



THE NORTHEAST TORCH

NEWS ABOUT NERM: NORTHEAST EPISCOPAL REGIONAL MINISTRY

DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

MARCH 2008

LENT

HOLY WEEK/EASTER WORSHIP

TRENTON:

MAUNDY THURSDAY	6:00 PM	FR. SID BREESE
GOOD FRIDAY	5:30 PM	CANON BILL FASEL
EASTER	10:30 AM	FR. SID BREESE

MARSHALL:

MAUNDY THURSDAY	5:30 PM	CANON BILL FASEL
GOOD FRIDAY	12:00 PM	DEACON MARTY BYER
EASTER	10:30 AM	FR. DON WILSON

LEXINGTON:

MAUNDY THURSDAY	7:30 PM	CANON BILL FASEL
GOOD FRIDAY	7:00 PM	MINISTRY TEAM
<i>Way of Cross</i>	6:30 PM	
EASTER	10:00 AM	FR. ED WHELAN

FAYETTE:

MAUNDY THURSDAY		(AT BOONVILLE)
GOOD FRIDAY	7:00 PM	MINISTRY TEAM
EASTER	9:00 AM	CANON BILL FASEL

BOONVILLE:

MAUNDY THURSDAY	7:00 PM	DEACON MARTY BYER
GOOD FRIDAY		(AT FAYETTE)
EASTER	11:00 AM	CANON BILL FASEL

BETHANY:

H. TUESDAY (3/18)	7:00 PM	CANON BILL FASEL
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From the Canon Missioner...

There has been a lot about religion in the news lately, and not just to do with the Presidential primaries. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public life has issued a study that shows that American religion continues to become more and more a marketplace where different religious groups compete for members, and where almost half of all adults (44%) have switched religious affiliation at some point. More on that later. Also in the news has been Dr. Bart Ehrman, professor of religion at the University of North Carolina. Dr. Ehrman has a new book titled *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer*. Before continuing, I need to be clear that I have just begun to read Dr. Ehrman's book. Most of what I will be discussing I have learned from hearing Dr. Ehrman interviewed on the radio.

Dr. Ehrman is a Bible scholar who considered himself Christian until about 10 years ago. His agnosticism is the result of his determination—correct I might add—that the Bible fails to provide a complete answer to the problem of human suffering; that is, how a kind, loving and all-powerful God can allow humans to suffer as they do? That Dr. Ehrman would eventually lose his faith when failing to find the answer to the problem of suffering is understandable considering his life story. Bart Ehrman grew up as an Episcopalian in Lawrence, Kansas, but converted to an Evangelical Fundamentalist religion (Youth for Christ) as a teenager. What attracted him to his new religion was its claim to offer certainty of salvation by following the Bible as completely literally true, error free and containing all of life's answers. After high school, he went on to study for the ministry

Continued on next page...

NERM Website Coming

A new NERM website is under construction. NERM has selected Charity Advantage, Inc. to host its website. Charity Advantage already hosts the diocesan website (www.diowestmo.org). Currently we are collecting content to go into the NERM website. Once the content has been sent to Charity Advantage, they will have the site up within two weeks. So, look for a NERM website around April 1st. The address will be:

www.nermwestmo.org

THE NORTHEAST TORCH

MARCH 2008

Publisher & Editor:

The Rev. Canon William J. Fasel, D.Min.

The Northeast Torch is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the
Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry
(NERM)
P. O. Box 307
Lexington, MO 64067

Purpose:

The Northeast Torch exists to serve God by providing a forum for news and opinion for the members of the Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry in the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, and to help strengthen the bonds of faith and affection that exist among the five member congregations.

Submissions/Letters Policy

The Northeast Torch welcomes submissions of news articles, photographs and letters to the editor on topics of interest to the members of NERM. Publication is dependant on space available. Submissions should include the writer's name, email address, mailing address and telephone number and are subject to editing.

Submission Address & Phone:

The Rev. Canon William J. Fasel, D.Min.
824 West 62nd St.
Kansas City, MO 64113-1504
816-803-4010
Fax: 816-444-0459
Email: frbillnerm@hotmail.com

Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry (NERM):

NERM is a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri, and includes the congregations of:

Christ Church, Boonville, Missouri
St. Mary's, Fayette, Missouri
Christ Church, Lexington, Missouri
Trinity Church, Marshall, Missouri
St. Philip's, Trenton, Missouri

Bishop of West Missouri:

The Rt. Rev. Barry R. Howe, D.Min.

From the Canon Missioner continued...

at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. After Moody, Ehrman went on continuing his study of scripture at Wheaton College in Illinois, and then Princeton where he eventually earned a Ph.D. At Princeton, as a result of his academic study of the Bible, Ehrman eventually had to give up his belief in a literally true and error free Bible. Over time, failing to find the answer to his biggest life question in the Bible, he lost his faith altogether.

I have to confess that I prefer Dr. Ehrman's agnosticism to those who believe that they have found all the answers and that therefore they are empowered to impose their answers on me. All the same, what Dr. Ehrman shares in common with the latter group is *the assumption that religion should provide all the answers*. They are not alone in that assumption, either. Most Americans probably share that assumption. The problem is, in this complex and difficult world no religion can actually supply all of the answers to life. Nor should they. While we may not know the ultimate answer to human suffering, one thing we do know is that much of the suffering of the world occurs when one group attempts to force its religious and political vision on others. Rather than seeking absolute answers, religion works best when it helps us to live in better harmony with God, each other, and the created world around us. Religion of this type provides wisdom rather than answers, while still providing a framework of meaning, purpose and fulfillment in our lives.

As The Episcopal Church continues to decline as a percentage of the overall population and considering what the Pew study calls "a very competitive marketplace" of religion, we would be tempted to believe that we need to do a better job of giving religious consumers what they want. Since most assume that they are seeking "answers", we could try to provide an Episcopal version of those answers while arguing why ours are better. Of course, such an approach would be neither true nor honest to our actual beliefs, and I'm not sure that it would work anyway. Better, why don't we challenge the assumption that "answers" are what our faith is all about, and offer some new questions. Rather than finding the answer to why people suffer, maybe a good place to start would be asking the question, "What does God want me to do for people who are suffering (for whatever reason)?"

As we enter Holy Week, with its focus on the suffering of our Lord, we should remember that Jesus suffered partly because he challenged the accepted "answers" of the religious and political authorities of his day. He embraced suffering on our behalf, not because he was offering a new set of answers but rather that he embodied a new way for humans to live in the world. He left us with one new commandment, that we love one another as he loved us. In the great passion play of Holy Week, we encounter a wisdom of living in the world that neither seeks to explain suffering, nor to avoid it, but rather to transcend it by practicing radical love. As we contemplate the great events of this week, let us pray that we may become truly wise, and more and more like Jesus whom we follow.

Bill

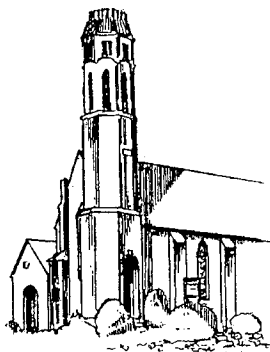
NEWS FROM NERM CHURCHES



We are sad to report that longtime Boonville member John Heinrich passed away on Tuesday, March 11 after a long illness. His burial will be Friday, March 14th at the Pilot Grove cemetery, officiated by The Rev. Marty Byer. John is survived by his wife, Kitty.



With spring in the air, St. Mary's has scheduled a cleanup day for Saturday, March 15th. Included in the general sprucing up of the buildings and grounds, they will be replacing locksets on all of the doors and starting anew with a key control system. In the past few months St. Mary's has also replaced the heating system in the sanctuary and installed new handrails with a true handicapped entrance. Next on the repair list will be the ceiling over the altar. Meanwhile, the Bishop's Committee is considering new outreach ministry possibilities, and hopes to zero in on one or two opportunities at its next meeting.



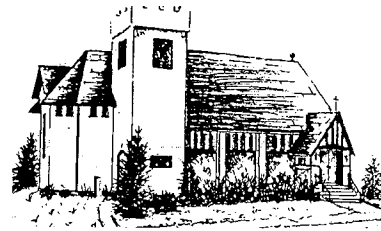
Bishop Howe made his annual visit to Christ Church, Lexington on January 20th. The highlight of the worship was the baptism of Armen Davis Wood (wife of *West Missouri Spirit* editor Ben Wood) and the



Armen Davis Wood and friend of the congregation Carl Wheat.

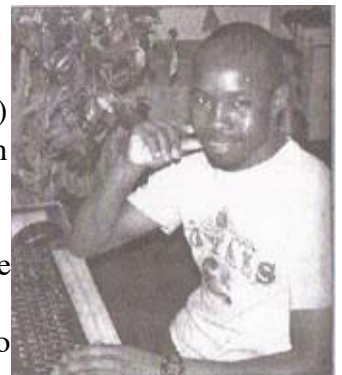
confirmation of Clemella Farlow. Gluttons for punishment, Christ Church also had its annual meeting that day. Since then, the new Vestry has been busy. They have

committed to donate \$500 minimum to the diocese's Emmaus Celebration, while also raising money for the Millenium Development Goals through the Emmaus mite boxes. They are redoing the visitor packet while also preparing a new directory. New to the directory will be Charles Pinzon who has moved to Lexington to work for Wentworth Military Academy. Welcome Charles.

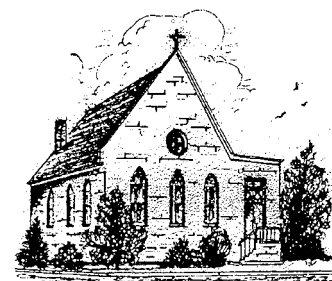


We're happy to hear from Bernard Ronoh that his family in Kenya is fine despite the recent unrest. Bernard is a sophomore at Missouri Valley College

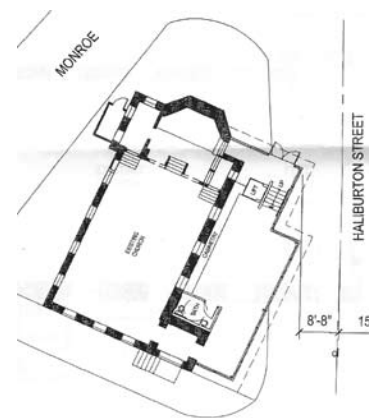
and attends Trinity Church in Marshall. Larry Maxwell of Trinity has started the MAD (Making A Difference) Marshall 7-11 League, which will operate at Bueker Middle School on Friday nights from 7 to 11 p.m. The league is open to all area teenagers as a wholesome alternative to other possible Friday evening activities.



Bernard Ronoh



St. Philip's, Trenton continues to develop plans for an addition to the building that would include a new entrance, a handicap lift and a bathroom. Below is the latest plan. They hope to begin building soon.



NERM Schedule April - June 2008

Email Addresses Needed!

Date	Boonville	Fayette	Lexington	Marshall	Trenton
Apr. 6 – Easter 3	Klein	Klein	Byer	Wilson	Bp. Howe
Apr. 13 – Easter 4	MP	MP	MP	Fasel	MP
Apr. 20 – Easter 5	Fasel	Fasel	Whelan	Byer	Breese
Apr. 27 – Easter 6	MP	MP	Fasel	MP	MP
May 4 – Easter 7	Byer	Byer	MP	Fasel	Breese
May 11 – Pentecost Day	Klein	Klein	Byer	Lockhart	Lusk
May 18 – Trinity Sunday	MP	MP	Whelan	MP	Byer
May 25 – Pentecost 2	Klein	Klein	MP	Byer	MP
June 1 – Pentecost 3	Byer	Byer	Breese	MP	Fasel
June 8 – Pentecost 4	Fasel	Fasel	MP	Byer	MP
June 15 – Pentecost 5	MP	MP	Fasel	MP	Breese
June 22 – Pentecost 6	Byer	Byer	MP	Fasel	MP
June 29 – Pentecost 7	Klein	Klein	Byer	Wilson	Fasel

If you are receiving a paper copy of this newsletter and have an email address, you can save NERM at least 60 cents each issue by sending us your email address and switching to electronic delivery. In addition to saving NERM, you will get your issue in color, and also get it faster. Please send your email address to:

frbillnerm@hotmail.com

Next NERM Council Meeting will be April 19, 2008 in Trenton starting at 10:30 AM.

Janice Chatelain Woodward

Janice Woodward, a member of St. Mary's, Fayette, passed away on February 4, 2008. She had developed leukemia two years before, and although cured of the cancer, complications related to her treatment eventually cut short her recovery. Born in Fort Benning, Georgia on February 7, 1944, Janice Chatelain was the daughter of Lamie Chatelain and Mary Agnes Baudouin Chatelain. Janice grew up in New Orleans and attended St. Joseph's Academy, the University of Southwest Louisiana and Illinois State, from which she



received her degree. Janice worked for State Farm Insurance, first in Bloomington, Illinois, then Monroe, Louisiana, and finally New Orleans. Beginning as a secretary, she worked her way up as a claims adjuster to an executive position in the company before retiring in 1997. In 1996 she married Dr. Ralph Lee Woodward, Jr. who at the time was Professor of History at Tulane University (now retired). Besides her husband Lee, Janice is survived by a son and a daughter, three step children, three grandchildren, three brothers and two sisters.

**Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry
C/O Christ Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 307
Lexington, MO 64067**

Address Service Requested.