

The Eagle

The Newsletter of
St. John's of Lattingtown

Winter 2006 Issue

February-April 2006

Letter From the Priest-in-Charge

Dear Fellow Disciples,

Happy New Year and another year of working together for the building up of the parish for now and the future.

We had wonderful Christmas and New Year worship with some 280 attending our Christingle Service on Christmas Eve. We have some exciting liturgies this coming year too not least the ordination to the Sacred Priesthood of my colleague the Rev Clare Nesmith. You will read more about this in the present edition of the Eagle.

It is going to be an exciting year also as we continue to grow spiritually, financially, in Christian Education and in numbers. I am delighted that new parishioners come and find St John's a welcoming family as people readily tell me. It is inevitable that we 'lose' members to the church in heaven but God ensures the church on earth continues to grow and develop here in this part of God's vineyard.

I provide for your reading, prayerful reflection and action my report given at the Annual Meeting which is for every member of the parish.

God Bless you sisters and brothers

Onward and upward

As always, Your Parish Priest, Simon+

From the Parish Assistant: Deacons? Why do we have them?

A few weeks ago, I had the honor of serving as a deacon at the ordination of a priest. As I served there with other deacons and priests and the bishop, I was ruminating on "What is a deacon? What does being a deacon mean? What does that say for priests (who first are ordained as deacons) and what does that say for the person in the pew?"

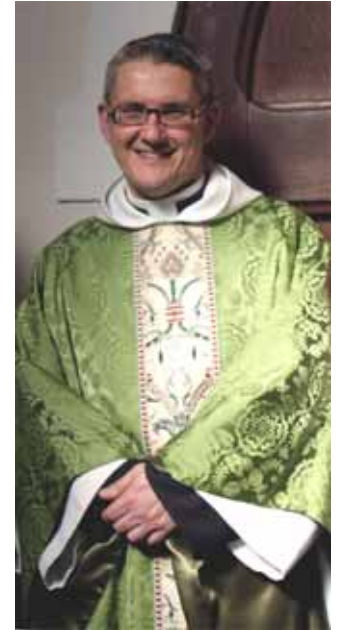
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Annual Meeting 2005 - Report from the Priest-in-Charge

The Greek New Testament uses the word 'eucharist' to convey the importance of thanks, gratefulness and thanksgiving. This priest needs to begin here today. Thanks to ALL who share in the life of St John's in any way and have done so over this last year.

I wish to thank Frank, Chad and Brewster for their hard work, faithfulness and support as well of course as all Vestry members. We express our thanks today to David Brewer, John Macaskill, Jennifer Naylor, Ed Palmer and Dawn Stiegelbauer who have worked in similar vein as Vestry members/members of the Management Team. Thanks to all those who will continue the work they have already been doing on the Vestry for the coming year (and welcome also to you brave souls joining Vestry). Thanks to Johanna and the teachers and volunteer helpers for hard work in Sunday School, to Jan and Mary Williams as ECW Co Chairs,

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From someone helped by our Parish Outreach work.

The Rev. Prof. M. M. D. Sibande

St. John's Residence
Luwinga Township
P. O. Box 20603
Mzuzu-Malawi-D. Africa

January 2, 2006

Dear Colleague,

Thank you so much for your letter of November 11, 2005. As usual we are very thankful for the check of \$500.

We are meeting our needs just because of the St. John's congregation and because of your concern as a Priest-in-Charge for us the poor. Please do also remember to thank the Episcopal Church Women who are at our heart. We thank you and the total congregation for their support and concern for the poor.

I am glad to learn that you have an assistant Pastor, by the name of Clare Nesmith, who has come to help you to ease the load for you in that good congregation. We wish Clare Nesmith all the best and a good new year for you and the congregation.

We are well but there is famine in my country. People die of hunger and your help goes to many people who suffer in the villages. I share with them the letter from you of what you give me. God bless you this New Year.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,
M.M.D. Sibande

One of the children participating in the Christingle



Deacons ... (continued)

The word "deacon" comes from the Greek word *diakonia*, which means "servant," especially in the context of serving at table. So, Sunday by Sunday, you see me serving at table when I set the table and serve the cup and then clean up afterwards. The stole worn over the shoulder is said to be a reminder of a towel! Do you sling a towel over your shoulder when you are doing the washing up?

In the New Testament book, the Acts of the Apostles, is where we first read of deacons. There they were chosen to take bread to the widows and help administer the alms of the church. So, we see in capsule what deacons are ordained to do—go out from the Church into the world, visiting, spreading the Gospel, serving—and what they model for the whole Church.

What else do you see your deacon doing Sunday by Sunday? What the deacon does in the worship service gives the clue as to what a deacon is called to do in all of life. We proclaim the Gospel—the Good News of God in Christ. We proclaim it in season and out of season! We introduce the Confession—encouraging the assembly to purify themselves for service. We offer the Prayers of the People—bringing the concerns of the world both near and far to the Church. As I talked about earlier, we serve at table. And last, we dismiss the assembly, saying "Go out from here into the world and do Christ's work!" At the ordination I said, "Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit!" In other words, "Go! Rejoice! Show the world what the Church can do through the Holy Spirit! Go! Get to work!" Deacons are the conscience of the community and the encouragers.

Once I am ordained to the priesthood, I will remain a deacon. Fr. Simon is still a deacon, he reminded me when he served as an acolyte helping me set the table the other Sunday. He still goes out visiting, spreading the Gospel, serving others, and bringing back the concerns of the world to the Church. He acts as a conscience, he prods, he encourages. As a matter of fact, every one of you is called to that ministry, also! We just seem to be called to that ministry in different levels of intensity.

As Christians, each one of us is called to a servant ministry; some of us are called to represent this servant ministry. All of us are called by Christ to do as he did when he laid down his cloak, tied a towel around himself and washed the feet of his disciples. We are called to set self aside, take up the tools of service, and minister to others.

Your Servant,
Clare



Continued—Annual Meeting 2005 - Report from the Priest-in-Charge

Kathy Brewer and Carla Beale as Altar Guild Co Chairs, Laura Reaper and Stephen White as Co Chairs of the Fair..and all who work alongside these people. Thanks too to the Staff to Ginny, Eric, Mary and John for all the dedicated work they do on our behalf. Thanks to Eric and all choir members for the excellent quality of music in this parish providing what many parishes would die for, to have the standard and beauty of worship we have in this place. Thank you to my new colleague I appointed the Rev Clare Nesmith who has brought her many skills, wit and singing voice to share alongside me in the ordained ministry in this parish. You will never know how much I really appreciate you Clare and what you have done and brought and how much I appreciate you all and this great parish of St John's of Lattingtown.

Priorities for year stated in 2004 Annual report were :

Nurturing a strong spiritual base

Providing dignified and thoughtful worship and preaching

Make pastoral care visible with others

Develop Christian education/youth outreach working with the Director of the Sunday School and others

Keep working on administrative/communications with the Management Team

Develop welcome ministry

These have been and continue to be worked on by those concerned. I have had new members comment on the quality of the welcome they receive here and how much they enjoy what the parish offers. We now have a new Parish Directory and lists of who does what. The Sunday School sends out regular letters and bulletins about Sunday School life, the Curriculum and policy on Children and Holy Communion. We continue to try and streamline administration and work at long term administrative burdens and simplify and rationalize where we can. The list of how all these priorities have been and continue to be worked on are endless.



The Reverend Clare Nesmith,
Parish Assistant

Of particular significance in 2005:

- **New Members and Welcome Ministry-** small group meetings to welcome new people as well as welcome 'pew cards' and a more pro active way to integrate people into the parish
- **Money given to Charities - this has been colossal this year**
 - Fair as form of outreach and fundraising - building on the successes of past has continued to develop and this year was a particular success
- **Development of Home Communion and Sick Visits**
- **Development of more and more people coming for advice and counsel**
- **Development of our Education programs - adults and children**
- **Development of informal worship for children**

These are to name but a few items of significance over the year.



Priorities for 2006

I have personally felt good about the year. However that is not because the parish is perfect or because we don't have serious issues to face. I have every confidence though that this coming year we can face them head on and address them. What things am I thinking about?

(A) Making WORSHIP a Priority

- Sunday and weekday where possible. If everyone who loves St John's made worship life a priority for them and their family we could have even more in Church. We live in a mobile community, a commuter community, a community where people have homes in different places and where there are many opportunities for sport and leisure. TOGETHER though we need to ensure that we ALL do what we can to be at regular worship and to bring others and encourage others to worship. Worship cannot be relegated to a leisure time occupation. Like prayer it should be the source and ground of our life and work. There is a lot of good will towards this Church, a lot of people who come twice a year and who feel it is 'their' Church but we need to move to getting much greater commitment by bodies present in worship. WE are all equally responsible for that. Jesus said 'Go out and spread the Good News'. Part of the Good News here is that we have a believing community that is open to all and wants to develop, expand and grow because it believes the Lord is with us, has risen from the dead and He is infinitely worth celebrating and worth worshipping



A couple of fellas at Christingle

(B) Making STEWARDSHIP a priority

- I and others had a lot of feedback from my sermon on giving a few weeks ago. I made clear that God has already solved the deficit and financial problems in this parish - and of course we are not alone in deficits as an issue. WE of all parishes should have no financial problems at all. The answer is in the hands of every parishioner. Every parishioner needs to be encouraged to examine their giving not in the light of solving the church's financial problems but in terms of expressing in tangible monetary form thanksgiving to God for all God's blessings to us in life and parish. Please if you haven't got your pledge card in do so this week and consider increasing the amount if you haven't done so and are able. If you haven't pledged please do seriously think about it. If you haven't used offertory envelopes before then please be in touch with the office to get them. If you choose to make a plate offering then think about what you put in and can it be increased. WE cannot rely on the Endowment for running costs. Giving as thanksgiving to God for God's blessing is a key essential attitude. ALL without exception should examine their giving to God and this parish in these terms. WE TOGETHER need to take corporate responsibility for ensuring those who love this Parish share with us in its financial well being. Let us all be agents of ensuring good stewardship by all in the parish

(C) Making new VOLUNTEERS a priority

- in any parish it is assumed that the work gets done but who by? Parishes are based on voluntarism and we have a challenge that we must address. The same people very often share burdens and responsibilities that need to be shared by others. I am delighted that we now have women ushers and the net is wider for that work. TOGETHER we need to encourage more people to volunteer for parish work. There are plans afoot for this coming year to expand voluntarism and who does it. Will we all try to encourage more volunteers, other people, newer congregants to feel part of the different aspects of parish life.



(D) Making sure WE are POSITIVE about parish life and talk it up.

GROW the parish together. Christians for many years the world over have been bad at one thing - complaining. In a parish like this we have so much to be thankful for, so much worth celebrating, so much worth sharing in and yet we need to be always aware that complaining and negativity affects others and affects the spiritual temperature of a place. Constructive helpful comments and suggestions to those concerned are good and proper but may 's be a brand leader in being positive and being appreciative of all we have here, all that God has blessed us with. As I always say St John's like any parish is anything but perfect just like each one of us here is not perfect but let us open our eyes and ears and stamp out the wrong sort of negativity if it creeps in and keep creating a culture of the positive, open and caring towards each other

(E) Making the SUNDAY SCHOOL a prayer theme and an area for our ENCOURAGING.

In this culture, in this community we are very fortunate to have a Sunday School at all. Johanna and her team along with some parents work hard in this area. Of course they can be always open for criticism. There is always room for improvement and development in every area of parish life and no less the Sunday School. It takes committed parents to make a Sunday School work alongside a good faculty and caring and educating teachers. As a parish we need to help promote parental commitment to the Church as a worshipping community and to the Sunday School as an educational enterprise, an Episcopal one that is relevant and adapted to the reality of the context we live in. Parents as well as all congregants need to be the evangelizes for our Sunday School and parish - get parents to come to Church, find out about Sunday School, find out about what children are doing in Sunday School, get children and parents to come to children's worship, car pool to help those parents who really can't come to Church and so on. There is a regular teachers faculty meeting so if you have any praise, thanks, concerns speak directly with Johanna our Director and get these put on the agenda for the next meeting

(F) Making the FAIR an area for thought and prayer.

The Fair in this parish has been a product of its own success. It is a huge dinosaur and what I am hearing loud and clear is that things can't carry on as they have been. It peaked this year and it needs to be reviewed and thought through, as does how its proceeds may or may not be distributed. Your Vestry is working hard and thinking hard on this so share any thoughts you have with them on this. It has been a key outreach work and more thought needs to go into the future of the fair and it's shape and purposes.

This year for me has been one of getting to know the parish more and loving the parish even more. This coming year we will see an ordination to the Priesthood as well as a Celebration of New Ministry which will also be part of our ongoing life together we seek to build up the Church in this parish and extend the Kingdom. May God continue to strengthen us and bless as we seek to serve God's parish here as it not ours really - God's parish of St John of Lattingtown.

"The Invitation to Reconciliation"

Lenten Quiet Day

Saturday, April 8th

10 am-12:30 pm

St. John's of Lattingtown invites you to a special morning of meditations on the Lenten theme of reconciliation, one of the sacraments of our faith. This powerful topic invites us to explore the many ways a "disconnect" with God can manifest... as well as the many ways God urges us toward wholeness. This morning offers a rhythm of leader-led reflections, silence, music for meditation, thought-provoking exercises, journaling, and a closing. The leader is Nina Frost Close, vocational counselor and spiritual director. She is a principal of The Vocare Group in New York City, author of the book "Soul Mapping," frequent retreat leader and graduate of the General Theological Seminary. She is also married to the Rev. Dr. Robert Close, interim pastor of Locust Valley Reformed Church.

VESTRY NOTES:

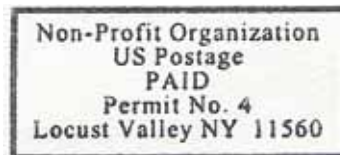
The Vestry will be participating in their annual retreat on Saturday, January 21st. The timing of the meeting will, unfortunately, miss the deadline for this issue of The Eagle so a full report will be included in the next issue.

As a major part of the agenda there will be discussions of the St John's stewardship program and an analysis of the physical condition of our facilities.

There was some review of stewardship at the annual meeting in December. During the budget discussions it was pointed out that our expenses have followed an inflationary trend while donations and pledges have remained flat. Thus we are facing a deficit which must be overcome. A full review of alternatives is planned.

As for the facilities review, the vestry will be looking at an analysis of the present physical condition of all of our buildings. With this report, a schedule of both short term and long range maintenance will be developed.

Typically, other matters requiring vestry attention are added prior to the meeting. These will also be reported to you in future issues of The Eagle.



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Clergy: The Rev. Simon Foster,
Priest-in-Charge
& Rev Clare Nesmith, Parish Assistant

Office Hours: Mon-Fri, 9am to 1pm

If you would like to talk to the clergy about anything, need priestly ministry or would like to receive Holy Communion at home or in hospital due to sickness, please call to make an appointment.



Baptisms

Mark Christopher Jennings
Henry Pomeroy Davison III
Eliza Cummings Ritter
Morgan Elizabeth Gillies

Weddings

Peter Harry McCallion & Judith Underwood Stewart
Randolph Post Eddy III & Kelly Elizabeth Fife

Burials

Brewster T. Gillies
Charles W. Bast
Janet O'Rourke
Elizabeth Greeff

Labyrinth Workshop:

March 25th, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Listening and Saying "Yes" to God

Have you ever walked a labyrinth?
Do you wonder what in the world it is all about?

One hears about labyrinths in ancient history,
laid out in stone in medieval cathedrals,
cut into the turf in remote countrysides.

This ancient practice of pilgrimage is being revived
as a way of listening for God
within the twists and tangles of our daily lives,
as we seek to encounter the sacred in our midst.

Come to St. John's, Saturday, March 25th,
to explore what walking a labyrinth can do for you.

Facilitated by the parish clergy
Bring food to share for lunch