



The Beehive

Vol. 25, Issue 1 * February 2009 * Christ Episcopal Church, Norway, ME 04268 * 207-743-6782
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DEAR PEOPLE OF CHRIST CHURCH—

Never had I had to struggle for my own space in the Beehive! This is the way our newsletter should be—"too many" articles coming in from parishioners. We've had to add an extra page!

Please note the sundry reflections in these pages from those thirteen who spent several days on retreat at the monastery of the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), an Episcopal order of monks. These retreats must be planned months and months in advance and much thought goes into developing the theme. Our theme of theodicy (how can God's goodness coexist with evil?) will be continued at Christ Church in the Lenten discussions offered in March on the 15th, 22nd and 29th.

Also, regarding Lent, it is customary to make Sundays in Lent distinct and to combine Lenten solemnity and penitence with Eucharistic celebration and joy. This Lent you will notice several distinctive things on Sundays: the choir's silent entrance followed by our reciting the Decalogue (10 Commandments) and the Confession and Absolution; our petitions in the Prayers of the People offered at the very beginning instead of scattered throughout; the Lord's Prayer sung (The Hymnal S-148) and a new invitation at Communion. The Worship Committee and I believe these Lenten additions will add great beauty and dignity to our worship.

Our Ash Wednesday services at 9:30 A.M. and again at 7:00 P.M. on 25 February will mark the beginning of our Lenten observances.

May this Lent be a season, not solely of penitence and preparation for Jesus' resurrection, but also a time for you all of spiritual renewal and growth in your faith.

Faithfully, in Christ,

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Women of the church and their guests continue to meet in the Guild Room on Tuesdays from 11:30 A.M. until 12:30 or a bit later. We have read Susanna and Judith, from the Apocrypha, and, most recently, Esther. Our discussions are lively and most helpful! We bring our Bibles and some of us bring a sandwich as well, to go with the coffee and tea provided. Our only homework is to read the book of the week ahead of time, if possible. Our weekly bulletins will have information for the following week. Or phone the Church Office for details.

2009 CHRIST CHURCH LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY

Rector:	Anne Stanley	Members of the Vestry:		
Parish Secretary:	Linda Caradonna	Beulah Ayer	743-5943	
Senior Warden:	Carlyn Watts	539-9678	Peter Blackman	583-4871
Junior Warden:	Barbi Tinder	928-3603	Jeanne Byers	743-5762
Clerk:	Cheryl Willey	583-6185	Ted Kehn	527-2313
Treasurer:	Tom Knight	743-8629	Joanne Lowell	743-5540
Asst. Treasurer:	Marcia Pottle	539-2218	Lynne Orsini	583-4589
			Chris Pottle	539-2218
			Bonnie Trundy	966-3276

REFLECTIONS ON THE RECENT MONASTERY RETREAT

“Senior citizens” struggling to purchase a Charlie Card on the T; Anne’s guided walking tour through Harvard Square, Harvard Yard, and EDS (Anne’s seminary, The Episcopal Divinity School); quiet time reflecting on Brother Bruce’s words; Brother Curtis’s welcoming smile; fabulous meals enjoyed in silence; the Brothers’ melodic voices as the last thing heard in the evening and the first thing heard in the morning; living at a monastery for four days – priceless!

- Carlyn Watts

Chanting the Psalms with the monastery brothers was the high point of my retreat. The last time I was at the monastery in Cambridge was for a guided retreat in learning Anglican chant. It is still hard for me to read the musical notation but I learned that this isn’t really important: the brothers know how to do this and all I have to do is immerse myself in their prayer. My heart learned to rest in God as He prayed for me through these ancient words.

- Ted Kehn

One of the comments made that I liked (and there were a lot of those) was: the Bible is not a textbook, not the Complete Idiots’ Guide to Life.

- Thelma Cunningham

I liked the silence that was enveloping.

- Beulah Ayer

At our last Eucharist on Friday morning, one verse of scripture stands out: 1 John 4:12—“No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is perfected in us.” Love predominated on these three days; in the love the brothers showed each other and us, and the love we showed to each other, our fellow retreatants. As we lived together, every act of kindness reflected God’s love.

- Bernice Kehn

While attending the retreat this past week, I learned that my personal experience of evil and suffering, as well as joy and thankfulness, are important to God. God wants to know how I feel, whether it’s a complaint, anger, despair, or joy, so He can experience it with me. No question is out of bounds to discuss with God, and I can hold Him accountable. God can take it. If I am unable to express my own feelings, then praying the Psalms can express them for me. No longer do I have to hide, feel guilty, fearful or ashamed of what I feel or experience. God understands through Jesus Christ, who is the expert on suffering. I am never alone.

- Gratefully, Fran Martin

This was not my first time on a retreat at the monastery, and it was wonderful being back. Jeanne and I had the room that looked down over the altar. When we returned from services, we could still smell the fragrant aroma of incense that lingered in the room. One morning, we didn’t go to 6:00 A.M. morning prayer; however, we could hear the prayers and music while we were in bed. It was inspiring! Many times, while listening to the monks chant and trying to chant with them, I thanked God that I was in that holy place.

- Jim Byers

A retreat at SSJE allows retreatants the luxury of having plenty of quiet “alone” time that can be spent in any way that one chooses. There was ample time for reading, prayer and contemplation without the distractions of everyday life. There were lots of opportunities each day for community worship with the brothers. Our retreat was a great experience that I would recommend to anyone. I really appreciated the opportunity to attend.

- Thanks, Jan Wall

I especially enjoyed the two sessions on theodicy with Brother Bruce. I wish we could have had more discussion time. Here are the important points he left us with to ponder—

1. Don’t gloss over the suffering and evil in the world. It’s real.
2. It’s OK to complain to God.
3. If you lack the words, use the psalms. The psalmists were world-class complainers.
4. Beware of being pretentious and arrogant when you question God’s goodness.
5. Fight injustice and suffering wherever you can.
6. It is in suffering that we meet God. The church was founded in suffering.
7. The Bible does not have the answer to why bad things happen to good people—it was never intended to.

- Jeanne Byers

You don’t realize how hectic your daily life is until you go on a retreat at a monastery and participate in the life of their community. My time at SSJE gave me a chance to catch my breath by participating in the daily office and Eucharist. The prayerful and quiet pace gave me time to reflect on life’s little treasures. I highly recommend attending one.

- Doug Wall

I found taking time to be in silence, prayer and chant a soul satisfying way to begin the New Year. One cannot help but be nourished in the quiet setting of the monastery surrounded by solid stone, stained glass, views of the river, abundant books, delicious meals and voices lifted in gratitude, love and praise.

- Mary K. Colbath

I have been thinking about my impressions and what words to use to point to the Reality that is available to all of us by whatever route. There is an intimacy in silence; it is easier to understand how that is God’s first language and from silence I can learn to value language and speech more highly. From Br. Bruce, the perception that the Bible is a reflection of a people’s relationship to God; that the Psalms reflect the full range of human emotions and that I fit in there in lots of places some of the time.

- Richard Norris

A favorite memory always of retreats in this monastery: monks walking out of the chapel before we do, sandals occasionally squeaking on the marble floor, a whisper of vestments swishing past. Now they’re gone, and we rise to go, too.

- Anne Stanley

WORSHIP AND OTHER PERSONNEL – FEBRUARY 2009

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SERVE ON A SCHEDULED DATE, PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT AND LET THE CHURCH OFFICE KNOW THAT PERSON'S NAME BY THE TUESDAY MORNING BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED DAY.

	FEB. 01	FEB. 08	FEB. 15	FEB. 22
<u>EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER</u> 8:00 A.M.	Lynn Brown	Mary Bickford	Al Barth	Peter Bickford
10:00 A.M.	Allan Crane	Carlyn Watts	Chris Pottle	Tom Knight
<u>ACOLYTE</u> 8:00 A.M.	Lynn Brown	Peter Bickford	Al Barth	Peter Bickford
10:00 A.M.	Andy Churchill	Rachel Brennan	Thelma Cunningham	Chris Pottle
<u>LECTOR</u> 10:00 A.M.	Merton Lord-NT	Ted Kehn-OT	James Lehr-NT	Jeremy Hill-OT
<u>USHERS</u> 8:00 A.M.	Ann Bickford	Sandy Luke	Peter Bickford	Carlyn Watts
10:00 A.M.	Tim & Donna Churchill	Jane Dann Jodi Carter	Beulah Ayer Bonnie Trundy	Peter Blackman Carlyn Watts
<u>COUNTERS</u>	David Stanley Marcia Pottle	Peter Blackman Chris Pottle	Thelma Cunningham Bill Gibson	Bernice Kehn Tom Knight
<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	Carlyn Watts	Rosemary Laban	Merton Lord	Nancy Rideout
<u>ALTAR GUILD</u>	<u>Jan. 24—Feb. 06</u> Thelma Cunningham Lynne Orsini	<u>Feb. 07—Feb. 20</u> Lynn Brown Bernice Kehn		<u>Feb. 21—March 06</u> Helga Thurston Beulah Ayer

WORSHIP AND OTHER PERSONNEL – MARCH 2009

PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO SERVE ON A SCHEDULED DATE, PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT AND LET THE CHURCH OFFICE KNOW THAT PERSON'S NAME BY THE TUESDAY MORNING BEFORE YOUR SCHEDULED DAY.

	MARCH 01	MARCH 08	MARCH 15	MARCH 22	<u>MARCH 29</u>
<u>EUCH. MINISTER</u> 8:00 A.M.	Sue Emerson	Peter Hammond	Peter Bickford	Lynn Brown	Mary Bickford
10:00 A.M.	Thelma Cunningham	Barbi Tinder	Chris Pottle	Allan Crane	Carlyn Watts
<u>ACOLYTE</u> 8:00 A.M.	Sue Emerson	Peter Hammond	Peter Bickford	Lynn Brown	Peter Bickford
10:00 A.M.	Carlyn Watts	Thelma Cunningham	Andy Churchill	Chris Pottle	Rachel Brennan
<u>LECTOR</u> 10:00 A.M.	Barbara Rooth-NT	Caroline Leonard-OT	Bob/Jane Dann-NT	Ted Kehn-OT	Merton Lord-NT
<u>USHERS</u> 8:00 A.M.	Hank Emerson	Ann Bickford	Mary Bickford	Carlyn Watts	Sandy Luke
10:00 A.M.	Bill & Jane Gibson	Henry & Pat Stewart	Beulah Ayer Bonnie Trundy	Judy Gideonse Jane Dann	Peter Blackman David Stanley
<u>COUNTERS</u>	T. Cunningham Chris Pottle	David Stanley Henry Stewart	Bernice Kehn Bill Gibson	Tom Knight Chris Pottle	Marcia Pottle David Stanley
<u>COFFEE HOUR</u>	Anne Brown	Christine Hebert	Pat Brennan	Marcia Pottle	Cheryl Willey
<u>ALTAR GUILD</u>	<u>Feb. 21—March 06</u> Helga Thurston Beulah Ayer	<u>March 07—Mar. 20</u> Martha Eaton Cheryl Willey Mary Bickford		<u>March 21—April 03</u> Joanne Lowell Jan Wall	

Around The Parish—

A group of us went on retreat to the Society of Saint John the Evangelist (SSJE, otherwise known as the Cowley fathers) in early January. Situated by the Charles River in Cambridge, it is a great place to think, walk, meditate, and pray. Our studies were lead by Brother Bruce and we did not find the answer to the presence of evil and injustice in the world. We did find some ways to deal with it. Come to our Lenten discussions to learn more and read individual comments elsewhere in the Beehive. Silence is golden—and hard to maintain—but how else can we hear God?

Barbi Tinder was in England from Nov. 22 to Dec. 17. She spent Thanksgiving with her daughter and family, but was back here for Christmas. Solomon (grandson) and Nahma (Barbi) had great fun putting on their Wellies and tramping through the fields. Currently one of Barbi's pictures is on display in an on-line exhibition at Episcopal Church Visual Arts (www.ecva.org). She has been elected Province One UTO Coordinator to the National UTO Committee for the Triennium 2009-2012.

Lynn Brown is going to Virginia in early February to a national conference on Reading First, a federally funded program distributed through the state. Only five states were invited. Maine is being represented by Guy E. Rowe and Paris Elementary schools.

Kathy Whittier and her husband David are living full-time in their fifth wheel camper and served as volunteer camp hosts at a beautiful state park on a barrier island in Savannah, GA, for the months of October—December. While there, their duties included being friendly and helpful to campers, as well as some work in maintenance and in the nature center. On January 1st they headed to Mission, Texas, to spend three months at an RV park on the southern border of the Rio Grande. Kathy doesn't miss the snow, but does miss the folks at church.

- Thelma Cunningham



PLEDGE UPDATE

We have received 75 pledges in the amount of \$113,206 for 2009. This is an increase of 9 pledges and \$1,000 over what was pledged for 2008 and 2007. If you haven't made your pledge yet, please join your fellow parishioners in making a commitment to support the ministry of Christ Church. Thank you for this support!

- The Stewardship Committee

CENTERING PRAYER

As some of you know I have been leading the every-other Monday noon centering prayer group. Centering Prayer is the 4th stage of Lectio Divina, a way of reading scripture. So I was quite pleased to receive a handout from our retreat leader Brother Bruce Neal entitled Praying with Scripture: Holy Reading through the Benedictine Method, which is another description of lectio divina. A copy of this handout will be posted on the bulletin board outside the Rector's office and a copy will also go to each person attending our centering prayer group, thanks to Br. Bruce's generosity.

Independently I had purchased a book entitled Meditating On The Word by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the monastery bookstall at the recent Christ Church retreat in Cambridge. It concentrates on the first 2 parts of lectio, reading and contemplating on the Word.

After reading the introduction, I started to read Bonhoeffer's sermon on Psalm 62. The very first verse caught my attention and became my "word" for the day: "For God alone my soul in silence waits." I continued to digest this word throughout the day at the monastery and kept repeating it. It could be the theme of anyone's centering prayer experience.

Another interesting coincidence is that Bonhoeffer studied The Way of Holiness by Fr. Richard Meux Benson, the 19th century founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist at Cowley, England in his exposition of Psalm 119 as found in Meditating On The Word. The SSJE monastery in Cambridge where we had our retreat is descended from the one in England.

— Ted Kehn

Please continue to pray for.... Keith, David, Karen, George, Joyce, Pearl, Abby, Brendan, Forest, Kayla, Bill, Rose, Chris, and Toivo

SUNDAY WORSHIP

Sept. - May at 8:00 & 10:00 A.M.

BIBLE STUDY

9:30 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sept. - May at 10:00 A.M.

EUCCHARIST/HEALING SERVICE

Wednesday at 9:30 A.M.

MEN'S LUNCH

Wednesdays at noon

YUMMY DESSERT

- 1 angel food cake mix, prepared as directed OR bakery purchased angel food cake
- 1 container Cool Whip (thawed) OR homemade whipped cream
- 1 package frozen strawberries, thawed and drained

Slice angel food cake in half horizontally

Mix Cool Whip and strawberries together.

Frost bottom half of cake with Cool Whip strawberry mixture. Place second half on top.

Frost entire cake

Chill until ready to serve

Enjoy!

- Fran Martin

Agricultural Fair in Winter at Christ Church

Community Supported Agricultural (CSA) farms will be participating in a fair next Sunday, February 8th, between the hours of 1:00 and 4:00 P.M. The fair will be held at our church in cooperation with St. Catherine's. The public is encouraged to attend to learn about CSAs and how they might reduce their carbon footprint by developing a relationship with a local farm.

From The Sunday Paper

(*Sunday's yellow sheet*), Gretchen Wolff
Pritchard

In each of the three years of our lectionary cycle, we concentrate on one of the three "Synoptic Gospels:" Matthew, Mark, and Luke. "Synoptic" means "seen with the same eye," and these three Gospels are so called because they follow much of the same outline and contain many of the same incidents from the same point of view. In contrast, the Gospel of John is very different, and its special episodes and insights are spread over the three years of our cycle of readings, especially during the season of Lent.

We are now in Year B, or the year of Mark. Mark is the shortest of the Synoptics, with only 16 chapters. Even when the season of Epiphany is quite long, we barely make it out of the first chapter of Mark. Jesus *comes forth, is baptized, is tempted in the wilderness, chooses his disciples, and performs a very large number of miracles, three of which are described in detail*—all in the space of 45 verses. The chapter moves at a near-breakneck pace: starting with verse 9, when Jesus comes out from Galilee to be baptized, the word "immediately" is used eight times, plus the phrase "at once" in verse 28. Jesus appears among God's people like a meteor, drawing everyone's attention, blazing with luminous energy, changing the whole face of the sky. The power of darkness recognize him and tremble. The people of God know that something great is stirring: they become restless, agitated, excitable. They are *amazed* and *astonished*. *Immediately*, they are faced with a choice: acknowledge Jesus's Messiahship as coming directly from God, or line themselves up in opposition. Mark makes it clear that we, as we read, must make the same choice.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 03 Sandy Cullinan
Kyle Black
- 05 Keith Willoughby
- 06 Andrew Wall
- 07 Harriet Robinson
- 08 Janet Wall
- 12 Melissa Brown
Dennis Ryder
- 14 Jeanne Byers
Chris Pottle
- 15 Barbara Robinson
Elaine Vaill
Jared Jones
- 16 Terry Keiser
Caroline Leonard
- 21 Kathleen Parsons
- 22 Tom Stanley
- 23 David Tinder
- 25 Jane Gibson
- 26 Elizabeth Tinder
- 27 Gwyneth Bohr
- 29 Helga Thurston



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 14 Chris & Patti Brennan



LENTEN STUDY SESSIONS

The group who attended the recent retreat would like to continue the discussions we had there, the “problem” of evil and God’s justice, love and mercy, or theodicy. Or, in other words, if God is all-powerful and just, why do bad things happen to good people?

We will meet on Sundays, March 15, 22 and 29, from 11:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M. in the Undercroft. We’ll enjoy a simple lunch of soup, bread and fruit while plunging into the discussions.

Since theodicy is an age-old question, posed by all religious traditions, every one of us has thoughts about it, I’m sure. Bring your own thoughts! A hand-out will be available ahead of time, and there are a few suggested readings from scripture. You might start with Genesis 9:12-17, Exodus 14:5-31 and Psalm 109.

Anne Stanley

FEBRUARY CALENDAR

03	11:30 A.M.	Women’s Bible Study
04	Noon	Men’s Lunch
	7:00 P.M.	Choir rehearsal
08	1-4:00 P.M.	Agricultural Fair
09	Noon C	entering Prayer
10	11:30 A.M.	Women’s Bible Study
11	10:30 A.M.	Outreach Committee
	6:00 P.M.	Worship Committee
	7:00 P.M.	Choir rehearsal
15	8 & 10 A.M.	The Rt. Rev. H. Hopkins
	11:45 A.M.	Vestry
17	11:30 A.M.	Women’s Bible Study
18	Noon	Men’s Lunch
	7:00 P.M.	Choir rehearsal
23	Noon	Centering Prayer
25	Noon	Men’s Lunch
	7:00 P.M.	Ash Wednesday Eucharist Choir rehearsal

Morning Prayer continues at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

ANNUAL MEETING REVIEW

The 110th Annual (Supper) Meeting of Christ Church was held on Friday evening, 23 January.

Elected to leadership positions were:

Carlyn Watts, Sr. Warden
Barbi Tinder, Jr. Warden
Cheryl Willey, Clerk
Tom Knight, Treasurer
Marcia Pottle, Asst. Treasurer

Vestry Members:

Beulah Ayer, Peter Blackman (new)
Jeanne Byers, Ted Kehn, Joanne Lowell, Lynne Orsini (new), & Bonnie Trundy.

Diocesan Convention:

Delegates:

Peter Bickford, Barbi Tinder,
Carlyn Watts

Alternates:

Thelma Cunningham
Ted Kehn

Diocesan Area 4 Representative:

Thelma Cunningham

Rep. to Oxford Hills Assoc. of Churches:

Mary Tolman



REMEMBER LENT!

Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is on February 25th this year. Please see details of Christ Church’s Lenten discussions in the item above. Palm Sunday is April 5th, and Easter is on April 12th. How will you make your Lenten season meaningful?

In addition to reviewing the budget, adopting the Outreach Budget and going over old and new business, the meeting concentrated on thinking of, talking about and collecting ideas on special projects our church community might do this year. Barbi Tinder facilitated our work most effectively and we came up with a superabundance of ideas, all based on our collective talents, skills and interests. The Vestry will work with the ideas and find ways to implement them at its retreat on 31 January.

In November we heard from several parishioners, the stories of their journeys of faith. We will share one story in each Beehive. Here is Barbi Tinder's own story:

Faith Journey

"Read, mark, learn and inwardly digest." I always liked that phrase growing up and it continues to be part of my faith.

Preparing for this talk has been one of those times that I've had to be intentional about what my faith means and how it is expressed. A couple of weeks ago I said to Anne, "I've come to realize that my photography is an expression of my faith."

To which she said, "I know that."

Well, now I do too.

I invite you into my outdoor cathedral sharing with you God's artwork that I have tried to capture through the eye of the lens. Many of these visions are better at expressing my faith than I can with words. It is out in nature that often, I slow down enough to hear and listen to God. I've included a few of my "saints."

Slide show

Having been baptized at 3 months old, I've been an Episcopalian all my life. My earliest memory is from the church where I grew up. There were two Sunday school rooms for the younger children, pre school and kindergarten. The kindergarten room had an altar at one end. At the appropriate time each Sunday, one of the adults would come into the pre-school room, and ask us to pick up our chairs. We would then march into the other room singing- "Step, step, step, step, we're going to our church. We're going there to sing and play, we're going there to work and pray. Step, step, step, step, we're going to our church. Once in the kindergarten room we lined up our chairs with a center aisle, and created our own faith community. I'm sure we listened to Bible stories, but what I remember is the three questions we were asked each Sunday.

What do the flowers tell us?...We love God!

What does the cross tell us?... God loves us!

What do the candles tell us? ... Jesus is the light of the world!

So simple yet so profound. What more did I need?

One learning as I was growing up was that although the candles were extinguished at the end of the service the light was not; it was really shared with each one of us as we went our separate ways. It is the combinations of sparks that reunite to create the flame when the community is gathered.

Like Carlyn (Sr. Warden who also shared her faith story in November), if it was Sunday our family went to church. I remember the years that dad would go to the 8 o'clock service, come home to pick up those of us singing in the choir or my brothers on acolyte duties and take us to church for 9 o'clock. He'd go back home to baby sit the youngest one so mom could bring the rest of us for the service at 9:30. Our faith was woven into the fabric of our lives. My parent's actions taught me that many small acts of service were part of following Christ.

There are many memories from those years growing up. Choir, youth group, friends, teaching Sunday School, worship experiences. What really **stands out** are the people who made me aware of living your faith everyday, not just attending worship on Sundays. In addition to my parents, my minister and his wife Bill and Bea Berndt were walking with Christ all the time. Their arms were always open to draw you in. One particular Sunday school teacher would read from a book about the people whose lives reflected their belief. These "everyday" Christians taught me that each of us could follow Jesus and let our lives reflect what we believe, it wasn't just the saints and the disciples.

I've lived most of my life as an active Episcopalian. I've not studied to become a member. I've absorbed my faith. There are times that I consciously think about it. Those times are often when I am in a specific role serving the church at whatever level and in many roles. These experiences have broadened my understanding of living out the baptismal covenant. Reading the lessons and serving the chalice are an integral part of my ministry. My photography is growing into a very important part of a ministry; I have yet to learn where it may lead!

As an adult I've come to know that I'm a visual and experiential learner and that is the way I live my faith daily. I also have short term memory loss, so please don't ask me to quote scripture. I've condensed my beliefs down to what I can retain. I love my God with all my heart, strength and soul. I try to love my neighbor as I try to love myself. I strive to seek Christ in all persons respecting the dignity of every human being.

While working as a learning disabilities assistant, when my own children were in elementary school I was assigned to this one boy that I found challenging. He really didn't want to leave his classroom and I often had to create ways to keep his attention. Shortly after a friend shared with me about reading an article that told how one could look into a persons eyes to search for Jesus; this boy came in hanging his head and dragging his feet. He was suffering with a cold and was quite disheveled that day. Not only were his shoes in tatters, they were on the wrong feet. I thought, "Okay God, I need your help!" Remembering what my friend had said, I tried looking the boy in the eye, used my eyes to show love and tried to be as cheerful and as encouraging as I could. He did perk up and at the end of his session; he came around the table, put his arm around my shoulder and kissed me on the cheek.

That was a day that looking into his eyes I saw Jesus!

- Barbi Tinder

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
35 Paris Street, Norway, ME 04268



February 2009

“WHERE WAS GOD WHEN THE TORNADO STRUCK?”
(a reflection on Theodicy—God’s justice and the presence of evil)

On a balmy March afternoon in 1948 when I was eleven, a monstrous killer tornado (probably an F4) roared into the little town of Coatesville, IN, close to my hometown. Fourteen people were killed, hundreds were injured and, in 90 seconds the town was reduced to splinters. A young woman named Janice and her fiancé, Harry, were buried under the rubble of her house. While neighbors frantically tried to extricate them, the rubble caught fire and the young couple was burned alive. Poignantly, this horror took place at 5:00 P.M. on Good Friday—the very time Our Lord was being laid in Joseph’s new tomb.

The children of the Primitive Baptist Church were practicing their music for the Easter sunrise service. The minister, seeing that a thunderstorm was brewing, sent all the town children running home. He took the few children who lived farther away in his car. Then he saw the boiling funnel; the car was slammed into an embankment. The doors flew open and the screaming children were in danger of being sucked out of the car. The minister threw his large body on top of the children and, as the Coatesville Herald quaintly put it “lifted his heart in prayer.” The children were saved. All telephone lines were down, but the Methodist minister still had a functioning car and he drove for help and reportedly said he “thanked God for saving his car!”

Easter Sunday was bleak. It was snowing and sleeting and lilies and new hats seemed inappropriate at our big Methodist church. The Rev. Dr. John Tenant announced that he would not preach his prepared sermon. Instead he would like to talk about “Where was God when the tornado struck?” I was interested, but Dr. Tenant preached long, learned sermons with many literary references and it was difficult to follow. Walking home I asked my mother what it meant. “God was there,” my mother said, “but he was in the loving hands that helped the doctors and nurses in the emergency rooms, the minister who saved the children, the Red Cross, the Boy Scouts who collected food and clothes, the minister who drove for help.”

Well—I wasn’t buying it. “That’s just dumb!” I said indignantly. “Why not stop the tornado and save all the people? Why save one stupid car?” My mother just shook her head and pursed her lips. “We live in a free world. We don’t want to be puppets. Tornadoes happen,” she said. Privately I decided to consult the Bible. My Sunday School teacher, Mrs. Olive Tenant, the minister’s wife, had recently cautioned our class that Bibles should not be used in a magical way. The Bible was for guidance and inspiration. You should not open it up, put your finger on a word and expect to find an answer to a problem. They did that in superstitious olden times. But I thought that sounded like an interesting idea. At least it was worth a try. If you want a child to do something, just tell her not to do it.

I got home, went to my room, got my Bible, opened it up, jabbed my finger down on a page and looked. It was a serendipitous moment. I couldn’t have been more pleased. It was Job 1:19....“a great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young people.” I knew a little bit about Job. My aunts said people were “poor as Job’s turkeys” or “had the patience of Job.” I knew Satan caused all Job’s troubles, but it was because God allowed him to. I felt uneasy again. I was back to square one.

- Parishioner Jeanne Byers

GET YOUR BEEHIVE BY EMAIL!!



We have quite a sizeable group of parishioners receiving the newsletter by email. If you’d like to join them (and receive your Beehive in color!) just tell Linda and give her your current email address. We’ll add you to the list! **OR—If you have received this newsletter by email and do not wish to, just let us know and we’ll remove your name from the email list.**