
THE PARISH PULSE

"Within God's GraSP"

PENTECOST/SPRING 2009

DAILY BLESSINGS FROM MOTHER LOUS..

As we prepare to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost on May 31, I'm reminded of the early Christian experience that we hear expressed in our worship on this feast day each year. As we gather, we celebrate the variety of ways in which God's Holy Spirit works in and through us, to bring God's love and redemptive promise of forgiveness into our world. We celebrate being "on fire" with God's Spirit and we give thanks to God for all our blessings: for the way we are empowered to do greater things in Jesus' name than we could ever do on our own powers alone...for the love which gives us strength to face the events of our day to day human existence...and for the way God values each one of us in our unique differences.

It's sad, then, that so many people seem to face their Christian life with such reluctance, rather than the way the early apostles experienced it and passed it along to the rest of us. Why does being a Christian so often seem more like a burden than a way of life to celebrate and be thankful for?

This is a troublesome question for which there are no easy answers. We do, however, find a few clues in the words of Jesus, which are shared just before he himself is betrayed, mocked, and put to death by crucifixion. Jesus knew that life would not seem so joyful or promising for his followers at that point. Jesus knew that they would need some reassurance that such stressful times would not last forever, and that they would again see wonders and miracles happening all around them.

Repeatedly, Jesus reminds his followers to stay

close to his model of living and responding to others, and even more importantly, to stay close to him. "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he reminds us. Unless you keep connected, he warns, the energy and strength you once had will slip away. Life will simply become that which happens to you, rather than an experience in which you rise above the ordinary to come "alive" and to take control of human existence as it unfolds before you.

"Stay connected...do as I have done!" It sounds so basic, and yet such words lay the foundation for all else that comes our way in the Christian journey. We cannot know what awaits us in the days to come, but we will most definitely face times and events which cut to the core of our faith. Unless we return time and time again to our Lord's teachings, to the witness of Christians before us, to the gathered Christian family for prayers and the feeding of the Eucharist, and to active service with those in need, we will certainly be "burned out" and left to face life on feeble ground indeed. We need to return to places and people that recharge our batteries of faith—to be reminded that God is not only the initial source of life, but also the ongoing source of empowered life and love. The things we do as Christians are not meant to be guilt-trips or burdens, but are the doors through which we seek the means to truly live rather than merely exist.

If you're feeling "burned out" with life, or barely keeping your head above the swarming pressures of life around you, maybe you need to check your lifelines. Are you really connected to

Why does being a Christian so often seem more like a burden than a way of life to celebrate and be thankful for?

Daily Blessings from Mother Lois... (continued)

God, or merely resting on ties of the past? If a crisis comes, do you really know where to look to find God when the pressure's on? Perhaps this spring and summer would be a prime time to become reacquainted with the roots of your childhood faith experiences. We still have a few spaces in the pews—we'd love to have you join us as we attempt to keep the faith and light a few fires of God's love along the way!

Blessings,
The Rev. Lois J. Schembs, Interim Rector



On May 31, Christians around the world will celebrate the Day of Pentecost. It's often remembered as the church's birthday. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he promised that the Holy Spirit would come upon those who believed in his resurrection.

Three thousand people were gathered in Jerusalem when the Spirit came upon them. They were so touched by the Holy Spirit that they began to worship regularly, especially on Sundays, the day of Christ's resurrection.

To symbolize the "tongues, as of fire" (Acts 2:3, NRSV) that came upon the people present at Pentecost, liturgical churches display the color red in their worship services on Pentecost Sunday. Many people attending worship wear red on that day.

THANK YOU EVERYONE!!!

A gracious thank you to all those who worked so hard to make our Holy Week and Easter services such a wonderful expression of faith and praise! Denise Cavaliere and Barb Nichols toiled fearlessly and furiously to get the seasonal letters and bulletins prepared, stuffed and folded, and we'd be lost without their devotion to these details. Our faithful Altar Guild members also worked tirelessly and continuously throughout all the color changes, service particulars, and re-arranging of altar appointments and flowers to present dignified yet stunning backgrounds for our worship experiences. Our music director, Cynthia Westbrook, and the choir members outdid themselves with the special music that was woven throughout these services and presented in such spectacular form.

Those who worked to create all the activities and the prayer walk for the Palm Friday family event are to be commended for their efforts to present a spiritually uplifting and deeply devotional experience for those children and adults alike who could attend. If you've never come to one of these, regardless of your age, make a note now to attend the program next year—you won't be sorry! A special thank you also goes to Aaron Sked, who made the beautiful wooden cross box that we used on Easter Sunday for the Flowering of the Cross by the children. For those who could not be with us, you missed some of our most beautiful services of the year!

In addition to these activities, there were all those other ministries willingly carried out by those who volunteered to prepare food, to set up for meals, to read special lessons, to serve as acolytes or crucifers or intercessors or eucharistic ministers or ushers, to have their feet washed, and to help with all those monumental clean-up tasks which were faced during this busy week. It takes many hands to create solid worship and fellowship experiences, and several of you came back time and time again to help with the work. I truly thank you all for enabling these services and programs to go so beautifully!

Mother Lois

In the past days, the Church has received inquiries from our members, parishes and diocese regarding the news about swine flu and how, if at all, it might affect the continued practice of their faith. We are asked:

Should I go to Church? Exchange the Peace? Drink from the cup?

As long as it is recommended that we go to school and work, it is also fine to go to Church. Going to Church provides community and offers comfort. For some, it may be more comfortable at this time to share the Peace simply with a smile. For others, it may be helpful to remember that it is liturgically acceptable to receive only the bread.

The key is to make decisions based on local practices and safety issues, use common sense, stay informed, follow the advice of medical experts, and

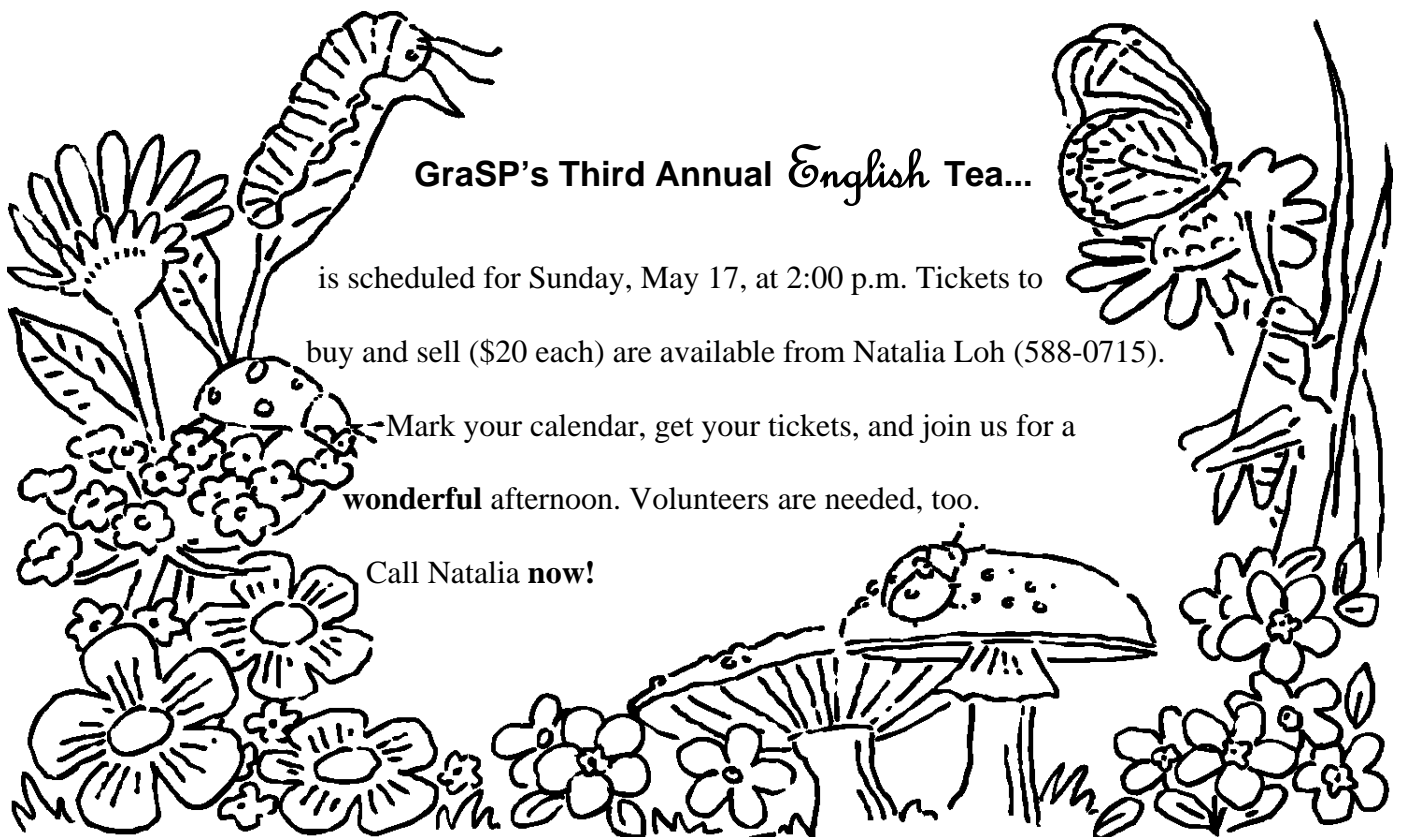
talk to your clergy if you have questions about worship service.

For more information, please see Episcopal Relief & Development's [website](#).

Constance, Nun, and her Companions
Commonly called "The Martyrs of Memphis," 1878

We give you thanks and praise, O God of compassion, for the heroic witness of Constance and her companions, who, in a time of plague and pestilence, were steadfast in their care for the sick and dying, and loved not their own lives, even unto death. Inspire in us a like love and commitment to those in need, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and forever. Amen.

(From the Episcopal Church website)



GraSP's Third Annual *English Tea*...

is scheduled for Sunday, May 17, at 2:00 p.m. Tickets to buy and sell (\$20 each) are available from Natalia Loh (588-0715).

Mark your calendar, get your tickets, and join us for a wonderful afternoon. Volunteers are needed, too.

Call Natalia now!



CommuniCans Pickin' Up Speed

As April passes, the CommuniCans celebrate our first six months of productivity. As my Mom said when she turned fifty: "I may be over the hill, but I'm pickin' up speed!" We feel like we've made our way over the first hurdles of getting started and are beginning to make some real headway. Yay!

THE WEB SITE IS SHAPING UP

Webmaster **TC Cetkowski** has been busy getting the Web site up to date in content and technology. He has cleaned up the code, making the site faster and easier for him to manage. Folks have also started making requests for revisions and updates, such as the installation of a new "Discernment Process" page where we will eventually post the Parish Profile for easy access to clergy seeking new homes.

The **Three Step Instructions** for requesting updates to the site bear repeating:

1. What Page? Copy the address for the page you want to change, so you can paste it in an email. An "address" is also called the "URL" and might be <http://gracestpaul.org/site/programs.html> or similar.

2. What Do You Want to Change? Be specific about what you want to change and where it should be placed. Examples: "The third line under Church School should be removed and replaced with the following: (text here)" or "Place the attached order form (document title) after paragraph 2 of the (specify) section".

3. Send An Email. Put the URL and explanation, as well as any documents to post to the site (such as a Word document or PDF file) and send the email to webmaster@gracestpaul.org.

Interested in holding an event at GraSP—a graduation party, bridal shower, or family gathering, perhaps? See our Parish Administrator, Denise Cavaliere, or contact the CommuniCans for a copy of the form to reserve your date of choice and a contract with details about parish hall rental.

THE SURVEY HAS BEEN SEALED! The Self-Study Committee has met several times since the last Parish Pulse, and the deadline for Survey responses (April 26) has passed. The Committee will be working diligently on putting together the Parish Profile, so look for it sometime SOON! Thanks to all of the Committee members who have dedicated their time and talent to this important undertaking.

Our Youth Group will likely be putting together a script to create a Public Service Announcement video to be televised on local Cablevision thanks to Kevin Drennan's leadership. We see it as a great way to spread the word about GraSP while encouraging other youth to volunteer and worship!

ANNOUNCE YOUR EVENT IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS by telling Martha Heckel (mlheckel@mac.com or 581-3404) by the 10th of the month before the event what you would like to have printed.

Please join us **June 9, 2009, at 7:10 p.m.** in the Library. We'd love to see YOU!

In love and light,
Martha Heckel
CommuniCans Chair

Rummage Sale Thanks!

Thank you to all who helped (or bought) at the Rummage Sale, on Thursday, Friday, and/or Saturday! It was exhausting work, but everyone pitched in! The kitchen staff served their usual excellent fare and brought in a record profit with their delicious donated foods. GraSP raised \$1,827! WOW!
Sue Cetkowski, Rummage Sale Chair

THE BISHOP IS COMING! THE BISHOP IS COMING!

Many of you have been asking about when we will have Confirmation—we now have a date for Bishop Councill to visit Grace-St. Paul's and to celebrate Confirmation. He will be with us on Sunday morning, October 18, for a combined service allowing for one joint celebration beginning at 10:00 a.m.



Any of our baptized young people, who will be 16 years old by October 2009 and who are interested in being Confirmed as an Episcopalian should speak to Mother Lois as soon as possible so we can arrange for preparation classes. Those adults who have been coming to Grace-St. Paul's from other than Episcopal backgrounds, who would like to formally claim their allegiance to the Episcopal Church, are also welcome to join us for these classes and to present themselves to the Bishop to be Confirmed or Received into the Episcopal Church.

If you have any questions or doubts about whether you should be coming, please feel free to talk to Mother Lois.

Stewardship Lenten Challenge

On February 22, the Stewardship Committee challenged the Church School to "Plant a Tree of Giving and Watch It Grow". We read the story, The Giving Tree, and then shared a reading from the Bible about the servants that were given coins by their master and that he expected them to return the coins with interest. After that we gave them an envelope with a dollar, and some suggestions on how they might make it grow. On Easter Sunday, when they returned their dollar and the money that they "grew" they were able to select whether they wanted their money to go to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, GraSP or Heifer International.

Fourteen children took the challenge and raised: \$17.50 for TASK, \$24.50 for Heifer International, and \$64.00 for GraSP.

Thank you to all the children that took the challenge.

The Stewardship Committee

Keeping Connected While at College

Are you a college or university student? Are young people in your parish, or a member of your family, heading off to college? The Diocese of New Jersey would like to help all students connect with the Episcopal campus ministry or the local parish church closest to their school, so that they can be welcomed and supported during this next stage of their lives.

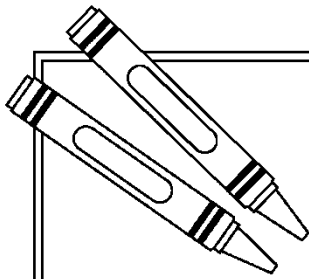
To connect with a campus ministry visit: <http://newjersey.anglican.org/Resources/YoungAdult/campusministry.html#>. You'll find an on-line referral form for connecting students to campus ministries, a link to a list of campus ministries around the country, and a directory of campus ministries in the Diocese of New Jersey (currently Rutgers, TCNJ, Princeton, and Rowan). For each contact submitted using the on-line form, a member of the campus ministry team will alert the appropriate campus minister or closest local parish church.



Over the years, Memorial Day has become a big holiday weekend. It's now the unofficial start of summer, rather than a day of tribute to the departed it was originally meant to be.

Even if we plan fun events for Memorial Day weekend, it's important to stop long enough to bow our heads and pay respect to our departed loved ones—especially those who fell in battle while helping preserve America's liberties.

Let us take time to make the pilgrimage to various cemeteries and pause long enough to say, "Thank you, Father, for these special lives, for sacrifices made and for friendships we have shared."



Just for **KIDS**

A legacy of faith

You're blessed when you have a mother, a grandmother or any relative or friend who passes down a strong faith to you. In the Bible, Timothy was influenced by his grandmother and mother.

Complete 2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV) below by filling in the blanks with the correct vowel.

VOWELS: 1 = a 2 = e 3 = i 4 = o 5 = u

" _ h _ v _ b _ _ n r _ m _ nd _ d _ f

y _ _ r s _ nc _ r _ f _ _ th, wh _ ch

f _ rst l _ v _ d _ n y _ _ r gr _ ndm _ th _ r

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n _ w l _ v _ s _ n y _ _ _ ls _ ."

2 T I M O T H Y 1 : 5 (N I V)

Answer: "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."

Thanks

FOR YOUR EXAMPLE

Mother's Day is a great opportunity to thank your mother, grandmother or any other woman who has been a wonderful example in your life. Make and give this craft to show how much you appreciate these special women.

What you need:

- An empty, glass, wide-mouthed jar (no lid needed)
- Acrylic craft paints (several different spring colors)
- Votive candle (optional)
- Flowers (optional)
- Small candies (optional)

What you do:

1. Make sure your glass jar is clean and dry.
2. Dip your pointer finger into one of the paint colors.
3. Using your finger as a stamp, make about five prints in a circle on the outside of your jar. These will be your flower petals. (Hint: Hold your jar by placing your hand inside it. Then you can turn the jar easily without messing up the wet paint.)
4. Dip your finger into another color and make a fingerprint in the center of your petals.
5. Make as many flowers as you want, using different fingers or your thumb to make different-sized petals.
6. Present this beautiful gift to a special woman this Mother's Day. There are many ways to use it:
 - Place a votive candle inside to make a candleholder.
 - Fill it with water and place flowers inside to make a vase.
 - Fill it with small candies to make a candy jar.

A Mother's Prayer

Make me a wise mother, O Lord. Keep me calm and give me patience to bear the small, irritating things in the daily routine of life. Give me tolerance and understanding to bridge the gulf between my generation and that of my children. Let me not be too ready to guide my children's stumbling feet, but allow me to be ever near to bind their bruises. Give me a sense of humor that I may laugh with them but never at them. Let me refrain from preaching with words; let me show by example instead. Keep me from forcing their confidences, but give me a sympathetic ear when my children come to me. Make me humble. Keep my children close to me, O Lord, though miles may separate us. And let Thy light so shine upon me that they, too, will perceive Thy glory. Amen.



Take Me Out to the Ball Game... with Grace-St. Paul's and the Trenton Thunder!




Please join us on July 18 for the 7:05 p.m. Trenton Thunder vs. Portland Sea Dogs game (with fireworks) at Trenton's Waterfront Park.

With regular box-office ticket prices of \$10, the Trenton Thunder will generously donate **40%** to the work of Grace St. Paul's! WOW!

Gift Certificates **good for any game** are on sale through the Fundraising Committee, and are redeemable at the box office or by mail for any available seat. We're going to gather a group together to attend the July 18 game, but you can also buy gift certificates for any of the remaining games this season!

If you don't catch us in church, please send an e-mail to fundraisers@gracestpaul.org or leave a message at 609-581-3404. Let us know your name and phone number, best time to reach you, and the number of gift certificates you'd like to purchase!



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

When: Monday through Friday, July 13-17
Time: To be announced
Coordinator: Erin Cook

Look for information in the coming weeks!

The Ascension

Many Christian churches will celebrate Ascension Day on (or near) May 21, which is 40 days after Easter. Theologian Friedemann Hebart explained Christ's Ascension this way:

“When Jesus' work on Earth was done, he took leave of his disciples and went to be with his Father. A time for sad farewells, one might think. Yet the church celebrates the Ascension with special joy. What is the reason for joy when Jesus leaves his people?”

“The Ascension is not the end of Jesus' work, but a new beginning! How could Jesus ever leave us alone? Because he has gone to be Lord of the universe, he can continue his work of life and love—among us, too. His work was not just a short episode in Galilee. In the person of the Holy Spirit, the same Lord is present among us, still revealing the Father's loving heart, so that we, too, can believe—and sing songs of joy.”



Father's Day is June 21

My Dad

When I was just a tiny kid,
Do you remember when,
The time you kissed my bruises,
Or cleaned by soiled chin?

You scrambled for the balls I hit,
(Short-winded more than not.)
Yet, every time we'd play a game,
You praised the "outs" I caught.

It seems like only yesterday,
You wiped away my tears,
And late at night I called your name,
To chase away my fears.

Though time has changed your handsome grip,
Your hair is snowy white,
You gait's a little slower now,
Thick glasses help your sight.

Oh, do I thirst for years gone by,
To be that growing lad,
Re-living all of the memories,
Of growing with my dad.
(by: Anonymous)

What Makes A Dad?

God took the strength of a mountain,
The majesty of a tree,
The warmth of a summer sun,
The calm of a quiet sea,
The generous soul of nature,
The comforting arm of night,
The wisdom of the ages,
The power of the eagle's flight,
The joy of a morning in spring,
The faith of a mustard seed,
The patience of eternity,
The depth of a family need,

Then God combined these qualities,
And then there was nothing more to add,
He knew His masterpiece was complete,
And so, He called it - Dad.
(by: Anonymous)

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DIRECTORY UPDATE

If you are a new member of our parish family or your information has changed, please complete the form below so we can keep our parish directory current. If you have any questions, please call the church at 586-6004.

GRASP NEW MEMBER INFORMATION / MEMBER UPDATE FORM

(Please complete the form below and place it in the Changes Box on the Welcome Table in Craft Hall, or mail it to the Church).

Name: _____ (Check one): New member Update

Children's names and ages _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____ Other information (e-mail address): _____
