

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

“For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Truer words were never spoken nor are any more applicable to today’s situation in the Episcopal Church than these.

Our Bishop and most of the Deputies to General Convention from this diocese joined many others in affirming Vicki Gene Robinson, a self-proclaimed gay man, to be the Bishop of New Hampshire. The General Convention also voted to allow each individual diocese to bless same-sex relationships (although the Convention did not establish any rites to do this).

This sent shock waves through the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion, and set in motion an uprising that threatens to break apart the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Wall Street Journal reporter Katherine Kersten put it succinctly when she said, *“Yet this church has just tossed aside 2,000 years of bedrock Christian teaching about marriage, the family and sexuality. It has rejected beliefs fundamental not only to Christianity, but to Judaism and Islam. Episcopalians’ inability to defend core doctrine suggests that mainline American churches are losing their theological moorings, and increasingly falling prey to the prevailing winds of secular culture.”*

St. Michael’s has always believed that we are called to “live the written Word, share the living Word, and love

without exception. (from our mission statement).

What does it mean to love without exception? Jesus said if we love Him we will keep his commandments. Jesus, in so stating, has reminded us that true love is rooted in keeping the commandments. Jesus never commanded us to affirm anything that contradicted the moral commandments of the Old Testament. In fact, Jesus reminded his followers that the commandments were **summarized** in the commandments to love God with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Love is not a warm gushy feeling but an action rooted in the commandments.

St. Paul often encourages his readers to resist those who would change the gospel or the Scriptures. This, according to Paul, is the most loving thing we can do. We are to attempt to restore to the truth one who is caught in sin. We are to do so gently, to be sure, but firmly as well.

So St. Michael’s has been one of the few voices in this diocese that has continued to call the Church back to traditional biblical morality. Unfortunately, our voice has not been heeded. Nor have the voices of many others around the country who have expressed their opinions to bishops and deputies.

As a result the leadership and a good portion of the Episcopal Church have now left the faith that was passed down to us by the apostles and the Anglican Communion.

This has caused us at this church to take a look at our relationship with the bishop, diocese and national church. Our Vestry will be meeting with the Vestries of other churches who hold to traditional biblical morality to talk about our

options as we respond to the actions of General Convention.

I will be flying to Texas on October 6-8 to meet with bishops, clergy and lay people from all over the country to discuss some options which might allow us to maintain our relationship with the Episcopal Church.

The Primates (Archbishops) of the Anglican Communion will be meeting in an emergency session in September to try to avert a split in the Communion.

St. Michael's will gather together sometime in October to hear what is going on and to discuss our options parish-wide.

In the mean time you can stay abreast of what is going on by visiting the American Anglican Council's website at www.americananglican.org or virtuosityonline.org

What do we do next?

1. **Rejoice...** in all circumstances. God is still on the throne.
2. **Repent...** for our participation in our Church's sins. Continue in a spirit of repentance, not arrogance, in the days ahead.
3. **Forgive...** as Jesus did, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."
4. **Pray...** for God's grace to guide and sustain us.
5. **Love...** those who consider themselves to be homosexual, sharing the transforming power of God.
6. **Reject...** the unbiblical, unconstitutional actions of General Convention. Repudiate them, disassociate yourself from them. Do this

personally, as a parish, as a diocese.

Communicate with your rector, your bishop- The Rt. Rev. Michael Garrison
1114 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY
14209, the Presiding Bishop (815
Second Ave., New York, NY 10017),
and the Archbishop of Canterbury
(Lambeth Palace, London SE1 7JU,
England). Copy the American Anglican
Council (1110 Vermont Ave., NW Suite
1180 Washington, DC 20005.

lhuntington@americananglican.org.

7. **Reach out...** to those who are lonely and isolated in unsupportive parishes or dioceses, and those who share our concerns but are not at General Convention; they are likely confused about what happened, unaware of the strength of our coalition, and uninformed about the Primates, the Plano meeting, etc.

Fr. Roger

ASK THE RECTOR

How does General Convention make its decisions?

Every three years the Episcopal Church meets in a General Convention. It is at this gathering that legislation is passed which determines the policies and mission of the American church. It is like a massive Vestry meeting. Over 800 deputies (clergy and laity) come representing the many dioceses around the country. They meet in what is called the House of Deputies. All of the active bishops of the Episcopal Church come together at the same time to meet in what is called the House of Bishops.

The General Convention works much like our diocesan convention. Resolutions are offered ahead of time, discussed at open hearings, debated on the floor of both Houses and then voted on by each House. In order for something to become law in the

Episcopal Church it must be voted on by the Deputies and Bishops. This is much like the House and Senate in the United States government.

Once something is approved by a simple majority of both Houses (although sometimes canonical changes have to be approved by a two-thirds majority) it becomes law in the Church.

The recent decision to affirm Vicki Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire was passed by a simple majority in both houses (though by no means an overwhelming majority).

It is interesting that many clergy and churches in the past have ignored the dictates of General Convention. For example, the Convention established in the past that it was not appropriate to ordain homosexuals. That did not prevent some bishops from doing just that. The same goes for blessing same-sex relationships.

Those who don't want to abide by General Convention's decisions simply do what they want until such time that they can persuade the majority of deputies and bishops that the old law is archaic and should be changed. Those who remember the women's ordination issue will see this reality. Some women were ordained illegally by some bishops. The next General Convention saw the deputies and bishops just go with the flow and approve women's ordination.

This is exactly what happened at this most recent Convention. Bishops have been ordaining homosexuals (contrary to the dictates of General Convention) and finally electing a homosexual as a bishop. This forced the Convention to address this issue after the fact (going through the back door-pardon the pun). Once the deed was done many in the Convention felt like

“why fight it, let's just approve it and move on.”

There was such a fear that the development of rites to bless same-sex relationships would just be too much in light of Robinson's affirmation that the resolution to develop these new rites was scrapped. The reality is that many churches were already developing their own rights for such blessings and so the General Convention in essence approved the use of rites of blessings which have been and could be developed in the local dioceses. They washed their hands of this decision by leaving it up to the local diocese to decide. What most now realize is that they tacitly approved such rites without having to develop them in a General Convention committee.

Many of us believe these recent decisions of General Convention not only go against 2000 years of church tradition, but also go against the plain teachings of Scripture.

In a gesture of resistance, St. Michael's Vestry has repudiated the above mentioned decisions made by this last General Convention.

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

- +Voted to repudiate the General Convention's decisions to affirm a practicing homosexual as a bishop and to allow each diocese to perform blessing of same-sex relationships.
- +Voted to assist the reorganization of the Vestry in 2004 to come into alignment with our new by-laws by asking the Sr. Warden to stay on another year.
- +Continued work on new Buildings Use Policy.
- +Discussed having a joint Vestry meeting with St. Bartholomew's, and others to discuss the recent General Convention actions. The meeting will be Tuesday, September 9 at St. Barts.
- +Discussed the need for more Sunday School teachers. Announced the upcoming Conference on Prayer at St. Michael's to be led by Fr. Sam.
- +Missions and Outreach reported an ongoing effort to assist with Friends of the Night People. Gave thanks for all who attended the Food For the Poor presentation.
- +Nurture reported that Prayer Chain was very active in July. Men's Brotherhood is planning an Oktoberfest for the fall complete with meal and professional Oktoberfest band.
- +A Special Vestry meeting will be held with St. Bartholomew's and St. Philip's on the normal Vestry night at 7 p.m.
- + The next Vestry meeting will be September 16th at 7 PM.

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.

FR. SAM TO HIGHLIGHT A CONFERENCE ON PRAYER AT ST. MICHAEL'S

On September 12 & 13 a vitally important conference will be held at St. Michael's. This conference entitled *The Secrets of Effective Prayer and Praying* will be taught by the Rev. Abuid Sam, a long-time friend of this church and priest of the Diocese of Western New York.

This conference will begin on Friday night with a potluck supper at 6 p.m. in the Parish Hall. A time of worship follows at 7 p.m. followed by Fr. Sam teaching at 7:30 p.m.

The conference continues on Saturday morning with a continental breakfast at 8 a.m. and Fr. Sam teaching at 9 a.m. The conference will conclude at noon.

Please invite anyone who might have an interest in prayer. The unchurched are especially welcome. Whether you bring anyone or not, bring yourself to this crucial conference.

As a prelude to this conference the church will be open for prayer on

September 11 from 9 a.m. until noon and
1:30 p.m. until 4 p.m.

SPECIAL 9/11 SERVICE AND VIDEO PRESENTATION

Those interested in commemorating the 9/11 tragedy a couple of years ago will want to meet for a dessert and coffee presentation of Cheryl McGuinness' video account of her husband's role as a pilot on one of the airliners that crashed into the Twin Towers.

Cheryl lost her husband, Tom McGuinness, on September 11, 2001 in the World Trade Center tragedy. Tom was the co-pilot of American Flight 11. Since this time, Cheryl has been asked on several occasions to share her story of dealing with these devastating events. In obedience to God's call, she shares her testimony of His faithfulness in raising "Beauty from the Ashes - How to Rise Above Your Circumstances."

The dessert starts at 7 p.m. with the video to follow. The evening concludes with a service of Compline.

We hope to have copies for sale of our own Gary Kadow's new book, 10 Days of Hell and Heroes, describing his experience at the World Trade Center.

FR. ROGER PUBLISHED

An article written by Fr. Roger has appeared in the national magazine *The Living Church*. The article, entitled "Joy in Giving: and many other lessons the church can learn from a group of barbershop singers.

This article is an expansion of an article he wrote for a recent newsletter. The article appeared in the August 17 addition and copies are available in the church office.

THURSDAY NIGHT ALIVE

A mid-week gathering of St. Michael's will feature Holy Communion, Contemporary worship with Prayer and Praise, and Bible teaching. This "Thursday Night Alive" will be held on September 25 at 7 p.m. in the church Nave. Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians are welcome.

On the other Thursdays of the month anyone is welcome to meet for prayer, sharing, praise in the Conference Room at 7 p.m.

VESTRY TO MEET WITH ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S

St. Michael's Vestry will meet in a joint session with the Vestries of St. Bartholomew's and St. Philip's to discuss a possible joint response to the recent decisions of General Convention. The meeting will be held in September as a prelude to the clergy of the above churches attending the Plano, Texas meeting in October.

ALTAR GUILD INSTITUTION

Each Altar Guild member and prospective members are encouraged to attend either the 8 or 10 a.m. service on Sunday, September 14. Each year the Altar Guild is re-commissioned to serve in the Sanctuary in a short service during the announcement time of our Eucharist. If you would like to join the Altar Guild, please contact Norma Fox at 824-5884, or Fr. Roger at the church.

MEN'S BROTHERHOOD MEETING CHANGED

The Men's Brotherhood has been reactivated and we would like all the men of St. Michael & All Angels to join us. The Men's Brotherhood meeting has

been changed to Sunday, September 7 between the 8 and 10:30 services. The meeting (9 a.m.) will be held in the parish hall and will be focused on the upcoming Oktoberfest we will be sponsoring at St. Michael's on October 4.

We need as many men as can make it to come help organize the various tasks and roles needed for this event.

HUMAN SEXUALITY TO BE THE FOCUS OF THE SEPTEMBER SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Many have wondered why this issue of human sexuality is such a hot-button issue. At 9 a.m. on Sunday's in September we will discuss the biblical, theological, sociological, and practical aspects of this issue.

We will also discuss the Church's recent decisions regarding this issue.

CONGRATULATIONS

Eve David recently received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Community Oriented Police Satellite Station (C.O.P.S.) in recognition of her hard work to make a change in her community. How wonderful to see that others appreciate her work

THANK YOU

Thank you Janet Casagrande and April Infantino for weeding the flower beds.

Thank you Debbie Mendel for the clever sayings on our outside sign board.

Thank you, dear friends, for your prayers, phone calls, cards and the flowers Mike delivered to me during my bout with skin trouble. A very special "Thank You" to Father Grist, who brought Communion to Jack and me and did so much to help me not be

discouraged and to keep the Faith. God Bless you all. *Evelyn Miller*

It seems like I'll never be able to thank all my family at St. Michael's for their prayers and beautiful cards. A special "thanks" to Father Grist for his visits to give me Communion. God Bless you all. *Norma Crump.*

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Again this year the women of St. Michael's Guild are participating in "Operation Christmas Child", a project of Samaritan's Purse, headed by Franklin Graham. We invite everyone to fill shoe boxes with Christmas gifts for children around the world who live in war zones and extreme poverty.

Small toys, school supplies, hygiene items, hard candy, and a \$5.00 donation in an envelope inside the shoe box to help cover shipping costs are among the suggested gifts. Further information is available at the Gift Shop or Shirley Szen.

CHURCH SCHOOL

September 14 is the beginning of our new Church School year for all ages.

ST. MICHAEL'S DAY

We will celebrate St. Michael's Day September 28th with the Celtic Spirit Pipe Band, balloons, and hot dogs. Plan to join us.

ST. FRANCIS DAY

There will be a service of Blessing of the Animals on October 5th in celebration of St. Francis Day at 12:15. This will allow for folks to go home to get their animals after the 10:30 a.m. service.

The service will last about 15 minutes.

WELCOME TO NEW LAY READERS

Welcome to our newest Lay Readers at the 8 a.m. service, Janet Casagrande and April Infantino. These ladies join Linda Duvall as our newest ministers at the Altar (Linda serves at the 10:30 service). Thanks for your willingness to serve.

THE ADMINISTRATION TEAM

The Admin. Team will meet at 5:30 Tuesday, September 23rd.

MISSION & OUTREACH TEAM

We had our first visit to the Friends of the Night People on July 26th. Thanks to all who helped us. More trips are planned and we will let you know when. Contact Bob DuVall to join us in this ministry.

WORSHIP TEAM

The Worship team will meet at 7 PM September 23rd.

OKTOBERFEST COMING

The Men's Brotherhood has been reactivated and we would like all the men of St. Michael & All Angels to join us. We are planning an Oktoberfest for

Saturday, October 4th. There will be a German dinner complete with sausage and beer, followed by a concert by the Buffalo Swabenchor. Doors open at 6 PM, Concert at 7:30 PM. For further information contact Gary Kadow, President; Bob DuVall, Vice-President, Mark Bidell, Secretary or John Bidell, Treasurer.

WOMEN'S GUILD

The Women's Guild of St. Michael's will hold their first meeting of the Fall season September 10 after the Holy Eucharist and Bible Study at 9:30 AM. This will be a "true Pot Luck" luncheon, so bring your favorite dish to share. Please plan to join us for the morning and lunch.

DONATIONS REQUESTED

The Vestry is asking for donations to help Father Roger attend the meeting in Plano, Texas of Clergy and laity opposed to the recent General Convention decisions. Please make your check payable to St. Michael & All Angels, earmarked for Father Roger's Texas trip. Thank you.

AN INVITATION TO "BREAKING FREE"

To the women at St. Michael and All Angels from the women at St. Bartholomew's – Last spring fifty of us participated in a Beth Moore course and were so greatly blessed that we want to share an upcoming opportunity with you. We invite you to join us this fall in taking Beth's course, "Breaking Free." Classes will be offered Wednesday mornings 10:30-12:30 and Thursday evenings 6:30-8:30, beginning September 17th and 18th.

The format will include worship, video presentation, small group meeting, prayer and home study. This is an eleven-week course that uses selected passages from Isaiah and draws parallels between the captive Israelites and today's Christians. The focus is on making freedom in Christ a daily reality.

In order to have your workbook by the first session, please mail your check for \$15.00 made out to "St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church", by Tuesday, September 2nd to Emily Hubbard, 398 Fries Rd., Tonawanda, NY 14150.

Also please include your phone number, address, whether you will attend Wednesday morning or Thursday evening and whether or not you need a baby sitter. We hope you will join us as we undertake another transforming step in our walk with Christ. Questions?: Call Emily Hubbard 838-0635. Bring your friends!

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please advise us if there have been any changes in your address, phone number or E-mail address as we are in the process of printing a new directory for the Parish and we do like to have everything correct before it is finished.

Also, we like to keep your birthdays and anniversaries updated, so please advise us if you are not on the posted lists. Thank you to those of you who responded to my recent request. – Madeline – Parish Secretary

A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Virginia Bradley submitted the following poem by Cyrus E. Albertson.

*Sometimes in folk around me
With burdens, hurts and fears
Through joyful, happy hours
And often through their tears;
In some loving acts of kindness
As they show how much they care
In the lives of folk around me
I find God reflected there.*

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

If anyone would like a red Book of Common Prayer Used copies that are not quite fit for our pews are available. Please see Donna Strain or Jack Bidell.

UNITED THANK OFFERING

What does the UTO Blue Box represent? It is a way of expressing our thankfulness each day for God's great blessings; our health, our food, our children and grandchildren. By expressing these thanks, we are helping others here and abroad to enjoy a better life. The Parish Ingathering will be held on October 5th at both services.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS- PARISH RETREAT COMING

This year's parish retreat will have a different focus than those in recent years. We will focus on our spiritual lives. This retreat will be designed to help you feel closer to God, find refreshment for your souls, and a quieting of the noisiness of life. The retreat is scheduled for October 10-11