

# *The Hallowed Word*

## **All Hallows Episcopal Church**

The Rev. Kenneth Thom, Priest-in-Charge

### **March 2011**

**Lent** The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 9, this year and continues for 40 days until the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 24. When counting the 40 days, Sundays are not counted as they are considered to be mini-Easters and the penitential character of Lent is somewhat relaxed. The 40 day period imitates Christ's fasting in the wilderness at the beginning of his time of public ministry. Christians are invited in the Prayer Book liturgy "to the observance of a holy Lent; by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word." In keeping with the more somber character of the season, the altar hangings and other decorations in the church are changed from the relatively bright green of Epiphany to a duller purple and the word "alleluia" is not used during the liturgy. The last three days of Lent constitute the sacred Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and special liturgies are provided in the Prayer Book for those days.

### **Hello, wonderful supportive people!**

I consider you to be among the many supportive people in my life, and I wanted to share some of the most important news in my life with you. Today I received the APPIC results of my psychology internship placement for my 4<sup>th</sup> year in the Virginia Consortium Program in Clinical Psychology. I am happy to announce that next year I will be at The Institute for Child and Family Health in Miami, Florida. I am very excited for this opportunity, and truth be told, a little terrified; however, this is just another part of the arduous journey on my quest for the ever elusive doctorate in psychology. Thank you for being there for me and for supporting me EVERY STEP OF THE WAY! Without each and every one of you, I never would have gotten this far!

Much love and admiration,

Alex Dryden

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**We already have a cosmic savior**, yet those who share God's dream are all partners in healing the world. God can't do it without us. As Desmond Tutu is fond of saying, when God said 'feed the hungry,' he didn't mean to stand around and wait for pizzas to fall from heaven.

(From a sermon by our Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori to the Anglican Primates meeting in Dublin.)

## **Do You Know How Good You Are?**

(The following story was written by The Rev. Nanese Hawthorne, the Rector of St. Luke's Church in Church Hill, MD. It appeared in *The Trumpeter*, the newsletter of St. Luke's Church, and its message applies just as much to the people of All Hallows as it does to St. Luke's.)

It is a good thing that we have our Annual Meeting at the beginning of the New Year! This past Sunday, at our Annual Meeting, you heard me state that this parish is a very *good* place, with very *good* people, who do very *good* things. Rather than have you think I was just making empty praises, I want you to understand – recognize – believe – that we are all good people doing very good things. God has been very good to our parish, and I see your goodness reflected in all the things that you do despite the struggles of balancing day jobs with other activities and the tasks that speak of your dedication to St. Luke's and St. Andrew's. This goodness is a gift of God. It comes with no price or strings attached. It is only a reflection of the goodness of God, and that brings us grace and gratitude. For Christmas this year, Bishop Shand gave his clergy a copy of Desmond Tutu's book "*Made for Goodness*." Co-authored by his daughter Mpho, the book lays out wonderful examples of God's goodness even in the midst of evil. It was during the darkest days of Apartheid in South Africa that Bishop Tutu brought energy and love to the podiums and streets of most major cities in the world. In clear and illustrative language he and his daughter tell story after story of good overcoming evil; the joy they discover and share in the

goodness of God provides not only a "good" read, but a joyful one as well. In the beginning of the book, the authors remind us that "we are made for goodness by God, who is goodness itself. We are made for and like God, who is the very essence of goodness." They then remind us we all – every one of us on this planet – are made in the image of God, and that upon completion of this creation God says, "It is very good..." They further explain, "Goodness is not the coin with which we anxiously pay for God's love. Our goodness is rather the recognition we offer and the thanks we return for the gifts and the love already given us." Further into the book they explore the place of sin and loss with which we all have struggled. Yet in God there is no loss – love is so powerful that it can overcome the worst of tragedy and sin – and hopelessness. Perhaps in the future we will have the opportunity to read and share the wonderful thoughts and ideas generated by this book, but for now I want to pass on to you the knowledge that we are good people, doing good things, and God's abundant love is with us all in our journey.

## **A Prayer for Our Diocese**

Almighty Father, shed Thy light upon this Diocese of Easton, its people, its clergy, and its bishop; and awaken in us a zeal for Thy Kingdom. Keep us ever in the bonds of love and fellowship and give us a new vision of our place in the parish, the diocese, and the Church-at-large. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Organ Fund Donor Listing**

Following is the list of the names of donors to the organ fund as they will be listed on a plaque to be placed on the wall behind the organ. If you would like to make a donation to the organ fund, please contact Fr. Ken or Ed Haile.

Nancy Blank  
Ruth and Chuck Bowie  
Joan Brisbin  
Mary and Harry Deitch  
Barbara and Patric Dittrich  
Jenny and Keith Donoway  
Tish and Ray Dryden  
Cate and Dave Easmunt  
Catherine Eftimadi  
Bob and Kathy Fisher  
Dorothy Garrett  
Hazel and Ron Geesey  
Ann and Ernie Gibb  
Pam and Bill Gordy  
Kelley and Tom Gravenor  
Tom and Althea Groton  
Sue and Ed Haile  
Becky and Leroy Hall  
William Hatala  
June Pettit and Peter Karras  
Douglas King  
Virginia Lane  
Ardis McElhaney  
Mary McMullen  
Barbara and George Murray, Jr.  
Doris and Nelson Payne  
Edward and Ruth Phillips  
Emily and Bill Russell  
Robert Scott  
Kathe and Ray Selph  
Elizabeth and Carey Shockley Family  
Janet Simpson  
Arlene and Ken Thom  
Jeanne Townsend  
Victoria Glading Trader  
Alice Tweedy  
Betty West  
Kemp Wills

**Whatever is given to us** is given to us to in turn give it to others. That is our purpose in this world.  
(Archbishop Rowan Williams)

**Passed on by a friend...** May today there be peace within. May you trust that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. May you use the gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content with yourself just the way you are. Let the knowledge settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love. It is there for each and every one of us.

### **Calendar of Events**

#### Worship Schedule

March 9. Ash Wednesday, Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes, 12 Noon and 7 pm

March 13, Holy Eucharist, Rite II

March 20, Deacon's Mass, Rite II

March 27, Holy Eucharist, Rite II

April 3, Holy Eucharist, Rite I

April 10, Holy Eucharist, Rite II

#### Special Events

March 8, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

March 9, beginning of Lent

March 15, Soup and Salad Supper, 6:30 pm

March 22, Soup and Salad Supper, 6:30 pm

March 29, Soup and Salad Supper, 6:30 pm

**New Church Signs** (discovered by Tish Dryden)

>The Best Vitamin for a Christian is B1.

>Try our Sundays. They are better than Baskin-Robbins.

>Come in and have your faith lifted.

>You are not too bad to come in.

You are not too good to stay out.

>Can't sleep? Try counting your blessings.

>Life is Hard. Afterlife is Harder!

>Aspire to inspire before you expire.

>Here is a test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: If you're alive, it isn't.

## **Directory Updates**

### **New Address and Phone Number:**

Laurie Bowie  
305 Schooner Lane  
Berlin, MD 21811  
443-614-5802

### **Added Address:**

Elizabeth Simpson Mills  
1207 Fieldsedge Drive  
Hebron, KY 41048

### **Add Phone Number:**

Fred Johnson  
757-894-5486

### **New Address:**

Alex E. Dryden  
680 Ingleside Road  
Norfolk, VA 23502

### **New Phone Numbers:**

Jenny and Keith Donoway  
410-726-7663  
410-251-4210

### **Corrected Phone Number:**

Nick Haglich  
443-523-2467

## **Iranian Church Grows Amid**

### **Persecution** (copied from *The Living Church*)

Few realize that after the Islamic Revolution, from the late 1970's through the 1980's, Iran's Anglicans were the most severely persecuted Christians. Iranian Anglicans worshiped in Farsi, which

angered Islamists wanting to portray Christianity as a Western, Imperialist religion. More important, many Anglicans were converts from Islam.

The first post-revolution martyr was an Anglican priest, The Rev. Arastoo Sayyah. Islamists cut the throat of this Muslim convert in his office in Shiraz, southwestern Iran, on Feb. 19, 1979, and confiscated the property of the church he led. In October of the same year, the Rt. Rev. Hassan Dehqani-Tafti, also a Muslim convert, and his wife Margaret survived an assassination attempt in their bedroom. Dehqani-Tafti was the first Persian Anglican bishop.

The following May his son Bahram, 24, was murdered by Iranian government agents. The bishop could not even attend the funeral of his son, whose body had been found riddled with bullets. He sent a prayer that he had composed, forgiving the murderers. Dehqani-Tafti spent the last ten years of his episcopate in exile.

Dehqani-Tafti, who died in 2008, believed that Christians building "a Persian church," with "a strong and intelligent Christianity" that complemented an authentic Persian culture more than Islam, threatened the revolution. Many more Iranian and British Anglicans were arrested, imprisoned, and even killed for their faith in response to this threat. Churches were forced under-ground. Today the Bishop of Iran, Azad Marshall, must minister to his church from exile.

Many top church leaders were killed in the 1990s. One evangelical leader, Hossein Soodmand, was sentenced (cont.p.5)

**Iranian Church (continued)**

to death in Mashhad, northern Iran, charged with apostasy and operating an illegal church. He had converted from Islam in 1964 and had been an evangelist and Assemblies of God minister for 24 years. Soodmand, 55, was executed on December 3, 1990.

In late 1993, Mehdi Dibaj, who had converted from Islam as a teenager, was sentenced to death for apostasy after more than nine years' imprisonment in brutal conditions. Dibaj's execution was prevented thanks to the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Iran, Bishop Haik Hovsepian Mehr. Mehr, who composed more than 60 Persian-language hymns, drew international attention to Dibaj's plight. Dibaj was released on Jan. 16, 1994, but three days later the man who had saved him disappeared. On Jan. 30, 1994, authorities said that they had found Mehr's battered body.

In June 1994, Dibaj disappeared in a similar manner, and another church leader, the Rev. Tateos Mikaelian, the senior pastor of St. John Armenian Evangelical Church (Presbyterian Church of Iran), was also abducted. Mikaelian, who succeeded Mehr as president of the Council of Evangelical Ministers, was a scholar who had translated 60 books into Persian.

On July 2, 1994, authorities announced that they had found Mikaelian's body in a freezer. The cause of death was said to be multiple gunshots to the head. Three days

later, the police also found Dibaj, buried in a park in Tehran. He had been stabbed in the heart, but also had rope burns on his neck.

Another convert from Islam, Mohammed Bagher Yusefi, 34, pastor of the Assemblies of God churches in the north-western Province of Manzadaran, was killed in September 1996. Yusefi, known as *Ravanbakhsh* or "Soul Giver," left his home in Sari at 6 a.m. September 1996 to study and pray. Authorities found him hanging from a tree in a forest outside Sari that evening.

The children of Mehr, Dibaj, and Soodmand have become leaders in their own right. All four of Mehr's children are involved in ministry, as well as film making.

On Sept. 26, 2006, Dibaj's daughter Fehreshteh and her husband Amir "Reza" Montazami, leaders of an independent house church in Mashhad, were arrested and taken to a secret station of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. They were released on Oct. 5, 2006, after Montazami's elderly parents posted bail by turning over the title of a \$25,000 property.

Last year, in the early morning of Dec. 26, government security forces broke into the homes of dozens of Iranian Christians. According to Elam, a ministry to the church in Iran, 11 of 25 arrested in Tehran were released after days of intense interrogation. Others remain in prison. Some have not been heard from since their arrest. They may be held in Interrogation Block 209 in the basement of Tehran's notorious (cont.p.6)

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Church in Iran (cont. from p. 5)

Evin Prison, as have other Christians before them. Reports have also come of as many as 60 other arrests elsewhere in the country, many involving new converts.

The Iranian regime's attempt to squash the church backfired. Before the Islamic Revolution there were only 200 to 300 Iranian converts from Islam. But by 1992, Iranian Christians International reported that there were 13,300 Iranian converts from Islam around the world, with 6,700 living in Iran.

### **L'Chaim! – To Life!**

Someone has said, Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well-preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming, "Wow! What a ride!"

### **Biblical Theme Songs**

Noah: Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head

Adam and Eve: Strangers in Paradise

Lazarus: The Second Time Around

Esther: I Feel Pretty

Job: I've Got a Right to Sing the Blues

Moses: The Wanderer

Jezebel: The Lady is a Tramp

Samson: Hair

Salome: I Could Have Danced All Night

Daniel: The Lion Sleeps Tonight

Esau: Born to Be Wild

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: Great Balls of Fire

The Three Kings: When You Wish Upon a Star

Jonah: Got a Whale of a Tale

Elijah: Up, Up, and Away

Methuselah: Stayin' Alive

Nebuchadnezzar: Crazy

As the Japanese say, a crisis is too good an opportunity to waste.