

The Christ Episcopal Church Gazette



Christ Episcopal Church
369 Sandshore Road
Budd Lake, NJ
973-347-1866
christchurchbuddlake.org



Vol. 1 - 4

Spring, 2009

The Pastor's Nook

By Rev. Dr. Darlene Tittle

Our Time Together

A dear friend asked me at our son's wedding how I felt about leaving Christ Church at the end of June. She imagined that it would be hard to let go of the church that I have served for five years. I agreed that it was very hard because the people at Christ Church have been very good to us and very supportive of our ministry. But I told her that I could leave now because I am so confident that the Lord's plan for the church is enfolding and that it is a stronger church now than it was before.

I am looking forward to the picnic on June 13 at the home of Ann Edgar at 4 PM in the afternoon. Ann lives in Flanders and her home has often been a place of hospitality for the people of Christ Church. WE are grateful to Ann, for her many gracious gatherings at her home. Sharing memories of our time together and telling stories will be good for all of us as we prepare to say our farewells.

On Sunday, June 28 there will be no morning services. We will hold only one service at 3 PM. Our Bishop, Mark Beckwith, will be our celebrant and homilist. We are hoping that it will be a joyful celebration of our mutual ministry and the gifts of God that have sustained and blessed us over these five years.



Awakening

By Elizabeth Bonker

My senses are awakening

I feel brand new.

I am on a road less traveled

But there are things I plan to
do:

To speak to you.

I'll tell you all the things

You have wanted to know

I promise you the words will
flow.

A Challenge

By Elena Mastroianni

Once upon a time I was a school teacher. Rarely does a teacher have an opportunity to teach a class twice, but I was blessed to teach the same class three times: second grade, third grade, and sixth grade.

By the time the kids got to sixth grade I knew them quite well, and they knew me, as well, and just what buttons to press to make me

count to ten! But as you will see, we really came together and had many wonderful, memorable times in our classroom.

One can hardly believe that these “kids” are now older than I was when I taught them in second grade (forty for them is only two years away!).

I reconnected with this group through a series of fortunate events and this June we will hold the First Annual Fernbrook Mini-Field Day/Picnic Reunion in Randolph!

One member of this class, who became a high school English teacher and who recently earned his Master’s degree in English, said, “I still don’t know how you did it. You created a world that obviously we all still want to be a part of twenty-five years later.”

This group of individuals will be bringing spouses, children, and their brothers and sisters, who also attended Fernbrook.

One of the members of the Fernbrook Class of 1983 will be bringing his band to add to the excitement of the day.

Games are planned for children and adults. Everyone is bringing a cooler with food for his/her family, but as one individual said, “I expect we will be eating out of each other’s coolers, as we did when we had Field Days in Randolph.”

Everyone is excited about seeing one another; many have not seen each other since their graduation from high school in 1989. All are looking forward to renewing old friendships, but there is one individual they are most anxious to see.

One of their classmates was diagnosed with stage 3 glioma, cancer of the brain, on April 23, 2009. He and his wife have a one year old boy who will turn two years old this month. Their second son was born on May 29, 2009.

Eric is inviting anyone who would like to help him find a cure for cancer to participate in an event at Montgomery County Community College at 340 DeKalb Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422 on August 23, 2009 at 7:30 AM. It is a 5K Run/Walk.

Information about the event can be found on the following web site:

www.livestrongchallenge.org/site/c.frKPI1PAIoE/b.3935395/ or you can contact Eric at www.caringbridge.org/visit/ewillkic kthetumorsbutt.

I urge you to check out the www.caringbridge.org/visit/ewillkic kthetumorsbutt web site. Once you read Eric’s story, see the pictures he has posted on the web site, and read his journal entries, you will know you have met a determined man, a great communicator, and an inspiration to family, friends, and all who read his story.

I hope you will accept his challenge and be part of the team composed of family, friends, and those who are inspired by Eric’s story to join him in Blue Bell, PA at 7:30 AM on August 23, 2009.

Good Friday 2009 Sermon

By Ray Bonker

“My God, My God”

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts always be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen. Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?

One week earlier he had been hailed by the crowds of Jerusalem, waving their palms, calling him King, calling him the Messiah. He was The Man, this was the time, freedom was on the way in, and he was coming to deliver. Imagine the euphoria, the air of expectation, even more electric than a Springsteen concert, or an Obama rally. Israel, conquered by heathen Rome, was about to rise again. God's chosen people would once more cast off their enemy and reclaim the Promised Land. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? What? It had been a tumultuous week. The wild entrance into Jerusalem. The bizarre eruption in the temple, trashing the stalls of the animal merchants and driving out the money changers. The boastful claim about tearing down the Temple itself and rebuilding it in only three days. Crazy talk. And then, just for good measure, he tells the Pharisees and the Sadducees to essentially stick it where the sun don't shine. Why? A week ago he was The Man, the rock star, the celebrity in the brightest spotlight, on the biggest stage in all Israel, with everyone there for Passover. Why was he acting out? In our modern times, his PR firm would rush in with some heavy spin,

explain it all away as merely symbolic, then book some time on 60 Minutes or Leno to get The Man back on message. But this wasn't modern times, this was Jerusalem AD 33, so instead of calling the PR firm, they called in the Romans instead. The Man wasn't going to rehab, The Man was going to Hell. My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Pilate and Herod and the Sanhedrin and Judas: The Man was doomed. Some trumped up charges, no defense lawyer, the prosecution torturing the suspect, and The Man was invoking the 5th Amendment way ahead of Time. He had already said what he needed to say, 3 years of preaching what the people needed to hear. He foretold the disciples what would happen, that they would abandon him. They did. He had taught them how to pray – Our Father, who art in heaven. He cast out demons and walked on water and preached about the Kingdom of Heaven with authority, with words of beauty and power that the illiterate could understand and the elite could not refute. Render unto Caesar. The Sermon on the Mount – blessed are the poor. Turn the other cheek. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone. I forgive your sin, go and sin no more.

Lazarus, rise. I and my Father are One. Love your enemies. The Kingdom of God is at hand. He taught them these and so many more. He also taught them this one: There is no greater Love than to lay down your life for another. And now he was about to do it.

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani.

He had been up all night in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying so damn hard he sweat blood. Then they dragged him off, flogged him, mocked him, drove thorns into his temples, then nails into his palms, after forcing him to drag his own cross halfway to Golgotha. No food, no drink. No sleep, beaten, exhausted, bleeding, and slowly suffocating for six hours. It is no surprise he wasn't talking much. But even in this extreme state of deprivation, the Word managed a few more words. To the thief at his right hand: you will be with me in paradise. To his mother and the disciple John standing below him: Behold, this is your mother, this is your son.

Then the soldiers shove vinegar in his face. The sign over his head mocks him: King of the Jews. The crowd, a week earlier, hailed him, then they demanded his crucifixion, and now they mock him too. Save yourself, come down off your cross.

Even so, a few last words: Forgive them Lord, for they know not what they do. Last week he was The Man, now he is the Pariah. The cornerstone was being rejected, the suffering servant was dying, the sheep had turned on their shepherd. His very last words, with his last breath: Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani. And then Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. It is finished. They pierce his side, he bleeds.

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? His very last words, and then the Light goes out. The Word goes mute. The curtain in the Temple is rent asunder.

And so the question remains: why did God forsake Jesus on the cross? Did he forsake him? How are we to interpret this question? Was Jesus giving up, disillusioned, quitting his Father? Was this his 'moment of doubt and pain', as the Rolling Stones sing in "Sympathy for the Devil?" Was Jesus simply delusional by this point, out of his mind in pain, exhaustion, agony? Or did he say it for us, the ultimate teachable moment, posing a question right into our reality about his reality. Is Jesus asking you this question from the cross? He is addressing his Father, but he speaks it out loud, for all to hear.

My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Do you know the answer? Are you the answer? Jesus volunteered to take sin, your sins, upon the cross. Sin is separation from God. If Jesus was being separated from his Father at this moment, what he says makes perfect sense. He is being forsaken, put out of the camp, the sacrifice of a Son by a Father, the new Isaac cut off from the oldest Abraham, the second Adam, exiled again as the first. The Light had come into the world, yet, people loved the darkness rather than the light because their actions were evil. It was their actions that ultimately put Jesus on that Cross, after he volunteered for it. Judas acted. Pilate and Herod and the Sanhedrin acted. The crowd acted. And their actions were evil. We act, and our actions are evil. They denied Jesus food and drink. We deny Jesus food and drink. Don't think so? How could we do such a thing? Oh no, not me! If I was in the crowd that day, I wouldn't deny Jesus food or drink. Are you sure? What did the Word say?

I was hungry, but you did not give me anything to eat, and I was thirsty, but you did not give me anything to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not welcome me, and I was naked,

but you did not give me any clothes to wear. I was sick and in jail, but you did not take care of me."

Then the people will ask, "Lord, when did we fail to help you when you were hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in jail?"

The king will say to them, "Whenever you failed to help any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you failed to do it for me." (Matthew 25: 41-45)

The unimportant people, the ones with no money, the ones with autism, with Parkinson's, and Downs, and addictions, and no job, with broken bones and broken spirits and broken hearts, on their death beds, the unloved and the unknown. If we deny them, we deny Jesus. If we help them, if we help all of them, all of God's children, then maybe we can be counted with the sheep, on the right hand. As for the goats, the king will say to those on his left, "Get away from me! You are under God's curse. Go into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels!"

To which some of the goats might very well reply Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani, but by then it will be too late, for them. But it is not yet too late for us.

Let me be the first to confess, I too have cried out in my own moments of doubt and pain “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” And why have you forsaken my son? My daughter? Why autism? Why death, and despair, depression, disease, desire, devastation, dependency and decay? Why me God? Poor, poor pitiful me.

Of course, when I asked God that question, I wasn't up all night the evening before, sweating blood in prayer. I wasn't being flogged or spit upon or beaten. I wasn't asking with a crown of thorns tearing into my skin. I wasn't asking that question with nails in my hands and my internal organs failing. No one was shoving vinegar in my face or piercing my side. I wasn't asking on behalf of others, and I wasn't asking without sin. I was much more like Job than Jesus, arguing with God instead of atoning for sin before God.

How about you? Have you ever asked God why he was forsaking you? When it gets really bad, when you have totally had it, when the pain and the sorrow immobilize you? Why me God? Why this? Why that? Come down off your cross, and fix it right now. Eloi, Eloi, come down from heaven and fix it right now.

Why won't you answer my prayers right now? Why have you forsaken me? Sound familiar?

And when I say that, and when you say that, The Man hears it, the Word hears it, the Messiah, the One and the Only, hears it, and he understands it, because he said it too. As a matter of fact, he wasn't even the first to say it. He was actually quoting the beginning of the 22nd Psalm,

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.”

Kinda sounds familiar, doesn't it? Isn't this what we feel in our moments of doubt and pain? Jesus understands those moments more than anyone, because he lived it and he died with it on his tongue. He died before he could even get out the next line “Why are you so far from saving me?” He understands it, like no one else ever understood it. Like you and I will never understand it, even in our darkest moments.

OK, so what do we conclude? What is the answer to this question Jesus literally left us with? Did God

forsake Jesus on the Cross? Was Jesus revealing one last word of Truth before his exit? Was he out of his mind? Are we the answer to his question? Was he revealing his utter humanity before his fellow beings? Was he experiencing the separation from God that comes with sin? Tonight we stand before him, just as that crowd in Jerusalem stood before him, looking up, looking for an answer. But on Good Friday, there is no answer. The Man is gone. The Light is out. The Word is mute. Jesus is dead.

You still want an answer, don't you?

I want an answer too.

Come back on Sunday. Amen.

A Dad's Moment from an All God's Children Service

By Mr. Hartling

I would like to focus my thoughts around two ideas: gracious freedom and humility.

When Liam was born, Madeline and I were running full steam ahead, full steam sideways, and full steam in reverse. Life just kept putting more and more demands in front of us: teaching adjuncting, scenic artistry, decorative painting, a daughter in college, a new born-son, rugby, family in New England, family in Maryland, each demanding our full and immediate attention, independent of our abilities to give each other our full and immediate attention...and then Liam went into the darkness, and everything stopped. Looking back on those days, I sometimes think I would give

anything to be pulled in those many directions again, but the good Lord had other plans. Freedom. Free from every conventional demand to be pulled in countless directions attempting to please all those who cannot be pleased. Freedom from everything that would divert our time and energy. Freedom from the idea that the medical community has all the answers or even a clue as to what the problem is, never mind the answers. Freedom for Liam.

To find out at middle age what our real purpose in life is, which is to give our children their lives, is to be in possession of the fundamental truth of Christianity. I refer to this as "gracious freedom" because, like all acts of grace, our children are our gift from God.

I'd like to close with the following thought... there is a certain amount of humility necessary on the part of all those who are used to confronting their problems with a "bring it on, can do attitude"; practical, empirical approaches have been found wanting. The medical professionals, teachers, therapists, siblings, parents, need to provide a quantifiable amount of energy devoted to a spiritual approach to autism, as with all of life's challenges. There are no atheists in foxholes for a very good reason, and that's my dad's minute.

Christ Episcopal Church to Hold AA Meetings

By Terri Howard

AA would like to thank The Christ Episcopal Church for so generously allowing us to hold a weekly meeting in the basement of the church. This meeting will be held on Thursday nights at 7:00 pm beginning June 4, 2009.

SOFTBALL TEAM

By Ed Burkhart

As of our last game on Monday, June 1, we have 6 wins and 1 loss. We are first in our division and first overall. This may be the most talented team we have ever had; the results have been amazing. Our one loss was to Grace, The Church on the Mount by a score of 15-7. Our six wins include a 19-7 decision over the defending champs, Valley View, a 30-4 blow-out over Bethlehem Church; an 8-7 squeaker over Morris Plains Presbyterians; a 17-7 win over Holy Faith; a 22-1 blow-out over Market Street Mission and a 17-2 win against a short-handed team (only 7 players instead of the usual 19), Grace Bible Chapel.

Our remaining games are as follows:
Tues. June 9 at Well Christian Church at Abbett Ave. Field in Morristown.

Tues. June 16 vs. Denville Community Church on our field (Netcong Indians Field).

Mon. June 22 at Long Valley Presbyterian.

Tues. June 23 vs. Ledgewood Baptist on our field.

The playoffs begin the week of July 6.

Ed Burkhart, Captain

Summer Reading Suggestions

By Rebecca Burkhart and Elena Mastroianni

We have categorized the summer reading suggestions as follows: Picture Books, Beginning Readers, Young Readers, Teens (YA = Young Adult), Classics and Award Winners, and Adults.

Picture Books:

Cordouroy by Don Freeman

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr.

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Harry, The Dirty Dog by Gene Zion

Beginning Readers:

Bob Books Set # 2 by Maslem

The Night Before First Grade by Laura Buller

Biscuit (My First I Can Read Book Series) by Alyssa Satin Capucilli

Sammy the Seal by Syd Hoff

Frog and Toad Together by Arnold Lobel

Amelia Bedelia (I Can Read Books Series) by Peggy Parish

Balto The Bravest Dog Ever by Natalie Standiford

The Night Before Kindergarten by Natalie Wing

Morris Goes to School by B. Wiserman

Young Readers:

Ramona Quimby by Beverly Cleary

The Mouse and the Motorcycle by Beverly Cleary

Red Scarf Girl by Ji-li Jiang

The Puppy Place by Miles

Encyclopedia Brown, Boy Detective by Donald J. Sobol

The Boxcar Children by Gertrude Chandler Warner

Young Adults (Teens):

The Truth about Forever by Sarah Dessen

A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly

The Amazing Mrs. Pollifax by Dorothy Gilman

Stormbreaker (Alex Rider Series #1) by Anthony Horowitz

Rodrick Rules (Diary of a Wimpy Kid Series #2) by Jeff Kinney

Monster by Walter Dean Myers

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak

Classics and Award Winners:

The Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

The Giver by Lois Lowry

The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

Maniac Magee by Jerry Spinelli

Adults:

Safe Passage by Ida Cook

Clara's War: One Girl's Story of Survival by Clara Kramer, Stephen Glantz

Road Dogs by Elmore Leonard

Shanghai Girls by Lisa See

The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society by Mary Ann Shaffer, Annie Barrows

The Basics in 21 Days

By Lana Liu

Those of you who participated in the Lenten program this year, and even those of you who were not able to, might be interested in the website of the man and ministry that influenced authors Benjamin and Micah Joy

Williams to make two-way journaling an integral part of their study, *The Basics in 21 Days*. I believe you will be encouraged as I have been by the experiences of others who have learned to commune with God in this way.

"Communion with God Ministries"
cwg@cwgministries.org

Maraschino Cherry Cake

By Lana Liu

(The one served in honor of Pastor Darlene's birthday at the March 25 Lenten supper.)

Cream together until fluffy:

2/3 c. soft shortening (half butter)

1 1/2 c. sugar

Sift together:

3 c. sifted cake flour

2 1/2 t. baking powder

1 t. salt

To shortening/sugar mixture add dry ingredients alternately with:

1/4 c. cherry juice (drained from maraschino cherries)

3/4 c. milk

Stir in:

1/2 c. chopped nuts

16 maraschino cherries, chopped

Fold in:

5 eggs whites, stiffly beaten

Pour into 2 prepared 8" pans. Bake at 30-35 minutes at 350.

Fluffy White Frosting

Combine in saucepan. Cook and stir till bubbly and sugar dissolves:

1 c. sugar

¼ t. cream of tartar

1/3 c. water (substitute cherry juice for water for delicate pink color)

Dash of salt

Combine in bowl:

2 egg whites

1 teaspoon of vanilla

Add sugar mixture very slowly to unbeaten egg whites while beating constantly at high speed, about 7 minutes or till stiff peaks form.

Spread the icing over the cake.

Decorate with Maraschino Cherries, if you so desire.

Editor-in-Chief: Rev. Dr.
Darlene Tittle

Editor: Elena Mastroianni

The "Gazette" can be found on
the church web site:
www.christchurchbuddlake.org