



Bellringer

Rector:
The Rev. Bradley Callaway Dyche

august@bestweb.net, wstacroton.org

Dec 2006/Jan 2007

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

December 2006

1	Friday	10 a.m.-4 p.m., 7:30 p.m.-9 p.m.,	Wreath Decorating in Parish Hall Wreath Decorating in Parish Hall
2	Saturday	10 a.m.-4 p.m., 10:00 a.m. - Noon 5:00 p.m.	Christmas Wreath and Youth Council Bake Sale in the Parish Hall Choir Workshop in Church Holy Eucharist II
3	<u>First Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
		11:00 a.m.	Meeting for Spring Mission trip to Gulf Coast
		9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Croton Blood Drive at CHHS
4	Monday	7:30 p.m.	Outreach Committee Meeting
5	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
6	Wednesday	11:45 a.m.	First Wednesday Holiday Luncheon at The Ocean House
9	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
10	<u>Second Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
12	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
13	Wednesday	2:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist at Skyview Nursing Home
		8:00 p.m.	Vestry meeting
16	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Sunday School Christmas Pageant rehearsal in the church
		11:30 a.m.	Church and Parish Hall decorating party
		2:30 p.m.	Christmas Carols at Sky View Nursing Home
		5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
17	<u>Third Sunday in Advent</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I, followed by coffee hour
		10:00 a.m.	Children's Service and Christmas Pageant
		11:15 a.m.	Festive Potluck "Christmas" Coffee Hour
20	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
23	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
24	<u>Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
		4:00 p.m.	Children's Service, Holy Eucharist II
		7:00 p.m.	Family Service, Holy Eucharist II
		10:00 p.m.	First Service of Christmas, Holy Eucharist II
25	<u>Christmas Day</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II, without music
Dec. 25-Dec 31			Parish office closed
30	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Evening Prayer
31	<u>First Sunday After Christmas Day</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer
		10:00 a.m.	Morning Prayer



January 2007



1	Monday		Parish office closed for New Year's Day
2	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class resumes
3	Wednesday		No First Wednesday gathering
6	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
7	<u>First Sunday After The Epiphany, The Baptism of Our Lord,</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School, Block IV begins
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
9	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
13	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
14	<u>Second Sunday After The Epiphany</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
		3:00 p.m.	Interfaith Service of Remembrance, Martin Luther King, Jr
15	Monday		Parish Office closed in observance of Martin Luther King Day
16	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
17	Wednesday	8:00 p.m.	Vestry Meeting
20	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
21	<u>Third Sunday After The Epiphany</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
23	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	EFM Class
27	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
28	<u>Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		9:45 a.m.	Sunday School
		10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
		11:15 a.m.	Annual Parish Meeting & Vestry Election

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

First Wednesday: We will have a special luncheon on December 6 at 11:45 at The Ocean House. Please call the parish office (271-3501) to RSVP no later than December 1. Cost will be \$ 40 per person. There will be no First Wednesday in January.

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.-4 p.m. on Saturday, December 3. 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. The Youth Council will hold a Bake Sale at the same time to raise funds for their holiday outreach project, which is in support of Friends of Karen, a New York metropolitan-area non-profit dedicated to providing emotional, financial and advocacy support to children with life-threatening illnesses and their families. (<http://www.friendsofkaren.org>)



Deck the Halls! On Saturday, December 17 beginning at 11:30 a.m. many hands will be needed to decorate the church and hall in preparation for our Christmas Services. Please come and help; it's great fun! Refreshments will be served. 'Tis the season!



All who feel busy and overwhelmed, raise your hands! I imagine that you are lifting your arms as high as the Statue of Liberty and people in those *Sure Deodorant* commercials that used to air on television. I know that I am. It is the nature of this season and this time of year. In all reality, I love every minute of it. Seeing everyone at church services, getting ready to spend time with family, baking, and consuming the wonderful, yummy, normally contraband sweets. And this is our first Christmas together! But wow, is it ever busy. And in the middle of all of this, we are asked to observe Advent, the four weeks leading up to the 12 days of Christmas. And in the middle of the hecticness, Advent can feel like a chore, or worse completely unrelated to what is going on in our homes, schools, offices, and even churches.

But in reality, Advent is completely related to our lives at this time of year. While we burden ourselves with lots of expectations: ideals of the perfect Christmas and social obligations, we are invited by the church to slow down. As one parishioner in the parish in Larchmont said, "This is a time of year for lowering expectations." And we need that permission: permission to breathe, to exhale, to realize that the best possible holiday season will be one that we slow down for and enjoy.

And we need that permission here at St. A's too. After a great stewardship campaign, thanks to Dana Garrett, Jenn Latham, and Gerald Ardito, we are preparing for a bumper new year. And we have just had an amazing Installation and visit by Bishop Roskam. Thank you to all who helped make such a gracious event happen. And Laura Seitz and I have just spent two days at our annual Diocesan Convention. We have done so much. And we are getting ready to do so much more with Christmas: Christmas pageants, family, and Christmas services. Point blank: we need to make sure that we also make time to breathe *AND* lower our expectations.

2,000 years ago, we were paid a special visit. It was not so much that God was not around or with us before, but we needed a refresher course, perhaps even a revelatory course in how to love one another. And so God became human. Instead of being like a Martha Stewart with a perfectly brined turkey and a well ordered billionaire's kingdom, God comes as one who would have felt just as overwhelmed with expectations as we might feel today. And that is the beauty and the peace of Christmas. God shows up on humanity's doorstep to simply show us that while we once thought God was vengeful and punishing, while we perhaps also thought that God wanted us to be likewise with our fellow humans, God does not. God is, instead, as vulnerable, and loving. God comes to us as a child in a feed pen, a manger. God becomes a loving, caring, focused on God human, in the midst of the difficulties of his own time. And in the midst of the craziness of our holidays and worse our on-going wars, we know that God is with us, among us, and for us. God is our peace in the storm. And God, by God's very nature, is showing us in how to walk toward that peace. Hostile hecticness is always around. Frustration comes easily, and we can sometimes yield to its temptation. But I hope at the end of this season we do not feel exhausted or overwhelmed. I hope we, instead, feel refreshed, cherished, and loved by the God who is always trying to come into our hearts just as much as God came to Bethlehem 2000 years ago.

A Merry and Blessed Christmas and Holiday Season to you all!

Bradley C. Dyche





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 17.

Give the gift of life:

Croton's Annual Blood Drive will be held Sunday, December 3 at CET from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Please help during the holiday season which is often a time of increased accidents & illness. If you'd like to make an appointment, please call Mary Ellen O'Neill at 271-1307, or see her at coffee hour.

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. 15 to Monday, Dec. 18.

Carol Sing at Sky View Nursing Home December 16, 2:30 p.m.

This will be our 11th annual gathering to brighten the lives of our neighbors and to warm their hearts with Christmas cheer. We sing for no more than 30 minutes – it is not a long commitment of time but is one that fills all present with the true spirit of Christmas. All ages and all abilities of choristers are welcome! We will meet in the lobby of Sky View at 2:15 p.m. (Sky View is located on Route 9A, Croton.).

Consider giving a gift to your parish family by making a Christmas Offering to St. A's.

Support our linked parish in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi by making a gift at:

www.episcopalchurch.org/darkness

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 Chris Moore, 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 17. All Sunday School age children (pre-school through grade 6) are invited to participate. Rehearsals will be during regular Sunday School hours (9:45 - 10:30) on Sunday, December 3 and Sunday, December 10, and on Saturday morning December 16th at 10:00 a.m. Please contact director Rachel Norfleet at 271-0812 if your child would like to participate but cannot be at the first rehearsal. Following the service on the 17th, 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, 1/14 at 3 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.

St. A's Annual Meeting will be held on 1/28 following the 10 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 at 5 p.m. Saturday, 1/27 and closed at 11:15 a.m. on 1/28. Anyone interested in running for Vestry should speak with the Clerk of the Vestry, Chris Moore.

COFFEE HOUR: St. A's is getting organized!! In the New Year we plan to schedule coffee hour hosts into the church calendar, which is an integrated calendar for all volunteers for church services. This means we need to develop a list of people who are willing to host or partner in a coffee hour during the coming year. Please help out by calling or e-mailing Jenn in the Parish Office to add your name to this list or sign up for a particular date! THANK YOU !!





COMMUNITY BUILDING COMMITTEE

START-UP! St. A's is hoping to organize a group of people who are interested in helping with a variety of Community Building activities. These activities would range from outings, special events, picnics, making care packages for those away in college, and helping and enhancing already existing events. Our first meeting will be Sunday January 21st, 2007 right after the 10 AM service. If you would like to be a part of ANY - or ALL - of this committee please contact Loren Zack at 962-1254 or zackhome@optonline.net or Jenn in the Parish Office.

Treasurer's Report: October Operations:

The Church's financial operations continue to be strong despite worries about pledges, with total revenues exceeding total expenses for the year to date. Our expense position is excellent, with most categories coming in where expected or lower than expected (some due to the fact that our new Rector did not join us until July). Revenues are generally stable. Fundraising has improved dramatically after the most successful JuneFest ever -- \$21,575 in net revenues. The success is not enough, however, to offset the drop in expected pledges through the year to date: current year pledges are dramatically behind expectations by close to \$11,000. During the first two weeks of November there was improvement in pledges received -- hopefully a rebound in pledges will eliminate any concerns about the church's ability to meet its financial goals for 2006.

Vestry Notes from the November Meeting

- ☛ The pledge gap is closing, which is encouraging.
- ☛ Outreach: On the recommendation of the Outreach Committee, the Vestry has approved \$4,100 to be disbursed to the following organizations:
 1. Paul's House
 2. Hudson Link
 3. Peekskill soup kitchen
 4. Croton Housing Network
 5. The mission to Christ Church in Bay St.

Louis, Mississippi

- ☛ Bishop Roskam's Visitation to St. Augustine's will take place on Sunday, October 14, 2007.

☛ The Vestry accepted the resignation of Gerald Ardito as Senior Warden with enormous gratitude for all that he has done for St. A's, and elected Ty West as Senior Warden, Dana Garrett as Junior Warden and Holly Anzani as a member of the Vestry, all three terms to end at the Annual Meeting in January 2007.

☛ The next Vestry meeting will be on Wednesday, December 13, 2006.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Moore, Clerk of the Vestry

Stewardship: Our pledge drive this year ended on November 12th with a delicious potluck brunch in the parish hall that was itself a beautiful example of stewardship. Many people offered their time and their talents by preparing food, setting up the hall or cleaning up afterwards. Even our children made a wonderful contribution (with the help of our dedicated Sunday School teachers) by decorating dozens of placemats with drawings of what they're thankful for. It is this spirit of sharing and giving that helps make St Augustine's such a special place.

Our pledge campaign this year has been centered around the idea that it is through giving of ourselves that we can recognize and acknowledge all that we have been given. Giving, of course, can take many forms and all our important. But by making a financial pledge, we make a real commitment, as members of St. Augustine's, to the life, health and mission of the church. Our goal this year is to be able to raise enough in pledges so that we can reduce our dependency on fundraising for our operating budget.

I'm happy to report that we've had a very strong, early response, with 36 families pledging a total of \$73,000! For those of you who have made your pledge for next year, thank you, thank you! If you have not yet returned your pledge card, I ask you to try to get in to office as soon as possible. Without knowing exactly how much money we can expect in pledges, we can't put together an accurate budget for next year. You can mail your pledge card to the parish office, or simply put it in the collection plate next Sunday. Together, we can do great things for and with this church.

~submitted by Dana Garrett, Stewardship Chairperson



CHRISTMAS AT ST. AUGUSTINE'S

CHRISTMAS EVE 9:00 a.m. Fourth Sunday of Advent, Holy Eucharist I
 4:00 p.m. Children's Service, Holy Eucharist*
 7:00 p.m. Family Service, Holy Eucharist II*
 10:00 p.m. First Service of Christmas, Holy Eucharist II

CHRISTMAS DAY 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

SATURDAY, December 30
 5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS, December 31
 9:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

*Babysitting to be provided at these services

Rector The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche

Rector Emeritus: The Rev. David B. Wayne

2006 VESTRY MEMBERS

Senior Warden:	Ty West	Junior Warden:	Dana Garrett		
Treasurer:	Holly Anzani	Clerk:	<u>Chris Moore</u>		
<u>Class of 2006</u>	Terri Huntington	<u>Class of 2007</u>	Ellen Irvine	<u>Class of 2008</u>	Duncan Cleary
	Holly Anzani		Louise Levey		Laura Seitz
	Penny Morgan		Chris Moore		Loren Zack

Meeting Schedule: Vestry, 3rd Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.

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Croton-On-Hudson, NY 10520
www.stacroton.org

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