



St. John's Prologue

"In the beginning was the Word..."

**St. John's Episcopal Church
Williamstown, Massachusetts**

May 2009

Dear members and friends,

At 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 7th, we'll take a step towards adding to our skill-set a time and format for worship that is simple, brief, and beautiful: the late-evening half-hour service of sung Compline.

Compline is the bedtime hour for prayer. Its name comes from a Latin word that is a cousin to the word "complete". In Compline we mark the completion of the day, drawing us into the silence of night. (Or not, as the case may be—but you get the picture. For students and others working late into the night, this service will feel more like a break for refreshment.)

In her book Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully through the Hours of the Day, Macrina Wiederkehr, a Benedictine, writes lovingly of this time of night:

"As I enter the Great Silence, I thoughtfully attend to my heart. With eyes of mercy and delight I scan my actions of this day. Are the achievements of this day aligned with my heart's deepest yearning for grace-filled living? Gratitude and compassion rise up from my soul like incense: gratitude for the blessings of the day, compassion for the discouragements of the day. I prayerfully hold in my heart the ones who have passed through my life this day. Silence and darkness fall upon me like a great protective quilt of love. Under the careful guidance of the angels and the Queen of Heaven, I put away my fear of the night and my reluctance to enter the silence. Like a bird going home to roost at the end of the day I, too, seek my rest. I enter the comforting darkness, robed in trust and confident of divine protection. The deep silence of the hour blesses me; the sweet darkness anoints me. The living prayer of this day, now complete, I offer to the Beloved."

On Thursday, May 7th, at 9:00 p.m., the choir will lead us as we sing the psalms and hear the scripture and offer the prayers of Compline. Will you come?

Yours in the risen Christ,

The Rev. Peter Elvin

*St. John's Church
and*



*presents our annual Gospel Concert
featuring*

The Kevin Sharpe Group

a dynamic, high-energy modern Gospel ensemble with its own unique flavor. The small choir and band explore a variety of musical territory from "straight ahead" jazz, funk, smooth, rock, and even odd-metered esoteric experiments but often with a nod to their roots in traditional gospel.

Friday, May 1st - 6:30 p.m.

**St. John's Episcopal Church
35 Park Street, Williamstown**

F R E E

MAY 17TH: FAMILY SUNDAY!

Our 10:00 a.m. eucharist on May 17th will mark the completion of our church school year and the imminent graduation of our high school seniors and seniors at Williams. Two of our Easter Vigil creative readings will be featured, memorable renditions of the creation story and of the flood story (*not to be missed!*).

MAY 24TH: UNITED THANK OFFERING

Our 2009 In-gathering for the United Thank Offering will take place on Sunday, May 24th, raising seed money for mission initiatives of the Episcopal Church and of the Anglican Communion all over the world. You're invited to send in your UTO gift or place it in the alms basin that Sunday, and to pick up (in the vestibule) a "blue box" for gathering daily thank-offerings between now and then.

MAY 31ST: BISHOP'S VISITATION!

Bishop Scruton will help us celebrate the Day of Pentecost at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 31st, when he will administer the apostolic rite of Confirmation and receive new members. Please remember in your praying these parishioners who are in discernment/preparation for that day:

Youth:

Keith Martin, John Kolesar, Andrea Fisher,
Chris Mahar, Zack Lecuyer, Nate Nurmi

Adult:

Madeline Burdick

ST. JOHN'S MEN'S BREAKFAST

St. John's men meet monthly for breakfast in the Library on a Saturday morning from 8:30 to 10, usually the Saturday before the second Sunday of the month. Coffee and light breakfast food are provided.

Attendance averages about 18. We meet next on May 9, when Jim Kolesar, Assistant to the President of Williams College for Public Affairs, will share his perspective on having the best seat in the house for viewing 25 years of change at Williams. As usual, Jim's remarks will be followed by a general sharing of perspectives. We welcome all men associated with St. John's and any guests they may wish to bring. We hope that as many as can will join us. If you have any questions, please contact Dave Coughlin (458-4623) or Stuart Crampton (458-8558).

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL ILLNESS

In recognition of Mental Health Month, The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) of Berkshire County announces that Alex N. Sabo, M.D. will speak on Wednesday, May 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Medical Arts Complex at Berkshire Medical Center, 5th floor classroom, 510 North St. The program is free and open to members, professionals, and anyone interested in mental health issues.

In his talk "Understanding Mental Illness: Mapping the Brain", Dr. Sabo will discuss the self, the family, the brain and how all three are impacted by mental illness.

TRANSITION TOWNS IN WESTERN MA

Totnes, England is the first "transition town" to "relocalize" in order to achieve an "elegant descent" from a fossil-fuels based economy. They created a local currency (similar, perhaps, to our Berkshire Bucks), working groups on transportation, medicine, food, and so on. They assessed what skills and talents they already possessed, and organized a "great re-skilling" to learn the forgotten arts like putting food by. And, in the process, they built community.

The New York Times' Jon Mooallem covered the Transition Towns movement in the April 16th piece, "The End is Near (Yay!)." Tina Clarke has brought the concept home to the Pioneer Valley, and I have been inspired by the creativity, hope, and interdependence the process fosters. For more information:

www.transitiontowns.org/

-- Tamara Adkins

ST. JOHN'S PERSONALS

Cecelia Anne Smith was born on April 2 to Becky (Birrell) and John Smith in Brunswick, Maine, causing a mighty happiness for grandparents Polly and Steve.

Julia Ann Perry was born to Allison (Fissel) and Mitch on April 15th. We rejoice with them!

Celia Twomey has completed her Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology from Goddard College. Bravo, Celia!

THE PARISH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED

May 19th through May 26th while Madeline is away enjoying family and Nascar racing in North Carolina. The building will be open as usual in this period, and other staff members may be reached by phone, using their extension numbers given in the recorded menu.

WE SEND CONDOLENCE

Duane Gocht, Franz Burnet-Gocht's nephew, and Eunice Bremner, Franz's cousin, died on March 28th. Our prayers are with Franz and his family as they sustain these losses.

Ross Hunter, son of Jim Hunter and Valerie Ross, died on March 24th. His memorial service was held here on April 4th. Our hearts are heavy at the death of this young man, and we pray for all who have loved him.

Earl Smith, friend of many at St. John's and our Parish Treasurer, died on Palm Sunday, April 5th. His memorial service was held here on April 25th. We're holding his wife Diane and their son Steve in our prayers, and his sisters and their families.

Peter Davenport Kleinpell, Sr., Peter Davenport's father, died on April 14th, surrounded by his family. We extend our condolence to Peter, Sebastian, and Vlado.

Peter and Diana Elvin traveled to Hartford, CT, on April 18th, where Peter joined The Rev. Allison Read, Chaplain at Trinity College, in officiating at a memorial service for Jane Grainger, who died on October 19, 2008. Jane's ashes were interred in the memorial garden there, where her late husband Bill's ashes are also interred.

Doris Forney, Doreen's mother, died on April 20th in Hendersonville, NC. Our thoughts and prayers are with Doreen.

Linda Kandarian Ryan, Diana Elvin's younger cousin, died on April 24th after a short illness. Her memorial services were held in Hingham, MA, and in West Hartford, CT, on April 29th and May 1st. We remember her family as they grieve.

THE ST. JOHN'S ARBOR FELLOWSHIP PLANTING FOR THE FUTURE

Is St. John's in your will, or have you arranged a life income gift to the parish? If not, please consider the advantages of doing so, both to you and to your church. There is information about potential advantages and how to make such arrangements in our brochure, "Do You Have a Will?" You can find a copy in a rack in the church vestibule or the Upper Room. If you would like to talk about these issues with someone, please contact any member of the Planned Giving Ministry Team.

The St. John's Arbor Fellowship exists to thank and recognize those who have made such arrangements. If you have but have not told anyone here about it, please do tell the Rector or another member of the Planned Giving Ministry Team, whether or not you wish to be recognized by membership in the Arbor Fellowship.

Your Planned Giving Ministry Team:

Stuart Crampton
Phil McKnight

Bob McGill
Polly Macpherson

Peter Elvin
Jid Sprague

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS, APRIL 1

Youth Minister Jacki Petrino visited for an update and dialogue about children's ministry. Upwards of 40 children are now taking part, with twice-monthly Worship Outside the Box averaging an intergenerational 35-40. This service helps pave the way for children and families to step into the 10:00 a.m. eucharist.

Vestry members serving on the Facilities Committee reported on the need for a Chapter 34 Code Review before structural repairs can be resumed in the lower room. Vestry authorized the Committee to contract with an architect for such services, not to exceed \$2,400.

To arrange for more comprehensive professional management of rectory rental, Vestry approved a request for proposals to be sent to three interested parties.

The Rector gave an overview of factors to be considered as we turn to further trimming of our 2009 operating budget, and as we look ahead to 2010 and 2011.

He also reported on a recent meeting of Berkshire Episcopal clergy with The Rev. Canon Sarah Shofstall from Diocesan House, sharing news that the vestries of St. John's in North Adams and of St. Mark's in Adams have agreed to find joint solutions to their fiscal and staffing needs and, in time, their physical plants. Rising from this meeting will be another on May 16th for Berkshire rectors and wardens, to discuss regional matters. In response to Vestry members' desire to be supportive of our sister congregations, the clearest answer so far is to keep them in our praying.

Charles Bonenti reported on completed heating and electrical audits; follow-up plans are underway to obtain cost estimates for recommended remedies.



SCHOOL DAYS IN KHARTOUM AND OTHER NEWS

A telephoned report from “our” school advises that one teacher is helping 6 girls finish high school; the government mandate to take a required exam in their home district presents a challenge. Three teachers work with 56 elementary school youngsters, and 2 teachers with 30 part-time preschoolers. Many stayed at home during the pro-Bashir demonstrations earlier this spring, but everyone is OK. The choir continues successfully. Clement remains director but teaching only part time as he also teaches English at another program. Roof repairs have been completed, and the next capital project will be to replace some of the chairs which are deteriorating due to heavy use.

The successful “Bridge to Sudan” fundraiser will be repeated on September 22nd. We are grateful to Carl and Marilyn Faulkner for donating space at the Williams Inn.

We had productive conversations with Amber Chand about selling our soup mix along with her small Darfur baskets. We agreed on the importance of telling the southern Sudan IDP story as well as that of Darfur. She is open to initiatives such as selling the soup in hand-embroidered bags from “our” camp if we could work out production and transportation issues. Amber works with NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) who often can get the necessary export licenses. We plan to introduce the soup/gift basket combination in the Amber Chand on-line collection at a fall “Peace and Prosperity Gathering.”

The premise of a new book, *Dead Aid* by Zambian-born Dambisa Moyo, merits pondering. The former head of economic research and strategy for sub-Saharan Africa at Goldman Sachs, who previously worked for the World Bank in Washington D.C., she confronts the myth that billions of aid dollars sent from wealthy countries to developing African nations reduced poverty and increased economic growth. Moyo shows how overreliance on aid trapped some nations in a vicious circle of dependency, corruption, and further poverty.

Our friend and mentor Eric Reeves emailed that he had a “major transplant procedure half a year ago to address highly refractory leukemia; it will be another half year before I really know whether it has been a success. Good for you all for sticking with the daunting challenge of an issue/country.” Please keep him in your prayers, along with all who are displaced in the world, and, as in Darfur, largely out of reach of aid agencies.

Elizabeth Williams and Josie Eusden
Co-Chairs, Sudan Relief Task Force

WORKSHOP ON WRITING THE SACRED

On Tuesday, May 5th, at 7 p.m., Ray McGinnis will teach a workshop on Writing the Sacred, co-sponsored by Inkberry, the Williams College Chaplains’ Office, and the First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ, in Williamstown, MA. The workshop will be held in the Church library at 906 Main Street (Rt. 2).

The workshop builds on journal writing, poetry and spiritual themes. Participants are invited to explore the thin spaces where creative writing and spirituality meet by writing their own new Psalms, or spiritual poems.

Ray McGinnis has taught over 8000 people how to write prayers, poetry, and autobiographies, all the while guiding them to bring their whole heart, mind and spirit to the process. He provides a safe, nurturing space for those who maintain a regular writing practice and for those who have never put pen to paper.

His book *Writing the Sacred* is in its second printing. Signed copies will be available at the workshop for \$20, cash or check. For more information about Ray's work visit www.writetothetheheart.com.

Cost \$15 for adults, \$13.50 for Inkberry members, free for Williams College students. Ask about student rates for non-Williams students.

Contact Inkberry at 413-664-0775 or www.inkberry.org to register.

ANTI-MALARIA PARTNERSHIPS

Malaria Day summit honors work of religious organizations
By Mary Frances Schjonberg

[Episcopal News Service] Episcopalians and Anglicans have formed vital partnerships with governments and other faith-based organizations to begin to control and eradicate malaria at the One World Against Malaria Summit heard April 24 in Washington, D.C.

The summit, held at the home of the National Geographic Society the day before World Malaria Day, included the announcement of new commitments from faith-based organizations, including NetsforLife, a partnership founded by Episcopal Relief & Development, which pledged to mobilize more than 30,000 volunteers and distribute up to seven million mosquito nets in 17 sub-Saharan Africa over the next five years. This second phase of the partnership's efforts will be the largest distribution of nets yet by NetsforLife. In its first three years, the program distributed more than one million nets.

"We have helped the communities through our church and other faith-based organizations to make the fight against malaria a priority," Diocese of Northern Zambia Bishop Albert Chama told the summit. For the full story, go to: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/79901_107087_ENG_HTM.htm

BIRTHDAYS

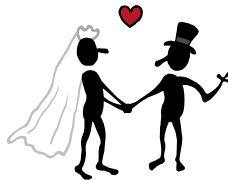
- 1 Gordon McWilliams, Joe Dewey, Liz McManus
- 2 Penny Spencer
- 4 Justina Perry, Cole Kuster, Max Menkel
- 5 Michelle Ridgeway



- 6 Isaac Abodunrin '11, Kelsey Sunn
- 7 Lee Manning, John Denaro, James Allison '11
- 8 Tracy Skidmore, Anne Reed
- 9 Margot Menkel
- 10 Ava Howard
- 11 Sally White, Jennifer Bayliss
- 12 Barbara Halligan
- 13 Francis Ogert, Katie Yosua '11, Anthony Petrino
- 15 Shaina Manning, Dawn Daniels, Elizabeth Strano
Jessica Sunn
- 16 Alfred (Ted) Taylor
- 17 Matthew LeSage, Maribeth Conroy, Lucius Park
- 18 Judy (Fissel) Skeels, Kevin Hamel
- 19 Becky Haley, Peter Glover, Steve Birrell
- 21 Hugh Glover, Susan Briggs, Taylor Stevens '11
- 24 Bob Burns
- 25 Steve Geislinger
- 26 Rachel Chenail, Edward Pelz
- 28 Susan Matsui
- 29 Joan Soper
- 30 Kathleen Birrell, George Kennedy, Eleanor Myers
- 31 Tamara Adkins, Julie Hart, Amy Mendes

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Richard & Marge Daniels
- 4 Fred & Gay Scarborough
- 20 James Bergin & Debbie Monahan
- 22 Charles Bonenti & Stephanie Johnson



FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH:

(or memorial service)

- 1 James S. Drummond
- 7 Edward J. Messina, Kathy Park's brother



FROM THE PARISH CALENDAR

This month:

- Gospel concert, p. 1*
- Compline, p. 1*
- Family Sunday, p. 2*
- UTO Sunday, p. 2*
- Bishop's visitation, p. 2*
- Men's breakfast meeting, p. 2*
- Workshop: Writing the Sacred, p. 4*

ONGOING:

Tuesdays

- 9:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist, upper room
- 9:30 a.m., Early Intervention Playgroup, sunroom
- 2:30 p.m., Evening Prayer, Sweetbrook
(1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month only)
- 7:30 p.m., AA, lower room

Wednesdays

- 9:30 a.m. Early Intervention Playgroup, sunroom

Thursdays

- 1:00 p.m., Affin-KNIT-ty Group, library
- 7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal, upper room
- 7:30 p.m., AA, library

Fridays

- Noon, AA, library
- 12:15 p.m., Bible Study, room 3

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Tuesday, May 12th, 11:45 a.m., Staff meeting, library

Wednesday, May 13th,

10:30 a.m., Williamstown Commons Holy Eucharist

7:00 p.m., VESTRY, library

Thursday, May 14th

6:30 p.m., National Alliance for the
Mentally Ill (NAMI) support group, Room 3

Sunday, May 17th

11:30 a.m., Home Delivered Meals

12:30 p.m., Friendship Knot Quilters,
lower room

Wednesday, May 27th

2:30 p.m., Sweetbrook Holy Eucharist