

Ponder Anew

PEOPLE AROUND THE OFFICE HAVE NOTICED SOMETHING. I sing. I talk to myself, too, but mostly I sing while roaming around or working at my desk. If I'm correcting the bulletin, I often find myself singing one of the hymns for the coming Sunday. If I'm preparing a sermon, some passage of scripture for which there is a familiar musical setting will wend its way into my subconscious. Recently I have had one particular hymn stuck in my head; it's #390 in The Hymnal 1982, "Praise to the Lord." The third verse contains these words:

"Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy way and defend thee; surely his goodness and mercy shall ever attend thee; ponder anew what the Almighty can do, who with his love doth befriend thee."

I've been considering this hymn the "official theme song" for my first year of ministry with you at St. Barnabas. Coincidentally, this was the entrance hymn on my first Sunday- chosen before my arrival- and so appropriate for a first Sunday, or a first Sunday back. There are so many good things happening here that we want to support and strengthen, and there are other ideas for serving God and the community that we might want to explore and experiment with. This hymn calls us to open our minds to new possibilities, and reminds us that we need not rely solely on our own initiative- we have a loving friend who partners with us to "prosper our way".

On October 9th at 7PM we will be marking an important milestone in the life of this parish -and in my life as well. It is my hope that everyone who is able will be on hand to celebrate when Bishop Sisk officially installs me as your 13th rector and we celebrate and give thanks for one hundred and fifty years of service and worship in this place. From what I understand, the altar guild, the choir and everyone involved in the planning for this evening will be pulling out all the

stops (and in the case of the organ music, I mean this literally).

Things have changed. When Charlie Colwell was installed as the 12th rector in 1972, women were not yet being ordained to the priesthood in the Episcopal Church. After I am installed, the gender balance of Episcopal clergy on the Hudson Line will have achieved a notable shift. I will be the fifth woman of ten clergy in the churches between Hastings and Peekskill.

Things have remained the same. We are still congregating on the ground and in the space that was consecrated as St. Barnabas Church over 150 years ago. And though it has been through many additions, renovations and restorations, it is still a place of beauty and holiness where the worship of God and the marking of significant moments in the lives of so many have taken place without interruption.

Things are being made new. As Christians, we acknowledge that God is always at work with us and through us and in us to refresh and restore all things- bringing them to their intended glory. As we take a look both backwards and forward, we will recognize that God never ceases to present opportunities to celebrate and to propagate God's mercy and goodness.

On October 9th — and in this year ahead — I invite us all to "ponder anew what the Almighty can do" as we celebrate our new ministry and mark the 150th anniversary of the consecration of our beloved Church of St. Barnabas.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

—Ephesians 3:20, 21

In Peace and with Great Joy,

—Nora †

From
the
Rector

From The Music Department

It is a pleasure to welcome Edwin Holmgren as a new member of the choir. If you may be interested in joining the choir, now is the perfect time as we begin the church year. Rehearsals are on Thursday evenings at 8:15 PM.

By the time that you receive this issue of the *In Common*, we probably will have had Nora's Service of Installation. It should be a grand event with music, a couple of big anthems in the great English/American tradition, to match.

The next big music event will be our annual Christmas presentation of "Reflections on Christ's Nativity." We will soon begin rehearsals for this music, so if you would like to sing for this occasion, please let me know.

"Reflections" will be presented on Sunday afternoon, December 13, at 5:00 PM.

I recently came across some singing directions for hymns from John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. Wesley



THE PILGRIM CHOIR

THE PILGRIM CHOIR GOT OFF TO A GREAT START THIS YEAR WITH A full group of beautiful voices.

Our first participation in worship service will be October 4th, when we will sing "God of the Sparrow, God of the Whale" in honor of St. Francis Day.

So if you have a little "pilgrim" in your family who might want to participate please get them to church by this Sunday at 9:00 to learn this lovely hymn.

We are also working on a very nice anthem for All Saints Day, which we will continue working on again on October 11th.

It won't be long at all before we will sing a song of Praise and Thanksgiving and then Advent and Yes . . . Christmas, etc. I believe the Pilgrims have the opportunity to deeply engage through music the sacred meanings of the texts they sing providing themselves and us, the listener with a more richly rewarding worship service.

In any event, I look very forward to seeing all the Pilgrims and hearing them sing on Sundays. Remember, if your child can read, and enjoys singing, they are eligible to participate in our Pilgrim Choir. We meet in the Parish Hall.

Sincerely,
Sandy

was a priest of the Church of England but was very much influenced by the Moravian sect of Germany, and eventually his ministry concentrated on preaching and teaching to the poor. Both he and brother, Charles, were very musical. Here is what John has to say about hymn singing:

"Sing all. See that you join with the congregation as frequently as you can. If it is a cross to you, take it up, and you will find it a blessing.

"Sing lustily and with good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice now, nor more ashamed of its being heard, than when you sang the songs of Satan.

"Sing modestly. Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the rest of the congregation, that you may not destroy the harmony; but strive to unite your voices together as to make one clear melodious sound.

"Sing in time. Whatever time is sung be sure to keep with it. Do not run before nor stay behind it; but attend close to the leading voices, and move therewith as exactly as you can; and take care not to sing too slow....

"Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing Him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually; so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when He cometh in the clouds of heaven."

That John sets a high bar! I must say that when you, the congregation, get hold of hymn that you know and love, you're good. And it is pretty thrilling for me to hear a congregation singing lustily. Have fun. †

—Don Butt

Transitions

GOOD MORNING! I AM IN THE PULPIT this morning because it is very difficult to say “No” when Joel asks you to do something. It is a great honor to be here this morning with David Nicholson.

Usually on this Sunday every year Bill and I are at Lyndhurst involved with the Westchester Kennel Club Dog Show; I selling catalogs and Bill seeing that the dogs and exhibitors are happy. You could go later today – it is a fun event.

This is a day of real transition — on our own — without a Rector, but only for two days! We can do it with God’s help and Sue Stanley in the office!

Some fourteen months ago in June 2008 we celebrated the 36 years of Charles Colwell’s ministry with us. I reread the In Common edition of last June/July and had tears in my eyes. It was such a happy celebration of so many people who had known and loved the Colwells. Charlie had written, “We expected the party would be a sad occasion. That was not the case! The party that you held was upbeat, gracious, funny, touching and a grand celebration of our 36 years together. We loved every minute of it.”

Yes, those are memories we should savor and cherish. The weather was perfect and we know how to throw a great party – especially with Esther Nicholson’s planning! But the party had a much deeper significance. These were the outward expressions of deeply felt awareness of a special leadership and grace that had walked among us. Charlie knew how to listen and respected the challenges of everyday life. He could let us go at our own pace

and create great things like Thrift Sales and Midnight Runs, a Healing Ministry, Spiritual Journeys, a thriving Sunday School, the Memorial Garden, study groups, two trips to the Middle East, The Carpenter’s Kids and even a visit to school children in Tanzania.

Just think of all the people in this parish who have made these things happen. It is impossible to name many of them, but it is time to thank some: Linda Staropoli, Pam Mitchell, Cathy Hansen, Susan Watson, Mary Merryman, Barbara Wright, Sarah Gardner, Cindy Malin, Diane Potter, Cynthia Ferguson, Lou Lustenberger, Laura Seaman, Peter and Nicky Coddington, Susan Robinson, Barbara Waesche, Juanita Dugdale, John Elwyn, the wonderful choir, all who run the sound system, Bill Stifel, the Altar Guild, Susan Ordahl...you see the list just goes on and on with so many more leaders and workers, so much talent.

Charlie Colwell’s words ring true in an interview last June in The Journal News: “We need to get people facing each other and talking, that’s when prejudice breaks down...Life isn’t about rules or being saved by following the rules...It’s an open-ended journey and people can be at different places on that journey. It’s sort of a continuum. The door is wide open and it swings both ways.”

I have been asked to offer some Reflections on the Scriptures. This morning we listened to ancient words from the Bible; may we absorb them into our lives as the doors swing open with our worship.

Hear the message from the 35th Chapter of Isaiah in the First Lesson:

“God will come with vengeance and terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” HOW does he save us? We have his gifts – a mind, a heart and hands, and if we are lucky, the time to use them for good.

Then we find poetry presenting the healing gifts that can be ours, even as Jesus worked his miracles two thousand years ago.

Isaiah writes *“the eyes of the blind shall be opened”* and we can see — see with new vision the person with need we had overlooked or neglected; those blessed with eyesight need to open our eyes to the beauty surrounding us and preserve, not destroy it.

“The ears of the deaf unstopped” – yes, hearing aids help some, but alas they do not reproduce the beautiful song of the wood thrush... how often those of us with perfect hearing fail to hear the message of Christ’s love, or the cry for help from a troubled heart

“then the lame shall leap like a deer,” - let us dance for the joy of being alive even if arthritis cripples and the knees no longer bend

“And the tongue of the speechless sing for joy” – may the autistic child find expression through all the loving care of parents and teachers; may the soldiers shocked into silence through too many horrors of war find peace

“For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert” — Blessed is our sister Water; don’t waste it, don’t pollute it, share it with all who thirst.

This month we have faced another challenging farewell. The Reverend Joel Daniels has gone to Boston on his search for even greater truth and knowledge. We thought he was already well equipped! Some eighty of us gathered on Sunday, August 2 to celebrate his two year ministry with us and to wish him Godspeed. I think that gathering was as much to comfort and support each other as it was for Joel and Lystra. We knew that we had experi-

BULLETINS

Baptism: Kevin William Ricca, son of Robert Vito Ricca and Lucy Buford Ricca, born Sunday, September 27th.

Memorial Service & Burial: Frances "Larry" Lawrence, Thursday, September 17, 2009, in the Memorial Garden.

Marriage: Matthew Gallagher & Sarah Bosley Leitzes (daughter of Gerald & Betsy) September 19th at 4 p.m.



Stock Donation reminder: If anyone is considering

transferring securities to fulfill pledges, please contact the office for current instructions.



Midnight Run dates: Friday, October 23, November 6 & December 11. Sign up in the Lounge. We welcome backpacks, blankets, sleeping bags & men's clean sneakers size 9-13.



The next meeting of the **Book Group** will be on **Wednesday, October 21st, at 7:30.** We will discuss *Out Stealing Horses*, by Per Petterson. All are welcome.

REFLECTIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

enced a very special gift in his ministry among us as we witnessed his growth and were inspired by his sermons and total dedication to his work.

Barbara Wright has been a tower of strength, leadership and service here for many years. She spoke unscripted and unmiked last Sunday after Joel's last sermon. Since many could not hear her or were not present, with her permission I want to share Barbara's thoughts:

"We knew from the outset that Joel was with us just for a short time: In that situation with a person you have four choices: 1 – you can ignore them; 2 – resent them; 3 – work around them; 4 – fall in love with them. I believe that most everyone at church chose the fourth option. There were many individual spontaneous gesture of love for Joel, and this is a collective expression of that love."

Again we face change. Change can be upsetting and sometimes hard. It threatens our comfort zone. But now we must embrace it. We have been very

well prepared to face what I like to think of as New Beginnings. Think of all that has been accomplished in the past two years, thanks to the leaders of Stewardship and the Capital Campaigns, and the generous support of the parish. We have a superb organ and a gifted organist, Donald Butt, to bring music to our worship. The Rectory has been totally rejuvenated with a fabulous new kitchen, the new kitchen in Colwell Hall is ready for all functions, new bathrooms are state of the art, a handicapped ramp provides needed access, revitalized landscaping welcomes, many other necessary repairs to keep an old plant functioning have been made. It is only fitting to say that the continuous attention of our Property Chairman, Andy Merryman to all the details has been a wonderful gift to the parish. The Lord's house is in order (well, almost!) and it is up to all of us to keep it that way – and provide for its future.

Yes, at 150 years of age this church will have a new Rector: The Reverend Nora Smith will arrive on Tuesday, September 8. There will be exciting and challenging days ahead. There has

been wonderful lay leadership during the interim. We can hardly know the amount of time, thought and prayer dedicated by the Call Committee and Vestry to the search. They have studied 75 resumes, traveled, listened, questioned many candidates, socialized and entertained the serious possibilities, met with disappointing events, and prayed again. A profound THANK YOU to Barry Seaman and Wayne Olson and all those who served. May God give Nora and us strength and vision in all the days ahead.

I would like to close with the beautiful prayer Debbie Wilson wrote years ago when she was a young music student. It is inscribed on the windows of the Sacristy:

*Lord Jesus Come
And be Our Guest
Our Morning Joy,
And Evening Rest
And With Our
Daily Bread Impart
Thy Love and Peace
In Every Heart.*

—Amen. †

—Carolyn G. Stifel

InCommon

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MISSION STATEMENT: The Church of St. Barnabas, Irvington is a Christian community, grounded in the Episcopal tradition, which celebrates the love of Christ through regular worship, fellowship and music. Our goals are to grow in faith, both within ourselves as individuals and by welcoming others from a variety of backgrounds and stages of life, and to reach out and share God's abundant gifts with others.

Halloween Kids' Outreach

Calling all young people, Sunday
School-age and older!

Help assemble Halloween care packages for parishioners away at college!

Last year we sent over *two dozen* care packages to college students from St. Barnabas. Join us after church on October 18th to help assemble boxes of Halloween goodies for this year's crop of college students.

Other questions? Want to suggest a recipient? Please contact **Linda Pierpont** at **591-6645**. †

