



“Where there is always a place at the table”

Church of the Ascension Herald - November 2011

Phone: (718) 442-4187 Fax: (718) 442-4187

Website: www.ascensionsi.org

e-mail: admin@ascensionsi.org

A Reflection from the Rector

“Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest-home;
all is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin;

God, our Maker, doth provide
for our wants to be supplied;
come to God’s own temple, come,
raise the song of harvest-home.”¹

About half-way through our “Giving Is...” theme focusing on stewardship in October, I suddenly was aware of a powerful feeling of thanksgiving. As I processed this at that moment and afterwards, I quickly realized that this feeling was an important gift, an opportunity to consider the many things for which I am truly thankful.

Since this occurred in the middle of our talking about giving to God and the Church, I first began to reflect on my thankfulness for each person of the parish, who gives so selflessly in so many ways. The pre-eminent way in which you give is by your presence here (and this most certainly includes those who have moved away, or who are unable to come on Sundays – all of whom remain so strongly in our hearts and prayers). You need not do or say anything in particular to be giving selflessly to your parish community and the world around you. It reminds me of the way in which God is simply present in our lives, profoundly and deeply so, and what a comfort and strength that is.

As your pledges for 2012 have come in, my thanksgiving has also been due to your financial generosity, your giving even though giving can be challenging these days. Some have been forced to pledge less than last year, others are able to pledge more, yet regardless, it is based on generosity, perhaps an acknowledgment of the gratitude and certitude expressed in the hymn “Come, Ye Thankful People, Come,” the first verse of which I’ve quoted above.

I reflected too that so many in this parish share gifts of teaching, of prayer, of leadership in worship and organizationally, of hospitality, of financial skills. The bounty expressed in all of this is truly exciting, and has such a far-reaching impact for friends and visitors alike.

¹ *The Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 1985), Hymn 290.

This hymn, which we will sing at Mass on Thanksgiving Eve, is a hymn of faith, one which directs us unwaveringly to the One who provides us all with what we truly need (**truly**, I think, can be the tricky part here). Some of you may have grown up in the kind of life that I led, in which planting and harvesting were a given each year. This hymn points out that we are thankful people for the harvest, whatever the harvest may be in your life, and that it is God who provides the harvest.

What, then, is our response to that harvest, provided by the One who does indeed supply all of our needs? It is to gather together as a community, in worship, to thank and praise God for all that He has been, is now, and forever will be for each one of us.

A profound praise and gratitude towards God cannot but help to redirect our focus from self to the other, all those around us, in whom we might see some aspect of God if we keep our hearts open to it. How we treat each other, in the parish and all around us, everywhere, is a critical and unavoidable part of giving thanks to God. I think this was the essence of the gift I received on that day in mid-October. I've often said that loving one another is a tool given us to actually love God. Similarly, showing gratitude for one another is a tool given us to actually praise and give thanks to God. I believe strongly that praise of our heavenly Father is not simply a prayer, but action too. Perhaps we could call it a living prayer.

As we move into the Thanksgiving holiday and on into the season of Advent, I want to share with you how I focus each year on thanksgiving as a part of my Advent preparation for the Incarnation of the Lord. If this is something you have not tried before, I hope that you will join me in it this year.

“All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;
then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love.”²

May the words of this second beloved Thanksgiving Day hymn encourage you in this year's great Advent season of preparation, and may God bless and keep each one of you, this day and always.

Fr. Richard

Thanksgiving Baskets:

On Saturday, November 20th, Ascension church will distribute 30 turkeys and boxes of food for families of Richmond Senior Services to make Thanksgiving dinner. Each year, we assist the Rotary Club of Staten Island, which donates these turkey dinners, by serving as a distribution point. This is another way that we work to reach out to our local community. If you would like to help to distribute turkey dinners on that day, please contact Art Ullstrom at (718) 447-6318 or ajcrystal1@aol.com. The distribution of these dinners begins at 9:00 that morning and is done within an hour or so.

Art and Joan Ullstrom
Outreach Committee

² *The Hymnal 1982* (New York: Church Publishing Inc., 1985), Hymn 291.

Staten Island Celebrates 350 Years

A Celebration at Christ Church, Sunday, Dec. 4 at 4:00 PM

During the past year numerous events have taken place to mark the 350th Anniversary of Staten Island's establishment.

In the month of December the churches of the island will host events marking the roles the various religious groups have played in Staten Island's history. The Richmond Inter-parish Council of the Episcopal Diocese of New York has made plans to participate in a celebration to be held at Christ Church in New Brighton. All the Episcopal Churches are expected to participate.

There will be a choir made up of parishioners from all 10 Episcopal churches. Our clergy are to process, along with Bishop Catherine Roskam and Bishop Andrew Smith. Clergy from other denominations are welcome to process.

Following Evensong a reception will be held in the Christ Church parish hall, where each parish will have a table to display materials associated with its history.

Bob Matthews

IPC Representative from Ascension along with Rosemary Colca

St. Martha's Guild

I would like to thank the women of St. Martha's for helping to make the Annual Fall Meeting of the Episcopal Church Women, Staten Island District, a successful event. We had over 25 guests on October 18, who heard a most interesting talk by the Rev. Deacon Beverly Neuhaus about the lost Episcopal churches of Staten Island. Many thanks to Father Richard for celebrating Holy Eucharist with us, and for his lovely and welcoming homily. Our annual Thanksgiving bake sale will take place on Sunday, November 20, 2011. We are looking forward to the specialties of our regular bakers and invite all members of the parish to donate good things as well. We need cookies and cupcakes to sell, as well as fruit based breads and cakes. Come to the bake sale, donate, buy, and enjoy!! St. Martha's will be preparing three Thanksgiving food baskets for needy families on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. Please bring in canned or packaged food items to be included in these baskets before that date, and join us to pack the baskets after our regular Wednesday Eucharist and breakfast.

The Guild's Christmas Dinner will be at Café DelMondo on Dec. 11 at 4:00PM. All women of the parish are welcome.

Rosemary Loffredo

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!' While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, 'Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!'

The Wardens, Vestry, and People of
St. Mary's (Castleton) invite you to
The Celebration of a New Season of Ministry
The installation of The Rev. Kevin Fisher
as our 16th Rector

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Smith

Presiding and Preaching

Friday, November 18th

7:30 p.m.

Reception following

Clergy: White Stoles

CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION WELCOMES ITS NEW DEACON!

We are delighted to have Deacon Novella Lawrence come to serve Ascension once again! Her first Sunday with us was October 23rd. Deacon Novella first came to Church of the Ascension in 1980. She was amazed by the spirit of warmth and the love of the clergy and parishioners. Early on she began to be involved in Outreach and encouraged several members of the parish to provide meals and to sleep overnight in the newly formed Project Hospitality Shelters. Other Outreach start-ups were Pastoral Care to the sick and ministry to the Lakeside Manor Home for Adults. The spiritual aspects of the church at that time were High Mass, Cursillo and Prayer Group.

Novella was nourished by this parish and eventually was called to the Diaconate in 1992 and ordained in 1997 while The Rev. John Alexander was Rector. There is a chair dedicated to her mother, Pauline Brown, as well as a set of vestments. Deacon Novella baptized her granddaughter, Amina Novella, at this church. Her mother is buried in the Columbarium. In 2000 she accepted a call to St. Paul's Church in Darien, CT., where she has served as assistant clergy for 12 years. She views this call to return to Ascension by Fr. Richard as a part of the Lord's plan, and is delighted to reunite with old friends and to make new friends here. We are so very happy to have her back to serve. Thanks be to God!

NEW TUESDAY EVENING DEACON'S FORUM

On Tuesday evening, November the 15th, from 7:00 pm to 8:15pm, Deacon Novella and Father Richard started a special series that will be both exciting and spiritually uplifting. This will be in the form of a Video Presentation/Dramatization of the Book of Acts from the Scriptures. This will take place over a period of five weeks ending on **Tuesday, December 13th**. Journey with the physician, Luke as he tells the enthralling story of danger, struggle and triumph that marks the birth of the Christian church. Share the times of mystery and wonder that follow the resurrection of Jesus. Bear witness to the Ascension as He is taken up into heaven. Experience the transforming power of Pentecost and the eloquence of Peter and John as they send the flame of faith racing through Jerusalem. And, as Luke's powerful narrative brings the Book of Acts to vivid life, gain new insight into the compassionate love that unites the fellowship of believers. And when the martyrdom of Stephen (the first Deacon) marks the beginning of a great persecution, flee with the disciples as the infant church scatters from Jerusalem to embrace the WORLD. Each presentation will be followed by a brief discussion and Compline. We look forward to all attending who can! If you missed the first session feel free to join in now.

FLOWER AND CANDLE FUNDS at Ascension are essential for the provision of flowers and candles that beautify our sanctuary and dignify our worship of God. Your ongoing contributions to these at Easter and Christmas, as well as when you sign up for altar flowers and candles, is needed and so very much appreciated. If you are able, the cost of altar flowers is \$40 for one vase or \$60 for two. If you feel that it is not affordable to contribute for 2 vases, 2 people can sign up for one day for \$40 each. It is more important to me that you commemorate those you love with flowers and candles than not participating because of cost, so either way, give what you are able. The candle fund tends to be quite down on funds so please try to contribute \$20 for the sanctuary candle if you are able to.

Many thanks - Fr. Richard

The Convention to elect a new bishop on October 29 was cancelled due to inclement weather. It will take place instead on Saturday, November 19th. Father Richard and Margot Lowell will be in attendance to represent Church of the Ascension. The regular annual Diocesan Convention has been postponed until January 14th, 2012.

Advent is Soon Upon Us!

Time has flown by, hasn't it? The final Sunday of November is the first Sunday of Advent! As we did last year, we will have a brief liturgy associated with the lighting of the Advent candles each week, including on Christmas Eve. Advent is a wonderful time to pray and prepare, reflecting upon and giving thanks for the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Make a promise to yourself to be present for each Sunday in Advent - a wonderful time to step back, slow down, and worship amidst the intensity of the secular world.

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Date	Event	Location
Tuesday, Nov 15	1 st Deacon's Forum and Compline Video Presentation of the Book of Acts	Undercroft
Saturday, Nov 19	Holiday Turkey Distribution	Church Entrance
Sunday, Nov 20	St. Martha's Bake Sale Holy Eucharist	Undercroft Lakeside Manor
Wednesday, Nov 23	Thanksgiving Eve Mass	Sanctuary
Sunday, Dec. 4	Staten Island 350 Evensong	Christ Church
Sunday, Dec 11	Vestry Meeting St. Martha's Christmas Dinner	Rectory Café Delmondo
Saturday, Dec 17	Rector's Christmas Party	Rectory
Saturday, Dec 24 Christmas Eve	5:00 pm Family Christmas Mass 10:30 pm Carols & Hymns 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Mass	Sanctuary Sanctuary Sanctuary
Sunday, Dec 25 Christmas Day	Mass at 8:00 am and 10:00 am	Sanctuary
Sunday, Jan 8 Epiphany	Eucharist Service at 7:00 PM	Sanctuary

Rector's Christmas Party with Tree Decorating for the Children

Our 2nd annual Christmas Party and Tree Decorating will be hosted by Fr. Richard and the St. Martha's Guild on Saturday, December 17th from 4:00 to 8:00 pm at the Rectory! Be sure to bring the children to decorate the Christmas tree - they did a marvelous job at it last year. Come one, come all!

Here is a recap of this year's fundraisers. Many thanks to all of you who helped make these important fundraisers such a success!

Spring Yard Sale: \$ 2,084.97*

Share the Bounty Cocktail Party: \$ 6,335.47*

Oktoberfest: \$3,228.19*

*reflects net income

A priest dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket, and jeans.

Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, 'Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven ? '

The guy replies, 'I'm Jack, retired airline pilot from Houston.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, 'Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom.' The pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff.

Next, it's the priest's turn. He stands erect and booms out, 'I am Father Bob, pastor of Saint Mary's for the last 43 years.'

Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the priest, 'Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom.'

'Just a minute,' says the good father. 'That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?'

'Up here - we go by results,' says Saint Peter. 'When you preached - people slept. When he flew, people prayed.'



Church of the Ascension
One Kingsley Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10314-2420
Return Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Staten Island, NY 10314
Permit No. 196

Affix Address
Label Over this Text