

The Messenger

April
2009

Volume 14
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Congregations Gather for Finance Meeting

by Rise Thew Forrester

More than forty people from across the diocese, some traveling from their winter homes in Minnesota and Indiana, came to Marquette on March 14 to hear a presentation on diocesan finances and the challenges that lay ahead. Kevin Thew Forrester, Ministry Developer/Bishop-elect, reflected for the group on the situation that is before us as a diocese, as communities, as individuals. "Something very good, that we cannot see well now, will come out of the struggle we find ourselves in," he said. Each participant was asked to say what gives them hope, as they introduced themselves to the group. As each person offered their claim on hope, some themes began to emerge: the strength of mutual ministry, the deep faith of the people of the diocese, the gathering of so many people on such a beautiful day, from so far away; the good reliable leadership we have, and a sense that we can get together in crisis and solve problems.

Manuel Padilla, member of the new Episcopal Ministry Support Team and Ministry Developer in the Western Region, laid out the situation that we face: an economy in recession, large losses in our endowment funds from the stock market plunge, a declining population in most of the Upper Peninsula. "If you are using a map and a compass, you have to know where you are when you start," he said. "This is information so that together we can figure out where we are, and together we can figure out where we're going."

He offered figures and graphs that illustrated the decline, over the past 10 years, in average Sunday attendance in our churches and that our income has been static. With our current numbers of people and

giving, the four regions of the diocese can afford 2.9 Ministry Developers, without any funds from the diocesan budget. We currently have 4.5, and the difference is made up by the diocesan budget. The leadership of the diocese believes that the staffing level we have now is rock bottom. "We have not been cutting fat in the last few years," Padilla said. "There is no fat in our budget. We are talking about cutting off our limbs."

Given the serious situation, a proposal is being developed by the Core Team to discuss how we might remove the regional boundaries as far as budgeting, so that all Ministry Developers are paid out of the diocesan budget, which would remove some of the convoluted financing that currently happens. There are benefits and costs to such a plan.

It was stated clearly throughout the meeting that the current trends cannot be ignored. Much is out of our control: the stock market and economy, the declining overall population of the Upper Peninsula. However, we do have control of how we plan strategically, and how much energy we put into congregational development.

"Our biggest challenge is to grow our congregations," said Thew Forrester. "We are here in the midst of our very busy lives, because our way of following Christ gives us hope. If we embrace fully who we are, there will be enough people attracted to our congregations." The participants echoed the desire to learn more, for information and help with stewardship, planned giving and evangelism.

On **May 16**, the Diocesan Spring Conference will take up the challenge of growing our churches, gathering at St. Stephen's, Escanaba on the theme, "**The Gift we have to Offer**".

LifeCycles Reflections on Being At-One with God

by Kevin G. Thew Forrester

Lent and Suffering:

the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah

Second-Isaiah seeks to assure the people-in-exile in Assyria that God is still with them. Of all the verses written by Second-Isaiah, none so embrace and ponder the human and divine tragedy of suffering and loss as the four texts commonly called the “servant songs”. Through the words of Second-Isaiah, we discover a faithful nation wrestling mightily with what it means for innocent ones to be slaughtered.

Daniel Berrigan, in his poetic book, *Isaiah: Spirit of Courage, Gift of Tears*, offers a very insightful theology of the suffering servant, and one which deserves our attention. Berrigan hears in the *silence* of the suffering servant a song crying out for peace and justice. Silence is not resignation to a divinely ordained and demanded fate. Silence is refusal to participate in such ungodly action. There are no words which can make right the human act of slaughtering an innocent victim. The sacrifice of the suffering servant does not atone for human sin, as if any human action could divorce us from the presence of God. Humanity’s inability to see that we are already *at-one* with God, the Creator, is what makes possible this act of supreme violation.

The songs of the suffering servant, as the poetry of her silent ordeal is known, reveal to us, as with the words of Jeremiah, that God does not require human sacrifice. The sufferings and slaughter of the suffering servant do not create a condition where human beings are now at-one with God and each other. From the beginning, God has created us in the divine image. From the beginning, we are at-one with God and each other. Our brokenness is that we fail to see this

at-oneness; and in our ignorance, fear, and greed strike one another down in the name of God.

Second-Isaiah reveals a community struggling to know God as the one on the side of all victims. Whoever this author is, they clearly see the innocence of the victim. But Second-Isaiah also speaks to us of the community’s persistent belief that “it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain” (Is. 53:10). Thus, there remains tension in the author – and in Israel itself – about the place and role of God in human sacrifice. Somehow this tension will have to be resolved. Berrigan asks us to consider that the resolution is in favor of the victim. It is not human sacrifice God desires, but human mercy and compassion for

Though treated harshly, you bore it humbly
and never opened your mouth.
You were like a lamb led to slaughter, or a sheep before shearers:
you were silent and never opened your mouth.
Taken by force and condemned,
who would ever have foreseen your destiny?
You were taken from the land of the living,
and fatally struck down for the sin of the people.
You were buried with the wicked
and entombed with the rich,
though you had done no wrong,
and deceit was not found in your mouth.
But Our God was satisfied to crush you
and put you to grief.

(Isaiah 53.7-8)

and solidarity with all victims – for all are at-one with God. When we realize our *at-one-ment* with God and each other, perhaps we will indeed begin to see great things.

(*LifeCycles* Cycle II, Unit 1, Session 2. *LifeCycles* is the formation/education process developed by the Diocese of Northern Michigan in partnership with other dioceses, Episcopal Divinity School, and LeaderResources. Each month we will have a selection from *LifeCycles* that speaks to our at-one-ment with God, each other and creation.)

Room At The Inn Returns To St. Paul's In May

By Pat Micklow

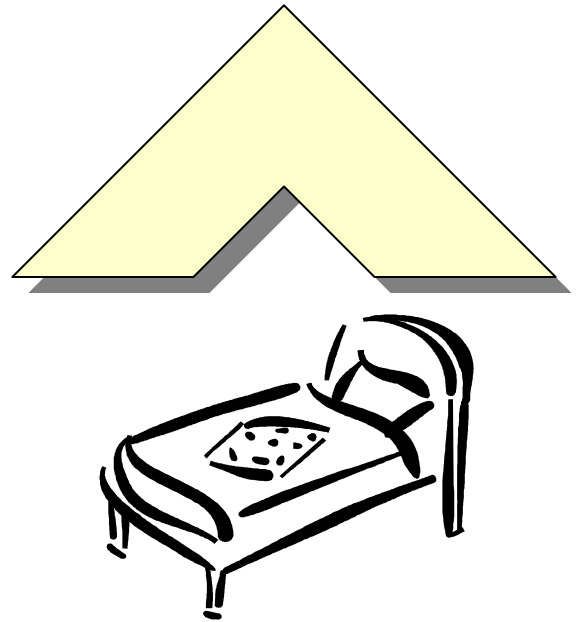
St. Paul's will again host *Room At the Inn*, the ecumenical program for Marquette's homeless, from **Sunday, May 17 to May 24**. We are hopeful that our St. Paul's parishioners will rally and provide the same level of support *Room At the Inn* (RATI) received last November when we hosted our first week of this remarkable program.

The RATI Board of Directors has decided that the program will continue on its usual schedule and not operate during the summer months. So the program will be completed on May 30, and will begin again in September, 2009. It has been a very successful program which has served hundreds of homeless men and women since its inception. More local churches (over 20) have joined this effort and the trained volunteer list continues to swell to nearly 700 volunteers.

Al Raymond will join Iris Erickson and Pat Micklow as coordinators of our St. Paul's week in May. We will need meals to be served and shift workers to fill the seven days of hosting. There are also jobs for hauling mattresses and totes, and doing laundry. We will provide sign-up sheets at the end of April and you can expect that we will be in contact with those of you who have helped before! We'll also publicize any new volunteer trainings that may occur before May 17th for those who may wish to become involved with working a shift. (Providing meals or hauling or laundry jobs do not require attending the 3-hour training session.)

Finally, we are in need of used twin/single bedding in good condition including fitted and flat sheets, pillowcases, and mattress pads. Any of these items that you would be willing to donate would be appreciated very much.

Please check your schedule and let us know if you are willing to help. As I reported to you last November, our volunteers really have enjoyed their participation in this program and feel they have received so much from this direct mission of helping others! It is truly God's work.



Meals, Please *by Bob Railey*

Bob & Joan Rafferty's two nearest sons have been staying with them as much as their work situations will allow; both will not be able to continue doing so to the same extent. Some of us have begun providing a dinner-time meal when neither son can be here for two or more nights in a row. A sign-up list for members of St. Paul's to provide such meals will be maintained on the "Pastoral Care" bulletin board located on the kiosk inside parking lot entrance of the church. Dinners not covered by us will be provided by hospice if they have at least 10 days notice. Young Bob Rafferty keeps me posted on when coverage is needed. Notes regarding providing a meal are on the sign-up list. Questions—ask Bob or Nancy Railey.



From the Welcomers Committee

by Sandy Purrington

Name Tags: A Friendly Reminder

Scientific studies show that people tend to be much more likely to approach others in social situations - like coffee hour after church - when there is a way to be reminded of their names - e.g., name tags! Name tags for all members of the congregation can be found in the little baskets at each entrance to the sanctuary.

Name tags are helpful for all of us -- especially for newcomers to St. Paul's. The bottom line is that they help us to be a more friendly, hospitable and welcoming congregation. If you might have gotten out of the habit of wearing your nametag, please consider wearing it again!

Addresses and Phone Numbers

For those of you who are not receiving via email, This Week At St. Paul's, our weekly schedule of services, meetings and activities, and would like to, please send your email address to Kathy at kathylenten201@uplogon.com. We would like to include email addresses and cell phone numbers on our Communications List (previously known as the "Quick List"). If you would like this information on the list, please send it to Kathy.

Welcome, Iris Erickson

by Sandy Purrington

Iris Erickson was formally welcomed to St. Paul's in the fall. She grew up in Minneapolis and taught in the elementary schools there for many years. About 20 years ago, she visited Marquette, felt drawn to the community and region and decided to move here. She greatly enjoys the U.P., especially the many outdoor opportunities. She has a golden retriever, Sandy, and they love to walk together on the beach and in the woods.

Iris says she loves St. Paul's and greatly appreciates the "openness and warmth" here. "It's very easy to become involved at St. Paul's," she stated, and she is especially attracted to our outreach programs. Currently, she actively participates with St. Paul's contingent in the "Room at the Inn" program, our community outreach to Marquette's homeless population. She is a newly elected member of the vestry. We happily welcome Iris to the St. Paul's community.

Easter Egg Hunt!

The Older Children are preparing for the Egg Hunt on Easter morning. After the Easter Day service, the younger children will wait in the Great Room while the older kids hide the eggs. Don't forget to bring your Easter basket!



Updates from Children and Youth Ministries

Children and Youth Ministries have been working hard to plan for the rest of the spring Sundays. This year has been a time of growth and change, as we have new families join St. Paul's and the children are more and more a part of our Sunday life together. This spring we continue our Sunday morning activities, along with the Older Youth gathering on the 4th Friday of each month.

Children and Youth Ministry meetings are held the 4th Sunday of each month (during the parish breakfast—yum!). Please come and join in!

For more information, contact one Rise Thew Forrester, risetf@gmail.com or 360-8561.

All Are Welcome

Recently, we have been running a bulletin announcement inviting any who would like to be received into the Episcopal Church to consider doing so at our May 3 liturgy when Tom Ray will be commissioning/ordaining here at St. Paul's. During discussion at our March MST meeting, it became obvious that there is some confusion about "welcoming", which we do whenever individuals or families come into our midst, and the range of Episcopal rites that may be celebrated during a bishop's visit.

"Welcoming" is a brief liturgy conducted on any Sunday by the Presider and assembled congregation. It signifies that those welcomed are considering making St. Paul's their church family/home. It does not imply anything about being an Episcopalian; it does not involve making or renewing baptismal vows; it is not "sacramental" in our historic understanding of that word.

In the baptismal liturgy (BCP 303), candidates may be presented to the bishop for confirmation, for reception into the Episcopal Church/Anglican communion, or for reaffirmation of baptismal vows. Note that, while baptism may be done by any presbyter,

these other three rites may only be done by a bishop.

The intent of confirmation has always been a "mature age" reaffirmation of baptismal vows usually first made on our behalf in infancy; in practice, it became a rite of passage, being done at an age before many are ready to make such a mature affirmation. Confirmation also became the doorway to participation in Holy Eucharist. Fortunately, the modern church has returned to the older practice where baptism marks entrance to membership, including Holy Eucharist.

In recent years, confirmation has been replaced by "reaffirmation", which may be done at more than one significant time in one's life.

Initially, reception was intended for those transferring into the Episcopal Church (Anglican Communion) from any other branch of the Catholic tradition (Roman, Orthodox). With the recent action in which the ELCA (Lutheran) and Episcopal Church have a complete honoring of each other's ministries and sacraments, reception necessarily includes any transferring from that denomination. The modern thrust for reception is that it be broadened to include any Christian denomination in which the prospective person was an active, committed member.

An Invitation to Consider Hosting House Blessing/Home Communion

by Bob Railey

Easter, which runs from April 19 through May 31 this year, is our most celebrative season. For many years now, we have used celebrations in the home as one way of emphasizing this. A sign-up list is posted on the sign-up bulletin board in the chapel hallway if you would like to have a House Blessing or host Home Communion. Of course, such celebrations can be done outside the Easter season. Questions—ask any of us who are hyper-active in things liturgical.

Prayer for use during the "Consent" process

Following the action by Special Convention in February, our Diocese awaits approval (consent) by a majority of the dioceses of the Episcopal Church. Following is a prayer that members and congregations of this diocese are invited to use while we wait.

*God of vision and imagination,
you know us better than we know ourselves:
grant to our diocese an awareness of your presence
as we await the consent of the wider church
to the action of our convention.*

*May the gift of your creativity and imagination
guide Kevin and the Episcopal Ministry Support Team
in their formation
as we continue our journey with courage, wisdom,
listening hearts, creativity, and a willingness to risk.
We ask this in the name of your Son.*

Amen.

The Annual Diocesan Spring Conference

will take up the challenge of growing our churches.

All are invited to come and gather information
and share ideas on
program development, stewardship, planned giving and evangelism.

“The Gift We Have to Offer”

Sharing the unique gift of the Episcopal Church in the Upper Peninsula

Saturday, May 16, 2009

St. Stephen's, Escanaba

9:00 a.m. Gathering

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Meeting

Preachers, Presiders and Deacons

Sundays:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Preside</u>	<u>Preach</u>	<u>Deacon</u>
5-Apr	Palm Sunday	Kevin	Kevin	Coralie
12-Apr	Easter Day	Bob	Judd	Pat
19-Apr	Easter 2	Jim	Jim	Coralie
26-Apr	Easter 3	Rise	Rise	Pat

Special:

9-Apr	Maundy Thu	Kevin	Kevin	Coralie	7:00 p.m.
10-Apr	*Good Friday	Marcia			7:00 p.m.
11-Apr	Great Vigil	Kevin	Kevin	Coralie	9:00 p.m.

Holy Days (combined with Wednesday Evening Prayer) :

<u>Date</u>	<u>Holy Day</u>	<u>Preside</u>
22-Apr	Mark	Bob
29-Apr	Philip & James	Marcia

*Good Friday Ecumenical Service: This year, St. Paul's will host the annual, noon, Good Friday Ecumenical Service. This year's preacher will be Charlie West of Grace United Methodist. This year's offering will go to two local health care agencies: Beacon House and Medical Care Access Coalition.

April 2009 Calendar

Wednesday	1	Evening Prayer Choir	5:30 pm 7:00 pm
Thursday	2	Mindfulness Meditation	7:45 am
Sunday	5	Ministry Support Team mtg. Holy Eucharist: Palm Sunday	9:00 am 10:30 am
Monday	6	Dance & Relaxation classes	5:30 pm
Tuesday	7	Mindfulness Meditation Executive Committee Group I	7:45 am 10:00 am 1:30 pm
Wednesday	8	Evening Prayer Choir	5:30 pm 7:00 pm
Thursday	9	Mindfulness Meditation Maundy Thursday Service	7:45 am 7:00 pm
Friday	10	Good Friday, Ecumenical Service Good Friday, Evening Service, Morgan Chapel	12:00 pm 7:00 pm
Saturday	11	Holy Saturday, Prayers at the Tomb Easter Vigil	10:00 am 9:00 pm
Sunday	12	Holy Eucharist: Easter	10:30 am
Monday	13	Dance & Relaxation Classes	5:30 pm
Tuesday	14	Mindfulness Meditation Finance Committee	7:45 am 12:00 pm
Wednesday	15	Evening Prayer Choir	5:30 pm 7:00 pm
Thursday	16	Mindfulness Meditation Vestry Meeting	7:45 am 7:00 pm
Sunday	19	Holy Eucharist: 2 Easter	10:30 am
Monday	20	Dance & Relaxation Classes	5:30 pm
Tuesday	21	Mindfulness Meditation Camp New Day Liturgy and Ministry Class	7:45 am 5:00 pm 6:30 pm
Wednesday	22	Evening Prayer Choir	5:30 pm 7:00 pm
Thursday	23	Mindfulness Meditation Scottish Folk Dancing	7:45 am 7:00 pm
Friday	24	Youth After School program	3:00 pm
Sunday	26	Youth Ministry Meeting All Parish Breakfast Holy Eucharist: 3 Easter	9:00 am 9:15 am 10:30 am
Monday	27	Dance and Relaxation Class	5:30 pm
Tuesday	28	Mindfulness Meditation	7:45 am
Wednesday	29	Evening Prayer Soup Supper (Altar Guild hosts) Choir	5:30 pm 6:00 pm 7:00 pm
Thursday	30	Mindfulness Meditation	7:45 am

April Birthdays

Rise Thew Forrester	6
Peggy Frazier	9
John Burt	11
William Ostwald	11
Andrew Goodrich	12
Sonja Soderberg-Wagstaff	12
Jack Bullock	14
Bill Sheehan	15
Don Wussow	15
Marcella Platt	17
Joan Rafferty	18
Joan Petersen	27
Ann Smith	27
Jan Brodersen	29
Jim Sorensen	29

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**The
Messenger
Team**

Late Breaking News

April Ladies Luncheon by Barb Carpenter

The Ladies Luncheon will be held at **Coco's** on Friday **April 17** at 11:30 a.m. Please call June Davis at 228-2861 for a reservation by noon on Thursday, April 16. Everyone is welcome!

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