

# THE EPISTLE

RIDGEWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
APRIL, 2009

OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Dear people of God,

My message this month is simple. It is not fraught with deep theological reflections, or witticisms, or social mores. This month's message is simply to reiterate to you what I announced on Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Most everyone knows by now, of course, but I apologize to those who may find out via this Epistle that I have tendered my resignation effective Monday, April 13, 2009.

Lynn and I will be moving to St. James' Episcopal Church, Port St. Joe, Florida. That is in the panhandle about 30 miles east of Panama City. The way it all came about was in a blur, but a very blessed blur. God has obviously (at least to me) decided that I should move and you know how I feel about living in God's will.

We have had great times of celebration together. We have had some times of conflict. We have had times of grief together. We have shared laughter and tears. We have shared our lives. And it has all been of the Lord our God; of that I am certain!

I want you all to know that I consider our time here a blessing to me and to Lynn. There are so many of you that we will miss. You are all invited (but not all at once) to come visit us anytime. We love you greatly.

So, goodbye, farewell, adieu, sayonara, catch ya on the flip side, aloha, adios, Godspeed and mostly Via Con Dios.

God bless you and keep you,  
and until we meet again,  
may he hold you always  
in the palm of his hand,  
Fr. Tommy+



**HERE'S TO ALL  
THE SAINTS  
CELEBRATING IN  
APRIL**

Doug Bryant	04/02	Ava Langdale	04/21
Susan d'Erizans	04/07	Tonya Rowe	04/23
All Ellison	04/08	Jennifer Autry	04/29
Jarrett Palmer	04/20	Ken Baldwin	04/29
Charlotte Floyd	04/20		

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN  
NEWS**

Is an ECW ministry of benefit at St. Stephens? Would ECW take up allot of my free time? How can a small group of Episcopal women make any difference in the church or community? How can I participate in an ECW program when I work and have small children? Come get the answers to these questions and more!

Saturday, April 18, 2009 at 11:00AM.

St. Stephens Episcopal Church

Guest speaker: Mrs.. Phyllis Webb, ECW President, Upper Diocese of South Carolina Lunch will be served.

Hope to see everyone there.

**HELP NEEDED**

Please consider volunteering to help out Sat. April 18th , sign up sheet will be located on hall bulletin board! thank you.

**YOUR MISSION COMMITTEE**

Sr. Warden:	JoAnn Palmer	2011
Jr. Warden:	Tom Willingham	2009
Member:	Mike Autry	2010
Member:	Bob Moore	2010
Member:	Ben DeBerry	2011
Member:	MJ Lever (one year term)	2009
Treasurer:	Carolyn Babb	2009
Secretary:	Margaret Murtaugh	2009
Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, 04/22/2009, 7:00PM		

**EQUIPPED FOR ACTION—CHANGING  
LIVES III**

Save the date—May 2, 2009 at Christ Church Episcopal School, Greenville

Keynote speaker: The Rev. Dr. David T. Gortner, director of the Doctor of Ministry Program and Professor of Evangelism and Congregational Leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS).

Call to the 87th Convention and Certification of Delegates and Alternates

Mrs. Angela Daniel, Secretary to Convention, has issued the Call to Convention to all clergy and congregations of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina. A letter was mailed last week. The Diocesan Convention will take place on October 16-17, 2009 at the Carolina First Center in Greenville. To read her letter, [click here](#).

The certification of Delegates and Alternates is also underway. Interactive forms may be found at [www.edusc.org/Certification](http://www.edusc.org/Certification). The form may be completed on line and then printed so as to have the necessary signature and date before mailing to the Secretary. As per Diocesan Canons, this form is to be completed and returned no later than April 15th. A change of delegates and alternates form will be available once this deadline has passed.

**The Good Friday Offering**

The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East was formed in 1841 with the purpose of forging friendships with the ancient churches and serving the expatriate communities in those areas. Since 1922 we have given thanks for the success of the ministry in that part of the world by donating the Good Friday offering.

Please be reminded that for many in this world there is a separation of church and state. It only has to be a reality in one's mind to be one's truth even if the religion is practiced in secret. For many of us in this world we hold tight to the hope that a certain human commonality runs deep in most of us. And on that hope we have empathy for those people.

Please give generously to this world mission during the Good Friday service.

We pray for peace, Carolyn Babb

## NEW ORGANIST

At the Mission Committee meeting of Wednesday, March 25, 2009 a vote was called to elect the next full-time organist of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Our new organist is Ms. Beverly Ffrench who has recently moved to Ridgeway from Columbia.

Beverly has been a church organist since 1984 and has served in several Episcopal Churches along the way. Most of those were in the northeast—New Jersey and New York.

Originally Beverly hails from the tropical nation of Jamaica. Of course, that means she definitely knows what it is to be an Anglican. Beverly has two grown sons. Howard is here in Ridgeway with her, and Bradley is in his second year of medical school at Howard University in Washington, DC. Please be sure to congratulate Beverly and do your best to make her feel at home here at St. Stephen's.

## HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 5 <sup>th</sup> , Passion/Palm Sunday	Procession of the palms and Holy Eucharist 10:30 AM
Thursday, April 9 <sup>th</sup> , Maundy Thursday	Holy Eucharist 6:30 PM
Friday, April 10 <sup>th</sup> , Good Friday	Services of the hours
	Noon Meditation
	3:30PM Meditation
	6:30PM Holy Eucharist from reserve
Saturday, April 11 <sup>th</sup> , Holy Saturday	Great Egg Hunt 10:30 PM
Sunday, April 12 <sup>th</sup> , Resurrection Day	Sunrise service (Aimwell Presbyterian) 7:00 AM
	Holy Eucharist 10:30 AM

# YOUNG PEOPLE'S PAGE

## HOME WORKS SPRING BLITZ

- April 18 Rock Hill, SC  
April 25 Aiken, Camden, Charleston,  
Columbia, Fort Mill and Myrtle  
Beach, SC  
May 2 Spartanburg, SC  
May 16 Greenville, SC

## HOME WORKS SUMMERSESSIONS

- June 7-14 Columbia, SC  
June 7-14 Valle Crucis, NC  
June 8-12 Columbia, SC (Middle School Youth)  
June 12-16 Augusta, GA (Middle School Youth)  
June 14-20` Aiken, SC  
June 21-28 Fayetteville, NC  
July 12-19 Greenville, SC  
July 12-19 Covington, LA  
July 26 to John's Island, SC  
Aug 2  
Aug 4-16 Zorritos, Peru

## CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

### EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Thank you one and all for supporting the efforts of Buck and McKinley. The sale of the Christmas tags and decorations have generated enough money to purchase a pig, a goat, 2 geese and a bee hive. The boys have made the leap from a local mindset to a world view. Their prayers call for God's help for people, places and problems worldwide. I also want to thank Donna Guess for her creative ideas and the many hours she spent working on our projects.

Again---many thanks,  
Carolyn Babb

## THE GREAT EGG HUNT

Please don't forget to bring a dozen or so - more are acceptable - plastic eggs to the church over the next week. We need to have plenty to hide for those renown egg hunters that will descend upon the church grounds looking to bag the biggest prize.

Eggs should be filled only with HARD candies, not chocolate. Oh but it pains me say so, since I am one of the worlds greatest chocolate lovers But, even the famous "melt in your mouth, not in your hand" kinds will get messy in an egg.

Eggs can either be brought to the Parish Hall or left at the Vicarage. Baskets are out for that purpose.

Also, don't forget that your services are needed at 9:00am on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup> to hide the eggs. People are also needed to help prepare and serve lunch to those weary hunters once they have completed the hunt. We will grill the hot dogs on the Vicar's gas grill in the carport and serve them in the Parish Hall.

The Great Hunt itself will start at 10:30am and end with the prize distributions. Lunch as above will follow immediately afterward.

## INFORMATION SHEET: HOSPITALITY

*"Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." (Romans 12:13)*

The purpose of this information sheet is to offer guidelines on providing hospitality. Sunday services and the hospitality time that follows give members an opportunity to spend time together, catch up on what has happened since the last time they gathered, and welcome visitors. The hospitality schedule is prepared and posted on the bulletin board and sent electronically to the membership at the beginning of the year. Families and individuals are assigned on a rotating basis.

Look at the hospitality schedule as soon as it's available. If you can't serve on an assigned Sunday, ask another member to trade dates with you. Inform the Vicar of the change so that the Sunday bulletin will reflect who is providing hospitality on that day.

If for some reason you can't serve at all, inform the Vicar before the yearly schedule is prepared so he can remove your name from the list.

The food you provide is entirely up to you. Past offerings have ranged from what would be considered a meal to just something sweet to eat; from homemade to ready made to a combination of both. The important thing is the ministry of hospitality, not what is served. During the summer months, hospitality is often provided outdoors.

Coffee and tea are available. You're welcome to provide other beverages, such as juices, soft drinks, lemonade, etc.

Paper products, serving dishes and utensils are provided. You're welcome to bring your own if you wish to acknowledge or celebrate a particular holiday or special event.

All leftover food and beverages should be handled as follows: (1) taken home or given away; (2) arrangements made with the hospitality provider for the following Sunday to use them; (3) thrown away. It doesn't take long for the refrigerator to fill up with leftovers that are never used, and there's no "refrigerator angel" to throw them away later.

The Parish Hall should be returned to its original state. This includes collecting used plates, cups, etc., and cleaning up spills and food on the tables and floors. Items that need to be washed can be hand washed and put away or rinsed and put in the dish washer. The drain strainers should be cleaned out and the sinks and counters cleaned up. Used towels should be taken home, washed and returned to the kitchen.

All trash bags in the Parish Hall and kitchen should be removed and replaced with clean bags. Please take the trash with you for disposal.

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS MINISTRY**

## INFORMATION SHEET: PROVIDING FLOWERS AND GREENS FOR THE ALTAR

"For hundreds of years flowers have decked churches for festivals, but apparently not altars if pictures and records of early times are accurate. Not until the late nineteenth century did flowers become generally acceptable decorations 'on or above the Table' in either the Church of England or the Episcopal Church." The only rubric in the Prayer Book that mentions flowers is found in the Dedication and Consecration of a Church. Today, flowers at the altar are normal, and we even expect to see them elsewhere in the church on special occasions. In fact, we've become so accustomed to seeing them that their absence, except during Advent and Lent when greens are used, is likely to be noted. The following information is provided to encourage those who hesitate because they aren't "expert" arrangers or aren't sure of what is acceptable and what is not, as well as for those who provide flowers and greens for the altar on a regular basis and may benefit from a "refresher" course.

"Altar flowers (*and greens*) are a gift of life and love presented to God, not to the congregation; **anyone, expert or not, can make an acceptable offering** (*emphasis added*). The only standard for church arrangements is that flowers (*and greens*) at the altar or in any other area blend into the background of the worship center and increase its beauty."

The customary practice for flowers and greens at St. Stephen's:

1. Individuals provide the altar arrangements, rather than the Altar Guild or a designated flower committee.
2. Any natural materials can be used – flowers (from the garden, greenhouse, field, or woods – even the blossoms of what people consider to be weeds), leaves, branches, greens, grasses, nuts, berries, vegetables, fruits, pods and tassels. Dried flowers, potted plants (e.g., memorial lilies, poinsettias and sheaves of wheat) and trees are appropriate if they fit the occasion.
3. Artificial flowers and greens aren't used for altar arrangements or elsewhere in the church at St. Stephen's. "...they represent life only symbolically. They aren't life; they aren't God's gift returned to him."
4. Arrangements shouldn't be taller than the altar cross. There is a visual tool in the kitchen to help determine the appropriate height – a yellow dot with a black ink line in its center has been placed to the left of the windows over the sink. The black line represents the top of the cross.
5. If a florist is used, provide some basic instructions for arrangements in the brass vases: the height of the arrangements themselves should not exceed 10-11 inches; the necks of the vases are very narrow – approximately 7 inches in circumference. Try to have little or no oasis showing above the vase tops. In general, the vases do not leave the church. However, if taking the vases to a florist is absolutely necessary, inform the Vicar and the Altar Guild Team when and for how long they will be gone.

6. Be sure to wipe the brass vases with a soft cloth or paper towel to remove any water droplets before placing the arrangements on the Altar and after removing them. They are placed between the Eucharist candles and the cross when the service includes holy communion; to the outside of the candelabra when the service doesn't include holy communion and the candelabra are used.

7. The brass vases traditionally have been used to hold the altar arrangements, but other kinds of containers could be used. They should hold and display the arrangements well, fit the space available on the re-table (the shelf attached to the east wall behind the altar, holding the cross, candles and vases), be clean and able to hold water or prepared oasis. For example, low rectangular containers would be appropriate if horizontal rather than vertical arrangements are desired. Good sources for containers would be floral supply houses, the floral sections of stores like Michael's, or your florist. Careful thought should be given to whether or not containers, other than the brass vases, should be visible. Consult the Vicar if there is any question about the appropriateness of the containers. The height limitation noted in #4 above applies here, as well.

8. Altar arrangements are always given to the Glory of God and may be given in memory or honor of or in thanksgiving for someone or some event. Let the Vicar know if you wish to have a memorial or thanksgiving noted in the service bulletin.

*Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges, The Altar Guild Book, Morehouse Publishing, 1982*

*Ibid.*

*Ibid.*