



# ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOMERVILLE, TENNESSEE

May 2011

## MISSION COUNCIL NEWS

The Mission Council met on April 10<sup>th</sup> and discussed the following.

- **Building & Grounds** - The back steps will be rebuilt. An 18" concrete walk will be added to the existing slab on the east side of the church to bridge the gap at the gate. A new step had been added at the Sacristy by Doyle Laird. Many thanks!
- **Literacy Council** - A thank you note for the donation to the Lambchop for Literacy fundraiser had been received from the Literacy Council.
- **Coleman Hall** - A phone line to Coleman Hall was authorized.

## PRAYER LIST

Please keep the following in your prayers.

Taylor, Brian, Lee, Lyanna, Steven, Sharon, Harold, Bobby, Mabel, Romell, Don, Heather, Betty, Nancy, Bill, Mary, Cary, Betty, Kay, Brook, Andrew, Felicia, Jerry, Margaret, Mary Elizabeth, JoAnn, Billy, Burl, Jimmy Sue, Demetria, Marlin and Anita.

The prayer list is updated at the first of the month. To add, make a correction, or remove someone from the prayer list please contact Deborah McCarty at [rmccarty01@netzero.com](mailto:rmccarty01@netzero.com) or 901-466-1952.

Bishop of West Tennessee: The Right  
Reverend Don Johnson  
Senior Warden: Jim Wiles  
Junior Warden: Doyle Laird

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Best wishes to Marilee Christian, Paul Seawright, Ray Skinner, Gerald Tomlinson, and Elizabeth White who have birthdays during the month of May!



## HISTORICAL FICTION BOOK CLUB

The Historical Fiction Book Club at the Somerville-Fayette County Library meets on the third Saturday of each month at 10:00 am. The club is open to everyone (even men!) May's book is The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman by Ernest J. Gaines. Contact Gerri Endicott at [gend59@att.net](mailto:gend59@att.net) for a list of books for the remainder of the year.

## GREEN CORNER

If every US household replaced just one incandescent light bulb with an Energy Star rated compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL), it would prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars. A CFL uses 1/4 of the energy of an incandescent bulb and will pay for itself within 6 months. Start small by installing Energy Star rated CFLs when a light blows out, or make a big change by installing CFLs in all your lights.

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[stthomassomerville.org](http://stthomassomerville.org)

Any announcements, articles or items of interest for the newsletter should be sent to Nancy Boatwright at [jehlmp@bellsouth.net](mailto:jehlmp@bellsouth.net) or 1530 Hewlett Drive, Rossville, TN, 38066

## **Newcomer Incorporation:** **A Countercultural Activity**

*By Harold T. Lewis, part of the Vestry Papers issue on Christian Hospitality*

Many of us have heard the old saying “Everybody who should be an Episcopalian already is.” We laugh nervously when we hear it because we realize that the adage reveals, perhaps, a truth about American Anglicanism of which we are not particularly proud.

In their 1978 tongue-in-cheek expose entitled *The Power of Their Glory – America’s Ruling Class: The Episcopalians*, Kit and Frederica Konolige observe that Episcopalians possess “a preference for family expansion rather than missionary activity as a means of growing as a religion.” This, coupled with the fact that in many communities, the Episcopal Church has historically functioned as a refuge for the social elite, has led many members of our small but influential denomination to believe that everyone with good sense, and certainly everyone with good taste, would beat a path to our doors.

This cherished belief was first questioned in the ‘60’s. Prayer Book revision, the church’s stand on civil rights, the ordination of women, and more recently, the debate on human sexuality have all caused many to beat a path to the exit doors. As a result, the Episcopal Church began in earnest to enter into the art of evangelism, until then a countercultural activity.

### **Our most important evangelistic activity**

The ministry of welcoming newcomers into our midst is arguably the most important evangelistic activity in which a parish can

engage. Gone are the days when people just plopped down at the nearest church.

New residents of a community unabashedly “church-shop,” often visiting parishes several miles from their home, and choose congregations based on a variety of criteria – music, preaching, Christian education, churchmanship, and politics – namely, where a given parish stands on the conservative-progressive continuum. And in a day when “brand loyalty” is no longer a given, a recently relocated family with roots in the Episcopal Church may well choose a Methodist congregation because its youth program better meets the needs of their children.

Of course, this cuts both ways. Our liturgy and our reputation as a church that doesn’t require its members to check their brains at the door continue to be beacons to those of other traditions. Many Episcopalians, for example, count among their membership former Presbyterian-Roman Catholic couples, who find in the Episcopal Church a spiritual and theological via media.

### **Intentionality begins the process**

We at Calvary do not believe that we have by any means perfected the newcomer process, but we have met with modest success by incorporating the following principle: intentionality. For the reasons outlined above, newcomer ministry cannot be left to chance. This means that vestries must allocate personnel, time and resources to the newcomer effort.

We must also be intentional for another reason. Our church building, described in a local newspaper recently as “44,000 square

feet of Gothic Revival prominence,” is not, on its face, warm and welcoming. Our behavior, therefore, must serve to counteract the possibly chilling effect of tons of Indiana limestone.

During the announcements at the Sunday Eucharist, we welcome all newcomers and invite them to stand, and they are presented with loaves of bread, baked by our Parish Loafers. Some newcomers, having sought anonymity on their church-hopping tour, opt not to stand, but we know they appreciate the welcome, because they do identify themselves to the clergy at the west door following the service. Attached to the loaf of bread is an information card (also found in the pew rack) which we ask the newcomers to fill out.

Secondly, we bombard newcomers with information. A packet is mailed immediately following the first visit, containing a letter from the rector, the parish newsletter, music and Christian Formation brochures, copies of recent sermons, a list of parish programs and outreach activities, a pledge card and other materials.

Our curate, whose portfolio includes newcomer incorporation, follows up with a phone call, e-mail or personal visit as appropriate. (I am guided by the testimony of a parishioner who explained that she chose our parish after a church-shopping tour thirty years ago because on the Wednesday after her visit, one of the parish clergy appeared on her doorstep!)

The parish also follows up with an invitation, either to a brunch at the home of the rector or warden, or to a foyer group, “cells” of about a dozen or so new and old members

who gather periodically for dinner and conversation. We find this an effective way to foster relationships which would otherwise be difficult to do in a large congregation.

No less important are “on-site” invitations extended by parishioners to join them at coffee hour, or an offer to help the visitor navigate through the Prayer Book or the Sunday bulletin. An Inquirers’ Class, led by members of the parish staff, is offered to newcomers (and old timers) at least twice a year. Using James Griffiss’ *The Anglican Vision* or a similar book we provide an introduction to the faith as this church has received it for those from other traditions (or a refresher course for Episcopalians who may have had little instruction since their Confirmation class).

### **More than pew-warming**

All of these steps lead to involvement. Evangelism experts tell us that newcomer incorporation is not complete until the person has a job other than pew-warming. Serving on an outreach committee, volunteering in the bookstore, or reading a lesson means that the newcomer has a stake in parish life. When all is said and done, newcomer incorporation is about extending hospitality, an act which, the Epistle to the Hebrews reminds us, may result in entertaining angels unawares.

*The Rev. Dr. Harold T. Lewis, an Episcopal Church Foundation fellow, is rector of Calvary Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Adjunct Professor of Church and Society at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.*

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR MAY 2011

- May 1<sup>st</sup> Morning Prayer Rite II  
Officiant: Jan Jaeger  
Lector: Jeanyne Rankin  
Prayers: Mary Laird
- May 8<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite II, The Reverend James Boyd  
Server: Molly McCarley  
Lector: Cheryl Rike  
Prayers: Jan Willen
- May 15<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer Rite II  
Officiant: Barbara Seawright  
Lector: Nancy Boatwright  
Prayers: Jim Wiles
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite II, The Reverend James Boyd  
Server: Gerri Endicott  
Lector: Mary Laird  
Prayers: Jim Wiles
- May 29<sup>th</sup> Morning Prayer Rite II  
Officiant: Nancy Boatwright  
Lector: Cheryl Rike  
Prayers: Mary Laird
- June 5<sup>th</sup> Holy Eucharist Rite II, The Reverend James Boyd  
Server: Molly McCarley  
Lector: Gerri Endicott  
Prayers: Nancy Boatwright

All worship services begin at 10 a.m.

### **SCHEDULE OF COLEMAN HALL EVENTS:**

Sundays @ 9:00 a.m.  
Sundays after worship

Sunday Study led by Jim Wiles  
Fellowship served up with food and fun

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