



ST STEPHEN'S SIGNPOST

ST STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
HEATHSVILLE, VIRGINIA



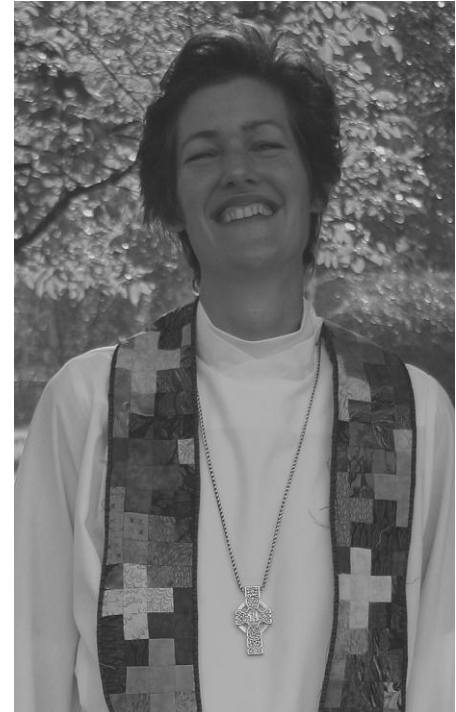
A welcoming family united in Christian love, worship, and
service

ststephensheathsville.org

THE RECTOR'S COLUMN

Now, as we face difficult economic times, Lent seems particularly appropriate. During Lent, we let go of the luxuries, and realize that what matters is not what we have, what matters is who we are. We remember that God does not shy away from human suffering, poverty, or even death; instead, Jesus participates in the worst as well as the best of human life.

At St. Stephen's, we are worshipping with the Rite One service of Holy Eucharist during the Sundays of Lent. Rite One has a greater emphasis on our penitence and God's mercy, which are two of the themes we focus on during the season of Lent. The beautiful older language of Rite One also deepens our worship with a sense of tradition from the faithful worshippers of the past. And a change to a different pattern of worship helps us to pay better attention to what we are doing in worship, and why. It is like the beneficial effects of travel: it is refreshing to see new sights and experience different ways people live their lives, and when we come home again we also appreciate more deeply the blessings and comforts of home.



It is not too late to take on a Lenten discipline, if you have not done so already. I particularly encourage you to attend the services of Holy Week. The schedule of services is printed on the following page.

Holy Week is one of the times in which the more you put into it, the more you get out of it. Participating in all the events of Holy Week, including Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, the betrayal and suffering, and the crucifixion are deeply meaningful in themselves. They also deepen our appreciation of Easter and our joy in the resurrection!

After Easter, we will begin having all our Sunday worship services outdoors at 9:00. I am very happy about this opportunity to worship God in the beauty of God's own creation. The 9:00 time will make it easier for many people to attend worship, and having a time and place for worship that remain the same each week will be easier for long-term parishioners and newcomers alike. I am looking forward to discovering all sorts of blessings as we embrace the identity Sue Eaves gave us as "the church without walls."

Blessings to all of you!

Lucia +

VESTRY MEETING NOTES

February 12, 2009 Vestry Meeting

Lucia called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. Bill Kirby, Joel Stubbs, Dawn Mahaffey, Dick Eager and Rick Skelton were present. Also present was Ellen Kirby, Treasurer. Lucia gave an opening prayer and led the vestry in the Lord's prayer.

Ellen Kirby summarized the January 2009 month end report. Income is down slightly and behind budget, reduced expenses somewhat compensate. Bill commented that monthly expenses will regularly exceed income. The budget will come together mid year and at year end when the June and December fundraising events income is included. The diocese has requested pledge payments monthly instead of quarterly. The Shrine Mont deposit has been paid.

The vestry voted to start summer worship at the Parish House on the first Sunday after Easter. Service time will continue to be 9 am. The Easter eve bonfire will be at 6:00 pm. Followed by the Easter vigil service at HUMC at 6:30 pm. Easter Day service will be at HUMC at the regular 11:30 time.

A motion was made and passed to include gay couples on our anniversary list. The vestry also voted to add St. Stephen's Episcopal Church to a world wide list of gay friendly churches at Gaychurch.org:

Our insertion into the prayers of the people will be reworded to include "all members of the Anglican Communion." We will not include churches listed in the Anglican cycle of prayer.

The Newcomers Committee met and Dawn has put together a brochure, highlighting of the order of service for newcomers and including introductory information about being Episcopalian and about St. Stephen's in particular.

At Bill's request, the vestry decided to meet after church on March 1st to decide on our 2009 priorities and goals.

Ellen reported from Gayl Fowler that the state of Virginia now has funding in hand for the "test well" to be constructed in the Northern Neck. St. Stephen's has several monies that may be donated to this effort. Gayl has asked that someone at St. Stephen's serve on the SAIF Water board of directors. The vestry discussed the possibility of establishing a "coordinator" position to serve on

SAIF Water and help keep tabs on the other water related outreach activities. This will be discussed further on March 1st.

Rocco is doing a great job with the children's Epiphany art project. Sandy will coordinate the Lenten program series with Wicomico Church.

Lucia led the group in closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Eager, Register

Holy Week Services

Palm Sunday

9:00 a.m. April 5th

Chilton House

Maundy Thursday

7:30 p.m. April 9th (joint service)
with optional footwashing

Heathsville United Methodist Church

Good Friday

12:00 noon April 10th (joint service)

Heathsville United Methodist Church

Easter Vigil

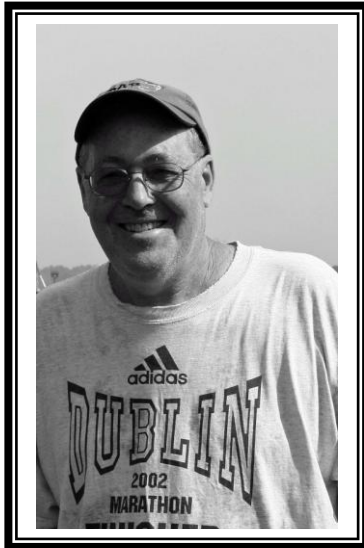
Saturday evening: 6:00 p.m. April 11th
Begins with bonfire at Chilton House,
then processes through the village to
Heathsville United Methodist Church

Easter Morning

11:30 a.m. April 12th

Heathsville United Methodist Church

SENIOR WARDEN COLUMN



Dear Folks,

True to form, March came in like a lion with ice, snow, power outages, and the coldest temperatures this winter. It was just the type of weather to severely test one's Lenten Disciplines after only one week!

February was busy, as usual, culminating in St. Stephen's first Shrove Tuesday Pancake and Mardi Gras Party followed the day after by the imposition of ashes at a joint service at Heathsville United Methodist. Almost 30 folks partied down at Chilton House on Shrove Tuesday, including a number of non-member friends and neighbors. We welcomed Sue Schmalz (our Oyster Roast Hot Dog Queen), who helped with the pancakes and other stuff; Zeke Hurst (Mary Byrd's husband); and Betty Whiteside (with husband John) who will be teaching Sunday school through Easter. A good time was had by all with pancakes, sausage, grits, music and refreshments. Lucia and Jim Godwin led the traditional Ash Wednesday service for about 20 communicants from both churches.

The snow knocked out the first week of our joint Lenten series at Wicomico Church; but we will be meeting on the next two Tuesday's (3/10 and 17) for potluck at 6 followed by discussion. Then, we move back to our own Thursday potluck on the 26th.

St. Stephen's continues to receive encouragement and support from other churches in the Diocese. This week we were informed of a \$500 gift from Emmanuel Church on the Hill, Alexandria, to support our water ministry!

The warm up has begun, and longer days are coming. That means a number of activities focused on the outdoors are in the offing, including:

- **Spring Cleanup.** Joel will be letting us know when. We'll need help with raking, pruning, weeding, mulching, and garden preparation. Lunch will be provided. We'll also be using the opportunity to construct our burn pile for the Easter Vigil bonfire.
- **Garden Maintenance.** We'd like to add some flower plantings and more vegetables to our Victory garden this year, but this means we will need some folks to step forward to help with watering and (groan) weeding. See me if you would like to be part of this crew!
- **Front Porch Renovation.** Repair and painting of the front porch will be undertaken, hopefully in time for Easter. The costs are being taken care of by an "anonymous donor".
- **Plant Sale.** It's not until September, but we need volunteers to begin planning now, so that we will have an ample inventory of salable plants and other stuff.
- **Outdoor Services.** All services will be moved outdoors, weather permitting, the Sunday after Easter. The Vestry is in the process of preparing for doing so, with an absolute minimum of chair and furniture moving!
- **Barbecue and Bluegrass.** Mark your calendars! Roanoke Farm, June 6, with the Honey Wind Bluegrass Boys! We need your help!

Faithfully,

Bill

Bishop Lee has announced that, following his retirement in October, he has accepted a call from Bishop Mark Andrus of California to serve as Dean of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco. He expects to be there for a year or so.

The Shack: A REVIEW

This novel will be the focal point for our two Lenten discussions at Wicomico Church. This review, written by a member of our EFM group who is a parishioner at Cople Parish, first published in the "EpisCople News" is reprinted with her permission here:

The Shack, William Paul Young, pub. 2007 by Windblown Media, Newbury Park, CA, 248 pages, quality paperback.

Mack Phillips is an ordinary guy, with a wife and four kids and a comfortable life in a friendly Oregon community. Although he's a churchgoer, a loving father and a good husband, inwardly he still suffers the deep wounds of an abusive upbringing and privately believes that God, if He exists at all, is a remote and indifferent deity who cares nothing for the suffering of His children. Nevertheless, all seems well with Mack until on a camping weekend with his children, his youngest daughter Missy is kidnapped by a serial killer. The police believe that Missy died in an abandoned fishing shack deep in the Oregon woods, but her body remains missing and her killer still at large. Mack does his best to "get on with his life", as the phrase had it, for the sake of his family, but inside an artificial exterior he's a seething cauldron of unresolved grief, hatred, and guilt. He walks in blackness, bereft of joy and hope.

Until he receives a mysterious note, apparently written by God, inviting him to a rendezvous at the old fishing shack in the woods. Naturally Mack is enraged and suspicious, but is nonetheless compelled to travel to the shack. There he meets a motherly black woman, a friendly young Middle Eastern man, and a strangely beautiful young woman who is, to say the least, unpredictable. They are, of course, not at all as they seem to be. *The Shack* is a marvelously visualized love story, a moving and imaginative depiction of God's infinite and unstoppable love for His own creations. The profound theological conversations that occupy the latter half of the book are treated in such a homely

humorous kitchen-table fashion that the reader is unlikely to feel that he's in over his head. Along the way the reader will find illuminating insights into the nature of the Trinity, the workings of the Holy Spirit, and a host of other central issues, including the question we all ask sometime or other—why does God let innocent people suffer?

Young's writing is clumsy and overwrought in places, and too reliant on narrative clichés. I'm invariably put off by such writing, but this time I was turning page after page, yearning to find out what happened next and how it would be explained. And when I finished—I went right back to the first page and read it over again. I bet you will too.

Starr Morrow

SAMPLE PASSAGE

*Courtesy of Amazon, here is a quotation from the text of *The Shack*. The speaker is the "Middle Eastern man" mentioned in the review. The two men are talking while fishing off the pier:*

"Our earth is like a child who has grown up without parents, having no one to guide and direct her." As Jesus spoke, his voice intensified in subdued anguish. "Some have attempted to help her but most have simply tried to use her. Humans, who have been given the task to lovingly steer the world, instead plunder her with no consideration other than their immediate needs. And they give little thought for their own children who will inherit their lack of love. So they use her and abuse her with little consideration and then when she shudders or blows her breath, they are offended and raise their fist at God."

"This blue-green ball in black space, filled with beauty even now, battered and abused and lovely." "I know that song. You must care deeply about the Creation," smiled Mack.

"Well, this blue-green ball in space belongs to me," Jesus stated emphatically."

THE AMERICAN SIN

This editorial, reprinted from "Episcopal Life on Line", presents the views of Solange De Santis, editor of Episcopal Life Media

Americans don't like to think about sin, especially when the question is whether a particular kind of sin could possibly be identified with the American character.

Of the traditional seven deadly sins, pride is certainly in the running—the blind, boastful pride that tramples another's sensibility. In its most extreme, the feeling is that, while the nation is not quite completely blameless, it is a good and great force in the world, bringer of light and democracy, liberator of oppressed peoples. At home, the virtues of capitalism and political freedom produce the best country there could possibly be, an example to all.

While pride takes part in the race, the winner, however, has to be greed.

One of the founding American documents, the Declaration of Independence, famously proclaimed that among the inherent rights of all were "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Who doesn't know that phrase? Yet how truly revolutionary/unique it is among national manifestoes.

Canada's constitution promises "peace, order and good government." France's extols "liberty, equality, brotherhood." This nation, however, makes a search for "happiness" part of its national persona.

The declaration's ringing phrase has drawn millions to make this country their home, yet its underbelly might be considered the American sin. The current economic situation must be laid at the feet of those who pursued "happiness" in the manner of Ebenezer Scrooge, described by Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol* as a "wrenching, squeezing, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner." Notice Dickens doesn't call him "a banker" or "a miser."

We are in the midst of the fallout from a greed mania, beginning with the idea that ever-rising home prices would support fundamentally flawed lending practices. ... The stock market's crash has exposed "investment managers" who lied to their clients and stole their money—but the customers lined up to get returns they thought no one else could match and were, in the end, too good to be true.

No one would argue with the idea that "the pursuit of happiness" includes the desire to create a better life for current and future generations, but why should "the American dream" only stand for things—for the house, the car, the overstuffed closets? Jesus had a fair bit to say about greed. He talked about "those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God"; about how "life is more than food and the body more than clothing."

The church has something to say about it, too, something about knowing when enough is enough, when it's time to share, when there are more important things than things, when sacrifice is called for in order to better the life of another.

The Episcopal Church spans the America of affluence (and greed) and parts of the world—and America—that aren't so well-off. One of those places is Haiti, another is the Dominican Republic.

The Presiding Bishop, as the church's chief pastor, travels as a representative of the larger church and as a bridge-builder. [Her] trip to the Dominican Republic [this month] follows a [trip] last month to Haiti (reports of both trips in *Episcopal Life Online*).

Greed may not be unknown in those places, either, but they have lessons to teach the rest of the church about generosity and the pursuit of true happiness.

If you found this editorial interesting, you might want to check out the website:
episcopalchurch.org/life/

In the spiritual reflections section, in addition to the daily readings from the lectionary and Forward Day by Day, you can also find daily readings at The Episcopal Café. Here's the one for March 5:

Emptying our Cups

"Once upon a time," an ancient story tells, "the master had a visitor who came to inquire about Zen. But instead of listening, the visitor kept talking about his own concerns and giving his own thoughts. After a while, the master served tea. He poured tea into his visitor's cup until it was full and then he kept on pouring. Finally the visitor could not bear it any longer. 'Don't you see that my cup is full?' he said. 'It's not possible to get anymore in.' 'Just so,' the master said, stopping at last. 'And like this cup you are filled with your own ideas. How can you expect me to give you Zen unless you first empty your cup?'"

A monastic Lent is the process of emptying our cups. Lent is the time for trimming the soul and scraping the sludge off a life turned slipshod. Lent is about taking stock of time, even religious time. Lent is about exercising the control that enables us to say no to ourselves so that when life turns hard of its own accord we have the spiritual stamina to say yes to its twists and turns with faith and hope. . . . Lent is the time to make new efforts to be what we say we want to be.

From *The Rule of Benedict: Insights for the Ages* by Joan Chittister (Crossroad, 1996).

THE SEASONS OF GRIEF:

A SUPPORT GROUP FOR LOSS, ADJUSTMENT, AND HEALING

TUESDAYS 4-5:30 p.m. March 17, 24, 31
April 21, 28 (12 week series, additional dates
to be decided later)

Bay Center for Spiritual Development,
31 Noblett Lane, Kilmarnock (across the street
from Ross' Rings and Things)

Group leaders: The Rev. Karen Woodruff and
The Rev. Lynn Holland

Texts: \$25.00

Donation (suggested): \$25.00

To register call 435-4020

BOOK CLUB NEWS

The Book Club meets March 24th at Greg Balchin's house to discuss Nevil Shute's 1950's novel *Round the Bend*. Join us for a discussion of Shute's conception of what form a messenger from God might take in modern times.

The central character is a young man employed in the aircraft industry as it expands from Europe into South East Asia after World War II—work that Jesus, Mohammed, or the Buddha might have done if they had been born in the 20th Century. And what is the message that he presents?....

Call Bill Kirby for directions to Greg's house near Burgess. At this meeting we will be choosing books for the next few months.

Sandra Kirkpatrick

LUCIA TO PARTICIPATE IN CREDO CONFERENCE

Lucia has been selected to attend an eight-day CREDO conference from April 20-27 at Lake Logan Conference Center in Canton, North Carolina.

CREDO, founded in 1997 as a pilot program funded by The Church Pension Group, provides an opportunity for participants to focus on finding direction and clarity in spiritual, physical, vocational, and financial areas, and to prayerfully discern the direction of their vocation.

Episcopal clergy, from virtually every diocese in the country have participated. Participants are selected at random from all active clergy with more than one year in the Pension Fund. The Fund pays all but \$500 of the conference costs. Lucia will join approximately 30 other clergy at the CREDO conference.

During the conference, participants will meet in plenary sessions, small groups and private consultations with faculty members. They will also have ample quiet time to reflect on their personal and professional lives.

Each participant commits to extensive reflection through pre-conference surveys that focus on personal and professional wellness. The work of CREDO is organized around four major areas that are explored as an integral part of the whole.

* **Spiritual** offers a sacred space where each participant can reflect on his or her interior life and relationship with God in Christ.

* **Vocational** provides opportunities for reflection, discernment, and planning in the professional areas of vocation, career, and work.

* **Health** encourages reflection on physical and emotional health and well-being, stewardship of the body, and development of a plan to address the individuals health needs.

* **Financial** explores all aspects of personal financial management and encourages reflection on God-given resources and how best to use them in response to God's call.

Through this discernment process, and with the help of a faculty team of professionals, each participant builds a personal covenant--a CREDO Plan—to provide a personal baseline and strategy for the future.

THURSDAY NIGHT PROGRAMS

Lenten shift to Tuesday nights!

~~March 3 6:00 Wicomico Church SNOWED OUT!~~

March 10 6:00 Wicomico Church

March 17 6:00 Wicomico Church

Back to Thursdays!

March 19 5:30 Evening Prayer,
6:00 Potluck Supper
6:30 View *Traces of the Trade*

March 26 5:30 Evening Prayer,
6:00 Potluck Supper
6:30 Discuss *Traces of the Trade*

April 9 Joint Maundy Thursday service with
Heathsville United Methodist Church

WATER MINISTRY NEWS

St Stephen's took part in the Family Day event at Reedville's Festival Hall on Saturday, February 28th. Sandra Kirkpatrick presented **H₂O Bingo**, a game featuring water conservation facts, to visitors to the SAIF Water exhibit.

The game, developed by Sandra and Rocco Tricarico, is part of St. Stephen's water ministry. Look for it on the website soon. Download it and play it with your children or grandchildren.

Do you know how much water is in a watermelon?

Or how many gallons evaporate from a swimming pool every month?

Or how much a camel can drink at one time? (Hint: the same amount it takes to fill a wading pool.)



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

March: Angela Travis

Marshall Lloyd

Anne Freeman

Lynne Campbell

Sandra Kirkpatrick

George Mahaffey

April Loretta Blakely

Dolly Rabelais

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Ushers:

March 1 Herb Cox & Dick Eager

March 8 Dick Eager

March 15 Phil Moore

March 22 Phil Moore

March 29 Phil Moore

April 5. Herb Cox & Bill Kirby



Altar Guild Leslie Hatch

Lesson Readers

March 1 Ellen Kirby (L), Bill Kirby (P)

March 8 Rocco Tricarico (L), Sandra Kirkpatrick(P)

March 15 Kendall Lloyd (L), Marshall Lloyd (P)

March 22 Susan Stubbs (L), Ted Hower, (P)

March 29 Amy Jones (L), Sandra Kirkpatrick (P)

April 5 Group reading of the passion, Tal Day (P)

April 6 (Maundy Thursday) Sandra Kirkpatrick (L)

April 10 (Good Friday) TBA (L)

April 11 (EasterVigil) TBA

Eucharistic Ministers

March 1 Lea Tilbury

March 8 David Kirkpatrick

March 15 Nancy Gates

March 22 Ellen Kirby

March 29 Rocco Tricarico

April 5 Lea Tilbury

April 6 (Maundy Thursday) David Kirkpatrick

April 10 (Good Friday) Loretta Blakely

April 11 (EasterVigil) TBA

Coffee Hour Hosts

March 1 Anne and George Freeman

March 8 Bill and Ellen Kirby

March 15 David and Sandra Kirkpatrick

March 22 Phil and Suzanne Johnson

March 29 Loretta and Lou Blakely

April 5 TBA

