

Church of the Holy Spirit News & Notes

March 2014—Volume 17, #3

Advocations – March 2014



Dear Friends:

I recently finished compiling the Parochial Report, an annual chore dreaded by Episcopal clergy and parish administrators nationwide. The hopes and goals behind this exercise in record-keeping are worthy ones – it’s good to have measurable information and benchmarks, and to be able to track trends! – but in this transient, overcommitted age, the old definitions of church membership are increasingly irrelevant to what actually goes on. At the Church of the Holy Spirit, we have people who spend part of the year here and part of it elsewhere, and are active, committed church members in both places. We have families who participate in Family Worship on Wednesdays but for whom Sunday morning attendance doesn’t make sense. Few folks in this day and age bother with formal “letters of transfer” when they move from one church to another; many place far more emphasis on parish culture and “fit” than on the denomination of the parish, in choosing where to attend.

That said, there are still some helpful insights that can be drawn from the process of compiling the Parochial Report.

- In 2013, our numbers held steady at an Average Weekly Attendance of 59. (Average attendance is a far more useful metric than “membership”, since it gives a sense of the overall level of participation; especially at a place like CHS, with so many folks coming and going over the course of the year.)
- Family Worship is included in the Average Weekly Attendance, since it is the principal service for many of those who participate. In 2013, folks from Holderness School began to participate in Family Worship, thus offsetting a slight decline in Sunday morning participation.
- The average was also driven up slightly by our combining with St. Mark’s Ashland, for a number of services in the summer.
- Attendance in Holy Week and Easter was very strong, which is a great sign! Let’s hope we can match or exceed those totals in 2014 – Holy Week and Easter services are great for inviting friends along, as they go straight to the heart of the Christian message and have a strong and unique energy for those who participate.

When the Vestry reviewed the Parochial Report before submitting it to the Episcopal Church’s central office in New York, there was some conversation about the fact that, as a small parish, we have three separate congregations with distinct identities. Some Vestry members who had not grown up in the Episcopal tradition presented a helpful perspective, questioning why the distinctions between “eight o’clockers,” “the 9:30 crowd” and Family Worship, seem so strong. Yes, each group has unique needs – but is there room for some mixing and mingling? How can we create stronger bonds of fellowship between church members who may attend different services, but who all care deeply about the CHS community and its future?

Consider making it part of your Lenten discipline to attend a different service at least once! You might be surprised by whom you see, what you experience, and what you learn!

In God’s peace,
Grace+

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Church of the Holy Spirit

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170 No. Main Street

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Rector

Rev. Grace Burson

Vestry Members

Senior Warden

Joan Bowers

Junior Warden (property issues)

Robert Cochran

Treasurer

Wavell Fogleman

Clerk

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New Building, New Possibilities for Ministry

By Joan Bowers, Sr. Warden

I've been listening to Bob Cochran make the case for our new church building on Highland Street, and I think his argument is a compelling one.

Increasingly we at Church of the Holy Spirit are relating to the community primarily at our Highland Street address. That is the location where we host all of the following (and thanks extend to all those who have helped in these ministries, not just those named):

- the Farmers' Market (thanks to Carol Perkins)
- the book sale (thanks to Barbara Brooks and Bob Brooks)
- multiple sessions of AA, Al-Anon, and NA per week
- the quilting and yoga groups (thanks to Lois Grant)
- the September yard sale (thanks to Paula Hancock)
- Morning Prayer and monthly healing service (thanks to Grace)

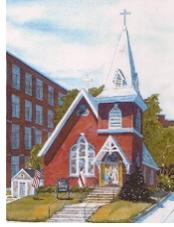
These events are all open to the community, and in addition we have our own committee meetings, lunches, teas, Mardi Gras dinner, and so on that happen at this location.

When we purchased the Highland Street property in 2002, we couldn't have envisioned the many kinds of community connections which are now taking place there.

In effect, we have already moved to the Highland Street property but haven't realized it yet! The opportunity for additional new possibilities in worship and ministry will occur as we build a worship space on the new site to catch up with our community ministries.

Those of us who have attended programs in other churches in town know how inaccessible, outdated, and unwelcoming our current facility is. Our growing community of young families currently meet at Holderness School for Family Worship in order to accommodate their needs. With their activities taking place off site, it may be difficult for them to feel as if they are a part of the congregation.

What exciting new ventures can we dream of once we have a new church building? As Grace's recent sermon asked, "How can we be salt and light to the world around us?" A new accessible, attractive, and welcoming worship space will be unlimited in usage if we engage our imagination and pay attention to the Holy Spirit's movement among us.



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Lent 2014 in Plymouth

- The Methodist, UCC, Roman Catholic, and Episcopal churches in Plymouth are coming together for a **Community Lenten Program**. Sessions will run from 5:30-7:00 PM on Tuesdays in Lent (March 11-April 8) and will include supper and a presentation on spiritual practices. (See schedule below.) If you'd like to help cook for one of the sessions we're hosting, please let Grace know!
- **Brown Bag Bible Study** returns on Wednesdays in Lent, 11 AM-noon at the CLC (263 Highland Street). March 12-April 9; we'll look at the Scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday. Bring your lunch if it helps you to fit this time of study and reflection into your schedule.
- **Going Back to the Basics in Lent:** In 2014, the community of the Church of the Holy Spirit will be exploring the three basic disciplines that, according to Pastor Eugene Peterson, are essential to a Christian spiritual life: weekly worship, daily Psalm reading, and constant prayer. We'll talk about this undertaking at Coffee Hour Plus on Sunday, in preparation; handouts and guidelines will be provided, and we'll regularly reflect on how it's going throughout Lent. Get ready to deepen your prayer and your practice of God's presence!

Schedule for the Community Lenten Series:

- March 11, at CHS (Griswold Hall): Grace Burson, "Praying in Color"
- March 18, at Plymouth United Methodist Church: Lois Grant, "Christian Yoga"
- March 25, at St. Matthew's Roman Catholic Parish: Deacon Mike Guy leads the Stations of the Cross
- April 1, at Plymouth UMC: Diane Randall, "Spiritual Storytelling"
- April 8, at CHS: Rev. Paulo Franca (of Plymouth UCC), "Being Human: A Lenten Practice"

Lenten Confession: The sacrament of reconciliation (also known as Confession) is available during the season of Lent by appointment with Grace (as, indeed, it is available at any time). The Anglican approach to Confession is that "all may, some should, none must." It can be a very helpful "reboot" to one's spiritual life to hand one's sins and struggles over to God through this sacrament, and receive individual assurance of forgiveness. Complete confidentiality is, of course, observed.

Mardi Gras Dinner/Ash Wednesday Services

There will be a Mardi Gras dinner on **Tuesday, March 4** at 5:30 p.m. in Griswold Hall. The dinner will be followed by the traditional Burning of the Palms for the Ash Wednesday ashes - please bring your palms from last Palm Sunday! (They can be dropped off at church beforehand if you won't be able to come to the dinner.) Sign up to bring a dish on the sign-up sheets at church, or let Grace know what you plan to bring!

The following day, **March 5**, there will be a noon Ash Wednesday service, followed by chowder lunch sponsored by the ECW, in Griswold, as well as a 7 p.m. service at the church. The lunch is \$5.00 per person, and community members are welcome to attend!

"Ashes to Go" Comes to Plymouth

We are bringing this amazing street ministry to Plymouth in 2014! Check out the website at <http://ashestogo.org/>. If you'd like to stand with Grace on the sidewalk and witness to God's presence in the world, let her know. 2-4 PM, March 5.



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Building Project Teas a Success!

On Sunday, February 23, the final tea for the Capital Campaign was held in Griswold Hall. Approximately 25 parishioners came to see and hear about the plans for our new “home.” Anne Cochran organized an excellent tea with lot of delicious goodies.



Our architect, Chris Williams, presented the proposed plans for our building project in an excellent and very informative manner. There were questions regarding such things as the heating system, the location and plans for a kitchen, the location of the altar, etc. It was an excellent afternoon spent appreciating the future possibilities for the Church of the Holy Spirit.



Above: Participants enjoy goodies while learning about the proposed building project plans. Right: Family Worship participants create the banners that were carried in procession at the 9:30 service on Candlemas

Family Worship for 2014

Family Worship is CHS’ “third congregation,” and if you’ve been wondering where the children and their parents are on Sunday mornings ... they’re at Family Worship on Wednesday evenings! You do NOT have to be a child, or have a young child, to come and be part of this terrific group and its experience of faith and fellowship!

Our gatherings – of young children, their families, and those who love them – are being held his semester on the campus of Holderness School, and the families from the parish and the school are enjoying our time together. We eat together, then share a Bible story and activity and a short, kid-friendly worship service. The time frame is 5:30-7:00 PM. Contact Grace (holyspiritrector@gmail.com, 996-1490) for details.

All sessions are Wednesdays, 5:30-7:00 PM, unless otherwise indicated.

- * **March 12** – Jairus’ daughter
- * **March 26** – The Transfiguration
- April 9** – The Good Samaritan
- ***(April 17 [Thursday at 5 PM]:** Parish Maundy Thursday dinner – Cross & Resurrection)
- April 30** – Easter Week
- May 14** – The Good Shepherd
- ***May 28** – The End of the Story

* Dates with an asterisk are in the Undercroft; all others are at Holderness School.





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Acolytes and LEMs Needed!

CHS could very much use a few new ACOLYTES or LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS! These ministries help to make our worship orderly and meaningful. LEMs serve the chalice of wine during communion; acolytes carry the cross and gospel book and assist the priest in other ways. If you are interested in acolyting, contact Kate Donahue at kdonahue@prhs.sau48.org or 536-9539. If you are interested in being a LEM, contact Kathy at kmlennox@plymouth.edu or 536-4779.

Spread Some Cheer--Help With the Postcard Ministry

Looking to get involved in a very special corner of church life? Consider volunteering to spread cheer as part of the Postcard Ministry! We are still looking for volunteers for the month of January, February, or December. For one month, send birthday greetings, anniversary wishes, and simple “thinking of you” notes to parishioners. You’ll be supplied with everything you need, so if you’re interested, contact Postcard Ministry Coordinator Kathy Lennox by phone at 536-4779 or at kmlennox@plymouth.edu.

March Birthdays

Bayard Hancock
Judith Largent
Jan Crawford
Peter Durnan
Stephanie Osborne
Keren Hepworth
Dave Hepworth
Libby Wilson
Marguerite Burne



Follow Grace’s New Blog!

Have you visited Grace's new blog, "Parables of the Pea Patch"? You'll find each week's sermon there, as well as other writings and insights. You can link to the blog at parableofthepeapatch.wordpress.com.

Remember to **“Spring Ahead” for Daylight Savings Time on March 8!** Yes, it’s almost time to set your clocks ahead one hour next Saturday so you’re not late to church the next morning. Isn’t it exciting to feel the days getting longer?

Sunday Service Child Care—Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed to help provide child care in the Undercroft during the 9:30 am service each week through mid-May. The shift lasts from 9:15 – 10:30. If you are Safe Church trained and would like to help, please contact Melissa Greenawalt at 536-1321 or email holyspiritnh@myfairpoint.net.

Be a Joyful Voice for the Choir

Our new organist, Ash Morgan, has done a terrific job in his first few months with us. The Choir is always open to new members! No musical training is required. Come and have fun singing! Rehearsals take place Thursday evenings from 7-8 p.m.

Do you have news to share? We’d love to hear from you! Send your announcements to Melissa Greenawalt, Parish Administrator, at holyspiritnh@myfairpoint.net. Submissions should be received by Wednesday morning to be included in that week’s email newsletter.

March 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 8:00/9:30 Eucharist- CH	3	4 Exec. Comm. Mtg- 11am-CLC Mardi Gras dinner-5- 8pm-GH	5 Ash Wednesday Ser- vices-12pm/7pm-CH Chowder lunch-1pm- GH	6	7	8 Don't forget to "Spring Ahead" for Daylight Savings Time!!
9 8:00/9:30 Eucharist- CH	10	11 Comm. Lenten Series- 5:30pm-GH Vestry Mtg-7pm-CLC	12 Brown Bag Bible Study-11am-CLC Family Worship- 5:30pm-CH	13	14	15
16 8:00/9:30 Eucharist- CH	17	18 Comm. Lenten Series- 5:30pm-Plym. Meth- odist CH	19 Brown Bag Bible Study-11am-CLC	20	21	22
23 8:00/9:30 Eucharist- CH	24	25 Comm. Lenten Series- 5:30pm-St. Matthew's CH	26 Brown Bag Bible Study-11am-CLC Family Worship- 5:30pm-CH	27	28	29
30 8:00/9:30 Eucharist- CH	31				Regular meetings and events: Yoga-5pm W-GH Choir practice-7pm- CH	AA-7am M-F-GH -7pm W-GH Al-Anon-7pm M-GH NA-7pm Th-GH