

Pastor Pete's Page

Weekly thoughts from the Priest in Charge

June 6, 2010

CHILDREN'S LITURGY TODAY

I'm sure everyone will be happy to see our young children involved in the liturgy today. Parishes that are growing in numbers generally make it obvious that they are family-friendly by the way they welcome children. Having kids involved in worship with the rest of the congregation on a regular basis gets that message out to people. Some congregations make this a monthly practice. The thing about children's liturgies is that they really are designed for children—the readings are translated with vocabulary kids can understand. Much of the music appeals to kids. The sermon is directed to them. But the funny thing about all of this, children's liturgies reach many adults better than regular worship experiences. Children have a way of opening hearts, and God can get in much easier at those moments! I think this is something we need to keep doing!

OUR PARISH MEMBERS AT LUTHERAN SYNOD ASSEMBLY

A few members of the congregation and myself will be in Rochester beginning this Sunday evening for the assembly of the Upstate NY Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church In America (ELCA). This is similar to "Diocesan Convention" for the Episcopalians. For me it will be an opportunity to take in more of the atmosphere of ELCA, and get a better appreciation of what it means to be a Lutheran. As pastor to both Lutherans and Episcopalians here at Grace and Holy Spirit, I hope this learning will help my ministry in our parish. Of course, we all can benefit on reflecting on exactly what are the special gifts of the Lutheran and Episcopal traditions. Then we can find ways to incorporate the best of each in the life of our parish.

DIVERSITY DISCUSSION—WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO US

There are a few folks in the parish who share my interest in developing a diversity education program in the parish. One of my concerns is that the Episcopal Church and ELCA are each about 98% of European descent. Well, there is nothing wrong with being white Euro-Americans, but the point is that the USA population as a whole is far more diverse than our denominations. I suggest to you that if our church is going to exist in the future, it will have to reflect the diversity of the culture we are in. The Diocese of Central NY is currently developing an anti-racism training that is required for people in ministry. (There is also a national standard for anti-racism training in the Lutheran church.) However, in the meantime, I would love to see a training program for our entire parish, to help us all be truly as welcoming as possible to all people. We have great resources to do such a program here, as we have contacts with folks who are expert in diversity issues at the college. I will keep you posted as to how this program is going.

PASTOR'S MOVING DAY

Don't bother me on June 11th! I am moving to a new apartment that day!

Of course, if there is a life and death emergency, I will just have to deal with that if it happens. I have so many things on my calendar over the next few days, it seems as if it will be a miracle if I am actually ready to move. And, of course, there is that age old spiritual question I am thinking about now as I look around the old apartment: "Why the heck do I have so much stuff I don't really use?"

WHY I WRITE SO MUCH EACH WEEK

Fr John Finnegan was a priest with whom I shared ministry at a large parish in Camillus. He is quite a few years ahead of me, and is not a fan of using computers. I remember how he spent a great deal of time every week TYPING on a TYPEWRITER a long entry of thoughts from the pastor that were to go in the parish bulletin. If there were several million more people like him, Smith-Corona would still be in business in Cortland! I remember asking him why he spent so much time on writing the pastor's stuff for the weekly bulletin. He insisted that it was a good way to keep in touch with the people of the parish, and those who could not get to church especially liked reading his view of what was going on in the parish. I was a bit skeptical, but I copied that practice in my parish in Fulton. They very much appreciated that addition to the bulletin. People said they felt that they were really part of the community, as they read about what was happening in the life of the parish. I keep on doing that today, in *Pastor Pete's Page* with thanks to John Finnegan for the idea. Actually, I copied quite a few things from him. True wisdom is recognizing that sometimes other people have better ideas. We are smart when we copy best practices from others.

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING

Will be here Wednesday Evening July 7, 6:30PM

Fr John Martinichio will be the trainer.

All adults who work with children here or anywhere in the Episcopal Church MUST attend a Safe Church training. This includes Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Nursery, Parish Employees, Clergy and ANY parishioners who want to help make our parish a safer place for kids. I note that the Evangelical Lutheran Church has similar expectations. If you cannot attend this training, we will post any other training times and locations that we know about.



SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

begins Sunday, July 4 with ONE liturgy at 9AM.

Summer worship schedule continues through Labor Day.

Regular schedule resumes on September 12.

TUESDAY NOON EUCHARIST?

I am interested in beginning a ministry to the downtown area with a noontime service, probably on Tuesdays. At least once a month, this might include a healing service. HOWEVER, I do not want this to be a one person show. I would like others to help in planning and setting up, and welcoming people. Let me know if you are interested in helping, and we will talk.