

Homes Full of Grace

by John Yates

This past autumn our church family spent a considerable amount of time in sermons, small groups and special events focusing on *evangelism*. We thought about it, talked about it and even *did* it! Toward the end of the season a new conversation, related to evangelism, began to emerge. The topic was *hospitality*. As our small groups discussed the complex reality of sharing the gospel in our pluralistic society one of the things that people kept coming to was the conviction that our homes are often our greatest asset when it comes to sharing the gospel.

For so many years we've been told that knocking on other people's doors and getting into other people's homes was the best way to share God's good news. This method isn't without merit. But it is not always the best way. Sometimes the most effective way to bring someone to the place of opening his or her heart to Christ is by first opening your life and home to them. When we invite people to come into our homes, to share a meal, a cup of coffee, the chaos of an afternoon with kids, or the blessed peacefulness of an adult dinner party, we are inviting them to share life with us. And when we openly share our lives we cannot help but share the love of Christ in action. When a non-believer steps into a home that is full of grace they experience gospel lesson 101.

During January and February the 10:24 discipleship hour class had a series on the topic of hospitality. It sparked further discussion and reflection and for many involved it led to conscious action. In her article below, Tracy Defina, reflects on some of the fear and excitement she has experienced in her own reflections on hospitality, and through conversations with others offers us some good practical wisdom and encouragement. If you want to know a bit more about how a home full of grace can be a place where others are transformed, read on!

What Some are Saying and Doing About Hospitality

by Tracy Defina

When you hear the word hospitality do you cringe? Is it just something else to do? Something that creates a stressful laundry list of "to do"s - invite people, prepare the house, prepare the food, worry about how it'll go, how people will get along and on and on and on? I confess, I do.

Is this how Jesus meant for us to respond to his commands to love one another and feed his sheep? I am again and again, in my walk, struck by how Jesus gives us instructions that, if we obey, will meet our deepest needs and fill us with joy. I misunderstand obedience to be something that will leave me spent.

We were created to be in relationship. So much so that God knew the only way to really get to us was to send his Son to be in relationship with us. It makes sense that we enjoy being with others. How many times have you experienced hospitality, either giving or receiving, and then said "why don't we do that more often?" Christ is with us where two or more are gathered. By gathering, we create a space for the Holy Spirit to come in and move about freely. In this way Christ can guide us, comfort us and celebrate with us, and when our homes welcome those who don't know Christ, they experience Him.

Jesus' last gathering with his disciples was a supper. He broke bread with his beloved. There he promised that though he was leaving them, the Holy Spirit would come to be with them. He knew it was important for them to know that though he was going away they were not being left alone. Spending time alone, and spending time alone with Jesus is restful and refreshing, but living a life alone is not, nor is it what was intended for us or for anyone in our community.

If we watch Jesus, we have a model for Christian hospitality that differs from simply entertaining. Christ didn't always entertain other people. He invited them in to receive love or he went to others who were in need and gave love. Look and see whom he spent time with. He invited in sinners and strangers and went out to the sick and elderly.

We can learn from those who do this well. Where we have experienced hospitality and received love we can get a clue as to how to be hospitable.

This is not to be confused with entertaining, which may not be for all. We are *all* commanded to *love one another*. Because it is not entertaining we need not feel pressure to perform or prepare our homes in some certain way. People feel most loved when they are invited into a genuine home with all its shortcomings by genuine people with all their shortcomings.

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Nan & Sam McCullough

Author Nan McCullough to Conduct Evangelism & Hospitality Seminar

“Doing” hospitality to share the gospel—that’s Nan McCullough’s passion. Author of *Entertaining for Eternity*, Nan will speak on how to evangelize via simple hospitality at the Women’s Ministries spring event on April 17. Her teaching will cover:

- How opening our homes to others builds relationships for God’s kingdom
- How to share our own faith stories in two minutes or less—perfect for low-key evangelism in a social setting
- How to make hospitality simple and fun, not a burden

Nan and her husband, Sam, have served at the Christian Embassy in Washington, D. C. since 1979. After leading the Congressional Wives Bible Study from 1990-1998, now Nan enjoys a ministry of evangelism and discipleship with women leaders. Presently she is the “Women’s Speaker at Large” for the Christian Embassy, speaking to wives of governors, congressmen, ambassadors, generals, and admirals.

Nan is the mother of three grown children and is a grandmother. Her husband, Sam, works alongside Nan making heavenly hospitality a vital part of his life, too. According to Nan, hospitality is not just a “woman’s thing!”

April 17, 2010
1:00pm-4:00pm
Ashton Hall

RSVP: Mary Ann McClarnon at
mclmak133@hotmail.com or 610-935-2251
(But don’t stay home if you find you can come
at the last minute!)

There will be a free will offering

What Some are Saying and Doing About Hospitality
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I spoke with some members of our Church family who seem to be pushing through the barriers to being hospitable and answering Jesus’ call. We can find some solace and companionship in what they say about practicing hospitality, and we can find inspiration too.

Interestingly, they all defined hospitality fairly simply as opening your heart and sharing Christ’s love. It wasn’t giving a lavish dinner party but rather something as simple as smiling at a stranger or offering a drink of water to a worker in your home.

The common barriers they discussed stem from the pitfall we all face – making the interactions more about us and our appearance than about giving to others. Most confessed having to work at not worrying about the state of the house or what might happen among the guests. It seems to be a conscious effort to decide to provide and leave the rest to God. Leaving the rest to God includes children’s behavior, weather, and guests’ anxieties.

These people have all experienced Christ’s love and are inspired to extend it to others, whether a group of students, workers or friends. They are motivated by how satisfying it can be to touch another making them feel loved and appreciated in the way they have been. It’s not about being known as a great cook or having beautiful china but rather about sharing Christ’s love, which is simple.

Robin Smith is always prepared to be spontaneous. The house may not be in perfect shape nor the provision extravagant but fellowship can occur naturally and with ease at a moment’s notice – the door is always open. A common theme talking to some of our most hospitable parishioners was an open door and empty chair. On a Sunday afternoon at R.J. and Amy Snell’s home, students feel welcome to share a meal and some family time – it may be chaotic but it’s warm. At Saturday lunch on the Barnes’ farm, workers and anyone else are welcome to come together to share a meal and conversation.

Their emphasis is not on inviting people over to get something but simply to give. They all have a desire to make others feel welcome, cared for and loved. They extend this to all people regardless of how that person may “benefit” them, which I think is what differentiates Christian hospitality.

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(John 21:17) The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

“Who can I feed Lord?” – Friends, neighbors, strangers, newcomers, family, sick, elderly, families with a new baby, workers, co-workers, clients and students. Be challenged to open your doors this spring in a new way. Look past the readiness of your home and invite someone in or invite someone out!

- Have a mixed group of friends over for pizza and games.
- Invite some neighborhood women for coffee.
- Have the guys over to watch a game.
- Meet up with some other families at a neighborhood park for a picnic.
- Take a meal to someone who is ill or who is caring for someone ill.
- Drop flowers off at the doorstep for someone you know who is down.
- Gather some new friends from church for a pot luck dinner.
- Arrange a night at the movies with some co-workers.

(Nehemiah 8:10) Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

As we move out of the season of Lent maybe we can hold on to some lessons of the Sabbath and what it means to rest and be refreshed to do the Lord’s work. We can look to the joy of our Lord for strength to reach out, celebrate and share His love with others.

As I was pondering this topic, I was dismayed at how little it seemed that Mike and I have opened our home to people in recent years. He lovingly reminded me that just days ago two little boys had come over to play for a few hours with our two little boys on a cold, dreary day - *very* hospitable. Perhaps even more hospitable were the eight Brownies who came home on the bus in the rain with Annie for an afternoon of baking and crafts. So, take into account your season in life and enjoy our Lord’s command to love one another. An open home and an open heart combine to create a place full of grace where those who enter can see, hear and touch the good news of Jesus Christ.



Annual “Caring For Caregivers” Lunch
Saturday, May 1, 12:00pm–3:00pm

Caregivers from the church and the surrounding community of the Good Samaritan will be gathering again to be encouraged by Sister Michele and comforted by one another. If you would like to join us, or know of someone who would benefit from this ministry, please contact Susan Starke, Parish Nurse 610-644-4040 x207 susans@good-samaritan.org

Vestry Corner: Overview of The Annual Meeting - February 28, 2010

by Bob Anewalt

After a potluck dinner in Ashton Hall, the 2009 Annual Meeting convened in the sanctuary at 6:30pm. We competed for attendees with the US vs. Canadian Olympic hockey game final, but about 150 people made their choice in favor of the church. Fr. Todd opened with prayer and a hymn, and our Rector's Warden, Rich Englander, began his report. Rich observed that 2009 was a year of major transition for Good Samaritan. We began the year with new realities as Fr. Greg departed for the wonders of New York City, and Fr. Todd was suddenly thrust into his new role as Priest-in-Charge - a position he assumed at our Annual Meeting a year ago. Couple this change with the uncertainty created by a very difficult economy, and you have the potential for an interesting year. We came through with flying colors and God has blessed us richly in all of our endeavors.

Next, Mary Ernst and Mac McCausland, co-chairs of the Discernment Committee, gave a report on their activities during 2009. First, remember that the Discernment Committee was assembled and chartered at our Annual Meeting in February 2009. Since then they have "prayed without ceasing," organized themselves to function as a committee, and met more than 30 times during the year to advance their very important work. The committee engaged the services of Rev'd Howard Friend to serve as an advisor and consultant. Early on there were a series of parish-wide information gathering meetings, and work began on the important task of writing our Parish Profile. This document was released in December and is available in the office and on our website. The Discernment Committee has been charged to cast a wide net, and to that end they have made contacts with suitable sources nationwide and throughout the Anglican Communion. The committee is now receiving names and will do so until the end of April. Their charge is to bring one name to the vestry. The Discernment Committee reports monthly to the vestry, and has regular updates available on our website. Stay tuned - 2010 will be an interesting year!

Bob Anewalt reported on two aspects of our finances; our 2009 Operating accounts, and the end of our three year Sanctuary Renovation capital campaign. Jeff Moretzsohn reported on the 2010 budget process and outlook.

2009 had the elements of a "perfect storm" ... but, considering our challenges, it was a very satisfactory year

Regarding 2009, although the year was not without its challenges, we ended with a \$73,000 surplus, and a good start to 2010. Interesting though is the fact that monthly through October our revenues roughly matched our expenses and the entire surplus materialized in November (a five Sunday month) and in December (specifically with many gifts coming in the last few days of the month). Bob observed that 2009 had the elements of a "perfect storm" as several major outside influences challenged the church. We had the effects of a very difficult economy, of Fr. Greg's departure, of continuing wider Episcopal and Anglican Church issues, and the slowly moving issue of demographic change that manifests itself over a number of years. Our 2009 result was modestly less than in 2008, but overall, and considering our challenges, it was a very satisfactory year.

2009 was also the final year of our three year capital campaign to renovate the sanctuary. The campaign began in the second half of 2006, the renovation began after Easter in 2007, and the work was completed by year end. Since the campaign asked for pledges to be paid over the three year period we had a construction financing loan provided by Wachovia Bank - due in full by January 31, 2010. There were moments in mid 2009 when we doubted our ability to make that deadline, but through a letter appeal and a heaven-sent matching gift opportunity provided by a parishioner, we met our bank obligation and paid off the loan in full and on time. Modest funds remain and we now have an account in Designated Gifts for "Debt Reduction." A very satisfactory outcome for which we are grateful to you all.

Jeff reported that the budget for 2010 is in place and contains an amount of "faith" consistent with our experience over the past several years. The budget process is not without its difficulties, however, as several personnel changes were necessary in 2009 and they have not been resolved in our 2010 plan. Also note that we continue to experience a trend toward fewer pre-paid pledges - always important for our cash flow. Over the last five years pre-paid pledges have decreased from about \$154,000 to about \$62,000 and is attributed to the

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March Membership Statistics

Births:

Simeon Makepeace Mosser to Carl & Elisabeth Mosser

First Communion:

Brynne Elizabeth Gallagher
 Charissa Faith Howard
 Tayiana Kishoiyan
 Frederick Francis (Freddie) Rollo
 Aleta Colette Ross
 Liam Daniel Roulston
 Caroline (Campbell) Siddons
 Grace Mildred Snell
 Gavin Karr Stewart
 Ethan Lotter Tartaglio
 Allyssa Jane Utecht
 Ava Marguerite Willcox
 Lisa Marie Wisely
 Sylvia Tucker Yates

New Members:

Steve Lybrand
 Chuck & Carol Wagner
 Hailey Wichard (age 6)



Red Cross Blood Drive: Friday, April 23 Ashton Hall 12:00pm – 6:00pm

Please consider giving blood on April 23. The Red Cross blood donations were severely impacted by the winter weather, and their supplies are very low. They are particularly in need of Type O blood.

Consider these facts: ~ Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood. ~ More than 38,000 blood donations are needed every day. ~ More than 1 million new people are diagnosed with cancer each year. ~ Many of them will need blood, sometimes daily, during their chemotherapy treatment. ~ You must be at least 17 years old, weigh more than 110 pounds, and be in good general health to donate. ~ A healthy donor may donate red blood cells every 56 days.

There will be a chance to sign up between services on Sunday, April 18 in Fellowship Hall, or you can sign up online at www.pleasegiveblood.org or call 800-GIVE LIFE.

Sunday, March 7, 2010

Dear Friends and Loved Ones,

I arrived home from Haiti last night to loving and comforting hugs and kisses from Robin. It will take me a long time to unpack all that I saw, all that I experienced, all that was revealed to me. I am privileged to have gone, called to the opportunity and upheld by your prayers and support.

I know that together, through the provision of safe water, we have touched lives, saved lives, and showed God's love. We have touched the hearts of tens of thousands, restoring hope. Imagine a Haitian mom's tears of joy when she realizes that there are friends at a church in Pennsylvania who love and care for her and her children enough to share their abundant treasure in order to give them a drink of pure and safe water. God has joined us together.

In the near future, I look forward to telling and showing you how you have affected, even transformed lives. I hope that you will realize the relationship with those to whom we have provided relief and those to whom we have provided the means to help.

Thanks and Blessings, Rusty Smith

Annual Meeting continued

weakened economy and to the demographic trend mentioned earlier. Still, the essential work of the church is assured, and we are hopeful that an improving economy will help us as the year progresses.

Jeff also reported briefly on several Diocesan activities with which he is involved on our behalf. Our activities with the diocese have increased over the last few years because Jeff and other interested parishioners have made the specific effort to do so. The church is the beneficiary of this involvement.

Fr. Todd reported that his year as priest-in-charge has been challenging and rewarding. The staff has responded very well and he has been reassured by the many expressions of confidence and support evidenced from the parish body. He also mentioned that he has received unqualified support from Bishop Michel at the diocese.

Pastor Beverly closed the meeting with prayer at 8:00pm.

Vestry Corner: The March Vestry Meeting

by Joanne Gillespie

The March meeting of the vestry was held on Monday, March 8 following Evening Prayer in the Chapel, which commenced at 7:00pm. The meeting was called to order by Fr. Todd at 7:31pm and began with an opening prayer offered by Charlene Fitzwater. The minutes of the February meeting were approved.

Whitney Kuniholm reported to the vestry on the formation and planning stages of the Mission Outreach Task Force.

Mac McCausland presented the monthly report from the Discernment Committee.

Rich Englander announced that Fr. Todd has asked him to continue as Rector's Warden. Bob Anewalt, Financial Warden, Ronnie Tousignant, Clerk of the Vestry and Joanne Gillespie, People's Warden will continue to serve as wardens.

Fr. Todd welcomed new vestry members Chuck Gregan, Brenda Shantz and R.J. Snell. The annual meeting was well-attended and had a positive outlook as we continue to move forward in our strategic plan. We are reminded that we believe God is calling us to build up the body and move forward in mission.

Jeff Moretzsohn presented the Treasurer's Report for Bob Anewalt. He reported that our deficit is less than planned, we ended the month of February with a \$1,946 deficit. The budget for 2010 was approved which contains an element of faith of \$150,000. The Day School finances continue to be good.

Jeff Moretzsohn presented the Parish Administrator's Report. The Parochial Report is completed and was unanimously accepted by the vestry. This report is submitted annually to the vestry, diocese and national church.

Charlene Fitzwater presented the Stewardship Report highlighting that in early Spring the Stewardship committee will start to plan to move forward from our "Making Church Happen" theme toward encouraging us in the giving of time, talent and treasure from all the God has given us.

Rich Englander presented the Rector's Warden Report welcoming the new members of the vestry and talking briefly of the year to come. We prayed the Prayer of Self-Dedication: "Almighty and eternal God,

so draw our hearts to thee, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly thine, utterly dedicated unto thee; and then use us, we pray thee, as thou wilt, and always to the glory and the welfare of thy people, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen."

It was decided that two vestry members will be available at a table outside Café Good Sam on Sundays during the Discipleship Hour. They will be available to answer questions and hear concerns from members of the congregation until the installation of the new rector.

The vestry went into a brief Executive Session to discuss Fr. Todd's mutual ministry review and was adjourned in prayer led by John Searle at 8:49pm.

Prayer with the vestry will be on Monday, March 22 at 7:00pm in the Chapel.

Respectfully submitted, The Wardens of the Church of the Good Samaritan

Discernment Committee Update

Dear Fellow Parishioners,

The Discernment Committee has been receiving names from within and outside the United States since early February. We expect to continue to receive names through April 30, 2010. We want to remind you that if you have names to suggest, or people you believe we should contact who can suggest nominees, please drop us a note at goodsamdcinfo@gmail.com! While we cannot discuss the names of nominees due to our confidentiality covenant, you are a very important source of potential nominees for us. We want to hear from you! Thank you for your prayers and other expressions of support.

Faithfully Yours,

The Discernment Committee



Cursillo Weekend #82
May 13-16
St. Mary of Providence Center
Elverson, PA

Diane Gibson of Good Sam is a member of the retreat team! Registration forms are available at www.cursillodiopa.org or through Betsy Wolford at betsy@good-samaritan.org. For those of you who may not have heard of Cursillo and want to know what you are missing, this weekend is for you!

Cursillo is a “short course” in Christian living. In our Baptismal Covenant, we make a commitment to proclaim by word and example the Good News in Christ, and to seek and serve Christ in all persons. Cursillo helps us to fulfill our Christian commitment.

The Weekend: Most persons who are part of Cursillo start by attending a three day program called “The Weekend.” It is a “retreat” only in the sense that the group attempts to limit the influence of the outside world. The word “advance” would probably be more descriptive.

The Cursillo weekend is a deeply moving experience in which we ask ourselves: What am I doing here? What does God want of me? What does Christ see in me? What do I see in Christ? What is Christ saying to me?

The Fourth Day: The Cursillo weekend is not an end to itself. It is a starting point that lasts the rest of your life. The Fourth Day includes:

Rule of Life - “walking the walk,” a personal spiritual journey including piety, study, and apostolic action.

Group Reunion - a small group who meet regularly and who hold each other accountable for their spiritual journey.

Ultreya - a periodic “reunion of reunions” that provides support and builds community by sharing communal experiences.

Spiritual Direction- seeking out skilled lay persons or clergy for spiritual direction to provide help in deepening our union with Christ.

Learn more at www.cursillodiopa.org

The Marriage Corner
God’s Doing; For God’s Glory

(Taken from a sermon series by John Piper)

Genesis 2:18- Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

The chasm between the biblical vision of marriage and the human vision is, and has always been, gargantuan. Some cultures in history respect the importance and the permanence of marriage more than others. Some, like our own, have such low, casual, take-it-or-leave-it attitudes toward marriage as to make the biblical vision seem ludicrous to most people. The greatness and glory of marriage is beyond our ability to think or feel without divine revelation and without the illuminating and awakening work of the Holy Spirit. The world cannot know what marriage is without learning it from God. The natural man does not have the capacities to see or receive or feel the wonder of what God has designed for marriage to be.

The most foundational thing to see from the Bible about marriage is that it is God’s doing. And the most ultimate thing to see from the Bible about marriage is that it is for God’s glory. The words “hold fast to his wife” and the words “they shall become one flesh” point to something far deeper and more permanent than serial marriages and occasional adultery. What these words point to is marriage as a sacred covenant rooted in covenant commitments that stand against every storm of “as long as we both shall live.”

Marriage is patterned after Christ’s covenant relationship to the church. And therefore the highest meaning and the most ultimate purpose of marriage is to put the covenant relationship of Christ and his church on display. That is why marriage exists. If you are married, that is why you are married. Staying married, therefore, is not about staying in love. It is about keeping covenant. “Till death do us part,” or, “As long as we both shall live” is sacred covenant promise—the same kind Jesus made with his bride when he died for her.

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he Church of the Good Samaritan

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Spring 2010 Events Calendar

April 1

Maundy Thursday Service 7:30pm

April 2

Good Friday

Children's Way of the Cross 9:30am

Community Service 12:00-3:00pm

**Dubois' The Seven Last Words of Christ
with Good Friday Liturgy 7:30pm**

April 3

The Great Vigil of Easter 8:00pm

April 4

Easter Sunday

7:30am & 11:15am Chapel

9:00am & 11:30am Church

April 11

Connecting Coffee with Clergy

April 13-15

EDS "Twice is Nice" Consignment Sale

April 17

Women's Spring Event

April 18

Anglican Identity Class begins

April 20

Samaritan Deadline

April 23

Red Cross Blood Drive

April 23-25

High School Spring Retreat

April 26

Prayer with the Vestry

April 27

Women's Book Discussion Group