

Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church

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Volume 4

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Number 3

Dear Friends,

March ends with the Gospel account of two Greek-speaking strangers search for Jesus. Among the twelve they see Philip (a Greek name). He is from Bethsaida (a trade crossroads where everyone spoke Greek and resentment of foreigners was minimal.) That sense of "something in common" is the bridge that brings them together. "Sir, we want to see Jesus." They bring the heart-cry of everyone to Philip and they receive the welcome and introduction they crave. In a sense, Philip and Andrew are the "face of Jesus" to these searching strangers until they can meet Jesus face to face.

"You are the face of Jesus for our generation." That's more than a nice sentiment to me. For more reasons than space permits me to describe, I truly believe Jesus' presence among us is made tangible in the faces (and words and deeds) of all who bear his name and his Cross on our foreheads.

Not always are we fully transparent to Jesus' presence within us. Even when we are able to think and act and love as Christ, not always is Jesus presence recognized and received any more than he was recognized and received in the flesh. Please don't get caught up in feelings of being unworthy. Our Prayer Book



catechism calls us to "represent Christ wherever you may be." It's a "best you can with what you have at the time" kind of thing.

Easter is the beginning of a new message series *Being the Face of Jesus* extending for Sundays through 3 May. We will be looking at how Jesus is present in us, giving us new life that reflects that presence! My Holy Week messages on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will "set the table" for the series that begins Easter Sunday.

One of the ways we are "the face of Jesus for our generation," is that we are people through whom others can come to encounter Christ in person. Like Philip, we are people who have something in common with others, people who can hear their plea (however unvoiced) "Sir, we want to see Jesus." Philip and Andrew were able to make that connection for their guests because they were in discerning and inviting mode. Easter, especially, is the time for us to invite and welcome friends so that they may find their hearts-cry heard.

Many Blessings,

Easter: How we Got from Jesus' Resurrection to Bunnies and Eggs

By Lucy Bregman

Did you ever wonder how Easter, a festival celebrating the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, became commemorated by endless representations of bunnies, baby chicks and colored eggs? I once thought that this is a straightforward case of a "religious" holiday turned into a "secular" one, but the story actually is rather different.

First, Passover, the Jewish feast that happened when Jesus ate the last supper, is basically a remembrance of the Exodus. But it was also, perhaps even earlier, a spring festival, filled with hope for release from winter. This "farmers'" meaning was joined to the theme of release from slavery in Egypt, so that a historical event and a seasonal event could be celebrated together.

When Jesus died and was raised from death right around Passover, these two meanings carried over, and so, for Christians, "Christ our Passover" is worshipped as the One who delivers from slavery to sin and death. When, in the days of Father Tuck, St. Stephen's held its own version of the *seder*, the traditional Passover meal, the link between Jesus' last supper and sacrificial death was added in, as a fitting modification for Christians.

When Christianity moved into Europe, it became easy to assimilate these three levels of meaning – seasons, Exodus and Jesus - into whatever seasonal celebrations of spring's arrival ancient Europeans had been doing. So, rabbits, eggs, flowers and anything else that serve as signs of "spring" got worked into what people actually did. But not all Christians thought this was so good. All the "spring" stuff looked "pagan." Indeed, one of my professors remarked that anyone who thought Christian Easter was about spring's arrival ought to be sent to the southern hemisphere, where Easter comes just at the start of autumn. In his eyes, Easter was strictly about "history," the Exodus and Jesus' own history. Forget eggs and bunnies.

Many American churches held to attitudes such as this throughout the 19th century. But immigrants brought customs and practices that exuberantly focused on just these banished elements. German immigrants especially brought with them belief in the "Easter Hare," the rabbit who lays, not just brings eggs. (They baked cakes showing this!) This was a little too much for uptight English-background Americans, and so the rabbit was modified, but still brought and hid eggs for children to find. Then, mid-19th century, department stores such as Wanamaker's started Easter displays, including flowers and special decorations. People loved seeing something "Easterish" when they shopped, and wondered why their churches couldn't do more to "dress up" Easter! Eventually, even the most stodgy churches started to give in to this pressure, and so spring and seasons were returned into church decorations, and into the fullness of Easter's meanings. Rather than "religious" to "secular," we may have bunnies and Wanamaker's assisting Christians to regain a sense of God's total resurrection power at work in Christ and the natural world.

Something Funny...

By Jan Myers

Bud & I have noticed that lately our social life has consisted of doctors' visits and tests. The ladies in our family doctor's office told us they love when we come in; we make them laugh. I'd love it better if they didn't see me often enough to remember my name!!



And the joy of waiting for test results... as Joan Rivers used to say, "Can we talk?" We've all had the experience of having a test done and thinking everything will be fine, then getting the jolt of... "You need another test." I can't speak for anyone else, but I always, ALWAYS imagine the worst. I'm dying... I'm going to be crippled... I'm losing my mind... (the last of which is ridiculous as my mind left years ago!)

I've always called it my Italian Optimism. Now, my Mom is going to be really made about that, but it's just what I've always called it. Imagine the worst, get the worst and you're somewhat prepared! Imagine the worst, get the best, it's a great day!! Ma, I'm changing it from Italian Optimism to "Scan-xiety"! The anxiety one feels about any test (scan)!!

So call it what you will, there would be no surviving the waiting without God's Grace!!!

Preschool Registration: Advance Registration

It has always been the Preschool's policy to open registration first to our parishioners and currently enrolled families. Should your household have a small person between the ages of 3 & 5 years old, now is the time to register he/she for St. Stephen's. We are accepting registrations for the 2009-2010 school year. If interested in enrollment for your preschooler, please contact Sharon Riess our Director for a registration packet. Call the school at 610-237-1043 or leave a message with the church office to reach her.

Our early registration policy is to offer a reduced rate for the first tuition payment. However, this reduced rate is for a limited time. In order to opt in on this offer you must register your child no later than April 30th. The registration process is simple. Call for your registration forms, complete the form and return it with the proper fee to the school/church office. Advance planning leads to a successful school year.

Children ages 3-5 are welcome. Cut off dates for all age groups are September 1st. Below please find the sessions and their registration rates.

Morning Sessions: 2-Day class meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

3-Day class meets on Monday-Wednesday-Friday mornings.

4-Day class meets any combination of four mornings.

5-Day class meets Monday through Friday mornings.

Morning sessions are from 9:00-11:30 AM.

Afternoon Sessions: 2-Day class meets on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons.

3-Day class meets on Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday afternoons.

4-Day class meets Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday afternoons.

Afternoon sessions are from 12:00-2:30 PM.

Please be aware that St. Stephen's reserves the right to cancel afternoon sessions if registration is insufficient as of mid-July. Pricing for the afternoon sessions will be the same as 2-3 & 4-day AM sessions.

This year the **early registration fees** are as follows:

2-DAY CLASS -- Enrollment Fee - \$45.00 registration fee plus first tuition \$70.00 - **\$115.00 Total**

3-DAY CLASS -- Enrollment Fee - \$45.00 registration fee plus first tuition \$85.00 - **\$130.00 Total**

4-DAY CLASS -- Enrollment Fee - \$45.00 registration fee plus first tuition \$105.00 - **\$150.00 Total**

5-DAY CLASS -- Enrollment Fee - \$45.00 registration fee plus first tuition \$120.00 - **\$165.00 Total**

The enrollment fees consist of a **\$45.00 registration fee and first tuition payment**. The total enrollment charge will be applied towards your child's yearly tuition bill. **The \$45.00 registration fee is non-refundable.**

The **regular tuition fees** for 2009-10 are as follows:

2-DAY CLASS -- \$1000.00

3-DAY CLASS -- \$1200.00

4-DAY CLASS -- \$1350.00

5-DAY CLASS -- \$1550.00

The above-mentioned fees are broken down into ten (10) payments starting with #1 due at registration and the balance August 1, 2009 through April 1, 2010. Tuitions may be paid in full at any time. A processing fee of \$45.00 will be withheld from the first tuition should you withdraw your child from the program prior to the start of school.

A Temple Connection and a Gala Event: Lutheran Episcopal Campus Ministry

For the past several years, Rev. Greg Wilson has served as Chaplain for the L.E.C.M. group at Temple University.

Now, the students and holding a "Gala and Silent Auction" on Friday April 24, 6:30-10:00 p.m. at the Parish of St. Luke and the Epiphany (330 S. 13th St., Phila. PA). This will include hors' d'oeuvres and a silent auction, live music and dancing.

If you are interested in attending, or supporting L.E.C.M., please contact:

Rev. Greg Wilson at revgreg@temple.edu, or Lucy Bregman at St. Stephen's

*Don't forget to pick up your
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They can be found in the
Parish Hall.*



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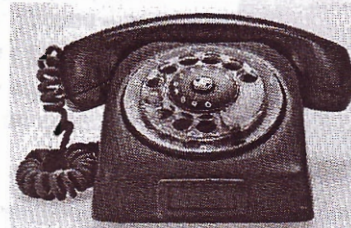
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Self-Portrait of a New PreSchool Teacher: JoAnn Leake

"Miss JoAnn! I have to go potty!" "Miss JoAnn, he hit me!" "Miss JoAnn! She said she doesn't want to be my friend anymore." "Mommy, I have a boo-boo!" "Mommy, do we have to go to school today?" "Mommy, you didn't give me my good-night kiss!" There are just some of the quotes I hear on a daily basis. Whether I am at home taking care of my four wonderful children (Andrew - 11, Joshua - 9, Matthew - 6, and Victoria -4) and my husband of 14 years, Andy, or whether I am at St. Stephen's Pre-school, I am a "Mother" and a "school Mother." Early October 2008, Fr. Michael invited me to move up from teacher's aide to teacher at the Preschool. He mentioned my "calm manner." I went home and told my family and they were thrilled for me. I became a teacher, when Mrs. Moore was on sick leave, then returned to my original job. Now I am back to teacher status. With the help of my family and all the staff, I have gotten into a routine with the students, and with my home life. I look forward to expanding the minds of the children who pass through the halls of St. Stephen's Pre-school for many years to come."



JoAnn tells us that she was born in Plainfield N.J., but grew up mostly in Southwest Philadelphia. She graduated from St. Maria Goretti High School in South Philadelphia, then attended Temple University. After a year and a half, she pursued a career in business, working in the finance department of Pacifico Ford and then for First Fidelity Bank. "I always felt that something was missing in my work life," she writes. She explains that she had taken care of her younger siblings, because her mother is hearing impaired, and at the time did not know English (Her mother, Taiwanese, now uses both American and Taiwanese sign language, as does JoAnn.) So, what was missing for her? "After Andy and I married and had our children, I realized how much I loved being around children." The family was introduced to St. Stephen's at the Christmas Pageant, where JoAnn felt "a certain type of love in the air." She became a St. Stephen's Preschool Teacher's Aide. Now, she states that "I have found what I was looking for in life and that was having the ability to work with children on a day to day basis."

PLEASE DELIVER ASAP
April 2009

D-19074
Jeffrey & Nicole Scalessa
213 Seminole Ave.
Norwood, PA 19074

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

The Prayer That
Shapes Our Community
For the Community we
Serve give us generous hearts,
O Lord...
Let us be that Community of
Worship and Mission where
all can become who they are
in Christ and serve joyfully in
Christ's Name. Amen

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