

# St. Michael's Episcopal Church

4000 Lees Summit Rd, Independence, MO

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May 2008

A Reflection from the Vicar ...

## *The State of the Church Report - Spring Update*

We began the new year looking back at our work and forward to new ministries. If you read the January newsletter article you know that we use our mission and our vision as tools to determine how we use our time, talents and treasure. Just to refresh your memory, St. Michael's Mission Statement says we are: ***"Called out of the world by Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to know and worship God and to serve and heal God's people in the world."*** You may also remember that a mission statement is general and provides a direction for the leadership and parish. From the mission statement usually grows a Vision statement which gives added focus for a particular period of time. The Vision statement which we currently use is: ***St. Michael's parish will be a dynamic community of strongly committed Christians evangelizing, educating and supporting each other. St. Michael's will be a focal point in the community - a visible symbol of God at work in the world.*** Our mission and vision guide how we use the resources that we have for God's work.

In January I told you that we planned to work on several aspects of our common life together and on our outreach; so I thought you would like to know what we have accomplished in the past 4 months and what we hope to work on in the spring and summer.

First, we asked each of you to invite people to worship with us and we have had a few visitors from those efforts. Second, we asked you to give away St. Michael's cards and St. Michael's ink pens to people as a way to invite them to worship with us. You have done a good job of leaving St. Michael's pens at restaurants and other places; and we hope that it will help us get more visitors to come worship with us. We have an on-line ad with the Independence Examiner so check us out on-line and tell us what you think. We are also exploring other electronic means of evangelism so if you have ideas share them with the Stewardship Committee.

Second, we had hoped to have a Spring Fling to reach out to our immediate neighbors and re-connect with them. However, the timing has not worked out for this. But we still plan to do this event just now it will be a Fall Fling. Various groups are hard at work on this project and you can help, just contact Terry Bickham or Margie Gray. We are planning a Pentecost Party to celebrate on May 11<sup>th</sup> with a special puppet show for the children and an ice cream and cake party for all of us. So spread the word and invite folks to come on Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup> and join in the fun! If you have an idea for a party or event, please let us know.

Third, we are seeking ways to make ourselves visible to the younger generation who want to conserve the earth's resources. Our recycling program which now includes paper, paperboard, cardboard, plastic, aluminum cans, cell phones, printer cartridges, eye glasses and plastic bags is going strong. We are still determining how to make our recycling programs more visible to the community. Our rain garden is about to become a reality as we break ground on May 3<sup>rd</sup> at our work day. If you would like to contribute plants or help pay for the border stone for this project, please let Margie Gray know of your interest.

We also want to be a visible symbol of what can be done in renewable energy. Our wind turbine project continues to get donations and we are trying to find grant sources as well. If you want to help with this project, make your check to St. Michael's and mark it for the wind turbine. The wind turbine will help us significantly

by generating clean, free power for us to use, and when we are not using the power the wind generates, it will turn our electric meter backward and send the power to the electric company. Most of you are aware of how much wind we get up here on the hill, and the experts believe that it is a good way to get into renewable energy. It is visible, it is economical, and it is something that no other church or entity in the area is currently doing. It will be evangelism on a grand scale while supporting our goal of being good stewards of God's world. Part of the Fall Fling will focus on educating our neighbors about renewal energy and energy savings opportunities.

Fourth, our worship, education and social opportunities have been numerous so far this year, and we continue to offer all of our usual programs. Peggy Chmelicek is helping us expand our youth ministry. The teens are having a party in a few weeks, so watch the announcements for more details; and of course we have Jr and Sr. High retreats this summer along with Missionpalooza in July. For the younger children, we will again offer a full week of Vacation Bible School, July 14-18 for ages 3 through 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Older youth can work as assistants in VBS. We have had several puppet shows and other special activities during Children's Chapel and we are planning more events which actively teach our children about God's love for them.

Fifth, we are called to reach out beyond our doors to those in need. We are doing that through our expanding Necessity Pantry partnership with the other Episcopal Churches and through our Food Pantry, which is now part of the Episcopal Anti-Hunger Network. We are currently trying to arrange an agreement with Harvesters Food Bank to keep our emergency food bank better supplied. Your help is always welcome as we need all kinds of food donations. We partner with Trinity to take clothes they can't use at the Mustard Seed and give them to folks we are in need. There are many opportunities to help in this area, so come volunteer.

Lastly, we always have to look at our financial picture and it has improved slightly over last year; but we still need your help to keep up with our bills. Some of you increased your level of giving striving for a Biblical tithe and we have put your donations to good use for the work of God's kingdom. We still need your help in the area of finances. We are asking that everyone tithe a portion of the special tax incentive rebate which most of us will receive in May or June. If every family gave the church an extra gift from that rebate, we would be able to catch up on our past due bills.

Your volunteer hours and your financial support have made St. Michael's a vibrant and active community of faith. I am so thankful to be part of God's work at St. Michael's and I am grateful to each of you for your support and your prayers. Most of you know that this has been a difficult few months as my father's health has declined and he is dying. I thank you for your prayers and your willingness to pitch in and help at St. Michael's, so that I can take a few extra days each month to care for my dad. All of you are a blessing to me and to my family. The work we do together brings me joy and it is a blessing to be part of this great community of faith. Thank you for sharing your lives and your ministry with me. Mo Pat+

## From the Deacon

### Promises to Keep

When we were baptized some of us may have received a baptismal candle that reminded us of the day we were brought into the Body of Christ, and marked as Christ's own. This candle reminds us that we are to be Christ's light in the world. It is good for us to be reminded of our vows to God.

When we are baptized we state our belief in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At baptism we stand **as a community** and promise God that we will be faithful in worship, engage in Bible study and daily prayer so we may seek and know God's will for our lives. We promise to be a part of the Body of Christ, the Church even when we think we don't need to come to worship. We promise to be participants in the gathering at the altar to share Christ's meal together. We also promise to involve ourselves in the prayers that help us as a community. At baptism we promise to fight evil in whatever way it may show itself in this world. To us this means to live lives that are honest, open, and strives to do right. We promise to proclaim the Good News of Christ, which may involve telling a friend about the love of Jesus, and bringing a friend to church. We promise to serve Christ in all persons, even to the point of loving those that are difficult to love. We promise to respect the dignity of all people, and to strive for justice for the powerless and to promote peace in this world ravaged by war and destruction. These promises might seem impossible for us to keep, but these promises are possible if we work together as a community faithfully striving to do God's will. At baptism God promises to be with us the rest of

our lives, God promises to equip us with the Holy Spirit to guide us, and God promises us eternal life because of Christ's saving acts.

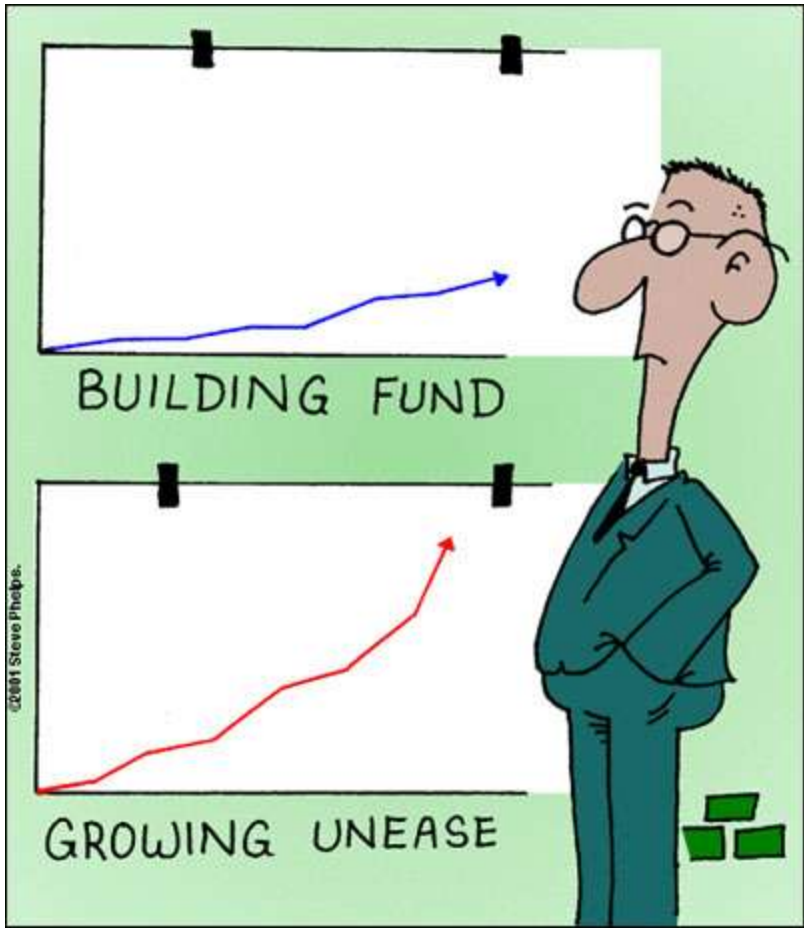
These words were taken from a sermon I gave three years ago when a friend was baptized. They are promises that are found in The Book of Common Prayer, and I think are good for us to reflect on from time to time. As I write this, Easter was a mere three weeks ago and we had 95 at the 10:30 AM service. The next week we had 27 in attendance. Mother Pat reminded me that the Sunday after Easter is always low attendance Sunday. Low attendance is puzzling since as the baptized followers of Jesus we have made promises to be faithful in community worship, Bible study and prayer. How we act and what we do are examples to others about what we think is important in life. Gathering together in community worship is a testimony to the world that we feel God should be exalted and praised. Let us strive to be consistent in keeping the promises we have made at our baptism.

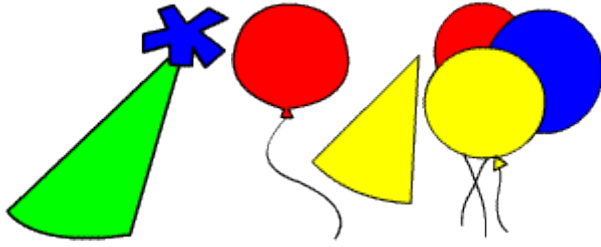
God's Peace, Deacon Larry

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Lambeth Conference is a gathering of all the Anglican Bishops from around the world. This gathering is held every 10 years in England. It is a time for the Bishops of the Church to gather in study, prayer and worship. It is a time for conversation and of course some debate. This gathering is not a decision making body of the Church, but rather a gathering for conversation and discernment. We ask your prayers for those at this gathering and for those unable to attend. Bishop Howe and his wife, Mary, will be attending and ask your prayers for safe travel, for wisdom in dealing with the press, and for a time of renewal with fellow Bishops and their spouses. You can follow the events and actions of the Lambeth Conference on-line through reports on the Diocesan Website or through the Anglican News Service on-line. The Diocesan Website is: [episcopalwestmo.org](http://episcopalwestmo.org)

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## FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

### Anniversaries

Jacob & Gina Crawford	5/4
Frank & Mary Beth Manning	5/4
Joseph & Debbie Hogan	5/6
Raymond & Michele Parsons	5/19
Evan & Ursula McNamara	5/27

### Birthdays

Samantha Stewart	5/7
Ada Napier	5/12
Pat Regier	5/22
Caitlin Crawford	5/25
Jacob Crawford	5/29

### Baptisms

Jamie Russell	5/8
David Dougherty	5/13
Mary Martin	5/15
Delaney Russell	5/17

# congratulations!



## **MAY FEAST DAYS**

May 1	Ascension Day	6:30 p.m.
May 2	St. Philip & St. James	6:30 p.m.
May 11	Day of Pentecost	Sunday

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## **Reputation & Character**

The circumstances amid which you live determine your reputation; the truth you believe determines your character.

Reputation is what you are supposed to be; character is what you are.

Reputation is the photograph; character is the face.

Reputation comes over one from without; character grows up from within.

Reputation is what you have when you come to a new community; character is what you have when you go away.

Your reputation is learned in an hour; your character does not come to light for a year.

Reputation is made in a moment; character is built in a lifetime.

Reputation grows like a mushroom; character grows like the oak.

A single newspaper report gives you your reputation; a life of toil gives you your character.

Reputation makes you rich or makes you poor; character makes you happy or makes you miserable.

Reputation is what men say about you on your tombstone; character is what angels say about you before the throne of God.

William Hersey Davis