

Saints Alive!

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June 2009

Season after Pentecost

A Congregation of the Spirit

Most congregations I know of have mixed feelings about the Holy Spirit, and All Saints is no exception. We know that the Spirit is important, of course. But as heirs of the Enlightenment, we can be tempted to equate the presence of the Holy Spirit with a disturbing, even frightening irrationality. And at All Saints, we still bear old scars from a "charismatic" time, more than 40 years ago, that deeply divided the parish. The marks have faded a lot, but they're still there.

So when Pentecost comes around, as it did on May 31, we get to experience the whole kaleidoscope of feelings all over again. The story of a great rushing wind reminds us of storms, of walking against a blustery day, of a boat heeled over in a fresh gale, of speed. All of these are images of power. Words like this inspire our awe. They can make us a little nervous.

Then there's fire. A mysterious fire alights on them all -- and fire is all about power, too. Power to cook a meal, destroy a forest, heat metal for shaping into cookware or weapons. We don't need to understand it scientifically. We get it viscerally, as symbol of God, the one who creates and destroys, all in accordance with an underlying plan of love.

And then there are words. That mysterious and extraordinary ability we have to communicate with sounds we make with our bodies -- communicate ideas of utter abstraction, sublime beauty, horrifying ugliness, of past, present and future hopes, of hatred and of love. Pentecost language isn't babbling. It's real language, spoken by some who don't even know it to those who do, and translated mysteriously one to another. God's story is carried forward.

Wind, fire, words: all symbols of power. At Pentecost, they are symbols of power entering into human beings and changing them, transforming their lives. So of course we respond with a variety of feelings, some of them strong. We're in the presence of something that changes us at every level. That's the point of the story of Pentecost. Christians experience something that changes them. They're never the same afterwards.

That's why this last Sunday I preached about what we get as part of a community gathered by and inspired by the Breath of God. What we

get is the change we long for so deeply, in ourselves and our attitudes and our world. When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, we see Scripture more clearly. We see God more clearly, and we see others and ourselves that way, too.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with a holy wind that blows away everything extraneous. It is to be filled with a holy fire that purges imperfections out of us. And it is to be filled with holy words that change how we think (and thus the whole reality of our lives) and how we act with and towards others.

In the presence of this kind of power, mixed emotions make perfect sense. After a while, however, we find that the changes that come from the entry of the Spirit into our lives are transformative in meaningful and deeply joyful ways. Seeing the truth more clearly over time can be challenging, but ultimately it's by far the best way to live. The Holy Spirit isn't irrational at all. It actually enhances our ability to see, to reason and to act.

Special Thank-You to Robin and Jack

I am very grateful to Robin Niderost and Jack Kincaid for shouldering the responsibilities of Rector's Warden during the first half of this year. Robin made a tremendous effort to maintain contact with the parish during her mission work in New Orleans and subsequent travel, and was amazingly effective using phones and emails to help keep things moving. And Jack was here "on the ground," looking after the great variety of activities in our busy parish. Now that Liz Berg has rejoined the vestry as our Rector's Warden, please take time to thank Robin and Jack for their faithful service!

Father Rob

Sunday Circle of Celebrations During June and July

Bringing Significant Weekday Feast Days to the Sunday Eucharist

June 21 John the Baptizer

July 5 Independence Day

July 26 Mary Magdalen

Why?

I believe that the Liturgy of the Word is the Work of the People. It is also a way of lifting up a life or an event that is important to all of us spiritually.

There will be a general meeting on Sunday, June 7, after the 10:00 service. People would choose how they want to be involved -- not at all, modestly, or more involved.

I would like to meet with all those interested in working on one of the three celebrations.
Thank you for your summer interest.

Fr. Rob McCann
(925) 212-2421 (cell)

Community Dance Summer Schedule

At All Saints Neighborhood Center

On the following Saturdays, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.:

June 13
July 11 and 25
August 8 and 22

Dances are taught in a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere; no prior dance experience or partners required.

Donation: \$5 to \$10, but one turned away for lack of funds.

About the Dance

German dance master Bernard Wosien traveled widely and collected dances from various cultures that were done in circles. Soon Wosien and others began choreographing more dances. It is called Circle Dance because of the feeling of wholeness and community that it evokes; in its more meditative form it is often referred to as Sacred Circle Dance. The aim is to create a sense of well being and to have fun.

About the Teacher

Maureen Atkins discovered Sacred Circle Dance in 1993 and began teaching in 1995. For more information, call (510) 317-9219, email her at maureenatkins@sbcglobal.net, or visit her website: www.maureenatkins.com.

Pledge Fulfillment

As we approach the mid-year mark, please be sure to bring your pledges up to date. Thank you!

Avoiding Calendar/Kitchen Conflicts

If you are organizing an event here at the church, please be sure to let Janet Plankenhorn know so she can put it on the calendar. In other words, don't add anything to the big calendar yourself - let her do it for you. This will avoid conflicts with outside groups and other parishioners.

And if your event involves the kitchen in any way, please let both Janet and Dora Muir, Kitchen Manager, know in advance.

Environmentalist Wanted

Do you have an interest in environmentalism, including helping the parish be more green? The Diocese of California has a Commission on the Environment that may interest you. They have asked for one person from each congregation to be a liaison and All Saints doesn't have one yet.

If you think you might be called to this ministry, check out the Commission on the Environment area on the diocesan website at diocal.org and let Fr. Rob know what you think.

Hint: This would be a perfect ministry for one of our older youth.

Father Rob Energized: No Sabbatical This Year

Father Rob will not take his sabbatical this year as previously announced. He says, "I'm not tired." He says he's energized and enjoying getting things moving for next year. All of this means Fr. Rob will have the following schedule:

- >From June 6 to 28, he'll be in Evanston, Illinois, doing his required continuing education work as he moves ahead in his Doctor of Ministry degree. Please note that this is not a vacation. It is a highly intensive period of study intended to enhance his abilities to minister at All Saints. During this time, he will have his usual availability via email and cell phone.
- He'll be back in his office June 29 and 30.

- Then, in July (1 to 26) he'll take his annual vacation.

Whenever Rob is away, the Rector's Warden Liz Berg is the "ecclesiastical authority." Fr. Mark Spaulding, rector at Holy Cross in Castro Valley, has also generously made himself available for major pastoral emergencies that may occur during any of these times. You can arrange this care by calling the church office or Fr. Rob's cell phone.

City News

Diana Souza

San Leandro Hospital

Sutter Health plans to leave San Leandro Hospital by this fall, closing surgical and acute care, as well as the emergency room. The Eden Township Healthcare District Board must decide what to do with the hospital building and operations, starting this summer.

We would prefer that Sutter continue operating in San Leandro. The options being pursued include filing an Environmental Impact Report legal challenge on Sutter's work at Eden Hospital and opposing the Alameda County Board of Supervisors' consideration of moving Fairmont Hospital rehabilitative care to San Leandro.

Economic Stimulus Plan

Remember this -- the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009? San Leandro is still in the running and actively pursuing a maximum of funding. Below is a listing of all of the recovery funds we are pursuing.

Formula Grants Already Awarded

The City has already been awarded through formula grants over \$2.2 million in federal stimulus funds as follows:

\$ 1.3 million -- Repair of heavily used commercial streets

\$196,000 -- ADA-compliant curbs and ramps

\$263,000 -- Police officer recruitment and retention

\$732,000 -- Green building and energy savings

Competitive Grants Applied For

\$43 million -- Upgrades at our Water Pollution Control Plant

\$3.1 to \$3.5 million -- COPS grant for six officers for three years.

\$40 million -- Marina and Davis Street interchanges

\$6 to \$10 million -- Eden Road and Washington interchanges (shovel-ready)

\$1 to \$3 million -- Fire station modernizing

\$2.5 million -- Foreclosures and homeless (as part of a consortium)

\$15 million -- Electric Vehicle Pilot Program (as part of a consortium)

We have also passed along funding opportunities to social service providers in areas such as child care, housing and youth employment. While this is great for our infrastructure, ironically it does not provide short-term "recovery" to our operational budget, and we still

plan to lay off up to 10% of our employees starting July 1, 2009.

Ask Your Councilmember

How much money will San Leandro receive from the East Bay Regional Park Measure WW?

The City of San Leandro is slated to receive approximately \$3.7 million dollars from Measure WW. This money must be used for parks, improving or creating new parks - it cannot be used for operational expenses.

Mayor Santos put together an Ad Hoc Committee to look at projects that might benefit from these funds. The committee recommends \$250,000 for new park pathways this year; \$988,000 for Marina Park picnic area renovations; the balance for the San Leandro Aquatic Center Competitive Pool.

For upcoming events, please visit the website:
www.saintsalive.net.

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