



The Epistle

October 2017

The Episcopal Church of St. James on the Parkway

A community growing in Christ, called to worship, learn, and serve.

Beloved Community

The Rev. William Heisley

Beloved Community. It's one of those phrases that sounds all warm and fuzzy. It's one of those phrases that has a bit of a churchy ring to it. One of those phrases that doesn't really mean that much.

I was a child and a teenager during the latter days of the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and I am sad that I remember little about him. And the one thing that I do remember is so sad. My father was outraged when our United Methodist pastor talked about Dr. King's assassination (April 4, 1968) in his Palm Sunday sermon on April 7, 1968. He believed that King was a rabble-rouser who should have been ignored, if not worse.

In my mind there was something very wrong about this.

Beloved Community was one of the key concepts of Dr. King's philosophy. Our pastor preached about building a Beloved Community but for many people, like my father, that idea was anathema. As if Jesus had not tried to build such a community himself.

On September 15 and 16 of this year the Episcopal Church in Minnesota met in its annual Convention, this year in Duluth. The theme of the Convention was Beloved Community. I didn't fully understand how deep, how broad that idea is, how deeply, how broadly we long for such community in the prayers we murmur and

in the all too frequent desperation that we feel.

Dr. King's Beloved Community was built upon the thinking of early 20th century philosopher/theologian Josiah Royce. It was not a utopian goal. For King, it was a realistic, achievable goal "that could be attained by a critical mass of people committed to and trained in the philosophy and methods of nonviolence."

I think of the Women's March of earlier this year. I think of NFL players "taking the knee" to protest the brutalization of African Americans in our country.

Beloved Community stands directly opposed to any form of violence: beatings, cursing, looting, demeaning, anything that denies the dignity of others.

Beloved Community does not deny that conflict will arise. It most assuredly will. But conflict can lead to destruction, or it can lead to resolution and ultimate redemption. Beloved Community is totally realistic in that rather than denying the differences that mark us as individuals and as individual communities, differences are seen as realities that can elevate our interactions to moments of growth and learning, of new understandings, of deeper celebrations of our common humanity.

We will be talking more about Beloved Community not only across ECMN this year but also at St. James on the Parkway. To learn more right now go to www.thekingcenter.org and have a look at "The King Philosophy."

And prepare to be enriched for the work that lies before us as believers in the Beloved Community to which Our Lord Jesus calls us.

This Sunday, October 1st

During the 10:30 service this Sunday we will not only be led by the youth in the first Youth Sunday of the season, but we will also witness an offering of praise given by a flautist. Don't miss this wonderful second Sunday of autumn!

But remember that the Parkway will be closed because of the Twin Cities Marathon. Leave extra time to get to St. James and plan your route accordingly.

The Bishop Is Coming!

We have learned only at the end of September that the Ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, the Right Rev. Brian N. Prior, will visit St. James on the Parkway on All Saints Sunday, November 5, 2017. Plan to be in Church that day, to participate in the Adult Forum, and to celebrate our unity with Episcopalians and Christians of every stripe across our beautiful state! And look for more information in our weekly e-letter.

Onè! Respe! (Honor! Respect!)

Haitian Friends Gear Up for Visit

By Susan Maas on behalf of the Haiti Committee

Plans are moving forward for a visit by four of our partners/friends this fall! Packets of support letters have been gathered and are in the hands of our friends and visa applicants. One final letter from Senator Franken will be added once the visa interview date has been set.

The prospective travelers interview together, even though each of the four might receive different results. In the past, people have received visas for different durations, from 3 months to 5 years! The process is tedious, but we're relentless.

This year, of course, we're less confident about the visas being approved. But Principal Louis Noncent remains optimistic as ever. He says that because of the expense, and the low percentage that are approved, fewer people are applying – which, he believes, increases our odds. We hope he's right! If things go well, we anticipate a visit in mid-October at the earliest.

Help us be good hosts

If your household might have an extra bed and the interest in hosting for a couple of days, please let us know! We'll provide help with interpretation, guidance regarding breakfast, and daytime/evening activities so you're only "on" in the morning and at bedtime. It's a relatively easy but wonderfully life-changing experience.

Or if you're potentially interested in helping out as a driver, or hosting a meal at your home, please speak to a Haiti Committee member: Louise Robinson, Kurt Hall, Ruth Anne Olson, Susan Maas, Liz Athorn, Mary Heltsley, Karen Murdock, or Fr. William. Please also share any ideas you have for activities during this visit: What outings/

experiences might our friends enjoy? What could we do together that will help give them a sense of what it's like to be a Minnesotan?

Minimal hurricane damage, for once!

Thankfully, Hurricane Irma only left minor damage in the area of our partnership. In fact, as Irma was approaching Florida, the Diocese of Haiti sent a message of wishes and prayers to everyone in Florida, hoping for modest damage as it crossed the state. That's a role reversal – we're usually offering up prayers for their safety! While we haven't heard concretely about Hurricane Maria, we believe impact was

minimal as well. Please pray for their continued safety, as the hurricane season is not over yet.

The Episcopal focus of Mission Opportunity 2015 was on the various Minnesota partnerships in Haiti. We raised \$4,500 for our partnership, funds which were set aside to build a "fence" around a portion of the school. This is common in Haiti because their schools are campuses that include several buildings, and they desire a fence for some privacy and security. Work on the fence was delayed last year because of the enormous hurricane relief efforts; they came to the fore this summer and the fence was built, along with a lovely new sign for the school.



From the Senior Warden Neal Cuthbert

Transition Happenings

In this Epistle you'll likely learn about a wide variety of activities that are going on – working with the other neighborhood churches on service, how our building assessment is proceeding, how our work in Haiti is moving forward, how the tri-faith group is continuing its exploration and work together – all great, incredible things that should make you feel proud of the great ministry of our parish. Our reach is often way beyond what a parish of our size generally accomplishes and it's a testament to the people and the leadership within our church. Because there's been such a whirl of events over the past several months, and things are going relatively well on the financial front, there's at least one big thing I haven't reported on for a while. And if you haven't guessed, it's the status of our dear transition priest, William, who has become a part of our community so easily and quickly that I forget that he's a transition priest, which when I remember honestly makes me kind of sad. So, what's up with the transition?

William has already been with us for a year. Hard to believe, but it's gone fast. From my own experience as Senior Warden and all reports from everyone else, things have been going really well. William has fallen in love with our quirky community, and he has been quickly embraced by the parish. Which has made it a gentle transition from Reverend Jim. Because we haven't talked about it, I know people have questions about what's the status of the transition. You'd like to know if we're looking for a permanent priest? Or if the diocese (Episcopal Church of Minnesota) has some-

thing to say? All great questions.

For the near term, meaning the next several months, the diocese is happy with the status quo, meaning that if we're happy with William, and he's happy with us, the diocese does not want to impose any artificial deadline on St. James. The vestry has enjoyed working with William and vice versa, so while we are considering all the decisions around our building and future in the months ahead, it makes sense to all of us that we continue with William until it makes sense, or is clear, that we should begin our search for a permanent priest.

A couple of people have asked whether William can become our permanent priest. It has not been the habit of the ECMN to allow transition priests to become permanent priests, but we have not broached this question with the ECMN. So, for the near term we will maintain our current status quo while we continue to figure things out.

The upcoming vestry retreat will be important in terms of setting direction in a general way, but even more important will be the next set of leaders on the vestry. Decisions about a permanent priest, our building, etc. will start with the next vestry so if you are interested in the direction of our parish, where it is going, being a part of these decisions coming up, please consider becoming part of the vestry. There will be a few slots open next year and your participation will be key to helping our community figure out our exciting and sustainable future.

From the Junior Warden Ted Gerold

MAP, Acorn2020 and the Future of SJOTP

About five years ago, Saint James on the Parkway embarked on a journey to our future. As a congregation, we recognized the challenges of maintaining our aging building, facilities and infrastructure in the face of a shrinking congregation. At the same time, we saw the value and passion behind our ministries and our desire to continue and enhance them. We resolved to make ministry our focus, without letting the challenges of our infrastructure hold us back. We decided to be proactive and seek answers to the inevitable questions facing us.

We started with the Mission Assessment Process (MAP) to identify and prioritize the interests and passions surrounding our ministries. Congregational meetings were

held, with much discussion, brainstorming and dreaming. From these efforts came Acorn2020, a concept and committee that took the mass of MAP information, considered all ideas and condensed them into the most viable options for ministry. The outgrowth from Acorn2020 includes our continued relationship with and support of the community of Bon Nouvelle in Haiti; support for the Minnehaha Food Shelf through our community garden and other food donations; the emerging Tri-Faith Initiative; Nokomis Serves, a ministry co-op with our local partner churches, as well as other ministries.

Continued on page 4

MAP, Acorn2020 and the Future of SJOTP

Continued from page 3

In order to thoughtfully address our challenges, it was decided to engage professionals to help us to understand the state of our building and infrastructure. McDonald & Mack Architects was chosen by the vestry from four proposals to provide an assessment. The work started in mid-September and we should have a draft report by mid-October for vestry review. A presentation will be made to the congregation in a November meeting, likely at 9:30 between services. This information will guide vestry recommendations and congregation decisions about the future direction of our worship and ministries.

Community Garden Celebration October 8!

The community garden continues its success story. Volunteers have spent many hours building, planting and maintaining the garden. Produce is harvested and donated to the Minnehaha Food Shelf at Minnehaha United Methodist Church, and production has far surpassed projections. There will be a harvest celebration on Sunday October 8th following the 10:30 service. At the end of the service, we will process from the church out to the garden for a blessing and potluck picnic celebration. Activities will include contests to name the garden and guess the total pounds donated, as well as crafts. On October 14th, the garden will be closed down and prepped for wintering. Volunteers are needed for this important event. Many thanks to all volunteers and supporters of this wonderful ministry.

Whatever Happened to That Acorn2020? Nokomis Serves (among other things)!

by Louis Hoffman

Four initiatives came out of the ACORN/2020 process: the Abrahamic Tri-Faith initiative; closer collaboration with our neighborhood partners, Lake Nokomis Lutheran and Minnehaha United Methodist; a complete review of the Parish's finances by the Finance Committee and Treasurer; and a complete analysis of the property by architects and engineers arranged by the Junior Warden and Property Committee. All of these are underway, you've heard something about all of them, you'll hear more about them, and they'll no doubt be the talk of the October 14 Vestry retreat.

One initiative that's underway that's a bit under the radar is Nokomis Serves. You may have noticed a nifty little brochure on the table in the Narthex if you were in church on Sunday. If you were and didn't or weren't please look for them, take one, and read it carefully. You may remember that the core of Nokomis Serves is pooling the service ministries at Lake Nokomis Lutheran, Minnehaha United Methodist, and St. James to let all three churches do a better job of service to our community. As we settle into our

fall routines, maybe this brochure will help you decide how you and your family can serve our community?

So what is Nokomis Serves? One of the things that we noticed in talking to our friends at LNL and MUM is that our service ministries look pretty similar. There are things that we already work on together like the Minnehaha Food Shelf. And there are things that multiple churches do. So the thought was to put together a committee, publish this brochure, and create a website and spread the word via social media in an effort to give members of all three churches – and others in the community interested in service – the opportunity to do more service and do it better.

A few examples: We struggle to meet our commitment to the First Nations Kitchen at All Saints Episcopal Mission. Certainly there are some people at LNL and MUM who might want to help us? We know that there are folks at LNL and MUM who are interest in our Haiti partnership. Similarly, there are things that we used to do that we don't because no one organizes it but that some of us are still interested in. This includes Loaves and Fishes, Simpson House dinners, and



Simpson House sandwiches – that our partners do. Nokomis Serves gives St. Jamesians who want to be involved in these ministries the opportunity to do so without having to organize it simply by doing it with our neighborhood churches.

St. Jamesians who serve on this committee are Kurt Hall, Sue Maas, and Anne Scheible. Anne, it should be noted, agreed to organize the first meeting but has also been chairing the group since its inception. Not what she signed up for! She'd like to step aside. So if you're interested in Nokomis Serves, especially if you're social media savvy because that's the next phase, please give her a call.

Youth Activities Update

Youth Sunday: 1st Sunday of the the month

Sunday School: 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

Youth Choir and Youth Sundays

Youth Sunday will be the first Sunday of the month. In October that's this Sunday, October 1. Liz Athorn is coordinating both Youth Choir and readers for Youth Sunday. Liz's plan is to have rehearsals after church from 12:00 - 12:30 PM. Look for a detailed calendar of youth events in the weeks ahead for the full year.

Sunday School

Sunday School will be on the second and fourth Sundays of the month. In October that's October 8 and 22. Anne Sween and Karin Spencer are teaching Sunday School. Louis Hoffman will assist during ski season when Karin's teaching skiing.

Bread and Pizza Oven

This may be a dumb idea. But given the centrality to hospitality of our faith and the popularity of pizza in our culture, why not build a bread and pizza oven in our lawn? We have reason to believe that there are at least two people in the Parish very interested in the idea. We also have reason to believe that ECMN

might help fund it as a community engagement and hunger ministries project. We know that Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and Hamline United Methodist Church in St. Paul have bread and pizza ovens. So we can learn from their experience. We already provide fresh produce to the Minnehaha

Food Shelf. Why not bread? Surely there are other ministries that need bread with which we have a connection? First Nations Kitchen? Simpson House sandwiches? And while the oven's hot, why not pizza on the lawn for the Parish and neighbors?





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