

APRIL 2006

THE ROCK



THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Sunday April 9

8:00 and 10:30 A.M.

Palm Sunday: the Passion

Procession with Palms and Dramatic Reading of the Passion

Wednesday April 12

7:00 P.M.

Tenebrae

Monastic Prayer

Psalms, Prayers, Readings, Silences, and Gathering Shadows

Thursday April 13

5:30 P.M. — Passover Seder in the Parish Hall

Adas Yeshuron Synagogue Seder, by reservation only

(\$15 for adults, \$10 for children — call the office for details, 594-8191)

8:00 P.M. — Maundy Thursday Liturgy in the Sanctuary

Footwashing, Communion, Stripping the Altar, the Garden Vigil

Friday April 14

Good Friday

12:00 noon — Franciscan Way of the Cross

6:30 P.M. — Adoration of the Cross and Healing Ministry

Saturday, April 15

5:00 P.M.

Easter Vigil

The New Fire, Paschal Candle, Salvation Stories, and Baptisms

Sunday, April 16

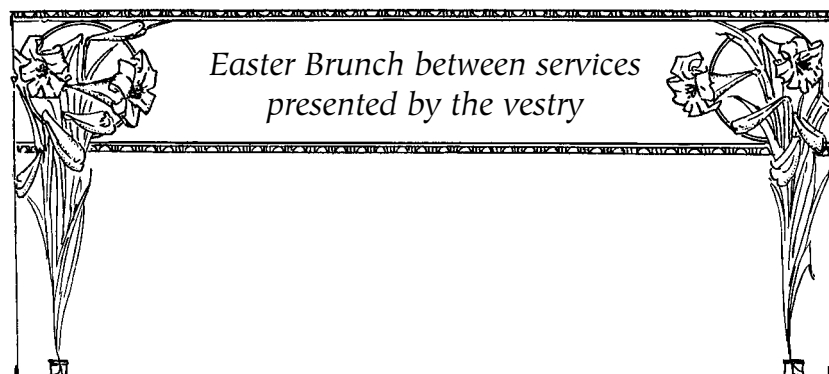
8:00 and 10:30 A.M.

The Day of Resurrection

Festive Easter Celebrations and Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Holy Week Renewal 2006

*Special moments of silence,
prayer, meditation, reflection,
sacrament, and song, observing
Christianity's most ancient
traditions, this year blessed by
the sacred Jewish Passover feast*



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WINDOW OF THE SPIRIT *views into the souls of St. Peter's*

Evolution as common sense

The Rev. Ralph Moore

(based on homily February 12, 2006)

All my grandparents and my parents were raised in the so-called Bible Belt—Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas—and they were active in churches, most of them Baptist. In their homes you never put another book on top of a Bible, didn't speak an off-color word and never mentioned anything having to do with alcoholic beverages—things like that.

My earliest memory having to do with my religious upbringing and evolution is of one of my grandfathers. He had worked all of his life as a railroad mail clerk in east Texas and had retired to west Texas when I first got to know him in 1940 or 1941. I was just about six years old. He often took me with him to catch catfish out of the Rio Grande, and one of those days, as we were sitting on the river bank, he poked a stick into the thick red mud and pulled out a big glob of it and said, "Ya know, Son, that's us, that's you and me, that's what we're made of and that's what we're goin' back to." That was his way of visualizing the Genesis creation story. Now at the very same time he loved scientific discoveries and the *National Geographic* was everywhere in his house and he used to read to me from it—and we read all the articles, not just the captions under the pictures. How I would hunger for those glorious adventures into scientific discoveries with him. For instance, after we had read about a new unearthing of prehistoric bones, he'd say something like, "Will ya look at that: one of our ancestors who lived 80,000 years ago!"

It amazes me to this day that in all of my family I never heard a word spoken against Charles Darwin, modern science or the teaching of evolution. That famous trial had taken place in 1925, and even though John Scopes, a high school biology teacher, was technically found guilty of violating Tennessee's new law against the teaching of evolution, the verdict was reversed a year later and the big push in many states to enact such laws had died down. Perhaps the need for scientific strength during the long period of World War II and then the Cold War ennobled scientific method and scientists. Whatever it was, there seemed from the start of my experience no contradiction between Bible and science. In fact, scientific discovery seemed to enhance a sense of God's glory. Granddad was pretty clear about it: the more we learned from science the more in awe we were of the wonder of creation.

Let's look for a moment not at the issue of evolution but at the reunion between science and spirituality in the healing arts. We read in lessons appointed for this morning two stories about seemingly miraculous healings. There is Naaman finding healing power in the word of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 5:1–14), and there is Jesus restoring a leper just through a word (Mark 1:40–45). We can affirm without a lot of conflict with our doctors that these events resemble healing experiences in our time. There is greater acknowledgement by science today of the role of faith and prayer and spiritual inner power as sometimes determining how illness is cured and always advancing the healing process. We do not profit much from insisting that these events literally happened the way they are recorded in scripture. But we are empowered when we recognize in them a hope that comes from antiquity: that faith nurtured in our religious community leads to healing of the soul and sometimes curing of the body, that there is enormous power in forgiveness, reconciliation and grace. Namaan's healing begins when he lets go of his bruised ego, his unhappiness over the prophet's not coming out to greet him in a

dramatic display divine power. The leper's healing begins when he simply offers himself to Jesus in humility. We have no idea whether or not the events happened as we read them in our translations. But we do experience these stories as being true for us every moment we let go of our bruised egos and seek to live humbly and openly letting God's power rise up in us.

Much of the conflict in today's world has been clothed in religious claims of certitude and orthodoxy. Frankly, I believe that is at the heart of it. It ought to be possible for all People of the Book—Jews, Christians and Muslims—to celebrate our common source, the one God we worship, the truth, love, and peace we are called to manifest, without there being only one authoritative version that ignores the realities of our various cultures and peculiar traditions. I lament how the political process in our nation, for example, has seemed intent on co-opting the so-called “evangelical” Christian communities. Would it not be preferable for us to honor one another as neighbors rather than be pitted against one another in the political arena?

I have joined the national Clergy Letter Project for just this reason (www.uwosh.edu/colleges/cols/religion_science_collaboration.htm). This is a network formed over the internet of pastors, chaplains, teachers and scientists who find in the way of the sciences not a violation of faith but rather an awesome adventure that inspires us to greater faith. The hope is threefold:

- To restore an understanding of the diversity of religious communities as legitimate, honorable, much to be respected.
- To embrace the sciences as gifts to be used by humans as we explore and learn about ourselves, our earth and our universe.
- To remove from government, legislation, public education and other places in our common civic life the need for certain doctrinal religious perspectives to become established by statute. We blend our religious perspectives by our actions with one another as we work for the common good.

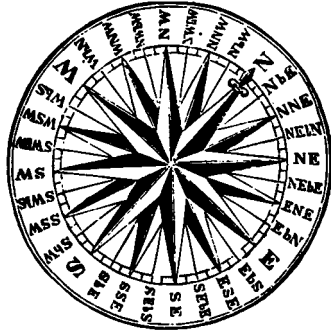
I look back once again to my grandparents as my guide. They didn't have years of graduate school or heavy doctrinal study to trip them up. For them it was just a matter of common sense to study, love, and investigate equally the words of scripture and the amazing things of the natural world. In some of our faith communities we do this. Many of our neighbors do not do this. So be it. Let's stay with each other in mutual respect and love. And let this aspect of our life not be dishonored by some in political life who need to win contests by manipulating religious sentiment.

Today, the leper is really each of us and our situation. We are all in need of healing, and our society and our world are hugely in need of healing. The prophet, the healer, even Jesus, simply say, “You can and will be healed, but this comes only as you genuinely and humbly seek new health.” Our life and our faith are formed around seeking and asking and loving God and inviting the living God into our lives. As healing happens, then we know what a real miracle is.



WINDOW OF THE SPIRIT *views into the souls of St. Peter's*

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WAYPOINTS *activities and notices on our journey together*

A word from Jeff Lewis

14 March 2006

Dear friends at St. Peter's,

I realized recently that many of you have probably heard through the grapevine some details about what I am doing and what my plans are for the future. That is not the best way to find out anything about anybody and I am sorry about that. In the interest of friendship, good communication, and all that good stuff I want to drop you a line and let you know what's happening with me.

Since stepping back from ordination last spring, I have had a lot of time for prayerful reflection about my call to the priesthood. In some ways, it seems like it's almost all I have done. In this time of healing and discernment I have relearned the truth that calling is both a personal and communal phenomenon, and I am grateful for all the support I felt in these last months.

The short of it is that I am moving forward with my ordination. Since October I have been serving as the deacon at St. John the Baptist Church in Thomaston with the Rev. Peter Jenks. It has been a wonderful and supportive experience, and I am grateful to have had this opportunity to get back in the saddle while living and working in my own community.

Recently I had a very supportive meeting with Bishop Knudsen and she has since arranged for me to meet with the Standing Committee on May 4 for a final interview before ordination to the priesthood. Should that go well, I hope to be ordained to the priesthood in Thomaston early in the summer (or late in the spring, depending on where you draw the line.) When the date written in pencil becomes the date written in ink, I will be sure to let you know.

You remain in my thoughts and prayers, and I appreciate being in yours.

Most sincerely,

Jeff

(the Rev. Jeffrey C. Lewis)

March vestry minutes

Members present: Ralph, Elizabeth Biddle, John Bird, Ferolyn Curtis, Jim Curtis, Bruce Davis, Spencer Hurtt, Joanne Murphy, Tom O'Brien, Joanne Smith, Pat Snow.

Members absent: Jim Bowditch, Kay Brown, Mac Deford, the Rev. Isabel Polk, Sarah Reynolds, Harold Van Lonkhuyzen.

Visitors: Paul and Marty Rogers.

The next vestry meeting has been shifted to the third Thursday for April: April 20, beginning at 6:30. Jerry LiaBraaten will attend to join a conversation about transitioning to a new rector, a topic of lively concern to the vestry.

During the treasurer's report an increase in pledges was noted; despite our ongoing deficit budget pledge payments are on track.

Ralph reported on the two recent retreat experiences involving St. Peter's: the diocesan deacon/priest retreat and the St. Peter's vestry retreat in February.

The February overnight vestry retreat at China Lake was rated a worthwhile experience by all who attended. We got to know each other better and shared prayerful times along with times of animated discus-

sion. Discussions ranged from attitudes toward music in worship to the timeline for a search for a new rector. The consensus was that we know ourselves much better than we did when Ralph came and don't think we need 18 months to search for a new rector. When Ralph retires, Isabel will stay to provide continuity for the congregation.

Marty Rogers reported on behalf of the Evangelism Commission. A new directory is an upcoming project. The "family tree," created several years ago, is to be updated; Spencer Hurtt has agreed to photograph church members for that use. The commission is producing the *Rock* on a seasonal schedule, with time-sensitive events announced in an expanded, separate Sunday bulletin.

Elizabeth reminded us that the Not-Just-Baskets auction and dinner will be April 29 at 6 P.M. She is cochair of the event.

The vestry is in agreement to make St Peter's property a non-smoking campus. The Recreation Center, as city property, already has that designation.

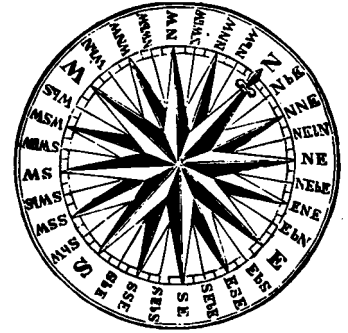
In his report Ralph outlined the Holy Week schedule. Of note, the vestry agreed to the celebration at St. Peter's of the Passover Seder with Adas Yeshuron to be followed by our Maundy Thursday service (these events do not usually occur on the same night).

He noted that our campus project is under way, with the general meeting for forming the steering committee 21 March. Robert Garcia will lead this meeting.

There are plans for a children's musical in the church; a producer is needed.

Ralph has shared his plan to be away all of July and the first two weeks of August; the vestry supports this. (Copies of the full vestry minutes are available from the church office.)

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Smith



WAYPOINTS

*activities and notices
on our journey
together*

Not-Just-Baskets Auction and Dinner

2006's first major fund-raiser: 29 April!

Please join your St. Peter's family at the **Not-Just-Baskets Auction and Dinner** social on Saturday, 29 April. Last year's event was a resounding success, with over 100 people in attendance and nearly \$7,000 raised!

A silent auction of themed baskets is again the major attraction, though this year's auction will also feature several stand-alone items, as well as a catered dinner and live entertainment.

All proceeds support the mission of St. Peter's as a downtown Rockland church.

We welcome your creative or organizational efforts to assemble baskets for these and other themes. We need everyone's help to encourage your friends and family to attend—or, maybe you would like to be a table captain this year.

Call Marty Rogers (236-8922) or Elizabeth Biddle (236-4941) to offer your support of this important fund-raising event.

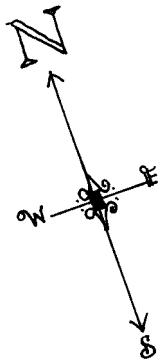
Thank you! —*Elizabeth and Marty, co-chairs*

ON THE HORIZON

upcoming events



ON THE HORIZON upcoming events



Bishop's 7 May homecoming at St. Peter's

Join Bishop Knudsen at St. Peter's on Sunday, 7 May, at 5 P.M. for her annual homecoming plus evensong, confirmation for youth and adults, and Holy Eucharist.

Diocesan area meetings

The bishop and other diocesan staff are holding area meetings with open discussions and Q&As about this June's upcoming General Convention in Columbus, Ohio. Our area 6 meeting (Knox, Waldo, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc Counties) will be Sunday, 30 April, at St. Thomas', Camden, at 4 P.M.

If you can't make this first of the area meetings, try to attend one of the others (all meetings are open to parishioners from any area). The full schedule of meetings follows.

Sunday, 30 April, 4 P.M., St. Thomas', Camden

Monday, 8 May, 6:30 P.M., Christ Church, Norway

Wednesday, 10 May, 6:30 P.M., St. Alban's, Cape Elizabeth

Monday, 15 May, 6:30 P.M., St. Mark's, Waterville

Saturday, 20 May, 3 P.M., Good Shepherd, Houlton

Thursday, 25 May, 6:00 P.M., Ascension Day Service

followed by 7:00 P.M. meeting, St. Dunstan's, Ellsworth

From the Rector



A review of the year just completed is an immensely satisfying exercise for me. I have felt blessed by every year, but the 2005–06 period of life and work is unique: August 31, 2006, marks the completion of the ten years we have served together through the ministry of St. Peter's.

During the observances we celebrated in February of the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr., I came across one of this prophet's more somber admonitions to people who consider themselves to be righteous. He said, "Nothing in the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity." Well, I truly believe that 2005 was a year in which we faced into such an admonition—as a parish and as a national church. All people of faith, in fact, were tested mightily to choose just how ignorant and stupid they and their religious tenets would stubbornly insist on being. Hardly any issue and conflict, locally and internationally, was not influenced by—or caused by—proponents of religious agendas. Many commentators over the years have echoed the refrain that "all wars are religious." How can we avoid the horror of the truth in such a cynical judgment and not feel implicated and involved?

My first point about 2005 is, therefore, that I truly believe that these questions, these dilemmas, could be faced by us as a religious community. I do not mean that we found answers or arrived at agreements.

Rather, and more important, I believe it has become increasingly safe for us—in our speaking, our sharing, our praying—to seek and be found by the Spirit and to let ourselves respect and support each other's spiritual journeys. We are being blessed again and again by the freedom to be unafraid as we deal with the contradictions in our lives and in the world around us, and also the freedom to experience church as a community of seekers and companions, and not a source of absolute solutions and certainties. We are catching more glimpses of ourselves as truly a "faith" community.

Several books about healthy congregations mention how easy it is to start a big fight in a parish: find the tiniest, most insignificant, detail, and get people to argue over it. In no time at all the temptation to fight over such silly things grabs hold and the parish becomes a battleground just like all other human institutions. Not that we are perfect, but I do believe that as a group of people we are growing into maturity of faith, into spiritual health, so that when any of us loses patience with someone else (myself included) we find ourselves surrounded by sisters and brothers who have a gentle word or touch to remind us about who we are: a community first loved by God, living in the grace of Christ, energized by the Holy Spirit. And we keep our perspective, we live into our calling to be Christian—loving, forgiving, reconciling, doing and speaking truth, compassion and justice.

This is my testimony about a major theme of our life together in 2005. If you'd like to test my claim, try making a list of things that we could have gotten into strife and conflict over—such as (but not limited to): the war in Iraq, human sexuality, a methadone clinic in Rockland, changes in liturgies, hymns and music selections, things not getting done, things done but done wrong, etc., etc. We all know that lots of differences and grumblings could easily separate us from each other. My sense is that two things have been happening: we are a thankful people, thankful that as a church we experience ourselves as a community of equals, all sinners and all embraced by the forgiving grace of God; and we are thankful for the vivid power we feel from living in the mystery of faith. We are being converted every moment, emptied of old, meaner spirits, filled with things that make for peace. Thus, you see, I don't think we are easily sliding into some status as ignorant or stupid sleep walkers.

Call me naive, tell me that I'm avoiding problems and living with illusions. I'll tell you that had this not been true for me, at least, during 2005 in St. Peter's, I would not have made it through. It was true for me that what we did together on Sundays turned out to be what it is called in the *Book of Common Prayer*: "celebration." It is hard to fake the role of "celebrant." So, thank you, sisters and brothers. Thank you, Gracious God.

This is my first point, my main point. I have about a dozen more points. (You are used to this from me by now.) But I'll only briefly touch on one of them. Because of what I have tried to describe as our growth as a faith community, I feel a new hope about our organizing ourselves in ways better defined during the coming year. An exciting task that our leadership will be invited to consider in the months ahead is outlined in the power of the Circle! (Oy! There he goes again!) Stay with me on this. I attach to my report a page from the newest guide produced by the Diocese of Maine for those entering the process of discerning their call to ministry (see pp. 8–9). It features two contrasting diagrams for envisioning how the church does ministry. Please ponder this page for a while, prayerfully. What delights me most in finding this new document (*Power from Within: Discerning Gifts for Ministry in the Congregation*, Oct. 2005) is that these diagrams have been used for many years all over

From the Rector



From the Rector



the world in many changing church situations—especially Roman Catholic and Anglican—in the revitalization of parish life. Unlike many church publications, this is not just another gimmick, another crutch to shore up failing congregations. We have been experiencing this in our life together for several years. It is the basis of all of our Christian Formation programs. It is the basis of the Education for Ministry courses. It is the foundation of all who prepare for the specialized ministries of deacon, priest and bishop. It is the refreshed redefinition of baptism for us all.

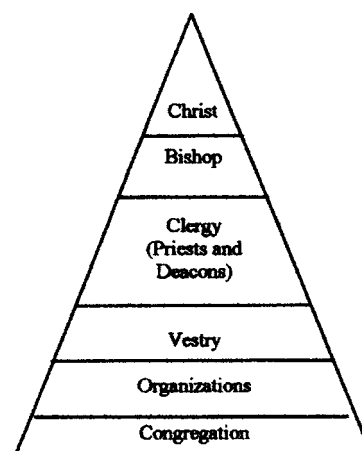
I believe that this material and our continued life of prayer and planning, will strengthen our leadership in 2006 as the vestry and others: 1) continue to oversee our work and coordinate our ministries and programs; 2) keep us all informed of the needs and expectations we are called to support through our stewardship of our resources, our talents and our time; 3) prepare for the interesting and challenging calling to initiate the search for a new rector in 2007 (also: to participate in selecting a new bishop for the Diocese of Maine).

Well, as we all know, life in God is not passive. The ancient prayer captures the moment well: “O God, our hearts are restless until they rest in thee.” Blessed restlessness! Blessed Celebration! Blessed Community of faith! How blest I have been to have such “com-panions”— “those who share bread”—as I have been with the sisters and brothers given to me in St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Rockland, Maine.

Prayers and Blessings in Christ,

Ralph

Hierarchical Model of Ministry



Relational Model of Ministry

(Reprinted from *Power from Within: Discerning Gifts for Ministry in the Congregation*, Oct. 2005)

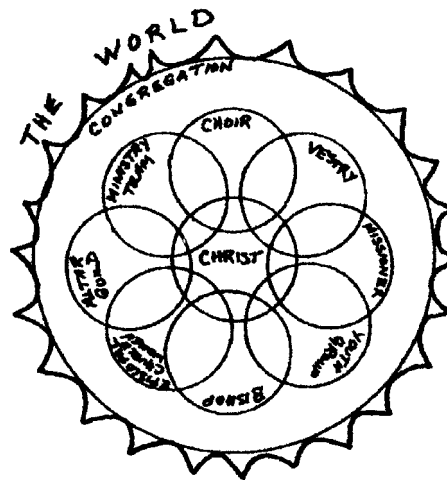
In the early church, the Corinthians wrestled with the challenges of acknowledging every person's gifts. In response to their struggle, Paul wrote:

There are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit, but the same Lord; there are varieties of activities, but it is the same Lord who activates all of them in everyone ... For just as the body is one and has many members, and all of the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body ... Indeed, the body does not consist of one body but many. If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body." That would not make it any less a part of the body ... If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be?

(I Cor. 12:4, 12-13, 14, 15, 17 NRSV)

Does the model of the church as you know it reflect the model of church that Paul describes above?

For many years, the church has operated on a hierarchical model. This guide is designed to help you move toward a **relational model of ministry** in your congregation.



The foundation for the relational model is both Scripture and the catechism found in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

- Q. *What is the mission of the Church?*
A. The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.
- Q. *How does the Church pursue its mission?*
A. The Church pursues its mission as it prays and worships, proclaims the Gospel, and promotes justice, peace, and love.
- Q. *Through whom does the Church carry out its mission?*
A. The church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members
- Q. *Who are the ministers of the Church?*
A. The ministers of the Church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons.
- Q. *What is the ministry of the laity?*
A. The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church; to bear witness to him wherever they may be; and, according to the gifts given them, to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world; and to take their place in the life, worship, and governance of the Church. (BCP, p. 855)

St. Peter's Episcopal Church seeks to serve God's mission of restoring all people to unity with him. We open wide our doors and say, in the name of Jesus Christ, "Welcome."

Worship

Sunday 8:00 and 10:30 A.M. Holy Eucharist
Wednesday 7:00 A.M. Taizé Holy Eucharist

Office hours

Tuesday–Thursday 8 A.M. to 4 P.M.

The Rev. Ralph Moore, Rector
(home 596-0421, rector@stpetersrockland.org)

The Rev. Isabel Polk, Deacon
(home 596-0003; deacon@stpetersrockland.org)

Deborah Watson, Administrative Secretary
Robert Earle, Organist
Malcolm Brooks, Composer and Choir Director
Valerie Wells, Director of Christian Education

The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen, Bishop of Maine

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John Bird 596-6276

Jim Bowditch 236-2272

JoAnne Murphy, Junior Warden, 594-4023

Mac Deford, Treasurer

Jake Thomas, Assistant Treasurer

Sarah Reynolds, Clerk

Vestry members

Elizabeth Biddle, Katherine Brown, Ferolyn Curtis,
Jim Curtis, Bruce Davis, Spencer Hurtt, Thomas O'Brien,
Joanne Smith, Pat Snow, Harold van Lonkhuyzen

THE ROCK

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