



# Holy Trinity Hillcrest

## News Letter July 2015

*The strategic planning meeting we held recently established growing the church as an objective for the parish. There will be more details published about this in due course but for now this is an interesting article published in Anglican's Online. It gives an interesting perspective on Evangelism and Growing the church in the Anglican (Episcopalian) church in the USA.*

### What Will It Take to Double Our Size? Musings About Evangelism

*The Revd Pierre W. Whalon*

The 2000 General Convention passed an ambitious goal: to double the size of the Episcopal Church by 2020. The next several columns will ask what it will take to accomplish this so-called 20/20 Vision.

While it is obvious that planting new churches and recruiting a new generation of clerics are important to the realization of this goal, the first issue to mull over is evangelism. While many have labelled the "Decade of Evangelism" a failure, it did at least succeed in making the "e-word" part of Episcopalians' vocabulary.

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer makes us promise God, every time we baptize someone, to evangelize: to share by word and example the Good News of God in Christ (BCP 306). For a lot of reasons, doing that is very intimidating. First, there is presently a cultural taboo in America about mentioning that one is a church-goer. It is tantamount in many circles to admitting to some weird private fetish. So some people like to say that others can see Christ in the way they live their lives, and that is sufficient. Other Episcopalians will say that talk is cheap, and that their work in some good cause is enough to keep their baptismal promise. Still other Episcopalians, converts from certain other churches, are grateful for the relative silence about evangelism. They shudder to recall the manipulative threats of damnation that accompanied their birth church's understanding and practice of evangelism.

Evangelism is not church growth, with which it is often confused. Church growth is about numbers, and there are many proven techniques to help churches grow, mostly by helping them do a better job of "marketing" themselves and welcoming newcomers. Evangelism on the other hand is about relationships—relationships among ourselves, people around us, and Jesus. Effective evangelism should result in increased numbers, to be sure. But if we charge into evangelism programs in order to double the Episcopal Church, we will fail. For evangelism is about fulfilling the baptismal covenant, a promise made to God about other people.

Archbishop William Temple, commenting on John 1:42, remarked that Andrew did the best thing anyone can do for another: he introduced someone, namely his brother Simon, to Jesus. That is evangelism, nothing more, nothing less. This implies a simple analogue of evangelism: introducing someone to your best friend.

If we began to conceive of evangelism as "introducing someone to our best friend," it might seem less threatening. After all, we surely have at least one person in the world with whom we are very close: a best friend. This person could be a spouse, a member of the family, or someone else. He or she is someone with whom you speak regularly, whose company you look forward to enjoying, with whom you share a profound intimacy. As we get to know someone new, eventually it becomes natural to introduce that person to our best and closest friend. Indeed, if we are to make a new friend, that person eventually has to come to know about our relationship with our best friend.

Isn't this a clear parallel to what Archbishop Temple described as the best thing one person can do for another? After all, we speak regularly with Jesus, sense the presence of the Trinity in our lives, and share our profoundest thoughts and feelings with God. Not to mention the intimacy of sharing the Holy Eucharist. Can we not say to ourselves that Jesus Christ is indeed our closest and best friend? It would follow, then, that we should, when appropriate, introduce him to other people.

This metaphor can help clarify what sound healthy evangelism looks and feels like. First of all, we do not immediately introduce new people in our lives to our best friend. There is a process of getting to know the new person in order to respect both the relationship with the best friend and the new person. When the time is right, we find a way to bring the two people together. Second, we do not try to manipulate the new person into becoming friends with our best friend, unless we are emotionally ill. Third, if the other two people do not hit it off, we still have a best friend, and perhaps a new

friend.

What this means is that we are not to attempt to convert others. There is to be no significant emotional payoff for bringing people to Jesus, other than the satisfaction of a promise kept. What if Simon Peter and Jesus had not hit it off? What would have been the result for Andrew? Can we see Andrew threatening his brother with damnation, or giving Jesus a "high five" for getting Simon Peter into the fold? Of course not.

Evangelism is not results-oriented. It is simply a matter of hoping to start new relationships. All healthy people make acquaintances, some of whom become friends. Then at some point, like introducing them to your best friend, we decide that it is appropriate to move forward. The best way is not to talk about church, but about our best friend and what that friendship means to us personally. People love to hear personal stories, if they know that their own stories will have a respectful listener in return. If they want to know more, then for it is probably time to invite them to church.

Of the approximately 100,000,000 Americans who are nominal Christians but have not darkened a church door for six months or more, only 25% will ever receive one or more invitations to attend a church, according to a recent study. Of these, only one in seven will accept. Going to a new church for these people is a nerve-wracking experience, even with a friend. Of those who finally do go, only one-half will return a second time. In a recent Episcopal News Service report about the February 2001 Executive Council meeting, Bishop Catherine Roskam is quoted as having said that Episcopalians invite another person to church every 38 years. For Episcopalians, it seems to be as nerve-wracking an experience to extend an invitation as it is for those who accept!

The best way to extend this invitation is probably not to propose attending a liturgy, but rather some other event or program. This should reduce the anxiety factor for both parties. In this writer's parish, people can be invited to a monthly dinner party, a weekday dinner at church, a number of home study groups, lay-led classes, support groups, a Habitat for Humanity group, a soup kitchen, a mother's day out program, a day school, classical and jazz concerts, a teen music and drama group, a youth group, and scouting, besides four weekly church services. Most congregations offer a variety of these entry points. One excellent resource among many is 'Church Growth and the Power of Evangelism', by Howard Hanchey (Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1990). Hanchey emphasizes the importance of deep respectful listening to the other as part of every person's evangelism.

Whether we really want to double the size of the Episcopal Church or not, then clearly evangelism training for every Episcopalian, as defined above, is a crucial part of Christian education for all ages. While increasing the number of visitors is critical both to new churches and existing parishes, effective evangelism will not focus on the numerical goal, but rather sharing Christ with no other agenda than the sheer joy of knowing him and making him known. This should increase our numbers, and it may well increase the numbers of other churches as well.

If an Episcopalian introduces someone to our Best Friend, and that person becomes, say, a committed Baptist, that Episcopalian has successfully kept the baptismal covenant.

The last point to make about this approach to evangelism is that it pre-supposes that we do in fact consider God in Christ to be like unto that closest, most intimate person in our lives. Each of us needs to ask ourselves deeply and honestly, "What do you think of the Christ?" When we have an answer to that question, then we are ready to make and keep the covenant of Baptism, including the imperative to evangelize.



### *Four reasons why evangelism is most effective when done through the local church*

#### ***What you see is what you get***

The local church is the centre of evangelism and is therefore the best place where people who have accepted Christ into their lives can be taken care of spiritually and also become familiar with its environment and what is expected of them as Christians. Here Christians get to know each other and connect on various levels.

#### ***The local church mobilises a whole army of evangelists***

The local church consists of a variety of talented and gifted individuals who may not necessarily know that they even have these gifts in the first place. The church therefore helps believers to identify these gifts and equips them best to use these gifts for the benefit and purposes of serving the Lord and His people in "...ministry of evangelism".

#### ***The local church context is friendship based***

Through the local church friendships are formed within. These friendships then form other possibilities for friendships outside church by people being invited to attend church which in turn is fulfilling the concept of evangelism.

#### ***The local church is the centre for renewal and transformation***

The local church through its contact with the community can bring about effective change because they understand and respond to the needs of their community and can therefore engage and effect transformation and renewal.

Extracted from Nicky Gumbel's : "How to run an Alpha Course" and quoted in TEEC Practical Theology course material.  
Submitted by Jennifer Lavender

# Winter warmth continues

*The ladies of the Morning Women's Fellowship share their experience from their excursion to 1000 Hills Community Centre where they handed out the winter outfits they had put together.*

Praise the Lord! Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015, was a beautiful, sunny Winters day (the day before we had experienced gale force winds!) - thus it was a perfect day for the planned outing, of the Morning Women's Fellowship, to 1000 Hills Community Centre at Inchanga. Our group numbered 30 - which included members, several obliging spouses, EWG members: Lynette Reynolds & Brigit Ramsden and visitor Dulcie Blackbeard. As scheduled, we set out in convoy at 9.15 a.m.

What a wonderful experience this visit proved to be and meeting Dawn Leppan, the founder of the Community Centre, was so very special. She has built it up over many years and it provides an exceptional service and sanctuary for our African brothers and sisters. The Clinic copes, on a daily basis, with many, many ill patients needing attention, each one receiving a meal whilst there.

The various Creches were so special – the children sang their little songs, bringing tears to many an eye. The Baby Wing was so endearing with a row of little babies, all fast asleep, lying on a mattress on the floor, with their little heads peeping out of the long communal blanket – just so cute! As Jean Hull said – “we didn't hear a child cry or grizzle during the whole visit” – absolutely amazing!

After handing over 70 children's jerseys and trousers, blankets, gloves, babies clothes, sweets etc to Dawn Leppan, our group thanked her for a memorable visit and proceeded to the “G-Spot” Restaurant at Cato Ridge Electrical where Sherry, Nan and staff provided us all with tea/coffee and delicious fresh muffins and sandwiches. The factory garden, with a variety of beautiful Aloes, Succulents and Cycads, was stunning – a most fitting end to our happy outing.

My grateful thanks to all our members for knitting the beautiful little jerseys and for purchasing the colour co-ordinated tracksuit trousers for the children of the Creches – it is most gratifying to know that they will be warm and cosy this winter. God bless you all. ANN MAUD CHAIRPERSON

I was both amazed and humbled when I visited the 1000 Hills Community Development project together with the Morning Women's Fellowship Group and other members of Holy Trinity's congregation.

317 Pre-schoolers attend from tiny babies to Grade R. All are given breakfast and lunch with snacks inbetween.

The 'baby room,' is large and comfortable with 3 ladies in attendance. Babies are provided with formula and even nappies.

There are different classes to accommodate different age groups from toddlers to Grade R with two or three teachers/teacher aids for class.

According to a time table, all are kept happy and busy -playing on climbing equipment, scooters, lego, puzzles books, colouring in, singing etc. etc. The Grade R's brought tears to our eyes when they sang "It's Love that makes the World go Round".

In addition there are approximately 50 primary school children who attend the After Care; also receiving a sandwich, a piece of fruit and something to drink to tide them over before going home.

It is hard to believe that in the school holidays, the staff provide holiday care for about 1000 children from the primary school.

Ms Leppan is presently trying to obtain the use of some adjacent vacant land so as to give these children a playground.

A very busy community medical clinic is held on 5 days a week. Various medical professionals give of their time and expertise on a regular basis.

I also observed computer instruction being given to young adults, as well as some Gogas being taught how to deal with children who have special needs.

Ms Dawn Leppan is indeed much to be admired and congratulated on her achievement which she began in 1989. Margaret Fiene



*It is not often that we see where miracles are taking place. But on June 18<sup>th</sup> on our trip out to 1000 Hills Community Centre we certainly saw where miracles happen all the time.*

*I found the whole experience overwhelming and at times quite tearful. The whole area of the classrooms – clinic are so clean and well cared for that you just realise this can only be accomplished with love. Two classrooms of children combined and sang to us. Denise Couzens said “wouldn't Fr Gary just love that volume on Sunday mornings”!! Jean Hull*





## Did you know:

Messy church is active in the following countries: Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Denmark, Eire, Germany, Grenada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Falklands and the USA.

The June Messy Church marked the first time I was seriously involved in Messy church. I realised that what was involved in planning and presenting Messy Church was more than met the eye. The concept is deceptively simple but the execution requires careful planning because time is critical. It is 5 o'clock when we start and the younger children will become crabby if we run too late and with young children you need to keep them occupied all the time or else they get restless.

We are starting a series of meetings based on heroes of the Bible. I was grateful that I had realised in advance that children are more impressed by the superheroes like Superman and Spiderman than human heroes like Noah. Nevertheless they seemed to listen attentively and respond with questions or answers where appropriate. The craft table helpers were run off their feet trying to complete the fiddly but amazing crafts. I am amazed at the creativity of people who can turn paper plates (for example) into zebra face masks or the same paper plates into chicken face masks.

I really hope the children enjoyed the evening as much as I did because I certainly had fun. Harold Walker



## BITS AND PIECES!



*Jesus told us to*

*make disciples, not decisions.* - John Pereira

*We talk of the Second Coming; half the world has never heard of the first.* - Oswald J. Smith

*Christ died for all men not just the ones you know and like.* - Anonymous

### July

03-Nick Railston-Brown  
04-Keith van Eeden  
05-David Tayfield  
05-Rosemary Greaves  
06-Margaret Fleming  
06-Gloria Rhodes

07-Jaqui Maryon  
08-Thembela Hlongwa  
09-Michele Serfontein  
11-Alan Watt  
12-Colin Watt  
12-Nola Kumm  
12-Maureen Cheshire  
14-Julia Evans  
15-Cheryl Stockland  
17-David Lyon  
18-Jenny Sander

18-Lynette Reynolds  
20-Eddie Reynolds  
22-Frank Chatterton  
22-Peter Porter  
23-Wendy Udall  
24-Elizabeth Shepherd  
24-Rosemary Combes  
25-Denise Couzens  
26-Jo Evennett  
26-Rose Owen  
28-John Woodcock



**Paddy Hollingsworth  
Joan Sheppard**



04-Ann & Graham Gibson  
04-Christine & Brian Blows  
09-Pam & Eckton Skinner  
09-Rose & Willi Scherzer  
10-Michele & Serf Serfontein  
11-Jill & Robin Saunderson

13-Julia & Anthony Evans  
19-June & Brian Kear  
19-Pam & Thembela Hlongwa  
26-Gloria & Keith van Eeden

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