



The Bellringer

Rector: The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche

august@bestweb.net, wstacroton.org

April 2007

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

April 2007

1	<u>The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday</u>	
	8:00 a.m.	The Blessing of the Palms and Holy Eucharist I
	9:45 a.m.	The Blessing of the Palms, reading of the Passion and Holy Eucharist II. (Children meet in the Parish Hall for Procession and for a special program during Liturgy of the Word.)
3	Tuesday	7:00 p.m. EFM Class
5	<u>Maundy Thursday, Deacon Keith McKenna preaching</u>	
	7:00 p.m.	Agape Meal in parish hall
	8:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II, foot washing, procession to the Altar of Repose, stripping of the Altar*
	9:00 p.m.	Vigil through the night begins
6	<u>Good Friday</u>	
	9:00 a.m.	Vigil concludes with Morning Prayer
	Noon	Good Friday Liturgy, The Rev. Betsy Johns Roadman preaching*
7	<u>Holy Saturday/Easter Eve</u>	
	7:00 p.m.	The Great Vigil of Easter and Holy Baptism*
8	<u>Easter Day</u>	
	9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II*
	11:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II, special children's program in parish hall *
	12:30 p.m.	Children's Easter Egg Hunt on the church lawn
9	Easter Monday	Parish Office closed
10	Tuesday	7:00 p.m. EFM Class
11	Wednesday	12:00 Noon First Wednesday, Pizza lunch and Noonday Prayer
14	Saturday	5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II
15	<u>The Second Sunday of Easter</u>	
	8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
	9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
17	Tuesday	7:00 p.m. EFM Class
18	Wednesday	8:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting
21	Saturday	5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II
22	<u>The Third Sunday of Easter</u>	
	8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
	9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
	10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
24	Tuesday	7:00 p.m. EFM Class
28	Saturday	5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

* Childcare available at these special services (as well as Sundays at 10:00 a.m. service)

29 The Fourth Sunday of Easter

8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II

April 2007

When I was studying communications, we often looked at the relationship between languages and cultures. The idea was that the words we use shape our sense of reality, and our sense of reality shapes our words. A prime example was the use of the word "ice" for Eskimos. Although this is probably an urban legend, it makes a great deal of sense. In this theory, Eskimos had many, many words for every variety of ice, whereas we only have a few. In fact, my Grandmother has unfortunately been recently acquainted with some black ice and broken both of her arms. Perhaps she needed more words to keep her upright. But I digress. The point is that the Eskimos' culture demanded that they identify and label different forms of ice, because their very lives depended on such nomenclature. Whether or not part of this is legend, it hints at a reality. Words can be liberating and helpful in terms of delineating thought.

The reverse, however, is also true. Words can be limiting. This is certainly the case with the word "love." In fact, in English I think that we need more words for love. The word "love" has become trite and sometimes meaningless. It is shorthand for something. Most often, it is shorthand for a romantic affection. This is the variety of love that movies tout and proclaim as the most amazing feeling in the world. Usually, it is the result of hormones, and it passes. But there are also other sorts of love. There is the love of a parent for a child. There is the love of a child for a parent. There is the love of friends. There is the love of caring for others. How do we differentiate between these different sorts of love?

The same parsing of words was necessary when the *New Testament* was being written. Although Jesus did not speak Greek, the *New Testament* was written in Greek, and it plays with the different meanings of love. In Greek there are basically three different words for love. First, there is the variety of *eros*. I think we all know what sort of "love" this is (wink, wink, nudge, nudge). Then, there is *philia*. This is like the love of a parent or a friend. Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, is the perfect example. It is a beautiful love but is very specific and based on a feeling. Then, there is another sort of love called *agape*. We have probably all heard the word a thousand times in church without really realizing what it actually means. *Agape* is meant to be a new sort of love. *Agape* is more than good feelings amongst friends, or seeking good ole *eros*. *Agape* is the type of love that occurs when we decide to actively seek someone else's well-being. It is an active verb, not a feeling. It is a way of serving others. With *agape*, other types of love can thrive, but without it, everything fades.

Rather than *eros* or even *philia*, *agape* is the sort and variety of love that we mean when we talk about the love of God and the love of Jesus. Jesus seeks our well being. God hopes for our future. It is this love that we will celebrate, commemorate, and, ideally, live into during Holy Week, the week leading up to Easter. This sense of love applies to the whole week and even Easter, but especially to that Thursday. On that Thursday, we honor what is called Maundy Thursday. Kids love to call this "Monday Thursday," but really, this *Maundy* is more related to the word "Mandate". On that Thursday, we remember two important mandates of Jesus. We remember Jesus washing his disciples' feet as a means of serving and *agape*-ing one another. This is really why we say "Maundy" because Jesus invites us to go and do likewise. And we remember Jesus' Last Supper. We celebrate the first Holy Eucharist. And I hope that we honor that Jesus in both acts gives us a mandate to go and *agape* others as we have been *agape*'d. Both this ritual meal of sharing and remembering God's love and the dirty feet stuff are supposed to be models for our action in the world.

At a recent conference I attended, the author Tony Bartlett spoke about the Eucharist in this way: He said that when we bless this bread and honor God with it, we are basically making a promise to the bread and God that we will, someday, honor and bless all bread and call it all holy. We will seek to eventually take the same reverence, thankfulness, and sense of shared humanity into the rest of the world, into every aspect of our lives, from soup to bread to nuts. We are promising that we will make our world more like this meal.

This Holy Week and Easter season, we have reflected on the meaning of outreach and the ideas of living into our faith. We have listened to people who have gone on Mission Trips and helped in our community and abroad. We are also seeking to get volunteers to help us with an AmeriCorps Homefront project in May and are learning about Micro-credit lending agencies as a way to help those in developing nations rise out of poverty. And, during Holy Week, while we are thinking about this "mandate" 22 of our parishioners will be living into that mandate by working in Mississippi. We are trying to *agape* others. Ideally, we always hold onto this ideal in our lives.

Our Church is also trying to live into this message in other ways. With *agape*, I wish our Parish Administrator well as she pursues a new position at Fordham after 4 years with us here, though I am also personally very sad to see her go (You see this whole *agape* thing goes past my own wants and desires). And with *agape*, I along with the wardens and vestry, will also be forming a new committee over the coming months to better think about who we as a parish are. This is the committee that will hopefully begin to reflect on the well being of our parish and plan for our future in terms of our sanctuary and church services. And finally, we will also go through Holy Week. I invite each of you to make this first week in April Holy by giving attention to the last week of Jesus' life. I do not make this invitation as a means of dwelling on Jesus' pain but as a way of understanding the love, the *agape*, with which Jesus approaches us and invites us to approach the world. As we approach Easter, as we celebrate the resurrection of God, let us also work toward the resurrection of our world, through the power of *agape*.

God's Peace and a Blessed Holy Week,

Bradley

Easter food donations are being sought by the Croton Caring Committee. Donations of canned hams, and dry and canned goods can be dropped off on the patio at 38 Penfield Avenue, Croton by Saturday, March 31. Fresh items can be dropped on Monday and Tuesday, April 2nd and 3rd.

The foods will be included in baskets to be distributed to needy families at Easter. Shopping cards are also gladly accepted. They can be dropped off at the parish office or put in Sunday's offering plate in a clearly marked envelope as to their purpose.

Save the Dates: Adult Formation Series. Adults who are hoping to deepen their knowledge about the Christian Faith and the Episcopal Church should consider taking part in this series of classes. It can either be a "refresher" course or a time to prepare for Confirmation or Reception into the Episcopal Church. Classes will be offered on Sunday afternoons from 4:00 to 5:30 PM in the Parish

House. If you are interested, please sign up by calling the parish office. If you are interested but cannot make this time slot, please also sign up. We might be able to negotiate times once the group is assembled.

- Sunday, April 29th, 4:00 -5:30 PM:
Introduction to the Bible
- Sunday, May 6th, 4:00 -5:30 PM:
Introduction to Church History
- Sunday, May 13th, 4:00 -5:30 PM:
Introduction to Theology
- Sunday, May 20th, 4:00 -5:30 PM:
Introduction to Liturgy

St. Augustine's in Croton is currently in the process of searching for a new Part-Time Parish Administrator. For a job description please contact the parish office, 271 -3501 or august@bestweb.net. Preference will be given to non-parishioners.

Carpenter's Kids: You may still sponsor a child or give a one-time gift to this worthy cause. A commitment of \$50/child for 50 children for 5 years will "link" our parish with a local Tanzanian parish. This will enable us to communicate directly with the local coordinators, exchange pictures, thoughts and prayers. The donation will not only give 50 very needy children the opportunity of education, but will let them know they are loved. **You can also make a one time gift to Carpenter's Kids.** All monies collected go directly to Tanzania. Money from individuals outside of the 5 year commitment program will be used directly for the support of children or indirectly, such as for the Cow Fund, providing cows to linked parishes to improve nutrition for the Carpenter's Kids, or to compensate those who administer the program in Tanzania. Absolutely no New York costs are taken from your contributions!

I would like to support the Carpenter's Kids Program:

_____ by committing to sponsoring one child for 5 years at \$50 each year (a total of \$250 over 5 years).

_____ by giving a one time gift to the program.

Please make check out to: **St. Augustine's Church,**
Memo line: Carpenter's Kids

Name: _____

Address: _____

Envelope Number: _____

ADULT EDUCATION:

On Just War, a Presentation for Thoughtful Christians in a Time of War

-Deacon Keith McKenna

On April 22nd and 29th we will offer an adult education presentation on the subject of "Just War", a concept and a way of thinking that has enormous importance to American Christians, living as we now are, as citizens of a nation engaged in war.

The idea of Just War arose in the mind of St. Augustine of Hippo as Christian soldiers, and people who might be conscripted as soldiers, began to ask their Christian mentors if any form of war

could ever be consistent with Christ's teachings. In consideration of the absolute Pacifist view, in which it would always be an act of wickedness to engage in war, Augustine thought about times in the past when innocent, peaceful nations were attacked. Surely, he thought, there must be justice, and Christian accord, in defending oneself, using warlike tools and methods.

He thought also about times when states had engaged in behavior that was so egregious that other states were justified in using armed methods to restore peace and safety. To take the Pacifist view in all such cases, he thought, would have resulted in the triumph of evil.

Two terms come down to us from Augustine, with later commentary from St. Thomas Aquinas:

Jus ad bellum, which deals with the decision to go to war;

Jus in bello, which deals with the conduct of the battle.

Modern thinkers on this topic add a new third concept:

Jus post bellum, Ideas about justice after a war.

Later, in the 19th Century, governments debated and signed treaties embodying the principles of Just War as articulated by the church down through the centuries.

We hope, in our discussions here at St. A's, to open up these important Christian concepts for examination as they offer guidance on the facts of the wars we have ourselves observed (or endured) in our own lifetimes, or in study, in the years of the twentieth century generally, when major wars erupted just about every 20 years. Please consider joining us at 11:15 a.m. those Sundays, (right after The 10 AM Service of Holy Eucharist).



Congratulations Julie Dumper, who turns 101 on April 18.

First Wednesday: Our gathering this month will be on April 11 (since the first Wednesday of the month is during Holy Week). We will meet in the parish hall for Noonday Prayer, a pizza lunch and fellowship. Please RSVP to the parish office by Tuesday, April 10, 271-3501.

Treasurer's Report:

Financial Operations (1/1/07-2/28/07):

	<u>Expenses</u>		<u>Revenues</u>
Administrative	\$ (9,720.24)		
Priest	\$(14,528.48)	Fundraising	\$ 647.54
Service/Program	\$ (2,916.22)	Plate	\$ 4,064.56
Diocese	\$ (4,843.00)	Pledge	\$28,798.00
Outreach	\$ (200.00)	Space	\$ 910.00
Property	<u>\$ (4,360.90)</u>	Investments	<u>\$ 2,004.73</u>
TOTAL	\$ (36,568.84)	TOTAL	\$36,424.83
(deficit)/surplus	\$ (144.01)		

The Church's financial operations are off to a good start. Expenses were in line with expectations, with Maintenance and Utilities coming in lower than expected due to the relatively mild winter to date. Revenues were generally stable, with a strong performance in Current Year Pledges, due mostly to some families paying their entire pledge at the beginning of the year. As a result, our current operating position is better than contained in the budget, with a slight deficit for the first two months of the year.

Vestry Notes from the March meeting:

- ☛ The new computer system for maintaining parish membership is up and running.
- ☛ Fund-raising: Currently, our fund-raising committee is not operational. We are looking for people to help with this group.
- ☛ The Vestry approved the Outreach Committee's Mission Statement:

We are called at our baptism to proclaim the Good News of God, not only by word, but also by example; to seek and serve Christ in all persons; to love our neighbors as ourselves; to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to respect the dignity of every human being.

The Outreach Committee of St Augustine's Episcopal Church will attempt to discern what work God is calling us to do as a community, both here at home and in the world, whether by our own labors or by financially supporting the efforts of others.

- ☛ The Wardens, Dana Garrett and Duncan Cleary, recently attended the Wardens Workshop sponsored by the Diocese
- ☛ Brad reported on the founding of a new Interfaith Lay Committee for Croton. There will be an organizational meeting in May.
- ☛ There was a report on the development of a Discernment Committee to deal with issues

surrounding the crowded nature of the 10 AM service on Sundays. The Committee will ideally become fully functioning this Fall.

☛ Brad announced the Adult Inquirer's Class that will begin at the end of April.

Our annual Food Fest fundraiser is a delicious way to help the church and help yourself.

Parishioners commit to making a dinner or dessert, those items are raffled off, and the winners of the raffles purchase them for a set price. If you have a favorite recipe and would like to offer a dinner or dessert, please contact Regina Hertl at rh@bestweb.net or 271 -1348. If you would like to purchase an item, check the back of the church or our website (www.stacroton.org) in the coming weeks to see the offerings and instructions about how you can participate.

Class Angels: Class Angels is a program that we will begin next Fall. Who are class angels? Class angels are high school students who help out, from time to time, in Sunday School Classes. If you are a high school student and interested, you could be assigned to a particular class and help that class, as much as you are able, throughout the year. This is a great community service, a time to help foster the faith of young kids, and a chance to take an active, adult role in the church. And everyone will look up to you for your efforts! While Sunday School teachers come and go throughout the year, you could be a mainstay. For more information, please contact Father Brad.

High School and Middle School Students Save the dates of September 14 -16th. You are invited to go Heifer International's Overlook Farm in Rutland, Massachusetts. While there, we will be participating in an amazing outreach project. Heifer International is a program that provides working animals for many developing countries. Many youth groups go there to help work on the farm and care for the animals and at the same time learn about world hunger. Over the course of the weekend, we will be hiking, helping out around the farm, and learning what we can do to help eradicate poverty. This adventure promises to be both a great deal of fun and an amazing learning experience. We will leave on Friday night, September 14th after school and be back on Sunday, September 16th. We will also need parents willing to participate. Please contact Father Brad in the parish office for more information or to sign up.

