

Messenger



February 2009

Vol. 24 No.1

The Art of the Coffee Hour

"The church coffee hour is not the afterthought of the worship service at all. Instead, it is its reality test.

"At the coffee hour, we either extend the hospitality we proclaim or we withhold it. Many people judge a congregation by its coffee-hour hospitality – especially newcomers. They can tell by the feel in the room whether they are welcome or not... [Ask] someone who doesn't come back after a first, brave visit (all first visits anywhere are brave) and you will discover that no one spoke to them during coffee hour...

"Many of us don't like coffee hour. We think it is all small talk or cocktail party gab. It is only that we if we ourselves keep it that way. The conversation and its depth are up to use, not "them," whoever "they" are. It is we who can make the conversation sparkle.

"It is not just newcomers who need to be welcomed at coffee hour. Old timers do also. [So] circulate. Move. Make it a point to speak to 10 people. Really speak to them. Remember something about them. Isn't this the anniversary of John's death. How long did your big meeting go this week? How is your mother doing?...

"The goal of coffee hour is to embody the welcome Jesus gives us to his realm. [It is] our weekly chance to demonstrate the love of God incarnate to one another, and to all who walk through our doors."

"The Welcoming Committee thanks Donna Schaper for this material; originally appearing in the Circuit Rider Newsletter, Jan./Dec. 2008-09"

State of the Parish

2009

There is an ancient monastic story which I want to share with you today.

The story is of a monastery which was so prominent and powerful that all of society looked to it for guidance. The teachings of the monastery were so true, and so alluring that everyone was drawn to them. The teachings informed people's lives and gave people meaning and purpose. But over time, the power and prestige of the monastery became supreme, and people began to resent the monastery. The monastery built beautiful buildings and adorned them with riches. People who disagreed with the monastery were shunned and demeaned. Those who were part of the monastery and those who followed its teachings were imbued with status and great power. Those who were different were named as outcasts, and were considered as outside the community.

Social Events and Special Receptions Meeting

Join us Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. as we continue the planning of our upcoming parish social events! We will meet in at the church, upstairs in the youth room. Creative ideas encouraged but not required, and no experience necessary! Beverages and snacks will be served. We hope to see you there and of course we'd love for everyone to bring a friend – the more, the merrier!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Make sure to sign up for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner which will be held on Feb. 24 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the church. Watch for more information in the weekly bulletins.

Elected at the Annual Parish Meeting

Elected to three-year terms on Vestry: Tom Barnard, Patti Gruber, Scott Moe and Dan Noel

Elected to fill the one-year unexpired term on Vestry: Linda Meyer

Elected for three-year terms as delegates to Synod: Sara Burrus, Randy Kobel and Lynn Ryle. Alan Ryle is the first alternate.

Eventually, the members of the monastery came to be resented because they were rich and powerful and because they looked down on those who differed from them and from their teachings. The people turned against the monastery and the monastery fell into ruin and the number of monks steadily declined until there were only a few monks left.

The few remaining monks, who were old and angry, began to prepare for the end of the monastery.

One day, the Abbot of the monastery had a dream. He dreamt that one of the monks of the monastery was the New Messiah who would bring compassion and love to the monastery, and the people would return. The Abbot shared this dream with his fellow monks. Each monk,

continued...

believing that one of the other monks must be the New Messiah, began to treat the other monks with great love and respect. It was not long before the monastery was transformed from a place of fear, anger and despair into a place of love and compassion. Each monk treated his fellow monk as he would treat Jesus.

Word spread, that the monastery was a place of patience, kindness, compassion and unconditional love. The people returned because the monastery was no longer a place of great wealth, power, prestige and judgment, but was a place of God's unconditional love. The Abbot had another dream, and in this dream the Angel said, "Christ is in each of you. You are all the New Messiah. This is what you had to learn if the people were to return."

* * * * *

This year has been a journey for this parish in "Knowing Christ." We are on a quest to know Christ Jesus not only in ourselves, but in each other.

Someone has said that, "The true measure of any society, any organization is to be found in the way in which that organization ministers to its very young, its very old, and those most at risk." By any measure, this has been a year at Emmanuel Parish of growth in all of these areas.

By mere human standards, the parish begins this year 2009 in good shape. You have shown stability in church attendance, in membership, and have ended the year with a modest budget surplus. Gifts made by will and estate increased your parish endowment by \$200,000 in 2008. And at a time when other main line churches in downtown have suffered severe financial set backs – one church ending the year over \$100,000 in debt – you have been able to underwrite the mission and ministry of this parish in an exemplary fashion. Your buildings and grounds are in excellent shape. Your Wardens and Vestry continue to grow in leadership and organizational skills, as do I. You begin the year with a challenging budget and projected deficit. But with careful stewardship on the part of your finance committee, Wardens and Vestry; with commitment from each of you to give a little extra when possible, I am confident that this challenge can and will be met.

These accomplishments are a testimony to the faith and commitment of each of you. Each of you is owed a debt of gratitude for all that you have given in ministry to Christ through this parish church. But none have done more than have your Wardens. Rarely has any parish been so blessed in challenging times with such gifted leadership. I wish to acknowledge and thank Rector's Warden, Roger Burrus, and Parish Warden, Terri Kobel, for their untiring efforts on your behalf. I thank them personally for their support, their prayer, and their Godly friendship. I am pleased to announce that Roger has agreed to continue on as Rector's Warden in 2009. Because her term on the Vestry is expiring, this is Terri's last annual meeting as Parish Warden – an office she has served nobly and well these last two years. I would like to take a personal moment to thank Terri publically for her ministry. We, each of us, have persons throughout our life who are so obviously a gift of God's grace that it must be acknowledged. I want to say to all of you that Terri has been such a person in my life. I could not begin to list all that I have learned from her. Let me just mention administrative, leadership, and organizational skills which she has freely shared with me. It was my pleasure to present Terri with a commemorative plaque at the Parish Dinner Dance in honor of her service.

The very human measures of parish status just mentioned are important to consider if the parish is to survive. They are not, however, the true measure of where this parish is as you begin the Year of Our Lord 2009.

The true measure of the parish is to be found in the way in which you have reached out to the very young, the very old and the most vulnerable in 2008. In all of these areas, your stewardship of God's Grace given to you has been excellent, and I commend you for it.

It is always a wonderful and moving experience to baptize new persons into Life in Christ. This year has been no exception. Let me say that I have been particularly impressed by the seriousness with which the parents and godparents approached their responsibility in supporting their children in this Sacrament this year. I have learned from these parents and godparents and only pray that pre-baptismal training will be even better in the future because of what I have learned from these persons. It gives me great hope for the future.

Let me also mention The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program under the leadership of Sara Burrus, Linda Meyer and Chris Russell which has brought new excitement, energy and vitality to your Sunday School program. This will only increase as additional atria or teaching levels are added to this program in the coming years. It is significant that your Sunday School program now has better than twice the attendance of any other main line church in downtown Champaign, as does your Youth Group. The Christmas Pageant this year was very well organized, and one of the best attended in years. I commend Leila Ramagopal for her excellent leadership of the pageant. We are all, I think, inspired by the voices of our young children singing Christian songs between Masses on Sundays. I want to thank Julie Gunn and Sonia Warfel for their leadership of children's music on Sundays. The Children's Chapel program continues to grow in teaching our littlest Episcopalians the joy and meaning of worshiping our Loving God – albeit in a bit unruly manner at times. Your Youth Group is thriving. I commend Deacon Hopkins and Youth Mentors, Nicole Gruber and Bryan Dobrik, for their excellent ministry. Beginning this year, your Youth Mentors are now paid staff, which will only strengthen and build what is already a strong program for parish youth. I only wish you could have been at the Youth Group Christmas Party and seen the excitement, the fun, and the love this Youth Group shows each other and experiences together. They Know Christ in their midst. Okay, they are messy and we don't want to mention the melted chocolate in baby diapers game, but that's enough about that. Your acolytes continue to serve (and faint) at the parish altar at worship services. Under the leadership of Larry Bouton and Matt Hopkins, this corps of young people learn not only how to serve at God's altar, but the why and the meaning of what they do in service to God and all of you. They are a joy to minister with – except when they are fainting. Your parish education task force is finalizing a core knowledge and values outline of what you hope each child will leave this parish with upon graduation from high school. This is a "tool box" of Christian knowledge and values which you hope your children will have at their disposal for use in adult life.

2008 was a tough year as we saw the final illness, decline, death and burial of several much beloved parish members. This is hard stuff, and many, including and especially your parish staff, still grieve the loss of these much loved friends. Yet painful as these losses are, we take comfort in the fact that without exception, every parishioner who died in the last year received the Sacraments and prayers of the church within 24 hours prior to their death. When Deacon Hopkins and I are

there with them – providing the Sacraments, reading Holy Scripture, and praying the prayers of the Church – you are there as well, for you have underwritten this ministry and we know that you join us in prayer and concern. This is your final gift to those who have sustained this parish through the years and provided a parish base from which you can now minister to them, to the children, and to those most vulnerable. You have also provided the ministers, and the means to reach out to your parish elderly who may need a little extra help as their faculties diminish. Your parish pastoral care team, parish nurses, and many volunteers are at the ready to assist those parishioners in need when the need arises and when help is welcomed. Truly Christ walks these streets in your ministry to each other and to those beyond these parish lives.

Just a few days ago, an obituary appeared in the News-Gazette for Eugene Hart. It was a short obituary and there was nothing in it which would have made you take notice of it. But your parish staff made note of it. Eugene, or “Cowboy” as we knew him because he always wore cowboy boots and a cowboy hat, froze to death under an apartment stairway. He was a person with severe mental disabilities which rendered him incapable of coherent speech and unreceptive to offers of medical and social help. But he was responsive to your ministry of pastoral care. Every day, for the last ten and more years, Cowboy came by the Parish Office and received a sack lunch. He would babble a few words, always with a smile. He would always genuflect or bow to us and gratefully receive one of the lunches that you pack. He would touch our hand – perhaps his only human and friendly touch of the day. And then he would be on his way. I think Eugene – Cowboy – Hart knew Christ at the door of this parish because of you. And that may have been the one bright spot in his life. We said Mass at the parish altar for the repose of his soul. At the end of his earthly life, this parish continued to care for him prayerfully. Cowboy is representative of dozens, perhaps hundreds, of persons you minister to on our city streets. These are some of our city’s most vulnerable. “When did you see me hungry or naked and feed me?” asked Jesus. We have seen and known Christ Jesus in these persons, and they have known Christ Jesus in the ministry you provide at the parish door.

Others have also known Christ in you, and you in them this year. Persons living miles and continents away now have ducks, and chickens and cows and sheep and rabbits because of you. They Know Christ because of your generosity in supporting the Heifer Project this past Lent and raising over \$ 8,000 for this ministry. People a world away from Champaign-Urbana eat, and have homes and better lives because of you.

Persons in these cities continued to have jobs because they received money at your parish door to pay for their gasoline to get to and from work. Persons at the lowest end of the economic scale received groceries, utility payments, rent assistance, medical payments and scholarships to stay in school at your parish door. All told, you donated almost \$ 25,000 above and beyond the parish budget to assist those in need. You Know Christ, and you Make Christ Known through this generosity.

But let me say just a bit more about this. Your Wardens and Vestry have voted to designate your parish Lenten giving to matching a \$10,000 generous gift given by a parishioner in support of your newly hired Youth Group Mentors. I commend this donor for the generosity even as I challenge you to match this gift with your Lenten self-denial giving. I am confident that you will more than match this gift which will be put into the Parish Endowment for support of youth ministry. You have shown in the past, that you are more than up to a financial challenge. Next Advent,

you will again be challenged to support the Heifer Project with more gifts of animals that keep on giving. You Know Christ, and you Make Christ Known through your generosity.

I must, however, say just a word about annual parish giving and estate planning. Through the years, you have always risen to the occasion and met any goal your Wardens and Vestry have set for outreach and special giving. Yet annual parish giving through your stewardship campaign has leveled off in recent years. There seems to be a disconnect between your understanding of giving to those in need and your giving to the parish which allows you, In the Name of Christ, to minister to those in need. Let me say in the clearest possible terms: If there is no parish, there is no ministry. Yes, it takes money to pay light, fuel and water bills. It takes money to pay staff salaries. It takes money to fund the diocese. It takes money for building upkeep, office supplies, Sunday School curriculum and even the chocolate and diapers for silly Youth Group games. Without your pledge dollars, we cannot continue ministry WITHIN the parish – all that we do for children and all that we do for the elderly. Without your pledge dollars, we can do no ministry to those in need outside the parish. There is no doubt that these are challenging financial times. There is also no doubt that the best money you spend is spent on Knowing Christ within these parish walls and Making Christ Known beyond these parish walls. Please consider giving beyond your pledge to support this ministry this year. Please give, if possible, to the parish annual budget beyond your pledged amount. And please consider naming this parish in your Will to support the ministry of this parish for generations to come.

Someone has said, that; “The true measure of any organization is how that organization ministers to the very young, the very old, and those most at risk.” It is clear from my remarks that by this true measure of this organization, this parish, this part of the Body of Christ, you are a very healthy parish indeed. Yet one question, at least, remains unanswered: “what about those in the middle.”

What about me? What about my needs? I am neither very young, nor very old, nor particularly at risk. So what does the parish have to offer me?

If you have found yourself asking this question during this address (and it is a fair question) perhaps I have an answer for you.

Your Wardens and I meet monthly to pray about, discuss and consider parish life. It is our conclusion that we “bit off more than we could chew” in 2008. Our parish goal was to come to Know Christ in 2008 and consider Making Christ Known in 2009 and beyond. We think that we are a bit ahead of the curve.

It is our belief that your Wardens and Vestry have put into place all of the structures which will assist you in coming to Know Christ more deeply. Our belief and our challenge is for you, as individuals, to put into use and use these structures to come to a deeper Knowing of Christ in 2009, beginning with the Lenten Series “Knowing Christ Through Worship” which will begin in a few weeks. Your Wardens and Vestry have now provided you the means for coming to Know Christ More deeply. We, your Rector and Wardens, now challenge you to do so in 2009. This is what is “in it for me”. You are not the youngest, or the most elderly, or those at risk. You are persons in other stages of life who seek meaning and purpose in your life. We are offering you the opportunity to find a meaning and purpose which is eternal. And that meaning and purpose, we believe, can only come from Knowing Christ Jesus. Nothing in your

life should and will be as important as Knowing Christ Jesus as your Savior and following Him as your Lord.

My colleague in ministry and friend, Kip Ashmore, (the Rector of Trinity Church, Jacksonville) gave me what was perhaps my greatest gift of the last year. He reintroduced me to the writings of Father Martin Thornton, one of the great Anglican spiritual writers and theologians of the 20th Century. Father Thornton writes always of "Christian discipline" from which we get the word "disciple." We all understand the importance of discipline in secular life. Whether you are a musician, a scholar, an athlete, or a tradesman; you understand that you must be disciplined in your endeavor if you are to master (or be mastered by) your endeavor. Musicians practice, scholars study and read, athletes work out, tradesmen practice their trade. The goal (to paraphrase Saint Paul) is to attain the victory of your endeavor. The discipline makes you a disciple of your endeavor.

So what is the discipline of a Christian which makes us Disciples of Christ Jesus? It is prayer, it is Scripture study, it is regular participation in the Sacraments of the church, it is self denial, it is quiet times away with the Lord to hear what he has to say to you. These disciplines are the way in which we come to Know Christ Jesus as Savior and follow Him as Lord.

If 2008 has been a year of setting your parish life in order to Know Christ, we challenge you to see 2009 as a year to put your own personal house in order to Know Christ Jesus as your Savior and follow Him as your Lord.

Martin Thornton uses a homey (and he admits a somewhat flawed) analogy. The Mass is the heart of Christ. The Daily Offices (Morning and Evening Prayer) are the veins of the church. The prayers of the people of the church are the church's life blood. All of which empowers the people of God – YOU – to be the Body of Christ in mission and ministry in the world.

We, your Wardens and Rector, challenge you to put yourselves intentionally in touch with the heart, the veins, and the Blood of Christ this year in order that you may be more and more the Body of Christ in mission and ministry in the world. Let there be no mistake, this will take discipline on your part if you are to be Disciples of Christ Jesus. To this end, we challenge you:

1. To attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Days and on week days as allowed.
2. To attend or read Morning or Evening Prayer (or Compline) either privately or at the church every day.
3. To spend time each day in private prayer and Scripture study, and at a minimum to pray before every meal.
4. To practice self denial and to give extra for the support of the mission of the church.
5. To set aside some time in the coming year (at least the Lenten study series) when you will intentionally come closer to Christ.

6. To commit to participate in some act of mercy in the Name of Christ Jesus such as sacking lunches, making a food delivery, working on a parish work day, participating in a Habitat for Humanity work day or some other such work.

This will require discipline of each of you. And like all acts of discipline, this will require commitment and work. This is not about your parish. This is about YOU. This is how we become spiritually healthy. This is how we come to truly KNOW CHRIST.

You are such a good group of people, I know that. My prayer and my dream for you is that you will commit to this program of discipline in order that you as a parish may truly be Disciples of Christ in 2009 and in all of the years to come.

Let me close by saying that what I have challenged you to do I commit myself to. I commit 2009 to be a year in my life in which I come to Know Christ Jesus more truly as Savior and follow him more faithfully as Lord through discipline – through being a true Disciple. I will be praying that this will be your prayer and your goal as well.

The angel said in a dream that "one of you is the Messiah." Through discipline, it will be each of you who is the Christ. As you come to Know Christ in your own heart and soul, you will also come to Know and recognize Christ in each other and in those in need. Our goal is not just to Know Christ Jesus, but to be Christ Jesus in our hearts and souls and lives. And if we do this, they will come.

Let me close with the prayer of your Vestry. Let us pray:

O God, our Heavenly Father,
who in Your love for us does plan for us
a way far better than our own:

Grant us to desire Your Will above all things,
and desiring it, to seek it;
and in seeking it, to find it;
and finding it, to serve You faithfully
and to make You known to all others.

This we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord,
in the power of the ever life giving and guiding
Holy Spirit.

Amen.



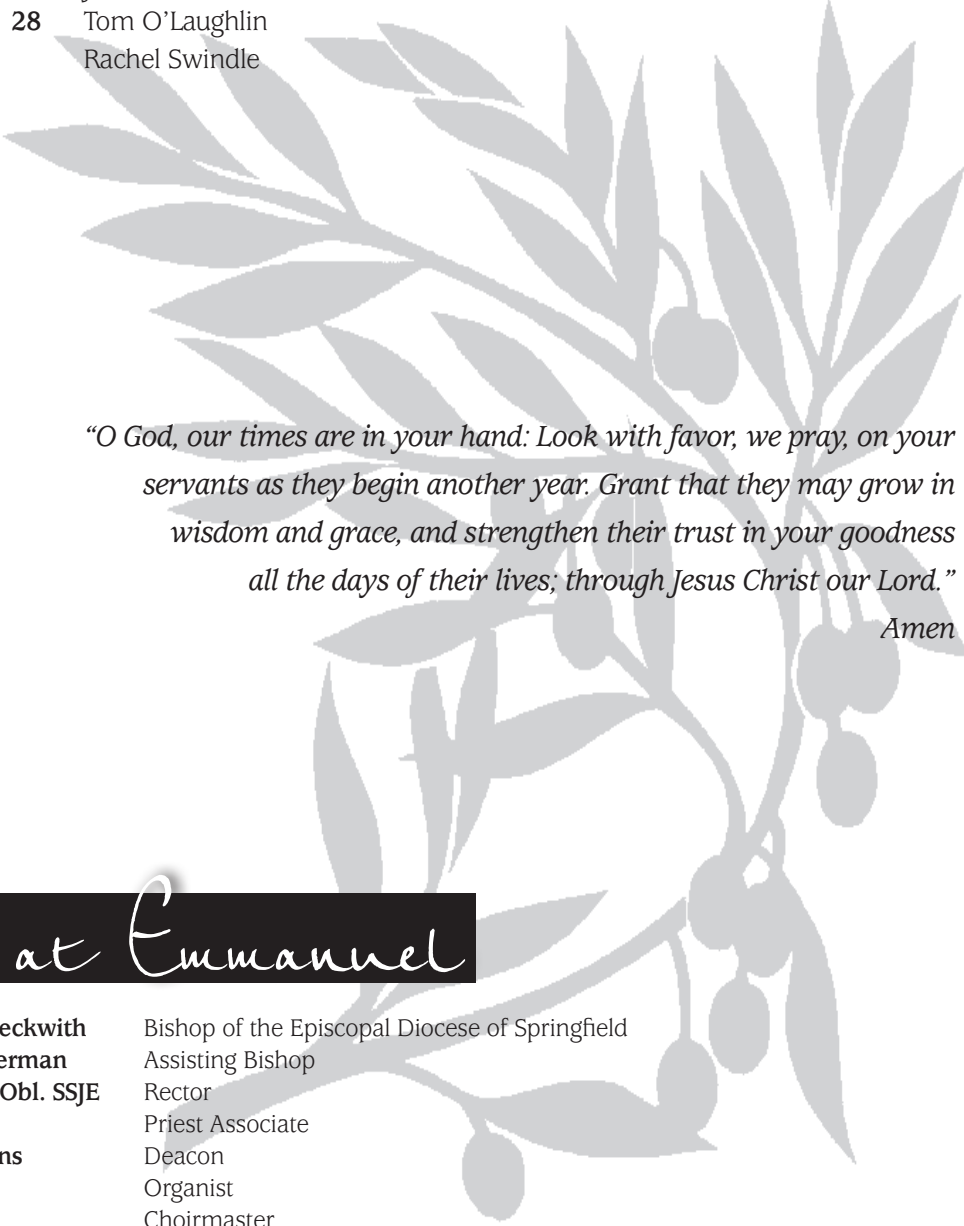
Milestones

February Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | Roberta Hoch | 25 | Anthony Collins |
| 2 | Mark Reynolds | | Markie Glassgow |
| | Merv Correll | 26 | Mike Hoch |
| 3 | Paul Weston | | Katie Wells |
| 5 | Kay Egbert-Jordan | 27 | Louise Audrieth |
| | B.A. Davis-Howe | | Julie Gunn |
| | Nathan Ryle | 28 | Tom O'Laughlin |
| | Josh Stanner | | Rachel Swindle |
| 7 | Daphne Griffin | | |
| 8 | Martha Leary | | |
| 9 | Sara Burrus | | |
| | Sam Cassel | | |
| 12 | Tish Stanner | | |
| 15 | Dorothy Bell | | |
| 16 | Jean Clarkson | | |
| | Jennifer Hurford | | |
| | Lorelie Yau | | |
| 18 | William Buerkett | | |
| | John Tabb | | |
| 20 | Abe Kocheril | | |
| 22 | Mike Hopkins | | |
| 23 | Bill Layton | | |

February Anniversaries

- | | |
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| 27 | Barbara & Peter Maggs |
| 29 | Anniversary of the Consecration of Peter H. Beckwith as the Tenth Bishop of Springfield (1992) |



“O God, our times are in your hand. Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Amen

The Staff at Emmanuel

The Right Reverend Peter H. Beckwith	Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield
The Right Reverend Keith Ackerman	Assisting Bishop
The Reverend Alan A. Herbst, Obl. SSJE	Rector
The Reverend Eugene Hall	Priest Associate
The Reverend Christine Hopkins	Deacon
Michael Fisher	Organist
Kevin Kelly	Choirmaster
Lori Dobrik	Parish Administrator

Wardens and Vestry

William Link, Treasurer	Roger Burrus	Lisa Kocheril*	Dean Olson
Lori Dobrik, Clerk	Fritz Danielson*	Brenda Koester*	Lois Rath
Roger Burrus, Rector's Warden	Brian Holding*	Kim McQueen	Craig Russell
Terri Kobel, Parish Warden	Terri Kobel*	Carol Jeanne Muster	Winton Solberg

*Retiring

Featured Outreach Program

Grassroots Alliance for Community Education - G.R.A.C.E. USA
170 Correas Street
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Some years ago this parish was instrumental in raising the funds to buy the land for the Good Hope Orphanage in Kenya. That orphanage is one component of the Grassroots Alliance for Community Education (G.R.A.C.E.). G.R.A.C.E. is a network of local groups in Kenya to support women and children living with AIDS. There are several aspects to the program—AIDS prevention information, a hospice for those dying of AIDS, the orphanage for children who have lost both parents to AIDS, college scholarships for those graduates from the orphanage, and a program to teach sustainable farming techniques with the goal of self-sufficiency. Funds are needed to support the ongoing needs of this program. Contact Natasha Martin at nlmartin@graceusa.org.

Upcoming Events

February

- 2/8 Bloodmobile at Emmanuel – 9:00 a.m. to Noon
Youth Group bowling at G.T. Western Bowl – Meet at church at 6 p.m.
- 2/10 Social Events/Receptions Meeting at church at 6:30 p.m.
- 2/12 Clergy at Clark-Lindsey Village – 10 a.m.
- 2/15 Youth Group – 6 to 8 p.m.
- 2/16-17 Parish Office Closed in observance of Presidents' Day
- 2/18 Messenger Deadline
- 2/19 St. Catherine's Guild Mass & Luncheon – 11 a.m.
- 2/24 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – 5:30 to 7 p.m.
- 2/25 Ash Wednesday – Masses at 7 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 7 p.m.

March

- 3/1 Sunday Evening Lenten Program
- 3/5 Mass at 11:30 a.m. followed by Bible Study/Brown Bag Lunch
- 3/8 Sunday Evening Lenten Program
- 3/12 Clergy at Clark-Lindsey Village – 10 a.m.
Mass at 11:30 a.m. followed by Bible Study/Brown Bag Lunch
- 3/15 Sunday Evening Lenten Program
- 3/16 Vestry – 7 p.m./ Egg Packing Day
- 3/17 Egg Pick-up Day
- 3/18 Messenger Deadline
- 3/19 Mass at 11:30 a.m. followed by Bible Study/Brown Bag Lunch
- 3/26 Mass at 11:30 a.m. followed by Bible Study/Brown Bag Lunch
- 3/29 Sunday Evening Lenten Program



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