

THE EPISTLE - April 2010

CONTENTS:

<i>April Message from Fr. Belton</i>	<i>p.1</i>
<i>Letter from Bishop Henderson</i>	<i>p.3</i>
<i>Report from Joyce Fauntleroy, Diocesan UTO Coordinator</i>	<i>p.4</i>
<i>Adult Study</i>	<i>p.4</i>
<i>April Birthdays and Dates</i>	<i>p.5</i>
<i>May Dates</i>	<i>p.5</i>

Dear Friends:

With our celebration of Easter Sunday we begin a period of time known as "The Great Fifty Days". It ends on the Day of Pentecost. For many of us who grew up with the **1928 Book of Common Prayer** we might remember that there was no reference to this particular time. It wasn't until we began using the **1979 Book of Common Prayer** and observing the revised liturgical calendar that the Great Fifty Days took on renewed meaning. In his book on the church calendar Laurence Hull Stookey observes: *The recovery of Easter as "the Great Fifty Days" of the year can move the church along toward a fuller understanding of what the resurrection of its Lord implies. Easter is not one closing day at the end of a lengthy period of Lent. Easter is one extended rejoicing in the resurrection that more than exceeds in length the Lenten disciplines. The first day of the season, Easter Day, is the opening of a protracted celebration, even as the Resurrection is itself the opening to a vast new reality.*

Let me offer the following as a way of providing some structure for what is to come during these great days.

The days following Easter offered the newly baptized an opportunity to reflected on their new faith, its implications and their responsibilities. For those who might be considered more mature Christians the days offered time to review the basics of their faith and seek any deeper meaning that might have eluded them before. Giving this, it might be said that the season of Easter is a time for both discovery and reaffirmation.

On the Second Sunday of Easter we always hear the story of Thomas' encounter with the risen Jesus. Regarding this lesson, Stookey reminds us that placing emphasis on the doubts that Thomas expressed is misplacing it. The real focus of the story is on "the graciousness of Christ in meeting our doubts."

The Gospel reading for each year's Third Sunday of Easter tells the story of Jesus having meal with someone. This year we hear about Jesus having breakfast with his disciples. My favorite story comes in Year A when we read about Jesus encountering the men on the road to Emmaus. Regardless of the year these stories remind us of the risen Lord's presence each time we gather for the Eucharistic meal. With Easter this

meal, once a sad event before Jesus' betrayal becomes a foreshadowing of the heavenly banquet, that meal that celebrates our deliverance from sin and at which all are welcome.

The Fourth Sunday of Easter is known as Good Shepherd Sunday. Each year we hear a portion of the 10th chapter of the Gospel according to John in which Jesus is identified as the Good Shepherd. The shepherd image serves as a metaphor for divine care, and has remained a constant image even though much of Christendom in this day and age knows very little about the raising of sheep. Many of us have attended churches that have a "Good Shepherd Window" in a prominent place. This, too, serves to remind us of God's constant loving care.

The Fifth Sunday of Easter is often thought of as "I am Sunday" since in two of the three lectionary years the Gospel brings us Jesus saying such things as "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Or, "I am the true vine...." This year read about Jesus giving his disciples the command that they should love one another as he has loved them. The lesson comes from a portion of John in which the writer tells us his version of the events that took place on the night of the last supper. It is also the part of the story in which Jesus speaks a great deal about what is required of those who expect to be considered his disciples, his followers.

The Sixth Sunday of Easter begins our preparations for Jesus' Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The readings for this day remind us how the followers of Jesus are supposed to live and bring us Jesus' promise that we will have assistance as we seek to do that.

The Seventh Sunday of Easter is generally referred to as Ascension Sunday since most parishes no longer have a service on Ascension Day, which always falls on a Thursday. The Gospel reading always comes from that portion of John known as Jesus' "high priestly prayer." In it Jesus prays for himself as the time of his death approaches and his earthly ministry reaches completion. He then prays for his disciples, those who are to be left behind to become his new presence in the world. And in the last part of this prayer he prays for the church universal, infused with the presence God, unified by love, fulfilling its mission of leading the world to believe.

All of the lessons for these Sundays underscore the joy of new life and the ongoing presence of the risen Jesus. As a consequence this joy should also be reflected in our worship, our liturgy. What that has meant traditionally is that truly joyful hymns are sung and the tone of the liturgy itself reflects that joy. Having spent all of Lent on our knees, during the Great Fifty days you are encouraged to stand for the entire liturgy except the lessons and sermon. The confession and absolution will be omitted since the Resurrection is *the* sign of our forgiveness and renewed life.

Easter has always been known as the Queen of Festivals. It was the first festival to be celebrated by Christians and has always been the most joyful. As we all know,

Christmas comes and goes very quickly, 12 days and it is over. For many it is over the very next day. However, the joy of Easter carries on well after the day itself. And as many of us were taught in Sunday School, every Sunday is a little Easter. It is the day of the resurrection. It is the day that promises hope for new life and the presence of God in all of our lives.

Allan+

✂ **Letter from Bishop Henderson** - March 18, 2010

A Letter of Gratitude to the Church in Upper South Carolina
In care of the President of the Diocesan Standing Committee
1115 Marion Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Sisters and Brothers, dearly Beloved:

This comes to you corporately, with my apologies. Believe me, my mother taught me better, but I am finding it impossible to write to each of you individually in a timely period. I hope to make up for that eventually, but in the meantime I have become increasingly aware of the passage of time without acknowledging your great farewell events and gifts. Thus I hope that you will accept this substitute for personal letters which I am determined—eventually—to dispatch.

Late last month I received a letter from Robert Clawson, President of our Diocesan Executive Council, which included this paragraph about gifts made to our diocese in my honor: "The purpose of these gifts were three fold. 45% were to be dedicated to the Millennium Development Goals, 10% were to be dedicated to the Bishop's Legacy Fund, and the final 45% were to be given to you as an unrestricted gift." The letter included a check for over ten thousand dollars. I probably do not need to say that I am deeply moved—by the financial gift, but even more by the banquet event the evening before our diocesan convention, and the numerous occasions and expressions, personally and by mail, from so very many of you. As for the banquet—at which so many of you were present—I have attended any number of "farewell" occasions for retiring bishops—usually with cold chicken and peas and a fairly uninteresting speech or two. Our event, however, was extraordinarily delightful! I can only hope that you had as much fun as I did.

I am, however, somewhat self-conscious about receiving 45% of the gifts for my personal use. (However, you may notice that I am not so self-conscious as to refuse it!) I have contributed \$1,000 of it to the Cange Bread and Water matching-funds drive, and continue to ponder how best to utilize the remainder.

To be sure, I am honored and humbled by this most gracious and generous expression from you, my sisters and brothers in our diocese; I don't know if I have ever been so surprised, so touched. At the same time, I could receive no greater gift than the contributions you made in my honor to the Millennium Development Goals and to the Bishop's Legacy Fund (a

fund designed to promote effective mission in all of our congregations). Obviously, both of these are extremely close to my heart, and it is exactly this kind of gift that most gratifies me.

Also "extremely close to my heart" are you—the clergy and people of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina. The Diocese is my home and you are my family. Thus I look forward passionately to my return when the time is appropriate. In the interim, please be assured that "my home and my family", including our new bishop, the lay and other clergy leadership, are in my daily prayers—prayers of both thanksgiving and intercession.

With warmest personal regards, thanksgiving to God and to you for incomparable gifts of relationships and experience, and prayers for God's richest blessings upon the mission, life and ministry of you all, corporately and severally, I remain

Faithfully yours in our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wm. J. Anderson, Jr." with a small cross symbol above the first letter of the first name.

✘ **UTO: A Report from Joyce Fautleroy, Diocesan UTO Coordinator.** Your 2009 United Thank Offering given for "thankful prayers and blessings received", when combined with UTO offerings from Episcopal Churches everywhere, supported 63 grants totaling \$2,065,472. Province IV, which includes this diocese, sent in \$517,394. Following are just a few of the recipients. **Cange, Haiti:** Our companion diocese received \$63,000 to help rebuild the water system, needed now more than ever due to the influx of refugees following the earthquake. **Mt. Olivet Episcopal Church, New Orleans:** \$25,000 to help fund the addition of a new kitchen for post-Katrina outreach ministries. **Episcopal Church and School, Navajoland, New Mexico:** \$17,940 for a program to assist Navajo women with children. **St. John's Episcopal Church, Florida:** \$25,000 to fight hunger and poverty in women and children. "As you can see, the United Thank Offering is sharing your blessings with those in need." **If you haven't turned in your Spring Offering yet, there's still time!** *Marge Pratt, UTO Coordinator, St. Stephen's, Ridgeway.*

✘ **Adult Study:** The Lenten Study program, *Hallelujah – The Bible and Handel's Messiah* has ended. It's now time to give some thought to future adult study opportunities. A third of the respondents to the Congregational Vision Survey considered adult education to be important. Content can range from Bible study to the Episcopal Church to topics related to life events. One suggestion already offered is a study on Holy Days and the Seasons of the Church. If you have a topic you're interested in, or if you're willing to lead a study group, please contact the Senior Warden.

✘ **April Birthdays:** *O God, our times are in your hand: look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives. BCP*

Doug Bryant	4/2	Charlotte Floyd	4/20
Susan d'Erizans	4/7	Ava Langdale	4/21
Ann Ellison	4/8	Tonya Rowe	4/23
Gavin Reyes	4/9	Jennifer Autry	4/29
Jarrett Palmer	4/20	Ken Baldwin	4/29

✘ **April Dates:**

- 7 Barbara Brown Taylor signs copies of her book *An Altar in the World.*, Satterlee Hall, Trinity Cathedral. Reception and opportunity to buy books at 5:30 pm; Q & A with the Rev. Ms. Taylor, 6:00 -7:00pm; book signing, 7:00pm.
- 14 Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church
- 18 Midlands Convocation Meeting, 3:00pm, St. Michael and All Angels
- 21 Mission Committee Meeting, 6:00pm, Parish Hall
- 28 Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church

✘ **May Dates:**

- 9 Mother's Day Brunch – Details to be announced
- 12 Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church
- 16 Annual Lake Service – *tentative date*
- 16 Midlands Convocation Fund Raising Benefit for Haiti – Details to be announced
- 19 Mission Committee Meeting 6:00pm, Church
- 22 Consecration of 8th Bishop, W. Andrew Waldo, Christ Church, Greenville
- 23-28 Senior Warden out of town
- 26 Healing Service, 6:00pm, Church

**ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!
THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!**