

## NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

I am writing these words shortly after having a wonderful Annual Meeting. It was filled with grace, love and the Holy Spirit. It was a time for a reality check as we heard reports from Bishop Garrison's visit to our church, his unwillingness to embrace sound doctrine, and his unhappiness with the Vestry's decision to redirect funds to support orthodox ministries and missions. We heard read a very stern and threatening letter from the Bishop.

It was a sobering letter which seemed to affirm in writing what some only heard second hand, that the Bishop is unwilling to change his mind on the issues with which we confronted him when he met with us.

This galvanized the support of those present for the action taken by the Vestry to affiliate with the American Anglican Council (a group of Episcopalians who stand for orthodox doctrine and teaching). By joining the AAC the Vestry is not saying our church is leaving the Episcopal Church, we are simply choosing to join ranks with other like-minded believers from all over the country who seek new ways of living out our orthodox beliefs.

The Annual Meeting was also a time for great rejoicing as we heard some of the things happening at St. Michael's. We were also able to honor a number of people who were nominated by others in the congregation to receive the St. Michael's Medal Award.

One of the things I shared with those gathered at our AM was that it is a loving thing to seek to correct those Christians who are teaching false doctrines (that includes bishops). St. Paul says this in 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These (false teachings, myths and genealogies) promote controversies rather than God's work –

which is by faith. **The goal of this command** (telling false teachers not to teach false doctrine) **is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** Some have wandered away from these (sound doctrines) and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

"We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts (in the Greek – those who practice homosexuality), for slave traders and liars and perjurers – **and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me**" (1 Timothy 1:3-11; **emphasis added**).

We see from this passage that not only is sound doctrine related to theological doctrine, it is related to moral doctrine. There is a correlation between the sound doctrine which was not being taught by the "certain men" spoken of in verse 3 and the sound doctrine which was to be taught (in verse 10). This sound doctrine includes the moral code of the Old Testament.

St. Paul mentions the names of those, who because of their believing and teaching false doctrine, have shipwrecked their faith (1 Timothy 1:19-20).

When we talk about false teachers teaching false doctrine, we are not just talking about a disagreement, or different ways of looking at something. We are talking about people who are causing their own faith and the faith of their hearers to be shipwrecked, to be of no value. Those who teach these false doctrines and those who accept their teachings are, in fact, following a different Jesus and a different gospel

(see II Cor. 11:4; Gal.1:6-9). That Jesus and that gospel cannot save them.

So, when we talk about the importance of confronting false teachers and false teaching, we are not talking simply about differing opinions, we are talking about a salvation issue here. No matter how sincere a person may be, if they are trusting in a different Jesus or a different gospel to save them, they will be sincerely wrong.

We are, I believe, doing the most loving thing we can do when we seek to point out to false teachers and others ways in which they have deviated from sound doctrine (both moral and theological).

I want to conclude with a quote from the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer. *“If there is no absolute moral standard, then one cannot say in a final sense that anything is right or wrong. By absolute we mean that which applies to all people, that which provides a final or ultimate standard. There must be an absolute if there are to be morals, and there must be an absolute if there are to be real values. If there is no absolute beyond man’s ideas, then there is no final appeal to judge between individuals and groups whose moral judgments conflict. We are merely left with conflicting opinions.”* How Should We Then Live (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), page145.

What we, as orthodox Episcopalians, are saying is that we believe the Bible (backed up by the earliest teachings of the Apostolic church, the three creeds, the four ecumenical councils and the first five centuries of Church history) contains those absolute moral standards.

The bishop and people like him do not believe this. Thus, we are at an impasse. The question is this – is there a way that we can continue to live under the leadership of bishops and a national church who are leading people away from the real Jesus and the real gospel by teaching false doctrine? This is the question the Vestry is continuing to

explore. Perhaps there is. We hope the bishop and the Episcopal Church will repent of false teachings.

We need your prayers as we seek God’s guidance and direction through this difficult time. We should also remain hopeful as the primates of the Anglican Communion continue to explore ways that this situation can be resolved. We should remain confident in God’s ability to provide for us.

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4: 29-30).

In Jesus’ love,  
FR. ROGER

## **ASK THE RECTOR**

### ***What is Ash Wednesday?***

Our Ash Wednesday services are at 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. in the Church on February 25.

The first of forty days of Lent, named for the custom of placing blessed ashes on the foreheads of worshipers at Ash Wednesday services. The ashes are a sign of penitence and a reminder of our mortality, and may be imposed with the sign of the cross. Ash Wednesday is observed as a fast in the church year of the Episcopal Church. We are to “remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The Old Testament frequently mentions the use of ashes as an expression of humiliation and sorrow. Ashes used on Ash Wednesday are made from burned palms from previous Palm Sunday services.

This is considered a major Feast day in the life of the church and a day of obligation in which each member is expected to participate if able. It is also a great way to kick off the Lenten season in preparation for the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus at Easter.

## **LENT IS COMING**

Ash Wednesday, February 25, ushers in the Church season we call Lent. This season, 40 days before Easter (not counting Sundays) is a time in which we, as Christians, examine our lives through prayer, penitence, and fasting. We seek to spiritually cleanse and prepare ourselves for the new life represented in the celebration of Jesus' resurrection. It is a time in which we acknowledge our sins, grieve over them and repent of them. It is a time in which we practice sacrifice in some way.

Some sacrifice by cutting out or back on goodies, others sacrifice by extra acts of kindness and giving, still others sacrifice by denying themselves some earthly pleasure and replacing it with the pleasure of a spiritual exercise that draws them closer to Jesus.

While sacrifice is beneficial we must remember the word of God which says "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22).

## **WHAT'S NEW ON OUR WEBSITE?**

Bob Weekley, our Webmaster, has been working hard to refine and improve our website which can be found at **[www.st-michaels-buffalo.org](http://www.st-michaels-buffalo.org)**.

Tell the people you are trying to interest in our church to visit our website. They could just find something there to pique their interest.

## **WEBSITES TO VISIT**

Those who want to keep up with what is happening in this rapidly changing Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion are urged to visit the following websites:

[www.virtuosityonline.org](http://www.virtuosityonline.org) and [www.americananglican.org](http://www.americananglican.org). These sites will give you news you won't hear via the mainstream media or Episcopal News sources.

## **JANUARY VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS**

+ The Annual Meeting was held on January 11 in which the members of the parish who were there voted unanimously to affiliate with the American Anglican Council. A report was given regarding the Bishop's letter condemning our church for the way the Vestry voted to express its disapproval of the Bishop supporting unbiblical sexual practices. The Vestry submitted its budget. The budget reflected a possible redirection of funds to support orthodox mission and ministry organizations. New Vestry members were elected: Charles Gardinier, Ronna Bulera, and Robert Howard were affirmed by the vote of our members. Charles and Shirley Gardinier and Janice Rickard were elected as Delegates to Diocesan Convention. Alternates elected were Mark Dascomb, Addie Broome, Michael Rickard.

The following people were nominated by members of the congregation to receive the St. Michael's Medal Award for extraordinary service to the Lord and the Church. The recipients were Bea Bidell, Jack Bidell, Virginia Bradley, Sarah DiLiberto, Norma Fox, Shirley Gardinier, Donna Strain, and Betty Walker.

Debbie Mendel was officially welcomed as a new member of the Altar Guild. Mark Bidell, John Bidell, and Brian Webster were honored for their assistance given to the Altar Guild.

At the regular meeting of the Vestry on January 13 the following actions were taken:

+Finalized forms for affiliation with the American Anglican Council resulting from a unanimous vote of support from the Annual Meeting.

+Appointed Carol Weekley as Clerk of the Vestry, Betty Walker as Treasurer, Shirley Gardinier as Assistant Treasurer.

+Housing allowance for Fr. Roger accepted and will continue to be paid monthly, until further notice.

+Admin. Team: Decided not to continue lawn care agreement. Will get estimates for lawn maintenance (cutting and edging) service. Ed Gorczyca will draw up an agreement with the sexton and act as the sexton's supervisor.  
+Education: Looking for new leader  
+Missions: Bob Duvall will check with team to ask about whether or not to continue commitment with School 61.  
+Nurturing: Ronna Bulera is new team leader.

+Worship: Bob Howard assigned to worship team.

+. Gary Kadow will chair an ad hoc committee for AAC membership and other issues. He will complete AAC and Adequate Oversight forms and get them submitted. The Planned Giving presentation on hold until a later date.

+Fish Fries: Jack Bidell will make a plea to the congregation for a firm 6-week commitment. If unable to get enough people to help for all six weeks, we will cancel Fish Fries this year.

### **SUNDAY MORNING PRAYER MINISTERS NEEDED**

We are looking for a few good Prayers. Would you be interested in being trained to pray for Fr. Roger at 7:30 a.m. in the Conference Room? We are also looking for people who would be willing to be trained to pray for people at the Chapel altar during the Communion portion of our Eucharistic services.

**Welcome to Charles and April Infantino who have agreed to join our 7:30 a.m. pre-service prayer team.**

If you think you might like to explore one or both of these ministries, please contact Bob Weekley at 897-3722 or [rcweekley@aol.com](mailto:rcweekley@aol.com).

### **YOU CAN HELP**

As most of you know we have been printing out the whole service in our bulletins each week. Many have commented how easy it is to follow the service now. It is especially easy for visitors to enter into our worship.

Some have asked if it might be possible to help defray the costs of this printing. There are three ways you may do this. One is to buy paper for our copy machine. We use 8 ½ x 11 20 lb. bond white paper. If you can buy a ream or two (or a case) you can help reduce our office expenses.

The second way to help is to purchase paper for our newsletter. We currently are using legal size pastel yellow or cream colored paper- 8 ½ x 14 20 lb bond.

The third way to help is to purchase either a laser jet black ink cartridge (HP 74 L) or a black ink jet cartridge (HP #29). This will help reduce our costs of printing things from the computer for our bulletins and newsletters.

The fourth way is to donate stamps. We have to mail Newsletters to those who are unable to pick them up and we also send the weekly bulletin to shut-ins along with normal mail.

**Many thanks go out to those who have already donated paper to the office.**

### **MID-WEEK PRAYER AND PRAISE**

Those looking for a more intimate time of prayer and praise are encouraged to come together in the church's conference room each Thursday night at 7 p.m. We sing, pray, study Scripture, and share with one another.

On the third Thursday of each month we share communion together. Make plans to join us any Thursday.

## **TOWARD A GROWING MARRIAGE CONFERENCE**

Does your marriage need a spark? Are you having struggles in your relationship? Make plans to attend the "Toward a Growing Marriage Conference" on March 6.

This seminar is not a formal, dry, marriage conference. It's a time of fun and discovery to help you build the love relationship of your dreams. This seminar is also good for those planning to be married.

It features one of the premier speakers in the area of marriage, Dr. Gary Chapman.

If you want more information about this Buffalo conference see Fr. Roger, go to [www.MoodyConferences.com](http://www.MoodyConferences.com), or call 1-888-824-8246.

## **NEW STUDY OF REVELATION TO BEGIN**

On Sunday mornings between the services (about 9:15) a Bible study led by the Rector is held. Beginning February 1 a new study of the Book of Revelation will begin. All are welcome no matter what your level of Bible knowledge. BYOB (bring your own Bible). The class is held in the basement (undercroft).

## **DANIEL STUDY TO CONTINUE**

Each Wednesday a service of Holy Communion and Healing is held in the Undercroft at 9:30 a.m. Following this service (about 10 a.m.) we have a verse by verse Bible study. Beginning February 4 we will continue in our study of the Book of Daniel. All are welcome whether you have been to the class before or not.

## **CHURCH ENVELOPES**

There are still a few not picked up from the table by the elevator. Since it costs approximately \$2.00 to mail each one, if anyone could deliver those remaining to people they may see occasionally it would be appreciated.

## **FISH FRIES RETURN**

We hope to again have our Lenten Fish Fries beginning February 27. If, however, we cannot get enough people signed up to help for the full six-week period, we will have to cancel the Fish Fries. Help is needed on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. A co-Chair is needed to assist Jack Bidell on Wednesdays and Thursdays. If you are willing to help either as a co-Chair or simply to be here on any one of the above days, contact Jack Bidell at 832-0598.

## **BE A RESPITE VOLUNTEER!**

The Alzheimer's Association of Western New York has launched a new respite program designed to provide temporary relief for caregivers of persons with memory loss. The Association is seeking volunteers to provide in-home companionship and supervision for persons with Alzheimer's disease so that their caregivers may take a break. Volunteers visit in pairs for two hours every week or every other week. If you are interested in bringing respite to a caregiver and supervisory care, meaningful interaction, and friendship to an individual with memory loss, please contact Jennifer Baran at (716) 626-0600 or [Jennifer.Baran@alz.org](mailto:Jennifer.Baran@alz.org). Free training will be provided.

The Alzheimer's Association of WNY is dedicated to patient and family services, education, advocacy, and research in support of the more than 46,000 people in WNY who have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. One in 10 Americans over 65 and nearly half of those older than 85 have Alzheimer's. Fourteen million Americans will have Alzheimer's by the middle of this century unless a cure or prevention is found. For more information, please contact the Alzheimer's Association at (716) 626-0600 or (800) 273-6737 or internet access at [www.alzwny.org](http://www.alzwny.org).

## **GUARDIAN ANGEL GIFT SHOP**

Valentine's Day is coming fast! The Gift Shop has some nice gifts for everyone. Just arrived is a beautiful music box that plays "Amazing Grace." What a nice gift for someone special! Come and see!

On Sundays, the shop is open at 9:15 and after both services downstairs in the undercroft. Thank you for helping support the Women's Guild in their ministry by making your gift purchases through us.

## **SIGNBOARD**

Are you checking out the messages Debbie Mendel is putting on our outdoor signboard? She is doing a great job and our thanks to her for her efforts.

### **With U**

Before U were thought of or time had begun,  
God placed U in the name of his Son.  
And each time U pray,  
You'll see it's trUe.  
You can't spell out JesUs and not include U.  
You're a pretty big part of His wonderful name,  
For U, He was born;  
That's why He came.  
And His great love for U  
Is the reason He died.  
It even takes U  
To spell crUcified.  
Isn't it thrilling and splendidly grand,  
He rose from the dead,  
with U in His plan.  
The stones split away,  
The gold trUmpet blew,  
And this word resUrrection is spelled with a U.  
When JesUs left earth at His upward ascension,  
He felt there was one thing  
He just had to mention.  
"Go into the world and tell them it's true that I love them all - Just like I love U."

Contributed by Eve David.

## **WOMEN'S GUILD**

The Women's Guild will resume its' regular monthly meetings on Wednesday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Then we will plan our program for the rest of the year. If we don't make any plans, we will just lose interest SO please make a special effort to be there. Perhaps there are some newly retired women who, now that they have recovered from Holiday doings, will join us at Bible Study and the Healing Service which starts on 9:30 on Wednesday mornings. Father Grist makes the Bible come alive. I hope to see you there. *Virginia Bradley, President*

## **FISH FRIES RETURN**

Our Lenten Fish Fries return beginning February 27<sup>th</sup>. Help is needed on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Jack Bidell is Chairman (832-0598), and Mike Rickard (823-0354) and Gary Kadow (832-5469) are co-chairmen. Please contact any of these gentlemen if you can help on any of these days. Let us make this year the best ever for our Fish Fries.

## **MEN'S BROTHERHOOD**

The Men's Brotherhood meets monthly. Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 9:30 a.m. for a Breakfast meeting. Our Mission Statement: "To promote social and spiritual growth, through fellowship, unity and prayer, while living sharing and defending the Word of God."

Future events are:

May – Family Day at the Ballpark

June – St. Michael's Neighborhood Picnic

Aug/Sept. – A Night on Broadway (MusicalFare Theatre Night)

October – Oktoberfest Dinner & Concert

We invite all the men of St. Michael's to join us in fellowship. Come to the breakfast Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> and make new friends!

## **VESTRY**

The next Vestry meeting is February 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM**

We will meet February 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., the third Wednesday of February and then in March return to the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.

## **WORSHIP TEAM**

We will meet February 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.

**“Most Christians come to church when hatched, attached, or detached.”**

## **SENIORS COMPUTER TRAINING**

One of the ministries of the Buffalo Urban League at 15 East Genesee St. is offering FREE computer classes for Seniors 55 and over from 9 – 12, or 1-4 Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Class room space is limited to ten. Call Joel Groden at 854-7625, extension 221 to enroll. There is free parking.

## **CONDOLENCES**

Our Condolences to the family and friends of Ethyl Doze who went to be with our Lord January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

## **ANNUAL REPORTS**

Copies of the Annual Reports are available in the Office or from the Ushers.