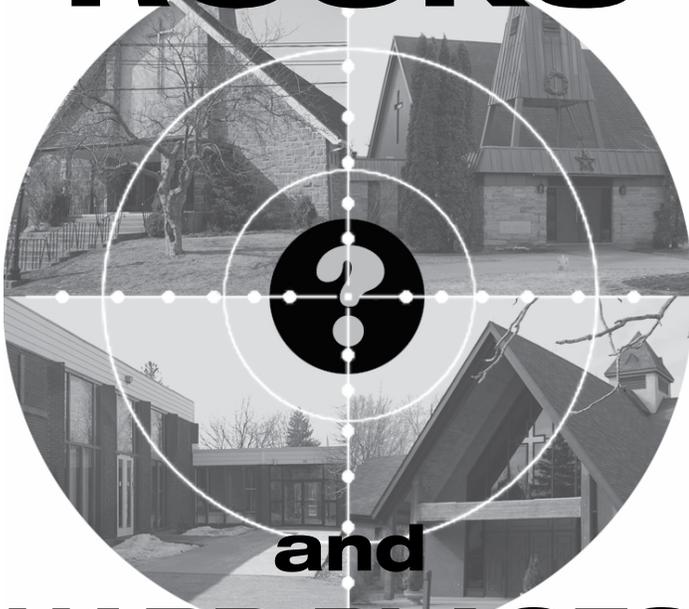


MESSENGER



ROCKS



and

HARD PLACES

All of the MESSENGERS so far this year have highlighted the future of the parish, both with respect to the recommendations of the Boken Report, and with that of the hard reality of budgetary shortfalls which have become accepted as annual events at Saint John the Baptist, it seems. Notwithstanding this latter circumstance, Rector's Warden, Brent Cowan, and the Rector himself, presented positive outlooks in articles which were published in March. As was mentioned in February, the Boken Report identified four local churches, including Saint John the Baptist, as being candidates for some form of reorganization, the most extreme solution being the closure of all their present buildings and the establishment of a 'new' combined congregation in a different, but undesignated, location. It is fair to say that the Corporation – and probably most parishioners – have not bought into this scenario, opting instead to look for solutions which will ensure the growth of St. J. the B. in its present premises. As is often the case, the *crisis* has created a sense of urgency and galvanized the Corporation, the Parish Council and, it is hoped, concerned parishioners to take a hard look at what needs to be done to turn the tide.

Perhaps inevitably, no matter which way we turn, argument surrounds many of the options proposed since it is difficult to know for certain what can be done to reach out successfully into the community. Moreover, the conclusions drawn from last year's survey suggest that significant change is the last thing most parishioners want. On that basis, the decision to try to reach "Prayer Book Anglicans", encouraging them to join in a "Prayer Book Parish", was made – but that was all before the publication of the Boken Report. With parish membership in decline and only a few new adherents attracted by the promise

(continued on p. 2)

The Servant Song

Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road;
We are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow til we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,
Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you;
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.

Richard Gillard, the composer and lyricist of 'The Servant Song' described its origins in the following words. *"It was in the first half of 1976 that I wrote Verse 3 ('I will hold the Christ-light for you ...') but, initially, no more than that. It wasn't until one particularly summery Sunday afternoon in December 1976 or January 1977, back in Auckland, that I took that scrap of paper out of my guitar case and began to meditate on that single verse, exploring the possibilities that it suggested. I remember that the other verses came quickly – although not in the order in which we now sing the Song."*

In 2001, the hymn was featured in a Remembrance Sunday broadcast from York Minster by the British TV programme, *Songs of Praise*. Richard Gillard adds that, although it *"sounded wonderful played on the Minster's grand organ, I still prefer the down-to-earth groundedness of a simple folk-song treatment but I let it go long ago. And that is as it should be."* DLP

'Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."

The Gospel according to Mark, Chapter 9, Verse 35

In memoriam

Winnie Hahn March 1930 – March 2010



Winnie Hahn was born in Burgeo Newfoundland, the only daughter in a family of boys. She remained in Newfoundland until she moved to Montreal for work. Winnie was an example of strength and perseverance to all who had the pleasure of knowing her as evidenced throughout her long battle with Parkinson's Disease. She will be sadly missed by her children and grandchildren and by those who knew her at Saint John the Baptist.

(‘Rocks’ continued from p.1)

of the Prayer Book liturgy, alternatives need to be examined. Among topics discussed at March’s Parish Council meeting was a more aggressive approach to advertising our presence as a place of worship. While one is tempted to imagine Ms. Boken laughing up her sleeve, this initiative was supported by both clergy and lay members of the Council. *(It is interesting to note that St. Paul’s Church, Lachine, which shares the same Boken status as St. J. the B., took the opportunity to advertise that it is looking for “another congregation to share its premises” – this in an advertisement published in the Religion page of The Gazette.)*

Be that as it may, where do WE start and how far should WE be prepared to go? To quote the editorial column in February’s MESSENGER, “*What are we trying to sell and to whom are we trying to sell it?*” In looking to find an answer to this question, the risks are obvious. If, indeed, parishioners prefer to maintain the status quo, what will happen if decisions affecting the future of the parish alienate some in the present congregation?

An example of this was raised at the Parish Council. The *Family Service* remains little different from regular Sunday worship; yet some parishioners, apparently, prefer not to attend, perhaps fearing that it is, in fact, somehow *different enough* to disrupt their worship experience. By contacting parish families with children, Rev. Glencross hopes to find out how the form of family worship could be adapted to more accurately reflect the needs and temperaments of their children and young people. Yet it is difficult to see what can be achieved within our current practices. Whether we like it or not, parents are caught on the horns of a dilemma, between the proverbial ‘rock and a hard place’. In our society, little consideration is given to the notion of Sunday as a day when young people may reasonably be expected to attend church with their families. Hockey, swimming, indoor soccer, instrumental groups and many other pastimes are routinely scheduled for that day. Busy schedules determine that the weekend is the only time when most of these activities can

feasibly be organized. Parents wish the best for their children and find it difficult to deny them access to the development of physical skills and other beneficial activities in which most of their peers participate.

The parish faces a similar difficulty as it tries to confront *the membership challenge*, for the same mind-set prevails. The Church is “marketing its wares” in a climate where Sundays are largely devoted to recreational pursuits, where stores remain open and sporting events of all kinds take place. Moreover, *religion* has been generally degraded. The popular view of churches and their people is clearly tainted by the publicity surrounding cases of priestly misconduct and by a concomitant ecclesiastical intransigence, interpreted in the media as “cover-up” of one kind or another. This makes an easy excuse, for those who wish to seek one, when it comes to justifying the continued relevance of “*the church*” in daily life.

David L. Paterson, Editor

Blessings, here and there

If memory serves me correctly, Peter Hannen advanced the thought that, since we bless battleships, and bless pets, why should we not bless same sex unions? In response, the statement was made that this is trivializing blessings in general, by the reference to battleships and pets. Not so.

One blesses a battleship for several reasons. First of all, it is the home, the safe refuge, of perhaps a thousand seamen. Secondly, its purpose is to defend us from the assaults of our enemies (e.g. Nazi Germany of recent memory) and it is an agent in the maintenance of peace, order and good government, for all of which we pray in the BCP.

And how about pets? We bless them because they are a part of a loving relationship. They are teaching us to care for the less powerful members of society, and in return they are giving us unconditional love. God is love (1 John 4:8) and where there is love, there is God, and where there is God, no blessing is out of place. *Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.*

Allan Marjerison, Deacon

Ascension & Pentecost

Remember that incident in the Easter garden, when Mary Magdalene longs to embrace the risen Lord? And he says “*Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to the Father.*” (John 20.17) The point is this: those who follow him must be weaned from earthly hopes and expectations. The earthly, the fleshly, must be transformed, transfigured, so that we see its true reality as spiritual. In that sense, he must depart from us, and it is expedient that he go away. “*The flesh profiteth nothing,*” he tells us, “*the words I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*” (John 6.63) In the travail of earthly life, we must give birth to faith, a faith which knows God as Spirit.

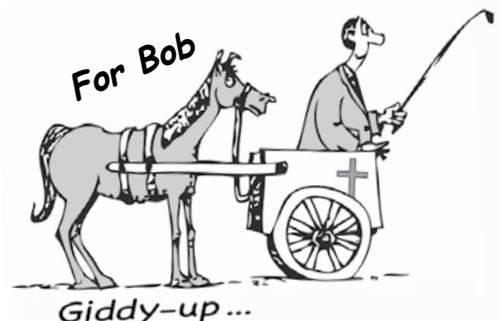
I know that to speak of spiritual life, or life in the Spirit, sounds pretty obscure to many Christians. But if that is really so, what then is our religion all about? We are risen with Christ; we are born anew of water and the spirit. We seek those things which are above, the life of Ascension and Pentecost being the fundamental reality of our life. We are to ascend with him “*in heart and mind*” and “*with him continually to dwell.*”

And that is not really so obscure.

From a Sermon for Ascension Day,
Dr. Robert Crouse

New piano

A new piano for use in the Hall was obtained as a gift from Gerry Moshonas. The net cost, which included complete renovation, delivery and provision of a dolly, was approximately \$800.00, to be paid out of the Choir Fund. The piano will be used principally by the groups who rent our premises. A plaque recognizing the donation and a protective cover have yet to be obtained.



SPRING SALE • Saturday, May 1st • 9.00 a.m. - Noon

Nearly new items Clothes Books CDs Toys Household goods Plants

Help is required on Friday, April 30th, to sort and Saturday, May 1st to sell, plus clean-up at noon. Call Dorothy Allen at 514-695-7597

Ascension Day in The Baltics

Cathedral and Senate Square, Helsinki, Finland



A memory of a past Ascension Day in the mid seventies came back to me as I started to write this article. We were in Indonesia on a railway contract with the family and had been there for several months. Our children had made local friends and we had found a Christian Church. One of Debbie's friends, a very outgoing Indonesian teenager, came to visit us on a school day, on a Thursday. We were surprised to see her but she explained that she had no school since it was a holiday. We assumed a Moslem special day but "No," she said, "this is a very special day for you!" I must say we all looked at her a bit blankly. She continued. "It is the day your Jesus ascended into heaven! You must be very happy!" Yes, Ascension Day is a Holiday, in that very Moslem country, as Jesus is regarded as an important religious figure. I must say we were a bit overwhelmed at her knowledge, as Ascension Day has never really been a day we have celebrated as a family in any special way – and I don't think we even were aware it was Ascension Day !

Altar, Temppeilaukio Church (Church of the Rock), Helsinki, Finland



Last year I went on a Baltic Cruise, a wonderful trip from Florida to Russia. Ascension Day in 2009 was on May 21st right in the middle of my adventure. This is a National holiday in all of the Baltic States and, being on a Thursday, promises a lovely four day weekend. As such, you can imagine, it is a very popular holiday! The Lutheran Religion is the State Religion in many of the countries we visited – Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Germany – and all observe this Holy Day as a National holiday. After the Reformation the lovely old Roman Catholic churches became Lutheran. These old churches seemed more "High Church" to my lower Anglican eyes – ranks of candles at the



Altar, St-Nicolai Church, Kiel, Germany

front of the chancel and confessionals were also in use. Most had beautifully restored organs, some of which were completely destroyed during the Second World War. The frontals were white, and altar flowers were also white in preparation for the Ascension Day services, later in the week.

In Helsinki, in the Senate Square in front of the magnificent Cathedral, an outdoor altar had been set up and huge white banners erected, ready for a service. The more modern Temppeilaukio, Church of the Rock, was also ready for the Thursday service – white frontal and candles. The service paper was ready on the narthex table. The next day we were in Stockholm and our tour guide said, "It is a good thing you are here today because tomorrow everyone will be on their way to their cottages. We have a four day weekend coming up!" In Kiel, the following day, we visited the lovely old church of St Nicholas and the service was to begin in an hour. We heard the organist warming up! The shopping square was full of families—no holiday for the shop keepers!

I have no idea how many people attend these services but I was very impressed that everyone knew it was Ascension Day and most knew it was forty days after Easter. For those who may be uncertain of its origins, Ascension Day commemorates the ascension of Jesus into Heaven (Acts 1, 6–11). According to tradition, it was first celebrated in 68 AD however there is no written evidence of the Ascension Day feast until about 385 AD. It is one of the six holy days of obligation of the Catholic Church wherein mass must be attended.

Ascension Day this year is Thursday, May 13th. As Debbie's young Indonesian friend said, "You should be very happy!" So be happy on May 13th!

Fortieth Day after Easter, sometimes called *Holy Thursday* (BCP page 201).

Margaret Nicoll-Griffith



Jack and Marjorie Brayne would like to thank all parishioners who attended their special day on December 20th last year.

A special "Thank you" to everyone involved in making the lovely reception possible and also to those who took the great photographs for them to treasure.

In the beginning was the Word

Male and Female?

In the current issue of the Montreal Anglican there is a reprint of articles previously printed in the MESSENGER. The thesis is proposed that a complete human being is the union of a man and a woman; that man without woman is incomplete; that Eve's first purpose was to complement and complete Adam.

That does not seem to be supported by scripture. In Genesis 2:18, after God had given Adam the task of looking after the garden, he said "It is not good for a man to be alone. I will make him a helper as his partner." So God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air and presented them to Adam, but none was found as a helper and partner.

Still determined to provide one, God took the rib from Adam, made it into a woman, and presented her to Adam. And Adam said, in effect, "Wow! Her DNA is the same as mine (Genesis 2:23: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called woman.")

So what did Adam get to make him a complete human being? More of himself!

To accept the thesis that man is incomplete without woman (and presumably, the equivalent thesis that woman is incomplete without man, is to accept that, looking back in history, there is a long line of incomplete people – all those celibate popes, Elizabeth 1st of England, Mother Teresa, Jean Vanier, and even, if one dare say (unless you believe that he did marry Mary Magdalene), a certain well-known citizen of Nazareth

Seems to me that, despite the thoughtful and well-presented thesis, it cannot be accepted . . .

Allan Margerison, Deacon

Interpreting the Law

Dr. Laura Schlesinger who calls herself "an observant Orthodox Jew" runs a radio show, and recently stated that homosexuality is an abomination according to the Law in *Leviticus 18:22*.

She received a copy of an open letter written to her by James M. Kaufman, Professor Emeritus of the University of Virginia, part of which is as follows:

"Thank you, Dr. Laura for giving me the means to handle any arguments about Homosexuality. I shall now simply quote *Leviticus 18:22* ... End of debate.

"However, I do need further advice from you regarding other elements of God's Laws and how to follow them.

"1. *Leviticus 25:44* that I may possess slaves, provided that they are purchased from neighbouring nations. A friend of mine states that this applies to Mexicans but not Canadians. Could you clarify? Why can't I buy a Canadian?

"2. I would like to sell my daughter into slavery, as sanctioned in *Exodus 21:7*. In today's market, what would be a fair price to ask ?

"3. I have a neighbour who insists on working on the Sabbath. *Exodus 35:2* clearly states that he should be put to death. Am I morally obligated to kill him myself, or should I ask the police to do it?

"4. A friend of mine tells that even though eating shellfish is an abomination as stated in *Leviticus*, it is a lesser abomination than homosexuality. Can you settle this? Is there a pecking order in abominations?

"5. My uncle has a farm. He violates the Law by planting two different crops in the same field, and his wife wears garments made of two different kinds of thread. He also tends to curse and blaspheme a lot. Is it really necessary to get the whole town together to stone them as stated in *Leviticus 24:10-16*? Couldn't I just burn them to death at a private family affair, like we must do to people who sleep with their in-laws (*Leviticus 20:14*)

"6. I know it may seem trivial to non-Orthodox Jews, but *Leviticus 11: 6-8* states that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean. May I still play football if I agree to wear gloves?

"I know you must have studied all these things, and await your replies.

I really would like to own a nice polite Canadian."

Mark Levesley

PRAYER - WIRELESS
ACCESS TO GOD WITH
NO ROAMING FEE.

SALVATION
GUARANTEED
OR YOUR SINS
CHEERFULLY
REFUNDED

Rector's Note

A Little Christian Humor

Jesus and Satan were having an on-going argument about who was better on the computer. They had been going at it for days, and frankly God was tired of hearing all the bickering. Finally fed up, God said, "THAT'S IT! I have had enough. I am going to set up a test that will run for two hours, and from those results, I will judge who does the better job." So Satan and Jesus sat down at the keyboards and typed away.

They moused. They faxed. They e-mailed ... with and without attachments.

They downloaded ... did spreadsheets! They wrote reports and they created labels and cards ... they created charts and graphs ...

They did some genealogy reports.

They did every job known to man. Jesus worked with heavenly efficiency and Satan was faster than fire.

Then, ten minutes before their time was up, lightning suddenly flashed across the sky, thunder rolled, rain poured, and, of course, the power went off. Satan stared at his blank screen and screamed every curse word known in the underworld.

Jesus just sighed ... finally the electricity came back on, and each of them restarted their computers. Satan started searching frantically, screaming:

"It's gone! It's all GONE! 'I lost everything when the power went out!"

Meanwhile, Jesus quietly started printing out all of his files from the past two hours of work.

Satan observed this and became irate. "Wait!" he screamed. "That's not fair! He cheated! How come he has all his work and I don't have any?"

God just shrugged and said, "JESUS SAVES!"

Reverend Bruce Glencross

SIGNS of the times . . .

There are some questions
that can't be answered by

Google™