



St. Bartholomew's
Anglican Church
Parish Newsletter

Trinity Edition, 2006

All thy works praise thee, O LORD; and thy saints give thanks unto thee. Psalm 145:10

Floral Paradise? Not Yet. Churchgoers have been treated to a gratuitous display of vibrant and colorful blossoms from our flowering shrubs this spring. Our *Rhododendrons* produced clusters of light purple blossoms, while their more diminutive brethren of the same genus, the *Azaleas*, have displayed dozens of terminal blossoms in both white and varying shades of red. Not to be outdone, the *Heather* flowers have been the scene of intense bee activity. Our website features a recent photo of one *Rhododendron* from the perspective of the sidewalk. Undoubtedly, the beauty and



abundance of our shrubs is the result of plentiful rain and the mild climate that we enjoy here. (Of course, it is not just the shrubs that are enjoying

the climate!) A plan is being developed to gradually extend our landscaped area outwards from around the buildings, until the view of our property from Avondale Road begins to look a little more inviting. Anyone with expertise in this area who would like to spend some time working at the Church this summer is very welcome.

Parish Calendar
Trinity

June 7-10 Summer Ember Days

8:30 Matins - 5:30 Evensong

Sunday, June 11, Trinity Sunday

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Wednesday, June 14, St. Barnabas, Apostle (transferred from June 11)

8:30 Matins

5:30 Evensong

6:00 Holy Communion...*come after work!!!*

Friday, June 16 Ladies Arts & Crafts Night 7pm

Saturday, June 17 Men's Prayer Breakfast, 8:30am

Sunday, June 18, Trinity I

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Saturday, June 24, Nativity of John the Baptist

10:00 Matins & Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Sunday, June 25, Trinity II

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Girls' Choir Day Camp June 27, 28, 29

Matins 10:00, Evensong 3:00 during Choir Camp

Thursday, June 29, St. Peter, Apostle

10:00 Matins & 3:00 Evensong (Girls' Choir Camp)

6:00 Holy Communion

6:45 Supper & Fellowship

Sunday, July 2, Trinity III

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Tuesday, July 4, Independence Day

8:30 Matins

5:30 Evensong

Sunday, July 9, Trinity IV

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

Sunday, July 16, Trinity V

8:30 Matins, 9:00 Bible Study

10:00 Holy Communion

5:30 Evensong

A World of Wonders

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The fascination of children lies in this: that with each of them all things are remade, and the universe is put on trial. As we walk the halls and see below us those delightful bulbous heads, three times too big for the body...we ought always primarily to remember that within every one of these heads there is a new universe, as new as it was on the seventh day of creation. In each of these orbs there is a new system of stars, new grass, new cities, a new sea.

- Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874-1936)

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G. K. Chesterton was a British poet and essayist who devoted much of his literary career to the defense of Christian orthodoxy. His writings are a treasury of wise, eminently quotable observations. He is author of a hymn 521, "O God of earth and altar" in our Hymnal. Late in life, Chesterton left the Anglican Church for the Roman Church, but this change of allegiance seems to have had little effect on his style or outlook.



Parish Notes

• **Parish Sale** Thank you Barbara Leen (and all those who helped her) for orchestrating, not one, but TWO, Parish Sales. You deserve an Alaskan cruise this summer! Thanks also to everyone who contributed items for the Sale. The proceeds will benefit the work of our Anglican Church Women (ACW).

• **A Choir Day Camp** will be held at the Church on June 27, 28 & 29, from 10:00-3:30. Our Girl Choristers will receive systematic instruction in music theory, vocal technique, and choral repertoire. The gift of singing can provide a lifetime of enjoyment (and even profit, in some cases). Our Choir will begin to play a more significant role in the Sunday Service as time goes by, and this Camp is one way of building up our proficiency. We have 4 Teachers & 3 Choir Mothers lined up to participate in the Camp and we hope to have around 12 Girl Choristers. Boys and Adult Singers, your time will come soon.

• **"Continuing Home" Blog Site** Be sure to visit Bill Swan's blog, at continuinghome.blogspot.com, where he posts installments in the ongoing "saga" of our parish. A cluster-map posted on the site shows that readers of the blog have been coming from all around the U.S.A, and even the World. People from Europe, South America and even South Africa have been reading about our parish! You are invited to read Bill's entries on the site and also to add your own comments.

• **Prayer Book & Hymnal Club** In the last issue of our Newsletter it was noted that we have almost reached our goal of replacing all the Service Books in the Nave. Special thanks go out to Walter & Jeanne Kirk, Bill & Kathy Swan, Andrew & Mary Walker, and Anonymous, for 14 Prayer Books and 21 Hymnals this spring. We still need several more copies of the Book of Common Prayer.

• **New Funds for Church School and Choir** Thanks to our savvy young writers, St. Bartholomew's won two awards in the recent Writing Contest: one for having the most entries of any parish, and one for being the home parish of the 1st Place Winner. After settling the Bishop's travel expenses, we had \$800.00, which is being divided between the Church School and Choir.

“All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
the Lord God made them all.”

(Hymnal, 311)

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Concern for the created order is a consistent thread throughout the Bible and the History of the Church, and should be ingrained in every Christian man, woman and child today. Those of you who were present on Rogation Sunday participated in a procession around the grounds of the Church with incense, while we read the Litany. This was our own “abridged” version of the ancient practice in English country parishes known as “beating the bounds of the parish”, in which the priest and congregation go about the parish fields, beseeching God to bless the spring planting. We need to always pray for, and show concern for our fellow creatures, for then we will be consistent with the whole Church throughout time.

Unfortunately, powerful voices in our society seek to portray the Church as the handmaiden of colonialists, industrialists and other exploiters of the Natural World. The oft-repeated myth is a powerful and compelling story about pantheistic indigenous peoples, living in happy harmony with nature, worshipping the spirits of the animals, the trees and sun. Then, a wave of grimfaced European Protestants and repressed Catholics paved it all over and destroyed Utopia, ravaging it with destructive and exploitative agricultural techniques, denuding the forests, devastating the stocks of wildlife, and imposing a rigid monotheism which reduced nature from deity to property. It is said that the Bible is to blame for all of this, for it allegedly commands mankind to exploit and dominate the natural world.

But does Christianity really make a very good scapegoat for the despoliation of our planet? Hardly. Like any myth, this story is just a bit too perfect, and I would contend that it is even a bit of propaganda: it is a “rosy scenario”, played to the advantage of today’s atheist/secularist ideologues.

I must commend to everyone a 2001 book by British scholar and author, Dr. Philip Sampson entitled *6 Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*. Dr. Sampson demonstrates that the exploitation of nature does not have its philosophical roots in the Bible, for it simply cannot be found there. Nor does mankind need a Bible or a

monotheistic religion to provide the rationale for such behavior. He points out that pagan Neolithic and Bronze Age peoples, despite the fact that they worshipped “sacred groves”, deforested much of Northern England; the fire-drive hunting techniques of some pre-Columbus Native North Americans severely impacted the ecology of this continent; the wide-spread cannibalism of pre-Columbus Meso-Americans was the direct result of hunting species of animals into extinction; the current desert condition of the interior of Australia was evidently caused by the burning/clearing techniques of settlers many thousands of years before the first European Christians arrived; and it is well-known that the deforestation of imperial China took place in a Buddhist religious context.

Dr. Sampson shows that today’s concept of “domination” or “mastery” of the natural world does not have its roots in the Bible, but in classical (pagan) Greek philosophy, from whence it came to influence Western Culture. For ex., Aristotle wrote that “plants exist for [the sake of animals] and the other animals for the sake of man...nature has made all the animals for the sake of man.” The Roman Empire advanced this philosophy by treating the natural environment as if it were one of their conquered provinces. In the course of the powerful 17th and 18th century philosophical movement known as “The Enlightenment”, a great deal of pagan Greek and Latin thought was revived. Nature came to be seen by “Enlightenment” thinkers as a mistress, to be mastered and exploited, even raped by “rational” mankind. Enlightenment thought, based on revived and distorted Classical (Greco-Roman) Philosophy, drove an imperial machine that conquered vast territories of the New World, and enslaved entire peoples.

If anything, Christianity ameliorated or softened the blow of this force, by emphasizing the worth of Man (male & female) as creatures made in the very image of God, and the value of trees and animals as a part of God’s good creation. What attitudes toward Nature can we actually find in the Bible and in the Judeo-Christian tradition? The Bible and the Christian Creeds clearly proclaim that the universe was created by God, *ex nihilo*, or “out of nothing”. Let me point out here that no Churchman is required to dogmatically profess that this was achieved over the course of Six Days or over the course of 4.6 Billion Years, but the point remains that if the world was created by God (by whatever means and time-frame) then the place of Man

within this world becomes more apparent. Creation belongs not to Man, but to God. Furthermore, we read in the Bible that God has delegated to Man the responsibility to exercise gentle dominion (not domination) over the earth. This dominion is derivative: it is not our own power to be exercised as we see fit, but rather that we are delegates who will give an account for our stewardship of the world. To further understand the Biblical concept of “dominion” in a practical way, we could examine the agrarian methods of ancient Israel as described in the Books of Moses (*Genesis* through *Deuteronomy*), or we could even look to our own farming methods up to about 100 years ago. These methods were based on the more old-fashioned idea of plant and animal husbandry, and cannot be compared to mindless exploitation of nature, nor even to modern, industrialized agriculture.

Does this mean that we are now obliged to go out and join the environmentalist political lobby? I suppose we have certain things in common, but I do ask you to remember that there are basic differences between the Christian view of the created order and the views of your ordinary, run-of-the-mill “environmentalist”. First of all, the whole concept of “environment” is anthropocentric (Man-centered) rather than God centered. Many, if not most environmentalists would view nature in terms of the particular environment in which ‘they’ move and work and live out their lives. God is not a part of this picture, and there is no responsibility either assumed or spelled out for our care of Creation, but merely a concern for “the environment” based upon utilitarian goals: in other words, we need to live in the environment, and therefore we cannot destroy it too badly or it will impact ‘us’. Another troubling fact is that many environmentalists also support abortion for the same reason: children are not seen as a gift from God to be nurtured and brought up properly, but are taken for granted and treated as commodities to be had or dispensed with at our convenience, as long as they do not turn out to be too burdensome to us and to “the environment”.

So what *can* the Christian worldview bring to the problems that now plague us as the result of unrestrained abuse of God’s creation, and the failure of Man to fulfill his obligation to exercise proper dominion? The secret is to once again view the world as God’s good creation, to recognize our place within it, and to fulfill our obligation to our fellow creatures. Christians do not regard the natural world as Deity, and thus as an object of

worship; on the other hand, neither do we see Creation as a mere accidental feature of our immediate “environment”. The Church recognizes the Natural World with all of its plants, animals and forces of nature, as truly enchanted, not as gods, but as our fellow creatures which exist alongside us for the praise and worship of the Most Holy Trinity, One God.

You are all hereby commissioned to read the Canticle for Morning Prayer on BCP p. 11 (Hymnal 627) called *Benedicite, omnia opera Domini*, “O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord”. I have promised myself that we are going to sing this Canticle to all of our trees and animals during next year’s Rogation Sunday Procession, for this not only sums up the attitude of the Church toward Creation, but is also the perfect way for us to express our goodwill to all of God’s creatures.

- Fr. Daniel McGrath +

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The Rev’d Dr. Edward H. Miller, *Deacon*

Worship Services

The Daily Office

Matins 8:30, Evensong 5:30

The Litany

Wednesday & Friday after Matins

Holy Communion

Sunday, and other Feast Days, 10:00

Parish Prayer Book Club

Help St. Bart’s replace our aging Service Books.

Name _____

I would like to provide our parish with
_____ copies of The Book of Common Prayer @ \$25 each
_____ copies of The Hymnal @ \$25 each.

*Each book will be inscribed on the inside of the front cover
with your name and a message of dedication.*