



# Genesis



Messiah's Newsletter

May 2008

The Church of the Messiah  
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### ***Vestry***

Rob Bader  
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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*

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

### ***Genesis Editor***

Phyllis Tyler

### ***From the Rector***

Three years ago, we had a parish-wide conversation about whether or not we should be added to the diocesan list of "Welcoming and Affirming" Parishes, and we were unable to reach agreement. The issue has been "on hold" since then. This past fall, it came up again as unfinished business when the vestry did its Mutual Ministry Review with the Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool. For those of you who don't know the history of this issue: In 1976, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirmed that "...*homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral care and concern of the church.*" "Welcoming and Affirming" is a designation used in the Episcopal Church as well as other denominations in this context. The Diocese of Maryland maintains a list of "Parishes Welcoming and Affirming Gay, Lesbian, and Transgender Persons" on its web page as well as in a brochure. Go to [www.ang-md.org/congregations](http://www.ang-md.org/congregations) and click on "Affirming congregations" to view the current list of parishes in our diocese.

The vestry has been talking about this very respectfully with each other even as they strongly disagree. It has raised the wider issue of what it means to be welcomed, to be included and to be excluded from community. They would now like to invite you into the conversation. Please join us on **Sunday May 18 at 9 AM** in the Lower Hall for a Cafe Conversation. We will not be debating issues of human sexuality, but rather focus on the larger questions. Our list of questions to be discussed is as follows:

Have you ever been excluded by divisions between 'us' and 'them?' What was that like?

What memberships define your identity? Who do these memberships exclude? When does exclusion become harmful, and how does this happen?

Have you had the experience of moving beyond barriers between 'us' and 'them?' How did this happen?

What allows people to move beyond barriers between 'us' and 'them?'

How do the discussions we've had today relate to designating ourselves as a "Welcoming and Affirming" parish?

Vestry members will act as table hosts and will facilitate the conversations. We are having this conversation because we are trying to be faithful to our call (in our Vision Statement) "to respectfully listen to one another." The vestry feels it is vital to hear from all of you. Our hope is that the process will help us all grow in Christ, whatever the outcome may be. Please plan to join us. A continental breakfast will be served.

Faithfully yours,

## ***Burial Plans***

One of the greatest gifts you can give to your family and friends is to have made plans for your funeral. At the time of death, those who are grieving are comforted by being able to carry out the wishes of the departed, when there is so little else they can do. There is now a one page sheet, asking you to make choices about what type of service, readings and music, available in the Tower Room. Please take the time to pick one up, complete it and return a copy to the church office. Your surviving loved ones will be most grateful! If you would like to have a sheet mailed to you, please call or email the office.

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## ***Summer Reading***

Unlike many church groups, the Book Group likes to meet MORE in the summer months. Join us one, two or three times to discuss the novels listed below. All books are available in paperback and from your local library. Meetings are at Messiah, from 7:00 to 8:30PM.

Wed. June 18 *Loving Frank* by Nancy Horan  
Wed. July 23 *Gorgeous Lies* by Martha McPhee  
Wed. Aug.27 *Free Food for Millionaires* by Min Jin Lee

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## ***Centering Prayer***

Centering Prayer will meet on Monday May 12th at 7PM. All are welcome to share in the time of silent meditation. We meet in the Family Room, which is downstairs, for one hour. Instruction is provided.

## ***Appreciating Spiritual Gifts***

The Bible says that we all have spiritual gifts. What are they and how do we use them? Join us for this conversation on **two Wednesday evenings** for an hour and a half, in the Upper Hall: **May 21 and May 28 from 7pm until 8:30pm**. This offering is a follow up to our April classes on spirituality and spiritual disciplines, but you do not need to have come to those in order to come to these. Please let Lee Ann+ know if you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity.

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*God willing and the People consenting  
The Right Reverend John L. Rabb  
Bishop-in-Charge of Maryland  
will ordain*

*Lewis Bradford and Linda Hollis  
to the Sacred Order of Deacons*

*in Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic  
Church  
on Saturday, the seventh of June  
Two thousand eight  
at eleven o'clock in the morning.*

*The Cathedral Church of the Incarnation*

*4 East University Parkway  
Baltimore, Maryland*

*Your prayers and presence are requested.*

**Greetings, my Messiah Friends!**

Hello to all, from General Seminary in NYC! My final semester here is almost over, and I can hardly believe it. Caps and gowns, GTS crosses and academic hoods are measured and ordered; I've started collecting moving boxes, and am feeling the pain of separation again as I prepare to leave behind what was terrifyingly new, and has become so dear. It feels like I've been here for both a lifetime, and for just a blink of time. What a blessing and privilege it has been to live and study here in this community! On May 14, I will graduate from The General Theological Seminary. And on June 14, I will, God willing and the people consenting, be ordained to the transitional diaconate at the Cathedral in Baltimore, and begin the next phase of the journey, wherever it is that God leads me to serve.

I am moved to write to you today, having just come from a Pastoral Theology class. We are working to identify those characteristics of faith communities that "work": what has supported us along our journey as Christians, and what has been powerful in our formation. In our discussion, I spoke of you, and it became clear to me how much we rely on our communities to be our mirror, to call on us to *be who we are*, and to step forward to do what we are meant to do. Although feeling called to serve the Church since I was a young girl, I assumed I was too "different" to fit into the role of a clergy person. You, my Messiah friends, helped to lift me up to see clearly that *all* our gifts are God's design, meant to be used for the creative building up of God's church.

Thank you for being the wonderful community that you are! And thank you for your prayers and support for both Lilly and I throughout these three years of seminary, and forward into the unknown of my first call to serve as an ordained person. This is a perfect opportunity for us to remember that we are all called to let go into the hands of the God we trust - which is exactly where we need to be, especially when we are in the midst of change. Let us hold each other with compassion, and with the biggest possible vision, as we all step forward into the new work God has given us to do - "...with strength and courage, to love and serve God, with gladness and singleness of heart, through Christ our Lord!" Amen! Alleluia!

For the sake of his love,  
Julia  
(Julia Fritts interned at Messiah in 2004)

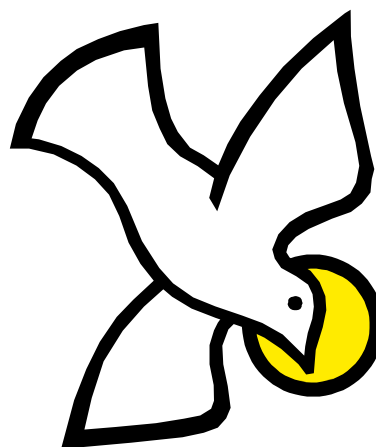
*God willing and the People consenting  
The Right Reverend John L. Rabb  
Bishop-in-Charge of Maryland  
will ordain*

*Laura Brecht  
Julia Fritts  
Marta Johnson*

*to the Sacred Order of Deacons  
in Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church  
on Saturday, the fourteenth of June  
Two thousand eight  
at eleven o'clock in the morning.*

*The Cathedral Church of the Incarnation  
4 East University Parkway  
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*Your prayers and presence are requested.*



## EVERYTHING WE ARE

Everything We Are is back from hiatus. This page is devoted to faithful Christian stewardship at Messiah and in everyday life, taking its name from the first line of Messiah's Stewardship Statement: We believe that everything we are and everything we have are gifts from God, our creator.

### Stewardship of Baking

Many of us love to bake, but we don't like to end up with more than we can (wisely) consume on our own. Fortunately, Messiah offers many opportunities to turn that talent into ministry.

- **Moveable Feast:** On the second Sunday of each month, you can donate freshly baked desserts to this wonderful program that delivers food to homebound patients living with HIV/AIDS and other chronic diseases. Desserts should be wrapped in individual portions and left on the back counter of the Messiah kitchen. See Carol Waldhauser for more information.
- **Communion Bread:** Did you ever wonder where Messiah's delicious communion bread comes from? A group of bread bakers with a not-so-secret recipe has been operating behind the scenes for years. If you would like to offer up your baking skills to support this ministry, please speak with Jean Becker or another member of the Altar Guild.
- **Coffee Hour:** Sunday morning fellowship helps to build the strong relationships that make Messiah so important to all of us, and an abundant refreshment table is a celebration of our spirit of fellowship. You can sign up to bake for the coffee hour by simply choosing a date and signing up on the schedule that is set out at every coffee hour.

### Keeping Current With Your Pledge

As the summer months quickly approach, many among us are making travel plans that will result in a missed Sunday here and there. Please do your best to stay current with your pledge even when you aren't here on Sunday. When Messiah's cash flow dwindles, we are forced to draw money out of our investment fund to cover our operational expenses, but a consistent and predictable cash flow lessens the need to move these funds around. We have been truly blessed by an abundance of pledged funds and a group of talented parishioners who are committed to managing Messiah's finances, so please try to stay current with your pledge as you make your summer plans.

### Stewardship Bookshelf

**Here are a couple of great reads to help you think about stewardship in your daily life.**

- **Climbing the Sycamore Tree:** A Study on Choice and Simplicity by Ann Hagmann.  
Based on the story of Zacchaeus, this is a 6-week study of faithful stewardship. Hagmann uses both scripture and current consumer statistics to show how our buying habits marginalize certain people and perpetuate systems that contradict good stewardship and love for God's creation. Following the experience of the tax collector, the study seeks to deepen the link between the faith we profess and the lifestyle we live. Available at St. Bede's Books at the Diocesan Center or online at [www.stbedesbooks.com](http://www.stbedesbooks.com).
- **Affluenza: An All-Consuming Epidemic by John de Graaf, et al.**  
In their eye-opening, soul-prodding look at the excess of American society, the authors of Affluenza include two quotations that encapsulate much of the book: T.S. Eliot's line "We are the hollow men / We are the stuffed men," which opens one of this book's chapters, and a quote from a newspaper article that notes "We are a nation that shouts at a microwave oven to hurry up." If these observations make you grimace at your own ruthless consumption or sigh at the hurried pace of your life, you may already be ill. Read on. Available from the Enoch Pratt Free Library and the Baltimore County Public Library.