

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

I had the opportunity in May and June to attend a Barbershop Quartet Training Class. It was fun to sing in close harmonies and to see men excited about something other than sports.

I made a lot of comparisons to these “Barbershoppers” and the Church while I attended these classes. I came up with the following observations:

First: I was personally invited to come to this class by someone already involved in Barbershop Quartets, Bob Weekley.

Second: When I arrived I was welcomed and greeted warmly by many different men.

Third: I was taken to an introductory class to explain the concept of Barbershop Quartets and was shown examples of how quartets should sound. I was given training in how to sing Barbershop style.

Fourth: I was encouraged and approached by many men telling me how glad they were that I was there.

Fifth: I noticed that these men were having fun. There was no gossiping, back-biting, or critical attitude apparent.

Sixth: They were faithful in their attendance at the weekly Monday meetings and didn’t seem at all put off by the fact that they were there for at least three hours. Not only did they meet once a week, many met for special practices to go over songs during the week.

Seventh; These men looked forward to going out into the community with the message and song of “Barbershopping.” They were willing to give up an occasional afternoon or weekend to perform for some group or event.

Eighth: Their enthusiasm was contagious. They loved what they were doing and wanted the world to know

(they always sang a song which ended “Its great to be a Barbershopper”).

Ninth: They were patient with those who weren’t as skilled at singing, and even went so far as to work in individual pick-up quartets to help those of us who needed help.

Tenth: They were very generous in the amount of time and money they gave to the organization.

These are just a few of the observations I made in my six-week course. The parallels with the Church should be obvious, but I want to emphasize a few.

If the Church were more like the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A (the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America) in its enthusiasm, its work ethic, its evangelism, its training and discipleship, its faithfulness, its outreach, its excitement about giving, its patience and love, then perhaps the church might be more successful at attracting new members.

LET US GROW!

Fr. Roger

ASK THE RECTOR

What is the Anglican Communion and what difference does it make?

Before I answer this question I want to talk about what an Anglican is.

Anglicans are a part of the global relationship of churches established over the centuries by the Church of England, a church that is experiencing tremendous growth and renewal in many locations, particularly the "2/3 world" (Africa, Asia, South America)..

Their worship is both ancient and modern. Anglicans have always upheld the Holy Scriptures as God's Word and have stood on the two great creeds, the Apostles' and Nicene, as the fundamental statements of Christian belief. They celebrate the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as commanded by Jesus and they uphold the historic order of Bishops in the administration of the church's life and mission.

The Anglican Communion is made up of Anglicans who trace their Christian roots back to the early Church, and their specifically Anglican identity to the post-Reformation expansion of the Church of England and other Episcopal or Anglican Churches. Historically, there were two main stages in the development and spread of the Communion. Beginning with the seventeenth century, Anglicanism was established alongside colonization in the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa. The second stage began in the eighteenth century when missionaries worked to establish Anglican churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

As a worldwide family of churches, the Anglican Communion has more than 70 million adherents in 38 Provinces spreading across 161 countries. Located

on every continent, Anglicans speak many languages and come from different races and cultures. Although the churches are autonomous, they are also uniquely unified through their history, their theology, their worship and their relationship to the ancient See of Canterbury (the Archbishop of Canterbury).

Episcopalians are considered as a part of this world-wide Anglican Communion for the time being.

Tragically, that relationship with the rest of the Anglican Communion is being threatened by rogue American and Canadian bishops and clergy who are choosing to defy not only the will of the General Convention (in the case of the Americans), but also the will of the majority of Primates (Archbishops) and Bishops in the rest of the Anglican Communion. This defiance is currently taking the form of ordaining practicing homosexuals to the ranks of bishop and priest, and blessing same-sex unions; all contrary to the will of the majority of the Anglican Communion and its stated policies; and contrary to the traditionally held views of Holy Scripture throughout the history of Anglicanism.

This majority is getting tired of the actions of a few revisionist bishops and clergy. If these unorthodox clergypersons continue as they have been, then the rest of this majority of Anglicans may summarily kick the American church out of the Anglican Communion.

Parts of this majority are actually sending missionaries to the United States to try to stem the tide of immorality and heresy and to maintain an Anglican presence in the U.S. that upholds true Anglicanism. That missionary outreach is called the Anglican Mission in America (AMIA). They are establishing

churches all over the country that look very Episcopal, but are affiliated with some of the Anglican Churches of Africa and Southeast Asia. This missionary effort is gaining churches and individuals here in this country that are choosing to affiliate with them.

It is tragic that the Episcopal Church is being viewed as fertile missionary ground, when we used to send missionaries out to try to teach the Gospel and the truth of Scripture to other nations and lands.

As the Episcopal Church approaches its triennial General Convention in August, the homosexual issue will certainly be raised. If the traditional teaching regarding marriage (even the approval of a rite for blessing same-sex relationships) and ordination are officially changed, then look for a swift reaction from many corners of the Communion. I urge you to pray for the Episcopal Church's return to biblical Christianity and orthodox Christian teaching. I urge you to make your voice heard by writing to all of our General Convention Deputies from this diocese. When you write, please reflect the gentleness and love of the Spirit, and avoid name-calling and threatening statements.

If you are interested in writing to the Deputies, see me for a list of their names and addresses.

If we lose our connection to the world-wide Anglican Communion we will not only be losing our connectedness with our historical roots, but we will become just another fast shrinking denomination among the many denominations of this country.

Fr. Roger

CONVERSATION ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

Fr. Roger was asked to be one of the two speakers at the Diocesan Conversation on Human Sexuality, May 31 at Trinity Church in Hamburg. Approximately 60 people heard Dean Tracey Lind from the Cathedral in Cleveland, OH present the case for accepting homosexuality in the church (including ordinations and blessing of same-sex unions). Fr. Roger was asked to present the case in favor of traditional Biblical morality related to this issue. Fr. Roger replaced the scheduled speaker, Dr. Peter Moore of Trinity Seminary, who had to cancel for personal reasons.

If you are interested in a copy of Fr. Roger's speech you may receive an e-mail or a hard copy of it by request.

PRAYER AND PRAISE CHANGE

Our Thursday night Prayer and Praise gathering will only be held in August this summer. Come for **Holy Communion** (August 21), contemporary music, prayer, and Bible study. Join us as we seek the Lord and His will for St. Michael's. All are welcome to join us in the church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 10 – 2nd Summer Family Picnic at Godfrey's Pond. See information in the this newsletter.

August 31- Morning Prayer and Holy Eucharist- one service only this day-9 a.m.

PLEASE DON'T BOTHER ME WHILE I GREET MY FRIENDS

Quite a few churches have established a rather pleasant custom of having a coffee hour after services for the purpose of – to use the term peculiar to church doings – “fellowshipping” one with another.

This can be a meaningful social time *if* you can find someone to “fellowship” with. But now and then my husband and I find ourselves on an island unto ourselves with no one to talk to despite the fellowshipping going on all around us.

On those mornings it seems that nearly everyone else has intimate friends to buddy-up with, and there’s great laughter and hilarity in little bunches around the room.

When we are caught friendless in this situation, we often fellowship with each other. We have solved some weighty family problems during fellowship hour – what to do about the roof that has started to leak, etc.

On a recent Sunday, we visited another church and discovered that it too had a fellowship hour. As we knew no one and felt quite conspicuous, we started fellowshipping with each other about the bare spots on our lawn. Finally a lady came over to us and said, “Good morning!” with great gusto. We felt popular for a minute until we noticed her lapel tag with the word “Greeter” on it.

Suddenly a couple at the other end of the room waved and smiled at us. We waved and smiled back, and they started to elbow their way toward us. “Do you know them?” I asked my husband through my smile. At last they made their way over to us, then past us, where they embraced the people standing behind us.

We started to move toward them with hands extended for shaking purposes so we just kept going, pretending we were greeting someone at the other end of the room.

When we reached the door, we kept going, still carrying our coffee cups. (This article by Helen Hagen is from the Diocese of Minnesota’s *Soundings*).

I have noticed at St. Michael’s coffee hour our new round tables really foster a lot of fellowship. HOWEVER, we seem to be neglecting some people in favor of sitting with our friends at the tables. Please be especially aware of anyone standing by themselves. Take the initiative to go and talk to them, or invite them to your table.

Only you can prevent church growth.

Fr. Roger

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE LATELY?

Bob Weekley, our Webmaster, has been working hard to refine and improve our website which can be found at www.st-michaels-buffalo.org.

You will find current news and events, a calendar section, and each month’s newsletter highlights. A “Virtual Tour” gives visitors to the sight the opportunity to see pictures of St. Michael’s and some of our members in action. There are also definitions for many “Episcopal” words to help the seeker and long-time Episcopalian.

There are links to some helpful websites and other interesting items. Check it out.

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

+Acknowledged the work done to beautify our grounds by Jack Bidell and his committee.

+ Voted to have carpets in church and offices cleaned using Pence Cans funds

+Voted to replace the old By-laws of the church with updated ones. The main change would be in how the wardens are chosen. It was determined that many churches follow the pattern of electing Vestry members at the Annual Meeting. The Rector then chooses the Sr. Warden from the elected Vestry members. The Vestry then selects the Jr. Warden from the elected Vestry members. Each member of the Vestry(including the Wardens) will now serve a three year term. The Vestry will also be downsized to 9 members. This policy was adopted by the Vestry and will be voted on at the Annual Meeting but will not take effect until 2005. Because of this, the current Vestry members (minus three of those leaving this year) have been asked to stay on another year. This will allow the three year rotation to work should this plan be adopted by the congregation at the 2004 Annual Meeting.

+Voted to use some of the Carpenter gift to the Education team to purchase a first set of Children's Bible Story Videos for the Sunday School not to exceed \$250

+Voted to accept Outreach Teams recommendations for distribution of Outreach monies.

+Outreach Team authorized to distribute no more than \$500 without Vestry approval.

+Nurture Team reported that Prayer Chains are reconfigured a bit, and they are seeking to meet more needs in the congregation.

+Worship Team talked about upcoming Morning Prayer and Eucharist services.

+Fr. Roger discussed his presentation at the Diocesan Conversation on Human Sexuality.

+Next meeting to be held August 12 (no July Meeting).

CALLING ALL MEN

The Brotherhood of St. Michael's met in June to reconstitute and reorganize for the fall. There are many exciting things in the works for our new men's ministry.

Those gathered talked about having regular monthly meetings for spiritual growth and fellowship. These gatherings will feature guest speakers, videos, and other special events.

It was also determined that one of the main purposes of this group was to get involved in the community by way of outreach. In July and August a number of the men will be invited to join the Outreach Team in assisting the "Friends of the Night People" in serving meals to those in need.

In the fall the big plans are to hold an "Oktoberfest" at St. Michael's for our own members and guests. More information will be forthcoming.

The next meeting will be July 12 at 8:30 a.m. The meeting will last about an hour.

VESTRY PICNIC

The Vestry will be having a picnic for Vestry members and family at the home of Donna Strain on July 12. All Vestry members will be contacted for this event.

ST. BART'S PROVIDES A BLESSING

St. Bartholomew's Church in Tonawanda is a church with whom we have had close ties for many years. We have stood with them in our ongoing battle to uphold biblical Christianity and morality.

Last month St. Bart's gave to St. Michael's a gift of \$1,701.44. They took up special offerings during Lent and decided to give the money to our church.

We thank God for the good people of St. Bartholomew's and pray God's blessings on them for their giving spirit and their heart for mission. If you know a St. Bart's member, give them a special "God bless you!"

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.

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.

HELP WITH SONGBOOKS NEEDED

We are in the process of updating our "green Praise book." We will be adding new songs to the book and removing some that are seldom used.

Would you be willing to help to search out and verify copyright

information for the songs in the book? We want to make sure that the songbook conforms to all of the legal copyright laws and that proper permission is attained before songs are included in the new Songbook

If you can help, would you contact Fr. Roger or Ronna Bulera (683-9904).

MORNING PRAYER COMING AGAIN

The Worship Team will be working on an old but new type of service for us to aid in our worship of Almighty God. The team has decided to try to have a combined Morning Prayer and Eucharist service on the fifth Sundays.

This will bring back to the memories of the days when Morning Prayer was standard fare for the Sunday morning worship time. It will be an exciting new way to worship for those unfamiliar with this Prayer Book service.

August 31 will feature ONE SERVICE only (9 a.m.) with Morning Prayer and Eucharist. There will be a brunch following the service.

PARISH RETREAT

Our Annual Parish Retreat is October 10th and 11th at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora. Please make plans to join us for this spiritual renewal weekend. See Donna Strain or Jack Bidell for further information

PATRIOTIC SUNDAY

Sunday, July 6 will feature a patriotic theme to our services and music. Each attendee will receive a special gift featuring the Stars and Stripes. The late service will feature patriotic hymns.

FOOD FOR THE POOR SUNDAY

Dear Parishioners:

I am happy to announce that I have extended an invitation to The Reverend William r. Beers, Ph.D., who will speak at all the Liturgies scheduled for Sunday, July 13, 2003. Father Beers will share what he has witnessed and will be providing us with insights about the very special work being accomplished in the Caribbean and Latin America through FOOD FOR THE POOR.

Let me mention briefly that FOOD FOR THE POOR is a non-profit charitable trust organized in the State of Florida for the purpose of improving the health, economic, and social conditions of the indigent of Haiti, Jamaica, El Salvador, Nicaragua and other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America. FOOD FOR THE POOR means to evangelized the poor as well as those who would help the needy. Brochures will be distributed for additional information. Please join me in welcoming Father Beers, Ph.D..
Yours in Christ, *Father Roger*

2ND SUMMER FAMILY PICNIC

Save Sunday, August 10th after the 10:30 service for another St. Michael's family summer picnic. This will be held at Godfrey's Pond, Batavia. Upon arrival, it will cost \$3.00 per adult and \$2.00 for seniors and children – it is an insurance thing. Trust me, you get a lot more for your money. It probably will not cost any more than at Akron Park. There is a large covered pavilion with picnic tables.

We will supply the meats and you will bring your dishes to pass and table settings, just as we do for the June Family Picnic. There is an area to fish and swim, rowboats, paddleboats and the like to rent for a slight fee. You may go

hiking, shoot archery or there is also a gun range so bring your equipment for whatever interests you. We also plan to have a couple of vans so those who don't wish to drive may ride in comfort and fellowship to start off the fun-filled day. For those who are driving, we will be supplying maps at a later date. Plan to join us. *The Rickards*

RECIPE TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

3 oz. Kindness

1 Warm Blanket

2 Gentle Hands, outstretched

4 Tblsp. Love and Acceptance

Dash of Encouragement

Mix ingredients in a large pot. Fill to the rim with God's love. Blend gently.

Sprinkle with laughter and tears. Offer a generous cup to anyone who asks.

Best served warm, with company.

FR. ROGER'S JULY SCHEDULE

Fr. Roger will be taking much of his vacation time in July. He will be gone from July 7 through July 27. Fr. William Beers, Ph.D. will be taking the services on July 13 as a representative of the *Food for the Poor* organization. The Rev. Russell Amend will be taking the services on July 20 & 27. Fr. Amend is a good friend of St. Michael's and a gifted teacher. Please come and support these two men as they bring us the Gospel.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

We hope you all enjoyed the Graduation ceremonies for our Church School. The teachers have worked long and hard to do their work of educating our children. Perhaps some of you would like to consider becoming a teacher also. The kids are fun to work with and you will find you "get more than you give." Please consider joining us in the Fall.

D. Meacham & J. Rickard

THE GARDENING PROJECT

I would like to express my most heartfelt thanks and deepest appreciation to the following:

First, to all of you who prayed for God's help and guidance with this project, for without God's guiding presence we never would have accomplished what we did;

Second, to the "clearing and removal" team of Bob DuVall, Bruce Von Hasseln and Skip Stowe, who helped remove all of the old, over-grown and weed infested bushes and shrubs that had "adorned" our building;

Third, to the "planting crew" of April Infantino, Debbie Mendel and Jan Rickard, who braved a cold, damp and windy evening in order to plant much of what you see surrounding our Church these days. Also, to Bob DuVall for his assistance in transplanting many of the plants donated from an actual garden....which, of course brings me to....;

Fourth, our "coordinator and overseer", Mildred Sanes, who not only gave of her time and expertise to help with the selection and placement of the plants, but also donated many of these plants from her own garden;

Last, but certainly not least, to all of you who contributed to the Garden Fund of St. Michael's. Between the monetary donations and the actual plants that people bought to be used, we had more than enough to complete the job at hand. My sincerest THANKS to each of you,
J. Bidell

THANK YOU

I want to thank everybody for your cards and prayers on the death of my mother last month. Knowing that "we" are family is comforting in trying times. Once again, Thank You and God Bless."

M. Ham

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THE CHURCH IS TAKING A VACATION?

While many of you will be taking vacations this year, there may be some who believe that the church is on vacation this summer just like the schools are. However, this is not the case.

Summertime can be a great opportunity for you to draw closer to God through worship, to continue your spiritual growth, and to enjoy the fellowship of other Christians.

It is also a time for children to be exposed to the whole service. This can be invaluable as they may only think that church is simply coming in and receiving communion.

During the summer many people “church shop.” They are looking for a new or first-time church home. If they come and find the pews empty, they may not be as inclined to come back again. Your presence in the pews this summer will not only make our worship space feel more energized, but you will have the chance to meet new people who are coming to check us out. So, if you are in town on Sundays come to church!

It is also critical that you keep up your pledges and giving during the summer as our bills continue to need to be paid.

OUTSIDE SIGN BOARD MANAGER FOUND

Many thanks to Debbie Mendel for her willingness to take on our outside signboard ministry. Keep an eye on the board as Debbie will be putting some eye-catching slogans on the board, as well as advertising the times of our services.

FR. ROGER’S E-MAIL

Some have wondered if it is possible to send a confidential e-mail to Fr. Roger. The answer is yes! He has his own e-mail address which no one else can access. If you would like to contact him about a private matter (or any other matter for that matter), send it to the following address: rgristmill2@aol.com.