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O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant us, we beseech thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that, when he shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, he liveth and reigneth ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

FROM THE RECTOR

Washington culture is adept at taking a word and using it to the point of extinction. A case in point is the word “transparent”. Several years ago, when Congress was perpetrating some mischief which masqueraded as “reform”, the goal of that legislation was “transparency” in financial dealings. Hardly a politician has run for office since who did not promise transparency. Whether those elected make good on their promises can be left to others to decide.

In the season of our focus on stewardship, it is reasonable to give attention to parish budget matters. Some other time, we will consider the place of budgets in the greater theology of stewardship, but for now, the focus is parochial. For many years, the financial records of this parish have been an open book. Any parishioner can find where every penny is spent, just as anyone is welcomed to attend vestry meetings to hear how the decisions on money are reached. The sole category not open to one and all is where the money comes from. In other words, it is not a matter of public record what the pledge support of any individual happens to be. When pledges are received, only a few know the connection between an individual amount and the donor, and those with access to such figures are generally the ones who have to count the money and keep the books. Otherwise, discretion is the absolute order of the day when it comes to contributions.

During the challenging financial stretch of the present year, a balanced budget has been a “near run thing”, to use the British phrase mis-attributed to the Duke of Wellington. In our case, the task has been to keep the spending within the limits established by the vestry. Those limits came after serious and at times

painful deliberations. If – and put that word at the front of your mind – if pledges total what was indicated by parishioners, we will end the year where we planned to be. That optimistic analysis reflects two crucial factors: No small amount of confidence in the response of our parishioners to the mission, direction, and leadership of this parish, and responsible use of parish funds by those to whom they were entrusted. I specifically mean the staff and vestry.

Precise financial figures from me are rarely given. I never mastered the basic principles of accounting, and have never been the treasurer of any organization. One is on safer ground in asking Gary Bachman or a member of the finance committee where certain specific figures stand. I speak in financial generalities; others have the specific facts. Still, it is wise to remember that truth is always more than just the sum of facts, and the financial truth in this parish is as in many today a daunting one. With continued faithful response to the current and the coming year, we will be on solid ground. Our call as disciples, however, is not to be on solid ground, but to be faithful.

Some future fiscal historian about these years at St Francis will have no reason to say we overspent money in any area. That historian may well wonder, however, if we were ever timid and weak-kneed in trusting God to give us a heart and will to do his work faithfully and boldly in and through this parish. Keep that in mind when the theme is stewardship.



2010 STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

As we approach our 2010 Stewardship campaign I would like to thank each of the St. Francis parishioners for the time, talent and commitment you have given to our church, and to encourage you to renew your commitment at this time. The Vestry is grateful to Steve and Laura Harper for leading this year's Stewardship Campaign. While our campaign focuses on funding the annual budget, this year the Stewardship Committee and Vestry also commends to you God's call to all of us to grow St. Francis.

Worship remains our central focus and we are fortunate to have all who lead our worship, including our fine clergy, those in our music program, Christian education, and youth programs. We respond as we come together on Sunday and throughout our year in gratitude as we commit to worship God "in the beauty of holiness".

As we move forward with our campaign I would like to ask you to commit to mutual support. We experience the love of God in and through love of our neighbor. Our many fellowship and outreach programs help our relationship with one another deepen and grow. Congregations that practice healthy stewardship cannot help but be welcoming to newcomers, because a warm welcome is the first step toward involvement. Involvement leads to ownership, and ownership leads to commitment. Commitment leads to financial support – all of which leads to joyful stewardship of all that we are and all that we have, honoring God who has given us everything.

I would like to ask you to commit to financial support. We gather regularly in the beautiful setting that is St. Francis church. We benefit from high quality leadership. We reach out in service to others. Although the value of this ministry is far greater than its cost, the cost remains. Our members provide the financial

means for our parish to continue and grow. If you have found this parish to be the place where you belong, it is because of the commitment of many. When we give joyously and generously we are blessed far beyond measure.

I invite you to reflect on God's goodness. Our response is reflected in our willingness to set aside a portion of our earnings for God. The Stewardship committee and Vestry encourage us to see our financial giving as both a benefit and a responsibility of membership. Throughout November, members of St. Francis will speak during our regular services about what it means to live thankfully. Meanwhile we invite you to reflect on what your gratitude might lead you to return from the material things you hold in trust for God. This year's campaign will provide support for our many wonderful programs and ministries, and outreach to our neighbors and beyond.

Stewardship is not just about money, but is about our relationship with God and the resources God has provided to each of us. Those resources include our time, our talents and our treasure. Put differently, our attitude toward stewardship depends on how we answer the question of commitment to be faithful to the church and uphold it by prayer, our presence, our gifts, and our service.

As we approach the end of the year, the Vestry encourages you to consider what God is calling you to give to support the mission and ministry of St. Francis and to sustain the connection that is our heritage and our future. For those of you who have made a pledge, please keep it current and consider increasing your gift. For all of us, a gift is an expression of our faith, a response to God's grace expressed in Jesus Christ, a response to our God who has given us everything.

Ellen Tozer,
Senior Warden

SENIOR'S POT-LUCK LUNCHEON

Thursday, November 19th, 12 Noon

Our speaker this month will be Bill Offutt, author, retired teacher and Montgomery County Historical Society Speaker. His topic, accompanied by slides, is "Montgomery County: A Rich History". This should be a fabulous program!

At the suggestion of several respondents to our survey, this will be a pot-luck lunch so we are asking you bring a salad, main dish or dessert based on your last name. Simple and tasty are the watchwords, Beef Wellington and chocolate soufflés need not apply!

If your last name begins with: **A-F**, please bring a main course; **G-O**, bring a salad; and **P-Z**, bring a dessert. These should serve 4 to 6 people. This is a change from 6 to 8.

IF you have a favorite item you'd prefer to bring just tell us that when you make your reservation and we will adjust the offerings accordingly.

Beverages, other than wine, and rolls will be supplied. The cost will only be \$5.00. Please call Christine in the Church Office to make reservations, indicating what dish you will bring.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS !

GALA CONCERT

Gaudete!

The National Philharmonic Singers

December 5, 2009 8:00 pm

Christ Episcopal Church

Christ Episcopal Church in Rockville will be the setting for the National Philharmonic Singers' holiday program on Saturday, 12/05/09 at 8 p.m.

Continued in next column

JOY AND CONCERN

Please join us in prayer for Robert Lincoln, Zoel Radner, and Frieda Vande Sande, mother of Thomas Vande Sande, who have died.

NEEDED: EMPTY SODA BOTTLES

The Physical Education teacher at St. Andrew's has asked if we can help her assemble some "bowling pins" for the children to use. You would recognize them better as empty 2 liter soda bottles with their tops.

If you have any spares, you can recycle them as a gift to St. Andrews by dropping them off by the kiosk outside the Church Office any day.

Thank you all from the little bowlers-to-be.

Join Conductor Stan Engebretson, Guest Vocal Artist Molly Donnelly, the Singers, and Theodore Guerrant on organ as they perform choral music from Renaissance to Contemporary periods. All free-will donations will benefit the Community Ministries of Rockville.

There will be an excerpt from Bach's Christmas Oratorio sung by special guest, mezzo-soprano Molly Donnelly. The ensemble will perform Ave Maria for tenor solo and eight-part choir as well as the anthem There Shall a Star appear from Jacob. The finale will be a celebration of traditional carols for all to sing. For more information visit www.nationalphilharmonic.org.

Christ Episcopal Church is located at 107 South Washington Street in Rockville, MD. Directions may be found at www.christchurchrockville.org or by calling the church at 301-762-2191, Ext. 3.

SEXTON'S HONOR

As we mark and celebrate Mr Thai's 20 years of faithful service, it is fitting that we continue to express our gratitude in as many ways as possible. There is great fondness in our parish for this gentleman and for good reason.

A sexton by definition is someone who looks after a church and churchyard, a tall order, no doubt, filled with hard work and menial tasks where physical plant is concerned, and patience and great tact where personnel management is required. For me, it's not that Mr Thai handles his duties so well, which indeed he does, but that he does so with a selfless care of one who truly understands the honor of doing one's best and giving fully toward improving the life of the world in which you find yourself.

Whether he knows it or not, this good man has taught many of us repeatedly the lessons of perseverance, patience, generosity, sincere humility, family loyalty, and just plain honest living. His strong work ethic and his virtuous character, indeed a very Christian character full of the sort of content to which, I believe, Dr King so famously alluded, are abundant blessings to us. We must give thanks for God's grace in bringing Mr Thai to us and for continuing to nurture his servant in this place and time among us here.

And so, I lend my voice to our chorus of thanks in my customary way through music, and more specifically, new music wedded to a text of relevance. Numerous times over the years we have sung the wonderful hymn by George Herbert (1593-1633), *Teach me, my God and King* (#592). Consistently, these words have brought Mr Thai to mind and so two years ago I wrote a new tune in his honor to which this text could be sung.

As many know, it is customary to give hymn tunes a name separate from the text. In this case, I chose SEXTON'S HONOR as a nod to the indispensable industry of our own sexton. Those attending the 9 o'clock service on October 25th heard its premiere during communion, which was sung beautifully by the girl choristers of our parish.

Admittedly, our hymnal has a very fine tune by Charles Lockhart (1745-1815) and I would not presume to try and usurp it. Rather, I offer an alternate setting as a means of personalizing my (our) thanks for Mr Thai. And for convenience, I am reprinting George Herbert's text here in the hope that you will take a moment to read and meditate upon it and then offer your own prayer of thanksgiving for our dear friend and colleague.

*Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see,
and what I do in anything,
to do it as for thee.*

*All may of thee partake;
nothing can be so mean,
which with this tincture, "For thy sake,"
will not grow bright and clean.*

*A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine:
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
makes that and th' action fine.*

*This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.*

Gary Davison, O-C

COMING UP AT ST FRANCIS

For more information, please visit our website at www.stfrancispotomac.org

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8

HUNGER SUNDAY

8:00am Holy Eucharist

9:00am Holy Eucharist

Sunday School & Adult Education Hour

11:15 am Morning Prayer

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10

10:30 Grounds Committee

5:30 pm St. Nicholas Training Choir

5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir

7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft

7:30 pm Communications Committee

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

10:00 am Holy Eucharist

11:00 am Rector's Bible Study

5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 11/22

5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study

7:30 pm St Francis Choir

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

7:00 am Men's Bible Study

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:30 am S. S. Teacher Training—Kincaid Library

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

8:00 am Holy Eucharist

9:00 am Morning Prayer

Sunday School & Adult Education Hour

11:15 am Holy Eucharist



The Scripture appointed for the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost:
Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17, Psalm 127 or 1 Kings 17:8-16, Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:24-28,
Mark 12:38-44

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