

NOTES FROM THE RECTOR

In their landmark congregational study *The Inviting Church*, Roy Oswald and Speed Leas studied new member assimilation in an array of growing parishes. They expected to find in these parishes similar programmatic elements, specifically formal and intentional assimilation systems that shared certain common features. Surprisingly, they discovered that none of these parishes had any such systems. Instead, what seemed to make folk want to become members was informal, unplanned, unsupervised and unintentional. They summarized: "What seems to be more important than anything else is that growing congregations have a positive personality which showed through in the church's (a) energy, (b) belief in inclusion, and (c) a sense of having a unique identity."

One of the things I am excited about is a growing sense of becoming a "congregation with a positive personality." This is happening after a long period of adjustment to a new Rector and the sifting that often happens when a new Rector comes on board. The evidence that this change is happening can be seen in more positive and fewer negative comments being made, in relationships being mended, and in more people getting involved in ministry who had formerly been on the sidelines.

I believe the next step in this "healing" that has been going on is that there will be a growing infusion of energy in our members. As the struggles of the transition to a new ministry have taken an emotional toll on the energy level of some, so now, I believe, the healing in our midst by the Lord Jesus will result in more vim and vigor.

As this healing is taking place, and energy returning, we will then begin to

see a growing sense of inclusion in our parish. Those who were formerly divided because of personality conflicts, differing viewpoints, and/or past hurts are beginning and will continue to look to the larger vision of growing our church and bringing people to Christ. This is resulting and will continue to result in more and more people being included in various aspects of parish life formerly reserved for a select few.

We will continue to grow in our willingness to reach out to those with whom we disagree because of theological and moral error. We will seek to live up to our mission statement to "love without exception." We will love in such a way as to open the door for us to share the truth of God's word in a winsome way. We will reach out to our friends, neighbors, and relatives who do not know Jesus, and bring them to Him in the fellowship of the church. We will do so by including them in our lives in order that we may reach some.

Finally, we will continue to grow into the discovery of our unique identity. We are not like other Episcopal churches. We are unique in many ways. As we can define and declare that uniqueness there will be those in the greater Buffalo area who are looking for a church just like ours. They will be drawn here like a bear is drawn to honey.

Please pray that God will help us to become a congregation with a positive personality. Would you ask Jesus to help you to contribute to this goal?

LET US GROW!

Fr. Roger

ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

MAY 2003

MAY 4, 2003	8:00 a.m.	1 st Server	Bob Howard
		2 nd Server	Mark Dascomb
	10:30 a.m.	1 st Server	Paul Zackey
		2 nd Server	Melissa DiLiberto
		1 st Crucifer	Sarah DiLiberto
		2 nd Crucifer	Alicia Meacham
MAY 11, 2003	8:00 a.m.	1 st Server	Bob Howard
		2 nd Server	Bobby Gardinier
	10:30 a.m.	1 st Server	Jason Bulera
		2 nd Server	Scott Miller
		1 st Crucifer	Melissa DiLiberto
		2 nd Crucifer	Alicia Meacham

MAY 18, 2003	8:00 a.m.	1 st Server	Bob Howard
		2 nd Server	Bobby Gardinier
	10:30 a.m.	1 st Server	Alicia Meacham
		2 nd Server	Melissa DiLiberto
		1 st Crucifer	Sarah DiLiberto
		2 nd Crucifer	Paul Zackey
MAY 25, 2003	8:00 a.m.	1 st Server	Jack Bidell
	10:30 a.m.	1 st Server	Melissa DiLiberto
		2 nd Server	Alicia Meacham
		1 st Crucifer	Jason Bulera
		2 nd Crucifer	Scott Miller
MAY 29, 2003	6:00 p.m. dinner		
	7:00 p.m. service	1 st Server	Alicia Meacham
<i>ascension</i>		2 nd Server	Melissa DiLiberto
		1 st Crucifer	Mark Dascomb

ASK THE RECTOR

Our Sunday School kids have asked some great questions in the past. The next question which they would like answered is: **How will we know when Jesus comes back to earth?**

We always celebrate the feast of the Ascension each year 40 days after Easter. After Jesus rose from the dead and showed himself alive by letting the disciples touch his resurrected body, by eating and drinking with them, and by appearing to them on many occasions, he told them that he would soon be going back to heaven from which he came to this earth. When he was getting ready to go back to heaven he gathered his disciples together near Bethany. They saw him ascend or go up into the sky and disappeared behind the clouds.

The book of Acts (1:9-11) puts it this way: “They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white (probably angels) stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’”

When Jesus talked about the period before his return he warned, “At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. See I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the

coming of the Son of Man” (Matt. 24:23-27).

So we see that the return of Jesus will come from the heavens and will be visible – “According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep (died). For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever” (1 Thess.4:15-17).

So we see that when Jesus returns to the earth it will be from the sky and to which believers will be called to meet him as he returns.

The book of Revelation (1:7) speaks of the return of Christ by quoting portion of an Old Testament prophecy (Zech.12:10). Jesus’ return is described in the following way: “Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him” (emphasis added).

The answer to the main question above then is that Jesus will come back again in the sky with every person on earth seeing his return. When he returns believers will be caught up in the air to be with him (sometimes called the “Rapture”).

All people are to be ready for his return by first accepting him as their Savior, and then by living life under the direction of his Holy Spirit who lives within the believer, keeping ourselves free from sin, and by looking for his return.

WOMEN'S GUILD – Noon May 7th

Nancy Grist has graciously opened her home to us for our meeting. We will bring our usual variety of food for the Pot Luck Luncheon. So be sure to mark that day in red or circle it so we can all enjoy a wonderful day.

We are also planning to have a special day on June 4th at our last meeting until the fall. See the weekly service sheet for announcements.

See YOU at both meetings.

Virginia Bradley, President

PRAYER AND PRAISE

Our Thursday night Prayer and Praise gathering will continue each Thursday at 7 p.m. in the conference room. Come for 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 Conference room upstairs in the Education/Office wing.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 29 – Ascension Day

June 8- Day of Pentecost Celebration

June 15- Trinity Sunday Celebration

June 22- St. Michael's Day at Akron Falls Park

EPISCOPAL NEWS SOURCE

Are you looking for news about the Episcopal Church from a conservative perspective? Would you like to read (as Paul Harvey says) the rest of the story? If you answered yes, then you need to visit www.virtuosityonline.org.

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 site the opportunity to see pictures of St. Michael's and some of our members in action.

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

USHERS, LAY READERS, ACOLYTES NEEDED

Would you be interested in helping with our Sunday services as an Usher, Lay Reader, or Acolyte? We provide the training and you will only be asked to serve one Sunday a month.

Ushers help pass out bulletins, assist with seating the congregation, take up the offering, and assist guests.

Lay Readers lead the Psalm, read the Lessons, lead the Prayers of the People, assist with the distribution of the chalice.

Acolytes help lead the processions in the church, assist with the offering, assist the priest in preparing for communion, and lead worship by example. Adults and High School Youth may be acolytes at St. Michael's.

If you are interested in any of these ministries, contact Fr. Roger at 836-0220 or by e-mail at rgristmill2@aol.com.

David Virtue spends hours each week compiling news articles from various sources around the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. His conservative commentary gives a balance to much of the Episcopal media one ordinarily finds. Virtue's website also has a link from which you can subscribe to his e-mail newsletter. This newsletter comes five or six times a week giving you almost daily updates on what is going on in the Church.

This site is an indispensable source of news from a theologically orthodox perspective.

BIBLICAL HEALING IN THE CHURCH TODAY

The Very Rev. Dr. Mark A. Pearson, President of the Institute for Christian Renewal, will be holding a special Healing Seminar and Service on Friday and Saturday - May 16 & 17 in Sanborn, NY.

St. Michael's members are encouraged to attend this weekend event which begins with a dinner at 6 p.m. followed by a teaching on the subject "What is the Healing Ministry?"

The Saturday session begins with a teaching - "Relationship: Sin, Sickness, Health." There will be another session on "Emotional Healing" and concluding with a "Practicum for Healing Teams."

The registration fee is \$10 with a \$12 charge for those wishing to attend the opening dinner. Other meals are extra.

If you are interested in learning more about the healing ministry, please make plans to attend. For more information or registration forms see Fr. Roger or check the downstairs bulletin board by the elevator.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

We will have a special Prayer and Praise service in the church in recognition of the National Day of Prayer - May 1 at 7 p.m. The service will feature contemporary singing, prayer and meditations. We will pray for all sorts and conditions of our world, especially focusing on peace.

ASCENSION DAY POTLUCK AND SERVICE

The St. Michael's family and others will join together for a special potluck supper to kickoff our Ascension Day celebration on Thursday, May 29.

Ascension Day is a major Feast day of the church in which we celebrate our Lord Jesus' ascension into heaven.

Our potluck begins in the Parish Hall at 6 p.m. Each person or family is encouraged to bring enough food for 6-8 people.

After the service we will proceed to the Church for a choral Eucharist at 7:30 p.m.

This is a great opportunity to gather together as brothers and sisters in Christ, building the bond of love and celebrating a truly remarkable event.

EASTER KUDOS

Thanks to all who helped make our Holy Week and Easter services so special. In particular we want to thank our secretary Madeline for all of the bulletins she had to do. Thanks also to the Acolytes, Lay Readers, Ushers, Greeters, Choir, Altar Guild, Money Counters, Coffee Hour host, and Prayer Team. Well done, good and faithful servants!

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

The Vestry has taken a major step toward the implementation of a plan that will help us to grow. After much thought and prayer the Vestry has decided to rework our Vision for Growth and Renewal to make it more manageable and achievable

This new “Vision” has combined some of the former teams and has given our Vestry members a new way of approaching the various ministries of our church.

The Vestry will now be composed of five teams (down from seven). Those teams are Administration, Education, Mission/Outreach, Nurturing, and Worship. Each team will have church growth and ministry development as its overarching goals. The Wardens, Donna Strain, Jack Bidell, and Ed Gorczyca will head up Administration. Mike Rickard and Mark Dascomb will head up Education. Bob Duvall will head up Mission/Outreach. Gary Kadow, Eve David and Addie Broome will head up Nurturing. Sarah DiLiberto and Mike Ham will head up Worship.

The new “Vision for Growth and Renewal” will be further refined and honed by each new Team and will be published at a future date.

Skip Stowe has been named the new head of the Finance Committee. This committee will work with our Treasurer Betty Walker, and assistant Treasurers Chuck and Shirley Gardinier. Donna Strain also serves on this committee. If you would like to help with this important ministry, please see Donna Strain.

The Treasurer reported that our expenditures are currently \$10,000+ over our income at this point in the year. Any help reducing this deficit would be appreciated.

The Parish Retreat has been changed to Friday and Saturday, October 10-11.

Mike Ham announced that he would be organizing and doing a parish pictorial directory in the near future.

The Vestry approved the use of part of the Carpenter gift for the purchase of round tables for the parish hall. Bids will be gathered. The money designated for the Endowment fund will be initially managed by the Finance Committee on behalf of the Vestry.

The Vestry was informed that the properties to the south of the church offices (the old Funeral home and the house just east of it) are coming up for sale. If anyone would be interested in purchasing these homes on behalf of the church it would increase our parking and give us other options for expansion in the future. If you might be interested in exploring this, contact Donna Strain at 655-0573 or via e-mail at either bubadms@omh.state.ny.us or rcs618@adlphia.net

CALLING ALL MEN

Fr. Roger is inviting all of the men of St. Michael’s to a continental breakfast on Saturday, May 10 at 8:30 a.m. We will meet in the Parish Hall for a time of fellowship and discussion about the possibility of establishing a regular men’s meeting.

Would you call the church office or sign-up on a blue card on Sunday so we can have an idea about how many for which to prepare breakfast?

ADDRESS CHANGE –

Beverly Ann Reilly
6909 Dr. M. L. King St. SA 298
St. Petersburg FL 33705-6204

**TRINITY SEMINARY
PRESENTATION**

The Rev. Chuck Wheeler will make a presentation to the St. Michael's family on behalf of Trinity Seminary on Sunday, May 18. He will preach at both services and offer a video presentation about Trinity Episcopal School for the Ministry between the services (at 9:15).

HOSPITAL VISITS

A new law went into effect April 14th. The legislation limits who gets to know when you are hospitalized. Clergy will NOT be notified automatically, UNLESS YOU SPECIFICALLY SAY WHEN YOU ARE ADMITTED that you are an Episcopalian. If you do not, you won't even be listed in the Pastoral Care department's daily file, which Clergy have been able to check in the past. So if you or a loved one are admitted to a hospital and wish to receive a Clergy visit, please have a friend or family member call the Church or Father Grist.

**UNITED THANK OFFERING
SPRING INGATHERING
MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 11, 2003.**

This is a most appropriate day for presenting our offering of thanks for all God's Blessings. After all, who has most to be thankful for but parents. For the very gift of children and grandchildren. For God's help in seeing us through the stress and joy of helping these children to grow into well-adjusted adults. For His help in all of our daily contacts at work, at Church, in the community, Thank you God!

THANK YOU from Jane and Les Robinson for all the prayers, cards, flowers, etc. Les is on the road to recovery and they want you to know your many acts of kindness are very much appreciated.

CONGRATULATIONS:

To Great-Grandparents Evelyn and Jack Miller who announce the birth of Colton Paul Steltzer April 14, 2003. He weighed in at 8 lbs. 2 oz. and they are (rightly) extremely proud!

CONGRATULATIONS – Kimberly Griffin, the granddaughter of our own Virginia Bradley, was named March Student of the Month by the CCC Charities and the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce. Kimberly is a senior at Cleveland Hill High School and has achieved a 94.55 scholastic average.

CANAAN HOUSE is having their annual fund raising and recognition banquet Thursday May 22nd 6-9 PM at the Love Joy Gospel Church, 5423 Genesee St., Lancaster. Tickets are \$20.00 reservation at 892-1563. There will be speakers, prizes and food.

LIFE'S RECIPE

1 cup of good thoughts
1 cup of kind deeds
1 cup of consideration for others
2 cups of sacrifice for others
3 cups of forgiveness
Mix thoroughly. Add tears of joy, sorrow and sympathy for others. Flavor with bits of love. Fold in 4 cups of prayers and faith. Pour into daily life and bake well with the heat of human kindness. Serve with a smile.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

1 Michelle Rickard
1 Jodi McHugh
2 Ethel Doze
3 Diane Meacham
5 Jack Slattery
7 Linda DuVall
8 Katherine DuVall
9 Mark Bidell
9 Tim Meyers
16 Julie VanLente
21 Evelyn Miller
21 Elizabeth Grist
24 Gary VonHasseln
25 John Bidell
26 Norma "Carmen" Miranda

MAY ANNIVERSARIES

3 - Barbara & Gary Kadow
5 – Carol & Leon Shatzel
22 – Marge & Norm Lang

YOUR HELP NEEDED

On various occasions people come to St. Michael's on a Sunday morning and ask for hand outs. Many of you have been generous in giving to them. Some are starting to become uneasy about being "hit up" so often for money. We have found that the word gets out that the people of St. Michael's are "easy marks."

We are asking that if anyone asks you for money at the church that you send them to Fr. Roger. The discretionary fund is set up for this purpose. It is designed to help those who truly need help.

EASTER SERMON AVAILABLE

Some have asked for copies of Fr. Roger's Easter sermon. If you would like a copy, call Fr. Roger or contact him via e-mail at rgristmill2@aol.com.

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.

THANK YOU to the Easter Elf for the lovely miniature daffodils. They will be planted in my garden later.

Also, a big **THANK YOU** to my helpers Addie and Lois with The Newsletter and Sarah, who has been working with me in the office. You make my job much easier. Madeline

DEAR LORD, let me pray until I forget what I want, and replace it or combine it with what YOU want. Remind me, I pray, that you have plans for me that are bigger and better than anything I can plan myself. Help me to pray until what I want is what YOU want. **Amen.**

WHY VOLUNTEER?

It's not for the money.
It's not for the fame.
It's not for personal gain.
It's just love of fellow man.
It's just to lend a helping hand.
It's just to give a tithe of self;
Something you can't buy with wealth.
It's not for medals won with pride.
It's for that feeling deep inside.
It's that reward down deep in your heart.
It's that feeling that you have been a part
of helping others far and near
that makes YOU

BECOME A VOLUNTEER.

TO PUSH OR NOT TO PUSH

Often I am asked, "Should I force my child to go to Sunday School? Should I make it their decision? What is an appropriate age to let them make their own decisions about attendance?"

In answering this, I would first ask a question. What is it about Sunday School which makes you wish for your child to be present? What value does it have? What does it impart which you feel makes your child's life richer or more meaningful? Do you feel your child would be missing something significant in his life if he were not present?

If you believe there is something significant for your child to receive, how do you rate Sunday School with such things as education, or perhaps some social customs which you would not

give your child choice as to their participation? In other words, is your child's faith development of the same value to you, as say, their high school education?

Next, I would ask you how comfortable you feel with your own spirituality. I do not ask this in a judgmental manner. Rather, I believe that much of our confusion, ambivalence, and uncertainty towards our children's faith development is a result of our own confusion, ambivalence, and uncertainty about our own faith development. It is hard to push something about which you have many questions yourself. However, rather than a stumbling block with our kids, questions can serve as a wonderful model to our children of what mature faith is – not a rigid understanding to be grasped, but a relationship to be explored, experienced, shared, and even questioned on occasion. Rather than be fearful of the perceived inadequacy of our own beliefs and faith experience, we can allow ourselves to be companions with our children on a journey.

The Anglican Digest (used with permission)

NEW ROUND TABLES

Thanks to a generous gift from the Edwin Carpenter estate we were able to purchase 12 new round tables for the parish hall, along with 12 white table cloths. These round tables will assist us in growing in our fellowship with one another, make it easier to converse with more people than at the conventional rectangular tables, and brighten up the appearance of the parish hall.

We used them to rave reviews at the recent Lamb Dinner on Maundy Thursday. Join us for Coffee hour each Sunday to experience our fellowship

time in a new way. Thanks to Gary Kadow for his assistance in procuring the tables. Thanks also to Mark Dascomb and Tim Meacham for doing the leg work in getting the tables unloaded and set up.

COMPUTER DONATED TO ST. MICHAEL'S

Jack Bidell has donated a computer which is currently being housed in a spare classroom downstairs. It is being used as a supplemental workstation for those helping Madeline to get our new church management software programmed and updated.

It is also our hope that this computer can be used to help instruct parish youth and perhaps as an outreach tool to assist other youth in how to operate a computer.

This computer is available to anyone in the parish who desires to become more "computer literate." We have some who are willing to assist in that endeavor.

OUTSIDE SIGN BOARD MANAGER SOUGHT

We are looking for someone who could oversee our outside message board near the corners of Burke Dr. and Huntley Dr. This would involve changing the message to advertise our special services and events. If you would be interested in this ministry, contact Fr. Roger.

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).