

Genesis



Messiah's Newsletter

December 2008

The Church of the Messiah
5801 Harford Road
Baltimore, MD 21214
Phone: 410-426-0709
messiah.episcopal@verizon.net
www.messiahbaltimore.org

Vestry

Rob Bader
Melinda Fowl
Debbie Maltrotti
Debra McKenna
Sarah Miranda
Janet Taylor
Vince Vanneman
Carol Waldhauser

Officers

Ira Gooding
Senior Warden
Randy Steppe
Junior Warden
Ruth Anthony
Registrar
Nancy Fuller
Treasurer
Jean Becker
Michele Steppe
Assistant Treasurers

Staff

Interim Rector
The Rev. Stephen Swift

James Gautsch
Director of Music
Carolyn Janowski
Parish Administrator
Mike Trusty
Sexton

Genesis Editor

Phyllis Tyler

From the Interim Rector:

What a joy it is for me to be with you through this interim! So many of you have helped me get settled in: Carolyn in the office, Mike at the church, Jim with the choir, Jean with the Altar Guild, Sarah with vegetables, Margaret and centering prayer, Janet with her soup, Randy and a new window for my office door, Michele's help learning names, Elise's help with painting the office, Ira's steady, gentle leadership....thank you all so very much.

As the holidays are upon us, let us remember those less fortunate than ourselves. It is going to be tough for everyone and especially so for those on the margins of our culture. Let us reach out in prayer, in ministry and with financial support where we can. A tradition in our family is to give to Heifer International money to provide a gaggle of geese or some chickens in the name of our granddaughters. Heifer International sends a card telling them that, for example, a gaggle of geese has been given in their name. (www.heifer.org)

The first liturgical season of our year, Advent, begins Sunday, November 30. Plans for the season include Advent Wreath making on the 30th after the 10:30 Eucharist; the 2008 Advent Adult life-long learning class, 3:30 to 4:45 on Sundays, November 30, December 7 and 14, entitled "Saints then and now: where were you when Augustine wrote Confessions, Henry VIII broke with Rome or when Agnes was martyred at Rome?"

This last week I was welcomed warmly by Rev. Eleanor Holland of St. Matthias. We went over the details to continue the tradition of alternating worship in each other's church on the feast days of Thanksgiving and Ascension. By the time you get this edition of Genesis we will have celebrated the Eucharist on Thanksgiving.

As I promised at the Annual Meeting, the Vestry and I will work out a comprehensive interim plan for formal endorsement by the Vestry at their regular meeting in January.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1)

Please know that I hold each of you dearly in my prayers. I ask that you remember me in yours. There is nothing like the spiritual companionship we have with prayer, to know that you are loved, that you do matter and are valued for who you are is a privilege and a blessing we share in the church. This is perhaps the best gift we have to offer. Let's look out for others beyond our church fellowship with whom we can share this gift. Look for God-given opportunities to tell someone that you will remember them in your prayers.

Look for a special seasonal letter from the Vestry and me bearing holiday greetings and inviting all to our Christmas Eve services (5:30PM, Family Eucharist and 10:30PM, "Midnight Mass") and to our Christmas Day Eucharist (December 25) at 11:00 AM. Blessings and joy to you, your family and friends!

~ Fr. Steve (Swift)



2008 CSA Season Wrap-up: Thanksgivings and Prayers....

As I write this, the last Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Pick Up just finished up on Nov. 17th. Many thanks to the loyal volunteers on the CSA team who helped during this long, 25-week season: Elise Meyer-Bothling, Margaret Goode, Bryan Gardiner, Maurice Ellis, Nancy Fuller, Karen Edsell, and the Gooding, Steppe and Ellis families. Thanks also to those who have participated during previous seasons. Your enthusiasm and support for this ministry has enabled us to continue for four full years now! Because of the team's efforts, more than \$2100 worth of produce was donated to seniors in Hamilton/Lauraville, and the Caroline Center's culinary arts students were able to learn about and cook with the best local organic produce available. We will be offering the literal and symbolic fruits of our CSA "harvest" during offertory on Christ the King Sunday, November 23rd and would like your input as we plan the future.

Now that our fourth season has ended, it's time to assess this ministry. What has gone well, and how can it improve? How do you feel about issues such as food security, sustainability and justice? What role can faith communities and Messiah in particular, play in addressing these issues? How does the current economic climate impact on these issues? How do you feel about Messiah's various "food ministries" such as CSA Pick Up Site, Food Pantry and our hosting the Caroline Center's Culinary Arts training program? Are there other ways we could serve and help build our community? Should we play a role in supporting the new community garden in Hamilton? Would you like to participate in Messiah's ministries or in other community outreach activities? Please share your ideas and insights with Sarah Miranda, CSA Coordinator, or Melinda Fowl and Rob Bader, Outreach Commission Co-chairs, or Fr. Steve, and please pray for all of Messiah's outreach ministries during this time of transition and opportunity.

~Sarah Miranda



Visit the Library!!

Stop by to see....

The Lift the Flap Bible (for youngest readers)

The Early Reader's Bible (simple text for beginning readers)

The Children's Illustrated Bible (beautiful Dorling Kindersley book)

Tomie de Paola's Book of Bible Stories (delightful children's illustrator)

Come enjoy!

~Karen Hoffman

Stewardship During the Holidays...

The holiday season is upon us. Soon, we will be occupied with baking, shopping and catching up with loved ones. Although these are all delightful activities, it becomes very easy to forget about the needs of people who are not as fortunate as we are. The harder economy times also make it difficult to give to people or charities like we might have in the past. I encourage you to put aside the "busy-ness" of the holidays and the stress of the economy and to be generous in your giving, be it of your time, money or talent.

Luke 6:38 states: "Give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."

When times become difficult we need to pull together even *more* to help those people around us. God gave the church the commandment to serve others and to help those who are in need. This commandment does not change just because things in this world change or become more difficult.

Acts 20:35 states, "In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Keep God's word close to your heart this holiday season. Remember to be a good steward and, in turn, God will bless your obedience.

Furnace Fund....

The Finance Committee and Vestry have agreed that we should let the parishioners of Messiah know that there is a need to fix our existing furnace/boiler. The estimate of the project is between \$14,000 - \$15,000. This is a real necessity, especially with the cold weather approaching rapidly. Also, the Arts and Ideas school is in the upstairs hall on a regular basis during the school year and needs to maintain a comfortable atmosphere for their students.

In years past, there was a heat or fuel fund envelope in the box of pledge envelopes. However, since there is no reminder any longer, we will set up a gentle reminder in the Tower Room of our need and a container that you can contribute weekly loose change or a few dollars, when possible. Of course larger donations will be gladly accepted, by placing a check (with a "furnace fund" notation made in the memo area) or money in an envelope which can be placed in the offering plate.

Because of the necessity of the repair, it will be taken care of as soon as possible. However, we realize that we can't keep drawing money from our Investment Fund to pay for untimely repairs to our building, and so we come to you with our need.

Our hope is that Messiah's parishioners will generously participate, as they have done in the past, when knowing of a need. We are aware of the hard financial times that many of you may be experiencing. Unfortunately, these unexpected expenses are not planned into our annual budget and so we need to reach a little to keep us cozy during the years to come.

~The Finance Committee and Vestry

From Nancy Fuller.....

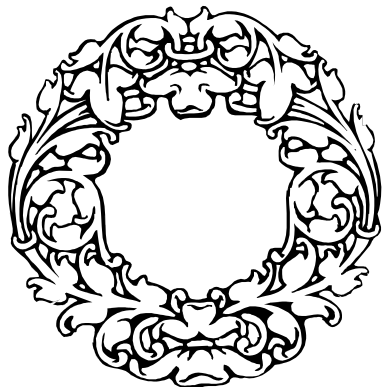
By now you may have heard that I have recently left Messiah. I want everyone to know that I will always love Messiah, and in my heart I will always belong to your church.

I really like Fr. Steve and feel very positive about the four members who will join the vestry in 2009. They are to be applauded for their willingness to serve.

My reasons for leaving are primarily due to Lee Ann's departure and my work with my spiritual advisor around that issue. Those discussions led me to the realization that when I came to Messiah in February, 2005 with no prior religious foundation, I moved too quickly into many roles in my zeal for my newfound Christianity, and never took the time to forge a good path for my Christian walk. I need to do that for myself now, and I hope you can understand that it has to be at another church. It has been my privilege to be your Treasurer.

I will make visits to service from time to time - this isn't goodbye. You haven't seen the last of me!

Your sister in Christ,
Nancy



The Maryland State Boychoir Presents The Annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols...

For tickets, please call the Maryland State Boychoir: 410-668-2003.

The Maryland State Boychoir, under the direction of Frank Cimino, Stephen Holmes and Patrick Bourckel will present its nineteenth annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 14th at 4:00 PM, Saturday, December 20th at 7:00 PM and Sunday, December 21st at 4:00 PM at The Maryland State Boychoir Center for the Arts, located at 3400 Norman Ave., Baltimore, MD 21213. The service will feature the world premiere of Canadian composer Eleanor Daley's "Christmastide," as well as works by Gustav Holst, John Rutter, Morten Lauridsen and Sergei Rachmaninoff. The candlelight service, reminiscent of the festival at King's College Chapel in England, begins with the traditional processional carol, "Once in Royal David's City." Tickets range in price from \$12-\$22, depending upon seating preference.

The Church of the Messiah has its very own choirister member of the MSB: **Conrad Ellis**, age 14. Conrad has been a member of the MSB for three years.

The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is a real treat for the senses - from the gleam of candlelight at every pew, to the glowing jewel colors on the western stained glass window at sunset, the glorious display of poinsettias throughtout the nave, the twinkling of the brass quintet, the aroma of cake baking and wafting down the hall for the reception, the solemnity of the traditional readings and the beautiful carols performed by the MSB.

~Devon Ellis