

# ST. ANNE'S EYE

Proclaiming the Stories of God's Love

at St. Anne's Episcopal Church,  
Trexlerstown, Pennsylvania

INFORM INVOLVE INSPIRE

Aug./Sept. 2017

# Feasting on Gratitude

Six-week stewardship series guiding annual contribution campaign

This Fall we will be focusing on "Feasting on Gratitude" for our annual giving. In our Church, we celebrate Holy Communion, a feast of gratitude, for all that has been given to us and for the blessings we receive in God's abiding presence with us. As Eucharistic people, our call is to respond with praise and thanksgiving.

How do faith communities support one another in embracing practices of gratitude? What is the annual giving campaign, a time that is traditionally devoted to raising support for the life giving ministries of a congregation? It is a time to embrace our intentional practice of gratitude and to recognize our giving practice as worship – a concrete way to offer praise and thanksgiving.

"Feasting on Gratitude" is a six week stewardship reflection series designed to complement our annual giving campaign. Each of the six contributing writers explores stewardship, giving, gratitude and generosity in connection with readings from the Gospel of Matthew each Sunday beginning on October 1st through October 29th - Gratitude Sunday - when we will make our pledges and celebrate with a brunch after each service – "Come to the Banquet."

The six weekly reflections say that we are



called to offer praise and thanksgiving with the entirety of our lives. One of the most concrete ways that we offer praise and gratitude for all we have been given.

We know it is not always easy to be grateful. Work and life pressures abound. We face loss and disappointments. Gratitude is the fruit of life abundant turning what we have into enough and more. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend.

The weekly discussion questions and reflections will be in your Sunday worship bulletins so that you can think about them during the week. We will also include our prayer for stewardship each week asking us to pray for discernment for our ministries.

– Connie Archer, Stewardship Campaign Chair

## Stewardship Reflection Series

Proper 22A v  
Matthew 21: 33-46

There was a landowner who planted a vineyard...

Recently I was in the Napa Valley of California, arguably the wine area of this country. I am always intrigued by the intricacy of the work that goes into all the preparation and growth that leads to grapes and then, finally, wine. While there, I was told a story about some of the vines that were imported to this country. To make sure there were no unwanted introductions to our ecosystem, these particular vines had to be quarantined for three years! So, the one waiting to plant, and begin the harvest, had to wait three years to even get the vines in the ground. At countless points in the process toward grapes, the key word seems to be patience, and also, a whole lot of care. The bottom

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line is this: it takes good stewards of the land, the vine, the natural resources, all of it, in order to actually get the fruit, and ultimately the wine. Some vines in this region are nearly 100 years old. Many who planted them are long gone from this earth, but the vines still bear fruit. The vines stand as living legacies.

This parable always reminds me of a story about a farmer who told the preacher he was tired of hearing that we didn't own anything, and that it all belonged to God. The farmer invited the preacher over for dinner, and after dinner took him out to look over his land. He had him stand and look in all directions, and he said to the preacher, "As far as the eye can see, this is all mine. Now can you really stand there and say I don't own it?" The preacher just smiled at him and said, "Ask me that in a hundred years." The shorter versions of this same idea are these: there are no luggage racks on a hearse, and at the end of the game the king and the pawn go in the same box.

All we have been given in this life is on loan, at best. It is not ours, we will never truly own it. We have it, for what-ever reason, in order to care for it as best we can. This is true of everything we, or the bank, says we own, and it is just as true for every relationship we have. We are stewards of all of it, called by God to leave the land, our material possessions, our money, and our relationships better than we found them, or they found us. All we now see, hold, and know is God's vineyard, and we are called to tend it, for the One who truly owns it all.

*The Rt. Rev. Gregory H. Rickel  
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of  
Olympia*

## Reflection Questions

How can you live into the claim that we are not "owners" of anything, we are simply called to steward what has been entrusted to us?

How do you embrace a practice of gratitude for all that has been given?

How does the practice of giving bear fruit in your life and in your community?

# "GATHER US IN"

As the summer comes to an end and we all return to our regular schedules, we look forward to being together and enjoying our full fellowship. This is a time to gather together as God calls us into a renewal and celebration of our place in the Family of God.

One of the most common tendencies we can experience in our relationships with those we are closest to is to take our loved ones for granted. Taking others for granted can become destructive to our relationships and a source of great regret. A helpful reflection could be to consider what it was like while dating before marriage. We sometimes forget the longing to be together. It is important to remember the anticipation and excitement that preceded time together.

It is good to remember the special way we felt when we were with our loved ones. That time was precious. It is no less precious now. Hopefully we feel similarly when we anticipate the opportunity to be together on Sundays or at other church activities. We are excited as we anticipate seeing our sisters and brothers. When we are together, we are aware of how special that time is and relish it. We should not waste our time together with petty gripes or pet peeves.

Sunday worship is so much more than fulfilling an obligation or completing a ritual in the shortest, least painful way possible. Actually, that is exactly what Sunday worship is not. That is the description of a burden. We fulfill no obligation when we



gather grudgingly or out of a feeling of guilt or compulsion. We certainly do not "celebrate" the Eucharist when we concern ourselves with the criticism of length of time spent, excitement or entertainment value.

Eucharist means thanksgiving. The first and foremost things we are thankful for is the opportunity to celebrate and express our love for God and our sisters and brothers as well as our commitment to them. If this is not at the core of our Sunday worship no amount of good music, insightful preaching, or convenient timing will satisfy us or will encourage us to return. (As a side note, helpful suggestions to improve our worship are always welcome.)

At this time in the life of the Family of God at St. Anne's church, we are called to renew and strengthen our relationships as part of that Family. Last year we celebrated our 50th Anniversary. Now

we look forward to living the Gospel together for the next 50 years. To be successful, we need to make a conscious effort to commit ourselves to deepening our relationship with God and each other. It will not happen automatically or by chance. Like good marriages, good friendships, and good family relationships; effort, commitment, and loving sacrifices are necessary.

NOW is the time to commit ourselves to each other. I am not sure if it was an oriental sage, a Greek philosopher or a wise grandparent who said: "While the past is but a memory, and the future is uncertain, today is a gift - that is why it is called the 'present.'" Today is the only time we have. Today is a gift from God. This gift is best shared with each other and not alone or apart. Please hear the call. You are needed to complete our family at St. Anne's. Your presence is celebrated and your absence felt keenly.

## *FROM LOSS AND LAMENT ... TO GROWTH AND GRACE*

Regardless of which service you attend, when you look around to see who is in church, there are noticeable changes. We have been blessed by a number of new people. However, there are some who are not there. In the past twelve months, we have had 11 deaths. Others have moved

away or attend other churches.

The loss of anyone changes our lives as well as the community. We fondly remember and miss those who are with the Lord. As God's loving family, we support each other in our loss. Our faith also provides consolation.

It is not only important, but necessary to acknowledge our losses. Each person is affected in different ways. The absence of a family member or fellow parishioner is significant. The way we worship, socialize, and function as a church family is changed.

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# Capital Campaign Update

The following are updates to the three remaining Capital Campaign projects:

## UPGRADES TO THE BATHROOMS:

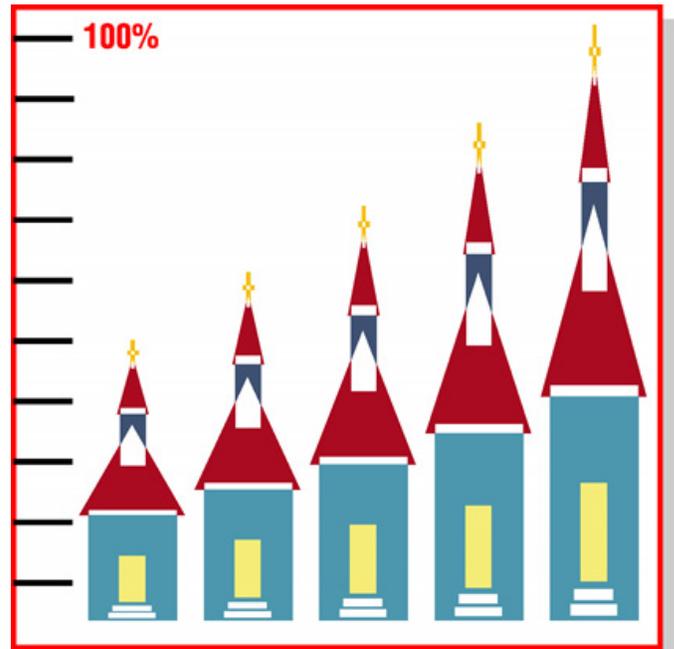
We received several bathroom design recommendations from parishioners over the past couple of months. The designs were reviewed with the architect and a final selection was made by the Vestry. The architect is now developing construction drawings that will be used to request bids from contractors. Once a contractor is selected, we will need to apply for a building permit. Pending receipt of permits, construction is targeted for later this year.

## INSTALLATION OF AN ELECTRONIC PROGRAMMABLE SIGN:

We successfully received planning and zoning variances from Lower Macungie Township for the installation of our new electronic sign. A design was reviewed and a sign was ordered from the manufacturer. Delivery and installation is expected in early to mid-September pending receipt of a building permit. A mason has been contacted and we are currently negotiating a contract for the masonry work.

## REFURBISHMENT OF THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT:

We have proceeded to order a commercial grade multi-slide plastic play system for the playground to replace the "wooden boat" that was removed due to its deterioration. Delivery is scheduled for the end of September. Any parishioners interested in helping with the installation should contact Paul Persico. In addition, an Eagle Scout candidate has proposed a project to enhance our playground, including the addition of benches and repairing and aligning the perimeter timbers. The candidate is looking to receive approval for



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

the project from the Boy Scouts in early September.

Further updates will be provided as these projects continue through their execution phase.

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We need to acknowledge, respect, and mourn each loss. If we are not personally profoundly impacted, we must remember those who are. We must be open to give and receive support. In this process, it is helpful to remember the stages of death and dying outlined in the book *On Death and Dying* by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (the five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance).

These stages can apply in the death of a loved one as well as when someone does not die but leaves our lives. Two of the stages we can experience are denial and anger. Ultimately, we hope to arrive at acceptance and the ability to move on. It is then we can truly and appropriately honor and cherish the lives and memory of those who are no longer with us.

If we are honest with ourselves, we have seen this process borne out in this last year. As church family, we have experienced loss. We have also experienced anger and denial in our church community. Some of this has introduced further hurt and suffering. While anger is a normal part of our lives, there are certainly inappropriate aspects to anger. Anger that hurts others or that is intentionally perpetuated is inappropriate and unhealthy. To live in denial or to avoid the truth is also extremely harmful. Once recognized, these issues must be admitted and solutions sought or the harm will only

grow like a cancer – equally destructive and deadly.

It is through the grace of God and the love and understanding of our church family that healing is achieved.

\* \* \*

In our personal families, the dynamics change constantly. As children, we rely on our parents. We form a vision of the future and the "way things should be." Many times, these visions are unrealistic and more a fantasy. They are nonetheless important to us and are the seedbed for the future.

In time, our families change. Families grow in numbers. Children mature and become more independent. As we all know, this is challenging for all. The wise parent will give their children space to discover themselves, all the while giving guidance and security. Parents have to deal with their changing, if not diminishing roles. Yet their role is essential. Meanwhile, children come into their own. This is exciting and stressful. It is also true that with growth, there is also lament. Parents fondly remember their "babies" and the wonderful feeling of being needed and being able to provide so much care and love. Meanwhile the maturing child misses the carefree and secure life of a young child.

Our parish family is no different. Elder members "raise" the newer ones by guiding and nurturing them. This is not to say that

those who are new to this parish are all children, but they are new to St. Anne's. By sharing faith, love, and experience, we help new members feel welcome, secure, and a part of the family. We do this by what we say and how we act.

The church we have maintained and fostered is the home into which new members are welcomed and are incorporated. The challenge is to not be controlling, dominating, or judgmental. Few things will impede growth or creativity more quickly than an attitude of: "we have always done it this way." We should not attempt to force others to be like us and not be true to themselves.

Our foundation is firmly rooted in the past but our future depends on new creativity and vision. It is contrary to the Holy Spirit and a violation of the unique gifts that each brings to the family of God to force our comfort zones on others. Good parents and good church elders put others first. Our first priority should be what is best for our church family. Putting others first will ultimately bring about greater personal satisfaction. This approach will include the new and the old. We must be joyful with both.

"This means, then, that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of heaven is like a homeowner who takes new and old things out of his storage room."  
(Matthew 13:52)

# All are welcome!



## Grow the Church

St. Anne's Vestry has agreed to start a new initiative at our Parish: Grow the Church!

This initiative will change how we look at ourselves, and how we fit into our surrounding community, always keeping in mind that we are a welcoming community of Christian worship.

Here are our goals:

- Make St. Anne's well known in Trelxertown and surrounding communities.
- Keep our members well informed about activities at St. Anne's.

Membership Goals:

- Increase Saint Anne's membership.
- Retain current membership.
- Contact inactive members and encourage them to return.

Procedures to make all of this happen:

- Establish a public relations campaign to make Saint Anne's well known in Trelxertown and surrounding communities.
- Work with community groups such as the
- "Welcome Wagon" to attract visitors and church shoppers.
- Establish new and additional

procedures to welcome visitors and new members at church services, including what we do now, (recognizing visitors ((if they agree)) at announcement time, and offering them the welcome loaf of bread).

- Establish additional procedures to follow up with visitors and church shoppers to help them feel welcome to visit again.
- Do a better job of communicating with our entire congregation keeping them informed of all the good things we do here at Saint Anne's.
- Work with other parish teams

to continue our great activities, and to develop new activities to keep our new and current members proud to be part of our community.

- Continue to make St. Anne's a Christian community that works together and plays together.

- Finally, develop new activities and new Christian services to attract young families, and young adults.

"Grow the Church" is, and will constantly be a work in progress.

Our Vestry and Father Don are excited about this program. Anyone interested in more information about "Grow the Church", can contact John Sibre, 215-801-9028, jpsibre@yahoo.com.



## 'Gathering in Unity' through song

By Virginia Knapp

I have, in my personal collection, a good number of hymnals from different denominations. I love to peruse all the different hymns that lie within their covers and, as I do, I get really excited over this one or that one, mentally placing each "gem" in the Sunday service for the different seasons.

One of the hymnals is titled "Love Reaching." Hymns for the Family of God. In addition to the title on the front cover, it lists the hymn categories as follows:

- God's love for us
- Our love for God
- Our love for the family of God
- Our love for others

Now perhaps the last two categories could easily be put together. This hymnal is published by Paragon Associates, Inc. of Nashville, TN. Now I'm not advocating that we buy another hymnal (!), but my point is that denominationalism should not stop us from appreciating and using hymns from other hymnals, of course, honoring the copyright laws.

Christians have been singing praises for these past two thousand years and their ancient Jewish brethren even before them. Hymns and songs knit us together, no matter whether they are classics, psalms, Renaissance chants or anthems, folk, rock, pop, modern or whatever. We love to sing because music lifts us out of ourselves and carries our soul up to God in prayer or, in the case of rock, folk, or pop - they just plain make us feel happy, energetic or "wired." We

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## HELP NEEDED BULLETIN BOARD

Please take note of the left side of the bulletin board on the parking lot side of the parish hall. Notices will be posted asking for your help in filling needs around our church. As part of God's Family, we are all needed to keep our church functioning well. The posted tasks could vary from the need for a reader or Eucharistic Minister at one of the services to maintenance issues around our church. They will be divided into two categories: assistance needed NOW and other needs that should be finished SOON.

If you are interested in helping, take the notice off the board and inform Fr. Don or Colette. The church will pay for parts or materials needed to accomplish any task.

We need your help to keep our church functioning smoothly. Thank you in advance for your help!

## CHALLENGES TO CHARITY BULLETIN BOARD

The items posted on this bulletin board will provide reflections on virtues to emphasize and embrace in our ongoing communal life. Reflections on stumbling blocks or impediments to good communal life will also be posted for our reflection.

It is a wise and good practice to reflect on how we interact as God's Family. Reminders and encouragement keep our efforts focused in the right direction while avoiding neglect or bad habits. These reflections are meant for each of us to use personally. We should avoid "prescribing" them for others. We will let the Divine Physician take care of that task. Feel free to share your thoughts on this endeavor.



# Fall 2017 Calendar

### AUGUST

Sunday, August 27: Sunday School Registration begins

### SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 17: Family Eucharist  
Sunday, September 24: Healing Eucharist both services, Sunday School Begins

### OCTOBER

Saturday, October 7: Blessing of Animals (tentative)  
Sunday, October 15: Family Eucharist  
Saturday, October 21: Family Potluck Supper & Bingo Night  
Sunday, October 29: Feast in Gratitude Brunch

### NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 4: Blood Drive  
Sunday, November 19: Family Eucharist  
TBA: Family Game Night

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need music in our lives; we desire music in our Sunday service. There is an old saying, "He who sings, prays twice." Think about what those words mean.

In St. Paul's letter to the Romans, he exhorts them (doesn't just tell them) to live in harmony with one another ... that together you may with ONE voice glorify God.

Now that ONE voice can mean we all pray aloud with enthusiasm or we can sing and take the roof off! This one voice does not mean that we are all alike.

It means that we express our different backgrounds, our different likes and dislikes, our different traditions - we live, pray and sing in harmony with each other.

In choosing hymns for this Fall, our emphasis will be on Gathering in Unity.

Some hymns will be peppy, some more meditative and some will hopefully send us out to set the world on fire with the love of the Holy Spirit. So folks, grab your hat and hang on to the fire truck as we learn new hymns, sing traditional ones, and "Gather Together" on Sunday mornings in love, strength and concern for each other in this St. Anne's family of God!

*Next issue: A message from Dietrich Bonhoeffer about our Gathering.*

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## ST. ANNE'S EYE

A Newsletter Published by St. Anne's Episcopal Church

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The Reverend Donald Schaible II

The Reverend Bernice D. Reichard, Deacon

Paul Persico, Senior Warden

Virginia Knapp, Director of Music Ministry

Colette Shepherd, Administrative Assistant

### SERVICES

Sundays: 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. The Holy Eucharist and  
Sermon

9:15 a.m. Family Service – 3rd  
Sunday of the month

Wednesday: 10:30 a.m. Eucharist – 3rd  
Wednesday of month

Sunday School: Sundays September through May