

The Guiding Light

The Newsletter of The Episcopal Church of the Epiphany

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May 2008



Highlights from the Rector

*Almighty and everliving God,
ruler of all things in heaven and earth,
hear our prayers for this parish family.
Strengthen the faithful, arouse the careless, and restore the penitent.
Grant us all things necessary for our common life,
and bring us all to be of one heart and mind within your holy Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.*
(Prayer for the Parish, BCP p.817)

Dear Parishioners:

May is my very favorite month of the entire year. I love the temperature, and the beauty of all that is green and blooming. When May gets here, that means summer is on the way, and I love summertime. May is a month full of new beginnings and looking ahead. It is full of hope and promise.

May is when the academic year winds down and graduations happen at the high school and college level. School sports programs finish, music and theatre finish as well. People make their summer plans for sports and camps and concerts in the park and summer productions. Vacations get planned. Resorts prepare for their summer crowds. Weddings begin happening in full force in churches or at banquet facilities or somewhere on a beach.

Not everyone is in that hopeful situation. Real life means that chronic pain or illness does not abide by a calendar. Poverty is usually affected by the calendar only in the way that by the end of the month, disability checks and social security checks and all limited income folks have often run out of money, maybe even food.

May is not a happy, hopeful month for anyone deployed to Iraq who is away from their family, and in the valley of the shadow of death each hour of the day and night.

As a parish, we are mindful of the poor and the sick, those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. We are mindful of those who are serving our country in this war. Prayers are offered daily for all we love, and those we do not even know who are in these situations.

As Christians we strive to integrate our personal lives with the life of our faith community. By virtue of our baptisms, we are all ministers for Our Lord.

In celebration of who we are and what we do, I have designated the month of May as Epiphany's "bring a friend to church" month.

Epiphany Church is a small church with a very big heart! The "heart" logo that the city of Newton uses fits our parish here in Newton well.

We offer a place where people are noticed, welcomed, and accepted. We want people who visit us to know the love of Jesus Christ through our friendship. We have great caring for those in need and we pray regularly for one another. We want people to feel welcome in our fellowship, in our study of the Bible and of our faith, and in our outreach efforts in this community, the diocese and in the world. We want people who visit us to know that whether or not they "join" our church, they can certainly consider Epiphany folks to be friends who care and who will always pray for them. We are here if they need us.

May is an opportunity for you to invite friends to visit your church with you, especially if they may be looking for a church home. This is also a time to invite your friends who attend other churches to come and be with you in your church one Sunday, and worship in your beautiful Episcopal tradition. You can teach them about our "ways". (Our intention is not to "steal" members from these other churches!) I believe it is always interesting, enriching, and educational to visit other churches, and much easier to do so if you have someone to sit with when you visit! I do hope you can persuade your friends to come with you one Sunday. They will then understand why they hear you talk about your church in such a fond way.

If you are reading this article, and you have not attended worship in a while, I want you to think of May as your "homecoming" month. Bring yourself back to church! Your presence with us is a great blessing, more than you realize. We love you and we miss you. And we will be so very happy to see you again.

Faithfully yours in the hope, the promise, and the grace of God,

Mother Beth

NEWS / UPCOMING EVENTS

Vestry Meeting - Will be held Wednesday, May 14, at 7 p.m. Please speak with Mthr. Beth ahead of time if you have any agenda items for the vestry to discuss, or speak with your Vestry representative for any positive feedback, or any suggestions and concerns.

Vestry Person of the Week - Connie Keisler for the week of May 4; Zoe Robertson for the week of May 11; Catherine Tucker for the week of May 18; Wanda Williams for the week of May 25; Luther Barringer for the week of June 1; Eric Ben-Davies for the week of June 8; and Jo Ann Harrington for the week of June 15.

Christian Formation: Adult Forum and Children's Sunday School - Will meet for the last time on Sunday, May 11 for an Intergenerational Event after the Mother's Day breakfast in the parish hall. Both classes will resume on the first Sunday after Labor Day, September 7th. Many thanks to those who helped to teach these classes this year, and to those who were participants.

Disciples Bible Study Class - continues to meet weekly on Thursday mornings from 10:00 until 11:30 a.m. until Thursday morning, May 29th, which will be the last class.

Midweek Evening Prayer with Holy Eucharist and Prayers for Healing - continues on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 - 6 p.m.

Choir Practice - is held on the first and third Wednesday evenings of the month at 6:00 p.m. following the Evening Prayer service. Anyone interested in joining our choir, please feel free to speak to one of the members or to Peter Weinrich. There is always room for one more choir member!

Men's Night Out - Will meet on Sunday, May 18, at 6:00 p.m. at IHOP in Hickory.

Daughters of the King - holds their monthly meetings on the second Saturday morning of each month from 9:00 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. At the May 10th meeting, will begin with our business meeting, followed with our Bible Study.

A Parish Bridal Shower will be hosted by Gloria Jupin and Raeanne Kummer for Becky Brandon on Sunday afternoon, June 1st at 2 pm at the church. She is registered at Target and Kohls.

The June/July Newsletter Deadline is Tuesday, May 27, in order to have them in your mailboxes by Sunday, June 1st. Please mark your calendars. The newsletter is still, by far, the most effective means of communication any church has. Please be in touch with Terri Beauvais, our Parish Administrator for weekly bulletin information. Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 a.m. until Noon. You may either call the office (464-1876), email her at secretary@EpiphanyNewton.org, or write your information down on paper and leave it in her door mailbox. You may also email your

newsletter editor at newsletter@EpiphanyNewton.org with monthly newsletter information you wish included.

Marriage Vows Re-Affirmed...Dona and Billy Richards will celebrate their 25 years of marriage in a special service on Saturday, June 21 at 2 pm. The parish is invited to join with them in person or in prayer. Please RSVP so that they can have an idea of who is coming. Blessings to you two!

CONGRATULATIONS

Maureen Ben-Davies will graduate on May 11, 2008, with an MD Degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She will begin her residency at the University of Chicago Children's Hospital in June.

Tricia Ben-Davies will graduate on May 10, 2008, with a BA in Political Science and Communications degree from East Carolina University in Greenville, N. C.

David Brandon, Jr., graduates from NC State University in History on May 9th and is commissioned into the United States Air Force on May 10th. David and Megan were married on April 14th. Congratulations to both of them!

WEBSITE NEWS

The website for Church of the Epiphany is LIVE!! Go to <http://www.EpiphanyNewton.org> on your browser (not yet with a search engine like Google or Yahoo) and see how wonderful our new website looks. (And if you are reading this from the website, you are already there!) Thank you to Kathy Hardin of Compass Point, our website service, and to Anita Bell, our parish webmaster who have designed and executed it. If any of you have digital photos of recent (within the last six months or so) events at Epiphany, please e-mail them to webmaster@epiphanynewton.org Our website will eventually have digital photo albums. Thanks so much for your help with this!

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBER --- MELANIE BRITT

When Zoe said she needed some information from me to include in the newsletter, I had to swallow hard. Please understand. My skill level with initially breaking the ice is pretty limited — about 2X3 inches, to be exact, the size of one of those name tags that say, “Hello, my name is Melanie.” I’m much more suited to listening long rather than talking fast - letting stories stretch and unfold over time, but I realize that spots in newsletters do better with the quick facts. Respectfully, I tried to think of a fun way to ease into this — maybe a true/false quiz, or spinning a fairy-tale complete with “once upon a time”, and the joy of living these days “happily ever after”.

I've now decided on the fortune-cookie format: short, simple, to the point. Here we go.

I was born and raised in Mississippi, solid Baptist in the heart of the Bible belt. That upbringing's still treasured deep in my bones, a great compliment to the Episcopal route I took in my mid-twenties. Graduate school took me to Texas briefly, yet North Carolina has been "home" for the past eighteen years. It was love a first sight with these mountains, winding trails and waterfalls; perfection! I was the only one in the neck of the woods until my younger sister moved to Virginia last year, making family a little closer in proximity. I still catch myself grinning at the chance to visit with her on a three-hour trip "up" as opposed to the thirteen-hour trek "down" to my parents (still in Mississippi) — but oh, how those miles fly in the excitement of getting to see any of them as often as possible! I count myself lucky in enjoying their company as much as I do. My immediate household family consists of two four-legged wonders, Hannah and Bailey, the stray pups who had originally wandered into traffic then wandered into my life to stay. The three of us are spoiled rotten with each other.

I've moved to Conover this past year, though I've worked in Hickory for the past fourteen years at Mental Health Services of Catawba County. My job has evolved from early years as an out-patient therapist, followed by a stint in the Staff Development/Quality Management role, to today's administrative spot where I get to keep up with policies and projects and chase a thousand details (which I love — can you believe!) Life beyond the weekday eight to five is much less hectic by purposeful design. Pretty easily amused, I'm happiest with unrushed hours — twirling wooden spoons as magic wands in the kitchen to cook whatever/whenever, hanging out with books or pen-n-paper on a sun-drenched deck, blue jeans and bare feet and holy simplicity. Nothing special, just much celebrated. God is indeed good, I learn more and more each day.

One of the best gifts recently has been the welcome by each of you to Epiphany. Thank you for that. I look forward to all the ways our paths may cross, and am grateful for the chance to join you, get to know you, and offer whatever I can in return. Here's to all that's ahead — MELANIE

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

April 9, 2008

Pastoral Concerns: *Marian Lewis will undergo bypass heart surgery next Friday, April 18. Fred Keisler had two hospitalizations during the last week. Jenny Bell had surgery on her feet.*

Senior Warden, Zoe Robertson: *Ann Adams, Pat Dalton, Catherine Tucker, and Anita Williams are serving on the Touch Base Telephone Ministry Committee.*

Junior Warden, Luther Barringer: A walk through provided a list of things needing to be done on our church property. Handicapped parking signs need to be replaced, and the trim around the stained glass window over the altar needs repair. Luther will ask Billy Richards to get more estimates for a sound system. Luther will check handicapped parking designated spots near the Church proper entrance.

Outreach Committee, Luther Barringer: Raeanne Kummer will chair this committee. Carol Clise will be the secretary. We continue to collect canned goods for ECCCM. School supplies are being collected for the Any Soldier project. The soldiers requested these supplies for the needy children they encounter. We also continue to collect cell phones that are exchanged for calling cards for our soldiers. The Highland Episcopalian is doing an article on our Any Soldier and cell phone outreach projects.

Hospitality, Wanda Williams: May is **Bring a Friend to Church month**. Friday, April 25th, the Catawba Valley Community Chorus will perform at Epiphany, refreshments will be needed. The vestry call list will be activated.

Mthr. Beth: The format for our Sunday church service bulletin will be changed. It will be in larger print on an 8 ½ X 14 sheet of paper coming soon. The format for the Prayers of the People has also been changed. The fourth Sunday of the month, we will use home-made communion bread made by Norma Ridenhour. Mthr. Beth also discussed her tentative calendar for continuing education and family vacation this summer, still to be finalized.

Gloria Jupin, Clerk of Vestry