



The Bellringer

E-mail: august@bestweb.net Website: www.stacroton.org Dec 2009/Jan 2010

Rector:
The Reverend Bradley C. Dyche
Priest Associate:
The Rev. Dr. Beth Glover
Deacons:
The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna
The Rev. Deacon Sharon Manning-Lew

St. Augustine's Episcopal Church ♦ 6 Old Post Road North, Croton on Hudson, NY 10520 ♦ 914-271-3501 (Office)

December 2009

1	Tuesday	7:30 p.m.	Ribbon making for wreaths in Parish Hall
3	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
5	Saturday	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Christmas Wreath Sale and Bake Sale
6	<u>Second Sunday in Advent, the Rev. Dr. Beth Glover preaching and celebrating</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		9:45 a.m.	Coffee Hour
		10:15 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal in Parish Hall
		10:30 a.m.	Rite II with music
		11:10 a.m.	Sunday School ends, children join service
		11:30 a.m.	Adult Education with Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna
		9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Croton Blood Drive at CHHS
10	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
13	<u>Third Sunday in Advent, the Rev. Dr. Beth Glover preaching and celebrating</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		10:15 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal in Parish Hall
		10:30 a.m.	Rite II with music
		11:10 a.m.	Sunday School ends, children join service
		11:30 a.m.	Adult Education with Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna
16	Wednesday	8:00 p.m.	Vestry Meeting
17	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
19	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Sunday School Christmas Pageant rehearsal in the church
		2:50 p.m.	Christmas Carols at Sky View Nursing Home
20	<u>Fourth Sunday in Advent</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		10:30 a.m.	Children's Service with Christmas pageant
		5:00 p.m.	Rite II service

Begin your Christmas decorating with wreaths from St. Augustine's. Our annual wreath sale will be held in the Parish Hall from **10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday, December 6th**. Wreaths vary in size from 12 inches to 36 inches, plain with a red ribbon or decorated with ribbon, pinecones and berries, in a price range of \$14 - \$50. Come by and give your home that holiday touch.

Once again, we are hoping to put the incredible baking talents of St. Augustine's parishioners to greater use. There will be a **bake sale** to coincide with the wreath sale on **December 5th**. Please, bakers start now - bake and freeze cookies and cakes and pies and other delights which we can sell on this day. The more, the merrier! For more information, please call Cathie Elliott at 271 9522.

- 24 **Christmas Eve** 4:00 p.m. Children's Service for Christmas Eve
 7:00 p.m. Family Service for Christmas Eve
 10:00 p.m. First Service of Christmas, Holy Eucharist II
- 25 **Christmas Day**
 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II
 Dec. 25, Dec 28-31 Parish office closed
- 27 **First Sunday After Christmas Day**
 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Lessons and Carols

January 2010

- 1 Friday Parish office closed for New Year's Day
- 3 **Second Sunday After Christmas**
 9:00 a.m. Rite II with music
 10:30 a.m. Children's Service
- 10 **First Sunday After The Epiphany**
 9:00 a.m. Rite II with music
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School begins
 10:30 a.m. Rite II with music
 11:10 a.m. Sunday School ends, children join service
 11:15 a.m. Book Group meeting in the Parish House
- 17 **Second Sunday After The Epiphany, The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna preaching**
 9:00 a.m. Rite II with music
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School begins
 10:30 a.m. Rite II with music
 11:10 a.m. Sunday School ends, children join service
 4:00 p.m. Interfaith Service of Remembrance, Martin Luther King, Jr
- 18 Monday Parish Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Day
- 20 Wednesday 8:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting
- 24 **Third Sunday After the Epiphany**
 9:00 a.m. Rite II with music
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School begins
 10:30 a.m. Rite II with music
 11:10 a.m. Sunday School ends, children join service
- 30 TBA 2nd Annual Pub Quiz
- 31 **Third Sunday After the Epiphany**
 9:00 a.m. Rite II with music
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School begins
 10:30 a.m. Rite II with music
 11:10 a.m. Sunday School ends, children join service
 11:15 a.m. Annual Parish Meeting & Vestry Election

Please note: All meetings and classes are in St. A's House unless otherwise noted.

From the Rector:

Last month, I spent a week at a conference in Connecticut discussing clergy leadership. One afternoon during some free time, I decided to take a walk with two fellow attendees, Debra and Caroline. It was a quiet autumnal morning. Every crunch of the leaves could be heard in the cool, crisp air. Trudge. Trudge. Trudge. No one said a word. Our heads were full of “clergy leadership” and not much else. We all walked in silence, sharing the moment. Then, Debra blurted out, “I just found out that my dog died.”

It was a very matter of fact announcement. Debra seemed to be in shock.

We walked on, not knowing how to respond.

Caroline and I attempted to be consoling. I shared my own fears about Margaret Anne, my cat, dying someday (which I am fairly certain will invite some Rev. Dr. Frankenstein sort of reaction). Then Debra spoke again. She said, “You know. The minute you adopt them, you know that they’ll break your heart.”

Indeed, the fact that pets will eventually break our hearts is a truth universally acknowledged. It is irrational to love an animal, knowing that it is a limited enterprise. They take time, money, effort. And they break our hearts. Yet somehow, many of us believe that it’s worth it. Many of us still give ourselves over to the grooming, the vet bills, the barking, the meowing, and the love. And the thing is... I am pretty certain that the story of Christmas is the same for God. The story of Christmas is the story of God’s adoption of us and God’s willingness to have God’s heart broken.

I can almost imagine God and Jesus having a conversation in the heavens:

“It’s getting kind of rough down there!” says God.

Jesus responds, “I know. I can barely look anymore. Why do they think that some people are better than others? Why do they think such vile things about You? I mean, You wouldn’t harm a fly! Silly humans! By the time they get to us in heaven, they’re all battered and worn and tired. Why don’t they trust us anymore? I have to go and help them.”

God warns, “I wouldn’t if I were you. We have to just let them be. In the beginning... I used to spend lots of time down there. But it hurts. And they’ll hurt you. Did I ever tell you about the Garden? Failed experiment. I had lots of trust issues after that. Better to stay up here. It’s safe.”

“I can’t do that. They need us,”

And so Jesus comes to humanity. God’s love becomes flesh. And the point is that God had to know that this enterprise would break his heart. God saw what we can do to one another. God knew that it could happen to Jesus. And yet, Jesus’ birth is announced with joy and celebration. The angel Gabriel comes and heartily proclaims the good news. Mary begins to embrace what will be. And God’s love and truth come into our world.

And the point is, God thought it was worth it, just like owning a cat or dog or snake or hamster is worth it. Loving another being is a blessing and a treasure, even if it will break our hearts. And Jesus knew that this was the way to teach us about who God really is.

If we really want to know who God is, look at the life of Jesus. Fleeshy, vulnerable to love and to hate, and full of forgiveness and peace. That is who God is. And this is who we miraculously, joyously celebrate year after year. Which seems irrational. Who wants a vulnerable God? Who wants a broken hearted God?

Me, for one.

Christmas is our acknowledgment that we are in this together, and that we are not alone. And it is our firm belief that we have been adopted and loved by a benevolent God. And even if we break God’s heart, even if we kill God, we will still be loved and cared for.

I don’t relish the idea that we could break God’s heart. I do not relish that we did. But I do love Christmas, and I love the possibility that we too can welcome God’s love into the world again and anew. And I celebrate that our love of God and our ability to love one another is our ability to heal God’s heart and to take to heart Jesus’ message of love.

And so, let us prepare to meet Jesus, again. Let us be surprised by him. And let us acknowledge and celebrate what God is willing to risk by being with us. God’s Peace.

Ways to Give this Christmas Season

Christmas Altar Flower Donations:

If you wish to donate Christmas flowers in memory of a loved one, or in thanksgiving, your donation can be put in the collection plate, or dropped off or mailed to the parish office. Suggested donation is \$20 but any amount is acceptable. Please be sure to specify the names of those you wish to remember, as well as your own, & write "Altar Fund" on your check. To ensure all names appear in the Christmas bulletins, they must be given to the office by Sunday, December 20.

Share Christmas joy:

Help the Croton Caring Committee fill Holiday Food Baskets. Non-perishable & non-breakable items can be dropped off anytime at 38 Penfield Ave. on the patio and frozen turkeys can be left from Friday, Dec. 18 to Monday, Dec. 21.

Carol Sing at Sky View Nursing Home December 19, 3:00 p.m.

Join in our annual Caroling tradition at Sky View Nursing home. What a great way to get into the Christmas Spirit! We will meet in the lobby of Sky View Nursing home at 2:50 PM on Saturday, December 19th and begin singing at 3:00 PM. Sky View is located at 1280 Albany Post Road. The residents there always appreciate our efforts, and a fun time is had by all. For more information, contact the parish office or Denise Bessette at 736-3467.

Vestry Nominations:

Do you feel called to be on the Vestry of the church? This is the group that makes policy, legal, and financial decisions for St. A's. It is the group that holds vision, planning, and the day to day needs of the church together. We meet once a month, on the third Wednesday, beginning at 8 p.m. We serve three year terms. We're a cross section of people with a common interest and love for the church and God's work here. Please contact Greg Kaebnick, the clerk of the Vestry, if you feel called to serve.

St. Augustine's children's Christmas pageant will be performed during the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, December 20. All Sunday School age children (pre-school through grade 6) are invited to participate. Rehearsals will be during regular Sunday School hours (10:15 - 11:10) on Sunday, December 6 and Sunday, December 13, and on Saturday morning December 19th at 10:00 a.m. Please contact director Chris Jones at 302-2531 if your child would like to participate but cannot be at the first rehearsal. Following the service on the 20th, we will celebrate with a festive potluck Christmas coffee hour.

The annual observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day will be held at St. A's on Sunday, January 17th at 4:00 p.m. This Interfaith service reminds us of our need to fight prejudice in our society, to celebrate freedom and to rejoice in our unity.

The topic of the sermon for the 2010 Martin Luther King Service will be "Feeding the Revolution," a discussion of the foods of the civil rights movement by Dr. Frederick Opie.

Born and raised in Croton, Frederick Douglass Opie is an associate professor of history and director of the African Diaspora Studies Program at Marist College in Poughkeepsie. His first book, *Hog and Hominy, Soul Food from Africa to America* is a global look at African American foodways (including the Caribbean and Brazil), that organically developed out of his own love of cooking (and eating). He has also published several related articles and chapters in books including: *"Eating, Dancing, and Courting in New York: Black and Latino Relations, 1930-1970,"* in **the Journal of Social History** (Fall 2008); and *"Molasses-Colored Glasses: WPA and other Sundry Sources on Molasses and Southern Foodways,"* in **Cornbread Nation 4 : The Best of Southern Food Writing** (University of Georgia Press, 2008); Fred Opie also blogs at <http://frederickdouglassopie.blogspot.com/> where he writes about history, food, and culture.

Financial Operations through October 31, 2009:			
	<i>Expenses</i>		<i>Revenues</i>
	<i>Paid</i>		<i>Received</i>
Administrative	\$ (31,681.64)		
Priest	\$ (69,860.71)	Fundraising	\$ 36,401.36
Service/Program	\$ (17,060.17)	Plate	\$ 8,922.54
Diocese	\$ (17,501.60)	Pledge	\$105,931.02
Outreach	\$ (1,602.24)	Space	\$ 5,920.00
Property	\$ (25,451.15)	Investments	\$ 6,078.49
TOTAL	\$(163,157.51)	TOTAL	\$163,253.41
(deficit)/surplus	\$ 95.90		
budgeted surplus	\$ (9,391.96)		

Treasurer’s Report: We approach year-end with a small surplus rather than the deficit contained in the budget, most of which is attributable to the success of JuneFest. We have also done an excellent job in managing our expenses, which has also attributed to our improved operations. Additionally, we applied for a grant from the Diocese to help offset the added expense of offering music at both services. Our application was successful, and will help to reduce the music expense both this year and next year (receipt of this grant was not included in the budget). JuneFest was budgeted to generate \$14,000 for operations; we actually made just over \$22,000 (we did not budget for a dinner and auction during JuneFest this year). Also, FoodFest brought in just under \$3,000. These three sources of revenue helped get us through the summer months, when pledge income dropped significantly. The dinner dance this Fall brought in \$9,600, of which \$9,000 was budgeted, and our wreath sale is just around the corner. Unfortunately, our office copier (20+ years old), finally gave out, and we have had to replace it at a cost of \$6,000 (it should last another 20 years). Not good news, especially since we are close to \$13,000 behind our budget in pledge income, a significant shortfall in expected revenues. Also, with regard to pledges, it is important to keep in mind that the budget assumed receipt of \$130,000 in pledges, as compared to the less than \$120,000 that was actually pledged.

Of more concern, however, is the outlook for the remainder of 2009. The \$130,000 in pledges in the 2009 budget still resulted in a reduction in programs and services offered during 2009. Each employee experienced a cut in hours or salary, including Father Brad. With cuts in salaries, hours, and programs, as well as the use of another \$5,000 from the Memorial Fund for operations, we were finally able to present to Vestry a balanced budget for 2009, with pledges anticipated at \$130,000. Some of the \$13,000 shortfall is attributable to pledges that were never made, but some is attributable to pledges that were made but have not yet been paid. Whether those pledges come in or not between now and December 31st will determine whether we end the year break-even, or need to dip into our dwindling reserves.

REMINDER:

All 2010 Pledge Cards are due.

You may place them in the offertory plate, leave them in the Parish mailbox or drop them off in the Parish Office. We are preparing St. A’s 2010’s budget. The Pledge Cards are necessary to **accurately** plan next year’s budget. Pledge Cards can be found at the back of the church. Thank you for your cooperation.

Pledge update

To date, November 30, 2009, 50 parishioners have returned their pledge cards. They have pledged \$86,526.

Annual Meeting

St. A’s Annual Meeting will be held on 1/31 during the 10:30 a.m. service. Please mark it in your calendars and come and hear reports from parish members & share in planning for the future. Polls for election of Vestry members will be opened on Sunday, 1/31 8:00 a.m. and closed at 6:00 p.m. Anyone interested in running for Vestry should speak with the Clerk of the Vestry, Greg Kaebnick.

Vestry Nominations

The Vestry is the group that makes policy, legal, and financial decisions for St. A's. It is the group that holds vision, planning, and the day to day needs of the church together. The Vestry meets on the third Wednesday, beginning at 8 p.m. and will go on retreat in February of 2010. The term is three years. Please contact Greg Kaebnick, the clerk of the Vestry, before January 10, 2010 to nominate yourself or someone else. Election of new officers will be at the Annual Parish meeting after the 10:30 service on Sunday, January 31, 2010

Choir Rehearsal for Christmas Eve Service

Anyone interested in singing at the 10:30 PM Christmas Eve service is welcome to come to rehearsals from 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM. Thursday evenings starting December 3rd. All are welcome.

Book Group

At the next book group January 10th we will be reading: **The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time, by Mark Haddon:**

This remarkable and poignant book is narrated by Christopher Boone, a 15 year old boy with autism. When his neighbor's poodle is killed, Christopher decides that he will take a page from Sherlock Holmes (one of his favorite characters) and track down the killer. The mystery leads him to the secrets of his parents' broken marriage and to a search to find his place in a world of emotions and relationships he has great difficulty understanding. Called *one of the most captivating, unusual, and widely heralded novels in recent years.* - (Amazon)

New Choir Books

A Music Note: Have you noticed? We are attempting to work in new musical experiences to our worship. For the parish, these hymns will be printed in the service bulletin. Keith and Ann McKenna have graciously donated copies of the *Hymnal Lift Every Voice and Sing II* for the choir to

use, in honor of their anniversary. We blessed these hymnals and our efforts to more accurately reflect the fullness of our church musical traditions!

International Mission Trip Update

We are proud to have two of our youths, as well as Father Brad, accompanying St. Johns on their Mission Trip to Nicaragua. Bennett Rosenow and Henri Huntington will be representing St. A's in July of 2010. As a parish we will be sponsoring them on their trip. As the year progresses we will be holding several fundraisers to help pay for their trip. Currently, if anyone has frequent fliers miles with Delta Airlines to share, please contact the Parish Office.

Parish Hall Update:

If you did not know, the boiler in the Parish Hall spewed soot into the Parish Hall over Columbus Day Weekend. We have cleaned as best as we are able and are attempting to file a claim with our Insurance Company to help repair the damage. Mostly likely, full repair will involve more specialized cleaning and re-painting. We will keep you posted as more information becomes available.

Art Project Update:

As many of you know, we have begun an art project in the Parish House. Chris Jones is busily working on an image of our altar upstairs. Once that is complete, other artists will be invited to provide additional images. So, artists, you will be hearing from us soon. For more information, talk to Father Brad.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT ST.
A'S AND FATHER BRAD

BLOODMOBILE IS COMING TO TOWN.

The semi-annual Croton Community Blood Drive will take place on Sunday, Dec. 6, from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Croton-Harmon High School Gym. In May 2007, 212 community members came to donate blood. Why not add your support to the next drive and make an appointment today? Being a blood donor involves no risk what-so-ever, since all equipment touching the donor is brand-new, sterile, disposable, and used only once. Refreshments are served, baby sitters and transportation are provided. Call 271-7645 to make an appointment or if you have questions. **Please note:** Many of us at St A's do not agree with the requirement excluding homosexuals from blood donation; however, the need for blood is still great, and therefore we still provide this information to you as a community service.

Lessons and Carols at Trinity

The Landmark Choir is celebrating Lessons & Carols at Trinity Church in Scarborough on 20 December. Joe Tuttle, Organ Scholar at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh PA will return this year as organist for the service. Join them for a wonderful way to celebrate the Holiday Season. If you would like to join the Choir for this event please contact Bill Cruse at his office 432.3316.

Reminder:
St. A's Parish Office
will be closed from
December 25th until
January 1st

December Events:

Tuesday and Wednesday, December 1 and 2
 Making bows

Thursday and Friday, December 3 and 4
 Decorating Wreaths

Saturday, December 5
 St. A's Wreath Sale

Sunday, December 6
 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 10:15 am

Sunday, December 13 and Saturday,
 December 19
 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 10:15 am

Sunday, December 20
 The Christmas Pageant – 10:15 am

Thursday, December 24 – Christmas Eve
 4:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Eve Service,
 Holy Eucharist Rite II

7:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service, Holy
 Eucharist Rite II

10:00 p.m. First Service of Christmas, Holy
 Eucharist Rite II

Friday, December 25 – Christmas Day
 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II

CHRISTMAS AT ST. AUGUSTINE’S

Sunday, December 20th	9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
	10:30 a.m.	Children’s Service with Christmas pageant
CHRISTMAS EVE, Thurs, Dec 24th	4:00 p.m.	Children’s Service for Christmas
	7:00 p.m.	Family Service for Christmas
	10:00 p.m.	First Service of Christmas, Holy Eucharist II
CHRISTMAS DAY, Fri. Dec 25th	9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS, December 27	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist with Lessons and Carols

<u>Rector</u>	<u>The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche</u>		
<u>Rector Emeritus</u>	<u>The Rev. David B. Wayne</u>		
<u>Priest Associate</u>	<u>The Rev. Dr. Beth Glover</u>		
<u>Deacon</u>	<u>The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna</u>		
<u>Deacon</u>	<u>The Rev. Deacon Sharon Manning-Lew</u>		
<u>2009 VESTRY MEMBERS</u>			
Senior Warden:	<u>Duncan Cleary</u>	Junior Warden:	<u>Jen Brehl</u>
Treasurer:	<u>Holly Anzani</u>	Clerk:	<u>Greg Kaebnick</u>
<u>Class of 2009</u>	Holly Anzani	<u>Class of</u> Cathie Elliott	<u>Class of 2011</u> Elizabeth Hoffman
	Ed Godek	<u>2010</u> Anya Steger	Laura Seitz
	Greg Kaebnick	David Wixted	Leigh Anna Harken
<u>Meeting Schedule:</u> Vestry, 3rd Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.			

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Address correction requested



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Dated material - please deliver promptly