

The Stone's Throw

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St Stephen's Episcopal Church



JANUARY

THE RECTOR'S FOCUS ON BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Dear Friends,

The following is an article by Fr. Chris Colby of Trinity Episcopal Church in Pass Christian, Mississippi. Two years after Hurricane Katrina, the rebuilding effort has barely begun. Fr. Colby's thoughts are not on what he and his congregation lack, but on the blessings they have received over these last years. He challenges the members of Trinity Church to be good stewards, because they are "blessed to be a blessing".

Let us begin this New Year by thanking God for the many blessings we have received – both as individuals and as a congregation – and recommit ourselves to share what we have been given, so that we too can say that we are "blessed to be a blessing."

Your brother in Christ,

David+

The Heart of a Steward

In the ancient world, large property owners delegated the management of their land to a steward. It was a very important position. The steward managed the labor force and was also responsible for all of the financial transactions. It was critical that the owner was able to trust his steward.

God has given us the stewardship of our lives and our community. We have been entrusted with the stewardship of Trinity Church as well. We have made enormous progress toward the restoration of our church buildings and property. We have been good stewards. Each year around this time, we discuss stewardship. Every year since my arrival in 1997, stewardship has not been a problem for Trinity Church. This year is different. The principal difference is that the institutions that were subsidizing us since Hurricane Kahina are cutting back. The Church Pension Fund will no longer pay my pension. The Diocese of Mississippi which underwrote our budget this year to the tune of \$18,000 is not able to do it in 2008. We are looking at an increase in expenses of more than \$44,000 and a decline in support. At our annual meeting, I expect our treasurer, Tom Shellnut, to present an unbalanced budget for 2008. I'm telling you this so you

The Heart of a Steward (continued)

aren't surprised. Let's keep in mind how richly we have been blessed over the past two years. People and parishes from across the country have sent us more than \$100,000 to help us get through our devastation. We have received piles of gifts: the banners from Christ Church, Savannah, the loan of an altar from Western Illinois, Prayer Books, Bibles, clothes, new vestments, old vestments, books. One of my seminary classmates sent an aspergillum which we use in house blessings. I've received an oil stock to hold holy oil. Then too, innumerable work teams have come to help us rebuild. All of these gifts have been given to us and forced us to be better stewards. "To whom much is given, much is expected."

We are being blessed to be a blessing. That's the goal, to be a blessing to Pass Christian. We need to continue to be good stewards in 2008. If you are able to give more, please do. If you can continue to give what you have been giving, I hope you will do so. While we have had a number of new families and individuals join us, it won't be enough to make up the deficit.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr. Christopher Colby



Bible Study

Thursday Morning Bible Study will resume on January 10th. Holy Eucharist starts at 10:00 am, with Bible Study following at 10:30 am. All are welcome to join us.

Attitude

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skills. It will make or break a company ... a church ... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude ... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our attitudes.”

Charles Swindel
via Bill Wagner

Thank You!

The Bailey family thanks you for all of your gifts, calls and - above all - prayers for Ginny's surgery and recovery. Ginny is doing fine and should be returning to school the first week in January. Also THANK YOU for Fr. David's "purse" this Christmas. It will be put to good use on a much needed vacation!

Second Notice of Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will be held on Sunday, January 27, 2008. The meeting will be held following the 10:30 service. According to our bylaws, all organizations within the Parish shall submit a written annual report to the Rector no later than January 13, 2008.

***The view from
This Little Row in the Lord's Vineyard***

Dohn Family Prayer Letter December, 2007 Health Ministries, La Replublica Dominicana South American Missionary Society, PO Box 399, Ambridge, PA 15003

“ . . . Proclaim His Praises on the far coasts! Isaiah 42:12

For Unto You a Child is Born

The notion that the “natural order” is that children survive their parents is a modern concept from developed countries. In our world today, children still die at inordinately high rates. Worldwide, 50,000 preventable deaths daily in the developing world and the vast majority are children under five years of age. Even just 150 years ago in the USA, it was not unusual that a man would have a series of wives as one after another died in childbirth, the babies variably surviving or not. Maternal and child health is a huge issue worldwide - probably the single most important area for increasing the years of life saved around the world.

Our time on the mission field has impressed us with the continuing vulnerability of our children. As we write this, we know of children here who are struggling to survive - some with diseases such as AIDS and others simply at risk of malnutrition. Two thousand years ago, surviving infancy and childhood was probably even more precarious. Mary and Joseph must have had some anxieties about their new baby despite the visitations from angels, shepherds, and kings - or perhaps even heightened anxiety as they realized this was an important baby with which they were entrusted. We do not know how many fevers or close calls Jesus may have had as a child.. What an act of faith on God's part to send His Son as a baby. We are privileged to serve God in this time and place solely through the faithfulness of you that have contributed to sustain this mission during the past year. As always, it is primarily through our combined actions and decisions as Ambassadors for Christ that God makes an impact in this world. “Thank you” to all the individuals and congregations that are partnering with this mission!

Drs. Anita & Michael Dohn, and Rebecca, Tracy, Natalia, & Elizabeth

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