

“The Word became flesh and blood, And moved into the neighborhood.”

John 1:14 (The Message)

by Father Todd Cederberg

It's easy to get used to the routine, isn't it? You wake up in the morning, look in the mirror, ask God for courage, and begin getting ready for the day. Take a shower, eat breakfast, let the dog out, go to work, stay out of trouble and try to make some contribution, come back home, say "Hi", eat something, watch a little TV. It's all in a day. String 'em together and you've got a life.

Then, one day, a moving truck pulls up next door. Interesting. That house has been vacant for some time. You watch casually. Not much stuff moves in. Turns out it's a young family with a baby. You wander over to greet them, and they invite you in. Very gracious, the wife offers you a cup of coffee and begins to inquire about who you are and who else lives in the area. They want to know about your family, and your dog. Suddenly, you realize that the time has flown and you hadn't even realized it. You need to leave, but offer a quick invitation for them to come over for dinner. They are touched and agree. When? Good question. Next Tuesday? Fine. See you then.

You leave with a distinctly ambivalent feeling. They were really easy to be with. Very likeable. Yet, too likeable? They seemed very interested in me. Too interested? And that baby. Beautiful, ordinary, serene.

In the days that follow you find yourself watching their house. People start arriving to visit. The house looks cheerful. The people visiting are an odd mix. Some well dressed. Others obviously pretty poor. Some nice cars. Others leave oil stains on the asphalt. A lot of laughter. A lot of music. Sometimes ominously quiet. "Who is this family? Do I want strangers visiting my predictable little street? Are they my kind of people? Folks like that could change a neighborhood. Do we want that? And what will it be like when they come to our house to visit?"

Ever since that first Christmas Jesus' neighbors have felt like that. We can't help but be very curious, and at the same time very threatened. Anyone who really watches must realize that when Jesus moves in, their normal routines are going to change. Things can't stay the same with Jesus in the neighborhood.

With him comes life. His very presence makes us begin to question our daily routine. As we watch him we begin to reconsider what is important, and how we could live differently. As we let him into our hearts, his moving truck pulls into our own driveway.

Christmas is more than just a holiday. It is the beginning of a revolution. In Jesus God is reclaiming the planet Earth, neighborhood by neighborhood, house by house. It comes not because of the goodness of our intentions, however, or the effectiveness of our plans. It comes because of the irresistible act of the Word becoming human flesh, revealing to us the face of God.

**“We saw the glory with our own eyes,
The one-of-a-kind glory,
Like Father, like Son,
Generous inside and out,
True from start to finish.”**
John 1:15 (The Message)

Alternative Christmas Card

After prayerful consideration, this year in lieu of sending Christmas cards, the staff felt that perhaps a better way to say thank you and Merry Christmas would be to invest the funds normally spent on sending Christmas cards (\$1,000) in ways that will make a significant difference in the lives of those who may otherwise not know the true joy of Christmas.

As such, on behalf of the entire Good Samaritan family, we have invested in two important ministries, which are directly linked to our congregation as well as to Good Samaritan's mission focus.

First, we have allocated \$500 to sponsor a Bolivian child by the name of "Guillermo." Guillermo lives in the orphanage, Pedacito de Cielo, which is part of Ninos Con Valor. Ninos Con Valor is a ministry started by Good Sam Parishioner Endel Lias while he was serving as a missionary in Bolivia.

Second, we have directed \$500 to Water Missions International and the ministry of bringing clean drinking water around the world. WMI, a supported ministry of Good Samaritan, is linked most notably to Rusty Smith, who serves both as a volunteer and advocate for WMI. Our financial support will be used to help fund a clean water system in Lunya Kenya.

Over the coming year we will provide periodic updates about how our small gift has, with God's help, changed lives and shared the love and joy of Christ with those who are in need. May this Christmas be one filled with peace and hope for you and your family.

In His name and for His glory,

*The Staff of the Church of the
Good Samaritan*

Update from the Discernment Committee December 15, 2009

The Discernment Committee is very pleased to report that, having finished compiling the self-study information from our Discernment Gatherings, we have completed the Parish Profile, and submitted it to the vestry for approval. Once the Vestry approves the document, we will publish it for prospective candidates to review.

The Parish Profile includes information from the extensive input of our parishioners as to the competencies and gifts they are seeking in a new Rector. We believe it demonstrates to prospective candidates that we have a sincere love and passion for Christ and that we walk this out through our daily lives and many ministries here at Good Samaritan. Three key points that emerged from our congregation's input are that:

- We are Christ-centered
- We are Bible-based
- We seek to be led by the Holy Spirit.

We are very grateful to all who participated in the TCI survey, the Discernment Gatherings and most especially in praying for God's guidance in our work.

As we move into the next phase of seeking a new Rector, we are developing the process for advertising and receiving nominations, selecting candidates for interviewing, and developing appropriate questions to ask applicants so that we can better know them and their gifts. With God's help, we will winnow the number of viable candidates until we discern that one person we believe God is calling to Good Samaritan and make our recommendation to the Vestry.

Thank you for your continued support and prayer. We will continue to update you on a regular basis as we move forward in our search process. As always, you may contact us at goodsamdcinfo@gmail.com, or use the Discernment Committee mailbox in the office.

Expectations for the Women's Retreat!

by Martha Bell

There is already an expectancy growing in my heart for the 2010 Women's Retreat! My experiences at the last four Women's Retreats lead me to want to encourage you to come too. At the retreats, I have experienced wonderful teaching, delightful worship, engaging small groups, and powerful individual sessions of prayer. My hope has been renewed and my faith strengthened. I have made friends, been touched by God and been enveloped in love. What an amazing way to spend a weekend.



Some of the 2008 retreat attendees

This year, we will again "retreat" to the beach in Avalon, New Jersey. Led by Nancy Filkin as our speaker, we will break open and press into the living Word of God. During the quiet time, perhaps I'll take a walk on the beach, play games with some of the people gathered by the fireplace or go shopping in town.

Please join us now in prayer and March 19-21, 2010 in Avalon for all that God has in store for us that weekend.

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." ~Romans 15:13

Thea Farrow extends her heartfelt thanks to the Altar Guild for all their help with food and their support during her illness. She also gives thanks to all those who have remembered her in their prayers. She is on the road to recovery.



Save the Date: March 19-21, 2010

Wonders in the Impossible

**Good Samaritan Women's Retreat
Avalon, New Jersey
Speaker: Nancy Filkin**

Registration: January 24 – February 14

Welcoming Newcomers This Winter

The following are some opportunities that you can share with newcomers to help get them connected and meet their needs for more information about Good Samaritan.

**Connecting Coffee with the Clergy:
Life at Good Samaritan**

Sunday, January 10 & Sunday, February 21
10:30am Room 223

Winter Welcoming Dinner

hosted by Men's Ministry at the Shantz's home
Saturday, February 20 at 5:30pm

The Marriage Course Information Dessert Party

Sunday, January 24, 6:30pm in Ashton Hall

The Marriage Course

Sundays, February 21 – April 18 at 6:00pm

For more information contact Tracy Defina, Assistant Director of Parish Growth 610-644-4040 x212, tracy@good-samaritan.org.

Parenting through the School-Age Years

Children do not come with an instruction manual, telling us what to do at each stage of their lives. Parenting brings difficult, often unsuspected and ever-changing challenges. Parenting pundits and their books make it sound so easy, but the reality is messy. Do we value our role as parents? How do we swim against a cultural tide that values outward achievement and popularity over everything else? Can we set effective boundaries and assign responsibilities? In two Sunday evenings we will address four topics in interactive workshops:

- Parents and Children - Biblical Perspectives and Cultural Pressures
- Talking, Listening & Loving YOUR Child
- Raising Competent Kids – Setting Boundaries and Assigning Responsibilities
- Encouraging Our Children to Follow Jesus

The material is targeted toward parents of middle school children, but all parents are welcome to attend. A meal will be served each week to start off our time together, and each week will include teaching from the front and guided discussion.

When: Sunday, January 10 & 17, 6:00 to 8:30pm
during Youth Group

Where: Ashton Hall

RSVP: Tracy Defina, 610-644-4040 x212 or
tracy@good-samaritan.org

Cost: Each individual attending is asked to contribute \$10 to help cover the meal.

Free childcare will be provided.

Dot & Steve Beck are the parents of three girls – two in college and one in high school. For many years they ran marriage and parenting workshops at their church in London.

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**Good Samaritan's MIC Bible study** is seeking a babysitter for infants and pre-schoolers on Thursdays from 9:15-11:45am. The pay is \$12/hour. If you are interested, please contact Pam Bennett at 610-251-9724 or [bennett\\_1988@hotmail.com](mailto:bennett_1988@hotmail.com).

## Merry Christmas!

I would like you to share in the joy of Water Missions International. This is not just to report on the output of our alternative Christmas gift initiative nor to thank you for your support. Rather, I sincerely hope that we can begin to develop a sense of relationship with the people WMI serves and those of us, you included, who are servants.

Last week, WMI held our annual Country Program Director's meetings in Charleston, SC. Before that, Moses N'gania, the director for Kenya, was with us at Good Sam. This was the first time he has been outside of Kenya except for college in Uganda and relief work in D R Congo. His experience here was certainly "other worldly." But peoples' lives, loves, desires, sufferings and beliefs are mostly the same regardless of where they are placed in His Kingdom. I tried to keep Moses' time here as real as possible, not "touristy." We visited local schools, hospitals, fire companies, police departments, township government, shopping malls and, of course, Home Depot. We shared celebrating with the Church of the Brethren in Lampeter as they completed raising funds for their partnership with the people in Asengo, Kenya. And Moses was deeply touched by the welcome and real friendship he feels with us in our parish.

We visited Independence National Park in Philadelphia to discover the roots of our great heritage of freedom and the Capitol in Washington to sense the blessings and the responsibilities that we, as Americans, enjoy and uphold.

The meetings in Charleston began with the nuts and bolts (literally) of new Living Water Treatment System (LWTS) designs and new accounting software (how exciting). But we soon progressed to a higher and deeper consideration of the encompassing meaning to the water ministry. Provision of effective treatments to make water safe and available was only a key which unlocked a door. We reestablished that community development including health and hygiene education, micro enterprise and civic organization were essential to sustainability. And most importantly, we recognized that hope and relationship with God and God's people were both the foundation and goal of what we are do-

ing. Safe water is a pipeline which leads in many directions; between partners (like Good Sam) and brothers and sisters in Lunya, volunteers and staff, villagers and donors, neighbor and neighbor, saved and unchurched.

For most of the 454,000 people WMI reached in 2009, this will be their first Christmas with safe water. What a gift! For many of them, this will be their first Christmas! In Morinjoi, Kenya, a church was planted on the day of the opening and commissioning of the LWTS last spring. They have been unreached polytheists worshipping what they feared or what sustained them. WMI installed a treatment system which will provide relief from debilitating, agonizing and deadly water borne disease. It was natural for them to want to worship us for this magic. The key was in the lock. The WMI ministry was now trusted and could begin to

share with words the loving grace of God. Not surprisingly, that sharing was even more magical and mysterious to them than the water which they could see was clear and pure.

On that dedication day, some in the village began their walk with Jesus. More were curious and attracted to this new idea of love and hope. Their hearts and minds have been opened and their trust and belief verified by the gift of "Maji Safi." Imagine what they are wondering about His virgin birth. The church meets in the shade under a tree. There are about 60 followers plus their children and dozens more seekers every Sunday. Frequently, families from other villages come also to hear after traveling miles to their neighbors' safe watering hole. The seed grows.

I am telling this to you hoping that you will accept it as your story too, that you might connect in these relationships as you take in the messages and meanings of our involvement through Water Missions. It's not about the nuts and bolts or the financial support. It is about our relationship to each other, both near and far, and to our living relationship together with Jesus Christ.

Sharing His Blessings,

Rusty Smith



## Vestry Corner

Our December Vestry meeting was held on Monday, December 14, following Evening prayer at 7:00pm in the Chapel. The meeting was called to order by Fr. Todd at 7:38pm and opened in prayer by Peter Niedland. The minutes of the November meeting were approved and will be available on the Good Samaritan website.

Rich Englander then presented an action brief for consideration by the Vestry. The essence of the brief was to fill the position on the Vestry being vacated by Kerk Burbank. This came about because of Kerk's taking a job in Grenada. We will miss Kerk's wisdom and companionship in the Lord's work with us but according to our By-Laws, the Vestry is responsible with the task of choosing someone to fill unexpired terms. As such, Rich nominated Tom Connett, a life-long member of Good Samaritan to fill the vacant spot in the class of 2012. Tom spent some time telling his story of his time at our church, his involvement in many worship endeavors, his family and his faith walk. After excusing himself from our meeting, a vote was taken and Tom was unanimously elected to the Vestry.

Mac McCausland and Mary Ernst, co-chairs of the Discernment Committee (DC), then gave their monthly report. They were pleased to offer to the Vestry the Parish Profile that the committee has been laboring on for nearly ten months. The DC had unanimously approved the profile on the Wednesday evening preceding our meeting. Mac and Mary described the profile as containing key points in our church's history, life in the parish, our mission, ministry and outreach, a description of our common life together, community demographics, self-study, vision and financial reports. We spent a good deal of time discussing the profile and the methodology used in creating the document. The Vestry will now read the document, continue praying and come back together in a week believing that they will approve the Parish Profile with some corrections that may be needed. Once approved, the profile will be sent to the appropriate places and the search phase begun.

Fr. Todd asked for continued prayer and encouragement for the staff. Changes are occurring, particularly in the area of music, and the budget remains tight. He also spoke of plans for the upcoming Vestry retreat being held on March 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Finally, Fr. Todd announced, with gratitude, that Whitney Kuniholm had

agreed to be the point person for a yet to be organized mission/outreach task force that the Vestry requested to be formed in its strategic planning process.

Bob Anewalt reported that November's financial performance was very good. While November was a five Sunday month, expense management was strong. With a strong December, he is somewhat optimistic of ending the year on budget. Bob spoke of the three year Sanctuary pledge drive coming to an end on December 31 and efforts to close the gap that presently stands at \$234,000. He also spoke of our recent trends in attendance and giving and how in many respects we are in the vortex of a perfect storm. The economy continues to be an issue but we have faced Fr. Greg's departure, wider church issues and a noticeable demographic shift as older parishioners become less active. Bob said that our challenge was to keep our heads when all about are losing theirs. Lastly, Bob spoke of the continued favorable financial results of our Day School.

Jeff Moretzsohn spoke about the recently held diocesan convention. A resolution was passed calling for the formation of a committee to facilitate dialog and discussion regarding the Anglican Covenant, the process and our role and responsibility both as parishes and a diocese. Also a resolution was passed establishing a task force to engage in a formal process of "vision casting" and reconciliation within the diocese. He also spoke of Mac McCausland's election to the Standing Committee. We at Good Samaritan are now represented on both the Executive Committee of Diocesan Council and the Standing Committee.

Jeff also made a recommendation that the church cover one-third of the travel expenses (\$1,090) of the folks who came from Standing Rock to engage in a visioning process with our Dakota Committee. This occurred when Bp. Michael Smith came to ordain Todd Brewer to the diaconate. This recommendation was put in the form of a motion and the Vestry approved.

Jeff also attached a brief to his report calling for the approval by the Vestry of housing allowances for our clergy for the year 2010. This is done annually for tax purposes. The Vestry approved the clergy housing allowances as presented for 2010.

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Rich Englander next presented the Warden's Report. He spoke of Advent, a time to be at prayer, being still, listening and preparing for the coming of our savior Jesus Christ. As we look into the New Year, Rich also talked of the expectancy that our congregation's time of prayer and discernment will lead to the call of a new Rector that God has chosen for us. Rich also told of the warden's brief meeting with Fr. Todd as an evaluation committee to have a mutual review of the third quarter of Todd's time as Priest-in-Charge. The wardens and Todd will meet for a more extensive meeting soon and Rich will give a more extensive report at the January meeting of the Vestry. Rich's report concluded with us praying the collect for the Second Sunday of Advent from the Anglican Church of Kenya.

Charlene Fitzwater gave a report on stewardship. She updated us on the commitments made thus far pertaining to time and talent and to treasure. We are approximately comparable with pledge commitments relative to prior years at this time. Charlene spoke of follow-up plans surrounding stewardship and also of request for support to fund the shortfall for the bank loan repayment related to Sanctuary Fund pledges not fulfilled. Lastly, she spoke of the receipt of a generous matching gift offer from a parishioner who wishes to remain anonymous. This gift pertains to gifts to the Sanctuary Fund that we receive from parishioners who were not part of our original pledge campaign. The match is up to the "low five figures" and applies to gifts received by the church through January 15, 2010.

Rusty Smith gave a report from the Facility Committee. He spoke of the improvements/activities since his last report and projects that are pending. A long term capital improvement/maintenance plan is also being developed. He suggested that the Vestry consider transferring, at the end of each year, unspent operating budget money for facilities into a designated account. The idea would be to accumulate funds for large future capital expenses. The Vestry plans to look at this suggestion after the calendar year ends.

Ed Goll gave a report on Communications. He updated us on the status against our strategic action plan. He commented on our website, increased contributions by various groups in the Samaritan, increased e-mail coverage to parishioners and the development and distribution of a "Term Card" providing quarterly event scheduling. He also spoke to the issue of wall postings and how best to deal with the plethora of flyers posted all over the building.

Peter Niedland gave a revenue update on our Episcopal Day School. His report concerned the revenue hole created by not having a golf outing this fiscal year. He asked for prayer that another ten students might come into the school. A spring social is planned to help raise funds for the school along with other traditional fund raisers that the school has successfully done in the past. Progress in filling the hole is occurring. The staff is doing a great job in addressing revenue needs and staying prudent on the expense line.

A closing prayer was offered by John Searle and the meeting was adjourned at 9:57pm.

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

**Notice to members of the  
Church of the Good Samaritan  
regarding nominations for vestry:**

In accordance with the by-laws of the church, any member of the parish may nominate qualified persons for the Vestry and Deanery/Diocesan representatives. Nominations must be received at least three weeks before the annual meeting and each nomination submitted shall be signed by at least 25 qualified voting members.

Nominee qualifications: Baptized Christian and confirmed or received in the Episcopal Church, must be eighteen years or older, regular worshippers in this parish for at least one year, and shall appear on the records to have contributed to its support during the preceding calendar year.

Voter qualifications: Baptized Christian, sixteen years or older, worshipper in this parish for one year or more, and have a record of financial support for the last calendar year.

The Annual Meeting will be held on February 28, 2010 at 6:30pm in the church. A potluck dinner at 5:30pm in Ashton Hall will precede the meeting.

## **The Marriage Course: How to build a healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime**

### *What is The Marriage Course?*

The Marriage Course is very practical, giving any married couple the tools to build a strong and healthy marriage that lasts a lifetime. Over eight evenings spent together couples talk about important issues that can get swept under the carpet in the rush of daily life.

Topics covered include: recognizing each other's needs, learning to communicate effectively, resolving conflict, healing past hurt, knowing how to make each other feel loved, relating to parents and in-laws, good sex, making time for each other and having fun together. Privacy as a couple is always respected. There is no group discussion and no requirement to disclose anything about your relationship to anyone else.

### *What's involved?*

Each evening begins with a candlelit meal. There is then either a talk or video, followed by an opportunity to discuss the topic together as a couple. The setting is welcoming, relaxed and unthreatening.

### *Who is it for?*

The Marriage Course is for any married couple who wants to build a strong and lasting relationship, especially: • Those who want to enhance their marriage • Those in the first five years of marriage • Those at a challenging stage in their marriage, e.g. the birth of a child, a career change, teenagers at home, the "empty nest" • Those struggling with issues in their marriage. This course, while based on Christian principles, is very helpful for any couple with or without a Christian faith or church background.

### *How Can I Learn More?*

Come to the Marriage Course Dessert Party! It will be held in Ashton Hall, Sunday, January 24, from 6:30–8:30pm. Childcare will be provided. You will see a presentation of the outline of the course and have an opportunity to ask any questions you might have. And, you don't have to be married to come to the party. Anyone is welcome who is interested in learning more about how to support marriage at Good Sam.

### *Where will it be held?*

The Marriage Course itself will be held in Ashton Hall for seven Sunday evenings beginning February 21, from 6:00pm–8:30pm. Childcare will be available. The cost is \$135/couple, which covers course materials and catered dinners. Financial scholarships are available. Please contact Tracy Defina, 610-644-4040 x212 or [tracy@good-samaritan.org](mailto:tracy@good-samaritan.org) for more information.

## **Men's Breakfast January 23, 2010**

Men of all ages are invited to the Men's Breakfast on Saturday, January 23, 8:00am–9:30am in Ashton Hall. Breakfast will be served by the Women's Ministry. RSVP to [mensministry@good-samaritan.org](mailto:mensministry@good-samaritan.org) or to George Scheffey (610-407-0941). Hope to see you there!

## **The Freedom in Christ Retreat February 5-7, 2010**

Freedom in Christ is a 3-day retreat led by clergy and lay leaders from the Church of the Good Samaritan, and is designed for those who are serious about growing in their relationship with Jesus.

The Freedom in Christ program, developed by the Lazarus Center in Ambridge PA, uses principles from this powerful story to craft a life-changing weekend:

Often, "stones" block us from realizing our passion and purpose. *Freedom in Christ works to dislodge and roll away the things that keep you from growing.*

Only Jesus can call a person into life. *Freedom in Christ provides a rich environment for Jesus to speak and work in your life.*

We often need others to help "unwrap" us, to allow us to fully step out into new life. *Freedom in Christ has a team of dedicated caregivers to help guide you in your next steps of growth.*

Whether you feel like you've been dead for years, seem stuck in the mud of your spiritual life or are on your journey and just ready to take the next step, we invite you join us for this truly unique weekend. Experience Freedom in Christ for yourself!

Information, registration and scholarship request forms are available in the church office or online at [www.good-samaritan.org](http://www.good-samaritan.org).



# **he Church of the Good Samaritan**

212 West Lancaster Avenue Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301

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## ***Winter 2009 Events Calendar***

**January 3**  
**No Christian Education**

**January 10**  
**Connecting Coffee with the Clergy**  
**M.S. Bowling**  
**H.S. Alumni Coffeehouse**

**January 10 & 17**  
**Parenting Class**

**January 17**  
**Confirmation Information**

**January 23**  
**Men's Breakfast**

**January 24**  
**Summer Mission Information**

**January 24**  
**Alpha Marriage Course Dessert**

**January 25**  
**Prayer with the Vestry**

**January 26**  
**1st Communion Class**  
**begins**

**January 29-31**  
**M.S. Winter Retreat**

**January 31**  
**H.S. Coffeehouse**

**February 5-7**  
**Freedom in Christ Retreat**