

The Mantle

**St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
Sudbury, Massachusetts**



September 2007

Church School Begins Sept. 15

It's time to register your children for St. E's Church School programs. It's easier than ever, with forms available online. Please visit St. E's website to register online for the upcoming year.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, for ages 3-10, is rooted in the Bible and the liturgy of the church and uses the educational principles of Maria Montessori.

Journey to Adulthood, for ages 11-18, is a youth ministry program of spiritual formation for 6th - 12th graders. St. Elizabeth's uses all segments of the program: Rite-13 is a two-year program for 11-13 year-olds and J2A is a two-year program for 14-15 year-olds. YAC is for 16-18 year-olds.



Choir Rehearsals Kick Off Sept. 13

Join the St. E's choir on Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm beginning September 13. New members are always needed and welcomed! For more information, email Music Director Stan Hanson. We look forward to providing music that will enrich worship at St. Elizabeth's.

There are also musical opportunities for instrumentalists and youth singers.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Choir Rehearsals: Begin Sept. 13

Church School: Begins Sept. 16

Bible Study: Tuesday Mornings

Church Picnic: Sept. 16

Crop Walk: October 14

Talents & Treasures Dinner: Oct. 20

Dickens Dinner: December 8

Vestry Notes

by Peter Gonze, Co-Warden

St. E's Parish Feedback Project

Over a year ago, a Parish Feedback Project was initiated. Its Guiding Mission and Purpose was to engage in a Parish-wide conversation to help parishioners re-connect with the community of St. Elizabeth's through a personal and guided engagement with another parishioner. In total, 137 parishioners were interviewed, representing approximately 61% of the adults eligible to be interviewed for this project.

The All Parish Feedback report was presented to the Vestry at the July meeting. A significant portion of the agenda at that meeting was devoted to a high level summary of the data in the report and some of the major themes as synthesized by the Task Force. Several members of the Task force attended

the meeting to help provide greater context. A 40-page report was distributed, the result of an immense effort to summarize the many interviews that took place during the past year.

It was clear that more time was necessary to review and discuss the report at future Vestry meetings to fully understand the data. The Feedback Report became our summer reading assignment, and the August Vestry meeting agenda had a significant portion of time allocated to discussion.

To assure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to hear and see the results as well as participate in formulating plans moving forward, we anticipate several meetings. **In the meantime here is a sampling of things we have learned from the Feedback:**

'Climate' or 'Tenor' of Our Church Community. Nearly all parishioners interviewed conveyed a very strong feeling and belief that we are a very warm, welcoming, and vibrant church community with strong, committed Lay-Leaders and a "*spiritually gifted*" and caring Rector. Many cited and described their own personal experiences of being welcomed, accepted, and cared for by the community of St. E's. Some conveyed the sentiment that we are "*very engaging without being smothering.*"

Worship & Liturgy. Many parishioners mentioned finding the traditions and structure of our Liturgy and service comforting in their familiarity. Some others, however, said that they would enjoy occasionally experiencing some variation and/or variety in the worship service.

Music. Many parishioners mentioned music as being critically important to their worship experience and their sense of being in a faith-based community. Most would like more music, more variety of music, and more variation in their music experiences at St. E's.

Committee Work and Membership. A number of parishioners acknowledged and praised the amount of committee work and activity that goes on at St. Elizabeth's. In concert with this, several remarked that there was "*something for everyone here at St. E's*". Some parishioners feel that the activity and good work of many committees goes unnoticed and/or under-advertised. They feel that better communication 'programs' and channels need to be developed to help 'showcase' their work and contribution.

A number of parishioners felt that having meaningful fellowship events for adults was critically important for building and continuing both the spiritual and social 'connections' that empty-nester and elderly parishioners have with St. E's. Some parishioners felt that in addition to the popular, long standing annual events, new and different adult fellowship experiences need to be added and/or tried. They also feel that "*more family-friendly events need to be planned and provided.*"

There is a massive amount of data in the report and many points of view are included. The Vestry has appointed a small group, including the Wardens and Barbara, to develop a communications plan and prepare a presentation of its major themes.

A Parish presentation is planned for October.

(continued from Page 2)

'Memorable Moments' help to further highlight what parishioners value and find meaningful at St. E's. Here are a few examples of the things we as a community may want to preserve, strengthen, and/or do more of:

Pastoral Care and Attention. Many parishioners cited a time that they and/or a loved one received meaningful care and attention from Barbara during a time of struggle, illness, or loss. They remain very appreciative of Barbara's support and guidance during *"those tough times."*

Baptisms and Confirmations. Many parishioners recalled a Baptismal or Confirmation service involving themselves or a loved one, and often cited Barbara's ability to both personalize the experience for them as well as instill reverence and meaning in the ceremony. Some recalled simply being moved as 'witnesses' to the occasion...listening to Barbara's associated sermon, her involvement of the church children in the event, and/or her explaining the ceremony to the congregation as it proceeded.

Appalachian Service Project (ASP). Many parishioners mentioned ASP as providing a moving or touching experience. Those who went on an ASP trip spoke of it as a *"transforming experience"*. Parishioners who are parents of an ASP participant also remarked on the positive, *"life-enhancing"* effect the experience had on their child. There were also several parishioners who mentioned that they *"remain moved"* from listening to and reading about the transforming experiences ASP participants had.

A Show of Caring, Support, and/or Appreciation from Members of the Parish. Several parishioners described a time when members of the parish reached out to them with a helping hand, a meal, a ride, or a hug with a word of support. Several others remarked that being personally approached and thanked by parishioners for their work as a lay-leader or their effort in championing a project or planning an event *"was most meaningful and still incites a warm feeling."*

Task Force members identified the following issues as being particularly relevant and critical to the continued development and well-being of our church community:

Empty-Nester and Elderly Church Member 'Connections'. There may not be enough enrichment and attraction, spiritually and otherwise, for empty-nester and elderly parishioners here at St. E's. For many in this group there is a declining sense of 'belonging' to the parish community.

Cross-Generational Tensions. As we continue to evolve as a family-oriented parish, cross generational tensions can potentially 'consume' vital energy, spirit, time, and attention and distract us from our intent to be a 'warm, caring and welcoming community'.

Associate Rector. A strategy and plan needs to be developed that will lead to the eventual hiring of an Associate Rector in the not-too-distant future. Having an Associate Rector would positively impact on a number of the issues and needs highlighted by the Parish Feedback Project.

More Hands...Less Burnout. It seems critically important to develop strategies and programs to inspire a greater portion of the parish community to 'step in and step-up' to help maintain and deliver the myriad of programs and services expected and needed by our parishioners. Burnout among lay leaders, especially those involved in the church school, is a very real eventuality and a very costly outcome. At the same time we need to allow, encourage and reinforce the opportunity for parishioners to simply take 'nourishment' from their membership in the St. E's community as their need and circumstances dictate without feeling pressured or judged by other congregants.

Committee Work and Membership. Committees can provide special and unique ways for parishioners to 'connect' to the parish community and to the spirit of St. E's. Committees can also provide important *"touch points"* for shaping and directing our parish life and for carrying out work vital to our growth and health as a faith-based community. Barbara and the Vestry need to actively consider how to promote, use, and manage these 'moving parts' so that the 'whole' is greater than the sum of the 'parts'.

Continued on Page 14

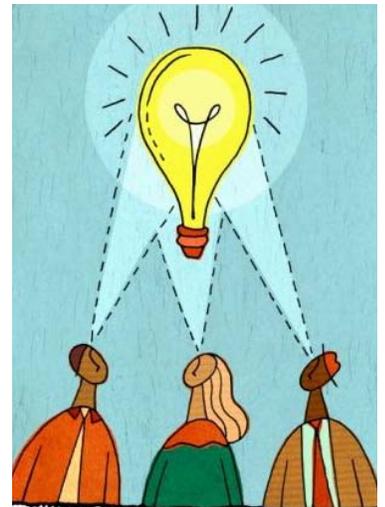
From the Rector by The Rev. Barbara Williamson

The long-awaited report of the All-Parish Feedback Project was delivered to the Vestry this summer. It is a marvelous piece of work that demonstrates the incredible generosity of St. E's, not only of the volunteers who contributed to its design and execution, but also of those who gave of their time (1) to think about the questions and (2) to meet for conversation about what is meaningful and valuable about St. E's, what we are doing well, and what we might be doing differently or better. Finally, this process of Appreciative Inquiry could not have been undertaken and completed without the oversight, expertise and selfless dedication of parishioner, John Stevens, to whom we all owe an enormous debt of gratitude.

It will take some time to unpack the data, its meaning, and next steps, a process that will be overseen primarily at the Vestry level. At this point, for my part, I want to reflect theologically on the implications of the process and the information generated, for our faith and ministry as a community of Christ's disciples.

First, the process. This undertaking was a listening campaign of sorts. The goal was to hear from you about what you think and feel about our life together and about what is meaningful to you at St. E's in order to help us discern how best to shape our identity and direct our mission as a church community going forward.

A central tenet of our faith is that whenever two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus he will be in the midst of them. It is clear from the content of the report that this tenet was borne out. The Spirit of Christ was present in the conversations and in the task force's work. The parishioners who engaged in this process felt more deeply connected to each other and to the Holy. Many of the interviewers spoke of experiencing the guided conversations as holy ground confirming the sacred value of listening and being listened to.



Second, the data generated. A central theme that sounds in the teachings of Jesus and in the writings of St. Paul speaks of life in community as an exercise in inclusiveness and mutual up-building in love. The All-Parish Feedback Report shows us that we have some work to do to refine and focus our mission so that it balances more appropriately the spiritual nurture and formation of all of our parishioners, from the youngest to the oldest.

Paul in his letter to the Ephesians points to speaking the truth in love as both a way of growing into the full stature of Christ and as a sign of spiritual maturity (Ephesians 4:1-16). The All-Parish Feedback Project goes a long way to showing forth the gifts with which God has graced St. E's and the congregation's desire to use those gifts to our great good and God's greater glory.

Warden's Words by Lisa Barnes, Co-Warden

Mitakuye Oyasin



Lakota words we learned in July on our Pilgrimage to South Dakota, meaning something close to "we are all connected" or "related". It is a greeting, a blessing, a reminder, a warning.

It is a theme that has guided me through reading and contemplating the fantastically rich Parish Feedback Report (PFR) which was presented to the Vestry in July. This massive undertaking is the result of the tireless work of the task force - and what a force they are! - made up of the following bright lights: Susan Berry, Larry Jobson, Ann Loos, Ruth Grisel, Susan Newlin, Betsy Wallingford, Nancy Morgan, Lucie St George, Jonas Barciauskas and Linda Bertolino. Over 40 pages long, the PFR was ultimately and astoundingly compiled by John Stevens.

Supported by Barbara and the Vestry, the task force began their work in early 2006 with 3 shared goals:

1. to satisfy our grant obligation for important congregational work to occur during Barbara's sabbatical;
2. to help parishioners re-discover and strengthen those things at St. E's that were meaningful to them post-construction; and
3. to generate feedback to help us shape and direct our identity and evolution as a church community.

The information reflected in the report would not be nearly as comprehensive were it not for the time 137 parishioners donated by making themselves available to speak with the task force members. The information shared during these one-on-one interviews, each of which lasted anywhere from thirty to ninety minutes, became the content for the report.

The Vestry will present the findings as well as next steps in an all parish meeting in October. In the interim, we are hard at work synthesizing and considering the many points raised. Since early 2006, some of the initiatives and suggestions have already begun, and taken root. (Read Peter Gonze's Vestry Notes on Page 2 for examples). Other topics raised will require more time, more flexibility and creativity, more money and/or resources than are readily accessible.

As we give thanks for the incredible gift of the PFR and delight in its good news, as we also acknowledge the difficult challenges left to address and regret missteps which have left some feeling hurt or excluded from our community, we look for guidance from the moral in Aesop's fable (recounted in the preface to the report and now posted on the hallway bulletin board). "Try to please all and you will please none."

The collective work of the PFR task force has given us a tremendous opportunity to prioritize and address unmet needs thereby deepening our connections to each other and to God. We would be wise to be gentle with each other as we thoughtfully address the issues raised. Let us be patient as well as dynamic in our actions going forward. Let us act together in responding to the PFR with the urgency, love and compassion it - and the St Elizabeth's community - so richly deserve. Mitakuye Oyasin.

St. E's Welcomes Malia Crawford as Pastoral Intern



Malia Crawford has begun a ten month internship at St. E's to advance her formation as a candidate for Holy Orders. She will be working with the Barbara Williamson to gain exposure to a parish different from other places she has served in the past.

While originally from central New Jersey, Malia spent most of her adult life in the metro-Boston area. After finishing her undergraduate work in math at MIT, she joined the Peace Corps. In the Central African nation of Gabon, her responsibilities included teaching math and English as a foreign language. Afterwards, she moved to the D.C. area, where she taught 6th-12th graders at a small private school. In 1999, she returned to Boston, working in the field of congregational growth, and began exploring a call to ordained ministry. While pursuing her Masters of Divinity, she interned at St. Michael's in Milton.

Malia also did field work at Brigham and Women's hospital, a day-shelter for homeless women, a hospice, and a community center for people living with HIV/AIDS. Since graduating, she has worked in the Stewardship Office at Trinity Church in Copley Square. She is about to change positions there, and will become the administrator for Liturgy and Pastoral Care. In June of 2008, Malia hopes to be ordained. Outside of church, she enjoys weaving and knitting, spending time with old friends, and exploring New England.

DOES THE NEW HEALTH CARE REFORM LAW AFFECT YOU?

Massachusetts is leading the nation in health care reform providing affordable health insurance for all residents. Metropolitan Interfaith Congregations Acting for Hope (MICAHA) has been asked by Greater Boston Interface Organization (GBIO) to help teach Massachusetts residents about the new health care reform law.

WHO IS AFFECTED?

The law requires that every Massachusetts resident have health insurance by December 31st, 2007. It will be enforced through the 2007 state tax return. If you don't currently have health insurance offered by your employer, you may qualify for the affordable health insurance options in this new law. The law affects different people based on their age and income.

Are you:

- * An adult on Mass Health – your benefits are likely to increase
- * Long term unemployed – there are no longer waiting lists for Mass Health Essentials
- * An adult whose income is too high for Mass Health – you may qualify for Commonwealth Care
- * A child (under 18 years old) without insurance – you may qualify for Mass Health
- * A young adult (19-26) – you may qualify for insurance with your family or buy lower-premium insurance
- * An adult who doesn't qualify for Commonwealth Care – you can get Commonwealth Choice
- * A small business owner who would like to provide health insurance to your employees – you may be able to offer the Commonwealth Choice insurance

MICAHA WANTS TO HELP YOU

MICAHA is creating a training program for Metro West Region residents. We will offer programs in Sudbury at St. E's and elsewhere. Read future Mantle articles and bulletin announcements for dates. To hear as soon as the schedule is available, contact Mara Huston (mara@hustonfam.net), Lucie St George (lstgeo@verizon.net) or Barbara.

DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

MICAHA would like to roll this training out to as many people as we can but we need help. If you are interested, contact Mara, Lucie or Barbara (see above). Our next meeting is Wednesday, September 12th, 7:30pm at St. E's.

Adult Ed: Speaking of Faith

Over the past decade, the World Wide Web has become a digital ocean of words, sounds and images. Amidst the Web's booming confusion, an excellent program appeared seven years ago dealing with topics of vital interest to individuals and communities of faith: *Speaking of Faith*. The program's host, Krista Tippett, received a Masters of Divinity degree from Yale after years of working as a political journalist in Europe. The idea of the program is to explore religion's many aspects beyond religious rhetoric and within the context of an objective interview. *Speaking of Faith* has developed into a full-fledged educational resource with a web site (<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/>) podcasts, program transcripts, and discussion guides designed for groups including religious adult education study classes.

This fall, using the program as a starting point, we will have our own conversations about seven of the topics that have been covered so far. The dates of the discussions are in parentheses. All are welcome to attend any session.



Marriage, Family, and Divorce (Oct. 10): American ideals and rituals of marriage, family, and divorce are infused with biblical messages. But what does the Bible really say, and how has it been taught across the centuries as the institution of marriage has changed dramatically and often? A rabbi (Elliot Dorff) and Christian theologian (Luke Timothy Johnson) help us explore the nuances of Jewish and Christian teachings and reveal the striking practicality of Jewish tradition across the ages and the surprising ambiguities of the New Testament.

The Spirituality of Parenting (Oct. 17): More and more people in our time are disconnected from religious institutions, at least for part of their lives. Others are religious and find themselves creating a family with a spouse from another tradition or no tradition at all. And the experience of parenting tends to raise spiritual questions anew. We sense that there is a spiritual aspect to our children's natures and wonder how to support and nurture that. The spiritual life begins not in abstractions, but in concrete everyday experiences. And children need our questions as much as our answers.

Stress and the Balance Within (Oct. 24) : The American experience of stress has spawned a multi-billion dollar self-help industry. Wary of this, Esther Sternberg, a rheumatologist and researcher, says that, until recently, modern science did not have the tools or the inclination to take emotional stress seriously. She shares fascinating new scientific insight into the molecular level of the mind-body connection.

Seeing Poverty after Katrina (Oct. 31): Hurricane Katrina brought urban poverty in America into all of our living rooms. In this program, David Hilfiker tells the story of how poverty and racial isolation came to be in cities across America. He lives creatively and realistically with questions many of us began to ask in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Religious Passion, Pluralism, and the Young (Nov. 7): Conversation with Eboo Patel, who calls al-Qaeda the most effective youth organization in the world. But contrary to the wisdom of secular society, he's working to deepen rather than tame the religious energies of the young across many traditions. And he believes this may be our only chance for survival.

The Soul of War (Nov. 14): Chaplain Major John Morris reveals his experiences of war in Iraq and its imprint on a soldier's spirit. He offers practical guidance for veterans and civilians for the sake of our common life.

Our sessions will take place on seven consecutive Wednesday evenings beginning on Oct. 3:

6:30 pm (optional – for those who didn't get a chance to hear the program) – We will listen to the program being discussed this evening. BYOS (bring your own supper – if needed).

7:30 – 9 pm – Discussion of this week's program

The first session on Oct. 3 will be devoted to an overview of this adult ed series and the *Speaking of Faith* program. We will also talk about podcasts, web sites, and other items related to participating in the class. Please note: All of the necessary *Speaking of Faith* material will be easily available to participants, even if they are computer phobic! For more information, please contact Jonas Barciauskas (978-440-8164; barciaus@bc.edu).

SEPTEMBER 2007

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	September Mantle deadline 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II -Church	27	28 10:00 AM Bible Study (cnf)	29	30	31	1
2	8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II -Church (Child- friendly) 10:00 AM Laying on of Hands	3	4 10:00 AM Bible Study (cnf) 7:00 PM YAC Adult Leaders Meeting (MPR)	5 8:30 AM Wardens Meeting (cnf) 3:30 PM - 5:15 PM Brownie Troop #2468 (MPR) 7:00 PM COGS Steering Committee Meeting (MPR)	6 Barbara Away thru 9/11	7	8
9	8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II -Church	10 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Girl Scout Leaders Meeting (MPR)	11 Clergy Day- Barbara Away 10:00 AM Bible Study- CANCELLED 6:00 PM Miracle Kitchen (cnf)	12 Barbara back in office 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM Wardens Meeting (cnf) 7:30 PM MICAH LOC (cnf)	13 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (Choir loft)	14	15 COGS Orientation
16	8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 9:45 AM Church School Starts 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II -Church 11:30 AM Church Picnic	17 6:50 PM Vestry Meeting (MPR)	18 10:00 AM Bible Study (cnf)	19	20 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (Choir loft)	21 5:00 PM Wedding Rehearsal (church)	22 4:00 PM Wedding (Church)
23	October Mantle Deadline Stewardship kickoff 8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 9:45 AM Church School (Baptisms) 11:15 AM MICAH Poster Session (PH)	24 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM Troops 7149 & 2484 (MPR, PH & R.13rm)	25 10:00 AM Bible Study (cnf) 12:30 PM Deanery Luncheon (PH)	26 12:45 PM - 3:30 PM Girl Scout troop #2453(MPR) 12:45 PM - 3:30 PM Troop 2440 (Rite 13 room) 12:45 PM - 3:30 PM Troop 2472 (J2A rm) 7:30 PM Adult Ed. (MPR)	27 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (Choir loft)	28	29
30	8:00 AM Holy Eucharist II - Chapel 9:45 AM Church School 10:00 AM Holy Eucharist II -Church (Baptism)	1	2 10:00 AM Bible Study (cnf)	3 Barbara away through 10/10 3:30 PM - 5:15 PM Brownie Troop #2468 (MPR) 7:30 PM Adult Ed. (MPR)	4 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal (Choir loft)	5	6

Miracle Kitchen Coordinator:	2 September	9 September	16 September	23 September	30 September
Kitchen Angel: Betsy Wallingford	Pentecost 14	Pentecost 15	Pentecost 16	Pentecost 17	Pentecost 18
Euch. Min.	8 AM H. Ainsworth 10 AM Harry Ainsworth Ruth Griesel	8 AM Audrey Newton 10 AM Betsy Wallingford Matt Reilly	8 AM Malia Crawford 10 AM Matt Reilly Stuart Hamilton	8 AM Malia Crawford 10 AM Betsy Wallingford Steve Davies	8 AM Ruth Griesel 10 AM Audrey Newton Susan Newlin
Breadbearer & Third Station			Karyn Grant/ John Howard Larry Stewart	Rich Grant/ Larry Stewart Stuart Hamilton	Rich Grant/ Larry Stewart Stuart Hamilton
Lector	Jane Graham	Karl Loos	Audrey Newton	Walter Morgan	Jane Graham
Acolyte	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
Vestry Person of the Day	Walter Morgan	Steve Kenney	Nancy Kimble	John Howard	Susan Newlin
Ushers	Mike & Jeremy Perisho	John Romain & Ray Considine	Jonas Barciauskas & Pat Coffin	Rajeev & Joanne Deshmuk	Mike & Jeremy Perisho
Greeters					
Altar Guild	8 AM Ruth Griesel 10 AM Ruth Griesel	8 AM Stevie Spina 10 AM Clare Perry	8 AM Clare Perry 10 AM Clare Perry	8 AM Christine Robb 10 AM Anne Reilly	8 AM Christine Robb 10 AM Anne Reilly
Coffee Server					

THE JOURNEY TO ADULTHOOD (J2A): AN OVERVIEW

A Transformational Way to Do Youth Ministry

Jay Holdman

Many in the parish have asked about Journey to Adulthood. What is it? Why is it so different from traditional youth curriculum? First of all – the program structure is different. There are three sections of the Journey to Adulthood program: Rite 13, J2A and YAC. Each section of the program lasts for two years and that two-year grouping of teens will stay together until they graduate from high school, with no other class being added in. This stability of group dynamics helps create a safe, sacred space where the group members can learn to trust themselves and each other as they grow in faith.

The first two years of the program is called **RITE 13**, a name that comes from a liturgical coming of age ceremony we celebrate with young people around their 13th birthday. This rite is loosely based on the Jewish bar/bat mitzvah tradition and is a way for the entire congregation to celebrate the unique gifts and abilities of its young teens. The two years of Rite 13 focus on recognizing the gifts God has given us, celebrating our creative potential, and learning to interact as a community of faith.



This journey has the potential to transform not just our youth, but our entire church. The program uses the collective wisdom of adults in our church to beckon young people into responsible, faithful adulthood. It calls the entire congregation into a deeper relationship with our young people and it calls each one of us – whatever our age – to think about the gifts we have been given. When we find ways to use our gifts to be God's presence in the world, we are ALL changed in very powerful ways.

The second segment is J2A, an acronym for **JOURNEY TO ADULTHOOD** — a little confusing since this is the same name as the entire program, but the reason for this is that the bulk of the work gets done in these two years, building on the foundation of the Rite 13 experience. During these years, teens learn and practice six basic skills of adulthood: active listening, negotiation, assertion, research & information management, partnership and leadership. This is also the time of preparation for Confirmation which is offered at the end of the second year. The crescendo of the J2A experience is a Holy Pilgrimage, the location and design of which is determined by the teens in consultation with the adult leaders and parents.

The last two years of the Journey to Adulthood program are referred to as YAC, which stands for **YOUNG ADULTS IN CHURCH**. YAC students are encouraged to accept more adult responsibilities and to contribute their time, talent and treasure in ways that support the ongoing work of the church. Teens write a personal credo of beliefs and rely on their trusted group of peers as they explore their faith more deeply and struggle with the details of transitioning from teenager to young adult in today's world.

The Journey to Adulthood experience incorporates much learning and laughter, but it takes our young people seriously and gives them real work to do. The program is based on the key concept that “Manhood and Womanhood are gifts from God, but Adulthood must be earned.” It encourages teens to explore the four areas of Self, Spirituality, Sexuality and Society, and learn to connect their faith to all areas of life. It is my hope that this program fosters an environment of wholeness and authenticity and helps teens develop a life-changing relationship with the God who created them.



Youth Ministry Reconfiguration and Nomenclature Change

Barbara Williamson

In an article on page 12, Jay Holdman describes Journey to Adulthood for youth in grades 6-12. This year for the first time we will implement the third and final segment of this program called **Young Adults in the Church**, or YAC. YAC is for teens in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. I am very excited about this development as it both broadens and deepens our programming for high school students.

The goal of YAC is to provide guidance for our young people as they continue their lifelong spiritual journey and begin to take on adult responsibilities in the congregation and the wider community. The adult leaders serve more as advisors and mentors rather than teachers. Guided by an outstanding curriculum, adults help the youth learn to lead the group and take from the program what best meets their developing spiritual needs.

In order hopefully to organize the “bins” of what we offer to youth, the programming that here to for has been known as “youth group” will be divided up. Beginning this month all activities, with the exception of preparations for youth mission trips, for teens in the 10th-12th grades will come under the umbrella of YAC and be called YAC. Therefore, YAC, in addition to using the program curriculum, will engage in non-mission trip activities such as cooking for the soup kitchen, apple picking, delivering food baskets, etc. When YAC gathers to use the program curriculum, it will meet on Sunday mornings at 9:45. When YAC gathers for adjunct activities, it will meet on Sunday right after church.

Mission trip preparation will be completely separate and this year will be called ASP Prep in anticipation of working with the Appalachia Service Project in the summer of 2008. Next year, mission trip preparation will be called City Mission Prep in anticipation of working with City Mission in summer of 2009. ASP Prep will take place on approximately 8 Sunday afternoons during the year and at one overnight retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center. It will also include fundraising events.

With these changes, the term “youth group” no longer accurately describes our programming for high school students. We now have YAC and ASP or City Mission Prep. Some youth will choose to participate only in YAC. Some will choose to participate only in mission trips. Some will do both.

Quoting from Jay’s article, “This... has the potential to transform not just our youth, but our entire church. The program uses the collective wisdom of adults in our church to beckon young people into responsible, faithful adulthood. It calls the entire congregation into a deeper relationship with our young people and it calls each one of us – whatever our age – to think about the gifts we have been given. When we find ways to use our gifts to be God’s presence in the world, we are ALL changed in very powerful ways.”



Building on the trust and spiritual deepening that has developed among the 10th, 11th, and 12th graders over the years as they came up through Rite 13, J2A, and youth group, this new configuration offers our teens a number of ways to connect to God, to the wider community, to the church, and to each other.



September Birthdays, etc...

Happy Birthday to You!



Jonas Barciauskas, Molly Binder, Will Binder, Pat Blackey, Ken Brown, Olivia Brown, Lynn Bryant, Cliff Card, Mandy Congleton, Janice Darias, Jose Darias, Julia Davenport, Adam Ewing, Skip Feist, Taylor Goodwin, Caroline Goswami, Sophia Goswami, Jane Graham, Robert Hacker, Drew Hall, Fay Hamilton, Linda Hanson, Greg Hauck, Chris Henry, Mary Jane Hillery, Donna Holdman, Barbara Ingersoll, Whitney Leslie, Jordan McLeod, John McNeill, Joe Meeks, Emily Meeks, David Mitchell, Erin Mullen, Amanda Nelson, Audrey Newton, David Pearson, Ian Robb, Larry Ruark, Erin Santomena, Lucy Small, Ian Springsteel, John Trail, Anna Trecker, Jim Wagner, John Walker, Sarah Watson, Hope Weldon

Ron and Vicki are New Mexico Bound!



Ron and Vicki Reder
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505-890-8585
508-395-3437 Ron's cell
508-395-3184 Vicki's cell

Sept.
21



International Day of Peace

Save
The
Date!

Talent & Treasures Dinner Saturday, October 20th 5 to 7:30 pm

Honoring the Altar Guild and Flower Guild Members
&

Featuring St. Elizabeth's volunteer committees

Appetizers and cocktails from 5 to 6:15 pm; Dinner at 6:30 pm

Entertainment and dinner for children ages 3 to 12; Childcare for children under 3

Stewardship 2008

By Susan Berry

"...sharing our gifts in response to God's love..."

September means another summer and the St. E's softball team season have come to an end, children return to school, and, at St. Elizabeth's, COGS, J2A/Rite 13, and youth group activities resume at full tilt. The pews are filled again, the choir returns to lead us in singing our praise, petitions, and thanksgivings, AND another stewardship season is about to begin.

This is the time of year that we will be asked to consider our pledge for the next calendar year (Jan.– Dec. 2008). To some, it may feel we are always being asked for money by St. Elizabeth's and a long list of other organizations. Certainly my evenings seem to be interrupted constantly with phone solicitations. However, I hope you will read on to learn why I have agreed to chair the stewardship committee this year, and why I think the period of stewardship is so important in the life of the parish and plays an important role in each member's individual spiritual journey.

Starting with the practical: most of the money that supports the programs of St. Elizabeth – Barbara's, Stan's, and Peg's salaries, electric, gas and phone bills, maintenance of the church building and rectory, outreach programs, COGS, Rite13/J2A/YAC etc. – comes from us, the members. The rest comes from fundraisers and some rents. Obviously, if St. E's is to survive and flourish, we, the members, need to contribute some of our treasure (as well as time and talents). Fortunately, members of the parish have always been very generous. However, as many folks mentioned in their Parish Feedback conversations, one of the most important issues in terms of the health of St. E's is getting some help for Barbara who is stretched pretty thin as a solo spiritual leader for this very active and vibrant parish. Many expressed their hope that St. Elizabeth's could hire an Assistant Rector. Adding any personnel will only be possible if the Vestry knows we can pay for it, and the only way they know what we as a parish can afford is by pledges received in the fall.

To support an Assistant Rector would be a huge reach at this point. Therefore, the Vestry has set

\$300,000 as a goal for the amount pledged during the fall Stewardship season. If we can reach it, we would be able to add an Educational Assistant who would help Barbara to support the education and formation programs for children, youth and adults.

Supporting St. Elizabeth's and hiring additional personnel to support our programs are the practical reasons for making a pledge. But I believe there is also a spiritual piece to this thing we call stewardship. Quoting from a stewardship curriculum by Johanna Frederickson, "Stewardship is about loving God with heart, soul, and mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves. It is about who we are (self), whom we love (neighbor) and who loves us (God). It is in the context of loving relationship that we as people of faith prayerfully reflect upon how we direct our time, treasure, and talent. Without this larger context of God's love for us, our love for our neighbor, and our self-understanding of ourselves as God's beloved, stewardship becomes a burden rather than a response to the blessings of this life."

Stewardship season is an opportunity for us to reflect on our understanding of our relationship with the God by whom we claim to be created, known and loved. Is it because of God's love, however we understand that love, that we are able to love ourselves and our neighbors? And how do we respond to that love, both received and given? Do our schedules lead us to a greater understanding of who we are (self), who we love (neighbor) and who loves us (God)?

Often our interests lie in those things in which we invest our money. How are we "investing" in God and our neighbor? What are our gifts and how are we using them? Are we giving of our time, treasure and talents in the context of love (of self, neighbor and God's love)? I believe giving without the renewal of the spirit cannot be sustained so in this stewardship season, as part of my reflection on the pledge I will make for 2008, I plan to spend time reflecting on my relationships to self, neighbor and God, where I need renewal and how St. Elizabeth's, my faith community, has and can help me in this journey. I hope you will join me in those reflections, and then make your pledge in the context of "sharing our gifts in response to God's love." ¹³

Parish
Feedback
Project
(cont. from Page 3)

Coffee Hour (and Acoustics). Upgrading the Coffee Hour experience could help to address a number of issues raised in the Parish Feedback. This includes helping our older and more elderly parishioners have a meaningful social time together every Sunday.

“What’s Going On?”. Our efforts and strategies for communicating what’s going on in the myriad of ‘circles’ comprising our church community need to be upgraded and systematized. We also need to consider ways to encourage parishioners to ‘go find out’ what is happening at St. E’s, i.e., assume more responsibility for accessing and using available means and channels that provide information relevant to St. E’s parishioners such as the website, Mantle, etc.

Finding a ‘Place’ in the St. E’s Community. While many have found the St. E’s community warm, welcoming, and caring, some have not. A few found it hard to break into a niche group. Others continue to feel like “outsiders” and/or overlooked by those who belong to an ‘in-group’. We need to highlight this issue within our congregation and encourage all St. E’s parishioners to approach and invite others into the ‘flow’ of our community.

What is Our Path Forward?

First and foremost to develop and present a summary of the Parish Feedback Report. Then, to build a consensus and prioritize actions designed to build on the strengths and talents at St. E’s. Some initiatives have already begun. These beginning steps address several of the issues raised by the report:

- .∴ Weekly daytime Bible study began in Lent and continues to the present time
- .∴ We are already looking at the best way to add staff to support parishioners and clergy
- .∴ Reinstated calendar planning meetings assist coordination and cross fertilization among committees
- .∴ We are already at work planning more cross generational fellowship events
- .∴ We are actively working on improvements to the coffee hour ambience
- .∴ We are in the process of upgrading communications through the website, newspaper, and bulletin boards

The ambitious goal of the Feedback Project was to engage in a Parish-wide conversation, collect and interpret the data. The Parish Feedback Task Force has done an incredible job to bring us this far. Now we need to use the lessons learned to build on our strengths, work on opportunities for improvement and strengthen our faith based community.



Welcome New Journey to Adulthood Adult Leaders

Following a six-month-long discernment process, new adult leaders were invited to use their gifts to assist in the formation of youth in J2A and YAC. The former J2A leaders, Jay Holdman, Lisa Barnes, and Larry St. George, stepped down as part of the policy that discourages parents from teaching their own teens.

New to J2A, we welcome Craig Stafford, Dave Mitchell, and Amy Henry, with cameo appearances by Walter Morgan.

New to YAC, we welcome Janice Darius, Greg Wilkins, and Graham Daley to the 9:45 a.m. classes. Kiersten and Dave Varner will oversee the 11:30 a.m. meetings. Malia Crawford, whose time is more flexible will assist across the board with YAC.

Gretchen Meeks has stepped down from her role as the Journey to Adulthood Program Coordinator. We welcome Jay Holdman who has stepped up to take her place.

The Rite 13 adult leaders have all re-upped for another two year segment. They are Joe Norton, Meg Striepe, and John Stevens.

With gifted leaders like these, you can rest assured that our youth are in good hands.

Nursery Staff

The Nursery staff will resume their weekly duties from 9:30-11:30am beginning on Sunday, September 16.

Please welcome them back!



"Well, technically, he hasn't broken his vow of silence."

Lakota Traditions

Our own Journey to Adulthood (J2A) teens traveled on pilgrimage in July to the sacred Black Hills of South Dakota. While there, they spent time with the Lakota people and visited the Pine Ridge Reservation.

On Saturday and Sunday, September 22 and 23 at the Nobscot Scout Reservation on Edgell Road in Sudbury, Lakota people (including dancers and drummers from Pine Ridge) will offer an opportunity to experience their culture and medicine traditions. Celebrating the theme "Unity and Acceptance of Cultures", this will be a rare opportunity to learn first hand about these First People.

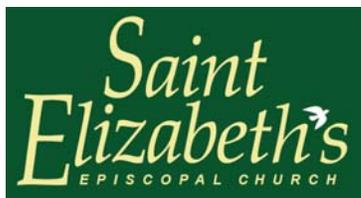
Pre-registration is required (deadline September 10), and there is a charge to cover related costs.



To register, go to www.lakotaceremonies.blancke.org.

Annual September Picnic: Sept. 16 following 10:00am service

Join us for the annual September cookout following the 10:00 am service on September 16th as we kick off the '07-'08 church school year. It's a fun event and a nice opportunity for newcomers and long-time members to meet fellow parishioners. We'll have games and activities for the children. Sign-up isn't necessary and there's no cost. Burgers, hotdogs and beverages are provided. Simply bring either a salad or a dessert for four. (No nuts, please.) See you there!



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Ours is a community through which we respond to our connection with God as revealed in Jesus Christ. Together we seek to know and worship God, nurturing one another in love as we live God's will. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we seek to reach out and respond to the needs of others and to make God known to the larger community.

St. Elizabeth's Church in the Town of Sudbury welcomes and honors everyone. In accordance with our baptismal covenant, we affirm the inherent worth and dignity of every person. We strive to include all persons without regard to sexual orientation, race, nationality, gender, family configuration, ethnic background, economic circumstances, difference in ability, culture or age. Our love and acceptance of each other embody our commitment to unity with God and each other in Christ.