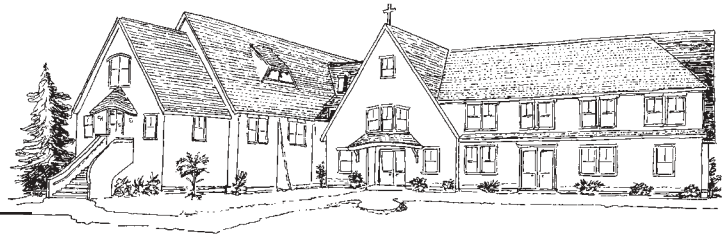


JANUARY 2007

THE ROCK



THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Evangelistic Listening

by the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop

**Presiding Bishop's Column
published in *Episcopal Life*
January 2007**

To reach the unchurched, we must learn new words and ways to tell our story. One of the significant challenges in our life as a church has to do with reaching out to the unchurched. I come from a part of the country where few people are active in religious communities, and the culture is quite clearly non-Christian. That makes evangelism a rather different proposition than it is in communities where most people know the basic shape of the Christian story. If we are going to be effective in reaching out to those beyond our walls, we are going to have to learn new language and ways of telling our story.

I taught a World Religions course in a secular university for several years. The course required students to attend several worship services in traditions outside their own (if they had one). They had to find the house of worship, join in as much as was possible and reasonable, and later write a paper on their experiences. The students often told about their surprise when they were welcomed as human beings and their chagrin when they felt they only were being received as potential converts and/or possible monetary additions.

I know I certainly have heard vestries and others say, "We have to grow, if we are going to balance our budget." But when these students were welcomed with curiosity and genuine interest in knowing them as persons and individuals, they responded with warmth, even if they had no intention of joining the community.

Part of our evangelical task is making our worshipping communities welcoming in a deep, human, relational sense. The gospel is about radical hospitality, after all, and that is what we are meant to model.

The other side of this challenge is how we might speak good news in language and forms that people uneducated in Christianity can understand and welcome. If our language engenders fear, it is likely to drive people away. If it welcomes and invites, the possibility can be quite different.

This may not be seen in many places in the Episcopal Church, but consider your own reaction to "If you don't believe the way we do, you're going to hell." Not only does hell not have much reality for the unchurched, there is an arrogance in that approach that many find repellent.

There are more subtle forms of that message, however, that are rampant in the church. We use language that is understandable only by insiders – and not just the arcane terms of our liturgy and polity (and those words themselves won't be understood by many!).

There is an underlying message in many faith communities that says, "The way we worship (or hold Sunday school or run our vestry meetings or....) is the only right way." And the implication that is heard is "There is no welcome here for you if you can't do it our way." There is an aspect of that message that is quite un-Anglican, if we really want to live up to our value of comprehensiveness.

Continued on page 2

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WINDOW OF THE SPIRIT *views into the souls of St. Peter's*

But even more deeply, we have to figure out how to tell our story in language that a person who doesn't know anything about Christianity can begin to understand. I'm going to suggest that telling of that great story has to begin in listening. Not only does it say to the other person, "Your story is of great importance, and I recognize your equal dignity by listening," but it also gives us an opportunity to discern where to help connect that story with the larger story of God's love known in Jesus Christ.

Frederick Buechner famously said that ministry happens when a person's great joys meet the deep hungers of the world. We cannot engage in ministry until we recognize where that hunger is.

I have had the remarkable gift and opportunity in recent months to speak to people who don't know much at all about the Episcopal Church or Christianity. Those opportunities have come through the secular media. Those interviews intentionally have avoided the language of Christian insiders for the reasons above.

The unfortunate result in some places has been anger when Episcopalians don't recognize their familiar language.

Let me suggest a challenging exercise: How would you tell the great truths of our faith without using overtly theological language? How would you tell a new neighbor that God loves him or her without measure, and invite him or her to learn more?

If we are going to hear that person's story with grace, we have to leave the door open for a while.

Parish Directory

A new, temporary Parish Directory is available. It has been in the Narthex for several weeks, but if you have not yet picked up one for your family, the parish office will mail it to you. If you find an error or omission in your listing, please notify Debbie Watson at 594-8191 as soon as possible. After the annual meeting and election of new Vestry members and Wardens a new directory will be published. If you have email addresses, please give us that address.

Tax Law and Donations

Parishioner and accountant Allen Holmes recently sent the office a copy of some of the changes in tax law that affects charitable donations. One of them requires a clear paper trail for everything donated. Loose cash in offering plates will not qualify. A check put in an envelope will. This raises some interesting points. For one, when we make a pledge, the use of pledge envelopes is absolutely necessary for people contributing cash. For that matter, making a pledge, rather than just contributing from time to time, will produce for the pledger a quarterly statement from the parish office that is proof of the donation. A lot of other information in this document from Allen is worth keeping in mind.

Even though pledging has been strong for 2007, many of us still have not yet made pledges. This is a mystery. Perhaps this tax notice will serve to nudge some of us who have put off this concern to make our stewardship commitment.

Allen Holmes might be happy to provide a workshop on this subject, if enough of us asked him. He'd be available to answer questions at his office: 594-1426.

LENTEN JOURNEYS, 2007

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

Three Services for prayer, receiving ashes and Holy Eucharist.

7:00 AM Ashes and Holy Eucharist in the Chapel
*A celebration offered through silence, Taize chants, readings and liturgy.
Brief and quiet.*

12:15 Noon Ashes and Holy Eucharist in the Nave
The traditional litany and prayers of the day.

6:00 PM Ashes and Holy Eucharist in the Nave
Quiet meditation, Taize chants, healing and anointing with oil

THURSDAY, MARCH 1

a Special and Unique Opportunity

“Life Together” — The faith community begins a new journey

5:30 PM — A potluck sharing of soup and salad in Lenten table fellowship

6:30 PM — “Present Faith, Future Journey”

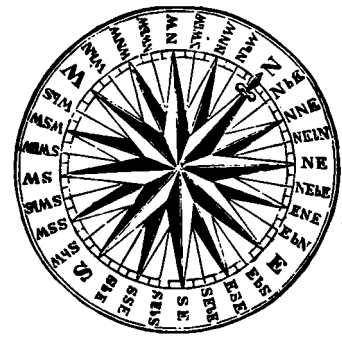
*A presentation and discussion led by the Rev. Canon Linton Studdiford, Canon for Ministry and Deployment of the Diocese of Maine
Reflections on ways of discerning the parish’s call to new rector*

WEDNESDAYS in MARCH

March 7, 14, 21, 28

6:30 PM — “Finding the Future in the Present”

Our Rector, Ralph Moore, will facilitate a series of four gatherings in which he will share reflections and prayers about his life as rector of St. Peter’s. Topics will include: “Expectations, Messes and Sillies,” “The Imperfection in All Perfection,” “Growing Older and Younger at the Same Time,” “Regrets, Surprises, and Gifts.” In each get-together we will examine specific parts of the ministry that we share and learnings that we have received in over ten years of journey together.



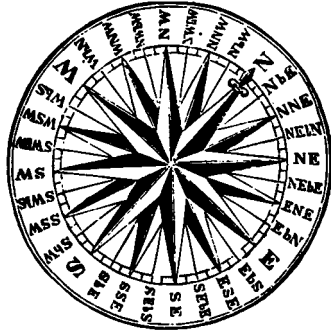
WAYPOINTS activities and notices on our journey together

Can you contribute to a special project?

The Stewardship Commission is looking for people who want to contribute money toward the purchase of six new, lightweight round tables. We continue to use round tables periodically and the ones we have weigh about 85 pounds each and are in pretty bad shape. The cost is \$200 per table and \$400 for a storage rack. To date, enough has been collected to buy 2 tables. If you would like more information contact Jim Bowditch at 236-2272. If you make a donation by check, make the check payable to St. Peter’s and write “Round Tables” in the memo line.

Foyer Groups are rolling along

We have 48 people currently participating in Foyer Groups. They are doing a variety of activities when they gather: Sunday lunches, Sunday dinners, bowling followed by supper at the Black Bull, a Mardi Gras theme for food at a February gathering and bring a written account of one’s own memorable spiritual event & the others in the group will have to try to identify the person. Anyone who would like to join a group, please contact Marty Rogers (236-8922) or Jim Bowditch (236-2272).



WAYPOINTS *activities and notices on our journey together*

AIO Challenge

Mary Hunter and Deacon Isabel Polk have issued a challenge to St. Peter's parishioners: Collect 100 pounds of food supplies for the Area Interfaith Outreach Food Pantry each week!

VESTRY MINUTES

Ralph Moore led a discussion of an article in *Vestry Papers* by Dick Kurth, titled "Losing our lives to save them . . ." with a passage from Luke.

Jake Thomas presented the Treasurer's report. The draft budget was unanimously accepted with the addition of funds for a sexton and for an increase in maintenance/cleaning supplies.

Jim Curtis discussed the plans of the nominating committee.

The annual meeting will be held February 4, 2007.

Activity and other reports:

- Evangelism – The vestry discussed two recommendations: one related to general mailings using the church mailing list and one regarding small box ads in the *Courier Gazette*. The vestry voted to modify the wording related to mailings to read, "All general mailings to St. Peter's parishioners shall be coordinated through the parish office." Money has already been provided in the 2006 and 2007 budgets for box ads.
- Stewardship – Jim Bowditch presented a proposal to purchase eight lightweight round tables to replace current heavy ones; he will go back to the committee for further discussion.
- Deacon's Report – Isabel discussed her desire to work with Ralph to implement millennium goals related to global reconciliation.
- Rector's Report – Ralph announced that Lee Karker will ascend to the priesthood on May 17, 2007. Joanne Murphy offered to contact people regarding donations for the deacon's gift. Ralph mentioned making arrangements for a vestry retreat, possibly at China Lake and discussed his plans for taking vacations one week at a time. Ralph read a thank you note from Judy Mullins regarding the scent-free pews.
- New business – Deb is working through the annual meeting.

The next meeting of the vestry was Wednesday, January 10 at 7 p.m.

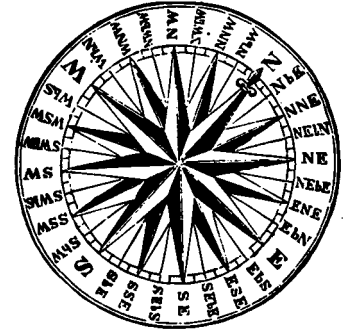
Sunday Adult Forums focus on goals

The Sunday Adult Forums at 9:15 am are currently focusing on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is part of "Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation" (EGR). The Millennium Development Goals are 8 goals for reducing suffering through development by 2015. The goals reflect a global consensus; they are a roadmap toward a world free from the suffering caused by extreme poverty.

1. Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promoted gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Rev. Isabel Polk, Jim Bowditch and Bruce Davis are working to organize activities that St. Peter's can implement towards these goals. A planning meeting was announced at Sunday services on January 21. For information contact Isabel, Jim or Bruce. Also look for the pamphlet "Preach The Gospel At All Times" in the Narthex.

A big loss to us all— Deb Watson



At church several Sundays ago the rector announced that Debbie Watson will be leaving us in early February due to a job restructuring recommended by a task force assigned to examine how to reduce annual expenditures. For those who missed that explanation he offers this fuller account. — Ed.

In a special task group's report to the Vestry last October, recommendations were proposed for steps to be taken for our budget in 2007. The special purpose of this report was to limit the parish's dependence on transfers from the capital of our reserve investment funds to make ends meet each year. For several years, deficits of \$40,000 to \$50,000 have had to be covered this way. Our fund-raising efforts and our pledging stewardship, while high and significant, have not been able to keep up with the bare-bones costs that we have faced. The reserves will be depleted in just five more years if spent at the present rate.

The task force recommended several changes in our expenditures. It noted that some compensation figures will change with the retirement of our rector. It also made the painful recommendation that our accounting/bookkeeping responsibilities be contracted out. The position of administrative secretary in its present definition would thereby be eliminated. The burdens of financial transactions and reporting have consumed a huge amount of Deb Watson's time, and she was not hired originally to concentrate on these complex demands. A new office position with a very different definition and a new bookkeeping arrangement were proposed by the task force to replace the one position. A parish secretary position would be created for about 15 hours per week, and there would also be a contract with an outside bookkeeper for financial transactions and records. In its November meeting the vestry approved this recommendation.

The vestry approved a draft of a 2007 budget in December that reflects these changes in compensation for the new position and the costs of the bookkeeper contract. The sad and painful result will be the departure of Deb Watson from our parish office. The budget will no longer be able to support the compensation and benefits she has been receiving in her present position. She has known of this possibility for several months and has known of the changes as the vestry has made these difficult decisions. That doesn't make it easier to bear emotionally. I personally lament this loss very much. Deb has served so faithfully and conscientiously that many of us have grown to depend on her for many services and much good and helpful conversation. She has been responsible for many of the excellent relationships we enjoy with community groups.

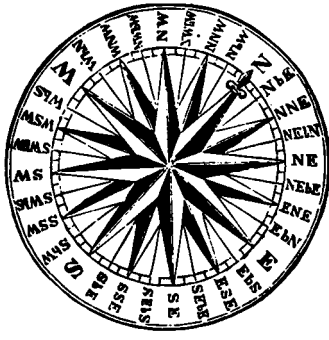
We will all have the opportunity to express our appreciation for Deb Watson's service at our Annual Meeting, February 4. Please plan to attend and join in this celebration.

Ralph Moore

WAYPOINTS *activities and notices on our journey together*

A time to say "Thank you, Deb!"

At our annual meeting
Sunday, February 4th
Holy Eucharist 9:00 AM
followed by the meeting
in the parish hall.



WAYPOINTS *activities and notices on our journey together*

Need a couch?

Jim Bowditch has a couch that is in good condition but an extra that he is wanting to give away free! It will be available after April 20th. If you would like more information call Jim at 236-2272.

(If free doesn't work for you, you could always donate something to the Round Table project in honor of your new couch. —Ed.)

February's Rock

Chris McLarty and I will both be away at deadline time for the February issue of The Rock. Our plan is to produce a very plain edition. It will not have any graphics or Chris's professional design work. Please email all material to Deborah Oliver at abinitio@midcoast.com by the deadline date of February 10th. She will do her professional work editing and arranging the items. We do need volunteers on February 14th to assist in the photocopying and labeling for mailing. Please contact me asap if you can help.

Marty Rogers, mlr@midcoast.com or 236-8922

New Features in THE ROCK

Several years ago THE ROCK contained a page for the young people of our parish. It was titled THE PEBBLE and was lovingly organized by Bridget Buck. We want to bring THE PEBBLE back and joyfully Elizabeth Biddle and others who are involved with the Christian Formation program for young people have agreed to do this.

"Focus On..." will be a new column highlighting and introducing members of the parish. Dorothy Nyman and Jo McAlary have agreed to do interviews—our own Roving Reporters. New people, lifelong members and anyone in between may be featured.

Thanks to all who have volunteered to help make THE ROCK even better.

Marty Rogers

Focus On: Chris McLarty

Chris, a native North Carolinian, came to Maine in 1976 to study at the Maine Photographic Workshops after teaching photography and crafts in Alaska. After completing the resident program there she received a Masters degree in Art Education from Arizona State University.

She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of NC at Greensboro and has taught at The Maine Photographic Workshops, Appalachian State University and in the University of Maine system in addition to many workshops in photography and polymer clay.

She owns Silverline Studio in Camden where she has been a graphic designer since 1981. She and her husband Jim also own Rafiki* Safaris (safaris to East Africa) and Rafiki Books (a mail-order book company for books on Africa). Her graphic design experience and her affinity for African design have played a major role in her development as a polymer clay jeweler and artist and her new enterprise, Maridadi**.

"When graphic design went digital and sat me in front of a computer for my workday, I needed something tactile. I had no idea that polymer clay would draw me in like it has. It's not only versatile and beautiful, it's about as low tech as an artist can get—nary a megabyte in sight! Working in clay is also a very centering and calming activity with only self-imposed deadlines. For a graphic designer this is truly heaven."

Her workshop and design studio are in Camden surrounded by the McLarty's notable garden—yet another passion. She also sings "like an angel" with the Down East Singers and mentors Education for Ministry.

For the first two weeks in February she will be leading a Rafiki Safari to Kenya and taking binoculars over to donate to anti-poaching patrols and young naturalists. If you have old binos you'd like to donate, please do. Contact Chris at 236-4244. Oh yes, pray for safe travel!

** Friend in Swahili*

*** Swahili for decked out and all dressed up*

This edition of the ROCK accompanies material about the Annual Meeting of our parish on February 4. Can you think of an event that has greater importance for a parish? This is where a budget for the ministry of the congregation is reviewed and affirmed. This is where leadership of the vestry—wardens and members—is elected. This is where we choose delegates who will represent our congregation in the Diocesan Convention on October 26-27 in which we will elect a new bishop for the Diocese of Maine. This will be the last annual meeting in which your present rector will be a participant. This will be the time when we celebrate and give thanks for many persons who have made the ministry we share strong and hopeful.



From the Rector

I confess to being puzzled about something, still, after more than ten years in St. Peter's. I'm bewildered by the reluctance that's in all of us to get more involved in the ministries of the church. It seems to me that if Christ really were the Lord of one's life, and that serving God's world in the name of Christ were the chief motivation for one's living, then everybody would be standing in line to jump on board each program and responsibility and service involved in the parish's outreach and its services. I'm convinced that the people of St. Peter's are really committed and have open and generous hearts. But I don't understand why mobilizing more of us for service and action is such hard work.

Often I'll be told the one supreme answer to this riddle: New England. The culture is private and cautious, and so there is in each of us some ingrained resistance to getting involved in carrying responsibilities. Then another supreme answer is given: electronic media. The world of computers, internet, i-pods and cell phones has produced people who prefer privacy and caution. (Was the internet invented by New Englanders?) And then another supreme answer is offered: the church and her work is antiquated and of lesser interest than ever before on the part of busy families and individuals on the move. (As though the church were invented by New Englanders.)

Ah well, none of these attempts at explaining it hold water. There are enough exceptions to it all: large churches jumping with enthusiasm and community service and lots of action and communication pulsing through the internet—all right here in New England. I just think that we're still growing in our awareness of what it is to be an Episcopalian in St. Peter's in Rockland. We're still a bit limited by a vision that's a bit too small and a bit too concerned about the ways of yesteryear. It's a natural way to be in a traditional church. And in ten years I think we've all experienced such huge changes in the life of traditional St. Peter's that none of us feels anything but optimism about the future: optimism about the commitment to strengthen our ministry in downtown Rockland, optimism about the faith community that nourishes us and optimism about our learning and growing and continuing to change as we walk—or are pulled—into the future.

So, everybody, please listen: 1) Come to the annual meeting and see for yourself. 2) Come to the annual meeting and be at prayer, letting that great five-word-biblical prayer pass through you— "Here I am, send me." 3) Come to the annual meeting in order to rise up and give cheerful support to your sisters and brothers with whom you share this high calling.

Peace,

Ralph

St. Peter's Episcopal Church seeks to serve God's mission of restoring all people to unity with him. We open wide our doors and say, in the name of Jesus Christ, "Welcome."

Worship

Sunday 8:00 and 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
Wednesday 7:00 AM Taizé Holy Eucharist

Office hours

Tuesday–Thursday 8 AM to 4 PM
The Rev. Dr. Ralph Moore, Jr., Rector
(home 596-0421, rector@stpetersrockland.org)
The Rev. Isabel Polk, Deacon
(home 596-0003; deacon@stpetersrockland.org)
The Rev. Lee Karker, Deacon
(home 596-0606 lkarker@mchinc.org)
Deborah Watson, Administrative Secretary
Robert Earle, Organist
Malcolm Brooks, Composer and Choir Director
Valerie Wells, Coordinator of Children's Ministries
The Rt. Rev. Chilton R. Knudsen, Bishop of Maine

Officers

Senior Wardens
John Bird 596-6276
Jim Bowditch 236-2272
JoAnne Murphy, Junior Warden, 594-4023
Mac Deford, Treasurer
Jake Thomas, Assistant Treasurer
Linda Mann, Clerk

Vestry members

Elizabeth Biddle, Katherine Brown, Ferolyn Curtis,
Jim Curtis, Bruce Davis, Spencer Hurtt, Thomas O'Brien,
Joanne Smith, Pat Snow, Harold van Lonkhuyzen

THE ROCK

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Please e-mail submissions to Marty @ mlr@midcoast.com

**You are welcome to contribute to our next newsletter.
Submission deadline is noon February 10th.**



Mailed January 25, 2007

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THE ROCK



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