

## Dear Companions on the Way...

We had one of our better turnouts last Sunday for the Annual Meeting of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. Last year, as you might remember, we were hard into one of our snowstorms as the annual meeting took place. After a glorious combined worship, a fabulous brunch, and an informative meeting, we ended our time with some questions being put to the members and an invitation for feedback; so if you were at the meeting, this is a reminder and review, and if you weren't at the meeting, here is your invitation to offer to the Vestry your thoughts about directions and priorities for the coming year.

The request is that you look over the Objectives for the Future (included below from the Site Planning Commission Report) and identify an objective that you feel strong enough about that you could consider actively supporting in some way, and then make one or more suggested actions that would fulfill the objective you have chosen. We further are asking members to respond to a list of descriptive values that I have now mentioned in two sermons and have listed below. Are there actions that we specifically could do to become more of the kind of community that enhances these values? Are there values you would identify as key that are not on this list?

We would like your feedback, especially if there are things you could see yourself doing that would build toward these objectives and values. Send an e-mail to me at AndrewC@StMarksDurango.com and we hope you might include your name. We then will compile these and look at them when the Vestry gathers for a retreat later this month.

### St. Mark's Objectives for the Future

1. We want to see growth, as a byproduct of better serving our community and intentionally welcoming and incorporating new people
2. We want to attract and retain more young and economically disadvantaged families to our congregation
3. We envision the church's evolution occurring at the edge of the wheel in a hub / spoke / wheel model (see Site Planning Commission report)

See *Companions*, page 2

## Companions *continued from page 1*

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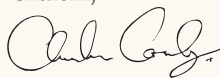
4. We wish to preserve and enhance our principal strengths:
  - a. Excellence in inwardly focused spiritual development, Anglican liturgy and worship, and preaching
  - b. Welcoming cultural diversity
  - c. Enriching the community with music and the arts
  - d. Deploying resources (money and volunteers) in outreach to the community and the world
5. We need to develop goals for the future in these areas:
  - a. Spiritual development of young people
  - b. Helping young families to balance busy lives with a link to their creator
  - c. Providing a helping hand to the poor and underprivileged, while providing opportunities for members to grow in love and service to God in the world around them

## Descriptive Values of St. Mark's identified by Fr. Andrew

1. A Sanctuary from Cynicism (and other de-humanizing language and behavior)
2. A Source of Beauty
3. A Bringer of Hope
4. A Wellspring of Compassion
5. A Place of Truth Telling

Two reports (and my sermon that day) laid the groundwork for the discussion and invitation for feedback. All the reports for the Annual Meeting are on our website and I would especially call to your attention the Rector's Report and the Report of the Site Planning Commission by linking to them at <http://www.stmarksdurango.com/Annualmeeting>.

Shalom,



Andrew

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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- February 6 . . St. Mark's day at Manna Soup Kitchen
- February 7 . . Safeguarding God's Children workshop
- February 13 . Youth Ski Retreat
- February 25 . Ash Wednesday Blood Drive, Services at noon and following Soul Break
- March 6 . . . . Gemma Kavanagh & Friends in recital

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## Safeguarding God's Children

The next Safeguarding God's Children workshop will be held on February 7, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to noon here at St. Mark's Church. It will be facilitated by Fr. Bob Seney and Peggy Glasco. Registration is necessary so the facilitators know how many packets to prepare. There is no fee to attend the workshop. All clergy and those who work with children are required to attend.

## Coming Up in Adult Education

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Communities of Practice, a four-week study led by Carol Tookey and Fr. Andrew begins February 1. March 1 will be a discussion of the Parish Read book, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*, by Phyllis Tickle (see pages 4 and 5). A study on later-life care, including the Five Wishes living wills and caring for aging parents begins March 8. Classes meet downstairs beginning at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays.

## Youth Events Set

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**Ski Retreat, February 13–15.** Here is something exciting and new for youth in Grades 6 to 12. Christ the King Lutheran Church is hosting a ski retreat and our youth are invited! The weekend will include team-build ing games, worship, Bible study, fellowship, food and a day of skiing at Wolf Creek (Saturday). Base cost is \$40 for youth plus the ski lift ticket, which is \$45 (\$24 for youth still age 12), plus costs if equipment rental or lessons are involved. For more information, call Andy Mohrhaus at 247-5310, ext. 102 or e-mail youthdir@ctkdurango.org. There are brochures and registration forms on the welcome table in the Parish Hall.

**QUEST 2K9 is April 17–19.** The annual Spring Youth retreat materials are now available on the Welcome table in the Parish Hall. You can read more about the event on the QUEST 2K9 webpage on the Diocese of Colorado Website: [http://www.coloradodiocese.org/03\\_faithformation/quest\\_09/quest\\_09.html](http://www.coloradodiocese.org/03_faithformation/quest_09/quest_09.html)

## Ash Wednesday Blood Drive

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St. Mark's Ash Wednesday Blood Drive will be held on Wednesday, February 25 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Donors must weigh a minimum of 110 pounds. If you have questions about your eligibility to donate blood, please call the Durango United Blood Services office at 385-4601 and inquire about your eligibility. The sign-up sheet is in the Parish Hall on the Outreach board. You can donate one pint of whole blood (or double red blood cells if you weigh 150 pounds or more). There's a bonus when you donate blood with United Blood services – free cholesterol screening results are made available for you by password access on their website. Giving blood is simple, free and a gift to all who receive it. This year, think of those who St. Mark's has recently lost and donate blood in their memory.

## Next Recital on the Series: March 6

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*Photo: Paul Boyer*

The next recital on St. Mark's 2008–2009 Recital Series is Friday, March 6 at 7:00 p.m. The recital features soprano Gemma Kavanagh with Nan Wagner, mezzo-soprano, Rochelle Mann on flute, Lou

Steele on guitar, Mick Hesse on trumpet and C. Scott Hagler on piano and organ. Gemma Kavanagh has sung to packed houses on our recital series, and received critical acclaim for her 2006 recital on the series. Buy your tickets early!

## Parish Read to Highlight Episcopal Emerging Church

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*The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*, by Phyllis Tickle, will be the focus of our next Parish Read starting February 1. We are providing opportunities for reading, parish-wide reflection and a call for further engagement.

It seems to many, both within and without the Episcopal Church, that Christianity is experiencing a subtle but significant shift. It's been happening for some time, but our corporate awareness of it has reached new levels in the last few years. As a result, new conversations are taking place everywhere and about everything traditionally perceived as the domain of religion: How do we read sacred scriptures? What does evangelism look like? What are the claims of social justice? How do we love each other? What is the role of the arts? What can worship look like? How do we recover the wisdom of the voices beyond our own recent history? These conversations are interfaith, interdenominational, intercontinental, interracial, and intergenerational. They are at coffee hour, over backyard fences, on the Internet, during Christian conferences, and in Christian literature. For now, this conversation is most commonly referred to as the "Emerging Church."

St. Mark's has been responding to this prompting, and we are connecting differently with our community today than, let's say, ten years ago: the contemplative Soul Break, the music festivals, the visual art shows, Godly Play (a narrative Christian education curriculum for children), Andrew on the sidewalk, and sermons on transformation are some of the signs. And, however we each perceive it or corporately define it, it is calling us all into new

levels of participation, into new understandings of Christianity as a vocation.

Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in any or all of the opportunities listed below. Our corporate insights will be as important as our individual insights as we look to understand and respond to the power of God moving in our time. Come join us.

### Parish Read for February

*The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*, a new title by Phyllis Tickle, will be our next Parish Read. Books will be available for purchase from the Lion's Corner Book Shop located in the Parish Hall, for circulation through the library, and from Fr. Andrew if you need a copy but can't quite find the funds right now.

Phyllis Tickle was the keynote speaker at the Colorado Diocesan Clergy Conference last November. She is a lay eucharistic minister in the Episcopal Church and a senior fellow of Cathedral College at the National Cathedral in Washington. She is the founding editor of the Religion Department of Publisher's Weekly, author of more than two dozen books (including a contemporary version of the *Daily Office* called *The Divine Hours*), and one of the most respected authorities on religion in America today. She will be one of the speakers at the March conference (see below).

If you are interested in additional reading, the library has several other books on this topic as well as several copies of the October–December issue of the magazine *Radical Grace*, which is devoted entirely to essays about the Emerging Church.

## **Parish Read Discussion, Sunday March 1**

Fr. Andrew will lead a discussion on Tickle's book during the Adult Education hour, 9:15 a.m., on Sunday, March 1. Whether or not you are able to attend the Emerging Church conference, this would be a great time for the parish to discuss the issues this book presents. Everyone is welcome.

## **Post-Modernism and the Emerging Church Conference with Richard Rohr, March 20–22, 2009**

There is one last chance to go to this conference at the group rate of \$135. We can add more people to our currently registered group, but the registrations and payments of additional registrants has to be submitted all at once to the conference registrar. Due to this, registration forms and full payment, either by credit card, money order or check (made out to the CAC) must be turned in to the office at St. Mark's by February 13, after which they will be sent to the CAC. If you miss this deadline you can still go, but the cost goes up to \$195. Fixed-income and student registration is available for \$99 through February 22 and \$115 after February 22 through the CAC website. If you don't have website access, you can call the St. Mark's office and talk to Cheryl who will print out your registration packet for you to pick up, fill out and mail. The CAC also has some scholarships available.

The Conference is being held March 20–22 at the Hotel Albuquerque in Old Town, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Speakers that will be featured include Richard Rohr, Phyllis Tickle, Brian McLaren, Shane Claiborne, Alexie Torres-Fleming, and others who will gather for three days of spiritual enrichment, challenge, and shared exploration as we envision what the Christian community can be and do

in this generation and in generations to come. You can read a lot more about this conference on the Internet by visiting <http://www.cacradicalgrace.org/conferences/emer/> you will also find lodging information (conference registration does not include lodging; you will need to book your own accommodations) and other information about the speakers, registration, suggested reading before the conference, videos, conference schedule and more.

## **American Cancer Society Offers Daffodils**

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Orders are being taken now for daffodils which will be available March 13–14. These flowers represent hope for cancer patients and their loved ones. Each \$10 donation buys ten daffodil buds which open when you put them in your warm home and last much longer than ones from the grocery store.

A sign-up sheet is in the Parish Hall. Payment must be in by February 15; please make checks to the American Cancer Society. Call Ellen Patterson at 946-9626 with questions.

## **Dave Spencer Classic**

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Set for March 6 and 7 at Durango Mountain Resort, the Dave Spencer Classic ski event supports the Adaptive Sports Association. If you would like to participate or sponsor a skier, see Mark Mishou at church or call him at 946-9473.

## Integrity Chapter Forming

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Formation of a Four Corners Chapter of Integrity is under way! Integrity is a nonprofit organization of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender [LGBT] Episcopalians and our straight friends.

From Integrity: "Since our founding by Dr. Louie Crew in rural Georgia in 1974, Integrity has been the leading grassroots voice for the full inclusion of LGBT persons in the Episcopal Church and our equal access to its rites. However, advocacy is only one facet of our ministry. At the national level and in local chapters and diocesan networks throughout the country, the primary activities are worship, fellowship, education, communication, outreach, and service to the church. Through Integrity's evangelism, thousands of LGBT people, estranged from the Episcopal Church and other denominations, have returned to parish life. Although the Episcopal Church has made tremendous strides toward inclusiveness, it still has a long way to go. Unfortunately, in too many parishes and dioceses, prejudice and oppression are still the norm. Whatever your sexual orientation, Integrity needs your support and membership."

If you are interested in Integrity and the Four Corners chapter, visit [integrityusa.org](http://integrityusa.org) or call St. Mark's at 247-1129.

## An Update from Cathy Donahoe

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I thank you for your prayers over the past year and hope that I have managed to convey something of how they have come to fruition with these brief articles. I pray that you had a wonderful Christmas season and that 2009 is off to a bright start!

Recently our church and community lost one of its long-time members to complications of diabetes. Since my arrival, Louisa has been in a wheelchair

following an amputation and has struggled with health issues on and off. I don't fully understand the network system here, but word of her death spread quickly. By that evening, the home of her daughter was full of people of all ages coming to grieve with the family. Fr. Felix led a brief prayer session and several women then led singing of various hymns. This continued until the service which was held the next afternoon at the church. The church was packed, with people also outside for lack of space. Following the service, folks followed the hearse to the cemetery, a few in cars, several on motorcycles and most walking. Several priests came to show their respect for this woman, who was born and raised here in Santa Fe, raised her family here, loved the Lord, loved to cook and loved to walk. She cooked for innumerable short-term teams throughout the years, lovingly known as Tía Louisa. She spoke English well, which was welcomed by many American visitors. I did not know her in her prime, but enjoyed getting to know her during my time here.

The month of February I will be in Haiti, a community called Deschappelles in the Artibonite Valley at the Hospital Albert Schweitzer. I will be teaching in a rehab tech training program. A gal who works in the community health program in the clinic, Santa, will be joining me for part of the time, working with the HIV program. Please pray for safe travel, productive class and clinical time for all and mutually beneficial collaboration for Santa and her colleagues.

## Deadline for March Newsletter

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Deadline for the next issue is February 20. Submit information for the newsletter to Tonya Wales at 259-4166 or [detwales@msn.com](mailto:detwales@msn.com) or contact Cheryl at [CherylW@StMarksDurango.com](mailto:CherylW@StMarksDurango.com).

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# Poet's Corner

## The Name of God

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*By Anya Silver*

Like a baker, swaddling the juice and heft of apples in pastry,  
I want my mouth to cradle the delicious name of God.

Kissing the Torah, I breathe the dust that has lain on the name of God,  
imagine ink on my indrawn breath.

I will dream myself into the body of a bee. I will enter the honeycomb  
and sip the scent of blackberry in the golden name of God.

I will open the windows of my house so the name of God can write itself  
on my walls with pigment of breeze and pollen, with stylus tipped in light.

If my heart were an amber room, I would inscribe the name of God  
over its doorways, and once a year I would flame it down to spicy smoke and oil.

When I was a girl, I drank from the chalice and felt the wine's heat travel  
down my bones, each pressed grape's drop alit with the secret name of God.

And later, full of grief, I let a woman press hard against my spine and felt  
life rushing again through my body, releasing the clenched-up name of God.

I want the name of God to frost over my sight, to loop the tides to my ears.  
How can I be frightened with those vowels in my lungs, flaring like paper lanterns?