

# Messenger

November 2009



Vol. 24

No. 11

## Spiritual Journey



### "Why Bother about God?"

That question was put to me by a professor when I was in college. The question continues to challenge me, but it was no part of my early years. I was brought up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. I attended church regularly with my family, and we viewed religion as important. Some of the doctrines I was taught in confirmation class were (I later discovered) medieval horror stories designed to make one behave in order to avoid an eternity in Hell. Despite its limitations, my religious nurture gave me a sense of loyalty to Christianity.

For a good twenty years, as a college student, an infantry officer in Germany during the war and in the Army of Occupation, a graduate student of American history, and a faculty member in various universities, I remained nominally a Lutheran and attended church quite regularly. While in college I became acquainted with the Episcopal Church, and during the war the chaplain in my battalion was an exemplary young Episcopal priest. While in graduate school I frequently attended the Memorial Church at Harvard (non-denominational); Christ Church, Episcopal, in Cambridge; and the Church of the Advent in Boston. A priest from Advent invited me to join the church, but I was not ready to take that step.

The question, why bother about God, continued to challenge me. Many of my peers had ceased to bother. I could not easily do that, but I had either to abandon religion or reconstruct my belief. The former was a live option. Much of the world I knew was the product of the Enlightenment agenda. The Radical Enlightenment beginning in the late seventeenth century had undermined the established structures of religious, political, social, and intellectual au-

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thority that had long commanded assent. The Enlightenment was a democratic, egalitarian, and secular movement that paved the way for modernity and the emancipation of man. It had little or no use for Trinitarian Christianity

The reconstruction of belief was another option for me. Beginning rapidly in the mid-nineteenth century, new knowledge about human nature, society, and the physical universe from archeology, anthropology, astronomy, biology, geology, history, philology, physics, psychology, sociology, and above all from the historical criticism of the Scriptures made it possible to read the Bible with new eyes. Becoming my own theologian, I was able to transcend the narrow, often literal interpretation of the Bible that had dominated American religious thought well into the late nineteenth century. Aided by this new learning, I did not abandon belief. I rethought such matters as the doctrine of biblical inspiration and teaching about angels and demons, prophecy, miracles, salvation, and Heaven and Hell.

I had never abandoned the institutional church, but now I had to decide which church was best for me. I admire Roman Catholic spirituality at its best, but could not submit to Rome. I admire much about Lutheranism, especially the Protestant principle. Over the years, however, I had found The Episcopal Church most attractive. I liked Anglican comprehensiveness, its blend of Scripture, tradition, and reason. I valued Anglican catholicity, and a church that emphasized liturgy was appealing. Nearing the age of forty, I was received into the Episcopal Church at St. Paul's-on-the-Hill in St. Paul, Minnesota. The Episcopal Church embraced the best of reformed religion and the catholic heritage when I joined it. It was vibrant then. Things have changed, and religious faith is fluid. Sometimes I still ask, why bother about God. But I have made a commitment. With Luther I can say, "Here I stand, I can do no other."

Winton U. Solberg, October 2009

# The Rector's Corner

Dear People of Emmanuel Memorial Church:

O.K., now I am going to tell you that I have finally gone round the bend...

I want to talk to you about cats. I live with two truly wonderful cats. Theo (actually Theophilus "the lover of God") is a wise old Maine Coon Cat. Percis (Perci for short) is a fat (Rubenesque) short-haired girl and is a wonder to behold.

My cats seem to have an innate sense of my moods. When I am angry or churlish they know to avoid me (although I would not nor have ever yelled or struck them). When I am in pain—physical, spiritual, or emotional—they come to me and cuddle up and comfort me. When I am in joy, they "meow" at me as a greeting. Perci "kneads" me with her soft padded paws. When I am praying the Daily Office or Meditating, they sit on my lap just to be with me. When I am sleeping, they lie down with me.

I know this may seem crazy to you, but I many times envision God as a cat.

When I am in a foul mood, God seems very far away. When I am in pain (physical, spiritual, or emotional) God seems very close. When I am in joy, God seems to rejoice with me. When I am praying or meditating, it is as though God is sitting on my lap.

O.K., I know that I am a middle aged man living with cats—and, perhaps I am crazy. But I like to think that the "theology of cats" tells me much about the heart of our loving God.

When my father died, my step-mother and I met with my father's minister. This minister is a large man who is loud, voluble, and laughs too much. He is also a good hearted soul. My mother and I just wanted to be quiet, to be listened to, and to be given the chance to express our thoughts and emotions and our wishes for my father's funeral. None of this was provided as this man talked and laughed on and on. I will say that he conducted my father's funeral with dignity for which I am very grateful.

It made me realize again the Holiness of silence, quiet, and listening. This is what we were seeking. This, I think, is what God provides us. This, I think, is the life of prayer. The older I get, the less I say in prayer. I don't pound God with my concerns and desires and wishes. I don't name people, and things, and concerns. (O.K., sometimes I do—especially when I know that one of you is hurting or in need, and I ask God to look after you.) Father Madden, my old spiritual director, used to say, "you get your cup of coffee, and you sit in a comfortable chair, and you watch

the rising sun and invite God to be with you." Persons who love each other have a language between them which is beyond words. You don't need to speak. You just have to, NEED, to BE with each other. And the intimate communication—that deep loving communication which is beyond words—is just there. If you want or need to speak, you also need to be listened to, and you also need to listen.

I was at a retreat some time ago, and the retreat leader said something which stuck with me. He said, "the most important gift you can give to your beloved is just to sit with them, or lie down and hold them. And to let them know that for the next however minutes, they can say whatever is in their hearts and minds. You don't need to respond. You just listen. No one really listens these days. What a loving gift to give to your beloved, if you provide a listening and non-judgmental presence to them. We all want to be heard—whatever is in our heart. How many relationships could be saved by just listening?!"

I think God listens to us whether we speak, or whether we are just thinking, or whether we are just being quiet, or especially when we are just trying to figure out what is going on in our heads—those times when we aren't even sure what it is we are searching for or what the answer is. People who love each other—and God loves us above all others—don't need words to be understood. Love is just there. It is a love in and of itself to comfort and console us. It is a Love which is provided by the one who loves us—and God loves us above all others. God is the ULTIMATE listener. We must also be listeners to what God has to say to us.

And so, in the early morning hours each day, I sit, (with my cats) and a cup of coffee in my study, and I invite God in. And I KNOW that God does come in to be with the cats and me. I think through the day past and the day to come. My only prayer is, "let me know how to be of service to others this day, in order to glorify You My God—and keep me stumbling in the right direction." I know that God hears, and He listens, and he guides me through the day.

God is there, and I am there, and the cats are there—and that is enough to get me through another day in God's Grace and Mercy.

With my love and prayers for each of you, I am,

Faithfully yours,



Father Alan, Obl. SSJE  
Rector

# Father Al Recommends...

## A Book for You to Read

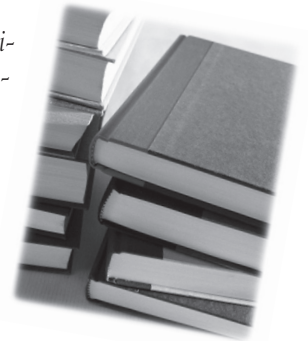
As an addendum to my Rector's Corner, I want to direct you to the book *Prayer and Personal Religion* which you will find in the parish Bookstall.

I did not know Bishop Coburn well, although I met him several times. He was for many years the President of the House of Deputies of the General Convention before he was elected as the Bishop of Massachusetts. He was, for many years, the "Episcopal Visitor" of the Cowley Fathers

of which I am a member. He was always a loving and wise and presence.

His little book, *Prayer and Personal Religion*, is a classic of Christian spirituality. I commend this book to you. In reading it, you will be drawn closer into the heart of our Loving God.

With my love and prayers,  
Father Alan, Obl. SSJE  
Rector



# Special Events

## Nominations For Elected Offices

A single slate of persons for elected offices will be prepared by the Nominating Committee, which may be supplemented by names submitted by parishioners. Parishioners may make suggestions to the Nominating Committee of persons to serve for various offices. Those parishioners who are interested in serving for either a three-year term on Vestry or a three-year term as a delegate to Synod must submit their name in writing. It must also be signed by two communicants in good standing and submitted to the Parish Office or a current Vestry member, preferably prior to the meeting of the Nominating Committee on November 16th. However, nominations may continue to be submitted through November 30th.

The single slate will be published in the January *Messenger*. Elected parish offices include:

- 4 persons for a three-year term on Vestry
- 2 persons for a three-year term as a Synod delegate

Nominations will be received from the floor on the day of the Annual Meeting, if and only if, the names of the potential nominees are presented to the Parish Office at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting to ensure that all persons are canonically eligible for election, i.e. Communicant in Good Standing, contributor of record, committed to the concept of the tithe, and evidence of willingness to serve. All such nominations must be in writing, signed by two communicants in good standing, and submitted to the Secretary of the Annual Meeting at the time of the nomination. In order to avoid a potentially embarrassing situation, please contact the Parish Office with the name of a nominee before you ask if the person is willing to serve. This will ensure that that person is eligible for nomination. Voting will be by secret ballot with each elector voting for the number of offices to be filled. The chair

of the meeting will announce the numerical vote beginning with the third ballot. A person will be declared elected when he/she has received a simple majority of votes cast. In the event of a tie vote, the chair will, in full view of the assembled Annual Meeting, choose between the two nominees by arbitrary means (flip of a coin), etc. These rules for parish elections shall remain in force until altered by a majority vote of the Vestry.

## Parish Update Scheduled for November 15

There will be a Parish Update meeting Sunday, Nov. 15th between services starting at 9:15 a.m. The agenda will include Emmanuel's Synod representatives reporting on the Diocesan Synod meeting which was October 23rd and 24th in Springfield, and progress and goals from Vestry SWEEP committees.

## Recognition of Rector's Ordination Anniversary

The Vestry wants to continue to recognize Emmanuel staff for long and faithful service. December 2nd of this year is Father Herbst's 30th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. He has requested that he receive no gifts, but would accept contributions to his discretionary fund, which benefits those in need in our communities. The Vestry believes that congratulatory wishes, cards, and letters are also appropriate.

We will also soon celebrate his 25th anniversary as Rector at Emmanuel. He was called to Emmanuel in November of 1985 and celebrated his first Mass with us in January of 1986. Plans to honor his 25th anniversary at Emmanuel will be announced next year.

# Being Servants of All

Pentecost 20 Proper 24 Year B  
Mark 10: 35-45

In 1968 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave a sermon based on this morning's gospel, entitled "The Drum Major Instinct". In that sermon Dr. King says that our first response might be to join with the other ten disciples in condemning James and John for their request of Jesus. But he suggests that we look more closely at ourselves before we do that. When we do, we will discover that we too have those same basic desires for recognition, and for importance. Dr. King said, "There is deep down within all of us an instinct. It's a kind of drum major instinct: a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade, a desire to be first. We all want to be important, to surpass others, to achieve distinction, to lead the parade. Alfred Adler, the great psychoanalyst, contends that this is the dominant impulse. This quest for recognition, this desire for attention, this desire for distinction is the basic drive of human life, this drum major instinct."

The sermon goes on to say that the drum major instinct can lead one to think that because he has some education, he's a little better than the one who doesn't have it. Or because she has some economic security, that she's a little better than the person who doesn't have it. And that is what gets us into trouble. We start to think I must be first; I must be supreme. And where does that put everybody else? Beneath us.

Dr. King spends some time developing his points but to summarize he says that Jesus doesn't necessarily condemn this drum major instinct but instead Jesus changes the priorities of how we are to be great and how we are to be first. Jesus tells us that everyone who wishes to be great must be servant of all.

What does that phrase, "to be servant of all", mean? How do we take that drum major instinct of being great that we all have, and put it into Jesus' priorities, Jesus definition of greatness. How do we become a servant of all?

Basically to me service means letting ourselves be touched by the lives of those near us. Service is a form of compassionate connection with others. It does not come from wanting to fix other's lives, to solve other's problems, or of even "helping" others. Because, sometimes when we help others what happens is that we see that person as someone weaker than we are, someone more needy. When we help we become more aware of our strengths because we are using them. Others become aware of our strength too and may feel diminished by it.

But we do not serve with our strength; we serve with our-

self. True service is not a relationship between an expert and a problem. It is a relationship between human beings, between actual people, who share with each other. Serving others has at its core compassion for others. It means that we see the person we are serving with the eyes of love, rather than with the eyes of pity. We are not better than they and they are not better than we.

To be a servant of all means we have compassion for all others, all others, regardless of how society might classify them. Being a servant of all means recognizing the holy that is in each of God's children. When we have experienced true service of all we know that it has been a sacred experience.

While I have been reflecting on this phrase I have thought of people who are examples of this, famous people, saints we may have read about or people we may call saints that we have known in our own lives. People who have demonstrated what it is to be a servant of all. Certainly there are many to choose from.

But instead I want to tell you about a fairly ordinary group of people, and something that they have done and will do again. For me this is a perfect example of being a servant of all. This is a story about Emmanuel's Youth Group.

A little background before the example is in order. The Youth Group has as its charge from the Vestry to form a Christian community in three particular ways: through having fun together, through doing outreach to the church and to the larger community, and through education. Early each fall the group meets to evaluate what activities have worked well in the past and to decide what activities they want to do in the year ahead. Part of the leaders' responsibility is to see that the activities are balanced to include fun, education and outreach. But in general the choice of specific activities belongs to the teens.

One of activities that fits under the category of outreach to the greater community is to visit the Swann Special Care Center. While the group has not always selected this as a choice for the year, they have gone several times in the past and plan to make a late October visit.

The Swann Center is a residential placement for about 150 younger people who have severe physical and mental disabilities. Most are in special wheelchairs; most have limited verbal skills. Some use a communication board and others communicate through their smiles, (or sometimes tears), squeals and clapping. When the group visits Swann, the Emmanuel teens will do various recreational activities with the residents. If the weather is good the activities generally include a walk around Kaufmann Lake, which

*continued on page 5*

continued from page 4

is near the center, and things like blowing bubbles, playing catch or other uncomplicated games. If the weather prevents outside play the Emmanuel teens will read books to the resident teens.

Because they do not get outside too often, sunscreen is applied prior to going out. Emmanuel teens assist the center personnel with this. These kids are so gentle, so patient, calling each person by name. Instinctively they squat down so that they are at the other person's eye level and they make contact with that person, talking to them as they gently help put the lotion on their face and hands. This personal contact continues as they go outside.

I have watched as each of them is moved when they receive a smile or an excited arm waving or other communication from the person who is in the chair. There is no sense of being better than they. There is no eye rolling or indication that they are bored and want this to be over. There is no pretense at all. It is a time of seeing life in a very different way than on a regular school day and they are obviously moved by it and totally involved in it. They are filled with compassion, not pity. They gain as much as they give. It is in all honesty, a holy time, a time of connec-

tion at a very basic level. I am in awe by how Emmanuel's teenagers demonstrate what Jesus means in saying we must be servants of all.

When the activities are over, after putting things away and washing hands the group pauses for just a moment to pray, giving thanks for those who work at the Swann Center on a daily basis and asking God's blessing on those with whom they have interacted. The drive back to Emmanuel is usually a quiet one as all reflect on what has happened but by the time we enter the parking lot they are back to chattering about the week ahead. What great kids these are! I can think of no better example of what Jesus means in saying that whoever wishes to be great, must be servant of all.

As Dr. King said, "Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don't have to be a certain age to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love. Yes, and each of us can be that servant." May it be so.

Deacon Christine Hopkins

## Featured Outreach

### Restoration Urban Ministries

Restoration Urban Ministries provides a food pantry and clothing center, religious services, youth programs, drug and alcohol support groups and a 74-unit transitional housing program. It also offers a couples group. The Wraparound project provides services to families of children who are in custody of DCFS or who are at risk of being placed. Services include advocacy, referral and assistance, transportation and training. You may call the

accompanying number if you are interested in learning how you might be involved in this ministry.

Restoration Urban Ministries  
P.O. Box 3277  
1213 Parkland Court  
Champaign, IL 61826-3277  
217) 355-2662  
[www.restorationurbanministries.com](http://www.restorationurbanministries.com)

## Social Committee Needs Help

Your Emmanuel Social Events Committee needs YOU!

- What:** Christmas Eve Reception helpers for putting out food, making punch & clean-up
- When:** Christmas Eve after the midnight service
- Why:** It's a great way to meet and greet your fellow parishioners!  
It's EASY, FUN and there is NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY— a detailed checklist will be provided.  
Without your help, we can't continue our wonderful tradition of a festive Christmas Eve reception.

For questions or to volunteer, please contact Lynn Ryle at [LERyle@Ryle.com](mailto:LERyle@Ryle.com) OR Kathy Aquino at [KHAquino@aol.com](mailto:KHAquino@aol.com) OR the Church Office at 352-9827. We appreciate all that you do!



# November Gatherings

## Youth Group

During the month of November the Youth Group will meet from 6:00–8:00 on the 1st, 8th, 22nd, and 29th. Details of the meeting plans will be in the weekly announcements. Also during November, the group will raise money to support their annual December toy project. Members will sell donuts and bagels after both church services on November 15 to support this outreach ministry. The money raised will be used to purchase new toys to make a happier Christmas for children who are in need. We are grateful in the parish's generous support of this project, which last year amounted to almost \$1000!

## November Adult Forum

Adult Forum meets from 9:15–10:00 in the adult education room most Sunday. For the first semester, we are primarily using the book *Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church*. Please join us as your schedule allows.

- Nov. 1: *Your Faith, Your Life*, Chapter 4: Church History
- Nov. 8: *Your Faith, Your Life*, Chapter 5: Faith—Whom Do We Trust?
- Nov. 15: Parish Update Meeting
- Nov. 22: *Your Faith, Your Life*, Chapter 6: Navigating the Church
- Nov. 29: Dr Bart Ehrman, DVD about New Testament topic

# Library Acquisitions

Recently acquired and cataloged books are now available in the Keck Library. The list was submitted by the Keck Library Committee on October 21, 2009. Committee members include Barbara Maggs, Chair; Toni Boynton, Lisa Cerezo, Tom Kilton, and Carol Jeanne Muster

## Bible

*The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal /Deuterocanonical Books*. New Revised Standard Version. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989 2476 B (Bible)

*The Books Called Apocrypha according to the Authorized Version*. London: Oxford University Press, [no date] 2474 B (Bible)

Mitchell, Stephen. *Genesis: A New Translation of the Classic Biblical Stories*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996. 2475 B (Bible)

*The Psalms: A New Translation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1979. 2473 B (Bible)

## Spirituality

Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost for His Highest: Selections for the Year*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1963. 2467 S (Spirituality)

Nouwen, Henri J. M., *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*. New York: Doubleday, 1996 2469 S (Spirituality)

Portaro, Sam. *Conflict and a Christian Life*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 2003 2468 S (Spirituality)

## Theology

Bokenkotter, Thomas. *Essential Catholicism: Dynamics of Faith and Belief*. Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1986. 2471 T (Theology)

Foster, Richard J. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1998. 2472 T (Theology)

Groothuis, Douglas. *Searching for the Real Jesus in an Age of Controversy*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996 2470 T (Theology)

# Blanket Our Troops with Love

Dear Members of Emmanuel Memorial Church:

There was an article in a recent edition of the New York Times with text and photos describing the experiences of our military personnel in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is truly horrific. It breaks your heart to think that this country's sons and daughters are living and fighting in these conditions. Yet it makes your heart proud to know that these fellow citizens are willingly putting their lives on the line to defend our nation.

As we approach the celebration of Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year, I implore you to remember these brave men and women in your prayers. They are far from home and in harms way.

As a tangible expression of your prayers for them, please consider sending cards and letters or small gift packages to them. I am told that they especially enjoy short notes about life back here in the U.S. and photos of life back here. Perhaps just a Larry Kanfer postcard available at most stores, or a photo of your family. I am also told that

a call has gone out for "care blankets" for those who have been wounded. These blankets are to be 45" x 45" and made of easily laundered materials. They will be sent to those who are recovering from traumatic injuries as "lap blankets". You can drop them by the parish office, and we will send them off. You may want to attach an encouraging note to the lap blanket you create, and the assurance of your prayers. This is another kind of "prayer shawl" ministry.

Addresses where you can send letters and gift packages (along with a suggested list of gift items) is on the parish web site. We can also give you these web sites if you want to stop by the Parish Office.

Thank you for your consideration and for your prayers for these brave women and men.

Faithfully,  
Father Alan, Obl. SSJE  
Rector

## Milestones

### November Birthdays

11/1	Charles Tabb Katie Yau	11/17	Dylan Cadwallader
11/6	Mary Lou Watson Amy Roberts	11/18	Bob McQueen
11/7	Allie Lindemann Kyle Moe Sofia Haken	11/20	Tom Barnard Rachel Danielson
11/9	Hediye Scheeler Sonia Warfel	11/21	Nicholas Noel
11/11	Fr. Alan Herbst	11/23	Debra Medlyn
11/12	Nicolas Haken Dakota DuVall	11/25	Ellen Moe
11/15	Ed Rath	11/26	Evis Brown Nathan Gunn Harriet White
11/16	Kathy Aquino Evan Scheeler	11/27	David Steigmann
		11/28	Grace Layton
		11/30	Jean Murphy Margaret Weaver

### November Anniversaries

11/9	Scott & Stephanie Ryle
11/10	Andy & Sonia Warfel
11/11	Vernon & Mary Moore
11/13	James & Judy Harry
11/14	Anniversary of Fr. Hall's Ordination to the Diaconate
11/15	Al & Pat Madsen
11/20	John & Nici Thompson
11/22	Don Pilcher & Linda Meyer
11/24	Bruce & Christine Bonds
11/25	Ed Sutton & Jean Hadfield John & Marilyn Taylor
11/26	Dawayne & Karol Gaines
11/28	Dick & Rosann Noel Kristine & Alan Chalifoux

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*"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*

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# The Staff at Emmanuel

**The Right Reverend Peter H. Beckwith**

Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield

**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

Linda Meyer

Lori Dobrik, Clerk

Scott Moe

Roger Burrus, Rector's Warden

Carol Jeanne Muster

Craig Russell, Parish Warden

Dan Noel

Tom Barnard

Dean Olson

Roger Burrus

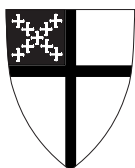
Lois Rath

Patti Gruber

Craig Russell

Kim McQueen

Winton Solberg



## Emmanuel Memorial Episcopal Church

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