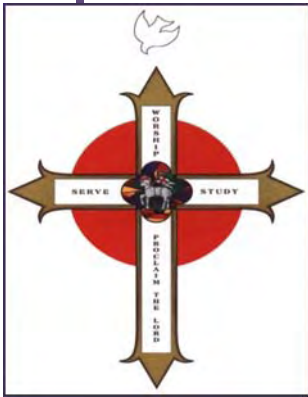


Cross Ties

January 2010



*Walking in the Way of the Cross
United and Empowered by the Holy Spirit*



From Father Craig Lister

As the New Year begins the Episcopal Church is facing new challenges to its continued membership in the worldwide Anglican Communion. Last month the Diocese of Los Angeles elected Canon Mary Glasspool to serve as one of its suffragan bishops. Canon Glasspool is a partnered lesbian, and open about her sexuality. At about the same time, the Bishop of Massachusetts, Thomas Shaw, announced that he was now permitting his clergy to perform same-sex weddings in his diocese. As many of you know, after the consecration of Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire, the Windsor Report, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Primates of the Communion specifically asked the Episcopal Church to not consecrate any more gay bishops, and refrain from same-sex blessings (let alone marriages). It is clear that this request is being ignored by a majority of our bishops.

When a person is elected to be a bishop, he or she does not immediately become one. There is a process of consent, which must take place. Every diocesan bishop (in our diocese (Bishop Curry, not Bishops Gregg and Marble) must either give or deny consent to the election. Also, the Standing Committee of each diocese (sort of the vestry of the diocese) must either give or deny consent. The elected person must receive a majority of the Bishops' consents as well as a majority from the Standing Committees. This mechanism is designed with the idea that every bishop is a bishop of the whole church and thereby be a symbol of unity for it. Given all the turmoil we have experienced over the past 6 years, all the losses we have suffered, and

all the lawsuits that have been filed, I cannot see how Canon Glasspool, for all the qualities she may possess, can be that symbol of unity.

Accordingly, I have written to Bishop Curry and urged him to withhold consent to this election. I have no idea what effect that letter will have, but I did not feel I could remain silent. The last 6 years have been a disaster for the Episcopal Church in terms of our numbers, our finances, and our common life together. People on both sides of the issue acknowledge that, though they disagree on what to do about it. That leads me to my final point.



It is impossible that a group of people the size of our parish can all be of one mind on these difficult issues we face. I understand, accept, and respect that.

There are times, like this one, where I feel compelled to respond to something that has occurred, and this article is a good way to do that. You may not agree with what has been written, but I hope you know me well enough now to know that I will continue to respect you, love you, and serve you as your priest. As I said in a previous article, this is not a time for further splintering; it is a time for us all to re-dedicate ourselves to each other in love. We cannot wish away the problems the church is facing, nor can we allow their presence to divide us and ruin the precious gift each of us has been given in being a part of St. Thomas' Parish church. God bless you all!

Father Craig Lister

Women of the Church Fall Fair

The WOC Fall Food Fair was a great success with approximately 3700.00 received in donations and purchased goods. We want to thank the Fair committee co-chaired by Barbara Yuskevich and Pat Clarke and their team for all their long hours of work and we especially thank the "pie ladies" who showed up each week to make pies, soups etc. We wish a big thank you to the cooks in our congregation for their contributions of wonderful cakes, pies, and cookies etc. to fill our tables with delicious goodies.

We're also thankful for Fr. Craig for checking by each day we worked keeping our spirits lifted with care and laughter (our official food taster). Everyone by their contributions of time, talent and treasure made our Fair a true success. Thank you all.

Mari Hann WOC



New Class!

Spring Bible Study: Getting to Know Jesus through the Gospel According to Matthew

This is a thirteen week study of the Gospel According to Matthew. Learn about Jesus as the Teacher, the King, and the Son of Man who gave His life for us all. Your Bible will be the only manual for this class. We will meet on Thursday mornings from 10:30 to 12 Noon beginning January 14. Barring any inclement weather, we will conclude on April 15, 2010. There will be a sign up sheet in the Lower Parish Hall.

Peggy Nelson

A Word from Happy Hank

A friend of mine recently went on a missionary trip to Peru. The group visited an area of Peru that was desperately poor. My friend told me about a woman he met there. She teaches computers in a college and only earns \$300 a month. Her home has no indoor plumbing. Yet, her hospitality was embarrassingly generous to the visiting "gringos" as she and her husband shared freely and happily what little they had. And they are part of the population the missionaries are hoping to win to Christ! What a model for Christians who have been given so much - both spiritually and materially! Jesus IS the reason for the season, and the reason for us to give freely and happily to others all year round. Happy New Year to all!

Happy Hank



Women of the Church Minutes

The December meeting of Women of the Church was held at 11 a.m. on December 7. WOC members plus guests enjoyed the program of the day, the traditional choral concert by children from J. Glenn Edwards School. President Mari Hann introduced their director, Dr. Daniel Hester. The attentive and well behaved choral group sang both sacred and secular songs.

The concert concluded with Dr. Hester's "gift" of two organ selections: J.S. Bach's *Wachet Auf* and a magnificent arrangement of the grand old camp song, *Amazing Grace*.

Prior to the concert Jo Ann Bowman explained to the children the season of Advent and the meaning of the blue hangings and the Advent wreath. Questions were encouraged, and the boys and girls became especially excited when the Advent wreath was lit.

Following the concert Treasurer presented a check for \$100 to Dr. Hester, to be used to purchase music. (Dr. Hester announced one of the musical selections of the day as having been purchased from money received from the Women of the Church in 2008.)

Following a dismissal prayer by President Hann, the children were treated to "goody bags" prepared by members of the WOC.

The January meeting is a scheduled visit to the Boys and Girls Club.



J. Glenn Edwards Children's Choir

"Cross Ties"

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Office Hours

Tuesday –Friday
9:00 am – 1:00 pm

The Parish Staff

The Rev Craig Lister
Rector
Pam Kerley, *Director Of Children's Ministries*
Dr. Jo Ann Bowman, *Choir Director*
Sophie Johnson, *Organist*
Kathy Stancar, *Secretary*
Marcie Warren, *Nursery Care*

Lay Leaders

Bob Nelson, *Treasurer*
Tom Reese
Asst. Treasurer
Mari Hann,
Women of the Church
Mary Lee Dutton
Parish Life Committee Chair
Pat Kirkman
Outreach Committee Chair

The Parish Vestry

Serving through 2010

Seth Cox
Bob Nelson
Mike Griffin

Serving through 2011

Oliver Crawley, Jr. *Warden*
Charlene Jeffries
Gordy Reese

Serving through 2012

David Puckett
Colin Watson
Dave Zeph

The "W" in Christmas

Each December, I vowed to make Christmas a calm and peaceful experience.

I had cut back on nonessential obligations - extensive card writing, endless baking, decorating, and even overspending...

Yet still, I found myself exhausted, unable to appreciate the precious family moments, and of course, the true meaning of Christmas.

My son, Nicholas, was in kindergarten that year. It was an exciting season for a six year old.

For weeks, he'd been memorizing songs for his school's Winter Pageant.

I didn't have the heart to tell him I'd be working the night of the production, unwilling to miss his shining moment, I spoke with his Teacher, she assured me there'd be a dress rehearsal the morning of the presentation.

All parents unable to attend that evening were welcome to come then. Fortunately, Nicholas seemed happy with the compromise.

So, the morning of the dress rehearsal, I filed in ten minutes early, found a spot on the cafeteria floor and sat down. Around the room I saw several other parents quietly scampering to their seats.

As I waited, the students were led into the room. Each class, accompanied by their teacher, sat cross-legged on the floor. Then, each group, one by one, rose to perform their song.

Because the public school system had long stopped referring to the holiday as "Christmas," I didn't expect anything other than fun, commercial entertainment songs of reindeer, Santa Claus, snowflakes and good cheer.

So, when my son's class rose to sing, "Christmas Love," I was slightly taken aback by its bold title.

Nicholas was aglow, as were all of his classmates, adorned in fuzzy mittens, red sweaters, and bright snowcaps upon their heads.

Those in the front row- center stage - held up large letters, one by one, to spell out the title of the song.

As the class would sing "C is for Christmas," a child would hold up the letter C. Then, "H is for Happy," and on and on, until each child holding up his portion had presented the complete message, "Christmas Love."

The performance was going smoothly, until suddenly, we noticed her; a small, quiet, girl in the front row holding the letter "M" upside down - totally unaware her letter "M" appeared as a "W".

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Although many teachers tried to shush the children, the laughter continued until the last letter was raised, and we all saw it together.

A hush came over the audience and eyes began to widen.

In that instant, we understood the reason we were there, why we celebrated the holiday in the first place, why even in the chaos, there was a purpose for our festivities.

For when the last letter was held high, the message read loud and clear:

"CHRISTWAS LOVE"

And, I believe, He still is. Amazed in His presence....humbled by His love.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

Contributed by Jo Ann Bowman



December Treasurer's Report by Bob Nelson

FINANCES TO NOVEMBER 30, 2009

	2009 Budget	Current Year To Date	Prior Year To Date	Percent of Budget
Revenues	\$307,922	\$275,200	\$221,972	89%
Caring for our Clergy	128,429	107,812	86,993	84%
Caring for Our Facilities	43,575	38,574	37,001	89%
Making It All Work	47,418	40,274	26,156	85%
Making a Celebration	29,975	26,010	26,844	87%
Making a Difference In the Word	13,800	9,082	2,863	66%
Making Disciples	13,325	9,594	8,712	72%
Caring for the Larger Church	25,000	19,976	18,350	80%
Caring for Each Other	6,400	3,474	3,684	54%
Totals	307,922	254,796	207,583	

CASH OVER (LESS THAN)

EXPENSES	2009 Budget	Current Year To Date	Prior Year To Date	Percent of Budget
CARING FOR OUR CLERGY	128,429	107,812	86,993	84%
CARING FOR OUR FACILITIES	43,575	38,574	37,001	89%
MAKING IT ALL WORK	47,418	40,274	26,156	85%
MAKING A CELEBRATION	29,975	26,010	26,844	87%

WILL END UP BEING LOWER DUE TO REV. COOK LEAVING 2 MONTHS EARLIER WITH REV CURTIS FILLING HER TERM.

REFLECTS THE COST OF NEW AUDIO/SPEAKERS AND OTHER ITEMS COVERED BY DESIGNATED REVENUE.

TRAVEL, EQUIPMENT AND TELEPHONE COMING IN LOWER.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO COVER SUNDAY SCHOOL EXPENSES HAVE NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED.

2009 Cross Ties in Review



We had to say goodbye to Rev. Barbara Cooke in 2009 but we appreciated the leadership she provided while we searched for a new rector. We offer our best wishes to her as she starts a new chapter of her life as rector at The Church of The Good Shepherd in Asheboro.

FEBRUARY

2009 Senior Warden, Steve Yuskevich, introduced himself to us in the February newsletter. We extend our most sincere appreciation to Steve for his calm and composed handling of what may be remembered as one of our most difficult years ever. With the national economic woes affecting our parish and the always stressful task of replacing a rector not to mention the natural ebbs and flows of any church operation, Steve held us together with his Christ driven strength. Well done, Steve!

MARCH

President of the Women of the Church, Mari Hann, listed an impressive list of all the fundraisers and Outreach projects in which they are involved. Among them were the Annual Fall Food Fundraiser, Annual Bake Sales, Annual Spring Yard Sale, Spaghetti Luncheon, United Outreach Center, J. Glenn Edwards Children's Chorus and the Boys and Girls Club.

APRIL



We were so truly blessed to have our beloved Rev. Mary Curtis step in to serve as Rector from the time that Rev. Cooke left to when Fr. Lister took over in June. Rev. Mary served during the numerous Easter services and programs. One of these programs was special music provided by the St. Thomas Choir and the renowned Organist Robert Burns King.

MAY - JUNE

The excitement of summer Bible school began with the announcement of that schedule in May. Highly organized and deeply committed Director of Children's Ministry, Pam Kerley, already was in high gear preparing for this important children's activity scheduled for June. And, of course, the arrival of our much anticipated new Rector, Father Craig Lister, was a prayer (many prayers) answered.

JULY - AUGUST

This is a good place to recognize Bob Nelson for his tireless commitment to keep all parishioners up to speed on the financial standing of St. Thomas. His work appeared in every newsletter. It was important during the national economic downturn to know that we had Bob at the helm of the difficult job of steering our finances through all the ups and downs of everyday church activity.

Also, this period was announcement time for the classes offered during the fall at St. Thomas. Jo Ann Bowman taught "An Invitation to the New Testament". Peggy Nelson taught the eleven week "Invitation to John".

SEPTEMBER

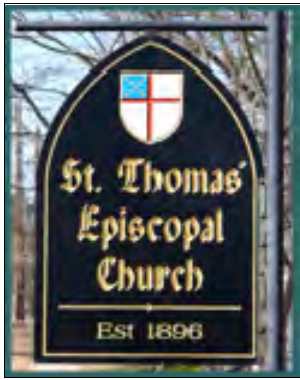
Ron Hewett took on the most difficult ministry of stewardship with an article in the September newsletter. He kicked off this important campaign with a Stewardship Committee meeting in conjunction with a Spaghetti Luncheon, prepared by the Women of the Church, held on September 27th.

OCTOBER

The St. Thomas Choir Retreat was reviewed in October. These devoted parishioners move all of us with their unparalleled talent and their deep love and dedication to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, as well as to St. Thomas.

**NOVEMBER**

The Heifer Project, headed by Pam Kerley, and stewardship were topics of interest in November. And Steve Yuskevich summarized the hard work performed at St. Thomas in 2009. It is amazing the amount of output flowing from our small parish. It could not be done without a concentrated effort from so many loving members of our St. Thomas family.



The Great Commission

“Jesus came and said to the disciples, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

Matthew 28:18-20

It is a joy for all Christians to answer God’s call to share their faith, and bring others to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ within the fellowship of the Church. Invite someone to attend a worship service with you this Sunday.

Our Mission...

*“To grow in the knowledge and love of God
through our worship of Him, our service to Him, and our study of His Word;
and to bring others to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior
within the fellowship of the Church.”*

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