

OUTLOOK

ST.ASAPHNEWSLETTER September 2008

The architect's color rendering of the exterior of the new building. A framed version of this plus an inside view of one of the classrooms is hanging in the parlor of the parish hall.



The next chapter begins! Creating the uncommon parish

By Sheepdog

I am so very excited! In just a matter of days we will be entering the next chapter in the life of St. Asaph's Church. The new building is already underway (well, almost). The interior of the church will soon begin its transformation. A new Montessori based curriculum (one of the most popular across the nation) will begin to be used with our children. The Outreach Team is continuing to expand its vision for the parish. Small groups are continuing to form to do fun and interesting things. Newcomers are being welcomed. Weddings are being planned. The gallery season is

being filled. A new organ is in residence. Some significant maintenance issues are being tackled. And I'm certain I've left out several other important items. The energy is ramping up for a great Fall! Where, I must ask, did the summer go?

The more important question is: where will **you** be? I hope you are planning now to be a part of every Sunday celebration. Each week will be a little different and you never know what you might miss in the life of our community if you're not here.

There are many changes in process. If that word scares you then call them expansions, enhancements, improvements, amendments or shifts, but please do not absent yourself from them. This just might be the most exciting time at St. Asaph's in the past 50 years and you really want to be a part of it. In order to seize the opportunities that are now before us, we must work together to make our compelling story known. And I now we will.

See you Sunday!

A state-of-the-art concert instrument at St. Asaph's

By Roy Harker

New to St. Asaph's this summer is the installation of a digital instrument of concert proportions in the rear of the church. The three-manual, five-division Johannus, is on loan from Nelsen Organ Works, the organ company owned and operated by Chuck Nelsen from his burgeoning home business in Wayne. Johannus organs are built in Holland and are only recently breaking into the American market. The 110 rank, 90-voice instrument was built for the American Guild of Organists national convention in Philadelphia in 2002. It has resided in several locations since that time and is now finding a temporary home at St. Asaph's. This organ is capable of the entire concert repertoire in addition to finely tuned choir and congregational accompaniment. Forty speakers, placed around the sanctuary, provide exceptional sound and realistic interpretations of pipe organ sound. It can create a thunderous cathedral fortissimo as well as the quietest whisper of pianissimo – and everything in between – with exceptional clarity and saturation of sound.

How it works. Digital instruments, like this one, derive their sound from the pipes of other significant pipe organs. Each pipe in the chosen organ is digitally "sampled" or recorded and stored in a large file. The recording takes place in three distinct stages: first the initial "attack" – the sound the pipe first makes when air enters it; second, the sustained note; and finally the sound the pipe makes when the air to the pipe is cut off – the "release". These three phases of sound are stored in a large computer that then reacts to the player's demands by combining successively the three recorded sounds digitally. Computers that can process large bits of information quickly have made this life-like play back possible, processing billions of bits per nanosecond. The result is an unparalleled likeness of the original pipe instrument. In some cases, like the open wooden stops on the Great division, you can actually hear the sound of rushing wind in the sample. Many of the samples in the Johannus now at St. Asaph's come from the pipe organs at St. John the Divine and The Riverside Church in New York.

This breakthrough in organ technology has made instruments like this one more accessible to churches with other spending priorities. In

addition to the lower purchase and installation price, maintenance is almost nill - no tuning, voicing, or re-leathering will ever be required. The console is also movable and can be integrated with existing pipework to create a hybrid of sorts of both real and digital stops. Just such a installation was recently completed at the Church of the Redeemer in Bryn Mawr by the Allen Organ Company.

News of this installation at St. Asaph's is spreading through the local organ industry and is attracting a number of organists for a test drive. St. Asaph's may also be asked to host a organ recital series sponsored by the local AGO Chapter later this year. I'll be demonstrating this instrument with an extended prelude on Sunday, September 14, beginning at 9:45am, as we re-enter the church from our summer recess. Please plan on coming early to experience this instrument for yourself! We remain grateful to Chuck Nelsen for the ongoing relationship with St. Asaph's Church, Nelsen Organ Works, and Johannus.

2008/9 Gallery season

The new gallery season will begin in October this year to avoid some of the messiness that the first month of construction will bring. Watch for gallery details next month.

The three-manual, five-division Johannus organ now in residence at St. Asaph's.



CONGREGATION

Vestry at work

At its regular August meeting, the Vestry worked through a short but very full agenda. The Rector gave an update on Lynda Staton and the volunteers working the parish office, the ecclesiastical trial of Bishop Bennison, and reflected on the informal conversations on service schedules and seating held after the Garden Mass for three weeks. The Rector then informed the Vestry of his decision to keep the current Sunday schedule and what had led him to that conclusion.

The Vestry then engaged in long and direct conversation about the amendment of seating in the church and the purchase of new wooden chairs. This particular agenda item concluded several months of discussion. As was noted in the informal community conversations, the matter of seating is not primarily about furniture but about how the community is formed by the way it prays together. The Vestry approved the removal of the pews and the purchase of new chairs (\$21,000) using communal formation as a primary framework for the decision. The Rector also shared a variety of seating arrangements and room arrangements that will now be possible in the church.

The Vestry also gave final approval for the Bala Build project. The Bala House Montessori School, having met the conditions of the Memorandum of Understanding established between the school and the parish for this project, sought approval to proceed and assurance of the necessary funding from the parish. The parish's financial commitment includes an initial \$200,000 investment plus the cost of an additional room added at the Vestry's request, 50% of the design phase fees, 100% of zoning process fees for a total of \$515,000. Additional costs are the required capital improvements (storm drain replacement, sewer line repair, new domestic water service, code compliant fire water service, upgraded electrical service, basement sprinklers) for another \$89,000. It is important to note these capital improvements are necessary regardless of the project and the cost of several of these items is being shared by The Bala House. The Vestry approved the funding noting that funding for some of the capital improvements had already been allocated.

Rectory and Barn work complete

The work to repair the sideporch of the rectory is now complete. The floor of the porch as well as several of the support joists had to be replaced. The staircase was moved from the side to the center and the railings were repaired. The substantial damage to the barn caused by the automobile accident has also been repaired. Work included replacing structural supports, storage units, an exterior wall, carpet and paint.

Pew removal work event

Wear your work clothes to church on Sunday, Sept 21 for the 10 am service. We will celebrate Holy Eucharist and then work together to remove the pews and to prepare the space for the new room arrangement. Once we've finished we'll have lunch together. Sandwiches will be provided. You can help with lunch by bringing drinks and salads. A sign-up sheet for food is on the bulletin boards.

Oct 5 St Francis Day

Our annual Blessing of the Animals in honor of St. Francis will be on Sunday, Oct 5 at the 10 am liturgy only. The early service is an animal-free zone on this day. The blessing liturgy is specially designed to be pet friendly. Bring your pets but remember they must be caged or leashed and curbed.

Thanks to our volunteers

With Lynda away to recuperate after surgery, we were in desperate of consistent and competent help in the office, and we got it! Our very deep thanks to Joanne Behm, Deb Callahan, John Barrett, Connie Stelzenmuller, Margaret Hunting and Renee Banson who kept our office open and running for three weeks.

Parish Workday, Sept 13

We're back on schedule for a regular parish workday on the second Saturday of each month. Our attendance at these has been less than we need, so let's all try to make a commitment to be better about them. The day begins at 9 am and continues until 2 pm. Come for any part of it and we'll put you to work. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin boards to let us know if you're coming.

MORE CONGREGATION

Wed Prayer Group

This group convened by Mary Chris Lindsay restarts on Wednesday, Sept 3 and will meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30 in the Meditation Space (south transept).

Play reading group

Anne Speyer convenes this new group that is off to a great start. They will next meet on Monday, Sept 8 at 7 pm in the church.

Book club

The selections for Fall are *While I Was Gone* by Sue Miller (for Sept) and *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh (for Oct). The groups meetings on the second Monday of each month in the parlor. Carolyn Ramsey is the convenor.

Common Threads

Allen Finley gathers this group each month on the third Saturday from 12:30 to 3 pm to share lunch and life and knitting. The group will next meet on Saturday, Sept 20 at the Rectory. Food signup is on the bulletin boards.

Do you have news for your group?

We'd love to hear and to help publicize the activities of your group! The deadline for Outlook is the 20th of the each month. Send your news to the parish office via email. All submissions are subject to editing.

Sunday flower and hospitality

The sign-up sheets for 2009 flowers and Fall coffee hours are now up on the bulletin boards. There are many opportunities available (that means open spaces) to serve the community this coming year.

Sign-up for Ministry

Want to become a lector or join the altar guild for this year? Need a break from some ministry you've been doing for a while or just want more time to focus your time in another ministry area? Use the sign-up sheets on the bulletin boards to let us know what you'd like to do this year. The process is simple. Each ministry and group has a page. If you are currently engaged in the ministry then your name appears on the list. **If you would like to join a group**, then add your name. **If you would like to leave a group**, draw a line through your name. The parish office will take care of the rest and notify the convenor. Sign ups will be up through the end of September. Look for:

LECTORS (READERS)
CHALICERS
GREETERS
ALTAR GUILD
BREAD GUILD
FLOWER GUILD
WISDOM CIRCLE
CHOIR
COMMON THREADS
PLAY READING
OUTREACH
TRANSPORTATION
LOAVES & FISHES
PASTORAL CAREGIVERS
COUNTERS
OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

OUTREACH NOTES

St. Asaph's ministry partners include Northlight Community Center, Cassidy Elementary School, Philabundance, and the Interfaith Hospitality Network

Thanks to all those who have participated in our summer Outreach projects: Philabundance Warehouse Day, Share the Harvest Garden, Dinner with IHN Families, school supply drive for Cassidy School and the children's food drive for North Light Community Center.

The FALL Outreach Calendar is beginning to take shape. Here's what we're planning for the next several months:

United Way Day of Caring
Saturday, Sept 13

Philadelphia Cares School District of Philadelphia Work Day
Saturday, Oct 18

Dinner with IHN families
Saturday, Nov 1

Thanksgiving Dinner Food Drive for North Light Families
Month of November

Christmas for Head Start Families
Month of December

Have you enjoyed the new folding chairs?

Thanks to your generosity to the Sam Dempster Memorial Fund (via the Island Fling) we have 100 new folding chairs that match the new folding tables purchased last year. When used at the Garden Mass many of you commented that not only were they attractive they were also very comfortable. So what is happening to the metal folding chairs, most of which have seen better days? We've retained a few for other uses, but nearly all of them are available for free! That's right! All you need do is contact the church office by Sept 30 with how many you would like to have and tell us exactly when you are coming to get them. First come, first served. If you'd like to make a donation to the Sam Dempster Fund as a thanksgiving then we'd love that, too. Any metal chairs that remain after Sept 30 will be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Deep thanks to Steve Sheeran and Bernie Stelzenmuller for delivery of the chairs. It took several trips to accomplish.

Building for the future right now

By the Rector

At long last the Bala Building Project is now becoming a reality. This exciting project is the result of untold numbers of people giving hours upon hours of their time and daring to dream together not only to resolve some of our longstanding building problems but also to provide capacity for the future. It is no secret that the building plan for the project that was presented to me upon my arrival did not meet with my approval. I knew immediately that that structure would become a barrier to future growth in short order. We (Bala House and St. Asaph's) needed to rethink what we were doing. And so we did.

The new structure gives us (St. Asaph's) many of the things we desperately need and would not otherwise be able to attain:

- improved and covered handicap accessibility
- two adult bathrooms on the main floor
- the use of all office spaces in the current building
- the use of classrooms on the lower level
- a new adult classroom with air conditioning
- the ability to add a second floor
- improved exterior lighting
- improved parking
- more landscaping

Of course, we gain other things as well because we have responsibilities as the landowner (and owner of the new building) to maintain our campus according to township codes. These commitments include (but are not limited to) these capital improvements:

- repair of existing sewer lines (and code compliance)
- replace rainwater runoff line (code compliance)
- fire suppression sprinklers throughout the buildings
- emergency lighting and signage in every room
- a "green bench" to accommodate pedestrian traffic along St. Asaph's Road
- upgraded electrical service

The Bala House has met all of their financial obligations. St. Asaph's contribution to the project is guided by the agreement signed by both organizations in November 2005 with additions authorized by the Vestry.

Initial commitment	\$200,000
Room addition (estimate)	150,000
Actual cost adjustment (inflation)	75,000
50% Design Phase costs	90,000
	515,000

Capital Improvements

Storm drain replacement	18,645
Repair sewer line	8,475
New domestic water line	15,313
Code complaint fire water service	9,663
Upgraded electrical service	8,500
Basement sprinklers	28,260
	88,856



Communication

We will be sending out a joint communication each Friday to update you on construction, where to park, which doors to use, special safety concerns for the coming week. It will be important for you to look for and read this email message each and every week. **If you have a meeting at the church that includes persons who are not on our email list, then it is your responsibility to advise them of the parking, campus access and safety requirements in the message.**

Safety and campus access

- The construction zone (the area inside the fencing) is a hard hat area.
- It is vital that everyone follows the safety information we provide you and the signage posted on the campus. We will strictly enforce the rules. If this sounds harsh then you are hearing me correctly. The safety of everyone requires that we work together and hold one another responsible (even someone else's child or teenager) for our behavior in a construction zone.
- Adult with children should keep their children in hand when outside on the campus. We cannot stress this strongly enough.
- There will be days and weeks when vehicular access to the campus will be limited. Watch the weekly Construction News email for specific information for the following Sunday and weekdays.

Parking

Federal Realty (the owners of the Bala Shopping Center) have granted us parking privileges in the rear of the shopping center in the row of spaces adjacent to the field. Please do not park elsewhere on their property unless you are willing to risk your car being towed. When you park there, you should enter our campus through the gate in the chainlink fence. You will notice a large sign to help you find the entrance. A safe pathway has been created for everyone to use. Once on the campus simply look for the green signs on the doors that will indicate a safe entryway for the day.

Yes, its going to be messy for a few months, but it will also be glorious. Groundbreaking will happen in October (after the fact). We'll send out the details when they are available.

New seating, new floorplan, old traditions

With the Vestry decision to remove the pews we finally have the opportunity to live into the older traditions of the church’s liturgical life. Did you know that pew seating is a fairly recent innovation? Churches were not commonly furnished with pews until the Protestant Reformation when the sermon (for them!) became the central act of Christian worship (not so with us Anglicans!). As Aidan Kavanagh said in his classic book, *Elements of Rite*:

Pews, which entered the liturgical place only recently, nail the assembly down, proclaiming that the liturgy is not a common action but a preachment perpetuated upon the seated, an ecclesiastical opera done by virtuosi for a paying audience. Pew distance the congregation, disenfranchise the faithful, and rend the assembly.

With flexible seating we will no longer have those particular issues and we will now be able to more fully serve the needs of each of our liturgies while also better accommodating acoustical performances (music and drama).

The chairs that have been purchased are very similar to the six chairs that have been used near the altar for the past 29 months. These chairs will arrive just before Christmas Day. Until then, the new folding chairs purchased for the parish hall will be used.

What about kneeling cushions?

The memorial kneelers work well with the new chairs and will continue to be used.

Will anything other than the pews be removed?

No. The carved “modesty screens” will be removed from the front center section while the one removed to make room for the grand piano and the Meditation Space in the south transept will be replaced. Any of these screens that are removed will be saved for future use.

Will I be able to purchase one of the pews?

Yes. Those details are still being worked out and will be announced to the parish as soon as they are available.

Will the floor be refinished?

We have not made a decision on that. A floor specialist will be investigating our options and reporting back. At the very least, we expect to clean up the floors and repaint them. Keep in mind that there is no subfloor in the Nave so our options may be very limited.

How will the room be arranged?

We will create “zones” for each part of the liturgy. For the 10 o’clock liturgy, the seating will face each other across the center aisle (much like we experience at the Garden Mass). The Liturgy of the Word will be led from the “rear” (where the choir sat last year). The Altar will remain in its present location under the tower at the crossing with ample open space around it. The Baptismal Font will be moved to the chancel to give it a more prominent position and to allow the community to gather around it for baptisms. This position of the font also speaks the progressive theological position that Baptism is not the gatekeeper to Communion but, following Jesus, is a result of the hospitality of the table.

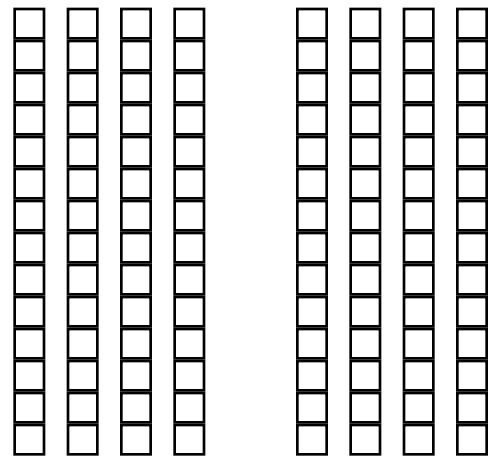
Where will the choir sit?

Our musicians will be mixed among the community in order to better assist us with our communal singing. They will continue to sing anthems but will have the freedom to assemble anywhere in the room when needed. It is important to note that this way of doing their work precludes “performing” for the congregation. Music in worship is intended to be prayer and they will help to lead us in that prayer work.



This is the very comfortable and elegant chair that will fill the church. Our chairs will have an upholstered seat (the photo shows a rush seat).

ALTAR



AMBO

Does probity translate into policy? God in the White House

Book Review



by Randall Balmer
HarperOne 2008
ISBN 0060734051

Available at St. Asaph's
Amazon store on the parish
website

How faith shaped the presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush

In 1960, presidential candidate John F. Kennedy asked the nation to disregard his religion. In 2000, George W. Bush informed the nation that Jesus was his favorite philosopher.

In his new book, *God in the White House*, Randall Balmer explores the interplay between religion and politics in America, tracking the "religionization" of the Oval Office across the last half of the 20th century. How did faith become such an important criterion for the presidency?

Balmer is a professor of American religious history at Barnard College and the author of several books on the evangelical experience in the United States. His newspaper columns are distributed nationally by The New York Times Syndicate, and he earned an Emmy nomination for hosting the PBS adaptation of his second book, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory: A Journey into the Evangelical Subculture in America*.

Randall Balmer, professor of religious history at Barnard College, the editor-at-large for Christianity Today, and, since 2006, an Episcopal priest, was interviewed today on Fresh Air about his book *God in the White House*. It's well worth clicking through the link above where you'll find two podcasts. Did you know that as late as 1976 the Southern Baptist Convention supported the legalization of abortion? What mobilized evangelicals politically, Balmer says, was the IRS ruling that Bob Jones University was not a charitable organization because it did not admit blacks. It was not until 1991 that the university admitted blacks and not until 1995 that it admitted unmarried blacks. Hmmm.

An excerpt from the book:

Does probity translate into policy? The record of the past four decades is mixed. Gerald Ford's pardon of Nixon was an expression of his religious convictions. Jimmy Carter's sense of morality led him to renegotiate the Panama Canal treaties and to draw attention to human-rights abuses around the world. Ronald Reagan's moral compass prompted him to reverse his earlier

support for abortion rights and to advocate a Human Life Amendment to the Constitution.

On the other side of the equation, Lyndon Johnson's personal life would never suggest that he was a paragon of virtue, but he worked passionately for civil rights and sought to improve the lot of those less fortunate. Richard Nixon, hardly a moral exemplar, nevertheless sought to protect the environment and signed several bills that restored lands and a measure of self-rule to Native Americans.

These examples suggest that the quest for moral rectitude in presidential candidates may be chimerical. The candidates' declarations of faith over the past several decades provide a fairly poor indicator of how they govern. Even the record of the two redeemer presidents of the past half century, Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush, is mixed. Carter actually sought to govern according to his moral lights and in fidelity to the principles of decency, honor, and fair play that he articulated on the campaign trail; the American voters resoundingly repudiated him when he ran for a second term.

Bush sought the presidency on a platform of morality and Christian virtues. Yet his policies in the first decade of the twenty-first century reflected those values only dimly, if at all. Perhaps it's time to shift our attention away from the candidates and toward the electorate. What is it we expect from our presidents? Do we look for charisma and political skills, experience in foreign and domestic policy, and administrative competence? Or do we demand that candidates for the White House pass some sort of catechetical test? It's not an either-or proposition, of course, but the record of the last four decades of the twentieth century suggests that we've moved toward the latter and away from the former.

Godly Play launch

By Kathy Hubbard

I am so excited about the upcoming 2008-09 Sunday School year and about the opportunity to explore the Godly Play program we will be using with our children. The class rooms are in the process of being cleaned out and organized, the materials have been ordered (most of them are in), and teachers have gone through the training. All we need now are the children and for September to arrive!

Important Dates

On **September 7** we will have a "meet and greet your teacher" event at 9 am. This will be an opportunity for parents/guardians and children to become acquainted with the teachers for this year, as well as a chance to explore the classrooms for a bit.

September 14 is the first official day of Sunday School.

November 30 will be our first Christmas Pageant rehearsal

December 21 Christmas Pageant will be performed during the 10 am service.

The Classes

The **Primary** (K - 2nd grades) and **Intermediate** (grades 3-5) classes will still meet from 8:45 - 9:45 in the same classes as last year: The Primary class will meet in the upstairs classroom and the Intermediates in the first floor classroom.

The **Pre-School** (ages 3-5) will meet from 10 am - 10:45 am (during the 10:00 service). This class will now meet upstairs in the same classroom as the Primary class.

Finally

I urge you all to either borrow (from me) or buy Volume 1 of the Godly Play Lessons which beautifully explains the philosophy and methodology behind Godly Play. (You can purchase the book through the St. Asaph's Amazon store on the parish website) I have already found ways in which this remarkable program translates into my daily life with my children, my dogs -- even my husband! And I'm sure you will too.

A holiday cookbook from St. Asaph's!

The Journey to Adulthood (J2A) class is continuing to raise funds for the pilgrimage at the end of this program year. The J2A-ers are



collecting your recipes for a holiday cookbook that will be available for sale in late 2008.

They're looking for your own special Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving, July 4th, etc.

recipes along

with your name and phone number. If you like, include a short background story for the recipe. The deadline for submitting recipes is Sunday, Sept 21. You may email your submissions to youth@saintasaphs.org or place your recipe(s) in the J2A mailbox located near the bulletin boards.



Our church carried that wound of silence for the next century, choosing to institutionalize denial for the sake of unity and joining in the practices of Jim Crow America....

Donald Schell

ANGLICANA

Moratorium? Not again. The cost of silence in the church

By Donald Schell. This essay was first published at [EpiscopalCafe](#)

Some of our global Anglican bishops have called for a moratorium on blessing same sex unions and ordaining LGBT bishops (or maybe even LGBT clergy). Can we accept their moratorium? Not if we remember what another moratorium cost our church in integrity when we turned away from black America at a moment of Gospel opportunity.

We have to learn how say 'yes' to Communion and 'no' to moratorium.

If we so 'no' to moratorium and don't just walk away, we'll have to explain ourselves patiently and compassionately to our fellow Anglicans around the world. That will include facing the debate to rescind B033 at Anaheim in 2009.

But if we reject the moratorium, won't they throw us out?

Common history and our understanding of sacrament anchor us in Anglican Communion, and our willingness to love sisters and brothers across the globe makes us flourish in Communion. Is Gene Robinson an Anglican bishop? We know he is, even though he was disinvited from Lambeth, but his critics know he's a bishop too - that's why they're so troubled and call for his resignation.

If our American and Canadian bishops get disinvited from the next Lambeth, I'd hope they'd find their way to join Gene in Canterbury outside the security line, following his lead to take Lambeth to the streets.

Meanwhile, though some would say we've already explained ourselves, in love for our sisters and brothers (at home and globally) we've got to use print, video, scholarly

publication, and face to face conversation to speak to those who don't get what we're saying and doing and -

- tell them all we've learned from the ministry of LGBT leaders among us,
- lay out (again and in detail) how we read scripture,
- say again why we believe that faithfulness to scripture, reason and tradition demand we practice full inclusion of LGBT sisters and brothers,
- argue biblically from St. Paul's refusal to accept a moratorium on baptizing uncircumcised Gentiles, and
- confess our Episcopal church's mistaken moratorium in the years when emerging global Anglicanism came to reject slavery.

For a moment in this present struggle, we're privileged to stand on a hilltop. We listen to the voices of sister and brother LGBT clergy who are us and stand among us; we see their faces and know them today because we're learning together to practice honesty. Of course they've been there all along, and they're all across the communion. The 'moratorium' asks us all to ignore their existence and asks them to return to hiding in plain sight. We can't do that anymore. Their ministries have blessed us all. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

From the hilltop we see the Spirit at work in our LGBT friends' willingness to risk marriage in a culture where people are afraid to commit or acknowledge lasting love, and we see a way forward as our secular society now leads us in

beginning to affirm committed LGBT relationships with domestic partnerships and marriage. Straight couples among us have been grateful for support and wise counsel from LGBT friends in relationship.

Moratorium at this point would be choosing anesthetized 'peace' over Good News. For us moratorium would be walking away from Jesus.

That's exactly what we did in the 19th century, turn away from Jesus. Our Episcopal Church turned its back on the key moral issue of its time.

Our English brothers and sisters, relentlessly urged on by Quaker activists (and a few brave Anglicans who defied and shamed their own recalcitrant C of E) disturbed a complacent, complicit church to bring an end to slavery. The English struggle for abolition began about the time our new Constitution acknowledged slavery as an institution. England stopped the slave trade in 1807 and emancipated all the slaves in English colonies in 1833. Of course there were abolitionists in the U.S., but they weren't Episcopalians. It takes two more generations for the American church to begin facing up to our national shame.

The Civil war divided the American Episcopal Church in two. Like other churches in the Confederacy, Southern Episcopalians found biblical justification for slavery. One prominent Episcopal Bishop (Leonidas Polk) was not only a slaveholder, but died on the battlefield as a Confederate general. Meanwhile, the Northern Episcopal Church, though loyal to the Union, never supported the Abolitionist movement in word or action. Instead we longed and prayed for reunion of the church, even at the cost of truth.

After the war our church rejoiced in reuniting, boasting that smoothing over differences proved our Christian charity. A few bishops and lay leaders attempted to begin a truth-telling conversation about Emancipation, but the 1865 General Convention quickly resolved that church unity was worth silence. The Episcopal Church's failure to repent of its complicity in slavery and celebrate the freedom of our own African-American members prompted

a mass exodus thousands of African-American to other churches.

It could have been different. There were voices at the 1865 General Convention like Maine Bishop Burgess who proposed holding a service of thanksgiving for the ending of the war and slavery. It's easy to imagine a momentary hush in the House of Bishops when he'd finished his proposal. Bishop Elliott of Georgia had warned against just this sort of thing in *The New York Times* a few weeks before the Convention:

"Reunion...ought to take place in such wise as to preserve our good faith in our brethren and each other...It is our duty to guard the memory of our deceased bishops Meade, Otey and especially our beloved Polk [the slaveholding Bishop who died on the battlefield as a Confederate General]. Not that we should expect any endorsement from the General Convention of their views and actions, but that we should feel assured that no reproach, either direct or implied, will be cast upon their graves...the reputation of the dead is in our keeping, and we can fraternize with nobody who would willingly disturb their ashes. They have lived and died for us, and however wrong others may think them, we revere their memory and weep over their graves."

"The church should desire to maintain and uphold the self-respect of all its members, remembering that they are the body of Christ. In this way we shall become in our reunion the admiration of the country, as we were for so many years during the fierce wrangling which preceded secession, its wonder, for our reticence and self-control."

Bishop Elliott speaks as though the Episcopal Church had no black members, though in fact, at that point, most African Americans still attended Episcopal churches. 'Our reticence and self-control' kept us from speaking against 'their' enslavement or celebrating their freedom.

But Bishop Elliott didn't actually ignore the existence of black people. He talked about them with a condescension that sounds like a contemporary Anglican bishop claiming Christian charity toward homosexual people and

concern that liberals are shielding 'them' from Biblical truth,

'...I have advised my people to take it [the oath of allegiance renewing U.S. citizenship] and be good citizens, and above all to do the best for the poor, unfortunate negroes, whose future is dark and miserable beyond conception. Already they are perishing by thousands, the whole race will now go out before civilization (so called) and competition, as the Indians are doing. We can survive the change, and one day flourish again; but not they; their fate is sealed.'

Apparently Bishop Elliott gave no thought to the thousands of black Episcopalians who would hear his self-satisfied warning of a future 'they' could not survive. No black Episcopalian hearing Elliott could miss how profoundly the bishop's 'we' and 'they' marginalized and obliterated black Episcopalians' desire and need to celebrate new found freedom in hope.

The Convention rejected Bishop Burgess initiative and followed Bishop Elliott's lead. The House of Bishops quickly crafted a substitute resolution that we celebrate that the church was being reunited (making no troubling mention of Emancipation). Can we hear their sigh of relief? It was almost over.

The House of Deputies did reopen the question but a flurry of fierce debate came to no resolution, so there the 1865 General Convention took no action to acknowledge that slavery for black Episcopalians (and other citizens of African descent) had ended. We embraced silence rather than thinking, not talking rather than facing painful arguments. We turned our backs on grief, responsibility, and wrong. And so we closed our eyes and shut our ears to the grace of long desired freedom that had come to so many of our members. By the 1867 Lambeth conference, most black Episcopalians had left our church. What difference would it have made to black Episcopalians if the Episcopal Church in 1865 had tried to tell its whole painful story? What if we had established something like South

Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission?

That first Lambeth Conference met just two years after the American church's 1865 General Convention. Our bishops carried America's unaddressed race struggles to the first Lambeth. We know they were wondering silently about the exodus of black Episcopalians, because back home they were preaching and writing about the ingratitude of the Negro race. How could they abandon our church after we built them slave galleries so they could worship with us?

Our church carried that wound of silence for the next century, choosing to institutionalize denial for the sake of unity and joining in the practices of Jim Crow America: A few years after first Lambeth Conference, when we ordained our first African-American Bishop (Delaney) to serve black Episcopalians in North Carolina, we made him promise that he would never lay hands on a white person's head in the rite of confirmation.

Our hundred-year moratorium of silence ended in the 1960's when the Civil Rights movement awakened our church's conscience. It was painful time for the church, because we were not of one mind, but conscience and conflict were no longer in hiding. From the 60's Freedom Marches until today, we've been struggling to keep speaking, listening and talking; it's clear that it will take a very long time to heal the wounds our century of silence inflicted on the church.

In 2008, American Episcopalians, legitimately confident in our proclamation of Jesus' welcome to all and proud that our church is working for justice for our LGBT sisters and brothers, must learn from our own shameful moratorium that held our church together and silent before the Civil War and reunited it at the cost of most of its black membership after the War.

The Spirit of Truth challenges us to reject any more moratoria on truth telling. That's all this moratorium would be - silence from and about the LGBT Anglicans throughout the Communion. But if we see our way to

rejecting the moratorium, can we do it without self-congratulation and disdain for our brothers, Anglican bishops and church leaders who, at this moment, hear inclusion as a counterfeit Gospel?

Along with all our efforts to interpret what we're doing now and why we believe it's faithful to Scripture, Reason and Tradition, humble truth-telling of the damage we did ourselves and our church with an earlier moratorium begins to sound like Gospel. Can we say 'no' to this moratorium and insistently thank the worldwide Communion for welcoming us over the last hundred and fifty years while we struggled (and continue the struggle) to become fully Christian on issues of race?

Speaking our truthful refusal to accept this new moratorium and acknowledging our past sins as a church will not prevent painful conversation and conflict. Painful conversation and conflict is inevitably part of growth and change. But recalling our old moratorium and what we learned from it could plant a seed of Gospel unity in penance and Christian charity. Like the mustard seed, such unity grows from a tiny beginning to a shrub so generous that birds will nest together in its shade. It's time to insist. Whatever it takes, we'll 'yes' to communion and 'no' to moratorium.

The Rev. Donald Schell, founder of St. Gregory of Nyssa Church in San Francisco, is Creative Director of All Saints Company, working for community development in congregational life focusing on sharing leadership, welcoming creativity and building community through music.

PRAYERS

for the community

Those for whom our prayers have been asked: Rose Bartos, Louise Duniec, Bill Finley, Everett William Frank, Norman Hjelm, David Lansdale, Geraldine Lindsay, Karen Love, Marshall Nelsen, Dave Paisley, Drew Perkins, John Regan, Kenneth Rideout, Joan Schroeter, Florence Sheeran, Glenn Stroud, Joe Touchstone, Christopher Wernersbach, Pam Wernersbach, Rowan Williams, Chris Wood.

for those who have died

In the parish: Sally M. Dennis (Chris Dennis), Maggie Achuff (Janet Barrett), Martin Bartos (Stevie Graves), Florence Sterthous (Linda Sterthous), Carol Axelrod (Gwen Hauser), Bayard Roberts, (Joan Roberts & Anna Roberts), Elizabeth Shaw, Sally Lansdale (Bob & Sarah Boote), Paton Roberts (Joan Roberts), Julia Mondrick (Barbara Rideout), Walter Squire (Jim Squire) David Thomas, Paul Andrien (Steve Lindsay), Edward Bond, Lisa Hayne, (Joan Roberts). **In the world:** Pauline Baynes (illustrator), Aleksandr Solzhenitzyn (writer), Bernic Mac (comic), Isaac Hayes (actor, songwriter), Thomas Weller (virologist), Ralph Young (singer/comic).

VISION & MISSION

St. Asaph's Church is called to be a progressive Christian community.

- We will welcome everyone to God's table.
- We will stand with those in need and advocate for the poor, the sick, the friendless and the marginalized.
- We will make children central to our life as a community.
- We will celebrate the presence of God with joyful, engaging and inviting worship.

Sunday Schedule

8 am, Contemplative Eucharist
9 am, Spiritual Formation for all ages
10 am, Community Eucharist
5 pm, New Worship (Second Sundays only)

Holy Days as announced

Parish Staff

The Rev'd Rodney Hudgen, *Rector*
Roy Harker, *Director of Music & Arts*
Kathy Hubbard, *Children's Formation*
Steve Sheeran, *Youth Formation*
Lynda Staton, *Parish Administrator*

Parish Vestry

Steve Scherf, *Rector's Warden*
Neil Desnoyers, *Accounting Warden*
Janet Barrett, Joanne Behm, George D'Angelo,
Nicky Garvan, Michael Kaufmann, Katherine Kurtz, Laurie Novo, Barbara Rideout, Steve Sheeran, Connie Stelzenmuller

Parish Office

Hours: Mon-Fri, 9a-3p
Phone: 610-664-0966
Fax: 610-664-3760

Diocese of Pennsylvania

The Rt. Rev'd Charles E. Bennison, Jr, *Bishop*
The Rt. Rev'd Allen Bartlett, *Assisting Bishop*

Check and return to church office if you no longer wish to be on our mailing list.

On the web at
www.saintasaphs.org

CHURCH OF SAINT ASAPH
27 Conshohocken State Rd
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004



OUTLOOK

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