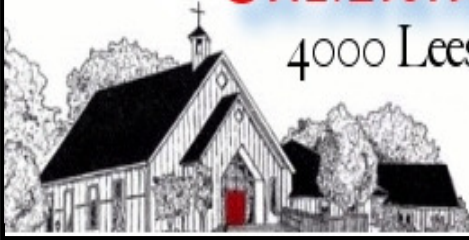


St. Michael's Episcopal Church

4000 Lees Summit Rd, Independence, MO

816 373-5333



December 2008

A monthly newsletter of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, Independence, MO

Vol. 2008 No. 12

Vicar's Reflection

Are You Prepared?

Are You Prepared for a Disaster? That was the title of a recent article in one of my nursing journals. The article stressed the importance of preparing for a disaster regardless of the source of the disaster. Some of the things that the Federal Government suggests as basic items for any disaster situation are:

- A three day supply of water for drinking and sanitation (one gallon of water per person per day).
- Food—at least a three day supply of non-perishable food for each person.
- A battery-powered or hand crank radio and weather radio along with extra batteries.
- A flashlight and extra batteries.
- First-aid kit and any prescription medications that are essential for each person.
- A whistle to signal for help if trapped.
- A dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting, along with duct tape to shelter-in-place.
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation.
- A wrench or pliers to turn off utilities if leaks or rupture occur.
- A can opener for food.
- Food for pets.
- Important documents in waterproof container.
- A sleeping bag and warm clothing for each person, along with one complete change of clothes.
- Household chlorine bleach to disinfect contaminated water and for sanitation.
- Candles and matches.
- Paper, pencils, books, and other activities for adults and children.

So, you may be wondering why I decided to share this list with you? Well, Advent is approaching and it's the season of the Church year when we are asked "if we are prepared." Are you prepared for the coming of Christ? I suggest that, just like the list of stuff you need to get ready

for a disaster, there are things that you need to do to ready your spiritual life for the coming of Christ. Here is the list I suggest:

- Book of Common Prayer (BCP) or other prayer book—it is as essential to your soul as water is to our physical bodies. We need to have a source for prayers when our own words fail us. The BCP also has essential answers to questions of faith which ground us when we try to prepare for Christ's return. Reading the devotions or the Daily Offices centers our day around God.
- A copy of the Bible, which is food for our souls. The Bible will uphold us in times of joy and sorrow and will help us grow in our faith. Read some scripture every day to nourish your soul, just as you eat food every day to nourish your body.
- Daily prayer is like our own hand-cranked two-way radio—prayer connects us to God and allows us to know God's will for our lives. Prayer enables us to hear what God desires of us and prayer enables us to share our hopes and concerns with God. Prayer can't be stock-piled but needs to be done daily like hand cranking a radio to generate power.
- A church community—you need a faith community like you need a first aid kit. The church is the place where our souls are patched up and we equip each other for the work of preparing for Christ's return. You are an essential part of giving aid to others and also getting help when you need it—both spiritual help and material help are found when you are an active part of a faith community.
- Study is like a disaster tool kit—that duct tape, plastic sheeting, mask, and other items to build a physical shelter. Study equips us with the tools we need to prepare a shelter for our souls. Study helps us see how to help others and study connects us to each other in our common work. Study gives us tools to use when our usual spiritual practices fail us.
- Spiritual direction is like that candle and matches, that extra clothing and sleeping bag. We each need someone who helps us prepare and reminds us what we need to bring for the journey. A spiritual friend and companion on the way keeps us from forgetting nec-

- necessary items as we prepare for Christ's coming. Spiritual direction helps light the way and invites us to explore areas of our spiritual life which may need greater personal reflection.
- Confession is the sacrament that lets us take care of spiritual sanitation. Confession lets us clean up our souls and our lives. The sacrament of confession and reconciliation is available whenever you feel the need. If you have concerns and wish to talk with clergy, please contact Mother Pat+ for an appointment.
- Read a devotional book or other book which challenges you to reflect on your faith journey. Books about prayer or spiritual growth are necessary for keeping your heart and mind connected to God. Reading a book which is not study related is like having a game or pencil and paper to keep our minds occupied like the items that are suggested on that disaster list.

Now, I am not suggesting that Christ's coming will be like a natural disaster. Rather, I am suggesting that we need to be prepared and that preparation requires us to plan to act as if we believe that Christ will come. So, are You Prepared? If not, start working on the list of things which you need to do to get yourself prepared for Christ's coming. Christ comes to us as a child in Bethlehem, Christ comes to us each day in the people we meet, and we expect Christ to return in glory. Scripture tells us to prepare. Jesus' parables tell us to keep extra oil for our lamps and to work to increase our talents and gifts so that we help build God's kingdom through our readiness. We cannot be ready unless we prepare. Take a spiritual inventory and see what items you need to include in your life to be prepared and ready to serve Christ in all persons and to welcome Christ when he returns in glory. If you need help preparing, please ask one of the clergy.

By the way, find your Advent wreath and get it ready. The first candle is lit on Sunday, November 30th. Symbols and rituals are important to remind us of God's presence in the midst of our busy lives. Even if you miss a day or two keep up the ritual—light a candle and say a prayer of thanksgiving for the promised return of Christ—anticipate the coming Messiah—don't rush Christmas. After Advent, during the Christmas season (December 25th through January 6th) replace your blue or purple candles with gold candles and continue to light all of them every day as a great Christmas tradition, giving thanks to God for the gift of Christ in your life and

the love of God which surrounds you.

God's peace and joy in this season of Advent,
Mother Pat+

From the Deacon

Canticle: First Song of Isaiah
Ecce, Deus
Isaiah 12:2-6

Surely it is God who saves me;*
I will trust in him and not be afraid.
For the Lord is my stronghold and my sure defense,*
And he will be my Savior.
Therefore you shall draw water with rejoicing*
From the springs of Salvation.
And on that day you shall say,*
Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name;
Make his deeds known among the peoples;*
See that they remember that his Name is exalted.
Sing the praises of the Lord, for he has done great things,*
And this is known in all the world.
Cry aloud, inhabitants of Zion, ring out your joy,*
For the great one in the midst of you is the Holy One of Israel.

As most of you are aware, this canticle has been set to music, which helps in remembering the words. I first heard it sung at an ordination I attended at Grace and Holy Cathedral, and it quickly became a favorite. The words are most reassuring, especially during these times in which we live. These are words that were written by the prophet Isaiah to the people of Judah, particularly to those living in the city of Jerusalem that were to face horrendous times. Israel had turned away from God, but when severe times came by way of invading foreign armies, the nation again turned to God for help. It's sad but so common that, at times, we give God little thought until distress comes. I have said it before and I will repeat that our daily walk with God is vital to our spiritual well being. I say this not only to you, but also to myself. It is all too easy to arise in the morning and rush to eat breakfast or grab that cup of coffee and hear the morning news before hurrying off to work or appointment, and neglect our time of meditation, prayer, and scripture reading. We live in such a

hurried world, taking little time to even catch our breath.

I was going through a difficult time at work the first time I heard these words set to music. I would go for walks at lunchtime and sing as I strolled along, and the words were very comforting. I would make it a habit every day to walk and sing. Also bringing me comfort during this time, as through the years, was the community at St. Michael's.

Take some time to meditate on the words of Isaiah. During these times when the Federal government is giving huge amounts of money in hope of relieving the credit freeze, caused by poor financial choices; let us pray for the economic crisis as well as invest our time developing our spiritual lives. During this time when our armies are fighting two wars against terrorists and hoping for peace and democracy in the Near East, let us pray and work for peace here at home. During this time when so many have lost their jobs because of cutbacks or have lost their homes due to the mortgage loan crisis; let us find hope in God from the words of Isaiah.

Meanwhile, let our energy and resources be focused to eliminate poverty, disease, and injustice around the world. Let us return to God and seek God's wisdom. There is a great deal of fear because of all that is going on in the world, let alone our individual crises that arise from time to time. Remember the words and repeat them aloud, "Surely it is God who saves me, I will trust in him and not be afraid." We are in the midst of Advent, looking for the coming hope of God in the birth of the Messiah. So "Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his Name; Make his deeds known among the peoples;* See that you remember that his Name is exalted." Find hope in God and tell others of the hope that you have found in Christ.

God's Peace, Deacon Larry

This newsletter is a publication of St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 4000 Lee's Summit Road, Independence, MO 64055. The telephone number is 816-373-5333. The newsletter is sent to all members of St. Michael's Church and to friends of the church. If you would like to be included in our mailing list, please contact the church office. Mail all news items to the church office at the address above or email to Shirley Nelson by the 15th of the month at shrl12nelson@sbcglobal.net Or drop off at the church office.



After two years of sharing with the ladies of Trinity, we at St. Michael's are now becoming an independent unit. We will soon have a service installing our new Chapter, Faithful Women of God. New officers are: President, Donna Meyer; Co-Vice Presidents, Abbey Amador and Peggy Chmelicek; Secretary, Trish Doran, and Treasurer, HazelAnn Barkie-Cox.

We invite you to join us! Anyone interested in more information on joining this Order, please talk to any of the officers listed above.

Who are we? We are a group of women living a Rule of Prayer and Service to our neighbors. We are women to whom parishioners can look for love and for help in time of need, loneliness, or strangeness. We seek to walk with God as our guide and try to draw those with whom we come in contact into the Church. We are women who work to spread Christ's Kingdom here on earth. We can never forget that prayer is the foundation from which our service grows.

Are you ready to become a Junior Daughter of the King? If you are interested and are between the ages of 7 and 21 and need more information, please contact Donna Meyer, Trish Doran, or Peggy Chmelicek for information.

What Junior Daughters Do ...

- Make a promise of daily prayer and service to our Lord Jesus
- Make a promise to be Christ's faithful servants and to extend His Love to all people
- Work to grow in our Christian faith and commitment through fellowship, prayer, and Bible study

Contributed by Donna Meyer

THE SECRET PLACE
Each soul has its secret place,
Where none may enter in
Save it and God—to them alone
What goeth on therein is known—
To it and God alone.

John Oxenham

FOCUS ON MINISTRY

Worship & Music

The Worship Committee meets once a year to plan the worship services for every season and to select the best liturgical arrangement and designated colors for the season.

Worship service planning includes: service music and all prayers in the service booklet (opening prayer, Eucharistic prayer, prayers of the people, confession, etc.). It is our aim to make the worship booklet easy to use and also from time to time we include written explanations of what we do and why we do it.

The physical appearance of the church season includes: placement of the chairs and floor plan of the worship space, which banners to use, whether to put kneelers around the altar or in front of the first row of chairs, where to place the baptismal font, will we have flowers or plants, are we using silver, glass, or ceramic vessels, etc. The Altar Guild is represented on the Worship Committee and they are also the group which implements the liturgical design aspects of our common worship together. They set up the special arrangements and banners as well as changing the liturgical paraments (the altar frontal and lectern hanging). Those are just some of the great words you learn at the Worship Committee meeting, so come and join the group the next time they meet.

Anyone is welcome to attend the meeting and is in fact encouraged to do so. Part of our discussion is to answer “why are we doing what we are doing?” We look at the theme for that season’s lessons (for that year) and use the theme to determine what we do. For example, some years Advent is focused more on the second coming of Christ than on the first coming of the promised Messiah. We remind ourselves of the themes of the Eucharistic prayers—why do we do prayer B in Christmas but not in Lent?

Mother Pat chairs the Worship Committee and Rachel Swaney has volunteered to record the information from the committee meeting and she then compiles the worship booklets and, along with the Worship Committee, selects the weekly music and what goes into the song section of the worship booklets. Ideally the music is planned several months in advance. In reality, that occurs once or twice a year and the rest of the time she operates week by week, which is less than ideal, but sometimes a necessity.

The choir is open to anyone who wants to participate. The only request is that you have a willingness to do your best to help lead in the worship of God. God will provide what we do not have. They practice on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. and on Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. The evening practice schedule for summer depends on what the group decides and what is best for the congregation. The choir rehearsals have a layout similar to a service—they sing, pray, and read scripture. Practices are open to all. You can find out what they will sing on Sunday.

Remember that all of us are part of the liturgy and ritual of worship. God’s work is done by all of us each time we gather to worship. Liturgy is derived from the Greek word which means “work of the people.” Our work is our song, our words, and our actions as we engage in offering ourselves in praise to God. So even if you don’t formally participate in the Worship Committee or in the choir, you still participate in the liturgy every time you come to church.

What If?

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?

- **What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?**
- **What if we flipped through it several times a day?**
- **What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?**
- **What if we used it to receive messages from the text?**
- **What if we gave it to kids as gifts?**
- **What if we used it when we traveled?**
- **What if we used it in case of emergency?**
- **This is something to make you go ... hmmm ... Where is my Bible?**

Oh, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phone, we don’t have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill.

Oh, and no dropped calls!



Ed Griffith	12/3
Barbara White	12/5
Rachel Swaney	12/22
Patti Griffith	12/30



Patty & Ed Griffith	12/13
---------------------	-------



Carolyn Henson	12/10
----------------	-------

HAPPINESS

Happiness comes of the capacity to feel deeply, to enjoy simply, to think freely, to risk life, to be needed.

Storm Jameson

**Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.**

John Wesley

Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World

The women of St. Michael's recently completed a study of the book "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World" by Joanna Weaver.

The group met at the home of Peggy Chmelicek. Each week we had an average of 12 women join together—and even a few ladies joined us as “friends of friends.” As we experienced more about each other through an incredibly sweet time of fellowship, study, and prayer, we also learned the importance of sitting quietly at Jesus’ feet and developing a “living room intimacy” with our Savior. We also learned the significance of offering a servant’s heart and we learned that there is a little of “Mary and Martha” in each of us.

The study was a great experience and we are looking forward to more opportunities to explore, to learn, and to grow in God’s love together.

If you have a book or topic you are hungry to discuss; or, if you are interested in attending or hosting or facilitating the discussion of a future study, please contact Peggy Chmelicek at 816-795-7019 or via email at Chmelicek@sbcglobal.net. We will wait until after the Holidays to start the next group.

This ministry is a work in progress. Anyone can attend (you don’t have to be member of St. Michael’s). It’s exciting and fun to love and grow in Christ together. We like to keep the discussion groups to 10-12 people and if we have more, we will form more than one discussion group. So come and invite a friend or family member.

Contributed by Peggy Chmelicek

A World in Need

At times it seems everywhere we turn there is need. The needs may be within our own family—parents, children, siblings. Other times we are asked to consider the needs of others through our faith community, to help those who are not making it in our society. At St. Michael’s we have the Necessity Pantry and we can barely meet all the needs with which we are confronted. We also keep a food pantry, and it seems we never have enough food to feed the hungry. And there is the larger community. During this season, how many of us feel slightly uncomfortable every time we pass a Salvation Army bell ringer at the store without putting money in the bucket. And now with a severe worldwide economic downturn, perhaps we are more concerned about our own financial future than we were a year ago.

Nevertheless, the Bible is clear on the subject of helping those less fortunate. I wonder, do we have to be a Bill Gates or a Warren Buffet (the truly rich) to think about those who are far from us in distance and culture—the most impoverished in the world, the third world. Are they not our neighbor too? By now you are saying, “Oh, come on! Enough is enough.” Well, there is a way you can give a gift that keeps on giving to someone in the third world. At the same time, you (we) can involve our children or grandchildren in it—teaching them about a larger world than they imagined and helping them to understand the hardships which exist for many in the world. Here’s how:

Episcopal Relief and Development offers a way to help heal a hurting world. They work *“to alleviate hunger and improve food supply by ensuring people have the food they need today, as well as the tools, knowledge and support they need for tomorrow.”*

Here’s some ideas for gifts ERD suggests:

Goat (provides food *and* earnings.) Give a family the opportunity to sustain a regular income. Goats are hardy, reproduce quickly and can be raised in a variety of climates to produce sought-after items such as milk and cheese, as well as manure for farming. **Cost:** \$80 for one goat.
Ducks & Geese (hatching opportunities to sustain families) Your gift of ducks and geese provides families with an ongoing source of protein and income. Duck eggs hatch in larger numbers and ducks are more resistant to disease than other birds, making them invaluable household livestock worldwide. **Cost:** \$35 for one duck or goose.

For more information and more suggestions for gifts go to the www.er-d.org/giftsforlife website, or ask MotherPat+ for more information.

“If there be any truer measure of a man than by what he does, it must be by what he gives.”

Robert South

Contributed by the Editor



DECEMBER FEAST DAYS

Monday, December 1
St. Andrew the Apostle 6:30 p.m.

Monday, December 22
St. Thomas the Apostle 6:30 p.m.

Friday, December 26
St. Stephen,
Deacon & Martyr 6:30 p.m.

Monday, December 29
The Holy Innocents 6:30 p.m.

Come join us on these feast days for sharing in the stories of the Saints of Christ and Holy Communion.

*MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL*



*MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL*