

July Newsletter 2008

Dear Friends,

As most of you know, Saturday was the election for Bishop of Idaho and I was not elected. The lay people of the diocese were very supportive, but the clergy stuck by the candidate from Twin Falls who was elected on the sixth ballot. While I still believe my experience and education are an excellent match for what the people of Idaho were looking for, I am also confident that God will make Brian into the kind of bishop the Diocese of Idaho needs.

As for Debbie and me, the last few weeks have been very difficult. We would sit on the screen porch in the evening and talk about the logistics of selling a house, packing up and moving again, leaving people we care about deeply. Day-by-day we watched gas and airline prices escalate and saw the distance between us, our children and our grandson grow and our financial ability to make the trips back to see them shrink. In short the sense of loss overcame the possible gains that this dramatic change in our lives would have brought.

I also know that this has been a difficult time for most of you and I want to apologize for making you involuntary passengers on this part of my personal journey. You have been patient and kind these past few months, and I want to thank each of you for stepping out and walking with me through this process. I look forward to a renewed focus on the tasks at hand, growing with each and all of you at St. Francis as we continue to discern what God has in store for our congregation.

Blessings, Father Kelsey
START UP, START OVER

At the end of March this year, Father Kelsey, Karen Anderson, Darcy Haslam, Clark Wisniewski, and Jane Sayre attended the Start Up, Start Over Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. The focus of this conference was helping congregations like St. Francis to flourish in the coming years. The presenters pointed out the rapid rate of change we are now experiencing in the world and encouraging us to look at ways we can adapt to this change in our congregation. They challenged us with questions like, "What makes St. Francis special? What is your purpose in your community? Who in your community would be affected if you closed your doors?"

People tend to look back to the good old days when the Sunday School was full of kids and whole families were in church every single Sunday.

Often we compare how things are today with the glory days and feel like failures. We discovered that in the 1950's and 60's families were larger and there were far fewer alternatives to going to Church on Sunday mornings. Today, couples are having fewer children, many parents both work, and the number of single parent families has increased dramatically. Trying strategies that worked fifty years ago and striving to make the church look and feel the way it did back then is a formula for almost certain failure. What is needed are strategies that make sense in today's world. We learned that flourishing congregations have eight things in common:

- 1) Empowering Leadership
- 2) Gift-based ministry
- 3) Passionate spirituality

- 4) Effective structures
 - 5) Inspiring worship services
 - 6) Holistic small groups
 - 7) Need-oriented evangelism
 - 8) Loving relationships
- There is not enough space in this article to define what all these terms mean but it is our hope that in the coming months our group will be able to share these concepts with the congregation in more depth. For now, each of these eight characteristics is essential for growing vital ministries and healthy congregations. In the next several weeks, various people in our congregation will be asked to complete a questionnaire that will help us measure how we are doing in these eight areas. Thirty people that represent the various ages, genders, longevity of membership, and marital status will be selected to represent the diversity of the congregation. The designer of the questionnaire, Christian Schwarz of the Natural Church Development, has found that the results of surveying thirty people is almost as accurate as surveying everyone in the congregation. If you are asked to complete a survey, please do so. The surveys will then be tabulated by the NCD people and the results shared with the vestry. The cost of this program is being paid in full by the Diocese of Nebraska.

One presenter said that if your strategy is based merely on survival, you must be 100% successful or eventually you will end up closing the doors. He pointed out that if your strategy is to grow by fifty families, and you are only 50% successful, you will still have 25 more families than you have now. He encouraged us to develop an evangelistic strategy and provided concrete ideas that would help us grow.

I believe I speak for all of us who attended in saying “Thank You!” for sending us to this vital conference. Our future is as bright as we choose to make it. Let us look toward the future, building on our very solid foundation, to make St. Francis Church a place where all are welcome, and where comfort, strength, compassion, joy and the peace of the Lord are the hallmarks of our ministry.

Jane Sayre

On behalf of Father Kelsey, Karen Anderson, Darcy Haslam,
and Clark Wisniewski –

RECIPES FOR OUTREACH

Tri-Parish cookbooks that weren't sold during the last two years were donated recently to Panhandle Community Services. Carmen at the PCS Food Pantry was delighted to receive the cookbooks (she and a co-worker came to the church to pick them up!) as an addition to holiday gift baskets.

Cookbooks were also given to the Scottsbluff and Gering libraries (a dozen to each library) to be included on their book-sales.

A great way of sharing some of our favorite recipes and renewing an awareness of the Episcopal presence in our community!!

Kathy Yates

Cookbook Project Coordinator



Enjoy a safe and pleasant Independence Day, July 4

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Actual Budget

Total income through May \$64,316 \$64,035

Total Expenses -81,025 -78,885

Shortfall \$16,709 \$14,850

Through the first five months of 2008 our expenses were \$16,709 higher than income. This is \$1,859 higher than expected and is due primarily to increased utility and maintenance costs on the building. So far this year we have spent in excess of \$17,800 on utilities, maintenance; fire and liability insurance. In these times of rising costs, we continue to closely watch expenses, but anticipate ending the year about \$25,000 in the red.

Notes from Cursillo 23

In April this year, Karen Anderson, Bob and Samala Brown, Peppi Gutierrez, Ann Peterson, and Collette Suhr attended an Episcopal Cursillo retreat in Halsey, Nebraska. The retreat was organized and staffed by former Cursillo participants, including Father Kelsey and Debbie Hogue, Don Eigenberg (St. Francis); and Cindy Yamamoto (Holy Apostles).

Cursillo retreats are not exclusively Episcopalian. There are Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran and other programs as well.

Cursillo is about proclaiming the best news: that God, in Christ, loves us. The central message of Cursillo is friendship toward each one's personal best, and each one's capacity for conviction, decision, and constancy.

During our Cursillo-days, we were introduced to new possibilities for spiritual growth, thru worship and discussion. Presentations offered by lay persons as well as clergy focused on Gifts of the Holy Spirit; the first day, Faith, the next day Love, and lastly, Hope. Smaller group discussions followed, to look more closely at the meanings presented and how they might be incorporated into our daily lives.

The retreat was a time of cheerful comraderie, singing, and great food.

Surrounded by fellow Episcopalians, acknowledging and celebrating Christ's presence in our lives, we were uplifted and enriched. Others too, face the same struggles we do, personally and as a parish family.

In closing our retreat, we discussed the need to stay in touch with other Christians, not only those attending the Cursillo but each and all of us. In a contemporary culture that often seeks to lead us astray, regular Christian

fellowship strengthens our efforts to remain faithful to Christ in kindness, giving, and compassion.

If you have not participated in a Cursillo retreat, I encourage you to include it on your Wish List. May we join together in supporting one another in our various journeys, acknowledging and embracing Christ every step of the way!

Samala Brown

THE 14th LAMBETH CONFERENCE July 16 - August 4, 2008

We are already seeing mention of the Lambeth Conference in the press. What is it, and how do we at St. Francis connect with it?

We need to go back to 1867, when the first Lambeth was held. Since then Lambeth has met about every ten years. The first such Conference was held at Lambeth Palace, (the London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury), on the River Thames, not far from the Houses of Parliament. When Lambeth began, the Palace could accommodate the 76 Bishops who came, but, since some 800 bishops are expected, the Conference has gathered since 1978 at the University of Kent. This is just outside the City of Canterbury, and within view of Canterbury Cathedral, the mother church of the Anglican Communion.

The Lambeth Conference is the meeting of the archbishops and bishops of the Anglican Communion, the family of our churches around the world. So, in the person of our Bishop, Joe Burnett, we at St Francis are meeting with the whole world-wide family of our Church. As far as I know, all of Nebraska's Bishops have attended whenever a Lambeth Conference happened during their episcopate, and, in his book, *A Bishop of the Plains*, our famous Bishop Beecher has left us an enlivening account of his attending in 1920.

Father Whitney and I happened to be in England during the 1978 Lambeth. Someone had given us a ticket which, unfortunately, would allow only one of us into the service at Westminster Abbey. So we waited outside with the crowd to see the bishops arrive from the Buckingham Palace Garden Party given by the Queen. A busload of bishops drove up, and our own Bishop Warner was the first to descend from the bus. We ignored the barriers, and went to greet him. We told him our predicament, and he said, "I know where I can get another ticket!" dashed off somewhere and came back with the necessary piece of paper. We were so glad!! It was a superb Evensong.

The other service we attended was the final one of the Conference, which took place in Canterbury Cathedral, no tickets needed, but we had to be there very early. What impressed us the most were the eager faces of the Bishops from Africa, some of whom had come at great cost, knowing their lives might well be in danger when they returned home. We all knew that Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, had been murdered the previous year (Feb 16, 1977) by President Idi Amin. So when, during the service, a chapel in the Cathedral was dedicated to 20th century Martyrs, Luwum's name was deliberately omitted, in order to protect the Ugandan bishops present, who were constantly being watched by Ugandan officials.

Bishops go to Lambeth Conferences by personal invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The focus of Lambeth 2008 will be on equipping the bishops as enablers and encouragers of God's people in their purpose and mission, and in helping them in their tasks of leadership.

Many of the bishops will be accompanied by their spouses, who will attend a parallel event hosted by Jane Williams, the wife of Rowan Williams, the present Archbishop of Canterbury. Their theme will be "Equipping the Whole People of God for God's Mission". Marty Burnett, our Bishop's wife, is planning to attend.

"Lambeth" provides the only opportunity in each decade for all the bishops of the member churches of the Anglican Communion to meet together, so plenty of time has been set aside for worship and prayer, bible study, mutual support and encouragement, as well as formal discussions and any church business to be done. However, we must note that "...the Lambeth Conference has no 'constitution' or formal powers; it is not a formal Synod or Council of the bishops of the Communion..."

Rae E Whitney

Lambeth Prayer

Pour down upon us, O God, the gifts of your Holy Spirit, that those who prepare for the Lambeth Conference may be filled with wisdom and understanding.

May they know at work within them the creative energy and vision which belong to our humanity, made in your image and redeemed by your love, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Today we seek to stand in the truth, to say yet again and say with and for a new generation that we are called away from the paths we have known, from a world where every stranger is a threat and every threat must be met with violent rejection. Standing in the truth is knowing the fear in our hearts and yet being able to hear God saying, 'Fear not, I am with you, I have called you by name'. And as we hear our name called, we remember that God has called every human man, woman and child by name, once and for all, has made them unique and uniquely precious. If we can hear that, we can at last let ourselves be led into the new paths that are promised, the paths of peace.

Rowan Williams Archbishop of Canterbury
Episcopal Church Women in Revue

2007 was a memorable and productive year for us!

*Birthday cards; get-well and condolence cards were sent to people in the parish.

*We served five funeral receptions.

*We provided meals for an anti-racism seminar held in the church.

*In the spring of 2007, along with the entire parish, we filled shoeboxes with games, magazines, and all kinds of goodies, to be sent to sailors on the submarine Oklahoma City. ECW helped with shipping costs.

*We organized, decorated, and served a reception for the ordinations of Karen Anderson and Bob Manasek.

*We donated \$250 to the Snows' missionary ministry, and gave \$50 to the Prairie Haven Hospice in memory of Sara Mitchell.

*We purchased a new roaster for the kitchen. Many parishioners helped clean and organize the kitchen. Looks great!! J

*At our Christmas-cookie exchange, we filled and delivered tins of cookies to parishioners who are homebound. We enjoyed coffee, cookies, and fellowship in the process.

*During our Christmas outreach, we gave \$250 in gift-cards to each of three families in the Valley.

With loving hands and hearts, and great expectations,
the St. Francis ECW is well into another full and joyful year –

Collette Suhr Shirley Mead Nancy Kepler Ann Peterson
President Vice-President Secretary Treasurer

In the good ol' summertime...



HABITAT for HUMANITY will build a house in Gering this summer. Our work-day to be announced –



GOLF TOURNAMENT –

Saturday, August 2 ~ followed by an all-parish cookout at Riverview Golf Course, Scottsbluff.

*Tee-times will depend on how many will be golfing.

Golfers & helpers, call Cindy Dickinson, 631-4494 for details –

STAFF & LEADERSHIP

Clergy Priests Kelsey Hogue 632-4626 (w)

632-6853 (h)

Karen Anderson 641-8799 (c)

Bob Manasek 436-7767

Deacon Bob Brown 632-2645

Christian Education Rae Whitney 630-8246

Peggy Wymore 436-1820

Monica Lehr 436-5743

Senior Warden Brad Bode 632-5656

Junior Warden Don Eigenberg 436-5549

Vestry Terry Haney 632-5233

Greg Suhr 436-5963

Al Williams 632-7803

Darcy Haslam 632-8850

Pati McLellan 632-2031

Sheryl Spath 632-6993

Julie Fancher 436-2552

Gina Shedd 635-1701

Joyce Walsh 436-7919

Prayer requests Rosemary, Church Secretary 632-4626

Foundation Tom Flaherty 632-8116

Treasurers Don Kepler 635-0734

Kathy Yates 631-2984

Ushers & Greeters Vic Brenizer 632-4002

Altar Guild Vonnie Rubottom 632-8656

Music & Choir Roberta Siebert 632-3824

Episcopal Women Collette Suhr 436-5963

Acolyte Master Clark Wisniewski 630-0732

E-bay Project Randy Yates 631-2984

Soup Kitchen Cindy Dickinson 630-7989

Knitting Group Samala Brown 632-2645