

Calvary Chronicles



CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
WILLIAMSVILLE, NEW YORK

October 2007

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Dear Friends,

October's arrival draws our attention to many remarkable things, one of the most pleasant being the celebration of the Feast of St. Francis on October 4. I have always been a lover of Francis, beginning as a teenager when our youth group camped out in the woods and ate tuna from a can as a symbol of living the simple life a la Francis (no need to comment on unimaginative religious ceremonies). Our lovable Francis of Assisi is one of the most beloved of saints and the odd traditions accompanying his remembrance by posterity, like preaching to the animals, are most affectionately embraced. He reminds us of our symbiotic relationship with nature and to honor him is to accept a scolding for our lack of appropriate stewardship of the world God has entrusted to us.

Being "Green" is now popular again after a brief inauguration in the 60's. Among all the environmental dramas being played out, the climatic shifts most believe are occurring make clear how significant is the impact of human civilization on the health of the planet. We Christians, brothers and sisters of St. Francis, have a particular responsibility to accept leadership in the effort to make changes in how we do things, from life in our own households to the policies of governments and corporations. We are part of the world, brothers and sisters to all biological life and co-creatures with all natural materials and systems. We have the unique ability among all creatures to make decisions that can affect the whole; God trusts us to honor his lordship by figuring out how to support human life without destroying our own global habitat.

Let's all be open to suggestions for reform that find their way to our consciousness and act on them in our lifestyles as well as support them in our public lives as consumers, educators and voters. The savvy but simple Francis would be thankful for our attention. Remember, it's not only time to bless the animals, but to step back and realize we are animals, too, albeit ones with appetites voracious enough to eat the entire world. Modify our consumption and we all might have a bright future as the apple of God's eye.

Faithfully,

Steven+

STRATEGIC PLANNING AT CALVARY

The Strategic Planning Committee was formed in response to a request from the Vestry to the Budget Committee to present a five-year financial plan. After considerable discussion, it was determined that any such plan must consider change. Calvary Church is a living, changing entity, and to plan using only historical data would not take the future into consideration.

The committee has met several times in the past months, discussing methods and procedures for producing a meaningful long-range plan that will involve all parish ministries and committees, and have input from all interested parishioners. We have also read literature by authors with congregational planning experience.

Our conclusion is that we need to seek additional help, and as a first step, three members of the committee and the Rector will attend a seminar sponsored by the Episcopal Church Center Office of Congregational Development. The meeting agenda includes sessions covering church life-cycle, demographics, group decision-making, and orientation for growth. We feel that the information gained from sessions, as well as discussion with members of other parishes in situations similar to ours, will be of great value as we begin to implement the project. In addition to Steven, Bob Preston, Cris Hicks-Usta and I (Tom Brunton) will attend.



Upon our return, the committee will prepare an initial plan to submit to the Vestry and the Parish. This will be an exciting project involving every interested parishioner as we move to fortify our current strengths, and determine new directions for Calvary Church.

We welcome input and help from all church members! Call or write with your input and concerns, and join the journey.

Tom Brunton, Chair

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Several years ago, before becoming a member of Calvary, I belonged to another church with a large congregation. As is usually the case, it was sometimes considered a “cold” congregation because it was difficult to get to know a lot of people. Sometimes, the larger the congregation, the more little groups or “clicks” there are, and it is difficult for newcomers to become incorporated into the life of the parish.

One new member of the congregation happened to be a lady of senior years, whom I will call her “Rita.” Rita took it upon herself to begin introducing herself to others. Then, during coffee hours Rita started introducing everyone to everyone. Of course being a newcomer, she had no idea who knew whom already, so every time we would meet Rita, she would ask our name, then turn and ask if we knew the person next to her. It got to be quite a chuckle at gatherings, because we knew that when Rita appeared, everyone would know everyone else whether they had been friends for years or not!!

However, much to everyone’s surprise, we realized this innocent ministry that Rita had...making people feel included and welcomed! Newcomers were being introduced to old-timers, people were talking with people with whom perhaps they had never had a conversation, etc. And everyone was smiling after Rita had talked with them!!

I’ll never forget Rita. She certainly brought a smile and a chuckle. Even though she could not remember names, or whether she had already met you or not, she taught us all a lesson. Everyone was a new friend at church!!



So, in the spirit that Rita left behind, please do talk with the people in the pew with you, behind you or in front of you. Talk with them during coffee hours. Introduce yourself to the “new” people nearby and invite them to coffee hour with you! And if they aren’t in church for a few weeks, drop them a note to say they are missed, call them on the phone, or let the parish office know your concern. Each one of us is important, and of value in our parish family.

Priscilla Welman, Chair
Congregational Care Committee



From the Tower

Welcome Back Sunday, September 9th was my first opportunity to be back on the carillon bench since the Summer Series ended in August. I am pleased to be playing the carillon at Calvary again, this time in a slightly different capacity.

I have been asked, by the Rector, to play 10 times between September and June, 2008. This will include two even-songs, Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday, and 5 more Sunday mornings. I hope you will enjoy the music as much as I will enjoy playing.

If anyone is interested in learning more about the carillon, or, in fact, learning to play, I would be happy to talk to you about coming up and seeing what is involved. There are no restrictions about coming up to see the instrument, but there are two prerequisites on taking lessons. You must be a high school student or older and must have prior experience playing a keyboard instrument.

I can be contacted at 632-4405 or by email at Carillon1@aol.com.

Gloria Werblow

When in Church...

As we came together on September 9th for the Welcome Sunday liturgy, it was so good to have our church pews full and our voices raised in a joyful noise. The Service and Eucharist have all the best parts of a great party – singing, laughing, greeting each other – but with a special purpose raising it beyond the level of just a party. We can enjoy each other and worship our creator at the same time.

Keeping that in mind, let's set an example for our children, leaving cell phones off or at home, and keeping personal conversations to a minimum during solemn parts of the liturgy.

That said, don't be afraid to being the kids closer to the front, where they can really see and participate in the service, with all its color and textures. It's never too early to lay the groundwork of faith in our families, appreciating and respecting the beauty of our great liturgical tradition.

Sue Kirkland
Vestry Liturgy liaison



Donations - Thank You!

You may have noticed some new furniture in the Reception Room. We want to acknowledge Bernie and Ken Ruof for their donation of a (dining room) table and chairs.

Also situated nearby is a break-front, donated through the wiles of Michael Way.

Both are thoughtful, welcome, new (and free!) additions to our church "living room." Every committee and Vestry meeting has you to thank for making their service to Calvary just a little bit nicer.

Thanks!!



...from the Choir Room

Now that the 2007-2008 season has officially begun, I take this opportunity to welcome you all back for what will be a very special year from the Music Ministry.

The renovation on the organ is almost complete – all that awaits is the addition of the new digital stops in the pedals, and the final tuning. This requires two visits from the Walker Technology Co. The new digital sounds will be installed on the first visit and then adjusted for our acoustical situation on the second. We are hoping that all of this will have taken place by our first Evensong on Oct. 7.

Look for a schedule of very special events to showcase the work that has been done. Plans are underway for special recitals and other liturgical services. In the meantime, please do come up and see the new console – 3 new keyboards, a new pedalboard and new rocker tabs are all resting very comfortably on a beautiful hardwood platform and I am thrilled to show it off!

I am very pleased to announce that the Children's Choir has begun rehearsals for the 2007-2008 year. Last year's survey produced interest from the parents of 21 young parishioners. Our rehearsals are on Wednesday afternoons from 4:30-5:30 and we welcome all who are interested. I am grateful to the parents for their support of this important ministry...without it, we will not succeed.

Faithfully,

debi



The Wardens' Corner

Well, we had our "opening event" on the 9th of September and it was extraordinary. We were thrilled at the number of people who attended and who responded to the various committees. It was all about the Calvary family getting together, talking and renewing their friendships after an amazing summer. Now it is important for us all to stay on track and join in on the various events this fall.

The September Vestry meeting dealt with finishing touches to the Churchyard, responsibilities of the vestry members in communicating with specific committees and issues with the Building and Grounds efforts to "make Calvary shine."

We will have a new approach toward stewardship that will be announced this month and that comes from a committee with new spirit and new members giving a fresh approach to the "yearly call."

We are happy with our refurbished organ and our newly formed Children's choir. Several kids (and parents) have responded, so we should have some new young voices singing their hearts out later this year. It's a good time at Calvary and we have much to be thankful for.

Dick Welte
Senior Warden

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FALL UTO

From Lynne G. Smith,
Diocesan UTO Coordinator

(Editor's note: This information was parsed from a recent letter to UTO Coordinators from Lynne. I share some of her insights with you in the following passages.)

“Gracious Lord, for these many blessings received every day, I give thanks with a heart open to you. For your many blessings and mercies received, may I in thanksgiving fill this box up to the brim with coins: gifts of love, hope and renewal, so that it may overflow into the lives of those who so need you. Amen.”

(Lynne continues:)

The other day I was packing away the little things on my sink window sill in preparation for moving. And there was my UTO blue box – taped many times over and still being used. But it really is time for a new box, I told myself – so between now and the time I am in my new home, this new box will be the lone item on my windowsill. Everyday I am thankful for so much. And in the rush of life, the sight of that box reminds me to say “thank you” to our most generous Father often, and add another coin.

I can not write it often enough. Giving thanks to God has always been the basis of United Thank Offering. The UTO BLUE BOX has been the outward symbol of this thankfulness for over 100 years. Our challenge, as UTO Coordinators, is to encourage members of our congregations to use the BLUE BOX in their homes.

Editor's thoughts:

In reading through Lynne's letter, several thoughts occurred to me. One is the never-ending use one can have for the Blue Boxes we are urged to take home. Lynne keeps her year-to-year, and refills it continually, each coin representing something for which to be thankful. We don't need a new box every year. We just need a reminder to keep it forefront and filled.

This reminds me of the constancy not only of things that we can be thankful for (if we'll only stop, think about it, then acknowledge it), and the constancy of needs that have a chance to be fulfilled through the plink, plink, plink of coin thank-yous...dimes, pennies, nickels, and

quarters...change that really can change lives...change you will never miss... change that doesn't need a new box every year. It does appreciate the company of coins every day, though.

Our next campaign is Spring, 2008. Don't wait until then, though, to take your BLUE BOX, and begin to thankfully fill it now...and again, and again. Then, like Lynne, perhaps you'll empty it, and begin again, for the thanks – and the need – never end. The BLUE BOX stands ready.



TOGETHER IN FAITH

The theme of this year's stewardship campaign is "Together in Faith." The highlight of Together in Faith will be a Festive Hymn Feast that will take place on Friday evening, November 2nd from 6:30 PM until 9:00 PM. In addition to sharing your favorite hymns, led by our very own Debi Overton, we will share a pot luck dinner and a brief gospel service.

Parishioners are asked to submit their favorite hymns by filling out an insert



found in Sunday morning programs and placing it in the ballot box or collection plate. Besides the traditional hymnal, the committee encourages people to examine the two other hymnals approved for use in the Episcopal Church that will be available in the back of the church, taking time to read the various texts. A selection of the most popular hymns will be played and sung at the November 2nd Feast.

Although this event is being led by your stewardship committee, it is something we are doing Together in Faith. If you are willing to participate as a table captain or in some other capacity, contact Bruce Davidson.

MISSION

October 14th - UTO SUNDAY

Please return your UTO envelopes, which will be mailed to you at the end of September. Children are also asked to return their UTO boxes. The response from our parish family on Mother's Day (almost \$1600) was overwhelming and greatly appreciated.

If you do not have a Blue Box, please pick one up on the table in the church. Giving thanks to God has always been the basis of the United Thank Offering. The UTO) BLUE BOX has been the outward symbol of this thankfulness for over 100 years.

UTO Prayer

Gracious Lord, for these many blessings received every day, I give thanks with a heart open to you. For your many blessings and mercies received, may I in thanksgiving fill this box up to the brim with coins: gifts of love, hope, and renewal, so that it may overflow into the lives of those who so need you. Amen

The UTO offering will be presented at the annual convention in October.

October 14th - FOOD GIVING SUNDAY

...to benefit Homespace-Second Chance. Your food donations, baby items, and monetary donations are greatly appreciated.

October 21st - FRIENDS OF THE NIGHT PEOPLE

Friends of the Night People has a new Executive Director, Mr. Joseph S. Heary, who comes to FONP with an impressive background. Help is needed to serve meals on this day. It is a short time, but a very rewarding experience. (Contact person: Joan Fischer at 688-7647)

October 28th - SCHOOL #30 ADOPTION CEREMONY

Oops! Somehow, last year we did not have the adoption ceremony, so we want to make sure that we don't make this mistake again. Our support for school #30 is necessary. The school depends on us. This is the day that we extend our commitment to the school. Please plan to attend.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SPEND 2-3 HOURS AT THE SCHOOL EACH WEEK. Teachers really appreciate this help. Some of our previous volunteers have decided to retire, so we are seeking new help. Please contact Sharon Jackson (877-4866) if you would like more information.

November 11th and 25th - AFRICAN TEAM MINISTRIES SALE will be held before and after the 8 and 10AM services. Come and do your Christmas shopping. If you want an unusual gift, this is the place to find it.

November 17th - MITTEN TREE for School #30 arrives in the reception room. Take a mitten and sign your name in the book next to the child's name. The grades will be identified in the November Chronicles.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Jeanne Eaton (626-5066) is desperately in need of volunteers to deliver and or drive for MOW. This takes a maximum of 2 hours on a Friday morning from the Senior Center on Audubon Pkwy. Substitutes would also be greatly appreciated. Your children are welcome to accompany you.

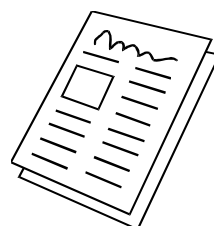
BINS

The bins are emptied each time we have a Mission Meeting (November 13th-next). Observing the signs on the bins makes sorting much easier. THREADS OF HOPE LINEN PANTRY is for kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom items only (towels, sheets, blankets).

ERIE COUNTY HOME

Contributions accepted through November 30th. Please consult list from 9/9 bulletin or posted on bulletin board.

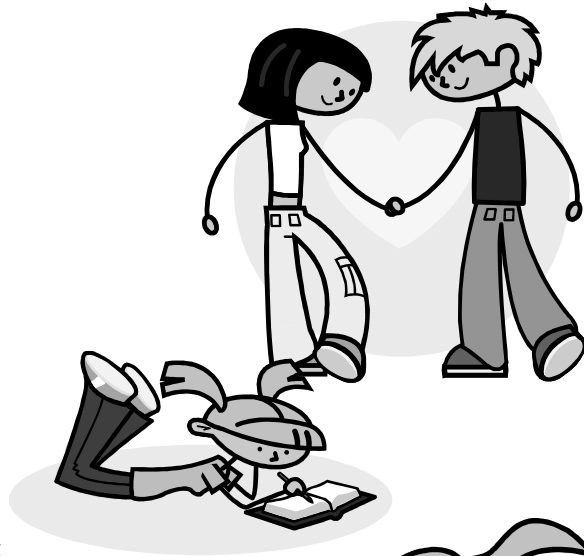
**OUR NEXT
MISSION MEETING IS
WEDNESDAY,
NOVEMBER 14th.
Help is needed.**



CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRIES

Welcome Back!!

With record-breaking attendance for our first day back to Sunday school, this year promises to be a very busy one indeed! We are very pleased to welcome Sam Guadagna, Ray Barker and Douglas Sandburg as our youth leaders for the Sr. Youth Class of 10th through 12th graders. Steven has been blessed with a very strong team to help lead this remarkable group of teenagers in worship and community fellowship. This class will be meeting in the classroom in the back of the Scaife Room at 9 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Please have your children join us.



“Safe Church” Diocesan Seminar...

Last Saturday a group of us attended a “Safe Church” seminar held in East Aurora. I mention this as it had a profound affect on how I perceive our responsibility as Sunday school teachers. I don’t believe God ever intended the word “love” to be used in distorted ways. It nonetheless remains a challenge to us as teachers to be careful about how we bond with your child. Cari Evans (Warden) and CYM are working to bring the “Safe Church” seminar and program to Calvary so that we can all operate on the same page.



...and Requirements

In that same vein, and not to end this on a less than upbeat note, we ask you to please continue to involve yourself with your child’s Sunday school experience. We need your help. It’s not a question of whether one teacher can “handle” it. It is rather now an issue of **diocesan requirement that we have at least two teachers in each classroom and our nursery.** Mr. Z. has need for your involvement for one Sunday or as many as you’d like - not to lead necessarily but to just “be there.” You might be surprised that you even like it!

Lisa Maxwell



PRAYERS FROM THE PEW BY: GEORGE MAYER

Scripture tells us that we are saved by grace through faith. So let's reflect upon that marvelous quality of our Creator and Heavenly Father: God's amazing grace.

The acronym formed from *God's Riches At Christ's Expense* comes to mind. We soon realize that God's loving kindness is everlasting. And, it is grace that teaches us to obey God.

No one understands human misery as Jesus does. He knows those who have been trampled underfoot as children, bent and broken by abuse. He grieves with those who are bending under a load of rejection and shame. He pities those whose hopes and dreams have been reduced to a flicker. His understanding is infinite. It is this "kindness that draws men and women to repentance." (Romans 2:4)

God's love "covers a multitude of sins." Because Jesus paid the price, all our sins accumulated over a lifetime have been put away forever. They have been pardoned, never to appear in judgment against us. Even our most outrageous sins are forgiven according to God's mercy and grace. We cannot drift beyond God's love and care. There is always a way back with God. Beyond the bad news of our failures and frustrations is grace - that incredible gift of God.

Grace means that God forgives us, no matter what we have done, are doing, or will ever do. It means that our sins are gone forever - replaced by love.

To say that grace is free, unmerited favor only expresses a little of its meaning. It is the unhindered, wondrous, boundless love of God poured out to us in an infinite variety of ways, without stint or measure, not according to our deserving, but according to His measureless heart of love.

Grace also means that God has given us the resources to make a new beginning. The question is not, "Can I make it? Am I able? Can I overcome my sin?" The question is always, "Is He able? Can He transform me?" He says He can, though it may take a while. God Himself will sanctify us through and through. The One who calls us is faithful and He will do it. (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

We must start with God's part, with a calm assurance that grace for the next act of obedience is already there. We can move forward without fear or frustration, knowing that the next step will take care of itself. That's the good news! That's the Gospel! Jesus did it all!

Chroniclers

All are welcome to forward articles of interest relative to events, missions, committee work, and relevant opinion along. We have plenty of space, and love to hear from you.

The monthly deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication issue, for example: October 15th for the November issue; November 15th for the December issue. If you would like a deadline reminder emailed to you, and do not currently get one, please send your request by email to: chickscooks@verizon.net and I'll add your name/address to my monthly reminder list. If you change e-addresses, please don't forget to let me - and the church office - know! Reminders are also posted in the Sunday service leaflet one and two weeks in advance.

Submissions are best sent electronically, either in an MS Word file or the body of your emailed message. If possible, use Book Antiqua font size 11, though I will make those changes if that's not possible.

Call if you have questions, need help, or are unsure of anything: 689-4526 or (cell) 868-7738.

Cris Hicks-Usta, Editor