

### St. Andrew & St. John Episcopal Church

315 Main Street • P.O. Box 767 • Southwest Harbor, ME 04679  
Phone: Church Office 207-244-3229; Tim Fleck 207-812-8362; Kathleen Killian 718-775-6069  
E-mail: [saints315@myfairpoint.net](mailto:saints315@myfairpoint.net) / [Tim@mdi-episcopal.org](mailto:Tim@mdi-episcopal.org) / [Kathleen@mdi-episcopal.org](mailto:Kathleen@mdi-episcopal.org)  
Website: [www.saintsmdi.org](http://www.saintsmdi.org)  
Office Open: Monday • Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

**Rector**

Timothy Fleck

**Assistant Rector**

Kathleen Killian

**Music Director**

Stephen Sampson

**Parish Administrator**

Michele Daley

**Editor**

Jayne Ashworth



# The Net Tender

Newsletter of St. Andrew & St. John Episcopal Church

November 2015

## The E-words

November 1, Michael Curry was installed as the 27<sup>th</sup> Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. In a spectacular sermon at his installation (which you can see at [www.youtu.be/mt6f3CvC3JE](http://www.youtu.be/mt6f3CvC3JE)), Bishop Curry joked that the response to the Jeopardy question “Two words beginning with E that are seldom heard in the same sentence” would be “What are Episcopalian and Evangelism.”



Episcopalians have a well-earned reputation for discomfort with evangelism. When we were an established church in England and in the American colonies, we didn't need (or didn't think we needed) to work at evangelizing our neighbors: it was assumed that everyone (or at least every white Anglo-Saxon person) was a Christian, and unless he was a Congregationalist or maybe a Quaker, he was probably an Anglican. We were the default.

Later, as other Christian denominations and movements awakened the American frontier, many Episcopalians seemed to think that evangelism and enthusiasm (another e-word with which we are uneasy) were in rather poor taste, simply not done. After the Methodists and the Presbyterians and the Baptists had burned through an area, we might follow up with a charming little chapel for those who were inclined toward our kind of worship, but seldom were we so vulgar as to actually seek people out. Surely the treasures of our tradition were such that discerning gentlefolk would seek us out and find us.

More recently, we have trapped ourselves inside a different kind of good taste: the laudable idea that one should not force one's beliefs on others has been over-refined into the notion that polite people do not talk about religion or faith at all for fear that we might expose differences among ourselves. Your beliefs are your business and my beliefs are my business, and unless you are practicing your piety in the street and frightening the horses, the less said about it the better.

These delicacies about evangelism spring from fundamental misunderstandings of our duty, our mission, our call to share the Good News.

Our first mistake is to assume that the goal of evangelism is to “convert the heathen:” to convince people that their religion or their practice of Christianity is wrong, and to turn them into proper Episcopalians. In the same sermon, Bishop Curry defines evangelism as “sharing the faith that is within me and listening to the faith that is within you.” This is very far from the idea that my religion is nobody's business. It is saying that faith is a gift from God, and that God may have given me something that will ring true for you, that might even change your life. This is very far from saying that we all develop our own personal belief structure, and that anyone's is as good as anyone else's. It is saying that, as a community over hundreds and thousands of years, in places all across the world, we have come to believe and practice certain things in common, and we have found them to be good enough to share. To quote Sri Lankan Methodist Bishop D.T. Niles, evangelism is “One beggar telling another where to find bread.”

## WESTSIDE FOOD PANTRY CELEBRATES 25<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OCTOBER 25



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If you no longer wish to receive the Net Tender or prefer to receive it by e-mail, please call the church office.

Deadline for articles for December/January *Net Tender* is December 6

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## 36 HOURS IN PORTLAND — REFLECTIONS ON THE CONVENTION

*"Bless the Lord, my soul....and bless his holy name"*

The fact that this refrain has been running through my head for over a week says something about the intensity I felt attending the 196<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention. The melody (WLP 825) was part of the brief opening ceremony and served to quiet us and focus us for the business at hand. Other services included Compline at the close of the dinner, a particularly beautiful service in the Celtic tradition featuring instrumental music as well as prayers and meditation. The concluding Eucharist at the Cathedral of St. Luke was a glorious celebration with all the pomp and trimmings available: incense, choir, full organ and a procession through the Cathedral. The pews had been placed in a semi-circular arrangement oriented toward the long side of the Cathedral, facing the font. This provided a much better view of the clergies' activities as well as a greater sense of the congregation worshipping together.

The business of the Convention took place in the comfortable auditorium of the University of Southern Maine. There were seven resolutions to consider. The first had to do with the lay delegate formula; the number of delegates had been based on the "number of communicants in good standing" - a somewhat slippery slope - and the proposal changed it to the average Sunday attendance, which in our case was 43. This means that we now qualify for 2 delegates rather than 3; should our numbers rise to above 50 for a Sunday average we would go back to 3.

There were resolutions about clergy and staff salaries, which passed, and a complicated one about health insurance. After lengthy discussion it was postponed for lack of adequate information. The resolutions which provoked the most discussion were two concerning the Middle East conflicts which had been approved at General Convention. One urges church members to "understand the traumas... fear...pain.. that shape the daily lives of all living in Israel and the Palestinian Territories," to become fully informed about the situation there and, where possible, to make a pilgrimage to observe it first hand and learn from fellow Christians.

The second resolution called upon the President and his Cabinet to make "concentrated efforts toward negotiated ends to the several conflicts in the Middle East" and called upon the clergy and laity in Maine to actively support this effort. Although the language was even-handed, showing no favoritism toward either Israel or the Palestinian Territories, there were those who felt that any action taken could be interpreted as favoring one side or the other and thus should be avoided. After considerable discussion both resolutions passed.

A resolution was considered and passed updating the church policy on alcohol use. This was the result of he death earlier this year of a cyclist at the hands of an Episcopal bishop. The policy sets a standard for moderate use and

protects children and persons struggling with addiction and also encourages frank and open discussion when problems occur.

The generous and delicious dinner at the Italian Heritage Center included a brief and enthusiastic talk by the director of Camp Bishopswood. After a summary of the successes of the summer's activities and a carefully worded description of the plumbing difficulties they were having he concluded with a quote I will long remember: a young camper said to her mother "Camp is the only place I feel safe talking about God."

The motto of the Convention was "We are God's dwelling, rooted in Scripture and Nurtured by Grace." In his address at the dinner Bishop Lane acknowledged our challenges: we are facing a rising generation that has not been raised in a faith tradition....many Americans distrust large institutions, including the church...we are not viewed as having the interests of non-church members at heart. We are not viewed as safe places for people of differing opinions or beliefs. He suggests that God is inviting us into a period of experimentation and went on to describe evidence of that in churches in Maine. He urged us not to be afraid of failure and referred to one of his own experiments which got a less than enthusiastic response on the Island: people walking a neighborhood regularly, praying for the residents, and discussing the experience with their partner.

In the spirit of experimentation the Bishop announced that the next Convention would have a different format. There would be a one day session for clergy and laity in the fall (rather than the current two days), then an education and workshop day in the spring and a worship event in the summer. After two cycles this alternative would be assessed to see what worked and what did not.

He ended with encouraging words: "We Episcopalians in Maine are hanging on better than almost anywhere else." But hanging on isn't enough — "we must be builders with God of a new heaven and a new earth. God will be with us as we move beyond preservation to transformation."

The Bishop's sermon at the closing Eucharist took this theme to a more personal level. "I invite you this day to go. Go on the adventure to which Christ is calling you. Bring your gifts and skills...doubts and fears. Be healed and be a healer." Finally he included a phrase from Mary Oliver's poem "Summer Day" which was read in its entirety at the beginning of the service: "God has given you one wild and precious life. With Jesus as your companion share it with the world."

*Bunny Watts*

## FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

*Stephen Sampson*

With the arrival of November and the turning back of our timepieces, it is a good time to remind the St. John community of Saint John Singers, which refers to the gathering of any interested parties every other week to sing the hymns of the upcoming services at Saint John. All are welcome at these rehearsals, at which we simply sing through the hymns that have been selected for the next two or three Sunday services. (We also talk among ourselves.) The rehearsals strengthen the congregation's singing during the services, and are also enjoyable in themselves. They also serve as a sounding board for the hymn selections, as we sometimes voice our opinion regarding hymn selections and suggest alternatives if we think an alternative would be more appropriate. In addition, the rehearsals strengthen the social bonds among us. The rehearsals take place at St. John's. Typically they have been held on the second and fourth Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m. We are now rescheduling them for a different day of the week — keep an eye on the bulletin. I encourage people to drop in at any rehearsal and see what it's all about. Best wishes for an enjoyable autumn.



## CHRISTMAS WREATHS



The committee of six (Karen Craig, Mary Mitchell, Carol Nelson, Sue Newman, Edie Stanwood and Barbara Campbell) will be making wreaths again this year. If you would like to help, please contact Karen at 244-5267. If you would like to place an order, there is a sign up sheet in the undercroft. Cost will be the same as last year — \$20/wreath.



## The E-words *(continued)*

It amazes me that we are only too eager to share a recipe we like, a diet that has worked for us, a video clip of a cat that made us laugh. We are not trying to convert people to liking peanut butter brownies, but we are happy to share in the hope that the recipe will work for them. And yet we are hesitant to share something that has supposedly changed our lives, something so urgent that we keep coming back for it week after week.

Another mistake is to make the goal of evangelism getting people to come to church. That is simultaneously too small a goal and one that is notoriously difficult to achieve. Bishop Curry took as one of his texts a passage from the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, when the crowd in Thessalonica were scandalized by Paul and Silas' teaching. The crowd "dragged some believers before the city authorities, shouting, 'These people who have turned the world upside down have come here also. They are acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying there is another king named Jesus.'"

Evangelism means spreading the message, spreading the Good News that there is another king called Jesus, a Kingdom of God that exists as an alternative the kingdoms of this world. Evangelism means sharing the way that God has turned our world upside down (and therefore right side up), and perhaps hearing the ways that other folks' sideways world is in need of some rotation. If we share the faith that is within us and listen to the faith that is within our neighbors, and if we show the light of that faith to the world, maybe some of those neighbors will want to come to church on Sunday morning. But maybe not – it doesn't really matter much either way.

Hard as it is to admit, Jesus didn't come to make Christians. Jesus came to turn the world upside down. Our job isn't to make Episcopalians. It is to share what Jesus has turned right side up in us.

*Feedback? I hope you will call or e-mail me to continue the conversation.*

*Yours in Christ's Peace, Tim*



## MDI COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING SERVICE

**Tuesday, November 24**

**5:30 p.m.**

**St. Saviour's Parish**

**Bar Harbor**



**Birthdays**

**NOVEMBER**

14—Winthrop Short  
 15—Elke O'Donnell  
 18—Ellen Gilmore  
 22—Ann Cox Halkett  
 22—Kathryn Hiscock  
 25—Spencer Ervin  
 26—Michele Daley  
 27—Floy Ervin

**Wedding Anniversaries**

**NOVEMBER**

23—Bob and Elaine Theriault

## (re)TRAINING FOR ACOLYTES AND CHALICE BEARERS



**Sunday, December 6, 11:30 – 12:30.** Some of us were trained forty years ago and could use a refresher course; some of us were never trained, but just told to “watch what she does and do the same;” some of us would like to better understand why we do what we do; some of us would be interested in learning a new ministry. All are invited / strongly encouraged to attend a training session after the 10:00 service on Sunday, December 6 in the chancel. If you really, really cannot make this date, please be in contact with Tim+ or Kathleen+ to schedule a make-up time.

## BAR HARBOR COMMUNITY RALLIES TO HELP SYRIAN REFUGEES

Area religious and civic organizations, libraries, and citizens will hold an event on **Saturday, November 7 from 3 to 5 p.m.** at Bar Harbor Congregational Church to help educate residents about the tragedy affecting the Syrian people and what can be done about it. The program will also feature local musicians, a singalong, and puppets for children. Speakers will feature Tarlan Ahmidov from Catholic Charities in Portland that is the U.S. State Department's designated organization in Maine to resettle Syrian and other refugees. Also College of the Atlantic student, Moni Ayoub, from Lebanon, who has worked in a Syrian refugee camp, Heath Cabot on the COA faculty who will comment on the Syrian refugees flooding into Europe, and a COA student who will speak on drought and climate change as one of the drivers of the Syrian refugee crisis. Information will be provided about organizations dealing with the crisis and contributions to one or more of them will be encouraged.

## Thinking on Thresholds *(continued)*

Looking ahead, the coming season of Advent is itself a threshold: from Advent 1 to 2 to 3 to 4, we cross Sunday to Sunday as if they were flagstones or river rocks, making our way to the other side—Christmas. We're not yet suspended in this season of hope and expectancy of the birth of our Lord, but we can anticipate the grace that will carry us forward to it, and that precipitates each new dawn. A poem by 13<sup>th</sup> century mystic Rumi:

*The breezes at dawn have secrets to tell you  
 Don't go back to sleep!  
 You must ask for what you really want.  
 Don't go back to sleep!  
 People are going back and forth  
 across the doorsill where the two worlds touch,  
 The door is round and open  
 Don't go back to sleep!*

## THINKING ON THRESHOLDS

*The Reverend Kathleen Killian*

In my last two pieces, I spoke to the power of “place” and “direction” in our lives. Place and conversion or transformation are intimately interconnected, a place's particularities integral to shaping our inner terrain and way of outer dwelling; and direction—which way we face or aim our intent— matters, remembering that to sin means to miss the mark and to repent from sin to turn around or turn back towards the mark—God. And lastly, I reflected on the rhythm or pattern that develops because of our location and course, such as island or parish hopping, circuit or internal itinerating that is either holy or habitually spirited.

This month I want to write about something that constitutes both a place and direction, but is also placeless and directionless, this something being a threshold: the literal bottom of a doorway that is a point of entry or beginning, as well as a level or limit reached, an intensity that manifests result or phenomenon. What got me to thinking about thresholds was my recent honeymoon, a time in which newlyweds flourish and are also suspended in a transitional space as they make their way across the threshold of marriage. In actualization or ritualization of this, the groom carries the bride across the doorsill of their new home.

A threshold is a borderland of possibility and expectancy that must also be crossed. We encounter many thresholds throughout our lives, becoming who we are in a series of entrances and exits, beginnings and endings, from childhood to adolescence, adulthood to old age, birth to death. Our growth requires that we travel through places unknown and territories uncharted, and that we are at times neither here nor there, but in-between. Our patterns and rhythms are not usual or our own, but new and “other” as we make the crossing. From his poem *Threshold*, Nobel Prize recipient Rabindranath Tagore writes:

*I was not aware of the moment  
 when I first crossed the threshold of this life.  
 What was the power that made me open out into this vast mystery  
 like a bud in the forest at midnight!*

You might ask yourself: at which threshold do I now stand? What direction am I headed and what place am I leaving? What is hindering my passage? What is surprising about where I find myself? What does the threshold feel like? For a threshold, whether of an interior or external nature, is a complexity of emotion and thought that can be disorienting but through which we must navigate. From his poem *Threshold*, Anglican priest R.S. Thomas writes:

*I have lingered too long on this threshold,  
 but where can I go?*

In the poem, he goes on to speak of the balance that is needed at the edge of a threshold, and whether to look back or look forward. Which way to go, and what to do?

Though a threshold is a time of heightened or altered sensitivity, change from within it can also be subtle, a mere glimmer of a feeling or thought that yet nudges us toward the doorsill. Change can also be abrupt: an “aha” arises and suddenly we see what we could not before. Life is unexpectedly different as are we. And so, thresholds are necessarily, though not often enough, cloaked in the ritual of ceremony, prayer, blessing, petition, and thanksgiving.

Each Sunday the church in her worship enters into such a threshold; we step out of the ordinary—even during the season we call ordinary time—because the liturgy of the Eucharistic is never rote. Upon entering the Eucharistic threshold, we enact and reenact salvation history, moving through the living story of the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Communion is a threshold of identity and transformation in Christ, the body of Christ reshaped in the sacrament of new life; from the font to the altar to the door of the church we have traversed a most sacred space and come out on the other side, changed.



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**INVESTING IN A BETTER FUTURE**  
*Together, we have achieved amazing things. We invite you to join us in celebrating 75 years of healing a hurting world.*

The 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gift Package is the highlight of this year's holiday giving season from *Gifts for Life*, Episcopal Relief & Development's alternative giving catalog. As the organization celebrates 75 years of healing a hurting world, congregations, families, groups and individuals are invited to give a gift with lasting impact, providing basics for life to strengthen communities around the globe.

With gifts that have proven to form the core building blocks of an entire community, the special anniversary gift package provides three **care packages for moms and newborns**, three gifts of **clean water**, three **goats**, reforestation of **100 trees** and a **micro-credit loan and training** for a female entrepreneur. Additionally, with our matching gift campaign in November and December, all *Gifts for Life* gifts you purchase in honor of family and friends this holiday season can have twice the impact, helping our partners to alleviate hunger, promote health, create economic opportunities and respond to disasters in the communities they serve."

Episcopal Relief & Development's *Gifts for Life* catalog, available in the undercroft or online, features gifts from a \$12 mosquito net that provides training and follow-up to prevent malaria, to a \$5,000 village well that gives an entire community access to clean, safe water. *Gifts for Life* gifts are fully tax-deductible, and are a wonderful way to support the organization's life-giving work and share that impact with family and friends.

Giving a gift through *Gifts for Life* is one way to share with our friends and loved ones the sentiments of Paul when he writes, 'How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?' (1 Thess. 3:9) A gift from *Gifts for Life* is a gift of meaning for us, and a gift of meaningful change for those we serve. Your gift of a chicken, a garden or a water tank won't only

lead to lasting change for an individual or family now, it can have an impact for generations to come.

Another way to support Episcopal Relief & Development through holiday giving is with the organization's new Fair Trade Partnership with Equal Exchange. Equal Exchange offers fair trade, organic coffee, tea, chocolate and other products that benefit Episcopal Relief & Development (the organization receives 15 cents for each pound of product purchased) while benefiting smallholder farmers who grow their crops sustainably.

Please contact Episcopal Relief & Development at 1.855.312.HEAL (4325) or [info@episcopalrelief.org](mailto:info@episcopalrelief.org) with any questions about holiday giving opportunities that will create a lasting difference in nearly 40 countries worldwide.

*Episcopal Relief & Development works with more than 3 million people in nearly 40 countries worldwide to overcome poverty, hunger and disease through multi-sector programs that utilize local resources and expertise. An independent 501(c)(3) organization, Episcopal Relief & Development works closely with Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners to help communities rebuild after disasters and develop long-term strategies to create a thriving future. In 2015, the organization joins Episcopalians and friends in celebrating 75 Years of Healing a Hurting World.*

ERD coin boxes and envelopes are available in the sanctuary (in the basket under the table) and will be collected in late November.

**COFFEE'S ON!**

The Maine Sea Coast Mission cordially invites all MDI Senior Citizens to join them for Coffee, Conversation and Music every first and third Tuesday of the months during the winter. The first get togethers are **Tuesday, November 3 and 17 from 9:30 to 11:30 am** at the Colket Center, 127 West Street, Bar Harbor. Music will be provided by Ruth Grierson! Come, brings senior friends and neighbors and join the fun!

**SUNDAY FORUMS at 9:15**

- November 1 — 2016 Budget Discussion
- November 8 — *At Home*, Anne Welles
- November 15 — Worship Ministries
- November 22 — *Acadia Family Center*, Dan Johnson

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER**

**November 1, All Saints Day**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Psalm 24; Wisdom 3:1-9; Revelation 21:1-6a; John 11:32-44

The Rev. Timothy Fleck

**November 8, Pentecost 24**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Psalm 127; Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

The Rev. Kathleen Killian

**November 15, Pentecost 25**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Psalm 16; 1 Samuel 1:4-20; Hebrews 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-8

The Rev. Timothy Fleck

**November 22, Last Sunday after Pentecost**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Psalm 132:1-19; 2 Samuel 23:1-7; Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

The Rev. Kathleen Killian

**November 26, Thanksgiving Day**

**NO SERVICE**

**November 29, First Sunday in Advent**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Psalm 25:1-9; Jeremiah 33:14-16— 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

The Rev. Timothy Fleck

**December 6, Second Sunday in Advent**

8:00 and 10:00 a.m. — Holy Eucharist  
 Canticle 16; Baruch 5:1-9; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

The Rev. Timothy Fleck

**Thursdays at 12:00 p.m.—Holy Eucharist**

November 5 (William Temple)

November 12 (Gregory Palamas)

November 19 (Elizabeth of Hungary)

December 3 (Francis Xavier)



John and I would like to send a big heartfelt *thank you* to every one at the parishes of St. John and St. Saviour for all of your support, prayers, and good wishes for our wedding! You helped to make October 17<sup>th</sup> the beautiful and special day that it was, which we will always remember with affection. We are blessed to begin our new life together with all of you - again, our deep gratitude for your kindness and for sharing our joy!

In Christ,  
 Kathleen and John

