



### *In the Interim*

I had a rejuvenating and restful time away and, I am glad to be home too. It's so good to see everyone and to be back at work.

The workshop on Interim Ministry could not have been more useful or interesting or refreshing. I've returned with an armload of excellent ideas for our work in the interim, and I have made some connections that will be useful as we continue to discern and search. I've also returned refreshed by the opportunity to be with fellow priests and rabbis and pastors who were working as interims. Together and in small groups, we shared information and ideas and stories and laughed and made friends. Thank you all for the time and resources to make this possible. I very much appreciate it.

I also had a splendid time hanging out with my daughter in DC. She and Dan and I went to baby stores, ate in a tiny Italian restaurant (5 tables) buried in a neighborhood, went to church on Sunday and just generally had a sweet time together. At my sister Johnie's, we went to see Maltipoos; there were loads of them, and I relished playing in the floor with them and throwing the ball, but there won't be any puppies until spring, which seems a long way away.

The only hitch in the trip was that whenever I tried to go from one place to the next, my 'transportation' didn't work out. On my way to the workshop, a flight was cancelled because of weather and I was stranded overnight in Charlotte, NC. Then, the car I was driving to DC (my brother in law's beloved late model Jaguar) overheated on the freeway allowing me to test my skills at staying calm while coordinating a tow truck, my daughter and my sister in 97 degree heat. And the train I caught back to my sister's from DC (the Jag had to be towed home) was hours late because it just stopped, for no apparent reason, and sat there out in the middle of nowhere. Then, on the trip to get me to the airport (we left hours earlier than necessary because clearly Susan had some bad Karma going on) my sister's perfectly reliable BMW overheated. I got the airport on time, Johnie eventually got home, as did the car and I spent most of the flight home thinking deep theological thoughts about all this 'difficulty in moving about'.

I don't think God makes things happen to us to 'teach' us something, but I do believe that if we are open to the Spirit in the midst of it all and to the Spirit's wisdom later, we will find some sparkling treasure obscured in the crush and confusion of

### *Relay For Life*

The American Cancer Society wants to thank everyone who participated in Novato's Relay For Life. So far about \$107,000 has been raised to help find a cure for cancer and to provide services for those fighting cancer.

St. Francis team raised \$3,040. I want to thank all of you who walked, raised money, donated money or bought luminarias. Each of you helped our team. A special thanks goes to Bill Babine who walked early on Sunday morning and raised \$1,190.

St. Francis is a very giving community and we thank you for supporting this outreach mission.

Dotti Kuchem

### *Thank you*

Joyce Cubley and her family are very thankful for the help and time everyone gave for Jim's service.

They greatly appreciate everyone's efforts. God Bless You!

### *Music Fundraiser*

### *for Brett Stranne*



Stay posted for details soon about a MUSIC FUNDRAISER for the Stranne family's medical bills.

We will need people to bake, make appetizers, sell food, take tickets, sell raffle tickets, work the bar, set up/clean up, etc (you all know the routine!)

If you'd like to be on the helper list, please email me your contact info. Thank you, team!

Laura Turner: [catspoiler@marincounty.net](mailto:catspoiler@marincounty.net)

the difficulties we encounter. On the ride home, and later when giving it more thought, I've come to realize how focused I have been on the future, on what lies ahead, on where I am going with you and with me, that I am not just taking time to notice the 'now'. There is so much to look forward to, so many happy things ahead and lots of ministry to accomplish. And. There is so much in today, so much happiness right here, right now.

I will, of course, continue to plan ahead and I will also take the time to notice the right here and the right now and the sparkling brightness of today.

### **If you need a Tickle this summer ...**

One of the books I read while I was gone was a book called the 'The Great Emergence' written by Phyllis Tickle, a book that I feel very successfully discusses the changes that are going on within the church, and in the world and where they are going in the future. Tickle is an engaging writer, as well as speaker and a lay leader in the Episcopal Church; if you've ever watched anything on PBS about religion, you've probably seen her interviewed.

This is, I believe, an important book for all of us to read and talk about this August, but this is also going to be very laid back. You're not going to be forced to go to a book study or listen to me drone on about it endlessly, this is August after all. We'll be forming some small groups, with facilitators, where we can talk about the book together, but if you want to just read along on your own or form your own group or talk about it with your best friend at Starbucks, that is fine too. Perhaps you'll take it to the beach with you.

I just want us all to read the book, because it has something to say to us about where we are as a church, as a whole, where we've been and where we are going; I believe it may be of enormous help to us as we continue to discern who we are as a parish and where we are going.

Mother Susan

## *Financial Corner*

### **For the month of July 2010**

Pledge Anticipated: \$ 10,198.

Pledge Actual: \$ 11,663.

Plate Anticipated: \$ 2,307.

Plate Actual: \$ 1,285.



**Thank you for keeping your pledge current.**

## *Christian Formation*

On Tuesday nights at 7 pm we are reading and discussing a new book by Brian C. Taylor titled *Becoming Human: Core Teachings of Jesus*. Brian Taylor focuses on the fresh, immediate, liberating quality of what Jesus had to say about life. Taylor's succinct summations of what Jesus taught--*Don't worry; Love everybody; Help the poor; Become simple; Face into conflict; Change the world; Forgive yourself for being human*, and so on--provide the basis for this series of reflections on the transformative wisdom that inspired those who had ears to hear to drop everything and follow Jesus. Come and join us for very interesting discussions and conversations.

## *Craft Group*

The Craft Group produces several items on a regular basis. We make baby caps to be distributed to newborns at Marin General Hospital. We also make hats and scarves for our troops overseas. In addition, we make prayer shawls and lap rugs for Mother Susan to distribute. If you wish to join with us in this ministry, please contact Mother Susan, Jackie Walton or Carol Dillon-Knutson with any questions you may have. Thank you

## *August Calendar*

### **Weekly meetings:**

**AA meetings:** Mondays and Fridays 2pm & 8pm

**Alanon meeting:** Thursdays at 7:15pm

**Craft and discussion meeting:** Tuesdays at 9:30 am

**Choir practice:** Mondays at 6 pm & Tuesdays at 7 pm

**Christian Formation :** Tuesdays at 7:00pm

**Search Committee:** Tuesdays 7-8:30 pm Block Hall

### **Important dates:**

**Vestry meeting** — Wednesday, August 11, 7 pm

**Youth Group**— Sundays, Grades 4-8: 4:30pm-6:30pm

Grades 9-12: 6:00pm-8:00pm, Dinner shared by all at 6pm.

**Services**— 7:30 am Rite I, 9:00 am Contemporary

10:30 am Rite II, Noon- Children's Service



## **VESTRY DOINGS - AUGUST 2010**

Highlights from our Vestry Meeting on July 7 included visits from both the Search Committee Co-Chairmen Bob Kuchem and Susan Kenny and our Marin Deanery representatives Al and Kathy Ferrando, (Steve Sayles is our other representative).

Al reported that the Marin Deanery is comprised of all of the Episcopal Churches here in Marin County, and its members represent us to the diocese. The main projects now for the Marin Deanery are Camp Create and Freedom School in Sausalito, the proposed northern Marin Food Bank and working on a grant program for activities that are in the individual parishes. The Deanery also represents us on how the diocesan budget is spent. Kathy Ferrando talked about the diocese and her involvement in committees at the diocesan level. She will be leaving the position in September and we will need to find a new representative. The diocese returned 10% of our assessment this year. Diobytes is a good place to get information out on our parish.

Search Committee report was given by Bob Kuchem and Susan Kenny. The committee has been meeting every Tuesday, making steady progress on development of our Parish Profile. Each member of the committee is writing a portion of it. They have received many responses from parishioners already and they look forward to more input on the actual vision of what kinds of ministries are important to us and what we need from a parish as an individual. It has been suggested that the 17<sup>th</sup> annual art fair this fall be centered on photographs of our buildings, people, liturgy, services, etc.

Financial report - Steve North. January-June report shows that our plate and pledge income is down \$5,500 for the first 6 months. This is somewhat offset by expenses being lower than what we have budgeted, but there is a need to be cautious and aware as we face the months ahead. We'll be organizing the stewardship campaign and committee early this year, with a focused effort to involve parish members. A subcommittee was formed to handle the endowment fund. The last order of Finance business was to approve a 2010 budget for the Search Committee of an initial \$2,000.

Buildings and grounds - Marta McGovern. The two projects which will be part of the Capital Improvement from Auction proceeds are to paint the sacristy and narthex, to repair the fence around the Pre-School, and to repair/add adequate lighting for additional security around the property.

Outreach - Dotti Kuchem. There has been good participation and sign-up for the Relay for Life this year. The Youth group has agreed to walk through the nighttime hours. The project with the San Francisco Food bank (to be shared with other Marin Episcopal Churches) is on hold for the time being.

Hospitality - Denise Mozzetti. Summer has included the family game night on June 10<sup>th</sup> and our Fourth of July Bar-b-que. It was agreed that we need more of these types of parish activities where we just have fun together.

Communications - Irv Hirsch suggested that we utilize e-mail blasts, the website, and flyers to promote these activities

Vestry member Bob Kenny was named as our representative (in addition to M. Susan) to be on the Preschool board beginning in September.

M. Susan reported that the 20 students that went to New Orleans had a life changing experience. They worked on 9 different houses. The students pulled together under the leadership of Matthew who did a superior job of working with the group.

We are planning a Ministries Fair for September 25<sup>th</sup> to highlight and promote all of the ministries, educational opportunities and activities that go on around St. Francis and to give an opportunity for people to learn more about each of them and to participate. We especially need more LEMs, Altar Guild Members, volunteers to assist with Godly Play (Sunday school), and choir members for both 9am and 10:30am services.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm with prayer.

Next Vestry Meeting: Wednesday, August 11



## A Visit with the Bishop

Every once in a while we are, as priests - especially if we are leading a parish - expected to go in to the city to check in with the Bishop. I had a very good visit with Bishop Marc last week.

He asked about our work with other parishes and I was pleased to be able to tell him about Outreach, Stephen Ministry and about our Youth Group. He was delighted about the trip to New Orleans, especially about how we had brought in young people from other churches and schools and taken them with us. He asked lots of questions about it, was very excited about us continuing to do this ministry - especially our support of young people who are not a part of our parish - and encouraged us to connect with the Episcopalians in New Orleans - they are friends of his.

We talked of course about how things are going with the search and he was pleased and supportive when I said you had decided to take more time for discernment. He recalled a search where a church had rushed through their process with not the best of results and he feels strongly that churches should take the time they need. We talked too of my future and he assured me of my place here in the Diocese and of his support and admiration of my ministry.

Bishop Marc also thought my idea about reading the Phyllis Tickle book together was swell.

## Christian One Liners

- Quit griping about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong.
- Opportunity my knock once, but temptation bangs on your front door forever.
- People are funny; they want the front of the bus, the middle of the read, and the back of the church.
- God Himself does not propose to judge a man until he is dead. So why should you?
- Some minds are like concrete- thoroughly mixed up and permanently set.
- When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.
- Peace starts with a smile.



*I wish I had halos...*

I could give to people who have done something particularly angelic. Until I find a way to make halos, this award will have to do. I call it the Halo award.

This month I'm giving a halo to **Matt McMurphy, Beth Kabage, Pam McMurphy, Denise Mozzetti** and **Chuck MacLellan** for their tremendous effort in making the New Orleans trip such a wonderful success. You are all angels indeed.

Also deserving of a halo is **Dortha Kuhlman**. A big one. She has been, as you know, working so hard as the Senior Warden to make sure everything is running smoothly and that nothing is falling through the cracks during this Interim period. She has taken on enormous responsibility and is doing an excellent job; the church is running smoothly. Thank you so much Dortha.

I want to also give a halo to **Marta McGovern** who is the Junior Warden and has taken up the traditional responsibilities of that office, which include not only building and grounds but listening to people and faithfully reporting what she hears to the Vestry. She has done a thorough and excellent job with all those responsibilities. Thank you Marta.

You all look wonderful in halos.





### THOUGHTS FROM A STEPHEN MINISTER....

"I tell you the truth: whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." *Matthew 25:40*

As a result of my Stephen Ministry training and my first experience with a caring relationship, I have learned that the joys of care giving can go well beyond delivering love and care to an officially assigned care receiver. It can become a way of life, affecting the manner in which I relate to family, friends, and other associates. Based on my experience to this point, here are some of my conclusions:

My caring ministry derives its direction and its strength from my own spiritual foundation.

In care giving, God seems to be within me, giving Himself to others through me.

It is possible for me to distribute the grace of God in various forms, even though I may not be fully aware of it.

God touches me in meaningful ways as I touch others--the result is joy.

Make care giving a way of life, and experience the joy!

Remember....if you are in need, or know someone who would benefit from Stephen Ministry, or for more information about Stephen Ministry, contact Dortha Kuhlman at [dorthakuhlman@comcast.net](mailto:dorthakuhlman@comcast.net) (telephone 897-6578), or Mother Susan at the Church.

### Pastoral Care Committee Update

Our Pastoral Care Committee is finding that e-mail and phone are effective ways of communicating with M. Susan and members of the Committee to identify and reach out to people in our community who are in need of assistance, such as:

Short visits to those who are housebound or in the hospital

Sitter relief for their Caregivers

Eucharistic visits by our LEMs

Cards and just friendly phone calls to let people know we're thinking of them

We still need more VOLUNTEERS to be available to help us in this important ministry. We are trying to build a phone and e-mail list of parishioners that we can call when there is a need. If you would be willing to be on our list, please let M. Susan or Dortha know.



## A Song for Her

The whole world was present to her [Clare] at San Damiano. The closer she grew to the one who is love in her small garden there, the more all of creation opened up to her. Clare marveled at how well she knew Mount Subasio simply from so many hours of looking at it in the distance. It had entered inside her and become a part of the way she saw all trees and every mountain. The more intimate her union with God became, the closer she seemed to be to nature, to the other Poor Ladies, and to Francis and his brothers. All these intimacies were somehow one and inseparable.

In the beginning she had feared (though she couldn't admit it then) that the love of God would divide and separate her other loves. In a sense it had, perhaps because she expected it to. But as she grew older and persevered in prayer, she experienced at the deepest level of her being a coming together, a centering of love. She dared to believe that in loving the Lord she had broken through to a more perfect love of nature and of people.

Sometimes, for example, as she was praying before the crucifix and lifting her eyes to the crucified, she would see the face of someone else. At first this experience had frightened her because she thought her love for people might be greater than her love for Christ. Then one day when one of the brothers was preaching in San Damiano, she looked at his face and saw there the face of Jesus. The two had become inseparably joined for Clare.

And she experienced something of God's Spirit in the lives of trees and flowers. The force that drove the flowers up into sunlight drove her to lift up her heart and mind in prayer.

Over the years Clare had wondered if Francis felt this way too, and she prayed that God would reveal this to her before Francis died. The answer came when Clare least expected it. Francis came to San Damiano in the spring of 1224 just after returning from La Verna where Christ had burned his own brand marks into Francis' flesh. He was very weak, and suddenly his eye sickness worsened. As a result he had to stay there for more than fifty days in a little cell next to the monastery.

One night when he was plagued more than ever by pain and sleeplessness, Francis began to feel sorry for himself. He cried out to the Lord to help him bear his suffering patiently. And the Lord answered him, promising him in exchange for his present pain an everlasting treasure beyond his dreams.

The next morning Francis composed his Canticle of the Creatures and set it to music. Clare heard this song with amazement and with a new understanding of Francis. He whose eyes could not bear the light of the sun praised the Lord first of all through the sun; he whose bleeding eyes could not bear the candlelight praised God through Brother Fire who is beautiful and gay, full of power and strength! Clare understood then how close Francis was to creatures. He had chosen this creature world as his instrument of praise of God. And she knew in her heart that he saw her face in Sister Moon for he had dubbed the moon bright and precious and fair—words which Brother Leo once told her Francis used in describing Clare herself.

Then Francis did one of those things which she had come to expect from him. He immediately dictated another canticle with words and music for her and all the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, a canticle full of the wise teachings he had always given them:

*Listen, little poor ones called by the Lord,  
Who have been gathered together from many parts and provinces;*

*Live always in truth,  
That you may die in obedience.*

*Do not look at the life outside,  
For that of the Spirit is better.*

*I beg you in my great love for you,  
That you use with discretion the alms  
which the Lord gives you.*

*Those who are weighted down with sickness,  
And those of you who are wearied by the care of them,  
You should all of you bear it in peace,  
For you will see that such fatigue is very precious.*

*For you will each be a Queen crowned in heaven,  
With the Virgin Mary. Amen*

Clare heard these words with tears in her eyes, for they told her that Francis knew what she was thinking and was answering her question. He turned her attention from him back to the Spirit inside, hinting at how he saw her and each of the Poor Ladies at San Damiano: They were mirrors of the Virgin Mary herself. What he felt for them would not be left unsaid until eternity. And Clare turned in wonder to her garden and to Mount Subasio and to prayer before the crucifix of San Damiano. From *Clare: A Light in the Garden*, by Murray Bodo

May Brother Wind come as a gentle breeze bringing you blessings each day. Br. Steve

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August 2010



**Worship Opportunities—August 2010**

Sundays: 7:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite I  
8:50 am Contemporary Eucharist  
10:30 am Holy Eucharist Rite II  
Noon Children’s Service

**Educational Opportunities**

Tuesdays 7:30 pm Christian Formation

**St. Francis of Assisi Episcopal Church**

Visit our website at [www.stfrancisnovato.com](http://www.stfrancisnovato.com)

415-892-1609

Reverend Susan D. Parsons, Interim Rector  
Amy Power, Office Administrator  
Rick Schaefer, Music Director  
Dortha Kuhlman, Senior Warden  
Sherry Fink, St. Francis Preschool Director  
Jackie Walton, Angel’s Attic Manager  
Shirley Printz, Altar Guild Directress  
Matthew McMurphy, Youth Group Director  
Beth Kabage, Assistant Youth Group Director  
Tina and Chai Laokwansathitaya, Sextons  
Jennifer Baldwin, Bookkeeper  
Steve North, treasurer