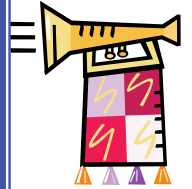


The Trumpeter



March 2011



Pastor Tom O'Brien

From the Pastor: March 2011

I know that this is a tough time for most of us. Some very tough decisions have been made and more will come in the months ahead. Change is not an easy thing to go through. Sometimes, we have to make hard decisions because of circumstances beyond our control. Spiritual retreats or times away from everyday life are a form of discipline that allow us to become replenished and opens our minds and hearts to new possibilities. Jesus retreated as a spiritual discipline and fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness. Lent can be a spiritual discipline that we can use as a means to help us refocus and come to terms with the power and will of God. For our congregation, this can be a good time to look at the successes we have made over the past five years and also an opportunity to look clearly at this congregation's history over the last fifty years.

Lent is a time for reflection and prayer, a time to remember all that God has done for us, blessed us with and taken from us. It is not all about sacrificing or not eating a certain food. Lent is a time for Christians to look deep inside their heart to see what is most important in their spiritual journey. We have many things to reflect upon and all of us need this time to reflect on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. At our soup and salad meals on Wednesdays, we will have about a 15 minute discussion on what our Baptism means to us and how that affects our lives. We will then follow the discussion with a short prayer meeting. Judy will forego the prayer meeting at her home during Lent and will lead us in our prayer journey through Lent.

This year we have made opportunities for members of our congregation to share our Lenten journey with others. A few years ago, we had our soup/salad Wednesday evening studies at St. George's Episcopal Church. It

was a great time of fellowship and learning about the Book of Revelation. This year we are trying to join together with our sister Lutheran congregation in Riverdale. Some of us showed up at the IHOP in Riverdale to eat pancakes, play games, receive beads and enjoy each others company along with those from St. John. As we approach Holy week, we will be celebrating Maundy Thursday with a meal and drama/comedy called, **THE ROOM UPSTAIRS.** Members of St. John Lutheran Church of Riverdale will be joining us at that event and they have offered to host us the next night for Good Friday Service and look at the Stations of the Cross with them.

Throughout the history of the Lutheran Church in America, there have come times when congregations joined together in celebrations and worship. Some had to wait years before a Pastor would arrive in their county or area. They continued to worship, to offer one another pastoral care, supporting one another in birth, sickness and death. It is important that we all realize that Jesus helps us each and every day in our spiritual walk and that the Holy Spirit offers us the power to carry that out.

Let us all make a special effort to set aside our material concerns and spend time with one another at meals, discussions and prayer over the next several months. Let us look at what God has in store for all of us. The future is what God has planned for us and we can make ourselves available to God so that we may hear and understand what He is calling us to do. We can hear Him in the still small quiet voice, if we stop long enough to listen.

Your Servant in Christ
Pastor Tom

The Reverend Tom O'Brien,
Pastor
Chuck Ashurst
2010-11 Council President
Kitty Stewart,
Admin. Asst.

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church
10110 Greenbelt Road
Lanham, Maryland 20706
(301) 794-7300
mygoodsam@comcast.net

See the newly revised Web Site
Done by Dawn Schwartz

Join our Yahoo Group!

Go online to
www.goodsamaritanlutheran.org
And click on Join our MyGoodSam
Yahoo Group

Show kids you know, the nifty new
section Dawn created for them.

Music Notes

Judy L. Marvel

Minister of Music

Blessings!!!!

Spring is here. Daffodils are in bloom. Robins are pecking for worms in my yard. The air is fresh from a gentle rain. And Good Sam's Music and Worship committee is busy putting together our Lenten and Easter Sunday morning services! Easter, a time of renewal and rebirth, is my favorite of all holy days. I hope to see you at our special Lenten services and on that glorious morning of hosannas and alleluias!

In the meantime, here is a little capsule of what is happening in the world of music:

Easter Sunday, we're anticipating trumpets and hand bells to herald and ring in the joyous celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord, strength and redeemer.

In lieu of a formal church choir, the search for special music is on! ... solos, duets, trios guest musicians ! So, if you are interested in providing special music during a Sunday morning worship service, please let me know. If you know of a musician that would add to our worship, please ... let me know. We recently had a beginning trombone player provide us with special music, a song very appropriate for Easter (Hot Crossed Buns). "After the Storm" (affectionately called "The Subway Boys") have sung their soulful gospel music for us twice in the last year. And of course, we've been graced with wonderful soloists. All were delightful! So, regardless of the level of accomplishment, all musicians and vocalists are welcome.

You surely have noticed that the organ hasn't been played of late (understatement). This is because the organ speakers have deteriorated to the point of sound distortion. Not a pleasant sound at all. We hope to rectify this situation in the future.

Enjoy the sun and warmer temperatures. Throw open the window of your heart and rejoice in the love of God, always, always keeping a song in your heart.

Judy

Church worship is staying at 11:00 AM.

2010-2011 GSLC Council

Tom O'Brien, Pastor		Jessica Mushala, At Large
Chuck Ashurst, President		Judy Marvel, At Large
Rose Woodruff, Vice President		Jean Clemmer, Treasurer
Jill Porco, Secretary		Ariel Henry, Treasurer

Council Meets on an as need basis

From the President

Greetings everyone!

Every few years Good Samaritan goes through a reinvention process. Guess what? In the middle of the Great Recession, during a time when memberships are declining in main line Protestant congregations, and during a time when our area is experiencing major demographic changes, we get to reinvent ourselves. Are we lucky, or what? What an opportunity!

I want to thank last year's church council and all of the members of Good Samaritan for holding on and getting us through 2010. Now comes the fun part – 2011. The brave souls on the new church council are: Chuck Ashurst, President; Rose Woodruff, VP, Jill Porco, Secretary; Ariel Henry, Treasurer; Jean Clemmer, Assistant Treasurer; Jessica Mushala, Member at Large; Judy Marvel, Member at Large; and Pastor Tom.

Finances and the future of Good Sam are the big topics and the big decisions to be made in church council. We need the collective wisdom of the Good Sam family to remedy our financial situation and to determine our mission and future.

Rose is continuing to manage rentals. If you can help her, let her know. Ariel and Jean are balancing our expenditures with limited income and promoting the "Adopt a Bill" program. The bills are displayed in the social hall every Sunday. If you can't pay a whole bill, pay part of one, or pray someone else adopts a bill or pray that the bill just goes away.

At the annual meeting, we scheduled a subsequent budget review meeting on April 17, 2011, following Palm Sunday Services. Please attend, we need your input.

Also, on April 10, 2011, following service, Pastor Philip C. Hirsch (Assistant to the Bishop) will be here at Good Sam to explain the resources available from the Synod to assist congregations in their reinvention adventure.

If you are reading this and no longer attend services at Good Sam, come home, we need you. If you are at Good Sam, join the adventure, it should be quite a ride.

Chuck Ashurst



Church Council Secretary's Report

2/13/11 Good Samaritan Lutheran Church Council meeting

1:00 PM—Roll call

Present

Chuck Ashurst, President	Jean Clemmer, Assistant Treasurer
Rose Woodruff, Vice President	Jill Porco, Secretary
Ariel Henry, Treasurer	Jessica Kamala-Mushala, Member-at-Large
Judy Marvel, Member-at-Large	Pastor Thomas O'Brien

No absences.

President's statement

Chuck thanked everyone for being willing to serve on Council. He says we have some important decisions to make that affect the congregation as a whole.

Question from Rose to Council members—What is important to you as a member of Council in re. these decision?

Chuck—would like to maintain the congregation's independence and freedom vis à vis any agenda or actions proposed by the metro-Washington, DC ELCA synod.

Rose—feels it is important to be honest and loving in our relations to the congregation in terms of our actions.

Business

Council decided to have its meetings on the first Sunday of each month. We also decided that we would share our actions/issues with the congregation during announcements time at the end of each month as a way to keep them updated of our activities.

Pastor Thomas O'Brien's report

He has participated in continuing ed/retreats for work. He's made numerous hospital calls/visits.

Pastor reported on witnessing a WhizKidz teacher spanking a student on Thursday, 2/10/11, near the end of the day. After speaking with Melissa about it, he spoke with Child Protective Services about it that evening. Ms. Nicole, director of WhizKidz, was upset on Friday morning that he hadn't called her about it. (Pastor gave me his write-up of the incident for the files.) Pastor is concerned overall about the GSLC relationships with its renters, of which this incident is one example.

Pastor has been talking with the Bishop regarding his call situation in recent weeks.

During Safe Haven, he conducted Bible studies with the men and spoke with the men about their individual situations.

President's report

Chuck has been in conversations with the Bishop about the situation re. Pastor Tom in the past week. He appreciates everyone's availability to help. He hopes we will be an active Council and that we will be what we want to be as a Council.

Treasurer's report

Rose is working with Ariel and Jean to transfer the books to them.

There was discussion of Jean's title because our constitution does not have provision for an assistant treasurer. It was decided that she would be called Assistant Treasurer. Rose would like to draft a letter, giving Jean joint authority to write checks, for Jill to sign as secretary. (Having an assistant treasurer who has check-writing authority is not in violation of the GSLC bylaws.)

Report re. finances

We are behind approximately \$15K, including being about \$4K behind in Pastor's pension, health insurance, and disability payments. Pastor's pension is \$715/mo. (per commitment we had made in Sept. 2010). We are approx. \$250/mo. in arrears of that. Give Him the Glory church is behind by \$750 in their rent payments. They paid half of Jan. and all of Feb. 2011 rent, but still owe us from Nov. and Dec. 2010 and half of Jan. 2011 rent payments. There is \$150 in the account of their security deposit. Chuck suggested to Rose that she send them a letter stating that we will keep their \$150 security deposit, but that they still owe us the remainder of the money. The other renters are caught up in payments.

We owe 2 months' worth of mortgage money—Jan. 2011 and Feb. 2011. Dec. 2010 mortgage was paid.

We are behind in paying Ehrlich--\$48/month is what we pay them. It was pointed out that we dropped care of the parsonage from our agreement with them.

Rose stated that the Bishop had told us that our priorities in terms of paying bills should be a) salaries, b) cut-off notices, c) insurance, d) mortgage, e) any designated funds, f) rental security deposits, g) taxes.

Rose recommends that we resume an adopt-a-bill campaign by the end of Feb. so that Ariel and Jean aren't getting constant calls from our creditors. Chuck Ashurst offered to take some of the calls so that Ariel and Jean don't have to field them all.

Judy commented that it is important that we carry the Spirit with us at all times in our conversations and actions.

Discussion of Pastor's call (took up most of the remainder of the meeting)

Church Council Secretary's Report cont

Chuck's main question for Bishop Graham was what is the role of Council in determining a solution to Pastor's call problem. There are several processes that end a Pastor's call—1) death of Pastor; 2) change of call—Pastor's resignation due to local issues; 3) Pastor does something wrong in his office as Pastor; 4) Pastor resigns—this is the Bishop's recommendation. This would mean we would have to pay him 3 months' severance, which we can't afford now.

We can have a series of meetings discuss the issues—one would be with the congregation; another would be a committee in conjunction with the Pastor and Bishop, and another pastor along with two lay people, and the last would be a full congregational vote re. retaining the Pastor or not. A vote to terminate would have to pass by a 2/3 majority. Chuck initially preferred this option.

Another option presented was a mutual agreement between Pastor and Council to terminate the call. This would be written out in a letter to be signed by the Council president, Pastor Tom, and the Bishop. The congregation would be informed. Pastor Tom pointed out that in section 9.0.5 of the bylaws it says that the Pastor can be terminated due to payroll issues (this does not reflect on Pastor's character in any way; it just states that the church can no longer afford to pay him his salary).

Consequences of call change for GSLC—what are they?

Would have to hire an on-call Pastor for pastoral care (approx. 5 hours/week)

There remains the question of could we pay a full-time Pastor in the future?

We would have no shepherd/leader for GSLC.

We would have to hire someone to preach on Sundays.

We would need a property manager in some capacity.

Rose admitted that she was going to bring a resolution before Council today to change the nature of Pastor's call. She would like to discuss the other options open to us first.

Pastor's assessment of the situation

He said that things were blossoming in the beginning in terms of outreach, there was energy for it. There were efforts to reach out to the youth in the neighborhood with youth programs, such as the Game Nights. This petered out over time due to lack of congregant energy to keep the programs going and due to our having less money for them. As a result, our outreach ministry was deteriorating.

This led to an evolution to our procuring rentals on Fridays/Saturday nights to help with paying the bills. There has been miscommunication with the WhizKidz, most recently in relation to Safe Haven, which interfered with that ministry of ours.

He says if he leaves we will get a reprieve, but we will need to work with someone to help us figure out our direction from here.

He would like to work out a mutual agreement with terms to be spelled out—compensation, how long he would remain in the Parsonage, etc., have the Bishop sign it also.

Council discussed the situation with the Pastor out of the room

We discussed various options, including a 2-point parish with another church, merge with another congregation, or have a part-time Pastor. If we have no shepherd, we become the shepherds for now.

Jessica pointed out that this situation shows up the need for more people to serve on the mutual ministry committee. She and Luella are the only members at this point.

Various proposals were discussed.

Pastor returned and made proposal

He would pay pension, benefits himself.

He asked for one week's pay for each year he's been here—that works out to 5 weeks of pay.

He also asked for 2 weeks' vacation pay.

He would like to remain in the parsonage until the 3rd week of June 2011.

Pastor informed us that he has revised his mobility papers with the help of Beth Platz, to be effective 4/1/11. Pastor says if he hangs in there and gets another call, then we wouldn't have to pay any severance at all. It would be a straight resignation and change of call.

Pastor left the room and Council discussed several options

Church Council Secretary's Report cont

Pastor returned to the room and Council offered to the Pastor the following conditions, which he accepted:

A letter of mutual agreement to terminate the call, effective June 15, 2011, whether or not he receives another call.

He would be paid through July 1, 2011, full pay. (This includes the 2 weeks' vacation pay.)

He would be allowed to remain in the Parsonage until July 31, 2011.

The letter would spell out all of the above terms.

Chuck would sign as Council President, Pastor Tom would sign as Pastor, Jill Porco would sign as secretary, Bishop Graham would sign it.

Letter will be mailed 2/21/11.

Letter also will be written regarding this by Chuck and mailed to congregation week of 2/20/11 so people know of the situation as soon as possible.

Pastor wanted a written copy of the agreement, which Jill drafted after the meeting ended.

Council decided to meet on 2/27/11 again to discuss the future of GSLC.

Other issues: Pastor said that Cathedral of Praise leaders came to him, asking re. the purchase of a new copier to be shared jointly between them, us, and other renters, to be put in a common place with codes given to each organization so they could track expenses by each, etc. Pastor brought Ms. Nicole of WhizKidz in to discuss with them also. Pastor said he would bring the issue to Council. Council and the Pastor decided they would only enter into such an agreement with WhizKidz, not with Cathedral of Praise also.

Pastor noted that it was important for GSLC to have an audit of the financial records.

Rose and Ariel agreed to meet at GSLC on 2/21/11 to review finances and transfer the books, etc.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Porco,
Secretary

Scripture Cake Ingredients

- 1/2 cup butter, Judges 5:25
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar, Jeremiah 6:20
- 3 eggs, Isaiah 10:14
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, 1 Kings 4:22
- 2 teaspoons baking powder, Luke 13:21
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, 1 Kings 10:10
- 1 teaspoon ground mace, 1 Kings 10:10
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves, 1 Kings 10:10
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, Leviticus 2:13
- 1/2 cup water, Genesis 43:24
- 1 tablespoon honey, Proverbs 24:13
- 1 cup figs, 1 Samuel 30:11
- 1 cup raisins, 1 Samuel 30:11
- 1/2 cup almonds, Genesis 43:11

Directions

1. Blend butter, sugar, spices and salt. Beat egg yolks and add. Sift in baking powder and flour, then add water and honey.
2. Put fruit and nuts through food processor and flour well. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites.
3. Pour into a 13 x 9-inch pan and bake at 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) for one hour.

Needed for the church

Property:

Lets take some time and brighten up our church in time for Easter.

There will be a scheduled Spring Clean & Spruce Up day that will be announced soon. In the meantime you can use some of your spare time to get started on some of the easier tasks.

There are several property needs of the church.

Tree limbs have fallen and need to be picked up along with trash that has accumulated over the winter.

Mulch is needed for the flower beds and they need to be weeded.

Roof shingles have been blown off the roof and gutters need to be cleaned and realigned.

In order to accomplish these tasks you made need to bring a tool or two of your own such as: used wheelbarrows, weed eaters, mulch, grass seed, wood chipper/mulcher, chain saw and gasoline for the mower and tractor.

There is a list of problems that need to be repaired and addressed or they will cause more damage if they are not taken care of soon.

Thank You to all who have already donated in the past. See Amos or Patty for details or just check the list that will be posted.

Thank You!

Up Coming Events as seen in Pastor's Weekly Newsletter

Each Wed. In Lent	Soup/Salad and workshop on prayer beginning @ 6:30 pm; followed by prayer meeting
Saturday March 19	CROP Walk Rally, 1 st United Methodist Church, Hyattsville @ 9:30 AM Anniversary of the installation of Pastor Tom O'Brien
Sunday April 3	Pot Luck
Sunday April 17	Special Congregational Budget Meeting
Thursday April 21	Maundy Thursday Dinner Drama/Comedy "The Upper Room" St. John's will join us and participate in this event. We are looking for people to take part in this interactive drama to play various parts. The audience will also be participants in this drama.
Good Friday Apr. 22	Worship together @ St. John's in Riverdale: Stations of the cross.
Saturday, Apr. 23	Easter Vigil 7:30pm begins with dessert
Sunday, Apr. 24	Easter Sunday
Sunday, May 1	Crop Walk after worship at Lake Artemesia.

Good Samaritan Lutheran Church
10110 Greenbelt Road
Lanham, MD 20706-2206



Phone: 301-794-7300
Fax: 301-794-4140
E-mail: mygoodsam@comcast.net

Your business tag line here.

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Coming Good Sam Events:

KEY FUTURE EVENT DATES:

**Soup & Salad Lenten Prayer services
each Wed in the FH at 6:30pm**

Special Cong. Budget Mtg: April 17

**Maundy Thursday April 21 "The Upper
Room" with St. John's of Riverdale**

**Good Friday April 22 at St John's
Stations of the Cross**

**Easter Sunday April 24 time for you
Chr-Easters to come out and get some
church!**

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Ongoing Events

Sunday AM Worship
11: 00 AM worship service

WOC Bible Study
As scheduled by Kathy Bevard
(301) 577-4366

We're on the Web!
www.GoodSamaritanLutheran.ORG