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CROSS-EXAMINATION

When did we see you hungry . . .
By Karl Ruttan

In reflecting on my 12 years at St. John=s, I am deeply aware of what a gift Manna Meal has been to me. When I was considering whether to come to St. John=s as Rector, the first thing I noticed was Manna Meal. I thought to myself, here is a community that lives its faith -- it doesn=t just talk about it. I was impressed with this community effort and the willingness of the Saints of John to open its doors to the least of these. Manna Meals presence was a significant factor of my coming to Charleston. It is what sets us apart from other churches. We are blessed to have it here.

Every day I come to St. John=s and the clients of Manna Meal greet me. AHello Reverend,@ they often say. Or sometimes they say, AHi, Preacher@ or APadre.@ Sometimes it=s ABless you Father.@ Or APray for me!@ What a great reminder every day that the Gospel work of feeding the hungry needs to be done. It is a constant invitation to step out of my insulated comfortable middle-class world and recognize that Gospel work needs to be done. We have a whole lot more to do to make our society a just world. Jesus was quick to point out that we find him in the least of these. It is an honor for us to be able to do this ministry. Wasn=t it great to have a picnic with Manna Meal on Sept. 10? It truly reminds us of our mission to be an open, caring community, radiating the love of Christ. It affirms our mission statement that we AReach out to the world in Christ=s name in the hope that all will find a place in God=s healing love.@

Being a Christian is the most difficult thing we do. It means seeing Christ in the hungry, the naked, the poor. Naturally we don=t like looking into the face of poverty. Our tendency is to want to isolate ourselves and avoid these challenges of our world. We are blessed at St. John=s to have Manna Meal to remind us day in and day out what the Gospel is about. I have learned so much from my Thursday morning ministry at Manna Meal. When I serve in line, I often hear the gratitude from the clients -- bless you or thank you is often the response I hear as people are fed. I see their children, their struggles, their humanity. It reminds me that we are all children of God. Of course, it is not always easy. To engage the world will inevitably bring challenges. People won=t always correspond to our comfortable, white middle-class expectations of decorum. These challenges help us to address what is right, what is good, what is appropriate, and how we can be faithful to God in this situation.

On the first week of August we designated the loose offering for Manna Meal because their funds have gotten uncomfortably low. Our parishioners responded generously. St. John=s has always had an open and caring heart. We have been a witness in our community for the least of these. This is a legacy I am so grateful to have inherited and continued. I trust that our open spirit will continue to shape and form the ethos of St. John=s. Most of our members join our church because we are the church which feeds the hungry. Manna Meal still needs your support. If you can assist us, send a check to St. John=s and mark it for Manna Meal. Let this gift be a response of thanks for helping us find Christ in the least of these.

Saint John=s Interchange

The parish newsletter for the people of God called to form the Christian community of Saint John=s Episcopal Church, Quarrier at Leon Sullivan Way, Charleston, West Virginia.

September 21, 2006, Vol. 46, No. 16

Sundays October 1 and 8, 2006 Seventeenth and Eighteenth Sundays after Pentecost

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| 8:00 a.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| 8:45 a.m. | Lectionary Study and Group Discussion, library |
| 9:30 a.m. | Adult Forum: Oct. 1, Parishioner Bren Pomponio, Mountain State Justice lawyer, will explain why his firm has filed a lawsuit accusing the Manchin Administration of discriminating against the elderly and disabled. Oct. 8, The Rev. Lawton Posey will share his reflections on liturgical language with AWhat Language Shall We Borrow?@ Room 109. |
| 9:30 a.m. | Nursery Open - Babies - 2 years old, Room 297 |
| 10:10 a.m. | Parents= Fellowship, Room 208 |
| 10:10 a.m. | Chapel for Older Children, Room 225 |
| 10:30 a.m. | Classes for Toddlers - Grade 5 |
| | * Toddlers , Room 298 |
| | * Godly Play, 4 - 8 years old , Room 299 |
| | * St. John=s Eagles, 3 rd - 5 th Grades, Room 221 |

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| 10:30 a.m. | Holy Eucharist, with choir |
| 11:30 a.m. | Coffee Hour, Hunter Hall |
| 11:45 a.m. | Rite 13/Journey to Adulthood, Room 208. |

WIFFF Luncheon will be held on Oct. 12 at 11:30 a.m. Julia Beury will show pictures and talk about her family=s experience while living in a small village in Belgium. Please make your reservation for lunch by Oct. 10 by calling 346-0359.

Interchange Deadlines: The next issue of Interchange will be for the weeks of Oct. 15 and 22. Items may be submitted to julkemp@charter.net or bdearien@stjohnswv.org by Tuesday, Oct. 3, at 4 p.m.

The Rev. Dr. Karl D. Ruttan
Rector
The Rev. Elizabeth Hoster
associate rector
Brenda Vanderford
director of music
Brenda Dearien
parish administrator
Katherine Gittinan
Christian formation
Bob Westmoreland
elder
James Wilson
custodian
vestry
Greg Clarke >08
treasurer
Lila Ramkey >07
people=s warden
Bren Pomponio >07
clerk
Becky Burns >06
Ellen Archibald >09
Joe Bolvard >09
Cheryl Clements >07
Page Hamrick >09
Diane Hendricks >08
Ann Morris >08
Bob Swartz >07
Michelle Walker >08
David Ramkey
Assistant Treasurer
David Ramkey/Becky Burns
finance
Wanda Dettinger/Rose Smith
evangelism/new member
Mary Fitzgerald
Debra Fung
Marv Barkalow/Donna Hamra
outreach
Bob Cochran/Dan McDonald
Bob Swartz
Nathan Arnett
children=s Christian formation
Melonie Knorr/Kasey Russell
youth Christian formation
Diane Hendricks
Marion Perry
adult forum
Phyllis Arward
Academics
Bar Owegs
Bob Swartz/Bob Miller
pastors
Cathy Fungdon
Betsy Jo Lloyd
Matha Gale
Ann Carcello
Primitivo
Julianne Kenner
Interchange editor

Indian Dinner: At the end of September Andrew and Esther Swamidoss will make a return visit to Charleston. They will be visiting two other Episcopal churches in Charleston, and we are pleased to host them for a potluck dinner on Friday evening, Sept. 29. Andrew and Esther have devoted their lives to the work of the church in southern India. Currently Andrew is the director of a school in Chennai where missionaries are trained to carry the Gospel message to some of the most remote parts of India. Members of St. John=s have supported their work in the past by providing money for the purchase of water buffalo, and by sponsoring school children. Please join us on Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. for a delicious St. John=s potluck. We will have some Indian food, and also welcome a variety of other fare. Let=s help Andrew and Esther feel welcome at St. John=s.

James Dent Dinner: This year's James Dent Dinner will be Tuesday, Oct. 17, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Charleston Marriott Hotel. The dinner will feature the return of comedian Susan Vass. The Dent Dinner, named for the Charleston Gazette=s late humor columnist, is the main fund-raising event for the Kanawha Pastoral Counseling Center. In 2005, the funds raised allowed the center to provide 1200 counseling hours at the minimum fee to children, families, individuals and couples who have little or no insurance and very limited income. More information and tickets, \$70 per person, can be found on the web at www.kpcc.com or by calling KPCC at 346-9689.

Patron Saint of Gardens: Have you noticed a new saint among the Saints of John? Visible behind the iron gate near the Quarrier Street, garden is a new raised bed with the patron saint of gardens in its midst. St. Fiacre was raised in an Irish monastery in the seventh century. A skilled gardener, his knowledge and holiness caused followers to flock to him, which destroyed the holy isolation he sought. He fled to France to establish a hermitage. St. Faro of Meaux offered him a piece of land to grow food and healing herbs. Fiacre dragged a spade behind him and wherever he went trees were uprooted. St. Faro called it a miracle garden and gave him all the land to till. The symbol of the saint is the spade which can be seen in his hand. Fiacre's connection to cab drivers is because the Hotel de Saint Fiacre in Paris, France, rented carriages. People who had no idea who Fiacre was referred to the cabs as "*Fiacre cabs*" and eventually as "*fiacres*." We thank all the gardeners who helped make the garden so beautiful and trust St. Fiacre will bless our efforts. Many thanks to Zeb Wright, Bob Swartz and the Garden Committee

Birthday People: Pray for the lives and ministries of those celebrating birthdays during the next two weeks: Sept. 25, Denise Ferguson and John Kuruvilla; Sept. 26, Julia Beury, Rodney Cecil and Gayle Twigger-Shaw; Sept. 27, Holly Blackwood, Mary Adelia McLeod, Sandy Morris, Warren Upton and Mika Vickers; Sept. 28, Chiemerie Njaka and Joseph Skiles; Sept. 29, Diane Clements, Suzanne Nelson and Jeff Swing; Sept. 30, Julie Blackwood and Tom Lloyd; Oct. 1, Courtlandt Smith; Oct. 3, Sarah Feinberg Pfeiffer and Christian Rowe; Oct. 4, John Barrett; Oct. 5, Bonnie Brown; Oct. 6, Hilary Ramsey, Kip Reese and James Thibeault; and Oct. 8, Erin Brewster.

Renovare: A Conference on Spiritual Renewal is being offered Oct. 6-7 at Christ Church United Methodist. Renovare means to "renew." The conference will feature the well-known spiritual writer, Richard Foster, who wrote *A Celebration of Discipline*. The focusing will be on deepening your faith walk through spiritual disciplines. Cost of the conference is \$70 and it is co-sponsored by the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia. Contact Lee Williams at 583-6066 or leewilliams@ntelos.net. Brochures are available in St. John's office.

Spiritual Retreat: West Virginia Institute of Spirituality, 1601 Virginia St. E., is sponsoring a retreat called "Dreams, Jung and Spiritual Practice" with Dr. Don Bisson, F.M.S., on Friday, Oct. 13, from 9 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Cost is \$35. 6.5 C.E.U.'s offered at \$10 per C.E.U. Call 345-0926 or Fax 345-8206 to register.

ospel Concert: Ethel Caffie-Austin, an outstanding gospel singer, will present a concert at St. John=s on Sunday, Nov. 19, at 4 p.m. A reception will follow in Hunter Hall. WIFFF and the New Member/Evangelism Committee are sponsoring the event to which all parishioners and their friends are invited.

The Challenge of Stewardship Rebecca Burns

Through giving, we affirm our commitment to God=s work. God has put us in charge of this world, and he expects us to use our time, talent, and treasure to help accomplish his purpose. Being intentional and sacrificial in our giving and recognizing that we are giving back to God -- consciously making choices on how we spend@ what has been given to us--is what stewardship is all about.

During the past year I have learned more about what it means to give sacrificially. I left a company where I worked for the past 16 years and started my own educational consulting business. As anyone who has similar experience knows, owning your own business is not like collecting a monthly check for a guaranteed amount. One=s income tends to fluctuate from month to month and sometimes things can be uncertain. Even with some uncertainty from time to time, I have realized what a blessing this new business is for me. I am grateful that by God=s grace I have been able to maintain my financial commitment to St. John=s. Also, I have realized what is important to me and what I can do without.

Because the Saints of John gave graciously of our gifts during the past year, we have done much to preserve our church=s heritage and to extend our commitment to God=s work in the world. Let me share just a few of the outcomes of our giving in the past year. You will learn more about our accomplishments and challenges at the stewardship luncheon on Oct. 15.

- * More than 250 people used our building each week for 12-step programs.
- * At least 2500 people who might have been hungry otherwise ate meals each week in our church at Manna Meal. What a blessing this is for our church and our community!
- * This year we offered our facilities in service to the community for groups such as Charleston Aids Network, Resolve Family Abuse, and East End Coalition for Families.
- * We kept Liddy Hoster on staff, made her associate rector, and increased her salary.
- * We offered centering prayer workshops, EFM, and a Gifts workshop to help people identify their God given gifts and how to use them.
- * We held a vacation Bible school with many children participating from our parish and the larger community.
- * We continued our commitment to excellent music with two Evensongs, two Easter services, monthly Taize services, bell choir, regular Sunday morning Eucharist with choir at 10:30 a.m. and organ music at 8 a.m. We also made some major repairs to our Skinner organ.
- * We enhanced our beautiful facility with a new garden, given in memory of Ann Clancy Cooke.
- * We continued to maintain our building properly even in the face of rising costs for utilities and maintenance. This is a big commitment that we continue to face in 2007.

Although these are only a few of the outcomes of our stewardship, I believe they indicate that we are a ministering congregation. St. John=s is a place where God is working his purpose out as we minister to each other and to the community. Thanks be to God!

This year we face new challenges as we move into a transition period and seek a new rector. Our commitment to St. John=s and its work must not falter. The prayers, time, talent, and money of all the Saints of John are needed to support our church community in the efforts to call a new leader and to expand our service to our church and community.

I urge you to consider prayerfully how you will meet the challenge of stewardship in the coming year. When you receive your stewardship letter and pledge card, please think about all that God and this church have given to you as you prepare to make your pledge of time, talent, and treasure to St. John=s on Nov. 5.

Dinner Parties: Dinners for Eight is an opportunity to meet other St. John's parishioners over dinner. We are getting a new list of dinner opportunities together this fall. If you would like to attend a dinner, please contact Rose Smith at rlsmith1@charter.net or Wanda Dettinger at WDettinger@aol.com

Covenant House Needs: The Drop-In Center on Shrewsbury Street is in need of feminine products and toothpaste. At the Food Pantry at First Presbyterian Church donations of dry beans such as pinto or Great Northern, plus macaroni

and cheese would be welcome. The Clothing Closet located at St. Mark=s United Methodist Church has a great need for men=s white shirts and black pants for restaurant work, men=s socks (not brand new, just clean), men=s underwear sizes 32 to 36 and children=s clothing.