "Out of Solitude" can be read and re-read. It centers me and brings me back to what is real and honest and true. May you find that quiet place and time also. Peace! – *Jeanne Jankovsky*

State of the Diocese - The biggest thing in the Diocese of Montana at this time is the continuing search for X Bishop; a search that started in July 2018 with Ordination scheduled for December 2019. For updates on the Bishop Search, go to the Dioceses of Montana Newsletter (www.diomontana.com). We will print information on the status of the search in each issue.

What's Happening?

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Oh Happy Day! Until I moved to Eureka, Montana I did not know there was another meaning for “The Happy Hookers” ---- Very soon the words also meant the Prayer Shawl Ministry. A service performed weekly by women of St. Michael & All Angels and women of other denominations. The gift of crocheting and knitting produce these amazing colorful prayer shawls and are given to those who are in need; the sick, the dying, men and women serving our country, and others who may need hope and know they are loved. I consider myself to be very fortunate and blessed to have been included in this ministry and honor the commitment of love, and giving to others in need. Please join us – a healing and compassionate commitment. –*JoAnn Bristol*

Wood Bank

St. Michael & All Angels Wood Bank Ministry began in 2011 by providing supplemental fire wood to low income veterans, the disabled, seniors and families.

Our first work day this year was October 27 and continued each Saturday of November. Sixty people arrived in five short days and completely took care of two truckloads of logs; sawing, splitting, stacking and delivering. Chrysalis School has been involved from the beginning and are the best stackers. Mama figures arrive those days with soup and the fixing, chili, cookies, coffee, hot chocolate, bowls, cups and utensils. Men bring saws and hydraulic splitters and human splitters work like machines, including a 23-year old. The energy is that of a bee hive or an ant hill, each worker focused on a chosen job. The sound is deafening. Young ones who need to do community service find pride in a job well done and new friends in older people.

January 21 (Martin Luther King Day) brought Joel Graves and his crew of teachers together for the third year on behalf of the Wood Bank. River Country Wood Products gave us permission to work the wood on site. Ten truck loads were cut, stacked and delivered that day in 2 ½ hours. This brings the count to 75 loads so far this year. (Last year, there were 150 loads delivered; a harder winter indeed. – Editor)

Work days are the most amazing examples of community working together. Strangers to each other just wanting to help in some way. We thank Tobacco Valley News for their gifts of full page ads for weeks in a row. We thank contributors who donate money to purchase logs, fuel and chain saw needs. We thank the Flanagan family for allowing us to work the wood and bank it on their land. We thank Ben Pluid for delivering the logs and Joe Flanagan for providing it. We thank the hundreds of volunteers who have participated over the years and made this ministry happen. It does take a village! A best part of this ministry is getting to know the folks we give wood to. The best part of all is sharing what we have. – Rev. Pattiann

Soup Café

All Angels Free Soup Café began as an Advent discipline in December 2016. It's hard to remember the poor condition of downstairs when you work in the bright and beautifully organized space now. Hickory cabinets replaced an old metal cart and ancient broken cupboards and new wiring is safer. The walls are painted a fresh bright cheery yellow. Kitchen tables and chairs with clean cotton tablecloths and red and white checkered curtains make a Café.

Happy salt and pepper shakers, plates of cut butter, the smells: fresh hot bread and delicious soups welcome hungry people off the street, some who bring their own beautiful bowls to carry back. Soup makers and bread bakers sign up to feed the masses. Volunteers shovel the sidewalk, put out the signs, turn on the lights and heat, ladle soup into paper bowls and add slices of bread. Someone washes dishes, makes more coffee, takes empty bowls away, give hugs and invites back. (Café has been averaging 25people each week. – Editor)

The first customers to arrive are usually the family with six hungry children. They line up in front of the stove, smallest to tallest and choose the soup they like best. Their father always prays with them before they eat. They come back for seconds and homemade chocolate chip cookies are their reward. The Free Soup Café is here to feed the hungry. That's all. If it was only this family who came, it would be enough. – Rev. Pattiann

St. Michael & All Angels Intercessory Prayers

Abram, Bonnie & Hubert, Bryan, Carol, Daisy Bird, Dee & Sam, Don & Linda, Donna, The Gwynn Family, Heather, Joanne, John & Sharon, Judith, Kathy, Leeann, Luke, Mary Lou, Marilyn, Megan & Sophia, Michael, Misha, Myrtle, Tom, Rosemary, Steve, Ted & Jan, Tom & Sandy

Service/Training Opportunities

Service

“And now, Father, send us out to do the work You have given us to do, to love and serve You as faithful witnesses of Christ our Lord.”

Annual Events – Volunteer to Chair the Spring (June) Rummage Sale or the Christmas Bazaar.

Clerical-type Service:

- ~Consolidate/update the Memorial Book and get brass plaques for windows, memorials;
- ~Set up and maintain Church Directory;
- ~Update Photo album with notations about events;
- ~Write or help with *The Messenger*.

Other: Clean Church, Shovel Snow, Make Soup

How to volunteer? Contact Rev. Pattiann or members of newsletter staff.

Training

Contact Rev. Pattiann for more information on any of the following and for dates of training:

Altar Guild

Lay Eucharistic Minister

Chalice Bearer

Morning Prayer Leaders

Purpose Statement

The purpose of “The Messenger” is to be in contact with

all the members and friends of St. Michael & All Angels, near and far. That they may be involved and informed

about the ministry, services, activities and opportunities.

Staff

Sharon LaBonty – Editor
Rev. Pattiann Bennett
Jenny Bartlett Leeann Nemeč
Claudia Evans Jeanne Jankovsky
JoAnn Bristol Dee Nance

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets every Wednesday, following lunch at the Soup Café, between Advent and Easter. The rest of the year, the Hookers usually change to a different day and bring sack lunches.

ALL ARE WELCOME! Don't know how to crochet or knit? We love to teach!

The Messenger Deadline

The deadline for the 2nd Quarter issue of *The Messenger* is March 15th. Please send any news or happenings at St. Michaels or an Op Ed to Sharon or hand it to her at church. E-mail: sharonlabonty@gmail.com

Birthdays / Anniversaries

St. Michael & All Angels is updating our directory. The first step to develop a directory is to gather information. To take that first step, we need your assistance. Enclosed in this newsletter is a postcard. Please take a minute to complete the information on the card and drop it in the offertory plate next time you come to church. Or put a stamp on it and drop in the mail.

Deadline: March 1st

Thank You

*To Doug Merrill and Jim Pettit for all the work you are doing on the stairs.

*To Art Walters and JoAnn Bristol for painting the basement a lovely shade of yellow.

*To Barbi Fonger for helping weekly with the Soup Café.

*To the “potato man” who always makes sure there’s enough potatoes at the Food Pantry.

*To those who do things without being asked, without asking for anything in return, and who do those things without being noticed.

For Sale

THOSE EPISKOPOLS by Dennis R. Maynard - \$12.00

St. Michael & All Angels COOKBOOK - \$15.00

St. Michael Note Cards – packet of 6 \$5.00

Interviews

Beginning with the next issue there will be space designated for interviews of members of our congregation – old and new. *The Messenger* staff is asking for volunteers to help with the interviewing process. If this is something that you would like to do, please talk with JoAnn Bristol or Sharon LaBonty (406/263-9208).

Holy Relics

An example of “sacred in the ordinary”: stairs. The wood removed from the steps to the basement has been made into crosses by John LaBonty. The crosses are 12”x 6” and have the original finish – 102 years of thousands of footsteps. If you would like a cross, pick up one at church or contact John at 406/230-0592.

HAPPY HOOKERS

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal

P.O. Box 342

Eureka, MT 59917

Dates to Remember

January 27 – Annual Meeting & Pot Luck

February 12 –Soup Dinner* hosted by St. Michael and the Food Pantry

February 24 – Pot Luck

March 1 – Directory cards due

March 3 – Last Sunday of Epiphany

March 6 – Ash Wednesday (begins Lent)
Service 1:00 pm after Café (Fast day)

April 14 – Palm Sunday (Holy Week begins)

April 21 - Easter

*St. Michael & All Angels hosted the first Soup Night at the Senior Citizens. In March 2010, there were 35 people who attended. In the eight years since, this weekly fellowship has grown to an average of 120-140 attendees and is sponsored by churches, businesses and families on a rotating basis. And it isn't always soup.

Ongoing

Soup Café - Wednesdays from 11:00 to 1:00 through Lent. (Volunteer to make soup or bread)
Pot Luck – 4th Sunday of each month

Upcoming

Ladies! Mark your calendars! The annual Camp Marshall Women's Spring Quilting Retreat is scheduled for April 25-28. The focus of the weekend is creating gifts of love and warmth for the children who attend Grace Camp sessions during the summer. Grace Camp children have at least one incarcerated parent. They get to choose a quilt to have during their stay and to take home. The Women's Spring Quilting Retreat is an opportunity to enjoy fellowship with ladies from around the state, wonderful food, prayer and Retreat! Our time together ends Sunday morning with Holy Eucharist and the blessing for the quilts. You need not be a quilter to attend. On-the-job training is always available. For more information, ask Claudia or Jenny for details.

