

The All Souls Message

All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church • Volume 106, Issue 1 • February/March 2006

From the Interim Rector

A Different Look at Lent

A few years ago, my partner and I bought our house. While the house itself needed little or no repair, the backyard needed a great deal of work. The former owner had done nothing to the yard in probably 50 years. It had no redeemable grass. The large bank that spanned the back of the house was a jungle of overgrown trees, vines, and bushes (a perfect environment for massive roaches and other critters).

Strewn throughout the landscape were jagged rocks, broken bottles, plastic containers, and other such debris. As we looked out at this yard for the first time, Libby saw a “dump.” I, however, saw a paradise. I envisioned the new grass, the cleared bank blooming with flowers, trimmed trees, a dog run for our animal companions, and a patio.

I even began to fantasize about decorative lighting and a hot tub. For the past three years, we have slowly but steadily transformed “the dump” into that paradise. The first summer, we had a fence put up and the dog run created. We spent hours clearing the bank and picking up the debris. We had new grass sown. We planted a small garden in which to grow mint, cilantro, tomatoes, and hot peppers. While we have planted some flowers, full floweriness is a work in progress. However, the patio has been built and a used hot tub is now up and running.

“
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it is really a time
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”

For me, our yard has become a powerful symbol of the spiritual life. Like a yard (or garden) if it is to grow and thrive, the spiritual life takes hard work, the investment of one’s energies, and having a vision for the future. It takes the constant nurturing of the sacred ground for growth that God gives us. For example, at baptism, God bestows upon us all we need to help us mature into the full stature of Christ: the inward and spiritual grace of being united with Christ in his death and resurrection; birth into God’s family, the Church; forgiveness of sins; and new life in the Holy Spirit. What we do, however, with this grace is up to us.

If we engage in such disciplines as prayer, regular worship, and self-examination, we have a much

better chance over time of nurturing the grace within so that our souls can bloom more fully with love, compassion, faith, and hope. However, if we choose to do nothing, then indeed our spiritual life can wither and run the risk of becoming overgrown with negative attitudes and actions and cluttered with harmful emotional and spiritual debris.

Mother Church, in her wisdom, knowing that often we fall into the latter pattern, gives us—time and time again—the opportunity to clean, clear out, prune, bring to blossom, and strengthen our spiritual lives. The holy season of Lent is one such significant opportunity. The word lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “*lencton*”, which refers to the springtime of the year, that season which follows the cold, dark, and seeming dead days of winter. Lent, in a spirit of Spring, thus holds the possibility for real change and transformation in our spiritual lives.

And what are the possibilities? Contrary to popular notion that Lent is a time “*to give up something*,” it is really a time “*to take something on*,” which helps us to renew and enhance our spiritual health. For example, Lent invites us to ask ourselves such questions as the following. In what ways can we live more fully into our baptismal covenant at church, work, school, and in our relationships with others? How can we better utilize our resources in service to God and those in need? How do we need to repent—turn around—and make new

Continued on the next page.

starts? And how can we demonstrate—in word and deed—our gratitude for God’s gift of love and new life? Indeed, at the end of Lent’s journey, as we greet Easter’s joy, God does not desire to find us people beaten down with guilt and gloom, but rather desires that we arrive as people renewed, bursting with spiritual vitality, to go forth anew to serve the world with love, peace, hope, and justice.

Therefore, I invite you, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent. In essence, take out a prayer shovel to dig deep into the soil of your soul. Put on some heavy duty gardening gloves to mix up what is stagnant and complacent

within. Ask God to provide the seeds of transformation and right beginnings. And nurture, through word and sacrament, the grace God has planted within you, so that you may grow and thrive and experience fully the rays of our Lord’s resurrecting power and know the warmth of God’s eternal love.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

I am excited about coming to serve among you as your new seminarian. Mother Joan has asked me to give you a bit of information about myself by way of introduction.

My name is DeWayne Messenger (I go by “D”) and I am a second-year master of divinity candidate at Virginia Theological Seminary. I will be graduating in May of 2007.

My home parish is Christ Church in Reading, Pa., and my home diocese is the Diocese of Bethlehem. My wonderful life partner, Ray Knapp, and I have been together for over 12 years and lived in the Alexandria area and were members of St. Margaret’s D.C. for many years before Ray was transferred to San Antonio.

I look forward to meeting and getting to know you all as we worship and serve God together.

“D” Messenger ■

December 20, 2005 meeting:

- Charged the rector search committee and recorded members’ formal commitment to the process
- Adopted the finance committee’s recommended asking budget for 2006 with the intent to refine the budget in January if the pledges fail to meet the objective

- Endorsed Norman Whitmire as a postulant for holy orders upon the recommendation of his parish committee on ministry.

January 17, 2006 meeting:

- Adopted a revised budget recommendation from the finance com-

- mittee reflecting the continuing generosity of our parish family
- Noted that the rector search committee will meet January 26th with our search consultant and the diocesan canon for deployment and vocational ministry.

David Michael Hollis ■

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Copy deadline for articles for the April/May 2006 issue of The Message is February 26, 2006

Please have your articles in Fred Jordan’s hands by that date. Electronic submission preferred at ctfj@verizon.net. Call him with story ideas, questions, and complaints at 202/488-0814. ■

ALMIGHTY AND EVERLASTING GOD, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth, mercifully hear the supplications of us thy servants, and grant unto All Souls' parish all things that are needful for its spiritual welfare; enlighten and guide its priests; strengthen and increase the faithful; visit and relieve the sick; turn and soften the wicked; rouse the careless; recover the fallen; restore the penitent; remove all hindrances to the advancement of thy truth; bring all to be of one heart and mind within the fold of thy holy Church; to the honor and glory of thy name. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer for a parish from Saint Augustine's Prayer Book is one that I say regularly in my private devotions and offer here for your consideration as we continue our journey through the interim time and search for a new rector. We at All Souls can rejoice that we do have the things that we need for our common spiritual welfare. Mother Joan and Mother Barbara lead us in the faithful celebration of the Eucharist. Sam Baker and our choir provide the music that enriches our liturgy. Ric Haines and a small volunteer army nurture our young people. And perhaps most importantly, the weekly presence of a faithful parish family seeking together to live into a deeper relationship with God.

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If you are
still praying about
the financial offering
you can make,
it's not too late.
We need your help
to reach our
asking budget.
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All of this is made possible as a practical matter through the generous financial support from the members and friends of All Souls. Your prayerful giving has allowed the church to operate with balanced budgets for several years, unlike two thirds of the parishes in the Diocese of Washington. And I am hopeful that this trend will continue in 2006. Our parish health and the outcome of the rector search process depend on it. (This may sound like an appeal from public radio, but it is really true.)

The rector search committee was commissioned in November and received its charge from the Vestry in December. The charge is a broad set of guidelines authorizing the committee to conduct a national search for the best qualified candidates who match the profile of the person we seek to become the seventh rector of All Souls. Travel costs, consultant fees, and printing and postage costs are estimated at about \$12,500 for 2006 and about \$3,000 for 2007. We must demonstrate to potential candidates that we remain financially sound and can offer a competitive compensation package. Any serious

candidate will examine the audited financial statements published in our profile and will ask questions about our giving patterns.

The prayer above asks God to "strengthen and increase the faithful; visit and relieve the sick." I see God working through us. All Souls is a dynamic parish. We're baptizing and receiving new members even as we bid farewell to friends moving away. Our children's programs are growing and we've commissioned four lay Eucharistic ministers to make pastoral visits to home-bound parishioners. And Mother Joan is planning a new Lenten study series. (See article p. 10.)

I am encouraged by the sustaining stewardship of time and talent manifested in our rich liturgy, warm fellowship, and the deep love we show one another. I am hopeful that our stewardship of treasure will match our hope for the future. The Vestry, finance committee, and the search committee offer grateful thanks for the pledges received for 2006. If you are still praying about the financial offering you can make, it's not too late. We need your help to reach our asking budget.

I see All Souls moving from strength to strength. I hope you do too.

David Michael Hollis ■

In November and December, we enjoyed three Adult Forum lectures and discussions on the parables of Jesus.

ON NOVEMBER 20, WILL COLEY PROVIDED A BROAD OVERVIEW OF PARABLES TO THE ADULT FORUM ATTENDEES. In his lecture, Will explained that parables are much like metaphors, employed by Jesus as a teaching device meant to challenge listeners' thinking as well as to change the beliefs and behaviors of those who heard (and later read) the parables.

To illustrate how a parable was used by Jesus to teach his disciples and followers, Will led the Adult Forum class in a discussion of a parable from the 14th chapter of Luke, the parable of a feast. Placing the story of a banquet feast in an historical context, Will explained the origins of this parable and the meaning of each section.

THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, MOTHER JOAN CONTINUED ON THE TOPIC OF PARABLES AND DEEPENED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THESE UNIQUE STORIES. Mother Joan reminded us that a parable is a short story with a double, usually religious, meaning. She explained that although often utilized by Jesus, parables did not originate with him. Parables have a long history, dating back to the teachings of Aristotle.

Moreover, parables can also be found in the Old Testament. Mother Joan provided us with two examples. The first was Nathan's parable to King David in 2 Samuel 12, and the second was the song of the vineyard, found in Isaiah 5:1-2.

Parables are valuable teaching tools, calling us to holy action. The next time you come across one of Jesus's parables, ask yourself, 'What is God calling me to do?' and 'How does this apply to my life?'

Turning back to Jesus's parables, Mother Joan explained that the Biblical tradition's interpretation of parable in the sense of metaphor makes it possible to argue that all of Jesus's words are parables. That means, according to Mother Joan, that we are called always to search for the deeper or double meaning in all of Jesus's teachings.

Mother Joan also gave us some valuable background information on Jesus to help reveal where he may have gotten his extensive knowledge. Mother Joan stated that Jesus was neither poor nor illiterate; that he was a devout Jew who followed the teaching of Hillel, a famous Jewish religious leader who lived in Jerusalem during the time of King Herod.

Hillel, she said, was more liberal than Shammai, a Jewish scholar of the first century who was much stricter in his interpretation of the law. Although Jesus was raised in the

middle class of his time and owned a home in Capernaum, he chose to be in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. All of these factors most likely contributed to Jesus's knowledge and his ability and preference to teach using parables.

Next, Mother Joan used the parable from Mark's gospel lesson for that day, Mark 13: 33-37, to illustrate how one of Jesus's parables related specifically to the Advent season. This parable is a story of the end times and the coming of God's kingdom. The message from the parable is to stay awake, for we do not know when Christ will return.

In summary, Mother Joan encouraged us to read and re-read the parables, as they demand interpretation and each successive reading brings greater appreciation and reveals new applications for our spiritual lives.

FINALLY, ON DECEMBER 4, I TAUGHT THE THIRD ADULT FORUM IN THE SERIES ON PARABLES. After reviewing the material covered in the previous two weeks, I expounded on the three overlapping themes of Jesus's parables that I found in my research. The first theme centers on the coming of the kingdom. The second theme commonly found in Jesus's parables focuses on the character of God. Lastly, the third theme involves morality and justice.

In my presentation, we read together and then discussed four parables from the gospel of Matthew as examples of the three main themes found in Jesus's parables. The first example came from Matthew 25: 1-13, the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. This parable's main theme focuses on the coming of the kingdom.

Continued on the next page.

Turning to the theme of the character of God, we read together the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, found in Matthew 20:1-16. The message gleaned from this parable is that God is the supreme judge of all and has the power to be generous and grant mercy to whomever he chooses.

On the theme of morality and justice, we read and discussed two parables. The first was the story of the unmerciful servant, found in Matthew 18:21-25, and the second was the parable of the two sons, from Matthew 21:28-32. Forgiveness is the overarching message of the first, while the second reveals that actions, not words, are the ultimate sign of obedience to God.

On the surface, parables may seem like easy stories to read and interpret. However, there is always a deeper, complex message to be found in each parable. Reading and studying the parables of Jesus, one must pay attention, think openly, and often struggle with the meaning.

Parables are valuable teaching tools, calling us to holy action. The next time you come across one of Jesus's parables, ask yourself, "What is God calling me to do?" and "How does this apply to my life?"

Darla Brown ■

Where you see a blank space where a presenter's name should be, you are encouraged to fill it with your own by contacting Elizabeth Olson at (202) 441-7839 or Beatrix_01@msn.com. (Information as of January 19, 2006.)

2006

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|----------|---|--------|--|
| Jan. 29 | Saladin and the Third Crusade <i>Stu Edwards</i> | May 7 | The Prayer Book of 1979 <i>Dale Lewis</i> |
| Feb. 5 | The Early Church Councils <i>Jim Child</i> | May 14 | Women in the Priesthood <i>Elizabeth George</i> |
| Feb. 12 | The Eastern Church: Theology <i>Dan Davis</i> | May 21 | <i>No Forum—Annual parish meeting</i> |
| Feb. 19 | The Eastern Church: Icons and Worship <i>Dan Davis</i> | May 22 | Current Reforms in the Episcopal Church |
| Feb. 26 | The Counter-Reformation <i>Marko Zlatich</i> | | |
| Mar. 5 | The Oxford Movement <i>Dan Davis</i> | | |
| Mar. 12 | Rethinking the Cross <i>Alison Prevost</i> | | |
| Mar. 19 | <i>Topic to be determined</i> <i>Ike Brannon</i> | | |
| Mar. 26 | The Penitential Order (BCP 319; 351) | | |
| Apr. 2 | Christian Ethics on Death and Dying <i>Dan Davis</i> | | |
| April 9 | The Art of the Crucifixion <i>Scott Minos</i> | | |
| Apr. 16 | <i>No Forum—Easter break</i> | | |
| Apr. 23 | The Social Gospel Movement <i>Alison Prevost</i> | | |
| April 30 | Vatican II <i>Deidre Hill</i> | | |

Elizabeth Olson ■

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If we understand reformation as a life-long process of studied or prayerful improvement both individually and corporately, then using it as a theme for our forums this year is a logical continuation; things come into being and then, for whatever reason, they change.

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Another in a series of discussions led by the interim rector on the subject of the interim during which we look for a permanent rector—Ed

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS.....¹

One misconception about the Interim time is that it is a “holding pattern.” In other words, that nothing “new” will happen until a new permanent priest arrives (i.e., program development stops, stewardship is put on hold, etc.). Nothing could be further from the truth! The interim period is a significant time in a parish's life, ripe with opportunity for a congregation to strengthen its vitality and engage in an intentional visioning process for its future. In order for us—the people of All Souls—to make this interim time such an opportunity, there are specific developmental tasks that we are called to work on. Through the collective wisdom of interim ministry specialist, five developmental tasks for the interim time have been identified. They are:

1. Coming to terms with our history
2. Becoming clear about our identity
3. Allowing shifts in leadership to occur
4. Rethinking the linkages to our denomination and its structures
5. Making a commitment to new leadership and a new future

First, in terms of coming to terms with our history, this task involves examining our past and identifying highs and lows (i.e., critical junctures, challenges, milestone events, the tenures of past rectors, losses in terms of patriarchs, matriarchs, beloved clergy, etc.) that have occurred through the years.

How you choose to use this interim time will shape your congregational growth, identity, and health for years to come.

Second, in terms of becoming clear about our identity, this task involves such processes as articulating an accurate account of the makeup of our membership, examining existing programs to determine whether they are meeting our needs, describing how we fit into the surrounding community; and identifying our sense of mission.

Third, in terms of allowing shifts in leadership to occur, the interim period is a time to review leadership selection and decision-making processes and make changes if necessary, and to identify and empower individuals and groups whose gifts will enhance the health of the congregation.

Fourth, in terms of rethinking the linkages to our denomination and its structures, the interim time affords us the opportunity to:

- become more educated on denominational policies and practices;
- renew our connection to the diocese by utilizing available resources during this transition time, and
- re-affirm our role and responsibility as a parish in the Diocese of Washington and the Episcopal Church of the United States.

And fifth, in terms of making a commitment to new leadership and a new future, the interim time is a time for us to see *each* pastorate as a time for us to move to a deeper and possibly different relationship to God and our way of serving God.

How we choose to use this interim time will shape the congregational growth, identity, and health of All Souls for years to come. Wide and inclusive congregational participation and support in terms of time, talent, and treasure is essential to accomplish these goals. And so I invite you to be a co-partner in ministry so that we—working, praying, and serving together—can make this time all that it can be in terms of life-giving productivity.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

1. Adapted from Roy M. Oswald, James M. Heath, Ann W. Heath, “Beginning Ministry Together: The Alban Handbook for Clergy Transitions” (Washington, D.C., The Alban Institute, 2003) pp 75-77

NEXT ISSUE:
“Why the Interim
Can Never Be a Candidate”

Announcing Koinonia: A Fellowship Ministry of Young Adults of All Souls'

Recently, a new fellowship ministry re-appeared here at All Souls'. Koinonia (which comes from Greek, meaning fellowship) is intended to provide opportunities for young adults—loosely defined as those in the 20-to-30-something age range—to come together as members of this parish family and talk about their experiences as active Christians. A similar group existed a few years ago, but became inactive. Now it has been reorganized and reenergized.

Efforts are also being made at both the diocesan and national church levels to identify similar groups and form a network of young adults' groups. A meeting of several groups from around the diocese was held in December at Church of the Epiphany, Washington. It provided a forum for dialog among young adult group leaders regarding activities and

projects past, present, and future; in addition, participants discussed the possibility of joint activities and projects.

To date, Koinonia's activities have included a cookout, brunch, and a Christmas party, but upcoming activities will include themed discussions, movie viewings, outings, service and outreach projects, and more get-togethers for brunch or happy hour. In addition, current efforts are underway for joint activities with young adult groups at other parishes in the diocese.

For more information, or if you would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Norman Whitmire, Jr. at normmd2@comcast.net

Norm Whitmire ■

Will Coley Honored for Influence as Teacher

Will Coley, who has been active in All Souls' Sunday School and Adult Forum, has been chosen to appear in the 2005-2006 edition of "Who's Who Among American Teachers". The publication honors educators nominated by students from "Who's Who Among American High School Students", "Who's Who Among American High School Students-Sports Edition", and students honored in The National Dean's List.

Because of its unique nominating process, students have the opportunity and responsibility to honor the teachers who have most significantly affected their academic careers. There are approximately 156,000 teachers in

the current edition of "Who's Who Among American Teacher". They are, according to the publication, "among our nation's best and most respected teachers."

Coley said he was nominated by a former 11th grade student. He teaches transitional English at High Point High School in Beltsville.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

Two All Souls' Members to take ESM Roles

Member Joe Howell was recently elected to the Board of Episcopal Senior Ministry and will serve on the Finance Committee. Member Mark Hoffman was appointed the All Souls Parish representative to ESM, a non-profit organization that improves the lives of older adults through a range of quality, affordable programs including housing, care management, transportation, education, and volunteer training and support.

Services are available to all seniors, families, and community members regardless of religious affiliation. For more information, contact Joe or Mark or call ESM at 202-414-6315, or visit the ESM website at www.esm.org.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

Calling All Women

You are invited to a beverage and cheese gathering on Wednesday, February 22, at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the possible creation of an All Souls Episcopal Women's Fellowship. All are welcome. So, please come with your ideas and thoughts about what kind of fellowship program for women you may want to see offered at All Souls' to meet your social and spiritual needs. Please RSVP to Mother Joan at 202-232-4244 or by email revjeb@comcast.net if you are planning to attend. Please also feel free to contact her if you have questions.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

“Oh, To Be an Episcopalian”

Beginning March 8, Mother Beilstein will lead a five-part series on the theme “Oh, To Be an Episcopalian” with a view to strengthening all members of All Souls in their understanding and appreciation of what our church is, where it came from, and what it means to belong to it.

Each session begins with evening prayer at 6 p.m. A simple potluck and the evening’s presentation follow in the undercroft. The evenings will conclude at 8 p.m.

Part of the reason for the series, Mother Beilstein said, is to ready the parish for the upcoming general convention of the Episcopal Church of the United States in Columbus, Ohio, June 10-21. A number of important, even explosive, issues will arise at that session, and it would be well for Episcopalians at All Souls—both newly minted and long standing—to have firm knowledge of their church.

Faithfully,
Mother Joan † ■

LENTEN SERIES

Theme: “Oh, to be An Episcopalian”

- Five Consecutive Wednesday nights.
- Beginning with Evening Prayer at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary,
- Followed by a simple potluck supper in the undercroft and program, concluding at 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday, March 8

LENTEN SERIES: SESSION 1

Topic: “Our History: Anglican Roots and the Episcopal Church”

Wednesday, March 15

LENTEN SERIES: SESSION 2

Topic: “Our Worship: The Book of Common Prayer and the Bible”

Wednesday, March 22

LENTEN SERIES: SESSION 3

Topic: “Our Mission: Hospitality”

Wednesday, March 29

LENTEN SERIES: SESSION 4

Topic: “Our Spirituality”

Wednesday, April 5

LENTEN SERIES: SESSION 5

Topic: “Our Ministry and Organization” with a discussion on the upcoming General Convention

Saturday, March 18

LENTEN QUIET DAY

9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.,
in the Sanctuary

Theme: “The Power of Forgiving and the Power of Being Forgiven”

Tuesday, February 28

SHROVE TUESDAY

- Evening Prayer at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary
- Pancake supper in the undercroft

Wednesday, March

ASH WEDNESDAY

- The Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist
- Services at 7:00 a.m., noon, and 7:00 p.m.

March 5 through April 2

THE SUNDAYS IN LENT

- Services at 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 p.m.

March 18

LENTEN QUIET DAY

- 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.,
in the sanctuary

April 9

PALM SUNDAY

- Services at 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 p.m.

April 10, & 11

MONDAY AND TUESDAY
IN HOLY WEEK

- Said Mass at 7:00 p.m.

April 12

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK

- Tenebrae at 7:00 p.m.

April 13

MAUNDY THURSDAY,

- Service at 8:00 p.m.

April 14

GOOD FRIDAY

- Service at noon

April 15

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

- Service at 8:30 p.m. with Baptism

April 16

EASTER DAY

- Services at 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.



Epiphany

Absalom Jones, *Priest (d. 1818)*
Feast Day, February 13

Absalom Jones was born a house slave in 1746 in Delaware. He taught himself to read out of the New Testament, among other books. When 16, he was sold to a store owner in Philadelphia. There he attended a night school for blacks, operated by Quakers. At 20, he married another slave, and purchased her freedom with his earnings. Jones bought his own freedom in 1784.

At St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church, he served as lay minister for its black membership. The active evangelism of Jones and that of his friend, Richard Allen, greatly increased black membership at St. George's. The alarmed vestry decided to segregate blacks into an upstairs gallery, without notifying them. During a Sunday service when ushers attempted to remove them, the blacks indignantly walked out in a body.

In 1787, black Christians organized the Free African Society, the first organized Afro-American society, and Absalom Jones and Richard Allen were elected overseers. Members of the Society paid monthly dues for the benefit of those in need. The Society established communication with similar black groups in other cities. In 1792, the Society began to build a church, which was dedicated on July 17, 1794. The African Church applied for membership in the Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania on the following conditions: 1—that they be received as an organized body; 2—that they have control over their local affairs; 3—that Absalom Jones be

licensed as lay reader, and, if qualified, be ordained as minister.

In October 1794 it was admitted as St. Thomas's African Episcopal Church. Bishop White ordained Jones as deacon in 1795 and as priest on September 21, 1802. Jones was an earnest preacher. He denounced slavery, and warned the oppressors to "clean their hands of slaves." To him, God was the Father, who always acted on "behalf of the oppressed and distressed." But it was his constant visiting and mild manner that made him beloved by his own flock and by the community. St. Thomas's Church grew to over 500 members during its first year. Known as "the Black Bishop of the Episcopal Church," Jones was an example of persistent faith in God and in the Church as God's instrument.



Lent

Perpetua and Her Companions,
Martyrs at Carthage (d. 202)
Feast Day, March 7

Vibia Perpetua was a young widow, mother of an infant and owner of several slaves, including Felicitas and Revocatus. With two other young Carthaginians, Secundulus and Saturninus, they were catechumens preparing for baptism.

Early in the third century, Emperor Septimius Severus decreed that all persons should sacrifice to the divinity of the emperor. There was no way that a Christian, confessing faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ, could do this. Perpetua and her companions were arrested and held in prison un-

der miserable conditions pending being sent into the arena to do battle with wild beasts. In a document attributed to Perpetua, we learn of visions she had in prison. One was of a ladder to heaven, which she climbed to reach a large garden; another was of her brother who had died when young of a dreadful disease, but was now well and drinking the water of life; the last was of herself as a warrior battling the devil and defeating him to win entrance to the gate of life. "And I awoke, understanding that I should fight, not with beasts, but with the devil. . . . So much about me up to the day before the games; let him who will write of what happened then."

At the public hearing before the proconsul, she refused even the entreaties of her aged father, saying, "I am a Christian." On March 7, Perpetua and her companions, encouraging one another to bear bravely whatever pain they might suffer, were sent to the arena to be mangled by a leopard, a boar, a bear, and a savage cow. Perpetua and Felicitas, tossed by the cow, were bruised and disheveled, but Perpetua, "lost in spirit and ecstasy," hardly knew that anything had happened. To her companions she cried, "Stand fast in the faith and love one another. And do not let what we suffer be a stumbling block to you." Eventually, all were put to death by a stroke of a sword through the throat. The soldier who struck Perpetua was inept. His first blow merely pierced her throat between the bones. She shrieked with pain, then aided the man to guide the sword properly. The report of her death concludes, "Perhaps so great a woman, feared by the unclean spirit, could not have been killed unless she so willed it."

Faithfully,
Mother Joan† ■

In the May 2005 *All Souls Message*, I had the privilege of commenting on "Science and the Trinity: the Christian Encounter" by Father John Polkinghorne, Anglican priest and renowned physicist.

The author, canon theologian of Liverpool, dealt in that book with the relationship of science and theology, exploring approaches to the question on the part of scientists in particular. They range from agnosticism through deism to theism: the acceptance of a personal god who cares for his creation.

In doing so, Polkinghorne distinguishes the empirical attitude required for doing science from the more diffuse approach needed for theology, which entails a blend of intellectual, esthetic, and spiritual experience and the intuitive capacity to make them one. Attempting to do the work science demands within such an overall framework will necessarily prove fruitless, nor can science impose on theology its methods.

This point is only one of the many compelling arguments the author makes throughout his works, but it is one I have greatly admired. I have the opportunity to share it again in this response to this new volume, "The God of Hope and the End of the World".

The very title forces us to move beyond generalized speculation to personal considerations of the end of life; at the same time, the author engages us to participate with him in a view that looks beyond final material disintegration to a continuity of life of a different order. He says, "The thesis of (the) book is that Christian belief provides the essential" of whether the world we live in "makes sense not just now but totally and forever."

In developing his position, Polkinghorne points out that our universe "despite its present fruitfulness, will eventually end in the futility of cosmic collapse or decay. This reliable prediction poses a sharp question to theology concerning how the latter conceives of the ultimate fulfillment of God's creation."

Here, he is taking the view of the cosmologist that measures time in billions of years, from the "Big Bang" about fourteen billion years ago to the death of our sun about five billion years in the future, after it has exhausted its fuel. In fact, he goes farther in reminding us that after the sun dies, the universe will still be here (most likely expanding "forever").

This is certainly a depressing scenario—the counsel of desperation, in fact, if we cannot see beyond the material universe to another level of reality.

The author, however, does not see the process in terms of a continuity abruptly destroyed in some kind of millenarian fireball. As he notes, "There must be sufficient continuity for the new to be seen to arise...out of the old," as perpetual change takes place through birth, growth, decay, and death. This constitutes what we might call the hallmark of a nature objectively described, with a minimum of attention given the describer. No matter what our biases or fears may be, the end will not be instantaneous.

In succeeding chapters of his book, the author moves from his role of (relatively) dispassionate physicist confronting the universe of nature to an appreciation of the priceless insights of the geniuses who have sought to understand and to share with use their concepts of meaningfulness inherent in the mystery of life and consciousness: Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein in physics; Teilhard de Chardin in science and religious faith; and countless others in many times and places.

These considerations naturally lead him to questions of general culture, for the successes of scientific and humanistic endeavor affect all of us (even when we are unaware of their origins). Polkinghorne stresses here the role of memory of the kind that "engages with preceding generations in a way that liberates people from the limitations of the contemporary..." Freed from the slavery of thinking that our own social and political institutions are the last word, we are in a position to make sound judgments in appraising what the author calls "[t]he shattered Utopian dreams of the 19th century." With new hope we can rid ourselves of "the immediate demands of the present," an essential prelude to coming to terms with eschatological thought, the contemplation of a life beyond death.

Polkinghorne then turns to the Bible, the events it relates and the insights it shares, from the patriarchs and the prophets through Jesus Christ and his apostles. His treatment accords the central place to Jesus's resurrection, the cornerstone of Christian eschatology.

This overview (of what to me has been a kind of epiphany of theological power) does not begin to do justice to the integration of the complex themes the author achieves. This work is not always easy to assimilate, but its clarity, style, and, most important, its basic message make it, in my view, well worth the intellectual effort.

Jim Child ■

FIRST LESSON—CLEANING LADY

During my second month of college, our professor gave us a pop quiz. I was a conscientious student and had breezed through the questions until I read the last one: “What is the first name of the woman who cleans the school?”

Surely this was some kind of joke. I had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her 50s, but how would I know her name?

I handed in my paper, leaving the last question blank. Just before class ended, one student asked if the last question would count toward our quiz grade. “Absolutely,” said the professor. “In your careers, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say ‘hello.’” I’ve never forgotten that lesson. I also learned her name was Dorothy.

SECOND LESSON—PICKUP IN THE RAIN

One night, around 11:30, an older African American woman was standing on the side of an Alabama highway trying to endure a lashing rainstorm. Her car had broken down and she desperately needed a ride.

Soaking wet, she decided to flag down the next car. A young white man stopped to help her, generally unheard of in those conflict-filled 1960s. The man took her to safety, helped her get assistance, and put her into a taxicab.

She seemed to be in a big hurry, but wrote down his address and thanked him. Seven days went by and a knock came on the man’s door. To his surprise, a giant console color TV was delivered to his home. A special note was attached.

It read: “Thank you so much for assisting me on the highway the other night. The rain drenched not only my clothes, but also my spirits. Then you came along. Because of you,

I was able to make it to my dying husband’s bedside just before he passed away. God bless you for helping me and unselfishly serving others.

Sincerely,
Mrs. Nat King Cole.”

THIRD LESSON—ALWAYS REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVE

In the days when an ice cream sundae cost much less, a 10-year-old boy entered a hotel coffee shop and sat at a table. A waitress put a glass of water in front of him.

“How much is an ice cream sundae?” he asked. “Fifty cents,” replied the waitress.

The little boy pulled his hand out of his pocket and studied the coins in it. “Well, how much is a plain dish of ice cream?” he inquired.

By now more people were waiting for a table and the waitress was growing impatient. “Thirty-five cents,” she brusquely replied.

The little boy again counted his coins. “I’ll have the plain ice cream,” he said.

The waitress brought the ice cream, put the bill on the table and walked away. The boy finished the ice cream, paid the cashier and left. When the waitress came back, she began to cry as she wiped down the table. There, placed neatly beside the empty dish, were two nickels and five pennies.

FOURTH LESSON—THE OBSTACLE IN OUR PATH

In ancient times, a king had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock.

Some of the king’s wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the king for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, he laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the king saying that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway. The peasant learned what many of us never understand: Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

FIFTH LESSON—GIVING WHEN IT COUNTS

Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare, serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her five-year-old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness.

The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister. I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, “Yes I’ll do it if it will save her.” As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded.

He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, “Will I start to die right away?” Being young, the little boy had misunderstood the doctor; he thought he was going to have to give his sister all of his blood in order to save her.

Tony Domenico ■

From the Membership Secretary
The Parish Register

Baptisms

January 8, 2006

Anton Gabriel David Haines
Annika Jianchen Wilder
Isabel Mengxian Wilder

Burials

None

Marriages

None

Transfers In

None

Transfers Out

Billie Kay and Thomas Horst,

to Grace Church, Georgetown, DC

Alice T. Wagner,

to St. James' Parish, Lothian, MD

Robert J. Baldre, Jr.,

to St. Paul's K Street, DC

Brian P. Gluckman,

to St. Bartholomew's, Atlanta, GA

Marianne and Norman Scharpf,

to All Saints', Chevy Chase, MD

From the Music Program

Listen to That Choir!

A few copies of "Choral Music from Five Centuries", the All Souls' choir's first compact disk recording, are still available for purchase for \$15.00 each. See Music Director Sam Baker for help in obtaining one.

From the Music Program

Concert Series to Begin

A series of classical chamber concerts in the sanctuary will begin on March 9 at 7:30 p.m. The series is being produced by Vasili Popov, the cellist you may remember from the Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. The purpose is to encourage new people to take part in church activities, develop a new concert venue in DC and support the cultural needs of the community, and help raise funds for the church. More information will be available in the future.

From the Membership Secretary

Baptism Dates (as of 01/03/2006)

February 2006

5 Lisa Zaina
6 Stu Edwards
Joanna Edwards
7 Barbara Menard
8 Keith Melchers
9 Andoni Barreto
10 Charles Johnson
15 Julia Preston
Bob Publicover
21 Ram Hansen
23 Deidre Hill
25 Tom Mabon

March 2006

1 Christine Burkhart
John Coates
2 Clive Brady
4 Wes McCune
8 Irene Butcher
12 Barbara Brady
13 Kevin LeGrand
14 Dale Lewis
18 Al Muller
20 Rachel Barham
Claire Swain
23 Linda Iverson
Richard McKewen
25 Kathy Nelson
26 Martin Culbreth
Annika Patricia Strandberg
Gulling
Karl Finn Strandberg Gulling
29 Barry Custer
Joyce Nohowel
30 Erin Piel
31 Chuck Hunter

Honoring the Great Sacrament of Baptism If your name is missing from this list and you would like to receive a baptism anniversary card from the church, or if there is a mistake, please call the parish office at 202/232-4244, and ask for Mickey Norris. ■

From the Fellowship Ministry

The Women of All Souls

As of December 2005, this fellowship group, part of the Episcopal Senior Ministries—Women's Guild, also

known as Sevier House, has disbanded. For information, please contact Regina Dading at 202/234-8776. ■



Sunday, February 5th, Theological Education Sunday

Bishop Jane Holmes Dixon visits All Souls!

We welcome Bishop Dixon as our guest preacher.

A special coffee hour will follow the 11:00 a.m. service.

The All Souls Message

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Moises Flores, *assistant sexton*

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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. ■

The All Souls Message

February/March 2006

All Souls Memorial Episcopal Church
2300 Cathedral Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008-1505



Lent & Easter at All Souls

*February 28—Shrove Tuesday, Evening Prayers at 6:30 p.m.
followed by pancake supper until 8:00 p.m.*

March 1—Ash Wednesday, 7:00 a.m., noon, and 7:00 p.m.

*Lenten Series: Wednesdays—March 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5 with Evening Prayer
at 6:00 p.m. followed by potluck supper and program ending at 8:00 p.m.*

March 5 through April 2—The Sundays in Lent, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

March 18—Saturday, Lenten Quiet Day, 9:00 a.m.—Noon

April 9—Palm Sunday, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

April 10 & 11—Monday & Tuesday in Holy Week, Said Mass at 7:00 p.m.

April 12—Wednesday in Holy Week, Tenebrae at 7:00 p.m.

April 13—Maundy Thursday, 8:00 p.m.

April 14—Good Friday, noon

April 15—Saturday, The Great Vigil of Easter, 8:30 p.m.

April 16—Easter Day, 8:30 & 11:00 a.m.