



# THE NORTHEAST TORCH

NEWS ABOUT NERM: NORTHEAST EPISCOPAL REGIONAL MINISTRY

DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

OCTOBER 2007

LATE PENTECOST

## **NERM Annual Meeting**

**Sunday  
October 21, 2007  
10:00 AM**

**Christ Episcopal Church  
Lexington**

Everyone in NERM is invited to the Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 21st. The meeting this year will be in Lexington at Christ Church, beginning with worship at 10:00 a.m. Following worship there will be a potluck dinner, and then the meeting will follow. Each congregation has received a letter from Christ Church with a suggestion of what to bring for dinner, but if in doubt *bring anything*. This is pot luck! At the meeting we will discuss the preliminary 2008 budget, discuss our various development plans, order 2008 calendars, plus other business.

**Directions:** Christ Church is at the intersection of 13th St. and Franklin St., and is a red brick building with a turreted bell tower. From the south & east, come up Business 13 about 1.5 miles from US 24. Christ Church will be on the right. From the north or US 24 West, take US 224 (Main St.). At the traffic light for 13th St., turn left. Christ Church will be on the left.

### FROM THE CANON MISSIONER...

What makes for a healthy church? Our instincts are to measure a church's health the same way we would measure some other business or organization: size, wealth, prestige, personal satisfaction... The problem with doing this is that a church is neither a business nor a voluntary organization like a club or lodge. In fact, the scriptural witness is clear that the earliest churches of the First Century AD did not consider themselves voluntary societies at all, but rather a new community called into existence by God. This concept is clear from the many ways that they described themselves: "people of the way", "saints", "body of Christ", and especially the Greek name that finally stuck, "*ekklesia*", or literally "those called out" (by God). They believed that God had called them to be different from the rest of the Roman world around them, and any similarity to that world would be considered failure on their part.

Of course, that was before the Fourth Century when the Roman Empire embraced Christianity and eventually made it the state religion. From that point until recently, the Church as religious community was synonymous with the political community (the state), the social community and even the business community. During that period the Church came to act much like any other part of society—seeking wealth, political power and social status. Since the adoption of the U. S. Constitution in 1788, however, we have been engaged in a slow process of separation of church and state. At this point, we have finally reached a point where churches are free to return to their true calling to be different from the rest of society around them.

So how do we measure health in a church? First and foremost, we need to get away from the notion that bigger is better. This is not to say that churches get worse as they get larger, or that size doesn't matter, but churches of any size can be healthy or unhealthy. Even more to the point, membership growth is not necessarily a sign of health, either. Churches can grow for very much the wrong reasons, such as a personality cult surrounding the pastor or because they are better at entertaining their members. Actually, an over focus on growth can even be unhealthy for a congregation, especially if it comes at the expense of other important aspects of our spiritual life together. While we are to help bring others into the community of the faith, we are also to care for one another, be agents of Christ's healing, serve the poor and weak, seek for justice and peace, and help one another grow more into

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OCTOBER 2007

### **Publisher & Editor:**

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

The Northeast Torch is published  
periodically 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.

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### **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.

## New Policy for the Northeast Torch

You may have noticed that it has been a while since the last issue of the Northeast Torch. The writing, editing and layout tasks for a 10-page edition were getting a bit daunting, plus the reproduction and mailing costs were straining our tight budget. Starting with this issue, we are shrinking the size of the Torch to four to six pages, and we are sending it out by email to all for whom we have an email address. Those without email will continue to get a paper copy by regular mail. Sending by email allows us to use color, which we can't afford on paper, gets the publication out faster, and saves us copying and mailing costs. If you have received a paper copy of this letter by mail, but have an email address, please send your email address to the Canon Missioner at [frbillnerm@hotmail.com](mailto:frbillnerm@hotmail.com) so that we can add you to the electronic distribution. With the smaller size and reduced costs, we are hoping to publish the Torch more frequently. Without making any promises, yet, our current intention is to publish every other month. Thus, we'll aim to have the next edition out in December before Christmas.

*From the Canon Missioner continued...*

the likeness of Christ (i.e., spiritual growth). If anything, our spiritual life together is more important than growing in membership. This was driven home to me most recently in a book written by Tyler Wigg, a man who identifies himself as an Evangelical and a Baptist (although not Southern Baptist):

I will point out that Paul the apostle, the greatest missionary in church history, spent exactly zero percent of his letters exhorting his flock to make new converts. His emphasis was on doctrinal truth and living together as the body of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

I might add that the doctrinal parts of Paul's letters were always written primarily to support his case to the churches on how and why they should live together as the body of Christ. Certainly Paul expected the churches to add new members, but it is clear that he expected people to be attracted to Christ primarily through the examples of holy living of those who were already part of the Body. St. Patrick, perhaps the second greatest missionary in church history, had a similar approach. St. Patrick's strategy was to establish a Christian community, sort of like a coed monastery, next door to a pagan town. St. Patrick certainly taught the faith to the pagans next door, but those who became Christians did so mainly because they saw a Christian community "in the flesh" and decided that they wanted to be part of it.

The true signs of health in a parish then will be related to who the parish is, and what it does. In what ways does the congregation embody Christ? How is it going about caring for the poor, the weak and the ill, as well as its own members? How as a congregation is it promoting justice and peace? Do the members see themselves as a body, a community;

<sup>1</sup> Tyler Wigg Stevenson, Brand Jesus: Christianity in a Consumerist Age. (2007: Seabury Books, New York) p. 114. *Continued back page...*

## NEWS From Around NERM



Christ Church, Boonville has recently completed a major overhaul of its organ. The organ has a new keyboard, new solid-state electronics, and new action. The overhaul was completed in mid-July for a cost of approximately \$20,000. The congregation raised most of the rehabilitation cost themselves, but also received some gifts from a community appeal.



St. Mary's, Fayette is sad to announce the passing of long-time member Charlene McClelland, who died October 12<sup>th</sup> in Glasgow. Her funeral will be Tuesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, in Chilicothe.

Helen Whitsitt of St. Mary's was named Employee of the Month in July for the Missouri Division of Health and Senior Services. Then this month, Helen was named employee of the month for the entire State of Missouri. Governor Blunt presented her with the award on October 10<sup>th</sup> in Jefferson City. Helen anticipates retiring from her state job in 2008 and we anticipate her ordination as a deacon in 2009.

On the project front, St. Mary's has replaced the hand rails going into the church and is planning shortly to install a handicap ramp into Bishop's Hall.

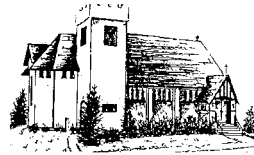


At Christ Church, Lexington, several members have recently celebrated important milestones. Roger Ewing just celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and Fred Tempel his 60<sup>th</sup>. Fred's wife Abigail managed to surprise Fred with a wonderful party at the Terre Beau winery in Dover, MO. Last, but certainly not least, Jane Hader last month celebrated a very significant birthday as well. Ben and Armen Davis Wood just returned from a trip to New Mexico where they got to meet their new granddaughter. Allen Brauningner suffered a broken ankle in August and we are happy to report that after two surgeries he is on the mend.

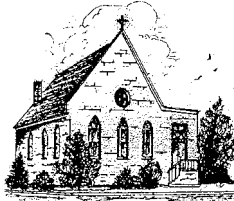
The adults have started a new class. They are studying *Real Faith for Real Life: Living The 6 Marks of Discipleship* by Michael Foss.

Lastly, we are sad to report the death of Bill and Suzie Kreitz's son Stephen, age 32, to cancer. Stephen died in Iowa on October 7<sup>th</sup> after a valiant

struggle against the disease. Besides Bill and Suzie, Stephen leaves behind a wife and two daughters. He was preceded in death by a son who died in infancy.



Trinity Church, Marshall, welcomes new member Pat Wright. Pat has jumped right in and is already serving as a lector. David and Disa Farris are now empty-nesters. Jonathan, who graduated from Marshall High School this year is now a freshman at Missouri State University in Springfield. Their other son Joshua is a senior at Webster University in St. Louis, and has recently received a scholarship for a semester in China next year.



St. Philip's, Trenton is making big plans to build an addition. The City of Trenton will close Halliburton Street on the south side of the Church, so that St. Philip's can build part-way into the street. The addition will have a new entrance with a handicap lift, a bathroom and a small gathering space. When built, St. Philip's will be able to end its lease on the Outreach Center.

Congratulations to Hannah Barron, granddaughter of John and MarySue McCullough, who has qualified for the district golf tournament.

Deacon Marty Byer has recently moved to a new house. Her new address is 3907 Ivanhoe Blvd., Columbia, MO 65203. Her phone and email remain the same.

Fr. Bill and Michelle Fasel are pleased to announce the birth of their first granddaughter, Page Edythe Fasel. Page was born just before midnight on October 10<sup>th</sup> and came into the world weighing 7 lbs. 7 oz. and 18 inches long. Proud parents Geof-

frey and Ann Fasel are exhausted, but otherwise doing fine.



# NERM Clergy Schedule October-December 2007

*From the Canon Missioner  
continued...*

Date	Boonville	Fayette		Marshall	Trenton
Oct. 7 – Pentecost 19	Fasel	Fasel	Whelan	Byer	Breese
Oct. 14 – Pentecost 20	Klein	Klein	MP	Fasel	Byer
Oct. 21 – Pentecost 21*	MP	MP	Fasel/Byer	MP	MP
Oct. 28 – Pentecost 22 <sup>1</sup>	Byer	Byer	MP	Wilson	Fasel
Nov. 4 – All Saints <sup>2</sup>	Fasel	Fasel	Lockhart	Byer	MP
Nov. 11 – Pentecost 24	Klein	Klein	Fasel	MP	Beam
Nov. 18 – Pentecost 25	MP	MP	Byer	Fasel	MP
Nov. 25 – Last Pentecost	Byer	Byer	MP	Wilson	Fasel
Dec. 2 – Advent 1	Fasel	Fasel	Whelan	MP	Byer
Dec. 9 – Advent 2	Klein	Klein	Fasel	Byer	MP
Dec. 16 – Advent 3	Byer	Byer	Lockhart	Fasel	Breese
Dec. 23 – Advent 4	MP	MP	MP	Wilson	Fasel
Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve	Klein	Klein	Whelan	Wilson	Fasel
Dec. 30 – Christmas I	Fasel	Fasel	MP	MP	Beam

\*NERM Annual Meeting in Lexington (10: 00 a.m.)

<sup>1</sup>All Saints celebration for St. Philip's, Trenton.

<sup>2</sup>23rd Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 26) for St. Philip's, Trenton.

or rather do they view themselves as individuals who happen to share certain interests, or a certain lifestyle, or who simply occupy the same space for an hour each week? Does the life of the Christian community help give meaning and purpose to their lives?

Being a healthy church does

not necessarily mean having a large budget supporting expensive programs that have a dramatic effect on the larger community. A church can have an effective ministry in a multitude of small and virtually unseen ways, many of which involve no program at all, but simply people attempting to live their lives in relationship to God and caring for and about other people. Whether a church receives the approval of others, or is even noticed at all is not a sign of health, either. After all, if a church were doing the work of the Devil, the Devil would definitely approve. Some would think that the absence of conflict would be a sign of health, but that is absolutely not true. Conflict can be a sign of serious problems in a congregation, but all communities from a single family to a nation will always have some conflict. Conflict arises from differences over things people care about. A church with no conflict would be indicative of one that is either doing nothing, or doesn't care, or both. Healthy congregations have conflicts, but handle them in constructive ways.

In our small congregations, people will come and go, be born and die at irregular intervals. As your missioner I will not worry that much about membership or attendance, nor will I harp to you about it. I will not harp about money either, except to note where its presence is enabling, or its lack is hindering, our efforts to fulfill God's call. I will work with you to strengthen our common life together, and to foster our spiritual growth. I invite you to do the same. *Bill*



Helen Whitsitt with her family at the awards ceremony in Columbia in July. At right are her awards.



Bishop Howe blessing a new tree in Marshall in June. With him is acolyte Alexander Richardson and his mother Laura. The tree is a gift from Michele Henessy (right) in memory of her mother.



**Northeast Episcopal Regional Ministry**  
**C/O Christ Episcopal Church**  
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