

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

“When there is a need the people of St. Michael’s always come through,” So said Sr. Warden Donna Strain at our January Annual Meeting. Donna was, of course, referring to figures she just cited which point to the possible large deficit which this church is projected to face. These figures are based on our current levels of giving by parishioners as compared to our budget for 2003.

What the Sr. Warden was saying is that St. Michael’s is at a critical juncture. Either we see a large increase in our income through our members increasing their giving and by growing our church with new members, or we will cut back to a part time priest and not be able to implement the things needed to grow the church.

I know that you know the church always needs money. This situation is not just about needing a couple of thousand dollars, this is much bigger than that. I feel it is important for our people to know the real situation of our parish not to scare you, but to challenge you to go the extra mile to help our church continue to minister in the Buffalo area, and to do so effectively.

Our treasurer Betty Walker tells me we have about 115 giving families and individuals. These faithful givers gave around \$110,000 last year. Our total expenses budgeted for 2003 are \$153,000 (which includes those items we feel we need to grow the church). If you do the math you will see what our needs are for 2003. These figures do not take into account dipping into the housing allowance fund that was established when the former rectory was sold.

In the past we have lived on a faith budget and God has provided for all of

our needs. We will continue to do that and trust that God will provide for our needs through his people.

I hope to not have to talk to you again this frankly about our finances, but I felt like it was my responsibility to give you an accurate assessment of our finances at this time. I believe that you love this church enough to do what it takes to grow our ministry and continue to try to have an impact on the western New York area.

Jamie Buckingham, the editor and founder of Charisma magazine once said, “Attempt something so great for God that unless He intervenes it will surely fail.” I believe this is what God is calling us to do. I am asking each one of you to be a part of something great God is going to do here at St. Michael’s.

LET US GROW!

Fr. Roger

ASK THE RECTOR

If someone asks me “What is the Gospel in a nutshell,” what should I say?

You might say something like this:
All have sinned. The penalty for sin is death. Jesus is without sin and so did not deserve death. Jesus willingly paid the death penalty for everyone else. Because of that sacrifice, all who accept Jesus’ death as payment in full for their sins can be forgiven and have a wonderful relationship with God as His children.

- “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
- “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

- “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22).
- “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
- “The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).
- “If you confess with your mouth ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Romans 10:9-10).
- See also Romans 3:21-26; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 9:23-28.

VESTRY NEWS

The new Vestry has taken on the following leadership roles:

Administration – Donna Strain (Sr. Warden), Michael Stroh (Jr. Warden), Bob Duval, Michael Rickard.

Education- Mark Dascomb

Growth- Michael Ham, Michael Stroh
Ministry Development and Stewardship- Gary Kadow, Addie Broome.

Mission and Outreach- Jack Bidell

Nurture- Eve David, Bob Duvall

Worship- Sarah DiLiberto

- ❖ Church to be painted by local inmates, cost to come from Pence Cans.
- ❖ Discussed the Diocesan Assessment. Will have a future meeting to discuss in more detail.
- ❖ Voted on the budget for 2003 totaling \$145,903 in general expenditures and \$7,000 needed

to fund our growth initiatives as outlined in the *Vision for Growth and Renewal*.

- ❖ The Rector is required to establish a figure needed for housing allowance which was submitted to the Vestry.
- ❖ Fish Fries are going to be held this year under the direction of Jack Bidell. He promised a whole new attitude with our workers and other support staff for these events. Encouragement and training will be given to those who have never worked on a Fish Fry at the church.
- ❖ Michael Stroh shared a plan to divide the Vestry into shepherding teams to keep in touch with our members in the various geographic zones.

ANNUAL MEETING

We had a most successful Annual Meeting on January 12. It was an opportunity for the church at St. Michael's to join together in fellowship and food. The Gardiniers arranged a wonderful brunch for the combined 8 and 10:30 a.m. service attendees.

After the brunch we heard from Fr. Grist who introduced a few new ministry leaders. Gary Kadow is the new lay minister heading up our Hospital Visitation Ministry. Jackie Stroh is our new Communications Coordinator. Carolyn Flynn is our Bulletin Board coordinator and publicity coordinator. Bob Weekley is our new Webpage designer/Webmaster.

Sr. Warden Donna Strain shared an interesting slide presentation on the state of the church. She pointed to the many positive things that have been accomplished this past year, such as the finalizing of our Vision for Growth and

Renewal, the calling of a new Rector, and the kickoff of our new youth Sunday School program. She thanked those who donated money to help with new carpeting in the Conference room, new furniture in the Rector's office, and painting the Parish hall.

Donna also shared with the congregation about the challenging financial picture that faces St. Michael's. With the acquisition of a new Rector, a rise in utility, medical, insurance, and costs there will be a large increase in the budget this year. Our pledge income from last year was around \$110,000. We are projecting a budget of \$146,000 just to maintain our ministry at its current level. We are hoping to be able to fund our Vision for Growth and Renewal Teams which will cost approximately \$7000 beyond our current projected budget. The budget for 2003 will require a substantial increase in giving from our members, a growth in our membership roles, and a tight reign on spending.

Donna shared that she has always found the members of St. Michael's rise to the occasion when there is a financial need in the parish.

BECOMING A CONTAGIOUS CHRISTIAN COMING

Have you ever been faced with the opportunity to talk about the Lord or your faith with someone and did not know what to say, how to say it, or even how to bring up the subject?

Have you wanted to talk to your unchurched friends, neighbors, and relatives, but were afraid you might not be knowledgeable enough?

Have you felt uncomfortable with traditional forms of evangelism and witnessing because it is just not your style?

If you answered yes to any of these questions then we have a deal for you. For five Wednesdays during Lent (beginning March 12) St. Michael's and others will gather in the Parish hall for a Lenten Soup Supper and Video program.

Beginning at 6 p.m. a Soup and Bread Supper will be offered (prepared by Volunteers). After the meal a video series entitled "Becoming a Contagious Christian" will be offered. After a discussion time following the video the evening will conclude with a Compline service (around 8 p.m.).

The video series will feature Bill Hybels, Pastor of the largest church in the U.S.; Lee Strobel, former atheist and law editor for the Chicago Times, and Mark Mittleberg, an evangelism trainer. These three have developed an effective way to be more effective in our lives and witness.

TEAM TEACHERS SOUGHT

Diane Meachem, our Sunday School director, is looking for a few good people. Our Sunday School teachers have been faithfully teaching downstairs without being able to participate in the bulk of the Sunday services.

Our Sunday School is growing! It is our hope that there may be some who would be willing to be trained to be a team teacher with our current teachers. We hope to expand our Sunday School next year with more classes. As a result we will need to have more teachers to aid our kids in their spiritual and intellectual growth in the faith.

Would you be willing to be on a rotating schedule with our current teachers in order to give them a break and excited about teaching? Would you be willing to be trained so that you could be equipped to be effective as a teacher? You would not be required to teach

every week but would have a flexible schedule. If you are interested in exploring this possibility would you contact Diane Meacham at 873-2638?

PARENTAL ALERT

Are you a Christian parent? Is your teenager a Christian? Are they thinking like a Christian? Numerous studies by George Barna, George Gallup, Josh McDowell Ministries and the Nehemiah Institute reveal that the average “Christian” student in our churches thinks and believes no different than non-churched teens.

- 57% could not even say that an objective standard of truth exists.
- 85% are likely to reason “just because it’s wrong for you doesn’t mean it’s wrong for me.”
- Only 29 % disagreed with the statement: “When it comes to matters of ethics, truth means different things to different people; no one can be absolutely positive they have the truth.”
- Only 38% disagreed with the statement: “Nothing can be known for certain except the things you experience in your life.”
- 45% could not disagree with the statement: “Everything in life is negotiable.”

From 1988 to 1996, out of thousands of Christian students that were tested by a national ministry, 90% left high school either “at risk” or “easy prey” to humanistic, anti-Christian philosophies and ideas.

Is it any wonder that 55% of Christian students from Christian homes are denying their faith before they graduate college? Will your teen deny the faith?

Our new Youth Sunday School (9:15 a.m. in the Youth Room) taught by Mark Dascomb and Michelle Rickard will be giving our young people an opportunity to explore their faith in depth. They will be addressing many of these questions and issues.

Parents – have you asked your middle school and high school students questions like “How do we know there is truth? How do we know the Bible is true? How do I answer common objections to Christianity? Why is Christianity truth? How do I know other world religions are not based on truth?”

If you cannot answer these questions please see Fr. Roger for some resources to help you and your youth.

EPISCOPAL YOUTH WNY – check out what’s online for you! at eyouthwny.homestead.com.

Jay Phillippi is the Youth Missioner for our Diocese. His e-mail is jayphillippi@episcopalwny.org. Coming up is Happening #14 April 25-27. Call the Youth Missioner at 716-483-6405.

Also Junior Counselors of High School age are needed for both Junior High and Sleep Away camps. No experience is necessary. For more information, contact Fr. James Snodgrass, Sleep Away Camp, PO Box 446, Olean NY 14760 or Fr. Eric Williams, 410 N. Main St. Jamestown NY 14701 for Junior High. (Junior High JC applications are available for you on the web at www.wingedox.com/jrhigh.htm).

Senior High Conference is June 29-July 5th and cost is \$250. You may obtain applications at eyouthwny website.

WNY CURSILLO March 20-23rd at Camp Pioneer Angola. Contact Ralph “Butch” Wiest at 675-8417 if interested in this adult worship retreat.

“I am too blessed to be stressed!” The shortest distance between a problem and a solution is the distance between your knees and the floor. The one who kneels to the Lord can stand up to anything. Love and peace be with you forever. Amen. (Bob Weekley)

WOMEN’S GUILD

We will have a meeting on Wednesday, February 5th. Unfortunately, we cancelled our January meeting and we must get going. After all, we don’t want to stagnate. So, come join us for Holy Eucharist, Healing and Bible Study – followed by lunch at 12:00 noon. Bring your favorite sandwich and dessert will be provided.

No doubt we will be asked to again work at the Fish Fries to the best of our abilities. Where there is a will there is a way!

See you on the 5th, full of ideas as to how we can adjust to our capabilities!

Virginia Bradley, President

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

1 –Bea Haley	2–Betty Gould
10–Jon Eckle	11–Mary Noonan
11–Alexandra Grist	16–Den. DiLiberto
17–Robin Meyers	18–Jill.Meacham
19–Irene Strauser	21–Helen Neubert
23–Jack Miller	28–Bob Weekley

ANNIVERSARIES

9–Candi & Skip Stowe

If you are not listed, please let the office know your birthday or anniversary.

THE GIFT OF TIME

Scripture admonishes us, “choose you this day whom you will serve.” We can use our gift of time in self-service. Or we can take the higher road and use the gift of time in service to others and to our church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FISH FRIES: Make plans now for St. Michael’s Fish Fries –March 7, 14, 21 & 28 and April 4 & 11.

If you would like to help, contact Jack Bidell 832-0598 or Donna Strain 655-0573.

In addition to the Fish Fries mentioned above:

March 5 –Ash Wednesday

March 12 – Lenten Soup supper and “Becoming a Contagious Christian” Video

March 19 Soup supper and Program

March 26 – Soup supper and Program

April 2 – Soup supper and Program

April 9 – Soup Supper and Program

April 13 - Palm Sunday

April 16 – Tenebrae

April 17 – Maundy Thursday

April 18 – Good Friday

April 20 – Easter Sunday

Annual Picnic – June 22, 2003 at Akron Falls Park Shelter 3.

“THE NEWSLETTER” is YOURS!

Do you have anything you wish to share with your fellow parishioners? What are your thoughts on parish life? Do you have any comments you wish to share on the articles presented here? Please write them out or e-mail them to the office: stmichaelepisc@aol.com . It would be nice to have your article in before the middle of the month so we may have “The Newsletter” ready by the last Sunday of each month for you to pick up when you attend church that day. Thank you.