

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT NEWSLETTER

February 2009

Dear Holy Spirit parishioners and friends,

On February 2, the Vestry received the names of the final candidates. The Search process is coming to a close and one of these days you will be saying “Hello” to the first permanent rector of the Church of the Holy Spirit! Once again, I am reminded of the title of a little book by Alla Bozarth Campbell, Life is Good-bye, Life is Hello. She fills the pages with nuggets of wisdom and stories of life transitions. Bozarth-Campbell says, “Life is change. Life means having and holding - then letting go and giving up - even what we love the best. We can survive loss. We can move beyond endurance to accept new and different joys into our lives.” This book helps me remember that each time I say, “Goodbye” that there is a “Hello” just around the corner. As the parishes I’ve served go through “Good-byes” and “Hellos” in unique ways, I’ve witnessed how our beautifully resilient Episcopal faith holds us in her bountiful skirts, like a mother with a generous lap as her people wait for what’s next, some restlessly, some throwing tantrums, some able to trust. Over the years, I’ve learned that however we deal with change, God is in the midst of all of the comings and goings of our lives.

It is very likely that a call will be made to the new rector during the season of Lent. Although I don’t believe I’ve ever met anyone who was excited about Lent coming, it should be a wonderful season for Church of the Holy Spirit. How perfect to step into the quiet, reflective time of this season, as you prepare to welcome a new rector. How ideal to enter into the time set aside by the entire church for prayer, fasting, study and giving as you ready your hearts to receive, not only a new rector, but whatever God is dreaming of for this parish.

As we move through Lent, focused on goodbyes to indulgence and laziness in our spiritual habits, I pray that our hearts will be prepared for the resounding hello of rebirth and new life that God in Christ has prepared for us.

In the words of the Book of Common Prayer we are “invited to the observance of a holy Lent, by self examination, and repentance, prayer, fasting and self denial, and by the reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.” (BCP p.265)

“Fast from criticism, and feast on praise; Fast from self-pity, and feast on joy;
Fast from ill temper, and feast on peace; Fast from resentment, and feast on contentment;
Fast from jealousy, and feast on love; Fast from pride, and feast on humility;
Fast from selfishness, and feast on service; Fast from fear, and feast on faith.”
(Bp. Arthur Lichtenberger)

Faithfully,

The Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard
Interim Rector

THE THIRD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Our third Annual Parish Meeting was held on January 25th. Reports were presented and the clerk's minutes for the 2007 and 2008 meetings were reviewed and accepted. The financial reports, carefully prepared and well presented by Treasurer Bob Meagher, were not encouraging. (See the Financial Summary which follows)

Discussion and suggestions took place. (More on this under "Our Finances). The following were elected:

Senior Warden-Sue Dangle
Junior Warden-Keith Bailey
Parish Clerk-Vivienne McKay
Treasurer-Bob Meagher
Assistant Treasurers- Kenn Doolittle and Bev Draper
Vestry members 3 year terms: Suzanne Coleman, Joanne Devoe, Bob Shand
Vestry member 2 year term (to complete Sue Dangle's term)-Brad Jacobs
Delegate to the Diocesan Convention- Cosbie Marable
Alternate Delegate to the Convention-Steve Mullins
Delegate to the Deanery-Melissa San Souci

Sue Dangle presented Nancy Staniewicz with flowers and led a round of well-earned applause for Nancy's devoted and effective work as Senior Warden.

The meeting adjourned with prayer and was followed by a delicious pot-luck lunch, organized by the Hospitality Committee. Leftover food was donated to the Columbus House.

The printed reports showed much activity in Outreach, Maintenance, Technology and more. Our parish is fortunate to have so many active volunteers! Please join in where you hear of a need or see an opportunity; all are needed to strengthen our beloved parish.

By Jane Dexter

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FINANCIAL SUMMARY

During 2008, our expenses exceeded our income by \$ 95,703. This difference must come from somewhere. In 2008 we had spent the entire balance of the CCMEF endowment by September. The plan at that point was to begin to use the proceeds from the sale of St. John's. Since that is still not completed we were advanced \$50,000 from the Diocese to use on current day to day operations. We also had to borrow \$ 50,000 from the Diocese for the cost over runs on the Tower repair. As of 12/31/08, we will owe the Diocese \$100,000 from the proceeds of the sale.

Pledge income and all the other income sources (rent, donations, plate, etc.) are currently not enough to finance the budget. In 2008, our expenses exceeded our income on an average of \$ 8,000 per month.

Pledge income was \$ 110,055 vs a budget of \$ 115,931. There was a shortfall of \$ 5,876.

Other income in total was \$ 28,338 vs a budget of 22,502. That made up for the pledge shortfall.

Again the problem was/is – our budgeted income does not cover our budgeted expenses.

Overall we were favorable in actual expenses vs budgeted expenses. The actual was \$234,644 vs \$ 252,548 budgeted. The majority of this cost savings came as the result of Father Cheney’s retirement. We no longer had to pay a rector’s health insurance premiums or pension payments. Going forward we will once again have these expenses.

We knew that sometime in 2008 the CCMEF endowment would be exhausted. That fund was an unrestricted fund. It contained all the memorial donations made over the years and the proceeds from the sale of 38 Church St. All of those funds went for the day to day operations of the church, with the exception of \$ 75,000, which went towards the Tower Fund.

We ended 2008 with \$ 20,831 in the General fund. Our 2008 experience shows us that our expenses exceed our income by about \$ 8,000 a month. That being the case, the \$ 20,831 will not carry us too long.

The 2009 budget that was just adopted will require funding of \$ 262,074. That is the pledge amount that is required to balance the budget. The current pledge amount to date is \$ 92,000. We have a long way to go. Any remaining gap between these two numbers will have to come from the proceeds of the St John’s property.

By Bob Meagher, Treasurer

Weekly Pledge Amount	Annual Pledge amount
\$121.15	\$6,300.00
\$100.00	\$5200.00
\$90.00	\$4680.00
\$82.00	\$4264.00
\$63.46	\$3300.00
\$57.69	\$3000.00
\$55.00	\$2860.00
\$50.00	\$2600.00
\$48.00	\$2496.00
\$39.23	\$2040.00
\$36.92	\$1920.00
\$35.00	\$1820.00
\$33.00	\$1716.00
\$32.31	\$1680.00
\$30.00	\$1560.00
\$25.00	\$1300.00

OUR FINANCES

During the Annual Meeting of Church of the Holy Spirit on January 25th, the list (to the left) of pledge amounts sparked quite a bit of conversation among those in attendance. This list contains all of the pledges amounts received as of the date of the meeting. The intention of presenting the list was so that every member of the congregation present could see where they fell in the grand scheme of the church’s budget. We have are 76 pledges totaling approximately \$92,000. In order to meet out 2009 financial obligations including the new rector whom we expect to call soon, we need an income of \$260,000. The Church of the Holy Spirit is currently running at a monthly deficit of \$8000. This cannot continue and the proceeds of the sale of the former St. John’s property will be depleted in less than five years if we continue at this monthly deficit. The situation is dire and the Vestry felt that it was important to present this information to the congregation at the Annual Meeting so that everyone present would be informed.

\$23.08	\$1200.00
\$22.50	\$1170.00
\$22.00	\$1140.00
\$20.00	\$1040.00
\$19.23	\$1000.00
\$18.27	\$950.00
\$17.00	\$884.00
\$16.00	\$832.00
\$15.38	\$800.00
\$13.46	\$700.00
\$11.54	\$600.00
\$10.38	\$540.00
\$10.00	\$520.00
\$9.62	\$500.00
\$9.00	\$468.00
\$8.00	\$416.00
\$6.92	\$360.00
\$6.00	\$312.00
\$5.77	\$300.00
\$5.00	\$260.00
\$4.81	\$250.00
\$4.62	\$240.00
\$4.00	\$208.00
\$3.85	\$200.00
\$2.00	\$104.00
\$1.92	\$100.00
\$1.00	52.00
\$0.48	\$25.00

OUR FINANCES (cont'd.)

Can this situation be reversed? Of course. The Church of the Holy Spirit is on a precipice. With everyone's commitment and energy, we can bring more people into the congregation and we can all dig as deep as possible and increase our pledges.

If you can pledge \$5.00 a week, can you afford \$6.00? If you can pledge \$10.00 a week, can you afford \$12.00? If you can pledge \$20.00 a week, can you pledge \$25.00? Currently the largest ten pledges are supporting 40% of the budget. This has to change in order for Church of the Holy Spirit to continue its good work in the local community and the world.

Pray about your pledge and the answer will come to you.

By Sue Dangle



CHURCH SIGNS

- *Life is a puzzle. Look here for missing peace.
- *All of our seats come with a first-class service.
- *Don't point a finger, lend a hand.
- *Give God what's right, not what's left.

JERICHO

By

Mark Stanislawski

Disclaimer: This is a fictional story and is intended for entertainment purposes only!

Chapter Six

“You must save me and my family!”

Rahab’s hands were clasped together and her eyes were pleading. The spies were visibly uncomfortable. They were torn between *wanting* to save this beautiful woman and her family and *knowing* they couldn’t.

“I’m sorry,” said the taller spy. “Our duty prohibits us from taking anyone out of the city, even a small, innocent child.”

“But you don’t understand! I’ve wanted to leave this city but I couldn’t leave my father, who is old and blind or my mother to deal with that and my younger brother and sister. The journey to Jerusalem is dangerous, as you know.”

The taller spy looked at the floor and then into Rahab’s dark eyes. “I truly am sorry but all of your begging....”

The shorter spy grabbed his companion’s arm and looked to the closed shutters. “Do you hear that? Someone’s coming! Sounds like soldiers!”

Rahab ran to the shutters and peeked out. There were indeed ten soldiers heading right toward her house with swords drawn. Her eyes widened with terror. She had to think quickly or her hope would be lost. Her, and her family would be doomed to death when the Hebrew Army ransacked Jericho, as she believed they would.

Rahab turned and quickly looked around the room. She spotted the stone stairs in the back corner. She pointed to the stairs and led the spies to them. “Quickly! These stairs lead to the roof! Hide in the flax that’s drying! Go!”

The spies wasted no time in running up the stairs. No sooner did they disappear from Rahab’s sight then there was a tremendous pounding on the wooden door. Rahab paused to give the spies some time to make it to the roof, before she answered the door.

The soldier’s stern face looked down at her as the door opened. The other soldiers looked just as grim. They were crowded close to the soldier in front of the door and their eyes immediately began to scan the inside of the house for anything out of the ordinary.

“We have received information that you are harboring two Hebrew spies. I don’t need to tell you how serious this is. You know the Hebrew Army is poised to attack this city any day. Your refusal to allow us to search your home will be an admission of guilt, punishable by death.”

Rahab’s eyes never wavered from the soldier’s. “I’m sorry. My family is at the market. I stayed home because I was feeling ill. I haven’t seen anyone except for you fine, brave soldiers. I have to refuse, not because I’m harboring spies, but because it is my father’s decision to allow you entrance.”

The soldier stood in silence, staring at Rahab. After what seemed like minutes, he turned his head to look at the soldier next to him. The soldier looked back at the lead soldier and, almost imperceptibly, shook his head.

The lead soldier looked back at Rahab. “Very well. When your family returns from the market, we will gain permission from your father.”

The lead soldier jerked his head and the other soldiers backed away from the door and left. As the soldiers turned down the first street, the lead soldier stopped them.

“I want two men here and two men at the street on the other side of the house. Anyone who comes out of that house other than the girl, capture them. When the girl’s family returns, send a runner to let us know.”

“Yes, Sir.”

After turning the soldiers away, Rahab immediately went to the roof. The sun was warm and there was a very slight warm breeze. She looked at the pile of drying flax. It looked undisturbed and she wasn’t sure if the spies had taken her advice and hidden in it.

“Th-They’re gone.”

After several seconds, the spies sat up in the flax.

“I’ve kept my promise,” said Rahab. “I’ve saved you both from certain death. Now swear to me by the one, true God that you’ll do all in your power to save me and my family when your Army tramples through Jericho!”

The two spies looked at each other and then nodded. “Agreed. The soldiers will be watching this house. Get us safely out of the city and we will tell the Generals of the Hebrew Army of your kindness and to spread the word that you and yours are to be spared in the siege.” The spy pointed to Rahab’s waist. “That red cord. Hang it from your window when the siege begins. That will be the sign that this house is to be left untouched.”

Rahab removed the cord and stared at it. Her robes opened slightly in a ‘V’, stopping just below her belly button. Her skin was perfect, smooth and unmarked. A soft breeze opened the top a little more. Rahab looked to the spies and dropped the cord to the roof. “Agreed,” Rahab said with a smile. “We have some time before my family returns.”

With that said she shrugged her robes off and stood before the spies completely naked...

TO BE CONTINUED...

Author’s Note: I had always questioned why Rahab’s house was never just invaded by soldiers if they **knew** the spies were in there. Every story I’ve come across has Rahab being asked to give up the spies. I’ve come to learn that this is keeping with the Eastern way that no man is allowed to enter a woman’s house without her express permission. Truth to tell, I had seriously considered ignoring this fact to inject some action into the story but common sense won out.

Author’s Note 2: For all you Rahab fans, there is a novel titled, *Women of the Bible: Rahab’s story* by Ann Burton. **ISBN**: 0451216288. You can find it on Amazon.com or order it from your local Barnes & Noble!

(Editor’s note: Also check your local library! If they don’t have this book, they can perhaps send for it.)



QUICK NOTES

Palms: Do you have old palms?? It is customary to burn the old palms from past Palm Sundays to make the ashes for Ash Wednesday. Please bring your old palms to church the next two Sundays. (February 15 & 22).

Women's Retreat: The women's retreat will be on November 6-8, 2009. A deposit of \$60.00 now is due. Please give your deposit to Bev Draper. Scholarships are available. (If you find you cannot attend as the date draws near, your deposit is refundable.)

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

There will be two services held on Ash Wednesday, February 25, 2009. This year Rev. Joanne Neel-Richard will distribute ashes at a 12 noon service and also at an evening service at 7 p.m.

LENTEN PROGRAM

The Rev. Diane Hovey will hold bible study during the Lenten season. The topic will be the "Corinthians" and it will be held on Thursdays, March, 5, 12 and 19. If you find you can only attend one or two of the bible studies, please come. The bible study, although focused on a related topic, can be joined anytime.

PRAYER SHAWLS

Prayer shawls can be used to celebrate many happy occasions, as well as being used for someone who is ill. The Knitting Ministry group has many shawls already available. See Marian Matts if you would like one.

OUTREACH EVENTS

The Outreach Committee is gearing up for a busy Spring! The Easter Basket Drive will begin on March 15 and baskets will be prepared on April 5. The Committee will be asking for baskets/buckets/pails, candy and treats this year. They have plenty of grass left from last year.



The Mothers' and Fathers' Day Drives will also be held this year. Look in your weekly bulletins for more information as the days draw near.

WOMEN FOR WOMEN UPDATE

Our Women for Women sponsorship of Ghazai Najeb is coming to an end and Ghazai will be graduating from the program. We have included the copy of the letter we received explaining everything and also our congratulations!



Dear Susan,

Thank you for your support of women survivors of war. We hope you are enjoying your sponsorship of Ghazai Najeb and your participation in our Sponsorship Community.

With your emotional and financial support, Ghazai has seized the opportunity to rebuild her life and become an active member of her society. She is attending rights education classes in areas such as domestic violence, women's legal rights, disease prevention, family health and voting. Over the next few months she will complete market-based job skills training that will help her find employment or start her own business. She will continue increasing her self-confidence and her understanding of her own individual potential. Additionally, she is now connected to a community of women, which helps to reinforce and promote her personal development and rebuild the safety net destroyed by war.

Ghazai will graduate from the program in **March 2009**. Graduation is a time of celebration for your sister and her community. The ceremonies include food made by our program participants and their families; testimonies from the graduates on how their lives have changed; and a great deal of hugging, laughing and dancing. Often, local and national officials attend graduation to congratulate the women, and at times the ceremonies are covered by local and national media. Each woman receives a certificate to commemorate her participation in the program.

At this time, we encourage you to begin writing your farewell letter to Ghazai so that it reaches her before she graduates. Congratulate your sister on her commitment to self-sufficiency and independence.

Ghazai will always be a part of Women for Women International's community. She is always welcome to visit our office and may continue to access the economic opportunity programs we offer. Through the connections she has made, Ghazai now has access to a variety of opportunities; she may choose to sell products through one of our stores; apply for a micro credit loan; join a cooperative business; or start her own small business.

You'll receive the results of our exit interview with Ghazai in **April 2009**, along with the profile of your new sister. Your ongoing support will give another woman the chance to rebuild her life. With your support, stronger women will continue to build stronger communities and stronger nations.

You will be matched with a new sister in Afghanistan. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information at 202-737-7705 or SGrigera@womenforwomen.org. As always, thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely,
Sara Grigera
Sponsorship Coordinator

Women for Women International 4455 Connecticut Ave Suite 200 Washington, DC 20008



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Episcopal Ministry in West Haven since 1723

West Haven, Connecticut, United States of America, February 10, 2009

Dear Ghazai,

Greetings and hearty congratulations on the occasion of your graduation from the Women for Women program!

By chance, we wrote to you just yesterday, but today we received news of your wonderful achievement. We are happy for you and very proud of you!

We are sure that you will continue to benefit from the friendships you made while participating in the Women for Women program. We hope that your new skills will help you continue to build a strong community. We pray that you will find happiness, prosperity and strength in whatever you choose to do next.

We are so honored to have played a small part in helping you reach your goals. It gives us great happiness to think of your future success. We will continue to keep you and your family in our hearts and pray for you.

May peace be upon you, Ghazai—salaam. God's blessings and protection be upon you and your family forever.

Your sisters and brothers in the United States,

The people of the Church of the Holy Spirit

A HEART-FELT “THANK YOU”

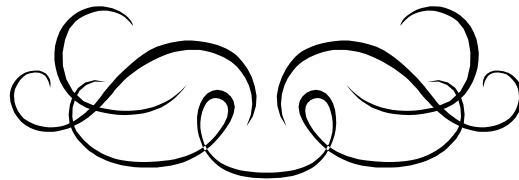
Gerry and Evelyn Bezruczyk would like to thank the Church of the Holy Spirit family for the many cards and for your concern and support.

It touched them deeply and they are very grateful.

OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER



Our next newsletter is being planned to reach you with information on Holy Week and Easter Services. Please plan to submit your information to be included by March 15. We look forward to any creative (poems, stories, etc.) or informative submissions.



This up-coming Lent weeks should be a time of “prayer, fasting, study and giving” as Rev. Joanne reminded us at the beginning of this letter. Please take it to heart and join in.

See you in Church!

Your editors,

Jane and Bonnie