

The Clarion

www.saintclement.org

August 2008

THE CHURCH OF SAINT CLEMENT

Episcopal + Alexandria, VA

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Twelfth Bishop of Virginia

The Rt. Rev. Shannon
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Bishop Coadjutor

The Rt. Rev. David Colin Jones
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William DeVan
Annette Foster
Brenda Graves
Michael Gray
Frances Harbour
Dennis Hardy
John Hodges
Vicki Hughes
Pat Jones
Lee Lavinder*

St. Clements
1701 N. Quaker Lane
Alexandria VA 22302
(703) 998-6166

Contact
office@saintclement.org

Communications Update

By Lee Lavinder (Vestry Liaison for Communications)

After a refreshing summer, the Clarion returns. Just a friendly reminder if you have ideas, stories or articles you would like to include in a future issue please drop them off in the church office prior to the 20th of the month. We have a lot going on this issue so lets get started.

Bishops and Priests We Know, But What Exactly Is A Deacon?

Of special interest in this month's letter is the first in a three part series by our Deacon, the Rev. Cynthia Park, discussing the role a Deacon. In the first of this three-part series, we will look at the order of deacons as established during the Church's early days. Our sources will be Holy Scripture and the Didache, the earliest extant book of church order. In the second installment, we will look at the work of deacons in the Episcopal Church during its earliest days, particularly as the American church spread west into the frontier, until the order all but disappeared in the early part of the 20th century. Finally, we will look at the work of deacons in the American church today as the order is being fully restored.

Ongoing Communications

I would like to thank everyone for filling out and handing in the communications survey distributed last month. In an effort to go "green" and save money, Saint Clements is now using its web site (www.saintclement.org) as the primary means of receiving the Clarion. While it's a great resource we realize that not everyone has access to the internet and will have hard copies available. If you need a printed version, please let the church office know and we will gladly mail one to you.

A Special Thanks

After many years running the Saint Clement website, Christina Crerar has passed on this responsibility to Harry Williams. I want to thank Christina for her years of service as web site administrator, a difficult and often thankless job. I would also like to thank Harry for taking on the web site and look forward to his support. If you have any ideas for improving the layout or information provided on the website, please feel free to contact him at harryw4@comcast.net or by dropping a note in the communications box in the church office.

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

August	Mid week services canceled for 5, 6, 12 and 13 August
Sept	Thrift shop reopens (Fridays and Saturdays 10 -1 PM)
Saturdays	8:30 AM Books and the Bible
Saturdays	10:00 AM AA meeting (Children's Chapel)

*"We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons; that they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments."
BCP, 387*

Bishops and Priests We Know, But What Exactly Is A Deacon?
by
The Rev. Deacon Cynthia Park

In Luke-Acts we read an account of the community of believers, men and women, widows and families, Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, different nationalities and races – in short, all different sorts and conditions of humanity who lived together in community because they believed that Jesus would come back for them shortly and it made sense to be in one place. This story of how the Church came to be a community is one of its distinctions from Judaism. Jews were first a community that developed a religion. By contrast, Christianity began as a religion and formed a community for its religious observance. For Jews, *orthopraxy* – doing the right thing – has always been more important than *orthodoxy* – believing the right thing. For Christians, the order is often reversed. And the right thing to believe for Christians is what we proclaim every week during the Eucharist: Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again! For the early Church gathered in Jerusalem before the fall of the second Temple, the expectation was that Christ would come again within their lifetime.

Such an assumption was understandable. Everything else about Jesus' ministry had occurred in a quick three-year period, beginning with his baptism and ending with his ascension into glory following his resurrection. It soon became clear, however, that Jesus' return might not be so imminent, as some believed. Somehow these disparate factions whose belief in Jesus had brought them all together would have to be managed. Apparently, the first problem addressed was the distribution of food.

Acts 6 describes a community fast increasing in numbers. The original disciples, now called apostles, were bombarded with daily life problems. Many of the Jewish believers would not eat the same food as the Gentile believers, despite Peter's teaching that all foods are clean and Jesus' own words that what goes in the mouth is not what defiles a person. Some of the widows were being overlooked during meals, because many thought that these women, for any number of reasons, did not qualify as *true* widows. It is too simplistic, however, to characterize these conditions as mere squabbles. There was more at stake.

Distribution of limited resources has always been a key factor in any culture. It continues to be today in our world as we consider the right distribution of water, energy, food, and shelter. Such basic necessities of life should never be controlled on the basis of wealth or privilege of birth. What the Church in Jerusalem faced was the two-fold ministry that continues to this day: On the one hand, we are called to spiritual worship and on the other hand we are called to do justice in the world. The apostles recognized both needs as legitimate and prayerfully forged a solution. *"It is not right that we should neglect the word of God in order to wait on tables. Therefore, select from among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this task, while we, for our part, will devote ourselves to prayer and to serving the word."* Acts 6.3 Stephen, the Church's first martyr, whose death the young man Saul witnessed, was among those first seven.

By the time Saul became reborn in the Spirit as Paul his letters contained references to deacons who served as heads of local congregations and as close assistants to bishops. Not only had deacons' ministry continued from the earliest community, but there were now women as well as men serving as deacons. [The term "deaconess" is altogether something different. The next installment will address this.] In Romans 16,

Paul commends *"our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchræ"* along with Prisca and Aquila who had a local congregation in their home. Later, in the pastoral epistle I Timothy 3. 8-13, qualifications for those persons called by the Church to serve as deacons are clearly defined: serious, not double-tongued (two-faced), not drunkards, not greedy for money, able to hold fast to the mysteries of faith with clear consciences, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things, married only once, and able to manage their children and their households.

The *Didache* discloses that, by the 3 century, local Christian communities elected as their leaders one *presbyter* (priest) to lead worship and a two-fold ministry shared by bishops and their assistants, called deacons. It is this final iteration of deacons assisting bishops and priests leading single congregations that shaped the three orders of bishop, ***(Continued on next page)***

priest, and deacon that we have in the Church today. Rather than a hierarchy, which is a popular misunderstanding, where the deacon is at the bottom and the bishop is at the top, the Church understood the three orders as working together in concert. Each order had distinct roles with some overlap. Bishops oversaw several congregations, making sure that all believers had access to important letters and documents as well as the scriptures so that all could learn, and ensuring that priests and deacons in various regions were teaching the same doctrines. Priests managed individual congregations, teaching, administering the sacraments, and leading worship. Deacons' roles had now grown beyond just waiting tables and collecting alms for the poor.

By the third century, deacons were the ministers who traveled between the bishops and the priests and, importantly, out into society's edges taking the gospel to the world and bringing back to the Church the news of the world. Some interpreters construe the Greek word for deacon as describing a person with *dusty feet*, an apt term for these ministers whose primary contribution to the life of the Church was made outside the Church's walls and in the world.

Next month we will look at deacons in the early days of the American church and, in particular, the shift from the full order to a transitional order, and the basis for the idea that lingers today that a deacon is a priest-in-waiting.

Spring Picnic and Silent Auction a Success

We filled Marshall-Rutter Hall to overflowing for the Saint Clement Episcopal Day School end of the year Picnic and Silent Auction! On Friday, May 23rd, the Parent Teacher Organization hosted not only a successful fund raising event, but also a wonderful way of bringing the school family and the church family together. With the outstanding leadership of our School Director, Dory Herman-Sample, and the President of the Parent Teacher Organization, Shannon Mitchell, this event was a resounding success. The money we raised is going towards the school enrichment programs and facility upgrades. Attendees enjoyed music, hotdogs, burgers and bidding on excellent prizes.

Special thanks to Helena Deschant and Holly Ford for going the extra mile in soliciting from local businesses all of those wonderful things for the auction. Also, thanks to all who volunteered to cook, clean, entertain and all the other wonderful things that made this event such a wonderful and profitable gathering.

Brenda Graves
Vestry Liaison to
St. Clement Episcopal Day School

Directed Giving Welcome

Ever see something at St. Clements that needs to be fixed or improved upon? While St. Clements is wonderful, sometimes you might notice a small thing that could really make a difference. In recent months there have been several instances of "directed giving". These people saw something at the church they felt could be improved and gave time or money to make it happen.

If you would like to contribute to the church for a specific improvement, please mention it to Father John or any vestry member. We would love to recognize those that have contributed in the Clarion or you can choose to remain anonymous.

Health Screening Held at St. Clement in May

Life Line Screening tests were offered to Saint Clement parishioners and members of the community at the Church of Saint Clement Saturday, 10 May. Approximately 15 people were screened by the skilled sonographers for vascular disease and technicians measured osteoporosis risk for individuals or drew blood for diabetes and cholesterol risk analysis. Each test was painless, took approximately 10 minutes, and most people got more than one test. Following the screening, each person went on their way knowing they did something good for their health. Over the next 20 days, test data will be reviewed by board certified physicians licensed in Virginia and results sent to each tested individual. If you'd like more information about the screening and where it's being offered, check out the website at www.lifelinescreening.com.

Coffee Hour Update

After the 8 am Sunday service, Vestry member Frances Harbour provides donuts in the Church kitchen, where congregants enjoy coffee and fellowship. After the 10 am service, attendees enjoy the weekly coffee hour in Marshall-Rutter Hall. Volunteers prepare, serve, and clean up the repast, which includes coffee, tea, lemonade, cookies, and other treats, such as home-made baked goods, fruit, cheese, and crackers.

It is a relaxing time, during which parishioners catch up with each other and welcome newcomers to St. Clements. The children have fun, too!

There are still a few Coffee Hour volunteer opportunities left this year: August 10 and 17; November 9; and December 14. If anyone is interested in participating in this fun and important ministry or in any other aspect of hospitality, please contact Martha Crawley at mc1092@verizon.net or sign up on the sheet in the Church kitchen. It's a great way to meet people and get involved!

Birthdays in August

8/1

*Pat Stoffel
Katie Connor*

8/3

*Sharon Hodges
Samantha Fontenelle*

8/11

*Michael Gray
Daniel Ziegler*

8/12

Ben Rinkema

8/13

William DeVan

8/15

*Liam DeVan
Mia Jones
Nan Ryant
Sorina Schultz
Marcella LeGrand*

8/16

Jack Carver

8/18

*James Graves
Brian Rush*

8/19

*Patrick Jones
Adhir Kackar*

8/10

*Elizabeth Brake
Tammi DeVan*

8/26

Larry McClemons

8/28

*Oumar Ganame
Lorna LeGrand*

8/29

Alex Gray

Books and the Bible

The Books and the Bible group began reading the letter of Paul to the Ephesians on April 6, 2008. The name of the commentary to be used to accompany the Biblical text will be posted on the board in Marshall-Rutter Hall, as soon as it is selected. If you are interested in exploring the Bible and enjoying coffee on Saturday mornings from about 8:30 to 10 am, please come! For more information about this adult Christian education opportunity, please contact Martha Crawley at mc1092@verizon.net or ask Ruth Jackson after the 8 a.m. Sunday Service or Pat Stoffel, Jan Taylor, Caroline Johnston, or Marsha Bell after the 10 am service. All are welcome to come and learn and enjoy!

This year the Books and the Bible group has read a variety of fascinating works that have enriched its participants' understanding of scripture and the church. In September they started with Raymond Brown's *Christ of the Gospels of the Ordinary Sundays*, a guide to the lectionary for the "green" Sundays that was written for lay people. Dennis Maynard's *Those Episkopols* followed next, written by a parish priest to answer questions such as: "Does God like all that ritual?" "Can you believe anything you want and be an Episcopalian?"

Last year's reading of William Barclay's *Revelation* led the group to select its most challenging book, *The Apocalyptic Literature* by Professor Stephen Cook of the Virginia Theological Seminary. Although it wasn't easy, the group used his analysis to examine Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, and other prophets and gain new understanding of these demanding sections of the Bible. Since it was not an easy read, they stopped at the end of the Old Testament, and will pick up the chapters on the New Testament at another time.

Books and the Bible is the oldest continuing adult Christian Education program at the Church of St. Clement. It was organized by parishioners in the late 1980s and has been meeting ever since. Some people come and stay for years, while others are interested only in one particular author or book, and are welcome to participate for however long they wish. All are welcome!

Upcoming Fall Events

This fall the Church of St. Clement is planning to have more family events to encourage the sense of community that is so important to us. Some of the tentatively planned events include a ministry fair/homecoming cookout in September, a Halloween potluck and a family potluck in December. Please watch the church bulletin, the website and the Clarion for further details as they are finalized.

<p>CLARION SUBMISSIONS: Submissions for the Clarion should be made to Lee Lavinder either by email (lavinder_lee@yahoo.com) or by dropping it off in the church office.</p>
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