

The Hallowed Word

All Hallows Episcopal Church

The Rev. Kenneth Thom, Priest-in-Charge

October 2010

United Thank Offering

The Fall Ingathering for the United Thank Offering will take place at All Hallows on Sunday, October 24th. Through this program, developed by and administered by women since 1889, offerings collected are sent to the UTO national office, which is entrusted to promote, receive and distribute the United Thank Offering monies through grants. In 2008, more than \$2,400,000 was given in 91 grants. Grants within the United States went to 70 recipients in the amount of \$1,500,000. There were 17 international grants totaling \$782,000. There were also 4 awards totaling \$84,000 to Companion Dioceses.

The Mission of the UTO is to expand the circle of thankful people through daily prayers, offerings and awareness of the abundance of God's blessings. Many choose to take a "Blue Box" (available at all times in the back of the church) and make a thoughtful daily offering. Others participate by placing an offering in the plate during the UTO collection on October 24th. Others may choose to mail a check to Ann Gibb, the treasurer of the Episcopal Church Women at All Hallows, at 30025 Southhampton Bridge Road, Salisbury, MD 21804.

For more information, visit www.episcopalchurch.org, or google United Thank Offering.

Importance of the Creed

The following article is by The Rt. Rev. G. Porter Taylor, Bishop of Western North Carolina, and first appeared in the October issue of *Highland Episcopalian*, the newsletter of that diocese.

As a parish priest, I frequently taught the Inquirer's Class for those interested in learning more about the Episcopal Church and perhaps becoming members. I was always surprised that one of the primary stumbling blocks for many people was the Creed. Inevitably someone would tell me, "I just don't believe all of it." When I would push them to explain, they said they could not give an intellectual assent to every proposition. They could not understand the mysteries rationally, and therefore, they felt they could not "believe" them. Most of the time I

replied, “But you see, understanding is not the same as belief.” Belief is not primarily about our mental, rational comprehension. When we stand and say, “We believe in God,” we are saying that we have been grasped by the divine reality of God the Creator, and our lives are now connected to God. This is why our Creeds say, “We believe in” instead of “We believe that.” We believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, confident that the divine Trinity believes in us. The Creed is the affirmation of our faith that God is at the center of our lives.

I remember hearing a story of an Orthodox priest who was told by a young man that he had trouble saying the creed. The priest asked him if his eyes were bad or something prevented him from reading the words. “No, Father,” the young man said, “I just don’t believe some of it.” “Oh,” said the priest, “Just keep saying it and you will.”

To our contemporary ears, this sounds authoritarian or simplistic or shallow. Yet there is a truth there, because none of us understands the mysteries of the Creed. None of us can explain the Incarnation or the Resurrection or the Ascension. We are all growing into understanding. What matters is that we are grasped by the divine reality they express. We give our hearts to the mystery. Our temptation is always to write our own Creed or be like Thomas Jefferson who cut out the passages of Scripture he didn’t like. However, the Creeds connect us to the great tradition which is bigger than us.

Perhaps that is why the Nicene Creed begins with “We” and not “I.” This is not merely my belief; it’s the expression of faith by the Body of Christ over the centuries. We are held up by the communion of faith so that when one of us has difficulty with one part, another’s voice helps him or her, and so on.

Our day is a tricky time to affirm a creed because we live between two poles – neither of which is life giving. On one side is the meaninglessness of a relativism that affirms everything but believes in nothing, and on the other is a rigid fundamentalism that seeks to eliminate the mystery by creating God into some rational, logical propositional faith. On the one hand, some people are so expansive that there is no clarity about what they believe, and therefore, they have no boundaries, and on the other, some are so narrow that their God is far too small, and therefore, they build brick walls. As the Irish poet, W.B. Yeats wrote, “The best have lost all conviction and the worst are filled with passionate intensity.”

As Christians and Episcopalians, we must be clear about the boundaries of our faith. The theologian Luke Timothy Johnson says that the

The Hallowed Word, page 3

Creed draws a circle so that we have a sense of what it means to belong to the Body of Christ. In this age that proclaims a tolerance that disguises our lack of certainty, we need to know the ground on which we stand. Johnson writes, “Being Christian...is a matter of living according to a specific view of the world.” The Creed is the Christian way of seeing; it is a lens for interpreting our lives.

That’s why the Creed tells the story of our faith. It is not so much theological propositions as it is the sacred narrative. The Creed does not so much explain as it describes. The gift of this is twofold. First, it enables the circle of faith to encompass a large group of people. Our core doctrine is the story of God creating, incarnating and resurrecting and not 10,000 rules like the Holiness Code of the Hebrew Bible. Second, it moves us out of our historical, scientific rationalism into the sacred mystery. The God we can understand is not a God worth worshiping. Certainly I am for using history and archeology and all the academic tools we have at our disposal, but none of them can lead us into the core mysteries of our faith.

May we believe with all our hearts and souls and minds in the mysteries of the creed, and may that belief enrich us, empower us, and guide us in this pilgrimage of faith.

Church Grounds

For a number of months, there has been a sketch of the landscaping around the church and parish house posted on the bulletin board in the parish house. The various areas of ground cover, plantings and flowers are divided into eleven separate landscaping areas identified by the letters A through K. Underneath the sketch is a sign-up sheet with blank spaces labeled A through K, corresponding to the landscaping areas. The idea is for one person or family to take responsibility for the care and maintenance of one area. By dividing the work among eleven persons, no one has a major time consuming task. However, so far only one name has been placed on the sign-up sheet. The growing season is nearing an end for this year, so signing up to maintain a landscaping area does not represent a major commitment. Some areas need to be weeded, some to be pruned, and some require almost no effort at all. If you would be willing to assume responsibility for an area, please sign up on the sheet or speak with Kemp Wills, the Junior Warden.

Easter Work: Christ is risen—as a promise that God intends to raise up all that is broken, unjust, and death-dealing in our world. And our risen Lord calls us all to this healing work, wherever we find ourselves.

Lay Ministry

Lay members of the congregation perform a number of very necessary and important functions before, during and after our worship services. There are greeters, lectors, Eucharistic ministers, acolytes, altar guild members, soloists, and coffee hour hosts/hostesses. The efforts of all of these people help to make our worship services run smoothly and efficiently so that worship- can be spiritually refreshing and fulfilling for all of the congregation. There are no gender restrictions for any of these functions, and anyone with interest and enthusiasm for the task, and above the age of 12 or so, can perform any of these functions. If you would like to serve or want more details, please see Father Ken.

Helping an Island Community Adapting to a Changing World: Life in the Solomon Islands, one of the many isolated island groups in the Pacific Ocean, has never been easy. Limited resources and salty soil have made day-to-day survival a challenge in even the best of times. Early last year, Episcopal Relief & Development partnered with the local Anglican Church of Melanesia to develop a plan that would help diversify the local diet and provide a possible income source. The result is an ambitious agricultural pilot program that is promoting the use of salt-resistant low-maintenance crops.

Chi Rho

The Chi Rho Ecumenical Youth Group will be meeting at All Hallows for the first three Sundays in November. When All Hallows hosts the group, we are responsible for providing refreshments. Volunteers are needed to either prepare or purchase refreshments, and one volunteer is needed to assist in setting out refreshments on Sunday afternoon from 5:15 to 6:00 p.m. If you can assist with the activity, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Parish House. For more information, contact Arlene Thom at 410-632-3977.

Beauty Tips

For attractive lips, speak words of kindness. For lovely eyes, seek out the good in people. For a slim figure, share your food with the hungry. For beautiful hair, let a child run his/her fingers through it once a day. For poise, walk with the knowledge you never walk alone. People, even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anyone. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you will find one at the end of each of your arms. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands; one for helping yourself, and the other for helping others.

New Organ

The Vestry of All Hallows in a proactive move on August 31st approved the purchase of a new organ. It will replace our twenty-five year old Allen organ, which has been showing signs of old age, and for which parts are no longer available. The Music Committee, consisting of Fr. Ken, Jim Bosworth (our organist), Ron Geesey (musician and guest organist), and Kathy Fisher (assistant treasurer) visited both Jordan Kitts, dealer for Allen Organ Company, and the Daffer Church Organ Company, dealer for Rogers Organs, for extended demonstrations and hands-on time. The organ selected is a Rogers Trillium Masterpiece Model 908. It will be installed on October 19-21. Not only will the Rogers Trillium meet our service needs, it will, with its more modern and extensive capacities, enable us to expand our music ministry to the community through concerts and presentations. The Vestry wishes to replace the funds with donations from members and friends of All Hallows. Gifts of \$5,000 and above may be memorialized. Other gifts will be listed by donor name. All gifts will be recognized on a brass plaque either attached to the organ or mounted on the wall immediately behind the organ. Pledge cards are available at the back of the church, and pledges may be paid over a period of three years.

A dedication concert with Taylor Harvey is tentatively set for the third Sunday in November.

Calendar of Events

Worship Schedule

October 10, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
October 17, Holy Eucharist, Rite III
October 24, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
October 31, Holy Eucharist, Rite II
November 7, Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Significant Dates

November 7, Bishop Shand's annual visitation to All Hallows

For Everyday Blessings

Dear God,

Open my eyes to the beauty of this day.

The yellow of an egg yolk in a blue bowl; The scent of bacon frying in the pan.

The soft caress of the morning breeze; The sound of children at play.

Awaken my senses; Let me see, hear, and feel the beauty around me.

And be aware of the presence of the Great Artist in my everyday world.