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ALPHA 8 OMEGA

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VISIONS OF A VICAR

We are in the middle of the dog days of summer. However, I am not finding much evidence of the living being easy. The laid-back lazies have eluded me one more season. But when there is some down time, Stephen and I go fishing--have yet to catch the "big one" -- but what we lack in quantity of fish, we make up in the peace and serenity that come from fishing on South Dakota prairie lakes. We agreed some time ago that when we go on our fishing journeys, we wouldn't talk shop. That is difficult at times, particularly when much is going on in our various cures, but for the most part, we keep to that bargain and simply enjoy each other's company and the incredible beauty of God's creation.

Much of the time we sit in silence, watching the bobber, or a family of Western Grebes, or listen to the cacaphony of whistles, chirps, honks, and the voice of the ever-present wind speaking poetry through the trees. Very often I forget to watch the bobber and instead, become engrossed in the patterned activity of the grebes as they incessantly call to one another with a high pitched voice that echoes through the underbrush and then dive and play as they round up their various charges as the sun sets. Birds, two by two, play house and the silence is once again disturbed by calls of love and order. Once in a while carp jump out of the water and the lake becomes a series of concentric circles only to be interrupted by the wake of other boats. And all the while silence reigns.

And God speaks through the cacaphony. I hear his voice, that still, small voice that Elijah so eloquently referred to after his encounter with the wind and the thunder and the fire. I hear God's voice through the plethora of sounds of his creation. I am reminded of Paul's image in Romans where he says that all creation is groaning to see the people of God come into their own (loosely paraphrased). The grebes, mud hens, geese, pelicans, orioles, wrens, swallows, and the abiding wind groan with expectation as God comes in the whisper of healing and reconciliation. And I am healed and restored. He makes sense out of the cacaphony of my life--the burdens and cares of all the folk with whom I come in contact during my week, sermon preparation and the thoughts and ideas of the scholars and theologians, which prayers and what liturgy, what about my kids and will they be okay as they again travel away from home, South Africa, poverty, abuse of children, and on and on. God comes through the myriad of voices of his creation and brings into perspective who I am and who I am to serve. And the vision of the church--a community of people led by the Spirit, serving Jesus the Christ by loving and caring for one another--is brought into clear view by the order, harmony and radiance of an ecological system that exudes the breath of God, and I am restored by that same breath which gives me life.

But the moment of peace and serenity is but a fleeting moment if I am not willing to be changed by what I hear. I can simply hear a cacaphony, or I can hear diversity in unity; I can hear noise, or I can hear harmony. The difference is a heart open to the possibility that God is incarnate in the world. He was in his Son; we profess that he dwells among us in these last days through the power of the Spirit. But that is a matter of faith, not a proposition that can be proved by a scientific method. I can surrender my self to the glorious assumption that God can speak to us through nature and also through the cacaphony of human voices that ring out in a dissonance that is both disorder and, at the same time, harmony. But if I am not willing to be transformed as I listen to God's many-faceted word, I will not hear the whisper of God through the clamor. It is a choice, but one that I make each time I am privileged to share in the community of God's creatures that inhabit the lake. It is a choice I make each time I share my life with all of you who make up the family of God. I may not be catching fish on these journeys into the prairie, but I am at peace when I come home. I may not always understand what is going on in the church community, but I can be healed by God's voice speaking through word, sacrament, and you.

Karen

Taken from the August issue of The Anglican Digest.

ON BEING AN EPISCOPALIAN

The following is one insight on why so many adults have *chosen* the Episcopal Church. You might like to share it with one who is a searcher and could find a home in the Episcopal Church.

1. *Worship* that brings you in, instead of putting you on the sidelines.
2. A *theology* that demands our intelligence rather than ignoring it.
3. A *willingness* not only to tolerate but to celebrate differences.
4. A *heritage* that takes the Bible very seriously but is not bound by literalism.
5. A strong sense of *community* in which our consensus is in Christ, not to a conformity of opinion.
6. A devotion to the *Biblical Sacraments* instituted by Jesus which evoke awe and mystery instead of factual explanation.
7. A sense of *ministry* that is rightfully the obligation and privilege of every baptized person.
8. An insistence upon *morality* [what is good and loving] and an avoidance of *moralism* [salvation by code and not by Christ].
9. The heritage of *Apostolic faith* in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and in the *Apostolic order* given to the Church by Him.

—The Rev Canon James R McLean, Canon Missioner, Diocese of Arkansas



Echo's from the Past

PRIESTS WHO SERVED GRACE CHURCH

Rev. W. J. Cleveland		April 21, 1888 - 1897
Rev. Albert Fillmore		1898 - 1900
Rev. E. H. Edson		1900 - 1903
Rev. C. E. Corbett		1904 - 1905
Rev. Mr. Beers		1905 - 1907
Rev. R. H. Hardman		1907 - 1910
Rev. Elias Wilson		1911 - 1916
Rev. E. F. Gwynne		1916 - 1917
Rev. J. H. Moore		1918 - 1919
Rev. Clyde Blakeslee	Age 45	1919 - 1922
Rev. Valentine Junker	Age 39	1925 - 1926
Rev. A. J. Haines	Age 35	1927 - 1933
Rev. Henry T. Praed	Age 30	1934 - 1939
Rev. P. D. Gough	Age 29	1939 - 1940
Rev. Bruce Swain	Age 40	1940 - 1941
Rev. Buckingham		1941
Rev. L. F. Ferguson		1941
Rev. A. E. Cash		1941 - 1942
Rev. Wm. Tallmadge		1943 - 1944
Rev. C. D. D. Doren	Age 29	1944 - 1946
Rev. Alexander McBeth	Age 57	1947 - 1950
Rev. Gordon Roth	Age 29	1951 - 1952
Rev. Bruce Swain		1954 - 1961
Rev. Gerald Richards		1963 - 1965
Rev. Leonard Adams	Age 53	1966 - 1973
Rev. Tom Campbell		1975 - 1977
Dr. J. P. Edwards		1977 - 1978
Rev. Karen Hall		1986 - Present

PRIESTS COMING FOR HOLY EUCHARIST WHEN WE WERE WITHOUT A RESIDENT PRIEST

Rev. Father Weston	1980
Arch Deacon Paul Davis	1981
Gordon Plowe	1982
Rev. Robert Wagner	1984 - 1985
Rev. Robert Wright	
Bishop Conrad Gesner	1985 - 1986

See You in
Church ^{Every} Sunday



THE CHURCH DOES MISS YOU!

Have you noticed something interesting at church! Our summer attendance has averaged fourteen members this summer, and by checking the register, one becomes aware that the winter attendance is only seventeen members per Sunday. Now that may seem reasonable for a "small congregation" but how small of a congregation are we really? There are forty church newsletters printed each month. Of this forty, five are sent to various organizations, there by leaving thirty-five that are sent to members homes. Now that would mean that there are at least thirty-five members in church. If one were to assume that only half of that number contain at least one other person in the household, then the number should be approximately fifty members potential for each Sunday. Going one step further, if we consider that there are at least ten children in the congregation, then the total should be at sixty. SIXTY members possible each Sunday. Slightly more than fourteen, would you not agree?

Some people comment: "I don't have anyway to get there." Have you considered asking someone for a ride? Or another, "I am mad at so and so." So why turn your back on the Church. If you turn your back enough times in a row, you will still be pointed in the direction from which you came. Also, "Church without communion is like I haven't been there." If you have attended lately, then you know that there has been communion at least three of the four Sundays for the past two months.

What will you say the next time you are asked to what church are you a member? I belong to or am a part of, and you are REALLY THERE, or are you on the register only in answer to a question?

See you on Sunday!

Alpha & Omega



JOINT GATHERING OF WIDER AREA MINISTRIES AT FLANDREAU

On Sunday, July 20th, a joint Gather of Wider Area Ministries was held. At 11:00 AM Holy Communion was celebrated. At Noon a potluck dinner was consumed and enjoyed. Afterwards, a meeting was held and John Davis gave us information on T.I.M.E. and Insurance. John explained some of the history on T.I.M.E. and how it affects the Wider Area Ministries. This affects our situation by helping with the funding of the project. All three Churches had representation.

From Grace Church were: Myrtle Newcomb



Mildred Rumrill

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Moose

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Stewart

Mr. & Mrs. Hal Rethorn & Jennifer

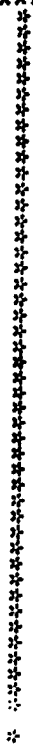
Thank You!

Thank You Rethorns for the beautiful "Ten Commandment" plaque in the entryway.



Have you noticed the changes that are happening inside and outside of the Church?

August 6
Feast of the Transfiguration
Celebrates the occasion when
Jesus led Peter, James and
John up a mountain where His
physical appearance changed
and He was bathed in light.
A voice spoke, saying, "This
is My beloved Son, in Whom
I am well pleased."
(Guidepost)



Thank you, dear God, that we can worship you and that you have given us so many things to enjoy in the summertime. We pray for special protection as we drive and most of all that our eyes may open wide to see You in everything beautiful. We pray for those who are ill and poor and cannot take a trip nor travel. Make us willing to share what we have with others. Bless all who worship in churches today and those who preach your gospel. Our hearts overflow with gratitude and joy for all we have been given by the Father of Mankind. Amen.

AUGUST SCHEDULE

August 3: Morning Prayer, Rite II
Officiant: Merrill Hunter
Acolyte: Ben Johnson

August 10: Deacon's Distribution of Communion
Lay Reader: Kitty Brewer
Acolyte: Annie Brewer

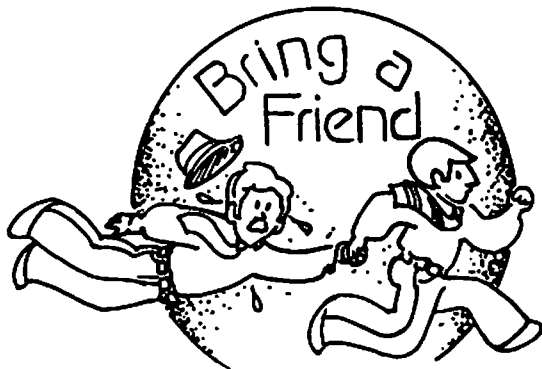
August 17: Deacon's Distribution of Communion
Lay Reader: Rex Page
Acolyte: Jennifer Rethorn

August 24: Morning Prayer, Rite II
Officiant: Beverly Hunter
Acolyte: Ben Johnson

August 31: Deacon's Distribution of Communion
Lay Reader: George DeLay
Acolyte: Annie Brewer

Karen on Vacation: August 1-9
August 22-29

Lay Readers Meeting: August 19 at 7:00pm
Bishops Committee Meeting: August 19 at 7:30pm



August



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



					1 Karen on Vacation	2 Karen on Vacation
3 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Coffee Karen on Vacation	4	5 Anniversaries - Richard Moose's and George Delay's	6 Feast of the Transfiguration	7 Birthday - Janice Johnson	8	9
10 9:00 Communion 10:00 Coffee News for next newsletter due	11	12	13	14	15 Birthday - Annie Brewer	16
17 9:00 Communion 10:00 Coffee Birthday - Fred Stewart	18 Birthday - Mildred Rumrill	19 7:00 PM Lay Reader Meeting 7:30 PM Bishops Committee Meeting	20	21	22 Karen on Vacation	23 Karen on Vacation
24 Birthday - Jennifer Hall 9:00 Morning Prayer 10:00 Coffee Karen on Vacation	25	26 Birthday - Andy Hall	27	28 Birthday - Merrill Hunter	29	30
31 9:00 Communion 10:00 Coffee Birthday - Judy Pavne						