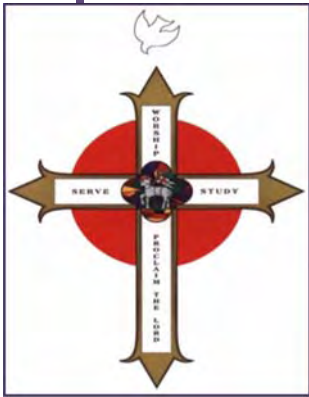


Cross Ties

May 2009



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



From The Rev. Mary Curtis

I grew up in the Episcopal Church--3rd-4th generation. My fondest memories include singing in children's choir and participating in youth group. In Sunday School we didn't study the Bible, per se, but used a curriculum called the "Seabury Series." I have no idea what it was about, but I know I never missed. One strong memory from my youth, was my confusion surrounding the "Holy Ghost." I just couldn't quite understand--did the "Ghost" fly around up in the rafters of the church? It was years later before I truly understood the who/what/why of the Holy Ghost/Spirit.



Rev. Mary Curtis

Jesus promised that the Spirit he would send would bring new life, and I believe new life is coming to St. Thomas'. You are filled with hope and joy, and are confident that your prayers and work over the past 18+ months will culminate in vital leadership and renewed spirit for the future. Don't let up on your faith or your prayers as you prepare for and look forward to the coming of your new rector. That will surely be a day of great celebration. And keep watch--who knows what God, the God who is doing better things than we can ask or imagine, might have in mind for you!

Pentecost, May 31, is the day in the church we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. This day is also called Whitsunday, the "birthday of the church." From last Sunday's Gospel we remember that when Jesus "breathed (his Spirit) on the disciples" the church was born, and the disciples were eternally bound together with the risen Lord.

May 31, Celebration of Pentecost, will mark my last Sunday as your Supply Priest. Sharing this most Holy time of the year with you has been a blessing, and while Frank and I will be with you until the end of May, we want to take this opportunity to thank you in advance all for your many kindnesses.

Love to you in Christ,

Mary Curtis+



From the Senior Warden

For this May issue of the CrossTies I have asked Ron Hewitt to speak about the "5th Circle" of our Program Church... "Stewardship at St Thomas"... Steve Yuskevich

Ken Miller, who headed the stewardship effort last year, has passed the baton to me. I believe his contribution of time and talent has kindled an understanding that stewardship deserves our year-round attention. So let's follow up on those efforts and now begin thinking about what we have to offer our church family and community.

The timing couldn't be better. We are all bearing our burdens and sharing concern for the difficulties many in our congregation, town, and nation are going through at this time. As a community of believers, these challenging times are a test, but as a community, we can weather the difficulties and find opportunities. With so many areas needing attention, none are more important than those closest to home in our church and community. The parable of the fishes and loaves comes to mind. We put into the basket what we have collectively and take out what we need. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

Like our nation, the parish of St Thomas has change in its midst. Steve and the vestry have announced a new program-based perspective for our parish life and we are finally at the end of our search for new leadership with the arrival of Father Craig Lister next month. What this means for us as a parish is that we have opportunity in the months ahead to harness all the built-up energy and channel it towards our church and our community for the glory of God.

Now let's explore the stewardship connection. The foundation of robust church programs is stewardship. While we all know we have the obligation to support our parish financially, there is also the need for parishioners to come forward with their time and talent to support the programs, our new rector, and our church. We will begin with a call to all parishioners to step forward and offer their time and talent to programs and other facets of church community life. We will do this in a combined time and talent pledge and survey format.

In the weeks ahead I will be asking the parish to discuss what you feel are the options we need to consider as we pursue stewardship. I will be looking for suggestions and feedback. We will be asking for your time and talent. Where do you feel you fit into the programs? What would you like to explore? What can we do together? What is the Lord telling us to pursue?

Once we have developed a sense of direction our program leaders, vestry, and priest will be able to map out a course to pursue our challenges. I believe you would agree with me that there are great days ahead for us at St Thomas. Combining the efforts of all in stewardship is the first step.

Sincerely,
Ron Hewitt

Hey, it's Spring! That means summer is not far behind. Bible study classes will be ending shortly, beach time is just around the corner. That means we can spend some time reading. There are all sorts of books in the church library. There are a lot of reference books if you would like to bone up (pun intended, arf arf) on your Bible studies during the off season. There are many inspirational books and books on prayer for those who would like to keep inspired. And for those times when you just want to relax with a good read, there are quite a few fiction titles as well. Stop by the Shaw Library and check out some books for the holiday season. This 'ole dawg is going to do just that! 'Til next time,

Happy Hank

Have You Left A Tip?

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Sophie Johnson, *Organist*

Kathy Stancar, *Secretary*

Marci Warren, *Nursery Care*

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Bob Nelson, *Treasurer*

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Asst. Treasurer

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Women of the Church

Mary Lee Dutton

Parish Life Committee Chair

Pat Kirkman

Outreach Committee Chair

The Parish Vestry

Serving through 2009

Steve Yuskevich, Sr. Warden

James Jessup

J.J. Cuff, Vestry Clerk

Serving through 2010

Seth Cox

Bob Nelson

Mike Griffin

Serving through 2011

Oliver Crawley, Jr. Warden

Charlene Jeffries

Gordy Reese

In addition to Forward Day by Day, I greatly enjoy reading Daily Bread. The subject on March 28th really spoke to me. I am a fervent believer in tithing, and the title that day was "Have you left a tip"? Most of us are diligent in generously tipping those who give us service. In restaurants the expected amount is 15% or 20%. I thought about how little God asks of us - 10%, or less if one cannot afford that amount.

No matter how much you give, you can't outgive God. I am sharing this article as it appeared in Daily Bread. The scripture this theme came from is 2 Corinthians 8: 1-9. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes, He became poor".

Respectfully submitted,

Alice Anne Ford



The practice of tipping is commonly accepted in many countries. But I wonder: Has this courtesy influenced our attitude toward giving money to the church?

Many Christians regard their financial giving as little more than a good-will gesture to God for the service He has rendered us. They think that as long as they have given their tithe to God, the rest is theirs to handle as they they please. But the Christian life is about so much more than money.

The Bible tells us that our Creator owns "the cattle on a thousand hills" (Ps. 50: 10. "The world is Mine," God says, "and all its fullness" (v. 12). Everything comes from Him, and everything we have belongs to Him. God has not only given us every material thing we have, He has also given us His Son, The Lord Jesus Christ, who provides our very salvation.

Paul used the Macedonian Christians as an illustration of what our giving should look like in the light of God's incredible generosity toward us. The Macedonians, who were in "deep poverty" gave with "liberality" (2 Cor. 8:2). But "they first gave themselves to the Lord" (v.5).

God the Creator of the universe does not NEED anything from us. He doesn't want a tip. He wants us!

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
 Repaid a thousand-fold will be;
 Then gladly will we give to Thee,
 Who givest all - who givest all.



The Treasurer's Report

	2009 Budget	Current Year to Date	Remaining
Revenues	\$307,922	\$53,310	\$254,612
Caring for our Clergy	128,429	23,213	105,216
Caring for our Facilities	43,575	7,141	36,434
Making it All Work	47,418	7,098	40,320
Making a Celebration	29,975	6,413	23,562
Making a Difference in the Word	13,800	541	13,259
Making Disciples	13,325	3,218	10,107
Caring for the Larger Church	25,000	5,736	19,264
Caring for Each Other	6,400	1,387	5,013
Totals	307,922	54,747	253,175

You know, giving is more than just raising funds to meet the needs of our parish's operating budget; stewardship is an opportunity to nurture and grow our faith and spirituality within our parish community.

March showed a nice improvement but we're still behind the budget. For instance, if we were in a 100 yard dash, the budget it would be at the 25 yard line, ahead by nearly 8 yards. You can do the math, that's not good.

I know in some years we have had strong finishes but this year our budget increased nearly 30%, largely to obtain Rev. Craig Lister. We are not demonstrating our ability to respond to that call. I'm hard pressed to believe there is anyone at St. Thomas wanting us to fail after calling Rev. Lister. I'm also concerned the message it sends to Rev. Lister. We want him to hit the ground running but not for the purpose of fund raising.

All you have to do is look around to see that St. Thomas has grown in the knowledge and love of God through our worship of Him, our service to Him and our study of His Word: and how we have brought others to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior within the fellowship at St. Thomas. There are so many who have strengthened their relationship with God through what is offered at St. Thomas. Lives are changing, molded by His hands; witness of His love abounds. There's a hunger to keep growing.

I enjoy being treasurer but there's the pragmatic side of me questioning our spirituality when it comes to our response to stewardship.

Is it possible there is still a significant obstacle yet to overcome? Could that obstacle be our purse strings? Have we gone so long not openly discussing stewardship that it has become the unmentionable?

Over subsequent months the Vestry will review our first quarter results, looking for ways to bring stewardship back into the conversation such as the following:

- Re-Implement a quarterly progress reporting your pledge statement.
- Review giving of those who did not pledge. Contact by Vestry members encouraging them to pledge or at least to give some idea of what the Church might expect.
- Letter from the stewardship committee.
- Discussions with selected members.

It is our responsibility to answer God's call to stewardship. If you have suggestions to help us we are certainly open to hearing from you. Folks, it's time!

Bob Nelson

Robert King Follow Up

One of the highlights of the Easter seasons was the organ music presented by Robert King, organ instructor at UNC-G. He played between the 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. services. Many parishioners have inquired about compositions that were performed. They are listed below:

Toccata (from Symphony V) Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)
Subdue Us With Thy Goodness (Transcribed for organ by Maurice Durufle') Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Toccata and Fugue, D Minor (BWV 565) Johann Sebastian Bach
Concerto V, F Major Georg Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
 Larghetto
 Allegro
 Sicilienne
 Presto
Andantino Dennis Bedard (b. 1950)
The Carillon of Westminster Louis Vierne (1870-1937)



Birthdays in May

3 – Pat Caviness; 4 – Dave Zeph; 5 – Sydney Swann; 7 – Michael Sidney; 8 – Brenda Brown, Nancy Stewart; 12 – Mike Griffen; 15 – Jean Wright; 16 – Bob Granger; 17 – Gordy Reese; 18 – Marg Downing; 29 – Jane Miller

(Regretfully, we don't have everyone's birth date. Please let the office know it. Thanks.)

Where In The World Is Happy Hank?

Happy Hank has become a world traveler. Can you guess where he went this month?

1. Located 40 miles southeast of Pergamos.
2. It was said of the church in this town that her best works were her last works.
3. The church in this town was one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation.

Look for the answer somewhere in this issue of Cross Ties.

The answer for Hank's last trip was Calvary or Golgotha (Luke 23:26-49; John 19:1-24.)

Thoughts From Rick Warren

When I get up in the morning, I sit on the side of my bed and say, God, if I don't get anything else done today, I want to know you more and love you better. God didn't put me on earth just to fulfill a to-do list. He's more interested in what I am than what I do.

That's why we're called human beings, not human doings.

Happy moments, PRAISE GOD.

Difficult moments, SEEK GOD.

Quiet moments, WORSHIP GOD.

Painful moments, TRUST GOD.

Every moment, THANK GOD.



Are your kids ready to sink their teeth into big fun? That's just what they'll do at Crocodile Dock, where fearless kids shine God's light! Crocodile Dock is filled with incredible Bible-learning that kids see, hear, touch and even taste! Bible Point crafts, team-building games, cool Bible songs and tasty treats are just a few of the Crocodile Dock activities that help faith flow into real life. Since everything is hands-on, kids might get a little messy. Be sure to send them in play clothes and safe shoes.

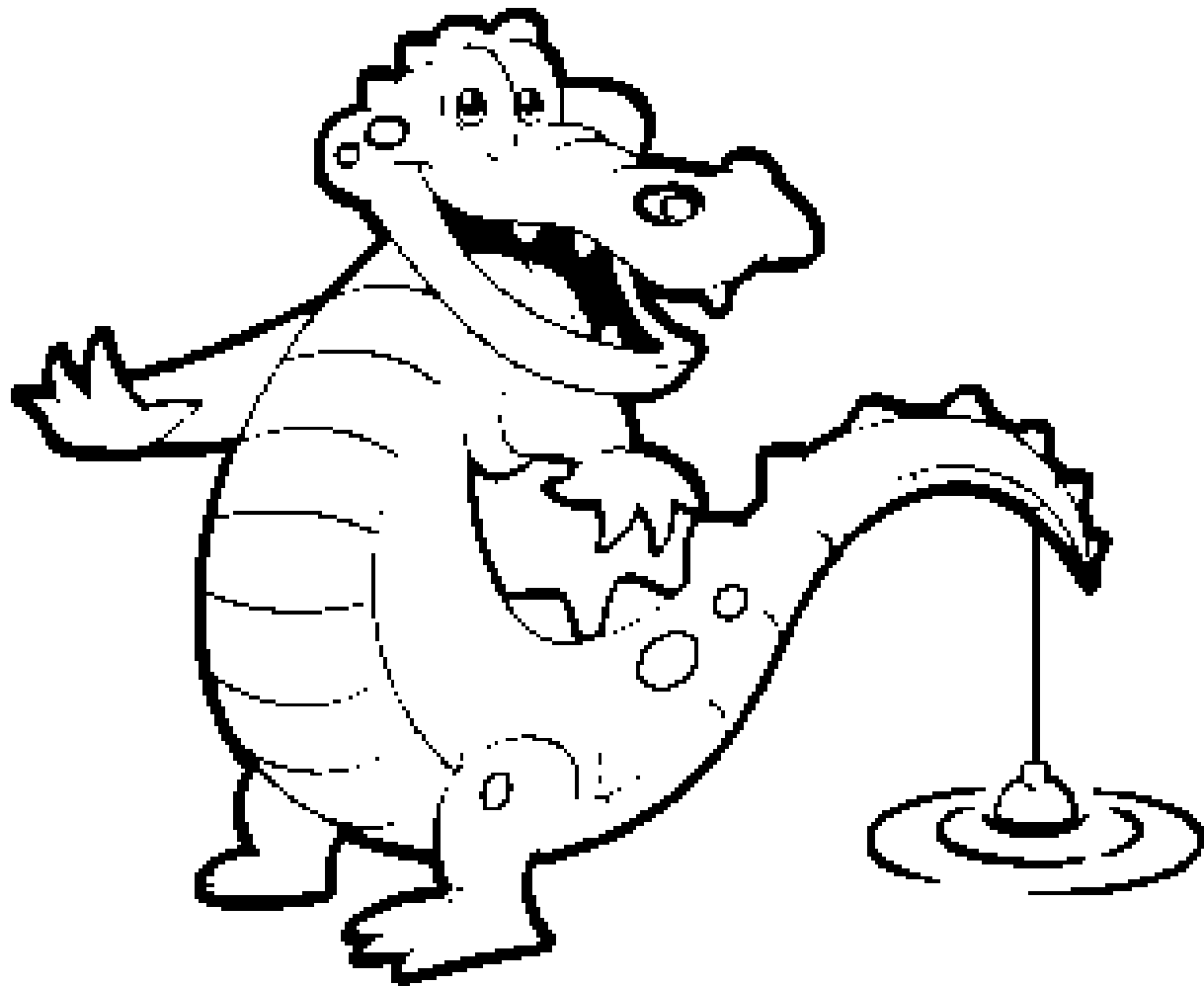
We will help kids discover how to see God in everyday life – something we call God Sightings. Get ready to hear that phrase a lot!

Your kids will also participate in a hands-on mission project called Operation Kid-to-kid that involves millions of other children across North America! Parents, grandparents and friends are invited to join us each day at 11:30 because that's when we'll be having Firefly Finale – a daily celebration of God's love you won't want to miss.

**Mark these dates on your calendar: June 22nd – June 26th
The fun starts at 9:00 am and will end at 12:00 noon.**

Pick up a registration form at the church or go to this website <http://www.groupvbs.com/webtoybox/myvbs/stthomassanford> and register your children, grandchildren and neighbor's children for this awesome power-packed adventure! Make copies of the registration form and hand it out. Let people know about the easy online registration.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS – please sign up to volunteer if you can help in anyway. Prayers, food, crew leaders, teachers, donations, and many more opportunities are available for you to participate in this year's VBS. I have been excited to hear many people talking about how important our young ones are. Here is your chance to put your words to work. VBS is a huge outreach to parents and children in our church and community. I hope to have more volunteers than jobs by the end of this month. Every member of this church should help out in some way. Please pray about how you can help this year and don't waste time letting me know.



© Group

GRAB YOUR CRAYONS KIDS!!



“Worry looks around, Sorry looks back,
Faith looks up.” ... Have Faith!

Where in the World is Happy Hank?

Answer: Thyatira



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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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

