

THE EPISTLE

RIDGEWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA

APRIL, 2008

OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

FROM THE DEAR PEOPLE OF GOD,



Alleluia! He is Risen! The Lord is Risen indeed! Alleluia! Praise be the name of the Lord!

Wow, that felt good. You know, I do love Lent; however, when it's over and Easter is here, those first alleluias really pump me up. I guess it lets me know just how much I've missed them - the alleluias.

Lent is a wonderful and deeply spiritual season in the year of the Church. We do indeed worship God in Lent, but it has a different sense to it, what with all the introspection and all the contemplation that we delve into concerning our relationship with the Lord our God.

But then comes Easter - Resurrection Sunday. A Christian artist by the name of Carmen did a song a number of years back that says something (loosely) about the relationship. In the song are lyrics whose flavor is like this (this is not a quote, by the way): When everything feels like [Good] Friday (meaning its good, but it could be a bit brighter) just remember, [Resurrection] Sunday is coming.

I guess, for me, there is a little of Peter's reaction to the Transfiguration of Jesus in the coming of Easter. There is a sense of awe at what Jesus did in dying for our sins and what the Lord God has done in raising Jesus from the dead. There is a bit of fear that goes along with that too. But the excitement - the excitement over what Jesus promised - that it was/is all true . . . Well, that leaves me a bit like Peter: "Lord, it is good that we are here . . ."

It is good that we are here. It is good that we are here in the kingdom, here in the promise, here in the hope. For the next several weeks we will celebrate that as we wait in high expectation, with great anticipation for the next promise to be fulfilled - the coming of the Advocate. The Advocate who will lead us into all truth, as promised by Jesus, is the Holy Spirit of God. We will celebrate the promised fulfillment on Whitsunday - Pentecost, May 11th.

In the meantime, over these next several weeks, just as the disciples were told we need to go to Galilee, and there we shall see Jesus. (Oooh, another promise fulfilled) Over these next several weeks we shall see the resurrected Jesus and his final days in direct ministry to his disciples as he established his church in and through them. It all starts this Sunday, April 6th, as he tells them: "Peace be with you." At that moment the disciples who had fled were redeemed. At that moment the first "second chance" to believe came to fruition, the promise of forgiveness was fulfilled.

Alleluia!! He is Risen!

God bless you and keep you,
and hold you always
in the palm of his hand,
Fr. Tommy+



HERE IS TO ALL
THE SAINTS
CELEBRATING IN
APRIL

Doug Bryant	04/02	Ava Langdale	04/21
Susan d'Erizans	04/07	Rebecca Orman	04/23
Ann Ellison	04/08	Tonya Rowe	04/23
Joe Trimmier	04/13	Jennifer Autry	04/29
Jarret Palmer	04/20	Ken Baldwin	04/29
Charlotte Floyd	04/20		

Sr. Warden:	Doug Bryant	2009
Jr. Warden:	Tom Willingham	2009
Member:	Mike Floyd	2008
Member:	Patti Palmer	2008
Member:	Mike Autry	2010
Member:	Bob Moore	2010
Secretary:	Carter Siegling	2008
Treasurer:	Tom Harwood	2008

WEBPAGE

Have you visited our webpage yet? www.ststephenssc.org is up and operating on "the net." You will find such things as the monthly calendar, the prayer list, and the Epistle included on the site. Also are items of interest like a brief history of the church and a description of the stained glass windows. We also have a link from the Diocesan webpage directory that takes you to our webpage. If you haven't visited the site yet, maybe you should check it out.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

It is the end of the quarter, and therefore the time that we "zero" the prayer list. Please review the prayer list before the Sunday service and/or on our webpage. If you have someone for whom the need has passed, please let the parish office know. There are always those who do indeed need our prayers and if you or a loved one still have need, please let the office know that too, or annotate the list before the Sunday service. Of course, if there is someone who is not currently listed and needs prayer, please add their names before the Sunday service and/or contact the office. Help us keep this ministry of the church up to date.

PRAYER OF THE MONTH

Last month the Vicar wrote about the importance and power of prayer. Since prayer is something so important and powerful, then why not include a prayer in the Epistle. These two come from the Book of Common Prayer (pp. 814, 815) and say much about the joy of Eastertide.

For Joy in God's Creation

O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty: Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

CONTINUING EDUCATION

April 12th, St. Martins-in-the-Fields, at 9:00AM is the next scheduled training. If you have not yet completed training as a service participant, please see the Vicar about registration.

MOTHER'S DAY PREPARATIONS

Men (of ALL ages), this is our annual opportunity to honor those wonderful, lovely, and patient ladies who care for and nurture us the whole year through. Preparing and serving a special breakfast for them just one Sunday after church hardly asks too much of us. Besides, every year so far, there seem to be some distinct advantages to doing so - not that that would be our motivation ladies. So men, whadda ya say? Let's get together again this year and bring a superb breakfast dining experience to the ladies of St. Stephen's. If you have any suggestions as to menu, please let Don Babb or the Vicar know. Of course, our standing menu seems to be greatly appreciated and we can continue with that if the ladies would like it that way. Regardless of menu men, please contact Don or the Vicar to let us know we can count on you to help. Remember, kitchen skills are not a requirement. Set-up still has to be done, clean-up still has to be done; and most importantly, we need men to serve the ladies their breakfast and ensure that they have all they need. The event this year is: Sunday, May 11, Pentecost Sunday. Come be the Spirit of the Lord and serve.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE
DIOCESAN 2008 CALENDAR OF YOUTH EVENTS

April

Apr 25-27: Junior High New Beginnings Bishop Gravatt Center
(6th-8th grades)

July

July 8-13: Episcopal Youth Event 2008 Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas
(9th-12th grades)

TBD: Senior High Summer Mission Project
(9th-12th grades)

Information about the structure, mission, and organization of youth ministry in the diocese is available on the Parish Hall bulletin board.

HOME WORKS OF AMERICA, INC.
2008 WORK SESSIONS

"REPAIRING HOMES, RESTORING HOPE"

Spring Blitz is on!

April 5 Philadelphia, PA
April 12 Camden, Columbia, Myrtle Beach, and
Rock Hill
April 19 Aiken, Charleston, Fort Mill, and
Greenville

High School Graduation Gift to their Community
May 26-30 Columbia area High Schools
June 2-6 Columbia area High Schools

Summer Programs

June 8-15 Columbia, SC & Valle Crucis, NC
June 9-13 Columbia, SC (Middle School youth)
June 15-21 Aiken, SC
June 20-24 Augusta, GA (Middle School youth)
June 22-28 Charleston, SC
June 22-29 Fayetteville, NC
July 13-19 Greenville, SC
July 13-20 Covington, LA
July 27-Aug 3 Zorritos, Peru

Session space is limited and is filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Adults are especially needed, both skilled and unskilled. Register at www.homeworks-sc.org or call 803/781-4536 and please let the Vicar know.

HAPPENING

Happening is a weekend event for youth in grades 10-12 that is focused on encountering Christ within community and learning how to strengthen our relationship with Christ and each other. The weekend is structured on a National Program with local flavor and tradition. Since each weekend is basically the same program, with variations due to the individuals who make up the team, one only "makes" one Happening weekend, but can participate as a team member at subsequent weekends. The Happening Committee consists of youth and adults who have attended a Happening weekend. This committee meets before each weekend to select leadership for the next event and to evaluate the previous event. They also make policy decisions and set dates for subsequent meetings, weekends, reunions and staff training.

So, if you have not "made" a weekend, maybe you would like to consider one of the upcoming events: December 5-7, 2008 or March 6-8, 2009. If you have "made" a weekend, maybe you would like to participate in some of the other ways described above.

Information is available from the Youth Coordinator (Rebecca Harwood) and/or the Vicar. There is a cost, but "scholarship" funds are available to help

VOCARE'

Vocare' is an event similar to Happening for Teens or Cursillo for Adults. Vocare' is formatted for young people and is meant to help them develop a mature relationship with the Lord. Vocare' is for those aged 19-30. The next event is scheduled for April 11-13, 2008. If you might be interested, please see the Vicar ASAP.

CURSILLO

Cursillo is similar to Happening and Vocare', and actually predates both. Cursillo was formed in the Catholic Church in Spain. It is meant for those over age 30 and its focus is to help build leaders in the parish families of its participants. The next two events are not until 2009 so there is plenty of time to listen for God's call to you to attend. The Vicar might make a subtle hint too.

It's that time again . . . the monthly meeting of the knitting group.. The group will meet from 2-4 PM on Sunday, April 6th. By the way, the first Sunday of the month is going to be our regular meeting.

Please join us; we have lots of fun. We will be discussing some of our future projects during our time together - silk screening and painting are just two of our choices. I guess we may have to consider naming ourselves something other than "the knitting group."

FYI - we have 22 "knitted" squares done for the "Warm Up America" afghan project. Please bring any completed squares with you on Sunday. Hope to see you there. Lynn Dwyer

ANNOUNCING!!

Mr. Allen and Mrs. Ashley Addison wish to announce the baptism of their daughter Harmony McKenzie Addison.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church

Sunday, April 6, 2008

10:30 AM

The Sacrament of Baptism will take place during the service of the Holy Eucharist. So, please join us for this special occasion.

To welcome someone into the family of God as part of the Body of Jesus Christ is one of the most exciting things we can do in the Church and is one of the two Sacraments instituted for us by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The proud grandparents, Karen and Carter Siegling will be sponsoring hospitality following the service. Come join the celebration.

THE GREAT EGG HUNT

We had pictures of the Great Egg Hunt in the bulletin on Easter Sunday, but how can you go wrong with more. Indulge yourself with the pictures below, and at least vicariously enjoy the fun that all the children had.



