



# The Bellringer

E-mail: [august@bestweb.net](mailto:august@bestweb.net) Website: [www.stacroton.org](http://www.stacroton.org) Dec 2010/Jan 2011

**Rector:**  
The Rev Bradley C. Dyche  
**Priest Associate:**  
The Rev. Dr. Beth Glover  
**Deacons:**  
The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna  
The Rev. Deacon Sharon Manning-Lew

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

## December 2010

30 Nov	Tuesday	7:30 p.m.	Bow making for wreaths in Parish Hall - All volunteers welcome
2	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
3	Friday	7:30 p.m.	Decorating Wreaths – All volunteers welcome
4	Saturday	10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Christmas Wreath Sale and Bake Sale
5	<b><u>Second Sunday in Advent, the Rev. Bradley C. Dyche preaching and celebrating</u></b>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		9:45 a.m.	Coffee Hour
		10:15 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal in Parish Hall
		10:30 a.m.	Rite II with music
		11:10 a.m.	Sunday School ends, children join service
		11:30 a.m.	Adult Education with Rev. Bradley C. Dyche
		9 a.m.-3 p.m.	Croton Blood Drive at CHHS
9	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
12	<b><u>Third Sunday in Advent, the Rev. Dr. Beth Glover preaching and celebrating</u></b>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		10:15 a.m.	Sunday School pageant rehearsal in Parish Hall
		10:30 a.m.	Rite II with music
		11:10 a.m.	Sunday School ends, children join service
		11:30 a.m.	Adult Education with Rev. Bradley C. Dyche
15	Wednesday	8:00 p.m.	Vestry Meeting
16	Thursday	7:30 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal in the Church
18	Saturday	10:00 a.m.	Sunday School Christmas Pageant rehearsal in the church
		2:30 p.m.	Christmas Carols at Sky View Nursing Home
19	<b><u>Fourth Sunday in Advent</u></b>		
		9:00 a.m.	Rite II with music
		10:30 a.m.	Children's Service with Christmas pageant

**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.-2 p.m. on Saturday, December 4th**. 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 - \$95. Come by and give your home that holiday touch.

Once again, we are hoping to put the incredible baking talents of St. Augustine's parishioners to greater use. There will be a **bake sale** to coincide with the wreath sale on **December 4th**. Please, bakers start now - bake and freeze cookies and cakes and pies and other delights which we can sell on this day. The more, the merrier! For more information, please call Cathie Elliott at 271 9522.



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## From the Rector

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I have been learning thangs again! Enter Dignity!

Last week, I spent time at Trinity Conference Center in Connecticut. I ate good food, enjoyed the late fall days, and learned things. The week was part of a two year program I am enrolled in called the Clergy Leadership Project. The program covers a wide range of topics, but this particular session was focused on reconciliation. And this was not just ANY reconciliation. Our presenter was Dr. Donna Hicks, who is a professor at Harvard and a specialist in international conflict and reconciliation. She has worked in Ireland, the Middle East, Columbia, and Indonesia (need I say more?). This was RECONCILIATION writ large. It was not a light week. The stories were profound, ranging from stories of war to the reconciliation of an IRA Catholic and a Protestant policeman from Ireland.

And what I found interesting is that in all her work, Professor Hicks kept coming around to the idea of dignity. She said that, in her experience, there is no shortage of good solutions to the entrenched conflicts of the world (or even of our individual conflicts). There is the two state model, the peace accords, etc. And there are lots of creative people with creative solutions. However, people do not always take the solutions which are offered.

Why? She claims that it has to do with dignity. There is too much past pain, too much trauma, too little trust, and too little dignity. Even though good solutions abound, we stay mired in conflict. When we wound each other's dignity, and when our dignity is wounded, it is almost impossible to choose a healthy way forward... unless the dignity is restored. Which brings me to Advent and Christmas, aka the Feast of the Incarnation. I have to believe that God coming into our world is about restoring our dignity and about our reconciliation with God.

Dignity is that sense of respect and honor that is innate to us. It is being and feeling "worthy." Dignity is God given and a birthright. But the problem is, we can doubt our own dignity and the dignity of others. We even misuse our own dignity and that of others, especially because our own dignity has been misused. And so we do not feel worthy of the good things around us, and we do not listen to the creative and healthy solutions which abound.

Enter Jesus. Jesus is about giving us dignity. He heals, offers love, and restores relationships. He even gives us dignity by needing us and our care in his infancy. And so I have to believe that through Jesus God is saying, "I know that this life can be difficult. I'm so sorry you have had to deal with so much pain. I'm sorry that they have taken away your dignity and that you have felt alone. But you are worth more to me than gold, and there are ways forward." And then God shows us God's love and God's forgiveness, a new, dignified way of being.

Which leads me to two things in Advent. If Advent is about preparing for Christmas, and for any additional revelations Jesus will make in the world, we have to continually remember that we are dignified. We have to lay our undignified selves on the altar and allow God to restore us. And secondly, we have to take those dignified selves out into the world to work with good solutions and God's love.

And building on that, we also have to do something else. Donna Hicks told the story of working in Ireland with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. After a long day of meetings, hearing horrible stories, she wanted to simply go to bed. But Tutu made her go to a party instead. He said that joyful living was the antidote to not having dignity. Joy is what restores dignity. And so, we also get to be, need to be, and have to be JOYFUL! We have to remember that the solutions to our problems, and the problems of the world, lie in restoring our dignity. And part of that is allowing ourselves to feel something other than pain and trauma. It is allowing ourselves to be joyful. And what should Christmas be, if not joyful!

I know that many of us have been traumatized in the past year. Many have lost those whom we love. Many have lost jobs, while only a few have found them. But we are called, during this time, to remember that we are still dignified. No matter what has happened or what we have done, the innate dignity that is part of us is still here, if only we can find it. And, of course, we are still called to be joyful, which is the antidote and the salvation of the world.

A Blessed Advent. A Merry Christmas. And a Happy New Year.  
Ways to Give this Christmas Season



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## Parish Events

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### 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 "Xmas Altar Fund" on your check. To ensure all names appear in the Christmas bulletins, they must be given to the office by Sunday, December 20.

### 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. 18 to Monday, Dec. 21.

### Carol Sing at Sky View Nursing Home December 18, 2:30 p.m.

Join in our annual Caroling tradition at Sky View Nursing home. What a great way to get into the Christmas Spirit! We will meet in the lobby of Sky View Nursing home at 2:15 PM on Saturday, December 18th and begin singing at 2:30 PM. Sky View is located at 1280 Albany Post Road. The residents there always appreciate our efforts, and a fun time is had by all. For more information, contact the parish office or Denise Bessette at 736-3467.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT ST.  
A'S AND FATHER BRAD

## 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. Election of new officers will be at the Annual Parish meeting after the 10:30 service on Sunday, January 30, 2011. Please contact Lisa Cohen, the clerk of the Vestry, if you feel called to serve.

## Christmas Pageant

St. Augustine's children's Christmas pageant will be performed during the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, December 19. All Sunday School age children (pre-school through grade 6) are invited to participate. Rehearsals will be during regular Sunday School hours (10:15 - 11:10) on Sunday, December 5 and Sunday, December 12, and on Saturday morning December 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Please contact director Chris Jones at 302-2531 if your child would like to participate but cannot be at the first rehearsal. Following the service on the 19<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate with a holiday party.

## Martin Luther King Service

The annual observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day will be held at St. A's on Sunday, January 16th at 4:00 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.

## Financials

### Treasurer's Report

<b>Financial Operations through October 31, 2010:</b>			
	<i>Expenses</i>		<i>Revenues</i>
	<i>Paid</i>		<i>Received</i>
Administrative	\$ (32,275.35)		
Priest	\$ (74,649.34)	Fundraising	\$ 34,907.76
Service/Program	\$ (17,499.57)	Plate	\$ 15,441.95
Diocese	\$ (17,533.00)	Pledge	\$100,941.00
Outreach	\$ 295.13	Space	\$ 7,173.00
Property	\$ (23,948.05)	Investments	\$ 7,551.52
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$(165,510.18)</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$166,015.23</b>
(deficit)/surplus	\$ 505.05		
budgeted surplus	\$ (2,058.73)		

**Treasurer's Report:** Because of our continued success at managing our expenses, our financial position is misleading at first glance. We have generated a small operating surplus despite a continued shortfall in the payment of current year pledges. According to our budget we should have incurred a deficit (expenses exceeding revenues) of -\$2,059. However, the actual results show that our income through October has exceeded our expenses by \$505. Although this is an improvement from last month, there is still a significant shortfall in actual operating revenues, which are necessary to pay our ongoing expenses. The revenue shortfall is entirely due to Pledge Income. Pledges are just not coming in on a timely basis. Our total pledge shortfall to date is over \$14,000! Adding to this situation are the JuneFest results. Dreadful weather on Sunday cut short our operations during what is usually our busiest afternoon, and we ended up making \$3,400 less than what was budgeted at a time when each and every revenue source is needed. To some

extent the poor JuneFest results were offset by the excellent results from the Harvest Moon Dinner (\$13,793 v. \$9,000 in the budget, although more money is due from families that have yet to pay for their auction items). Despite these positive results from our fundraising efforts, the continued shortfall in the largest component of our revenue stream -- Current Year Pledges -- leaves us in a weakened cash flow position. Much like last year, we again find ourselves in the position of having to consider changes or cut backs to programs if our revenue picture does not soon improve.

#### **REMINDER:**

All 2011 Pledge Cards are due.

You may place them in the offertory plate, leave them in the Parish mailbox or drop them off in the Parish Office. We are preparing St. A's 2011's budget. The Pledge Cards are necessary to **accurately** plan next year's budget. Pledge Cards can be found at the back of the church. Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Pledge update

To date, November 30, 2010, 47 parishioners have returned their pledge cards. They have pledged \$101,425. Last year's pledges totaled: \$ 134,000

#### Annual Meeting

**St. A's Annual Meeting** will be held on 1/30 during the 10:30 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 on Sunday, 1/30 8:00 a.m. and closed at 6:00 p.m. Anyone interested in running for Vestry should speak with the Clerk of the Vestry, Lisa Cohen.

#### Reminder:

**St. A's Parish Office will be closed from December 27<sup>th</sup> until December 31<sup>st</sup>**

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## Parish Events

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### How to read the Gospel according to Matthew

Getting Ready for Matthew: In December, we begin a new church year. During that new year, we will hear primarily from the Gospel of Matthew. For two Sundays, December 5th and 12th come discuss and learn about the Gospel of Matthew. We will use a brief article from the book "How to Read the New Testament" and the Gospel itself as our guides. During each class, we will read portions of the Gospel together, learn about the Gospel, and have some discussion. All are welcome

### Choir Rehearsal for Christmas Eve Service

Anyone interested in singing at the 10:30 PM Christmas Eve service is welcome to come to rehearsals from 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM. Thursday evenings starting December 2<sup>nd</sup>. All are welcome.

### Book Group

The next meeting will be **Sunday, January 23rd**. We will be discussing [The Master: A Novel](#), written by [Colm Toibin](#). The book is a fictionalized study, based on many biographical materials and family accounts, of the novelist's interior life from the moment in London in 1895 when James's hope to succeed in the theater rather than on the printed page was eclipsed by the towering success of his younger contemporary Oscar Wilde. Thereafter the book ranges seamlessly back and forth over James's life, from his memories of his prominent Brahmin family in the States-including the suicide of his father and the tragic early death of his troubled sister Alice-to his settling in England, in a cherished house of his own choosing in Rye.

### December Events:

Tuesday, November 30

Making bows

Friday, December 3

Decorating Wreaths

Saturday, December 4

St. A's Wreath Sale

Sunday, December 5

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 10:15 am

Sunday, December 12 and Saturday,  
December 18

Christmas Pageant Rehearsal – 10:15 am

Sunday, December 19

The Christmas Pageant – 10:15 am

Friday, December 24 – Christmas Eve

4:00 p.m. Children's Christmas Eve Service,  
Holy Eucharist Rite II

7:00 p.m. Family Christmas Eve Service, Holy  
Eucharist Rite II

10:00 p.m. First Service of Christmas, Holy  
Eucharist Rite II

Sunday, December 26 – Christmas Day

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite II

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## Fund Raising/Outside Opportunities

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### Fundraiser for Kenyan Women

During the Coffee Hours in Advent, Isobel Rosenberg will be selling beaded Kenyan jewelry. 100% of the proceeds of the sale will go directly to the women of the Kainuk Gospel Church. They use the money to support widows and orphans in their community. Kainuk is a small village in a barren region in northwestern Kenya, and has been suffering from a severe drought for many years. Items for sale include bracelets, necklaces, rings, belts and pouches. Prices range from \$5-\$40. These items make beautiful, unique gifts, and most importantly, the profits from their sale benefits those in need.

### A Job Offer

In need of reliable, caring, kind, compassionate personal assistants to perform non-medical errands and transportation for patients having medical procedures. Services provided include transportation to and from facility, assisting patient with pre and post-op errands. Part-time, flexible hours available. Hourly compensation plus transportation allowance. For more information please call Jack Mizrahi at 914-329-3432 or at [jcmiz@optonline.net](mailto:jcmiz@optonline.net)

### Need a babysitter?

**Look no further!** CPR/first aid certified; 1 year away from Masters in Social Work with children; all ages of children acceptable; works with special needs including Autism/spectrum children; lives 10 minutes from Croton; Leigh Anna and Andy Harken are personal references and resume available upon request. **Please contact Melissa Ciarcia at (203) 430-7402**

### BLOOD IS LIFE - PASS IT ON!

The semi-annual Croton Community Blood Drive will take place on Sunday, December 6, from 9 AM to 3 PM at the Croton-Harmon High School Gym. Each donor is carefully screened prior to donation, and those who should not donate are not permitted to do so. Being a blood donor involves no risk what-so-ever, since all equipment touching the donor is brand-new, sterile, disposable, and used only once. Refreshments are served, baby sitters and transportation are provided. Call Carol Shanesy, 271-7645 or Jo Ann Fannon, 271-5529, or email [communityblooddrive@gmail.com](mailto:communityblooddrive@gmail.com) to make an appointment or if you have questions. **Please note:** Many of us at St A's do not agree with the requirement excluding homosexuals from blood donation; however, the need for blood is still great, and therefore we still provide this information to you as a community service.

### St. Ann's Coat Drive

If you have coats, jackets, snowsuits, sweaters, hats or gloves the HELP Committee of St. Ann's church is looking for the above for men, women and children. You can bring the items to St. Ann's lower church in Ossining from 6:30 am to 7:00 pm from now until March 31<sup>st</sup>. For more information contact, Ann Lorelan, 941-6073 or Diana Lane 922-6329.

