



The Bellringer

E-mail: august@bestweb.net Website: www.stacroton.org March 2008

Rector:
The Reverend Bradley C. Dyche
Priest Associate:
The Rev. Betsy Johns Roadman
Deacon:
The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna

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

March 2008

1	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
2	<u>The Third Sunday in Lent</u>		
		8:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist I
		10:00 a.m.	Children's Eucharist (no Sunday School)
		11:15 a.m.	Fundraising Committee meeting in the Parish House
		5:30 p.m.	Pizza and a Movie sponsored by the Youth Council
3	Monday	7:30 p.m.	Outreach Committee Meeting
4	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer and Stations of the Cross
		7:00 p.m.	EFM Class
6	Thursday	5:30 p.m.	House Church at the Church
8	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
9	<u>The Fourth Sunday in Lent, The Rev. Betsy Johns Roadman preaching and celebrating</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.	Book Group Meeting in the Parish House
11	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer and Stations of the Cross
		7:00 p.m.	EFM Class
12	Wednesday	12:00 noon	First Wednesday, at the Croton Diner
	Wednesday	8:00 p.m.	Vestry meeting
15	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II
16	<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.)
18	Tuesday	6:30 p.m.	Evening Prayer and Stations of the Cross
		7:00 p.m.	EFM Class
20	<u>Maundy Thursday</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
21	<u>Good Friday</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Vigil concludes
		Noon	Good Friday Liturgy
22	<u>Holy Saturday/Easter Eve</u>		
		7:00 p.m.	The Great Vigil of Easter*
23	<u>Easter Day</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II*
		10:30 p.m.	Children's Easter Egg Hunt on the church lawn
		11:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II, special children's program in parish hall *

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

24	Easter Monday		Parish Office closed
25	Tuesday	7:00 p.m.	EFM Class
29	Saturday	5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist II, with the Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna
30	<u>First Sunday After Easter</u>		
		9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
		11:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist II
30	Sunday	11:15 a.m.	Block 6 Teacher Training in the Parish House

Why Wait! *from the Rector*

Sometimes, I am not so certain that we need Lent. Let's be honest, many people simply do not appreciate its stark austerity. Sometimes, the list of people who do not appreciate Lent's austerity includes me. For some reason, Lent has all too often conveyed a sense of rigidity and judgment instead of what I believe it should share: an invitation for introspection and preparation of the joys to come. Because the church has often failed in this endeavor, the season, for many, has begun to feel like endless days and endless nights instead of "forty days and forty nights." Some parishioners, you know who you are, even pretend that Lent simply does not exist. You go on saying "*Alleluia*" in spite of it all. How could you?

Yet there is a good theological reason *NOT* to have rigidity and austerity and perhaps not to have Lent. After all, the joys of Easter have already happened. Jesus did forgive his enemies. He loved even the people who killed him, and because of that love, no other power of the world, even death, could hold him... or US! And because Easter has already happened, we cannot pretend, even for Lent that such good news has not yet been made public. We could faithfully, reverently, and even impatiently ask, "Why wait?" Why not bring out the chocolate bunnies, the marshmallow *peeps*, and the un-environmentally friendly, cellophane wrapped baskets with plastic green grass? Why not celebrate Easter and scream "*ALLELUIA*" even in the middle of Lent?

The fact is, God is ready for Easter. It is a *fete accompli*. Easter is already here! We could opt to share in that. And yet, most of US are simply not ready (and some of us need every ounce of these forty days to get ready). Lest you think that I speak from a place of judgment on this matter, let me speak for my own self. I am not ready. At least in my own journey and life, I find that every year I need a lot more readiness and openness to receive this amazing, all-embracing sort of love. It all seems too good to be true: forgiven, loved, no vengefulness. To be able to accept those real joys of Easter, I have to be able to leave behind the shame of things done and left undone. I have to believe that all of us are more than a sum of our worst actions and inactions. I have to trust that God loves us, each of us, in spite of our flaws, broken dreams and relationships, and promises. I have to be open to something new, and that takes preparation.

We have been attempting to be open, in a similar way, in our parish. Our discernment committee has been taking its time, its very important time, to really make sure that what we present to the Vestry will be well thought out. How we address the issue of parish growth should be well discerned. Soon, in April, we hope to be able to present to the parish our thoughts and potential solutions. We will have presentation boards in the parish hall with each solution, including the positive and negative aspects of each plan (and the costs associated with each). Originally, when we began our work, we believed that we could quickly find a solution and move toward its acceptance, but like Lent, we have found that we need to be really mindful and slow. We have to make certain that we are open to all possibilities. We understand that such a way is the only path toward a solution that has truly discerned the will of God and the path of our congregation.

Lent, if it is done well, is about us preparing to and learning how to meet the joys of Easter and the person of Jesus with open arms. Going through Lent can be a, *not the*, way to open ourselves up to that love. We scale so much back, such as music and "alleluia's" so that we might prepare to greet that love, that we might accept God's radical love and forgiveness. We reduce everything to the lowest common denominator, the story and life of Jesus, so that we can focus ourselves solely on that love. Listening to the story of Jesus, feeling empathy

for his choices and his self-giving and forgiveness, are ways for us to realize that God loves us beyond our wildest imaginations. They are ways for us to be ready to receive the joys of Easter. SO, please join with me in putting away all those poor understandings of what Lent means. Put aside those dastardly notions that God wants anything other than to love us. Let go of any shame! Listen to the story again, and realize that God did not demand Jesus' death, but that even when we humans went astray, God's love prevailed. Be open to new understandings of the same old story. Do that so that we can prepare to meet the God who is already here, is already risen, and yet who can affect us in new and profound ways, if only we open ourselves to that love. And when we get there, we will say "ALLELUIA" together! Carry on, through Lent, brothers and sisters.

God's Peace,



Bradley

Some Sad News from Betsy Roadman

Dear parishioners of St. Augustine's,

After much thought and prayer, I have decided not to renew my contract with St. A's when it expires in May. I have loved serving as your priest associate, working with Father Brad, Deacon Keith, and Laura Ravotti. It has been a joy and a privilege to be in close relationship with you and to be involved in all that God is doing in and through you.

But more and more, I am feeling drawn and called to chaplaincy, spiritual direction, and the facilitation of groups focused on contemplative practices. I am working as a chaplain at Phelps Hospice, and I've established a spiritual direction practice, for individuals and groups, based at All Saints' Church in Briarcliff Manor. I have been leading workshops and retreats for faith communities here in Westchester and as far away as North Carolina.

I'm realizing that I can't do it all, and for this season of my life, I need to let the priest associate responsibilities go. I intend to worship at St. A's and to participate in the life of the community when I can, and I'm out and about in Ossining and Croton all the time, so we certainly don't need to say good-bye. But I will very much miss that moment during the Eucharist when I see your face at the communion rail.

Blessings – *Betsy*

Fundraising...

All Hands on Deck for the Fundraising Committee! On **Sunday, March 2nd**, after the 10 AM service, there will be a short meeting upstairs in the parish house for a newly organized Fund-raising Committee. If you do not know, fund-raising is one way that our parish is able to function above and beyond our pledge income. We have our annual food-fest and June-fest, not to mention other projects. We are hoping to re-energize those events and think of some new ones. Co-chair Suzanne Smith is helping to coordinate this committee. All are invited for this organizational meeting.

Bishop of Matlosane

We learned that retired Bishop of Matlosane David Nkwe passed away Monday, January 21. As you know, Bishop Nkwe served from about 1990 until his retirement last year.

The other news is that Bishop Stephen Diseko, the new Bishop of Matlosane, will be in New York from March 14 to 27. There will be a reception for him at Donegal Hall on Easter Monday at 6:15. John Harbeson expects to go, and other representatives of St. A's would be most welcome. If you are interested in going, please contact John Harbeson or the parish office.

Youth Event

Sunday, March 2nd, 5:30 PM. Dinner and a Movie at the Parish House. For more information, contact Mary Ellen O'Neill

Mission Trip Meeting

Sunday, April 6th after the 10:00 AM service: Meeting for youth and adults about the possibility of an international mission trip in 2009. Why would we think of such a thing? How might we make it happen? Come with questions and hear about the experiences of others as we explore this possibility together.

First Wednesday:

Our gathering this month will be on **March 12th** (the second Wednesday). We will meet in the parish hall for Noonday Prayer, then off to the Croton Diner for lunch and fellowship. Please RSVP to the parish office by Tuesday, March 11, 271-3501.

Carpenter's Kids Pledges

We are in the process of compiling St A's 2008 offering to Carpenter's Kids. Pledges for 2008 are due on March 23rd. Place your pledge in the offering plate with **Carpenter's Kids 2008** in the memo section of the check.

If you need to know the status of your pledge please contact the Parish Office.

Adult Education Continues

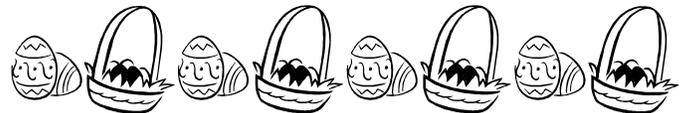
Deacon Keith's final program for the year is scheduled for **May 18th**, our Patronal feast. Our topic is, of course, our Patron, Augustine of Canterbury, the First Archbishop of Canterbury to be sure, but much more than that: diplomat, negotiator, and mediator, and in dicey times at that.

Easter Flowers

If you wish to donate Easter 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. There are envelopes in the back of the church. 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 Easter bulletins, they must be given to the office by Sunday, March 16.

Easter Egg Hunt

This year the Annual Easter Egg Hunt will take place **between the 9:00 and 11:00 services**. Please note: this is a change from last year. Children will find eggs scattered around the property.



Save the Date

Thursday, June 5th -

Rabbi Barry Weinsten to speak about his work in Louisiana, post Hurricane Katrina.

Check future Bellringers for details.

A Sustainability Fair

A Sustainability Fair to celebrate Earth Day will be held by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Briarcliff, Croton and Ossining on Sunday, April 20th from 1 to 5 PM. The Fellowship is located at 2021 Albany Post Road in Croton. There will be exhibits on various products (i.e. green cleaning products, local farmers' markets, organic foods, renewable energy, etc.) There will be a representative to discuss a program for low cost home energy and videos on a number of topics.

Preaching Series in April:

What we do and why we do it.

In an effort to explore what we do and why we do it, for the four Sundays in April, we are offering a preaching series on parts of the liturgy.

On **April 6th**, at the Children's Service, The Rev. Bradley Dyche will help explore why we do liturgy and worship at all.

On **April 13th**, The Rev. Betsy Johns Roadman will preach on the Prayers of the People

On **April 20th**, The Rev. Bradley Dyche will preach on the Nicene Creed and the Holy Eucharist

On **April 27th**, The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna will preach on the Dismissal

And on **May 17th and 18th**, all services will be Instructed Eucharists.

Repeat of Last Months Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Year-end 2007 Report.

The Church's financial operations continued to deteriorate for the last quarter of 2007. Expenses were generally lower than expectations. Administrative expense came in lower than expected as we were without a Parish Administrator during July and August. Property expenses came in lower than expected due to the relatively mild winter and a reduction in our sewer taxes. Priest also came in lower, since we had budgeted for a full year for an Assistant Priest, rather than the actual of eight months. Outreach was close to budget after the expenditure of monies to organizations recommended by the Outreach Committee. Program expenses were higher than the budget, due mostly to added investment in our Sunday School program. The reason for the significant increase in our deficit is the lag in revenues since the beginning of summer, especially pledges. JuneFest raised

\$20,988 (remarkably close to the \$21,000 in the budget). Space Use improved, but was still below expectations, with revenues 35% lower than budgeted. Current Year Pledges were budgeted at \$142,000 for 2007 (only \$137,599 in pledges were actually made for the year however). Of that amount, only \$127,180 was received during 2007, leaving a close to \$15,000 shortfall in pledge revenues v. budget, and a shortfall of over \$10,000 v. pledges made. Although expenses were generally lower than expected, they were not low enough to make up for this revenue shortfall, resulting in continued deterioration of our financial position, and an actual deficit of (\$12,863) versus the budgeted deficit of (\$132). This operating loss will have to be covered by our operating reserve, significantly depleting the amount available in our reserve for unforeseen events, or for revenue shortfalls in coming years.

Financial Operations through December 31, 2007:			
	<i>Expenses</i>		<i>Revenues</i>
	<i>Paid</i>		<i>Received</i>
Administrative	\$ (46,481.59)		
Priest	\$ (81,010.08)	Fundraising	\$ 27,770.06
Service/Program	\$ (20,073.96)	Plate	\$ 23,9749.07
Diocese	\$ (19,372.00)	Pledge	\$129,902.35
Outreach	\$ (8,645.23)	Space	\$ 6,062.50
Property	\$ (33,071.36)	Investments	\$ 8,082.31
TOTAL	\$(208,654.22)	TOTAL	\$195,791.29
(deficit)/surplus	\$ (12,862.93)		
budgeted deficit	\$ (132.91)		



Holy Week at St. A's:

Palm Sunday, March 16th: 9:45 Liturgy of the Palms in the Parish Hall. A Children's Event will be held during the service.

Maundy Thursday, March 20th: Agape Meal and Maundy Thursday Liturgy. Enjoy a meal with friends. The church will provide some mainstays, and invites you to bring some simple, Middle-eastern fair for this traditional meal followed by the service.

Maundy Thursday, March 20th: at 9:00 PM: Following the Maundy Thursday Liturgy, sign up to keep vigil in the Sanctuary overnight.

Good Friday, March 21st: Good Friday Liturgy at 12 Noon

Holy Saturday, March 22nd: Easter Vigil at 7 PM.

Easter Day: March 23rd: Easter Day: services at 9 and 11 AM. Children's activities will be provided during the sermon. Easter Egg Hunt will follow the 9 AM service.

<u>Rector</u>	<u>The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche</u>				
<u>Rector Emeritus</u>	<u>The Rev. David B. Wayne</u>				
<u>Priest Associate</u>	<u>The Rev. Betsy Johns Roadman</u>				
<u>Deacon</u>	<u>The Rev. Deacon Keith McKenna</u>				
<u>2008 VESTRY MEMBERS</u>					
Senior Warden:	<u>Duncan Cleary</u>	Junior Warden:	<u>Dana Garrett</u>		
Treasurer:	<u>Holly Anzani</u>	Clerk:	<u>Elizabeth Hoffman</u>		
Asst Treasure:	<u>Suzanne Smith</u>				
<u>Class of 2008</u>	Laura Seitz	<u>Class of</u>	Holly Anzani	<u>Class of</u>	Cathie Elliott
	Suzanne Smith	<u>2009</u>	Ed Godek	<u>2010</u>	Anya Steger
	Elizabeth Hoffman		Greg Kaebnick		David Wixted
<u>Meeting Schedule: Vestry, 3rd Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.</u>					

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Address correction requested



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