

News Letter

Cathedral Church
of Saint John,
Wilmington, Delaware

September, 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

In 1887, in a response to a letter to the New York Sun from eight year old Virginia O'Hanlon about the existence of Santa Claus, Francis P. Church wrote an editorial in which he made the now well known statement, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." Well, I think that we can apply a similar affirmation to the future of the Cathedral Church of Saint John. Can there be a future for this Cathedral? *Yes, dear friends, there can be a future.*

There has never been a question about the Cathedral's future in the sense of its life and work. The ministries provided for the people of Saint John's continue to be spiritually enriching and nourishing. The mission of the Cathedral to its community continues to be a sign of Christ's presence in and for the lives of people of all ages. And in the life of the Diocese of Delaware, the Cathedral is represented by its laity as officers of the Diocese and on Diocesan Council, as well as Deputies to General Convention and Representatives to the Triannual of the Women of the Church.

It is with numbers that questions about the future arise: numbers of people and numbers of dollars. The number of people gathering for worship on Sunday mornings is way down from the heady days

of yesteryear. So for the future of Saint John's, its story must be told, formally and informally, in such ways as to be inviting. We cannot be satisfied with being passively inviting; if there were ever a time for being assertive, this is it. The Cathedral has a good story to be told and each of us individually has a responsibility to tell it. The people who study congregational growth report that by far the largest percentage of new people visiting a parish do so because they have been invited by friends, neighbors, and family members.

It is not news to most of you that the question about the future of the Cathedral is also fueled by a concern about dollars. The dollar amount of pledged income (THANK YOU ALL WHO PLEDGE AND SUPPORT SAINT JOHN'S) does not cover expenses. As I am writing, this means that we have about an \$11,000.00 monthly shortfall. The reserve funds that were being used to make up this shortfall are now expended. New funds coming into the Cathedral's reserves should not be used in the same way. Therefore, for the near future three things need to be done.

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The second is to use Saint John's facilities for producing income, and by now you have probably seen the signs offering space for lease. There is potential for a meaningful income stream from leasing properties of the Cathedral and Cathedral Community Services. Indeed, income is already coming in from leasing Debnam House.

The third thing needed is for you to continue to be good and faithful stewards of your financial resources. The pledges and contributions that you offer for the life and work of Saint John's are critical to its future. They are signs of your desire for and commitment to that future. So, please keep your pledges and contributions current; and as we look to 2010, please, even in these difficult times, give consideration to increasing your pledge or contribution. Also, if you are a friend but not a member of the Cathedral, and have not given in support of its mission and ministry, please consider Saint John's as one of the places for some of your contribution dollars.

Yes, dear friends, there can be a future for the Cathedral Church of Saint John. And, as it has always been and always shall be, to a great extent that future rests with you, the members and friends of the Cathedral. I don't believe the Lord is finished with Saint John's, but remember, the Lord works through you.

Faithfully,
The Very Reverend William B. Lane

SOME THOUGHTS ON GENERAL CONVENTION

William B. Lane

For years the late Walter Cronkite would end his evening news cast by saying, "And that's the way it is." Meaning, I think, that he had just reported about the reality of the world in which his audience lived.

The 2009 General Convention of the Episcopal Church was gaveled to a close on the 17th of July. We at Saint John's were fortunate in hearing a first-hand report from the Convention by our own Debbie Layton and Cecily Sawyer-Harmon, who were two of the four lay Deputies from Delaware. We also heard from Helen Whitson who attended the Women's Triennial. Helen has been a leader in the Triennial for many years.

It appears to me that this Convention may well be remembered as the - *that's the way it is* - Convention. Without apology and recognizing potential consequences, the Deputies and Bishops in Convention said that in the Episcopal Church the *dignity of every human being* is to be honored and respected without qualification. The particular focus of this affirmation on human dignity was the full incorporation of the gay and lesbian members of the Church in its life and ministry.

Two resolutions affirmed this full incorporation: one recognizing the right of a diocese to elect a bishop without consideration of the candidate's sexual orientation; the other recognizing the prerogative of a diocesan bishop to exercise his/her pastoral ministry to provide for the celebration and blessing of same gender unions. As he prepared to cast his vote on the Resolution pertaining to same gender unions (Resolution 056), one of the Deputies, the Reverend Ian Douglas from Massachusetts, made a statement that I believe speaks for many of us. He said: *He would not join with those who would force the Episcopal Church to pick between faithfulness and the Anglican Communion. "We cannot*

pretend that concurring with C056 will not cause turmoil. Concurrence with this resolution, I suspect, will be used by groups like the Anglican Church in North America in attempts to marginalize us in the councils of the Anglican Communion and enfranchise them as the genuine expression of American Anglicanism. Yet I will concur with C056, not because it is a justice agenda, but because by doing so our church is being faithful to God in Jesus Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit."

That's the way it is as the Episcopal Church in the United States of America seeks to be faithful to the Gospel of Christ; not imposing its discernment of faithfulness on other national Churches in the Anglican Communion, but looking to those Churches to respect what it has discerned for itself. The Episcopal Church should not get drawn into debate over its position. Having made that clear, the Episcopal Church can focus on other areas in the human drama that it has identified as needing to be transformed by the presence of God's living and redeeming love.

As the Gospel According to John comes to a close, the evangelist tells us that Jesus commissions Simon Son of John to *feed my lambs; tend my sheep; feed my sheep*. And if Simon is so commissioned, might not the Church be as well? If our answer is yes to this, then we know the way the Church must go—the way of Christ; and we know what the Church is meant to be—Christ's blessing for all of God's creation.

Help Meet the Challenge

The Cathedral Choir School of Delaware is delighted to report that between now and June 30, 2010, your gift to the Scholarship Fund will be doubled by a generous \$50,000 Challenge Grant created by the following loyal donors: **Ross and Evelyn Burnam, Hardy and Margriet Drane, Delbert C. Glover and The Rev. Linda L. Grenz, Tom and Mary Henderer, Judy W.**

Sargent, Muff and Bob Scott, Vicki and Lee Tashjian, and Norm and Suzy Veasey. Now every dollar you give becomes two dollars for the Scholarship Fund. Your \$100 gift becomes \$200. All gifts will be matched 1:1 up to \$50,000 by the Challenge!

The Choir School's Scholarship Fund ensures that every child, regardless of income, can receive more than ten hours a week of professional choral training, piano lessons and mentoring by a caring adult. Children who participate in the Choir School have reached beyond their expectations - taking on leadership roles in school and going on to higher education. Please make sure you make your tax-deductible donation to the Scholarship Fund before June 30, 2010, so that every dollar of the Challenge will be awarded. The \$50,000 Challenge Grant plus \$50,000 in matching gifts will mean \$100,000 for the Scholarship Fund! ***For more information, please contact Lisa Slinkard at 302.654.6279, ext. 2.***

Neighborhood Assistance

The summer has drawn to an end, but the need for food for our Neighborhood Assistance Program continues. Donations have been very light for the past few months causing our reserves to be nearly depleted. Now that we are returning to the new program year, please consider adding to your "to do list": Take canned goods and other non-perishable food items to the Cathedral on Sunday.

The Cathedral Choir School of Delaware to Present a Choral Evensong Concert in Philadelphia

If you enjoy choral music, come to St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Chestnut Hill, 22 E. Chestnut Hill Avenue, Philadelphia, PA, on Sunday, October 18 at 5:00 p.m., when the Choir of the Cathedral Church of Saint John, featuring boys and girls from the Cathedral Choir School of Delaware, will sing a Choral Evensong Concert. This event is free and open to the public.

Cottage Meetings: Hosts/Hostesses Needed

We will once again be holding "Cottage Meetings" in October and November. Cottage Meetings are an opportunity for a small group of Cathedral members to meet in a member's home, enjoy fellowship and discuss ways of focusing on the life and work of the Cathedral. These are wonderful evenings to get to meet new friends or get to know better those you already know, and to learn more about what is happening at the Cathedral. Watch for dates and times to sign up in the near future.

***We are looking for individuals or families
willing to host a
"Cottage Meeting"***

Past hosts/hostesses have enjoyed the opportunity to gather folks in their homes. As in the past, hosts/hostesses provide a main dish for dinner and others attending will bring something to add to the meal. Please contact **Linda Whitehead** as soon as possible if you are willing to offer your home. *Linda is available at 302-652-2704 or lindaw302@verizon.net* and thanks for considering this.

**Next-to-New Shop Bag Sale
Tuesday, September 8 through
Thursday, September 10
10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Fill a grocery bag for \$2.00.
Other items half-price**

Fall Hours Resume at the Next-to-New Shop

Beginning Monday, September 14, the shop will be open *Mondays through Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.*

Help Us Restock the Shelves

All types of household and clothing items are needed to restock the shelves at the Next-to-New Shop. Please bring your donations to the shop during our normal business hours or leave them in the designated bin in the Great Hall. In addition, the Next-to-New Shop is in need of clothes hangers. Any type will be accepted. Thank you for supporting this community ministry!

After-School Homework Helpers Needed

School is back in session and so is the Cathedral Choir School of Delaware! Our after-school enrichment program provides our students with homework help and opportunities to enhance their learning. We meet at the Cathedral from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. Can you join us one afternoon a week? Volunteers are needed to help students with individual assignments and to lead group learning activities. Contact **Leslie Acker-Rowe** at 654-6279, ext. 118 or lacker-rowe@cathedralchoirschoolde.org to learn more.

MEN'S CLUB

Recently I heard interest expressed in the possibility of starting a monthly lunch time "club" for men. Obviously this would be for men who are retired or who can get away from work for lunch. As I understand it, this gathering would be for the purpose of fellowship and service to the Cathedral. If you are interested, please give Cindy Timko a phone call at the Cathedral office (654.6279) to get your name on the list of interested persons. William B. Lane

Thank You Father Juan

We thank Fr. Juan George for his service to the Cathedral and the community for the past 19 months. He has become a valued friend to everyone on staff, as well as the congregation. His urban ministry grew and blossomed as he helped with the Neighborhood Assistance Program, attended community meetings, taught Spanish and met one-on-one with folks from the Brandywine Village neighborhood. Fr. Juan, you will be missed by many. Good luck in your new position at Trinity and Old Swede's Episcopal Church. It is truly the Cathedral's loss and their gain.

From your Candidate to the Diaconate

Dear Cathedral Family,

The past several months have been a whirlwind. In late April I completed my nine canonical areas. I also reviewed a letter from Bishop Wright and the Standing Committee stating that my application for candidacy for ordination to the Diaconate was unanimously approved. *Praise be to God.* This summer the next steps were accomplished. They consisted of a psychological, medical and background check. In the next few days I will apply for ordination. I am required to write a 500

word statement of why I feel I am ready to be ordained. The vestry and rector also have to sign stating their approval and recommendation. There are six candidates for ordination and we have been given the date of December 5, 2009, for our ordination.

As you know I was a delegate to General Convention. I thoroughly enjoyed it, as well as gained much knowledge from my experience as a cognate chair. I have written an article about my time at General Convention which will be in an upcoming edition of the Communion.

In late July I was called by the Vestry of St. Thomas's Parish and appointed by Bishop Wright to be the Chaplain for the Episcopal Campus Ministry at the U of D. I began this new ministry on August 1st and find it both exciting and rewarding. I have made contact with several of the other chaplains and am very excited about the opportunity to do ecumenical work with the other faith groups on campus.

My health is good and for this I am most grateful and thankful to God. I ask for your continued support and prayers.

God's Shalom,

Cecily Sawyer Harmon
Candidate to the Diaconate



Youth Group

Everyone in grades 6-12 is welcome!

Our first meeting of the new school year is **Sunday, September 20 12:00-1:30 p.m.** in the Common Room. Lunch is provided.

What do you want to do this year as a Youth Group? Bring your ideas to the meeting!

For more information, please contact **Laura Eisenman** at **(302) 993-0942** or Eisenman@udel.edu

Cathedral Labyrinth

At the present time the Cathedral labyrinth is unusable due to lack of maintenance. The basic structure is intact, but the grounds need to be cleaned and manicured on a regular basis. If you or your group is interested in taking on this ministry, please contact Cindy in the church office at 302-654-6279.



September Birthdays

Joe Tatnall	9/2
Sei-Mongli Boayue	9/3
Cecily Sawyer Harmon	9/3
Vickie Forester	9/5
Dan Hayes	9/7
Ruth Muller	9/8
Britani Donaldson	9/10
Ed Twardus	9/11
Ethan Koob	9/12
Nick Orlando	9/13
Angie Gooding	9/14

Sarah Sardo	9/15
Dan Colburn	9/17
Michael Twardus	9/18
Anna Spencer	9/20
Catherine Maguire	9/20
Stephanie McDonald	9/20
Patti Van Voorhis	9/22
Kiara Pugh	9/22
Jane Runkle	9/23
Thomas Stinson	9/23
Emily Bower	9/24
Diane Drummond	9/25
Chance Hayes	9/28
Helen Ezembakwe	9/29
Isaiah Walker	9/29
Yei-Lehehn Boayue	9/29

September Anniversaries

Bill and Anne Kauffman	9/1
Scott Serota and Tom Angell	9/11
Richard and Debbie Layton	9/14

People and Places

On Wednesday, June 24 **Jennifer Andrews-Weckerly** was ordained Deacon at the Cathedral.

Jennifer and Scott Andrews-Weckerly celebrated the birth of their daughter, Simone Grace, on August 15. Mother and daughter are doing well.

Mary Bobnick, mother of **Joan Bobnick** died in July.

Polly Sutton died on July 28. She was the mother of Debbie Layton. Her memorial service was held at the Cathedral.

Betty Lewis has moved to Ingleside Retirement Apartments, 1005 N. Franklin Street, Wilmington, DE 19806.