



The Bellringer

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July/August 2006

Rector:
The Reverend Bradley C. Dyche

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

July 2006

1 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

2 **The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

4 Tuesday Parish Office Closed for July 4th Holiday

8 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

9 **The Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

15 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

16 **The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche preaching and celebrating**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

19 Wednesday 8:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting

22 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

23 **The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

29 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

30 **The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

Déjà Vu, St. A's Thrift shop, will be open only on Saturdays through Labor Day.

Sunday School Children and Acolytes who missed the end of the year awards may pick up their pins after church in the sacristy.

August 2006

5 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

6 **The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

12 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

13 **The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

19 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

20 **The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

26 Saturday 5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist II

28 **The Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist I

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist II

We want to thank Natural Solutions' John Grant (Chris Newton's brother) who has been working to save the tree to the left of the church front door. In order for the tree to recover from the disease that is affecting it, the tree must be kept "stress-free" which means **that no one should climb it and everyone should refrain from walking on the area around the tree.** Parents and children, please take note.

An excerpt from a sermon by The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche on May 14, 2006

On this happy morning, the fifth Sunday of Easter, on the day when many of us celebrate our Mothers here and gone, Happy Mother's Day, and on a morning when we get to kick-off, celebrate, and usher in a new future together at St. A's, oddly enough, the readings appointed for today focus us on a man who has no future and not much hope. In our reading from Luke's Acts of the Apostles, we hear about a high pitched Ethiopian, a eunuch, who becomes the first gentile convert to the early Jesus movement. And perhaps because of my deep love of irony and paradox, or even my dark sense of humor, I would like for us to dwell with this childless man for awhile on this Sunday of hell o's, for Mother's, and in Easter. Ironically and paradoxically, in this foreign man who could sire no children is a key for real joy and celebration, which is certainly relevant for me today, and I hope for you as well.

This eunuch of Acts is never named, but we are told several important points about his identity. One is that he worked for the Ethiopian Queen Candace. He was the money man, the keeper of the treasury of Ethiopia, which unlike present day, would have been sizeable. From that, we can deduce that this eunuch must have been an intelligent or at least well connected man. And we know that he was rewarded for his gifts. He had wealth, because he drove a chariot. But we also know that there was something missing for him. In the ancient world, before such wonders as adoption, a eunuch by definition had no future, no future generations, no one to pass his wealth onto, and no one to take care of him in his old age. As a result, although the eunuch was materially satiated, he was spiritually impoverished, so much so that we are told that he makes a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship, a difficult, arduous journey. Something was missing, more than a body part. So the eunuch goes to the great Temple in Jerusalem. But little does he know that at the Temple in Jerusalem, the house of God, foreigners were not allowed beyond the court of the Gentiles, and Eunuchs were not allowed into the Temple, period. On two counts, this man's search to fill the void in his life by

seeking God had been thwarted.

And so we find the eunuch on a remote desert road. Amazingly enough, he has not abandoned God. Instead, he goes to the Bible for solace, try, trying again for a new view of life. He reads from the prophet Isaiah, "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter... In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." And the Eunuch is puzzled, cannot understand the meaning of this passage. And I want to claim that what he cannot possibly comprehend is how God could be identified with suffering. For in his mind, at that time, suffering would have been thought to be punishment, while only health, wealth, and children would be thought to be a blessing of God. This man, being ostracized from the Temple, being without progeny would have seen himself as cursed and punished, despite his monetary success. The eunuch is being held hostage to a hostile theology and the mirage of divine favor through success. Enter the Apostle Philip. Philip tells the Eunuch about Jesus, the crucified one, the one who teaches us a new way to be with one another, a way without exclusion, a way without violence to self, body parts, or others. Philip tells the eunuch about a God not apart from suffering but one who is in and with those who do suffer. Philip shows the eunuch that through the life and death of Jesus, we have been shown that our ways of excluding others can result even in the killing of God, and that there is a new way to be together, a resurrecting, loving, more peaceful way to live, and this is the new family of God. And the eunuch finds hope, in spite of the Temple and in spite of his unique eunuchnicity. Although he cannot have a child, he gives birth, is made anew, and he realizes that he too has a future. Perhaps...., as he was unfurling the scroll of Isaiah, he should have also read the 56th Chapter wherein the prophet writes that God promises to "Gather the outcasts of Israel," (Isaiah 56:8), including the "eunuchs and foreigners," (Isaiah 56:3-4). And from that, we know that the love of God is about gathering us up rather than excluding us or us excluding one another.

The conversion of the eunuch symbolized a significant shift for the early Christians. Gentiles were suddenly included, involved in, and integral to this new family of God. Traditional boundaries that

were unhelpful were widened. And this is what excites me about talking about the eunuch today. The eunuch found a new family, a new hope, and we have a new family and new hope as we start a new life together. And we get the opportunity to work toward a family that cares for all, that is responsible in its dealings, is nonviolent in how we deal with one another in our words and actions. And we have the opportunity to model the love of God both here and in the world around us.

Of course, as I begin on this Sunday of fresh family starts, there are so many other things that I want to say. I feel that I need to say that this is not Iraq, and I am not the president. By that, I mean that I'm not coming here with my own preconceived ideas of what needs to be done. I instead want to live amongst you, see how things are done, and then prayerfully tweak that, help us and our parish grow and prosper. I also want to commend to each of us to be rooted in but not wedded to the past and how things "used to be." I want to ask each of us, including me, to make room for new growth and be ready for some pruning. I want to say that I hope we can be generous with one another, laugh with one another. Let us be forgiving of each other's weaknesses and value one another's strengths. I ask us to love one another, and care for one another, even when we annoy one another, even when we do not agree, even in the coming months as I try to learn your names and get to know you, and I forget your names. And like the Apostle Philip, I hope that we will be cognizant not only of the people within these walls but also of those outside them and their needs.

I want to say all of these things and more. But ultimately, I want to say, that we should enjoy this moment, this time, this honeymoon together. We should be thankful for the past leadership, for the search committee, for the vestry, especially Gerald, his sense of humor, and all the wardens of the past year. And we should behold this moment in the life of this institution. I am sure that there are difficult decisions and times ahead. But let us relish this moment of joy and newfound family. And let our time together be fertile and fecund and fraught with possibility. Let us enjoy it, because like a newly baptized eunuch, our future is bright. Let us enjoy it, fellow family members, together.

Vestry Notes from the June meeting:

- Senior Warden Gerald Ardito announced that the Reverend Bradley C. Dyche will begin his duties as Rector of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church on the weekend of July 15-16.
- Gerald also announced, in the absence of Treasurer Holly Anzani, the results of June Fest: the net total was \$21,600! This is a record for St. A's, and the fact that we had a downpour on Saturday and no sitting Rector makes the result even more worthy of celebration. We are all deeply grateful to the three chairs of the humongous undertaking, Terri Huntington, Regina Hertl and Betsy Joslyn Mitchell, and to all who helped to make the weekend so very successful. Bravo!
- Buildings and Grounds co-chair Laura Seitz and the rest of the Vestry would like to thank John Grant, of "Natural Solutions", for all the work he has donated to St. A's to repair and restore our beloved kousa dogwood tree.
- The Vestry and the parishioners of St. Augustine's would like to thank Kendra McIntosh for serving as our supply priest for six weeks, and for the enormous enthusiasm, joy and grace she brought to the task.

submitted by Chris Moore, Clerk of the Vestry

Summer Worship: In order to keep cool during the summer we will begin hold our services in the parish hall starting July 8 and 9.



Treasurer's Report:

May Financial Operations:

The Church's financial operations continue to be strong, 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 will not be joining us until July). Revenues are stable, but two categories down significantly from the amount budgeted: fundraising and pledges. Fundraising is improved, with FoodFest coming in at \$1,780 (ahead of budget -- although not all of the winners had paid as of the end of the month. Other Fundraising efforts are down, due to a drop in the sale of shopping certificates and a decline in sales in the thrift shop. The success of JuneFest will be reflected in the June financial report next month. Current year pledges are behind expectations by \$3,220. To a small extent this is mitigated by an increase in last year pledges paid in 2006 -- \$1,311 more than expected.

June Fest Congratulations!

This year's June Festival was remarkable despite weather problems on Friday and Saturday. We had lots of contributions of baked goods, gourmet delicacies, white elephants, plants, etc., and many people pitched in to organize, price, sell, cook, count and clean -up! We also had the steel drum band on Sunday back from last year which attracted many people to our acre of green!

The African Team Ministries booth took in \$1310.00 for both Mother's Day (\$846) and Junefest (\$464) which was sent to African Team Ministries for support of children in Africa who have HIV/AIDS.

Results Of June Festival 2006!

Auction	\$9145	Baked Goods	\$464	Rummage	\$3770	Gold Fish	\$690
Games	\$1320	Gourmet Food	\$696	Grill	\$1103	Plants	\$845
Dinner	\$550	White Elephant	\$3169	Concerts	\$6	Toys	\$523
Pub	\$661	Face painting	\$171	Cocktails	\$321	Food Fest	\$1780

GRAND TOTAL: (a record) \$ 21,592(after general expenses to date, this may range as expenses come in)

Rector The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche
Rector Emeritus: The Rev. David B. Wayne

2006 VESTRY MEMBERS

Senior Warden:	<u>Gerald Ardito</u>	Junior Warden:	<u>Ty West</u>		
Treasurer:	<u>Holly Anzani</u>	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
	Dana Garrett		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
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