

The Grapevine

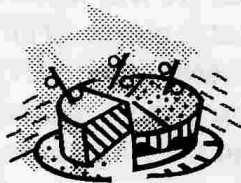
Volume IV, Issue II

February 2007

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

We would like to wish a happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating this special occasion for the Month of February:

2/6	Helen Carhart
2/8	Jim Carhart
2/10	Krista Hopping
2/11	Rebecca Sica (Sweet 16!)
2/15	Andrew Curley
2/17	Alex Frigeri
2/18	Colleen Callaghan
2/21	Myles Persaud
2/21	Ranji Persaud
2/20	Meredith Curley
2/28	Derry Dunsmore



The Grapevine

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Karen Stoia, Editor

St Gregory's Episcopal Church
480 S. Beverwyck Rd.
Parsippany, NJ 07054
973-887-5879

Saintgregory1@juno.com
The Rev. Susan Saucedo
Sica, Vicar

Submissions are due by the
15th of the preceding month.

Fact or Myth? 10 Issues That Make a Difference

If you were at the annual meeting you know that the upcoming year is one that presents many challenges for us. The Finance committee and the Executive have presented a budget that pares down to a minimum many of the things we have come to depend on to run this church –and we are still facing a substantial deficit. A deficit budget not only robs us from today by preventing us from accomplishing our goals, it robs us of the future by compromising our ability to make solid plans. In discussing these issues, many facts and “Myths” get tossed around making it more difficult to navigate these difficult waters. The following is a list of some of the most com-

monly heard ones that deserve a further look.

Myth #1: Most churches run a deficit budget

Fact: it is apparently true that many, if not most, churches in this diocese can't meet their budget expenses at the time the budget is made. What is unclear is whether they are able to make up the deficit during the program year, or whether they carry the deficit into the future. By operating this way, many churches dwindle their endowment funds to the point of jeopardizing the whole organization. A balanced budget should be the goal of every healthy congregation; barring that, a concerted effort to decrease the budget

should be established.

#2 Myth: The diocese will help us deal with the deficit.

Fact: the diocese does not have the resources to fund the operating expenses of its missions. The diocese will, through its Congregational Development program, ACTS/VIM and Ward Herbert funds, make grants for church growth programs, development programs and building needs. We have received several of these grants over the years for specific projects and will continue to apply for fund when we think we meet the criteria. None of this affects the budget deficit.

Myth #3: We can use our endowment to pay for our deficit.

Fact: We have been richly blessed by the generosity of those who cared to leave us part of their legacy. However, as a mission, St. Gregory's has no control over the assets in the endowment. They 'belong' as all assets do, to the diocese. Those funds are held in our name until such time as we can grow to achieve parish status. We are able, though, to use the interest income for our operating expenses. In 2005 we requested and were given (in 2006) a

Thank You

To all the members of the Executive Committee who 'graduated' this year, especially:

Meg Frigeri who took on the task of Warden and faithfully provided her presence and support for the last two years.

Karen Stoia who will continue on as the editor of The Grapevine.

BJ Mistick who in addition to serving as an

Exec also functioned as our Clerk and who now has Thursday nights free! Thanks and congratulations to those elected at our annual meeting, especially Pat Brown in her second year as warden even though she really only wanted to do one, Chris Curley and Bruce Frigeri as Execs. Thanks also to Bonnie Keith for serving again as our District 3 Representative. Con'd on p.2

Kudos!

Doing the right thing doesn't always come easy when you're in a crisis. Our admiration and thanks go to Robbie Hopping for keeping his cool and helping his grandfather Dave through a serious heart episode. Dave is now recuperating. Don't forget to check out the Star-ledger article on the bulletin board that features several of the Dodd family members and reminds us that saving a life is a family affair.

Thanks!

Con'd from p.1

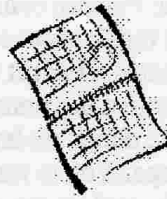
Thanks to our teachers, Kathy Keener and Meredith Curley for their awesome job with the Epiphany Pageant, and kudos to all the kids who participated—it was a memorial event! Thanks also to all who stayed behind and helped put away all the Christmas decorations, including the Sinangil Family, the Frigeri Family, the Sica Family, and more!

Lenten Program

Lent is around the corner and I thought you might be interested in starting to read the book that we will be discussing for our Lenten series.

Christ the Lord out of Egypt, a novel by Anne Rice is a well-researched and provocatively written account of Jesus' "lost years" from age 7 through 13 or so, "lost" because other than one account in the Gospel of Luke, we know nothing about his life during this time. The author, however, treats them as his formative years (as they would be for any child) and thus lays the foundation for Jesus' self-awareness and ministry later on. In essence, she tries to answer why Jesus does some of the things he does through her book, and why his whole life leads to the Cross. This is a work of fiction and the author's more famous work to date is all about vampires (I've never read any of those!) so it is also interesting to read her personal witness at the end of the book. Intrigued? I hope so. I also hope that you can join us Wednesdays in Lent for what promises to be an interesting discussion

Save the date!



Films for Thought 2/24/07

Our thought-provoking film experience is back on track after a holiday hiatus. Our next two films have been scheduled and promise to be as challenging as ever! On tap for February is the film "Heater" that deals primarily with issues of homelessness in a way that is both enlightening and sometimes humorous. We hope to have a facilitator for that evening from the drop-in center in Morristown. In March we will feature the film "Chiefs" a documentary which explores what it means to grow up Native American in the 21st Century, and was Tribeca Film Festival award winner. We are delighted to have our assisting bishop, the Rt. Rev. Dr. Carol Joy Gallagher as our facilitator for that evening. For further information, please see Bruce Frigeri.

Pancake Supper 2/20/07

February 28th is our annual Pancake Supper. Please join us for an evening of delicious fun! This year, we will also take up a collection to help people in New Orleans. Come, eat, have a good time -- Bring your friends!

Ash Wednesday 2/21/07

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and we will have two celebrations of the Eucharist with imposition of ashes: 7:00 AM and 7:30 PM to accommodate most work schedules. If you can't make either of these services, please contact Susan to discuss other arrangements.

Fact or Myth? 10 Issues That Make a Difference con'd from p.1

a one-time allocation to help reduce our deficit and begin some capital improvements.

Myth #4: The church is always asking for money.

Fact: We are a charity and as such, have limited opportunities for generating income without jeopardizing that status. However, all churches should model the best stewardship possible. We operate on a combination of resources: pledges and income from our endowment, rentals, fundraisers, etc. Unfortunately, our operating expenses still exceed our income. We have cut expenses drastically and are poised to cut programs. In addition, current pledging standards are such that a relatively few families carry the burden of the whole. This becomes a problem when, for reasons beyond our control, circumstances change and someone isn't able to fulfill their pledge and we must do without their contribution.

Myth #5: The diocese will close this church.

Fact: The diocese at this time has no plans to close this church. It is, however, concerned about all churches that engage in deficit spending and whose growth pattern hasn't changed or has gotten worse. The diocese has helped struggling churches define their mission goals and in such cases where options were limited, has helped congregations discern what to do. In essence, churches close themselves when they aren't able to meet growth and operating standards.

Myth #6: The clergy compensation package is a budget buster.

Fact: while the compensation package is proportionately the largest part of the budget, the compensation of a full-time clergy in this diocese lags significantly behind that of other dioceses in the immediate area. The compensation rate is voted on annually by Convention. St. Gregory's offers the minimum compensation required by the diocese.

Myth #7: All our Vicars leave for 'better' places.

Fact: Most clergy believe that they are called/led to serve in a particular place for a particular reason, therefore, God is in charge of the moves and if God calls someone to serve in a new place it is the obligation of the clergy to at least listen and explore that call. Sometimes a clergy move does result in more financial security for all involved: the church is able to call someone with different requirements, the clergy is able to find something more solid. However, experience tells us that compensation is rarely the reason for a move. It is simply too difficult and soul-rendering to move from place to place. In reality, more clergy move because they feel their compensation is a drain on a church's dwindling resources.

Myth #8: There's nothing we can do about our situation.

Fact: the possibilities for us are unlimited! Our two most pressing concerns are growth and finances, in that order. St. Gregory's situation is one that can be overcome with renewed commitment. We, currently, do not fit the profile of a dying church, just a struggling one: our population is younger and our children are thriving; our property is in reasonable shape. However, it's not enough. We need to be convinced that we are doing God's work. What can you do to make this community of faith a success? Invite your friends, suggest a new ministry, run a fundraiser, mow the lawn, paint the kitchen, increase your pledge...in other words: "ask not what the church can do for you but what you can do for your church!"

Myth #9: I've worked all my life for this church, it's someone else's turn.

Fact: we believe that each of us is given gifts for the common good. In a small congregation, especially, all gifts are needed and appreciated. However, to be a Christian doesn't mean to be an indentured servant, rather that there is a time and place for everything and everyone: nothing leads to burn out faster than people feeling that what they do doesn't matter. If your current ministry isn't satisfying, take a rest or try another one, but above all, join in the effort to make this vital place to the community and a priority in your life.

Myth #10: No one is interested in church anymore, there are too few Christians/Episcopalians in the area.

Fact: while secularism reigns supreme, many, many people are looking for a place to set anchor, as they are being "tossed to and fro by every sort of philosophy." We provide that place with welcome. Besides, the gospel imperative does not take into consideration whether a community is viable or not, we are asked to reach out to others with the Good News no matter what. The saints are well equipped, but do they want to work? Remember that God does not ask us to be successful, only faithful.

Are there any Myths that weren't covered –please don't keep them to yourself! Ask questions –the answers are out there!

Extra copies of the Annual Report are available from the Office. Pick one up or call us to have it mailed to you.

ST. GREGORY'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

480 South Beverwyck Road
Parsippany, NJ 07054

Phone: 973-887-5879
www.saintgregory.info

*St. Gregory's
Episcopal Church is*



Living joyfully by the example of Jesus Christ

Opening our doors to all God's children

Venturing into the world in service

Enjoying fellowship and community

Confirmation Reception

If you are in 8th Grade or an adult who is interested in being Confirmed in the Faith, or Received from another denomination, please contact Pastor Susan ASAP –Classes are being formed, and the dates have been set. We are going to try a venture with the folks from St. Paul's, Morris Plains. Join us!

Super Bowl Subs

Please don't forget to pick up your Super Bowl Subs after church on 2/4.
Thanks from the Sr. Youth Group.
Enjoy the game!

Youth Group/Confirmation Calendar February/March

Sunday February 11, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Jr High Youth Group
Bowling — Boonton Lanes

Sunday February 25, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Confirmation
Class at St. Paul's

Sunday March 4, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Jr High Youth Group
Meeting at St Paul's

Sunday March 11, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Confirmation
Class at St. Paul's

Sunday March 18, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Jr High Youth Group
Meeting at St Paul's

Sunday March 25, 2007
6:00pm-8:00pm Confirmation
Class at St. Paul's

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Special Offering: Our Little Roses Home for Children	Special Collection: Food for friends			1	2 Feast of the Presentation	3
4 V Epiphany :45 Choir 10 a Holy Eucharist Church School	5 Office closed 8p Yoga	6 7:30 District 3	7 8 PM Finance	8 COM	9	10
11 VI Epiphany 8:45 Choir 10 a Holy Eucharist Church School	12 Office closed 8p Yoga	13	14 Executive 6:30p wardens 7:30 executive	15 Grapevine deadline	16	17
18 Last Epiphany 8:45 Choir 10 a Holy Eucharist Church School 5p Shelter Ministry	19 Office closed 8p Yoga	20 Shrove Tuesday 6p Pancake Supper	21 ASH Wednesday 7a Holy Eucharist 7:30p Holy Eucharist	22 10:30a Troy Hills Nursing home	23	24 St. Matthias 7p Films for thought
25 I Lent 8:45 Choir 10 a Holy Eucharist – Healing Church School 6-8 PM Confirmation class	26 Office closed 8p Yoga	27	28 6:30p Lenten program			