

# The All Souls' Message

All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church • Volume 108, Issue 4 • September 2008

From the Rector

## Angels and Messengers

If I were to ask you to describe an angel, what might you say? Would you describe a very beautiful human form with wings, halo, and glowing aura? Would you describe an infant with wings, such as the *putti* who appear to float through so much Italian Renaissance art? Or would you describe something more Old Testament and terrifying, such as the six-winged, serpent-like seraphim seen by Isaiah? Regardless of what we might say, chances are that most of us would describe an angel as looking very, very different from ourselves. We think of angels as being from another realm, from another state of being, perhaps from the very limits of our faith or imagination.

When we look for angels in scripture, we are confronted with ambiguity, but it is an ambiguity that I think has some practical implications for Christian living. This has to do with the way the Hebrew language works. As many of you know, Hebrew is made up of consonants. The written indication of vowels, or “pointing,” of Hebrew is thought to have been introduced in the 7th to 10th centuries of the Common Era (A.D.), much, much later than the texts that are in our Old Testament. Hebrew words are formed from roots, often consisting of three letters. The root, m-l-k, for instance, can mean king or queen, depending upon the pointing, or the vowels that one chooses. Only context and tradition determine which vowels should go where. That same root with other vowels doesn’t mean king, but means messenger. It is related to the

### COLLECT FOR ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

*O* everlasting God,  
who hast ordained and  
constituted the ministries  
of angels and humans  
in a wonderful order:  
Mercifully grant that,  
as thy holy angels always serve  
and worship thee in heaven,  
so by thy appointment  
they may help and  
defend us on earth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who liveth and reigneth  
with thee and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

verb meaning “to send.” Change the vowels again and you have the Hebrew word for angel.

The multiples meanings of the m-l-k root point to an important aspect of our Christian life. Sometimes we pray for

an angel. We wait for an angel. We hope for an angel. But it might be that, all the time, God is sending us a messenger and we don’t recognize it because we were expecting wings and a halo. The same thing happens from the other point of view: perhaps we think that a particular person or a particular situation can only be resolved by God’s sending an angel. And yet, perhaps you or I are the messengers that God has in mind. So often, people in need require far less supernatural intervention than we might imagine. A good messenger (offering comfort, encouragement, silence, or hugs) can sometimes be the very way that God chooses to be made flesh in that situation.

One of the Church’s great feast days occurs every year on September 29, the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels. St. Michael appears in the Book of Daniel and in the Book of Revelation Archangel Michael and the other angels fight the great dragon and Satan is defeated. Michael remains as a symbol and reminder that in the end, all evil will be defeated. The Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, also nicknamed Michaelmas, is a time to give thanks for God’s holy angels who protect and guide, but it is also a time for us to be alert to the places in this world where we are called to be angels and messengers, and to offer the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

John Beddingfield ■

See “In this issue” on page 3.

ANGELS AND MINISTERS, SPIRITS OF GRACE,  
friends of the children, beholding God's face,  
moving like thought to us through the beyond,  
molded in beauty, and free from our bond!

Messengers clad in the swiftness of light,  
subtle as flame, as creative in might,  
helmed with the truth and with charity shod,  
wielding the wind of the purpose of God!

Earth's myriad creatures live after their kind,  
dumb, in the life of the body confined;  
you are pure spirit, but we here below  
linked in both orders, are tossed to and fro:

You do God's bidding unshaken and strong,  
we are distraught 'twixt the right and the wrong;  
yet would we soar as the bird from the mesh,  
freed from the weakness and wonder of flesh.

We too shall join you as comrades in grace,  
here but a little below you in place;  
then, when we climb from our lowness in worth,  
we too shall herald good will upon earth.

*Written by Percy Dearmer in 1931. Dearmer was a lifelong socialist and advocate of the ordination of women and was a leader in liturgical renewal by means of recovering ancient texts and practices. ■*

*On Sunday, September 21, 2008  
we will welcome a great friend of the parish  
as our celebrant and preacher  
at the 11 a.m. Mass,  
the Rt. Rev. James W. Montgomery,  
Ninth Bishop of Chicago.  
Please join us in welcoming  
Bishop Montgomery  
back to All Souls.*

I grew up in the 50's and came of age in the 60's. The time of "sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll." It was the time of the feminist movement, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam war protests, the riots here in Washington, and the poor people's march. Everyone was angry about something. Everyone wanted to have his voice heard. There was a collective disillusionment, so we marched and sloganed and protested ourselves into complete exhaustion. In the end we managed some change, but we weren't very happy about it.

Listening to my car radio recently, I heard an old song from that era called "Sign of the Times." The singer laments all of the signs of exclusion he finds, "long haired creepy people need not apply"; ...they "put up a fence to keep me out," "you have to be a member to come in;" "do this, don't do that, it's a sign of the times."

His response to all of these signs was "I wonder what God would think about all of this exclusion?" The song ends with, "so I got me a pen and paper and made my own: 'Thank you God for everything because I'm alive and doing fine.' I got to thinking about today's times. Some still protest war, although a different one this time; some are angry about the cost of gas, food and housing; some are alarmed about the deterioration of the air we breathe and the water we drink; and, alas, some



are working on new ways to exclude others whom they feel are different or who are intruding on their right to education and jobs and health care.

So here we are at All Souls, where all are welcomed and included—where differences are celebrated and embraced. At least I hope that is what is happening here. I hope that we are, by our actions, placing a sign on our door that says, "We welcome you!" We want to share what we have with you—the liturgy, the fellowship, God's love, and redemption. I don't believe in hanging banners and flags and other things from churches—but if I did, mine would read, "Thank you God for everything, we're alive and doing fine—and you

are welcome to join us." That would be a really big sign—maybe it should just say "Welcome" and really mean it. Archbishop Desmond Tutu talks often about the God within us. He has quoted an African one-word greeting that means: "the God within me greets the God within you." I hope that is what we do at All Souls and will continue to do.

On another note: we are getting ready for fall and our stewardship pilgrimage together. On September 1, we celebrate the first anniversary of Father Beddingfield's having accepted our call to be our Rector. Time flies. It is good to know that Father is no longer our "new" Rector—but "the" Rector. We are busy making repairs and working on our long-range plan for handicapped accessibility. We will begin planning for our Centennial year activities. May everything we plan, work on, and accomplish this coming year proclaim "Welcome"—to one another, to our immediate neighborhood, and our community as a whole.

Thank you God for everything, we're alive and doing fine.

Nancy Suggs ■

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The Message is published every two months except for a June/July/August issue and a single issue in September.

Summer is usually a quieter time at All Souls as so many parishioners use this time to go away or engage in summer hobbies on Sundays. However, as usual, it was a busy time for us as we caught up on a lot of tasks easier to complete when the sun is out.

### Water, Water, Everywhere

The most productive work was perhaps the completion of the Eastside Drainage Project, undertaken to solve, for once and for all, the many drainage problems that have plagued our Education Wing for so many years. Past attempts to accomplish this never quite solved the problems and the leaks, the floods, the mold, all continued. At the same time, we recognized that the leakage problem in the nursery, combined with the fact that the room had, in the past, been used for many purposes, had created a space that was neither sanitary nor pleasant for our infants and toddlers.

With the help of an engineer and architect, the building was excavated, cracked joints in the building repaired, and windows sealed. Old drain pipes were repaired, new drains installed, and window wells were added. The land along Woodley Place adjacent to the church was regraded and sloped to carry storm water away from our build-

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*...it was a busy time for us as we caught up on a lot of tasks...*  
”

ing and into the street. The walls in the Nursery were desalinated and treated to make it possible to repaint and plaster, things you cannot do on surfaces where water leaks have left salt. The storms that have occurred in our area since June have indicated that the waterproofing is holding.

As I write this, it is July. We are now working to make the room an attractive space for children. Defunct electrical boxes, conduits, and antique organ parts have been removed. We added a roomy closet for storing supplies, painted, plastered, and repaired the Nursery's powder room, the victim of many a flood. The Nursery's furnishings, which were in sad shape, were cheerfully donated to the dustbin and new furniture purchased in the hope that it would be found attractive and welcoming to our parish's youngest parishioners.

Many people deserve credit for this project's successful culmination. I'd like to thank our Rector, Senior Warden, and the entire Vestry for their wholehearted belief in the importance of completing this work and doing it right. Many delays and newly-discovered problems prolonged this work, but they did not lose faith. Most importantly, my thanks, and perhaps those of the whole parish, go to our wonderful Endowment Board. Their gift of \$10,000 went a long ways in helping us attain our goals and to demonstrate a renewed commitment to the fact that our children are our best investment.

Ray Myrtle ■

Your treasurer and your vestry have been busy over the last several months ensuring that our church finances are in order and invested safely. We have transferred some of our holdings from one bank to another to make sure we do not exceed the FDIC insurance cap. We are talking with Father John about various ministries and how they can be more effective. Father gave the Vestry some summer reading to do which will be discussed during the fall vestry meetings. The junior warden remains busy working on various repair projects throughout the church. Please remember to keep the Vestry in your prayers as we go about the business of All Souls Church.

*Nancye Suggs* ■

*From the Christian Education Ministry*  
**Adult Forum Focuses on the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion**

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The Adult Forum will begin on In-gathering Sunday, September 7 with the first of a two-part video and discussion entitled, "The Story of the Episcopal Church." Part 1 is "From Jamestown to Revolution," and Part 2, which we will see on September 14, continues the story with "The Call to Mission." The discussion following the video will be coordinated by Father Beddingfield. On Sunday, September 21, the Vestry will continue its practice of offering this time for a town hall meeting, in which parishioners can ask questions about the direction and vision of the parish. On the last Sunday of the month, Father Beddingfield will offer an overview of the Anglican Communion and discuss the recent Lambeth Conference and recent developments among Anglican churches.

*John Beddingfield* ■

*Mark Your Calendar*  
**St. Francis Day**

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Our celebration  
of St. Francis Day  
will be on  
Saturday,  
October 4 at 3 p.m.  
”

We gather on the front lawn of the church for Evening Prayer and the Blessing of Animals. Please bring animal companions as we give thanks to God for all the special creatures that grace our lives. Within the liturgy there is an opportunity to name, give thanks for, and bless with holy water our animal companions. Those who have lost a beloved animal companion may also find this an appropriate occasion to bring a picture or other token of remembrance, that we might give thanks. Spread the word, as this is a perfect opportunity to invite friends and newcomers. On the Sunday before, the Sunday school children will help prepare dog and cat treats (with a note from our church) that will be given to those who attend on Saturday.

*John Beddingfield* ■

*From the Sunday School*  
**A New Year**

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Sunday school will resume on September 8. We should be back to three classes now that the nursery is complete. We hope to have a fun and interesting year for the children, with some new ideas and continuation of activities we started last year.

Plan now for the Halloween Party on Saturday, October 18, Christmas Party, Saturday, December 13, and a new event on February 28 where in addition to a pot luck supper we will open the church for the children to explore and learn why we do what we do.

I would love to hear any ideas you may have for the Sunday School; just send me an email or catch me at coffee hour. We also need teachers. You can lead one class session or several. Please think about volunteering.

“  
We hope to have  
a fun, interesting year  
for the children.  
”

*Marcia Anderson* ■

**We Welcome Your Submissions**

**A**s a new program year gets under way, we encourage you to submit news, commentary, even poetry for upcoming issues of *The Message*.

Submission deadlines are regularly published in the Sunday bulletin. The next issue will be the October/November one, and the deadline is Sunday, August 31.

Please send submissions to:  
message.allsoulsdc@gmail.com

*George Barnum* ■

**Upcoming deadlines**

Copy deadline for articles for the October/November issue of The Message is Sunday, August 31

Copy deadline for articles for the December 2008/January 2009 issue of The Message is Sunday, October 26

Please have your articles in George Barnum's hands by that date. Electronic submission preferred at [message.allsoulsdc@gmail.com](mailto:message.allsoulsdc@gmail.com). Please also send a copy to [allsouls1@aol.com](mailto:allsouls1@aol.com). Call George with story ideas, questions, and comments at (W) 202/512-1801, extension 32067, or (H) 202/986-2998. ■

*Keeping Healthy*

**Flu & Pneumonia Vaccinations Coming**

**O**nce again this year, Maxim Health Systems will offer flu and pneumonia shots in the Undercroft on Saturday, October 18, from 10 a.m. till 1 p.m.

Maxim will bill Medicare Part B or participating health plans for those with valid Medicare coverage and proper documentation. For those without Medicare Part B, the cost of the flu shot is \$30.00, and \$45.00 for the pneumonia shot.

Our very own Dr. Al Muller is responsible for setting up this worthwhile service at All Souls. Please contact Al directly if you have questions or need more information, 301/657-1671.

*Dr. Al Muller* ■

*A Gathering of the Wise and Mature*

**Senior Lunch Bunch**

**T**he next luncheon of the "wise and mature" will be on Wednesday, September 24 at 12:30 p.m., following the noon mass. Please have your reservations in to the parish office no later than Monday, September 22 if you plan to attend. This will be our "ingathering lunch." Thanks to everyone who has joined in this time of fellowship.

*Mark Hoffman, ESM Representative* ■

*From the Foyer Dinner Program*

**Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?**

**O**ne of All Souls' oldest ministries, foyer dinners are a popular way to get acquainted with the diverse community who attend All Souls. Under the direction of dinner captains, small groups of about ten share potluck dinners in homes and other informal settings. Generally, several dinners are held by each group during the church year. *You may join this activity at any time during the year.* Contact either Butch Bradburn (703/525-0262) or Kathleen Scholl (202/244-2297) if you wish to be added to a group. ■

**Baptisms**

July 13, 2008

Ian Joshua Bailey

**Burials**

None

**Confirmations**

None

**Commitment Ceremonies**

None

**Marriages**

None

**Transfers In**

July 1, 2008

Michael P. McLaughlin

**Transfers Out**

None

## The All Souls Message

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Nancye Suggs, *senior warden*

*The mission of All Souls Church is to be a Christ-centered sanctuary where a diverse community worships and serves. We live this mission through faithful celebration of the Eucharist, Christian education, and loving nurture of both members and neighbors.* ■



# Ingathering Sunday

*Renew and refresh  
your All Souls spirit.*

**Please join us on September 7th  
for the start of the fall church year.**

Adult Forum begins, the choir returns,  
and Sunday school, the regular breakfast,  
and coffee hour begin.