

FROM THE DEAR PEOPLE OF GOD,



Lately the condition of the world appears as chaotic at best; and, at worst as coming apart at the seams. Terrorism is still a daily issue worldwide. Military juntas are so paranoid that they ignore the suffering of their own peoples. Oil prices are higher than they have ever been, and are predicted to go even higher. Economic downturns are occurring around the globe. The cost of food worldwide is causing millions to go hungry. The housing market in this country is in absolute upheaval. And those are just some of things over which we, human beings, can actually exercise some semblance of control. In general, greed, and the lust for power appear to be ever increasing while care for each other and "this our island home" appears to now be an afterthought.

Then there are all the natural disasters. The Tsunami a couple years ago in the Pacific is one example. All the disastrous hurricanes of 2004 are another. Myanmar has all but been destroyed by a cyclone. Tornadoes have recently ripped apart whole communities in the Midwest. China has been hit with the worst recorded disaster ever suffered by one people. The death toll is expected to top 80,000 people and millions have been left homeless and hopeless. And that doesn't account for all the disease (and the dis-ease) that is rampant in much of the world today.

We would seem to be in a real fix. Some are even saying that we are in "the end of days." Should they be right, and we really do not know that, then things are likely to get much worse and very quickly. Even so, people in every walk of life, every race, creed and nation are already struggling mightily and it is no wonder that many despair.

Ahh, but hope springs eternal. Eternal is the operative word in that sentence. St. Paul put it concisely and brilliantly in Romans 8:28 when he wrote, "God works all things together for good to those who love him and are called according to his purpose." Jesus told his disciples (that includes us), "I will be with you even to the end of the age." None of that insulates us from the suffering and pain of this world, nor from the anxiety of today. But it does hold hope up to us that even the most difficult, hurtful and agonizing things that we experience cannot overcome the Light of the world that is Jesus our Lord.

As Christian people, our response to all those difficult and even tragic things above is, *and should be*, compassion. Compassion for those who suffer (even ourselves) and recognition of what the Lord God of Hosts has continued to do for us. As Christian people our response is, *and should be*, reaching out to those who suffer, those who are in need; not out of obligation (the idea of keeping The Law), but out of gratitude toward the God who made us, calls us, and continues to provide for us.

Recognizing how we continue to be blessed, I think we need to ask ourselves, "How is God calling us" so that even these tragic events and situations might be turned to good? Our response in Christian compassion and generosity towards others is a living testament to Jesus being among us yet, and even to the end of the age. It is an example of people living out Jesus' prayer that we would all be one as he and the Father are one. Such compassion and generosity reach out and give hope, eternal hope, to those in despair. While we all look to the "down time" and relaxation of the summer months, don't forget to look for those opportunities to give hope, eternal hope, to those who are "in any [need] or trouble, that they may be delivered from their distress."

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



HERE'S TO ALL
THE SAINTS
CELEBRATING IN
JUNE

Beth Arndt	06/03	Chad Langdale	06/20
Brenda McGrew	06/03	Carter Siegling	06/20
Emily Matthews	06/04	Vincent Milano	06/23
Sandra Rankin	06/18		

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

BISCUITS, RICE AND MILK

As a result of the skyrocketing price of gasoline there has been a dramatic increase in the number of people in Fairfield County who can't afford to buy basic foodstuffs. In April the Fairfield Community Food Bank supplied essential food to 46 families plus 104 individuals. Although the Food Bank will of course gladly accept ANY non-perishable foodstuffs, they tell us they particularly need three kinds of grub. Cont'd on next page

HEALTHY CHURCH INITIATIVE

As a refresher, the Healthy Church Initiative is a program of the diocese that is funded by a generous grant. It focuses on assisting each congregation determine how they can maintain and continue to improve the health of their church. To that end, St. Stephen's will be visited by Tony Watkins, the diocesan consultant to walk us through the program processes on Sunday, June 22nd. This is a Sunday that I encourage all members of the congregation to attend, even though it is the summer, to participate in planning our future as a community of faith.

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

We held our Fourth Annual Mother's Day Brunch on Pentecost Sunday. This was a grand occasion to honor all mothers and those who have found themselves in a position of mothering. Mike Floyd helped to organize a wonderful waffle brunch served to the ladies by the Men Of St.. Stephen's. A nice added touch was that the ladies were "serenaded" by the men - a telling picture is included below.



Gentlemen, I have it on good authority from a bird on the inside who whispered in my ear - the ladies are busy planning some sort of reciprocal brunch for Father's Day on Sunday, June 15th. I was told that we should Be Prepared . . . (hmmm, that brings a few possibilities to mind).

Ladies, I'm sure you will be contacted by the yet incognito (to the men) coordinator of the day's events. I am sure the men will look forward, with great anticipation, to whatever it is that is in the works. I am also *HONESTLY* and *REVERENTLY* sure, that whatever is planned, it will *MERIT* our fond appreciation and give us much to talk about around the *CAMPFIRES* of summer.

So ladies, please turn out to make it a grand day. And gentlemen, please turn out to enjoy the *KIND* attention. Who knows, the ladies might also respond in kind and serenade us.

ROTA REVISION

FYI!!!! Due to various reasons, the Rota has recently been revised. The latest version is on the Bulletin Board for your perusal. Please, take the time to review it. As is the custom, locate someone with whom you can either swap days or who will take your turn for days where you may have a conflict and then notify the Vicar so the Epistle calendars and the Service Bulletins will properly reflect who is serving. Thank you.

ST. STEPHEN'S WEBPAGE

Did you know/remember that we now have a webpage? As of several months ago we entered upon the age of information and technology. Our webpage can be found at ststephenssc.org. On the webpage you can find an electronic copy of the Epistle, the current prayer list, a brief history of the church and the windows, a bulletin board, the telephone tree and several other things as well. So, if you have not checked it out recently, please do so. You can also get there via a link on the diocesan webpage directory.

BISCUITS, RICE AND MILK - CONT'D

The Food Bank needs:

1. Packaged "Mixes" (either Jiffy or generic) to make biscuits or cornbread.
2. Rice, especially in the convenient "Boil-in-Bag" or precooked forms.
3. Evaporated milk in 6 and 12 oz. cans.

Please remember to bring your donations to church and put them in the basket near the organ. It's a good way to serve our Lord.

Thank you in advance, Bob King

YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEWS

HEAR YE - HEAR YE!!

Calling all young (and not so young) people of the church. The normal expectation for high school graduates is that they are removed from the Rota as Acolytes / Crucifers. Well, we have seen so many of our Acolytes / Crucifers graduating over the last few years that we now have a real shortage of people to serve. Two more graduated this year and will come off the schedule in August. This is a ministry that can be done by anyone in the congregation and requires no diocesan training - it is all done "in-house." However, we also need some people to step forward as Chalicers. This ministry does require training and a certification by the diocese, but we can get you started while we wait for the next Diocesan Continuing Ed. Day. If you have done this in the past, or at another church, please consider taking up the mantle again. In short, your church needs you! Please pray about these ministries and speak with the Vicar about **your** calling.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Yeeehaaa! Aimwell Presbyterian is hosting this year's VBS roundup. Monday, June 9th at 5:45PM is the kick-off of the week that runs through Friday, June 13th. This year's theme is Cactus Canyon and is for children ages 4K - 6th grade. A special youth program is planned for 7th - 12th graders that will include a local service project. Time is short, buckaroos, so you need to saddle up, head 'em up and move 'em out. See the Padre for registration forms, or contact DeeDee Ruff.



St. Stephen's is rustling up and serving the grub on Monday and we need a few folks to assist at the chuckwagon. The menu is hot dogs and all the fixins. If you're willin' to help, contact Lynn Dwyer.