



The Epistle

The Episcopal Church of St. Paul—Chatham, NJ
May 2006

“The Puppy ate my Prayer Book”

by the Reverend Elizabeth Kaeton, Rector and Pastor

My beloved Ms. Conroy came home the other evening with tears in her eyes.

Now, you only need spend 10 minutes with “Nurse-Jane-Fuzzy-Wuzzy” to know that she's been a tough old bird since birth. The kids have always lovingly called her “Mother Superior.” Some of the folks at St. Paul’s call her “The Rock” because she is so solid and trustworthy. Her Hospice patients and families call her, “MY nurse” and say that as long as she's around, they know they can face even death and it will be okay.

Suffice it to say, it takes a great deal to make her cry.

“The puppy ate my Prayer Book,” she said, with a distinctive lump in her throat. In her hand was her 1979 Prayer Book Hymnal, the front cover ripped in to three major pieces, the thin pages beneath bearing tiny teeth marks and little tears.

At her feet, looking up with curiosity and anticipatory contrition (and with enough cuteness to break your heart) was the culprit - our daughter's 7 month old Havanese: CoCo Chanel, AKA “The Upper East Side Pooch” AKA “CoCo Pup” now known as “CoCo the Ripper.”

(Her North Jersey name is “Ethel Fuzzbutt” but we dare not say that in front of our UES daughter who is already negatively predisposed to the “Bridge and Tunnel” crowd.)

Mind you, we had taped together the back binder of that same Prayer Book about 2 years ago and promised ourselves to have the whole thing rebound - soon. But, well . . . with one thing and another . . . you know how it goes. Ah, life in the fast lane of parish ministry!

The book was given to her on the occasion of my ordination 20 years ago by my ordaining bishop, Frederick Barton Wolf, retired bishop of Maine, now resting in life eternal.

He had given it to her with the advice that she and I develop a circle of friends outside the church. “Make friends with the folks in the Garden Club, the golf course, the tennis court - anywhere but the church,” he said, sternly. “It would be even better if the friends you make are not Episcopalian, much less Christian. Not only will they keep you honest about your faith,” he warned, “but they'll also keep your relationship sane and intact.”

Thirty years later, we have never regretted taking his advice.

Her Prayer Book, like mine, is filled with the names and places of the various churches and communities where we've served together. Every time we've left a place, we've asked people to sign their names on the pages at the front of the book. Reading through the names is like a walk down ecclesiastical memory lane. My beloved and I have taken on the spiritual discipline and practice of highlighting the names and praying for those who have died every November 1st. It has become an important part of our prayer life.

Various prayers and hymns are marked with laminated prayer cards from the many funerals we've attended over the years. There's a whole flurry of them from the 80's. I stopped counting after we had lost the 50th friend to AIDS. I dare not count them, even now, for fear that I, too, will begin weeping – a much easier task for me. If I ever started to really grieve that loss, I fear I'd never stop.

Strangely enough, it is the stain on the corners of the pages that attracts my attention this time. I never noticed it before. There is a dark stain from palm sweat, leaving a mark in the exact place where her hands have held the book open. I've gone to check my book and have discovered the same phenomenon.

There are interesting differences. She and I both have the same palm marks on page 355 – Holy Eucharist Rite II – and following. The stains get darker again at page 358 – the Nicene Creed. And, of the six Eucharistic Prayers, Prayer "A" seems to have gotten the most use.

However, I have more stains on Morning Prayer and she has more stains at Evening Prayer. We have maintained the discipline of saying Compline together – another of Fred Wolf's gems of advice – so those pages are equally stained. However, I have more stains at the pastoral offices: Marriage, Baptism and Funerals.

On the one hand, after twenty years, it's probably time to break down and get a new Book of Common Prayer. On the other hand, how can we? That BCP has been with us every step of the way in our ministry together. It has seen us through times of grief and sorrow as well as joy and celebration. It is our connection with the saints – those who are here in the church militant, those who have gone on before us, those who are yet to come.

It has been the source of our solace and strength in times of oppression and prejudice, the words of our Baptismal Covenant bolstering our strength and inspiring our soul. It has been the silent recipient of the sweat of our palms, the labor of our prayers.

It is a holy book, sure and true.

Much ado has been made by the leadership of our church regarding the so-called "four instruments of unity" in the Anglican Communion. In my humble opinion, not enough attention has been paid to the Book of Common Prayer as the heart and soul of what it means to be an Episcopalian who is a member of the Anglican Communion.

The upcoming General Convention (June 11 – 22) will, no doubt, be a watershed moment in the history of The Episcopal Church. The conservative drums keep pounding out the message, "Walk together or walk apart." Even some of the most optimistic liberals are becoming more and more concerned that schism is a greater probability than possibility. The Presbyterians will also meet in June and it is reported that tensions in that church are also thick.

I have a thought – an antidote, of sorts, to the negative spin cycle in which we seem to be caught. Check your prayer book tonight. See if you have evidence of palm sweat on the pages. I dare say that, at the end of our days as the national churches gather, it will be the palm sweat on the pages of our Prayer Books that is more important than any thing else in our common life of faith.

Charges of heresy and threats of schism may gnaw away at the ties that bind, but it is the prayers we say together, the baptismal vows we make together, the communion of saints we celebrate together that make our life in common holy.

That's enough to bring tears to the eyes of even the toughest old bird in our flock, and healing to the marks and tears on the hard covers of our lives.

Easter Joy at St. Paul's

by the Reverend Elizabeth Kaeton, Rector and Pastor

Easter Day was an occasion of unbridled inspiration and joy this year. We had record attendance and an almost full house! Numbered among the many, many visitors was none other than Bishop Jack Spong and his beloved spouse, Christine. John Bennett tipped me off to their presence in the congregation 15 minutes before the service began with, "No pressure, but guess who's here?" Right! Too late to change the sermon. Too late to ask Scotty to beam me up. It was a delight to have them with us to share in our Easter joy.

There are many, many people who helped to make Holy Week, the Easter Vigil and Easter Day such a beautiful, meaningful spiritual event. I want to begin with Betty Williams and Ann Bennett, co-chairs of the Altar Guild, and all of the amazing people who helped to prepare the sanctuary with the thankless work of spit and polish, ironing and arranging.

Special thanks to those in the Flower Ministry. Palm Sunday's adornments have been perfected by Joanne Bradley and the "garden" by the Baptismal Font by Betty Williams. The Easter Lilies were also especially beautiful this year. Many thanks go to those who helped to deliver them.

Betty Stockley did a wonderful job in getting the best dramatic readers for the three times the Passion of Jesus is read during Holy Week. She also got stellar readers for the Great Vigil of Easter. In the Episcopal Church, our liturgy rests equally on Word and Sacrament. The ministry of lector is a sacred one – breaking open Holy Scripture so that God's people may be nourished and fed. My heartfelt thanks go to all those who take this ministry seriously and with great care.

The ushers, headed up by Todd Huffman, did their usual work of quiet excellence – ringing bells, turning lights off and on at the appropriate time, juggling the new fire – and all the other small things but enormously important things that put the drama in the dramatic reliving of Holy Week and Easter.

The Hospitality team did a wonderful job of providing soup for our Lenten Series (thanks to the coordination of Leslie Morgan Crowley), and the Easter Vigil Reception of Champagne and chocolate covered strawberries was overseen with joy by Biz Halliday.

Lenny Friday, our Sexton, did his best to keep up with the variety of changes made on a daily basis during Holy Week. He vacuumed, dusted, swept and cleaned – all the while saying his prayers and blessing us twice with his work. Thank you, Lenny.

The rest of the staff provided unbelievable assistance and excellent service: Tim Wong led the children through the Stations of the Cross and worked to coordinate the acolytes, torchbearers and crucifers – who all performed their tasks with maturity beyond their tender years. Allison Pishko worked her usual wonders with the Easter Egg . . . um . . . “hunt” and the Alleluia’s. Laura Weinbrom kept careful track of the contributions for each service. Randy Johnson and Linda Coogan did “yo-persons’ service” with all of the bulletins and all of the inserts. This was Randy’s first Holy Week and Easter as Parish Administrator, and yet he kept us all calm and on track. What a blessing to have him as part of our team!

Our seminarians, Jon Richardson and Megan Sanders also did a lot of the “heavy lifting” in helping me as I was recovering from loss of my voice to Strep Throat and the loss of our Deacon Intern Jeannette Hile who was hospitalized due to pernicious high blood pressure. We are both well on the road to recovery now, thanks in no small part to the work done by Jon and Megan.

And, what can we say about the choir led by Linda Eriksen? Except, perhaps, WOW! This was her first “liturgical” Easter in many, many years – the first in The Episcopal Church – but you never would have known it. The music – complete with brass and timpani – clearly put the capitol “I” in Inspirational. Thank you –one and all!

This is my fourth Easter Season as your rector and pastor, and I believe it was the best. Although, come to think of it, I say that every year, don’t I? I expect I’ll say it again this time next year, as well. My heartfelt thanks to so many willing hearts and hands that not only make the work light, it makes it an absolute joy.

The Lord is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Music News

by Linda Eriksen, Dir. of Music Ministry

Thank You to all who made our Lent / Easter season extra special.

Wednesday Lenten Series

Our Wednesday Lenten Meditation series was a success. It was a wonderful opportunity to share in a noonday prayer service, enjoy a wonderful musical offering, and fellowship with each other at our luncheon prepared for us by the Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton with assistance from our seminarian, Jon Richardson.

Our soloists included: All performers were accompanied by Linda Eriksen, Director of Music Ministry.

Don Webster, tenor

Joe La Vela, recorders

Eva Curtis, flautist

Alex Garrido-Brosnan, soprano (with Don Webster, tenor)

Mary Jo Oakley, soprano (with Rachel Reina- flautist)

Linda Eriksen, organists

We thank all our soloists and everyone who came and supported us in our Lenten Meditation series. Thanks to our worship leaders: Elizabeth Kaeton, Allison Pishko, Jon Richardson, and Tim Wong and to Randy Johnson for all his help in making the program a success. We hope that we can continue the tradition in years to come.

Lent and Holy Week

Our Parish Choir members deserve a big hug for all their long hours and dedication to our music ministry. They attended weekly rehearsals, participated in all our Sunday worship services, the Schubert Mass on March 26th, Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Great Vigil of Easter and Easter Day and lots of extra rehearsals for our special events. And thanks to our Junior Choir for their musical offerings and singing with the Festival Choir for our Easter Sunday Service and singing praises to our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Guest Musicians

Palm Sunday Jazz Musicians

This year, five jazz musicians lead the congregation down Main Street for a wonderful procession playing and singing “When the Saints Go Marching in” and “What a Friend we Have in Jesus”. Our jazz players were Scott Nadelson and Dan Vindgrad on trumpet, Susan Dillon and Nate Barbakoff on trombone, and Steve Berger on tuba. What a wonderful way to begin Holy Week!

Easter Brass

For our Easter service, special seasonal music was played by a brass quartet, timpani and organ. Our musicians were: Scott Nadelson and George Sabel, trumpet, Susan Dillon and Henry Kavett, trombone and Austin Gengos on timpani. Many thanks to Jim Buchanan, director of the Essex County Youth orchestra for loaning us the timpani. Austin is a student at Millburn Middle School and Scott is a senior at Millburn High School planning on majoring in music in college next year.

Sunday School News

by Allison Pishko

It is hard to believe but we are nearing the end of our program year! June 4th will be the last Sunday school session of the year. But mark your calendars because you will not want to miss our end of the year picnic on June 11th. Not only will we have hot dogs and ice cream but for the first time, we will have a moonwalk to entertain everyone – young and old alike!

With the scheduling of our end of the year events, thoughts turn to the fall and registration for Sunday school teachers. There will be a sign up in the back of the church and I encourage you to get involved. We have had several people volunteer for the first time this year and I hope that trend will continue. All curriculums and supplies are provided for you. Co- teachers and assistants are also available.

Don't forget to register your children for our 3rd annual Vacation Bible School scheduled for August 7–11, 2006. Registration forms are available on the youth group

table. We will also be looking for youth volunteers – anyone entering 6th grade and older is eligible. Please see Tim or me if you are interested.

Bring in your 7cents a day jars before the end of the year! You can drop them off with me or Randy in the main office. I will publish a total in next month's issue.

Before I close this month's issue, I would like to list the names of all the wonderful volunteers who have helped to make our Sunday school program possible this year. I know I have said this before, but these are the people who show up prepared each week to teach your children regardless of Saturday night plans, sports schedules, etc. I know you all join me in thanking them for their commitment and dedication.

Nursery: **Kaitlin Romei and Christina Hipp**

Pre-K: **Katie Orphanos, Amy Mason, Linda Scott, Alli Papier and Grace Oakley**

K-1st: **Tracy Ness, Ted Pishko, Mark Hipp, Stephanie Guerard and Max Papier**

2nd-3rd: **Nancy Livell, Julia Doern, Patti Hanley, Jennifer Carter and Rachel Verill**

4th-5th: **Laurie DeBiasse, Lorraine Basso, Laura Patrick, Dan Patrick and Ann Rea**

6th-8th: **Tim Wong**

Break In

April 28, 2006

by Randy Johnson

I would like to notify you of some sad news. Upon arriving at the parish office yesterday morning I discovered that the church had been burglarized. The Methodist church on Main Street was also burglarized yesterday, so this was not a isolated incident.

Although we suffered some property damage, very little of value was taken and no one was hurt. The glass in the door to my office was broken and my closet door was pried open. The doors to Rev'd Kaeton's office, the Sacristy and Beth Hatikvah's closet in the Parish Hall were also pried open and those locks were broken. Nothing was missing from any of these areas. Our cashbox was taken but that only contained stamps and a few checks.

The police were notified immediately and they called in a team of crime scene investigators from the Sheriff's office. By the end of the business day, a locksmith had repaired the damage to the affected doors.

I would like to turn this unfortunate incident into an opportunity to review and improve the security of the church property. Although we can never be totally secure, improvements can be made. More news about this will follow.

Episcopal Diocese of Washington publishes

"Following the Money: Donors and Activists on the Anglican Right"

When the General Convention of the Episcopal Church meets in Columbus, Ohio, in June, a small network of theologically conservative organizations will be on hand to warn deputies that they must repent of their liberal attitudes on homosexuality or face a possible schism. The groups represent a small minority of church members, but relationships with wealthy American donors and powerful African bishops have made them key players in the fight for the future of the Anglican Communion.

Now, in a two-part series in its diocesan newspaper, the Washington Window, the Episcopal Diocese of Washington examines these organizations, their donors and the strategy that has allowed them to destabilize the Episcopal Church.

"Following the Money: Donors and Activists on the Anglican Right" is now published as an eight-page section of the diocesan newspaper "The Window." It will also be available on the diocesan Web site at: "<http://www.edow.org/follow>"

The first part of the series, "Investing in Upheaval," draws on Internal Revenue Service Forms 990 to give a partial account of how contributions from Howard F. Ahmanson, Jr., the savings and loan heir, and five secular foundations have energized resistance to the Episcopal Church's decision to consecrate an openly gay bishop and to permit the blessing of gay and lesbian relationships.

The article sets contributions to organizations such as the American Anglican Council (AAC) and the Institute on Religion and Democracy (IRD) in the context of the donors and other philanthropic activities which include support for conservative political candidates, think tanks and causes such as the intelligent design movement.

The second article, "A Global Strategy," uses internal emails and memos from leaders of the AAC and IRD to examine efforts to have the Episcopal Church removed from the worldwide Anglican Communion and replaced with a more conservative entity. The documents surfaced during a Pennsylvania court case. The article also explores the financial relationship between conservative organizations in the United States and their allies in other parts of the world.

The series was written by Jim Naughton, a former reporter for The New York Times and The Washington Post, who is the director of communications for the diocese. For further information contact him at jnaughton@edow.org or 202/537-7162.

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Services

Every Sunday

8:00 am–9:00 am

Holy Eucharist

9:30 am–10:00 am

Adult Choir

10:00 am–11:30 am

Choral Holy Eucharist

5:00 pm

Holy Eucharist

Every Wednesday

7:00 am–7:45 am

Holy Eucharist

& Healing Service