



# ***THE BEACON***

*THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH*  
**November, 2009**

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## **Every Sunday**

8:00a Holy Eucharist  
9:15a Church School  
9:30a Service w/ Eucharist  
and music

## ***Father Bill's Message***

Thinking about Thanksgiving

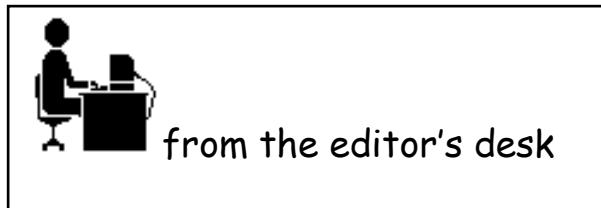
The writer of Psalm 52 states, "I will always thank you, God, for what you have done; in the presence of your people I will proclaim that you are good." Can you imagine feeling so happy that you thought you might burst? Maybe you were going to visit a friend in another state whom you hadn't seen in years. Or maybe you had just purchased a new home or car. Maybe you were up and about following a major illness that had sidelined you for months, and at long last the doctor had pronounced you cured. Now, tell me: did the Lord God make these happy moments possible? Should you thank God for them? The answer according to the psalmist is "Yes"! He promised always to thank God. That should be our promise too. Thanksgiving is far more than remembering the Pilgrims and Native Americans sitting down to eat a meal together as I and many of you were taught in elementary school. It's about giving thanks to GOD! In our private prayer time, we must show appreciation for God's goodness to us.

But there's more: the psalmist also says, "...in the presence of your people I will proclaim that you are good." To tell others about what God does for us (as several speakers did throughout October) is to offer testimony, to state that what we know in our lives about God is true. When we who call ourselves Christians get together, we often share how we have perceived God's presence, or how God has

answered our prayer, and even how God has given us the insight to solve a vexing problem in our lives. When we do this we are declaring the goodness of God, and showing forth our love for God in return. As a result, fellow believers find their faith strengthened, and non-believers begin to ponder God's existence.

As Thanksgiving Day approaches this November, please resolve to always thank God in private prayer, and to publicly share times of God's providence.

*Fr. Bill*



One of the better kept secrets of St. Stephen's is the existence of the Saturday morning Men's Group which meets two times a month from 8:00– 9:30am. We enjoy a light breakfast provided by a member, followed by a brief moment of worship then spend the rest of the time in discussion. Lately we have been discussing things that have attracted our attention from current readings in the pamphlet *Forward Day by Day*. (Available in the tract rack in the hallway). This pamphlet covers a 3-month period with a different writer for each month. Sometimes the writer is a clergy person, sometimes a lay person, some have even been written by a seminarian. The writings are not preachy; often they are reflections on a person's observations based on the Bible readings that accompany each entry.

If the above sounds like a pitch for Men's group and *Forward Day by Day*, you're absolutely right. Those of us who attend Men's Group regularly enjoy the time of fellowship. I

have found it to be a great lead-in for Sunday worship.

Let me share with you an observation I have made based on an October entry in *Forward Day by Day*. A man sent to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina was describing some of the ways FEMA would be helping. He mentioned that one of the ways would be by using IBB. When asked what the letters stood for, he replied, "Itty bitty boats," small craft that could hold only one or two people and go where large craft could not venture.

My first thought was with the huge number of people who needed rescuing, why bother with IBB. My second thought was how important an IBB would be to those one or two folks who got rescued. I'm sure we have all seen these small craft on flooded streets, taking people stranded on roof tops and other places.

The writer then goes on to say that God frequently uses IBB's, and that we have to be ready for them. Too often we think that God works only in big ways, but if we increase our awareness of our surroundings, we would be surprised at how often God arrives in an IBB and enters our lives in an unheralded way.

On recollection, I can think of several times when God appeared in an IBB, many related to quiet times I spent fishing. There was the sudden appearance of an owl who flew out of the woods at Chauncy Pond. There was the sudden burst on sunlight on a cloudy day. There was that glorious autumn morning on a camping weekend in Oakham. The lake was completely still; and the trees in full autumn display reflected in the water, a mirror image of the trees at the edge of the water.

I try to be on the lookout for God's IBB moments and realize that life is full of them if we just care to look. Is this a variant of "stop and smell the roses"? Probably, but I prefer to think of it as a visit from God in an IBB.

Peace,  
Frp

Addendum: My computer just crashed and I was afraid I had lost my whole column, but thanks to Autosave, when I rebooted, everything was on the screen. An IBB, no doubt!



## Bulletin Board

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, November 16, at 7:00pm. All vestry meetings are open to the entire parish. Parishioners wishing to include items on the agenda are asked to contact one of the wardens or the rector no later than two (2) weeks before the meeting. Vestry meeting agendas and minutes will be regularly posted on the bulletin board between Fay Hall and the narthex.

- \* **Are you among the missing?** Heartfelt thanks to all our family members who have made their commitment for 2010. I add my personal thanks for the willing volunteer canvassers who have made my job real easy. Just a few commitments are missing and if you are among them, please make an extra effort to put that right today. We had set October 31<sup>st</sup> as the final deadline and that was yesterday. It's hard on your canvasser if we must keep following up with you and we will!  
*Tim Moss, EMC Chair*
- \* *Michael Bakshi*, son of *Ruth Beck*, will be leaving us next Sunday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, as he enlists in military service. We'll have prayers for him that day to ask God to keep him safe wherever he may be sent in the world.
- \* *Fr. Bill* and *Gail* will be leaving for the Poconos after the Thanksgiving dinner on November 26<sup>th</sup>. They'll return on

Wednesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. The *Rev. Dr. Bob Gallagher* will be our guest officiant at both services on Sunday, November 29<sup>th</sup>.

- \* For almost forty years, **Thanksgiving Dinner** has been served to more than 100 of **Westborough's seniors** at the Knights of Columbus Hall.

The Westborough Interfaith Clergy Association sponsors the dinner, and each year a different church or temple provides the coordination. This year, *St. Stephen's* is coordinating the dinner with help from the Unitarian Church. The dinner will be held on **Thursday, November 26<sup>th</sup>** from 11:30 to 1:30 at the K of C on Willow Street.

The dinner is a great activity for family involvement. Help is needed for baking desserts, joining the seniors at the dinner as a host family, delivering meals to those that are home-bound and the always popular clean up!

Please save the date; check the bulletin for further information and sign up to volunteer on the sign up sheet in Fay Hall. Questions? Call *George Barrette* at (508)898-2513

- \* Because *Fr. Bill* will be away on November 29<sup>th</sup>, the fifth Sunday of the month, we will have the **scheduled Taizé service** one week earlier, i.e., **November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 9:30 AM.**
- \* The **children of the church school** will be leading worship on **Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, at the 9:30 AM service.** They'll read the scriptures and lead the prayers of the people. Please try to be here on that particular Sunday to support their efforts.
- \* Just to reiterate, below is a breakdown of the financial returns for the Fall Fair:

Craft Table	\$1000
Baked Goods	\$449
Yard Sale	\$566

Lunch/Food	\$612
Jewelry	\$193
Baskets	\$385
Kids	\$56
Xmas Table	\$95
Books	\$87
	<hr/>
	\$3443

We did have a number of items which were unsold so **we are planning on having a “gift bazaar” early in December** for those of you who might like to do some early Christmas shopping...AND, if you're like me and love to sew and do crafts, we welcome any and all new contributions to the sale table. Once again, thanks to everyone who made our fair such a huge success.

*Sharyn Philcox*

- ★ We have instituted diocesan guidelines regarding the H1N1 pandemic. Alcohol gel will be used by the rector and LEMs as the bread and wine are consecrated and distributed. Gel can also be found in the narthex next to the bulletins so that parishioners can wipe their own hands.
- ★ **Let's fix *Don Shapleigh's* “little red wagon”** by donating canned goods and non-perishables for the **Westborough food pantry**. The country is experiencing a significant increase in the number of families who need help putting food on the table. You can be sure that your donations will be appreciated and put to good use. If you have questions about what is needed, please see *Don Shapleigh*.

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## CONNECTIONS

“To get a better look at connecting resonances, consider a great lake, very still in early morning. Beside it are two stones. ‘Love’ walks by and picks up the two stones, tossing them in the water – one into the left side of the lake and the other into the right. Although the impact of hitting cool water was exhilarating, the two stones felt momentarily lost. The

perception of eddies expanding through the water was most enjoyable, albeit a lonely pursuit. Then all of a sudden, the eddies of one stone crossed paths with the eddies of the other. In a burst of joy, each stone realized that the other had been found. At last, they were in communion once more, although now with greater assurance, for they knew how to know each other in spirit. With that certainty, they can never be lost again.”

This passage is from *Love Without End* by Glenda Green, p.149. While it may be difficult to conceive of stones having connections, that is what the Divine Matrix is all about. Everything, living and innate, has connections because we are all part of the same energy field. Some of us have perfected communications in this way better than others. Some of us are still learning.

Understanding connections is important for us, because losing connections can mean a separation from God. “Most people live within circles of spirit that provide them with brotherhood and comfort.” (p.151) The cause and effect of the lesson “As you sow, so shall you reap”, can be expanded to become a complete circle where “the large shall nourish the small, and the small shall empower the large. If you would wish to have peace in your own life, then pray and work for peace on earth.” (p.152)

If we can believe that all action should come from love, and we believe that love is good, how do we explain evil in our world. ‘First Good and evil are not opposites any more than sickness and health are opposites. Evil is the absence of love. Sickness is the absence of health. Neither evil nor sickness has power in and of itself. We consciously act from love. It is our choice. When we choose not to act from love, evil acts and thoughts can occur. The same is true for wellness. We choose to act in ways to promote wellness – not smoking, not abusing drugs, exercising...all are choices to promote health.

I am prompted to write this because of the article in the Boston Sunday *Globe* of October 11, 2009. In an interview with Barbara Ehrenreich by Jenna Russell, the positive thinking movement is severely attacked. I think Barbara misses the point. She admits that she has a rational mind, which, I guess, means that she spends little time in the spiritual world or expanding her right brain experiences. Some of her criticisms are real. But to judge actions of some who are working to put themselves in a better place, is a risky business. She wants to have doubts, well that is OK. We all have doubts about tomorrow's weather. But we do not have doubts about what is good.

And I agree with her that "Joe the plumber" (of 2008 presidential campaign fame) had little chance to earn \$250,000. I am not sure his dream is as a result of his subscribing to a positive thinking experience. At least not the ones I am familiar with. My experiences have healthy doses of realism in them.

I do recognize her doubts about certain efforts to support cancer patients. Some are going to die sooner than expected. But to criticize support groups because they "infantilize women or make them "feel guilty for 'failing' to heal themselves" is pretty strong. Most people I know who have experiences cancer and gone through support groups are positive. Of course, the ones I spoke with survived. The others may have a different take.

I have introduced Matrics Energetics in these articles. That is healing through command of energy. Jesus healed people. We know the story of the woman who touched his cloak and was healed. Jesus felt her touch, sought her out and told her "your faith has made you well." If Barbara is confusing healing through ME with positive thinking seminars, she misses the point here as well.

Positive outcomes do not necessarily come from positive thinking. But negative thinking

has no winners. Negative thinking comes from intolerance and judgment, neither of which comes from love.

*Marsha Platt*

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### Prayerful Notes

It was a beautiful fall morning, as I dashed out the door, my errand list in hand and headed for an appointment in Northborough. I had taken a right by the courthouse on to Rt. 135 and had only gone a short distance, when the car in front of me suddenly stopped. They did not pull over to the side of the road. After a minute or so they did put on their emergency flashers but still remain stopped. I looked at my watch impatiently, as I wondered what was going on. There was a steady flow of traffic on the other side of the road. When it finally cleared, I saw what the problem was, two beautiful wild turkeys, not crossing the road, just standing in the middle! The driver finally was able to drive around them. Now they were directly in front of my car. They were quite comical, just standing there cocking their heads, looking as perplexed with me, as I was with them. When traffic cleared again on the other side, I also drove around them. I am sure this scenario was repeated with each of the 5 or 6 cars behind me.

I think sometimes God gives us these little interruptions in life, as a way of getting our attention.

As many of you know, I have a fascination with these large, beautiful birds. Seeing them again just seemed to lighten my mood, slow down my pace and give me a heightened awareness of the beauty all around me. Perhaps God sent them into our world to teach us, by the power of example, that we need to slow down and live our lives in the moment.

It really is a gift to live in New England, especially at this time of the year. I recently began a walking routine again. It feels so good to be out in the cool fresh autumn air, to feel the crunch of the leaves under my feet and to really look at the beauty all around me.

Life is hectic and it will become more so as we merge into the holiday season. It takes awareness and a conscious effort to slow down and really savor the moments of our lives but when we do, we draw closer to God.

Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Blessings Always

*Phyl Endicott*

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. *James 4: 8*

Included in this issue of the *Beacon* is the text of the stewardship witness given by *Libby Fox*. Future issues will feature the talks given *Bud Swanson* and *Marla Farrow*.

Good Morning! I am Libby Roll Fox.

I am very close to Tim and Liz Moss and if it weren't for Tim asking me to speak today I would not be here. You are IT, Tim - you owe me! I think it is breakfast.

Seriously, I love St. Stephen's. I am the eldest of 5 children raised in Southern Indiana as an Episcopalian. I started dating Mark (the boy next door and my husband of 35 years) when I was 15. When we graduated from college, Mark received job offers from the East coast, West and Texas - nothing from the Midwest.

My maternal grandparents grew up in Fairhaven and New Bedford. After my grandfather received his Doctorate from Harvard he moved his young bride west to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio where my existence began. I was always curious about the East so Mark and I elected to accept a job in

Westborough. I thought the adventure would last a few years. Was I ever naïve - our first winter was the blizzard of '78.

After Natalie was born in 1982, I had a serious conversation with Mark. We were a thousand miles away from family. We needed an extended family to raise our children and I wanted them raised in a Christian environment. We began Church shopping with St. Stephen's being the first. I walked through these doors with my baby girl - received such welcoming and support that we have never left.

I have discovered that life is a journey and St. Stephen's is my compass navigating me through joy, trials and sorrow.

I want to share a few poignant moments with you.

1) One Saturday after we moved into our house that we built, the door bell rang. I opened the door to Father Jack standing on the steps. "Hi - I've come to see your new house." There I was with paint clothes on, paint brush in hand and paint all over my face. He skips past me and climbs the stairs two at a time. runs throughout the upstairs and then lands in the foyer with me still paint brush in hand, mouth wide open. I said "Well, Father Jack to the left of you is our empty living room. He said "Oh no, this is your SOMEDAY ROOM! Do you know with that one phrase he turned EMPTINESS for me into something MAGICAL. Everyone needs a SOMEDAY ROOM!

2) One Sunday when Natalie was an acolyte and I a LEM, we were in

the vestibule visiting with choir, etc. Peg MacMillan (who at the time was Head of Altar Guild and Acolytes) speaks up loudly "Natalie, stand up straight, don't put your hands on the brass that has just been polished !" She then goes up to Natalie to straighten her robe and cross. I speak up "Peg!" She turns to me bewildered "What? She's mine - I raised her as an acolyte - she knows better." (Aside - Peg and I were close friends and as the years evolved became confidants.) After the service, as we were unrobing I asked Natty if Peg's comments bothered her. The last thing I wanted was to get my teenager refusing to come back to church. Natalie looks up at me as she's hanging her robe "Oh Mommy...Peg is just being Peg! You know I WILL ALWAYS LOVE HER!" DNA runs in families. Last month I was an acolyte and catching up on everyone's summer. Diane Barrette, Peg's daughter, tapped me on my shoulder and said "Libby, do you plan on watering the carpet with wax?" I responded, "Oh sorry, Diane." Diane, I love you too! I am with my Natty on this family of yours.

3) When Natalie was in the Confirmation process she asked Beverly Boyer to be her Sponsor. Part of the curriculum at the time was visiting other denominations. Natty chose the Methodist church partly because her Father was raised Methodist, but I really think it was because she had many friends as members. We made arrangements to meet one beautiful October Sunday. Natalie and I stood on the steps of the church greeting

Methodist members as they entered. Everyone was so hospitable - Natalie's friends giving her high fives. Bev arrived and we entered the church sat in the back because of unease only to be singled out as guests and given little brass crosses that I still have on my St. Stephen's name tag. Upon leaving the church and saying our goodbyes to Bev, Natalie speaks up, "Wow some awesome church - I want to start going to this church!" The look on Bev's face was horrific - I could only imagine what was going through her mind. I turned to Natty and stated, "Your Father and I have agreed to raise you as an Episcopalian and Bev has agreed to be your sponsor - once you are confirmed you will be an adult in my eyes for religious purposes and you can then make your own decision on how you want to practice your faith. Do you understand me?" "Yes, Mommy." We have a happy ending. To date she has not defected. THANK YOU LORD!

I haven't begun to fit Sarah (my miracle baby) nor Mark into this session. That is for another time.

St. Stephen's? I came to you for help to raise my family while I was 1,000 miles away from blood family and we DID IT! THANK YOU!

We have sent them out into the world with conviction and a solid Christian love and understanding. It is now up to them as to how they will use it. As for me - I remain with you - and always your humble servant.

Amen.