

Crossroads



A Quarterly Journal of the Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration

Spring 2010

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Church of the Transfiguration

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Volume III, Number 3

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*Crossroads is a quarterly journal of The Episcopal Church
of the Transfiguration, produced four times per year and
distributed to our congregation and friends.*

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FROM THE RECTOR

Welcome to the Spring 2010 edition of *Crossroads*. We hope you will find here readings that will both inform and enlighten your journey this Lent and Easter.

The Book of Common Prayer on page 15, teaches us about The Calendar of the Church Year. The opening paragraph highlights the two principle cycles of the Church Year with these words: "The Church Year consists of two cycles of feasts and holy days: one is dependent upon the movable date of the Sunday of the Resurrection or Easter Day; the other, upon the fixed date of December 25, the Feast of our Lord's Nativity or Christmas Day. Easter Day is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21 (or in the more poetic language of former Prayer Books: *Easter is observed on the Sunday after the first full moon on or after the day of the vernal equinox.*)

This means that Easter cannot be before March 22, nor after April 21. This year Easter falls more nearly in the middle of that time frame while in 2008, it was almost as early as it can be (March 23.) In 2014, Easter will be very late in the year, falling on April 20, but a good many of us will be celebrating it but "on another shore" when, in 2035, it again occurs as early as it was in 2008."

Wherever it lands on our Gregorian calendar, Easter reigns as the Feast of feasts or Queen of Feasts. It is the principal feast of the entire year for Christians. As such, it is only "right and good" that we should appropriately prepare for its celebration.

This issue of *Crossroads* brings you news of several opportunities to make a faithful preparation to "greet with joy" the Easter Feast. We are especially honored that Dr. Roy Heller will be our presenter for Wednesday nights in Lent. If you have not heard Roy speak, you are in for a veritable feast, albeit a Lenten one! Do not miss this chance. Students at Perkins/SMU clamor to attend his classes and they have to pay! Join us for the 6:00 pm Eucharist on the Wednesday of Lent, followed by dinner in Roper Hall and Dr. Heller's presentation. Details will be found in the following pages.

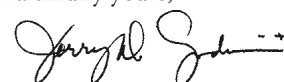
Other opportunities for Lenten worship and formation are also noted in this issue. I do urge you to join me in participating in our annual Lenten Self-Denial offering. You may use one of the red pew envelopes for your gift or you might want to pick up one of the "Hope Chest" boxes in the Gathering Space and drop your change in that box at the end of the day. It makes for a great family exercise, as well. And as you do, to say a brief prayer for those living in poverty whom your coins will help to a better and more healthy life through the ministry of the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund. Your gifts to ER&D will especially be helpful to the people of Haiti this year!

I particularly want to urge your presence at Sunday worship. Although we remind worshippers, week-by-week, of the spiritual strength Christians gain from regularly receiving Christ's Body and Blood at God's Table and ours, I wonder if we really "get it." We do not absent ourselves from physical sustenance if we wish to remain healthy, not even when we are dieting. Neither should we absent ourselves from spiritual sustenance for the health of our souls. It simply will not work. Our relationship with God in Christ suffers, can wither and ultimately die if we do not do all we can do to feed it and keep it healthy. That is sin...sin when we willfully separate ourselves from Christ's body, the Church, and from Christ himself. Lent provides us with a wonderful opportunity to examine our life in Christ and our lives...what we value...and put God back in the center. There is incredible joy to found in repenting and returning to the Lord. Try it. I guarantee you'll like it!

I look forward to seeing you in church EVERY Sunday in Lent AND Easter...what a great time to re-establish a "good for you" habit.

Bless you, my friends and family!

Faithfully yours,



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Incorporating the Church's Children

By Michael Merriman



People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. — Mark 10:13-16

Why do we baptize babies and young children?

The most basic reason for baptizing our infants and small children is the same reason that we include our children in our family life at home. We would not go to a family Thanksgiving Dinner or Christmas Day Dinner and leave the children at home with a baby-sitter (though sometimes, especially in the "terrible twos" we might be tempted to do so). We want our children, even the very youngest, to be with us and all of their extended family. The Church is our most important extended family, so since the very beginning Christian parents wanted their children included.

It is true that for a time in the fourth and fifth centuries some families did not baptize their children. This was a time in which even many adults who converted to Christianity put off their baptism in hopes of waiting until just before they died so that all their sins could be washed away with no time left to commit any more. The Church's leaders started urging parents not to delay.

However, in this drive to convince parents to have their babies baptized the leaders made what I believe to have been a serious mistake.

They started telling people that there was a risk that unbaptized babies might not make it to Heaven if they died before being baptized. (Remember that in those days infant mortality was very high and the possibility of children dying very young was very, very likely). This strategy worked but it left us with a very unattractive doctrine and one that seems to directly contradict the New Testament — as you can read in the quotation from the Gospel of Mark, above. The Episcopal Church, like most other Christian bodies, does not believe that unbaptized children are excluded from going to Heaven.

If we don't believe unbaptized babies are excluded from Heaven, then why baptize them? As we said above, it is because they need to be part of our family. For the same

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Incorporating the Church's Children

Continued from page 3

reason we want them to receive Holy Communion from an early age. We don't bring children to Thanksgiving Dinner and tell them they can't have any food until they understand the story of Thanksgiving, or Christmas Dinner until they can understand the meaning of Jesus' birth. We include them, even if their share of the dinner is a bottle or some Goldfish crackers and chicken nuggets. We include our children in Holy Communion as soon and as early in their lives as they express the desire to receive the Sacrament. We don't wait until they can "understand" Holy Communion. The world's greatest theologians don't fully understand the Sacrament. A child who knows that his or her church family is sharing a special meal with Jesus understands all that she or he needs understand at that age.



The Bible sees being a Christian as belonging to God's extended family. Like all families it has regular special occasions of celebration. On those occasions we get dressed up, tell some of our family stories, maybe sing a few favorite songs, and we eat and drink together. Those occasions (known as "church services") help us, and most especially our children learn the values of our family-in-God and help us and them understand who we are and whose we are.

Why not wait and let them get old enough to decide for themselves?

That is a valid question and one which some churches have adopted as their policy (though only a small percentage of Christianity as a whole does this). This line of thought assumes that being Christian involves one single, one-time decision. But in reality being Christian is an ongoing process of deciding for or against the Christian faith again and again.

Our Church along with most others expects that the time will come, most often during the teen years, when those baptized as infants will make their own mature decision to make their own commitment to their baptism and be confirmed. In recent years our parish, like many others, has adopted a process to help teens investigate and experience Christian believing and ministry so that they can decide if and when they are ready to be confirmed. That means that while many will be confirmed in High School, others may hold off for several more years (and some may never chose to be confirmed).

Meanwhile, during childhood, they are being shaped and formed by Christian learning and living. They are being nurtured by God's Spirit in the life of the congregation. They are being fed

with God's life in Holy Communion. This equips them and empowers them for living according to the values of their Christian family. We should wish nothing less for them.

They will still have their own opportunity to decide on living the life of a baptized person – a decision that mature Christians find they must make again and again throughout their lives.

What does it mean for an infant to be baptized?

What it does not mean is that we are saving them from going to hell or to the Roman Catholic "limbo."

We believe, on the basis of Jesus' own teaching that infants and very young children are already part of God's Kingdom by their very nature and innocence. The issue for us is that fairly soon small children begin to learn from observing those older than themselves, ways of living that run counter to the life of God's Kingdom. At that point they need, not only Christian teaching at home and at Church, but they also need to be living in the grace and presence of God that is given to them in Baptism, and as soon as they wish it, in regular reception of Holy Communion.

What it means for an infant to be baptized is that she becomes a full member of God's family, the Church. His life is fully united with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. She is living day by day in the sacramental presence of God, being nurtured by God's own life. He or she belongs fully, just as we do, to the family and household of God. Baptism becomes the greatest gift we can ever give them.

O God, you have taught us through your blessed Son that whoever receives a little child in the name of Christ receives Christ himself: We give you thanks for the blessing you have bestowed upon us in giving us a child. Confirm our joy by a lively sense of your presence with us, and give us calm strength and patient wisdom as we seek to bring our children to love all that is true and noble, just and pure, lovable and gracious, excellent and admirable, follow the example of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Book of Common Prayer, page 443.

O eternal God, you have promised to be a father to a thousand generations of those who love and fear you: Bless our child and preserve his life; receive him and enable her to receive you, that through the Sacrament of Baptism she may become the child of God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. BCP, page 444.



it's COOL to CARE in 2010

By Jeb Honeyman

People everywhere are waking up to the idea of justice and compassion. This is not news to you. Our continued global connectivity has led to a new sort of global awareness that is in some part affecting not only what we do, but how we do it. Need is becoming known (even if it's not fully understood). People want to get involved more and more. Compassion-based organizations are popping up at an accelerated rate. It's as though it's officially cool to care. As a friend of mine says, "Kids don't start bands anymore, they start 501C3's."

While cynics sit in the corner, throwing their over-informed, under-exposed rocks, I find myself standing up and putting my rally cap on. I can't help but think more people becoming more involved is a good thing, and has the potential to lead to something truly great for the world we serve and for the individuals serving it.

This is certainly a reality for the emerging generation. No longer are they asking, "What can the church do for me?" They are



now wondering, "What can the church empower me to do to make the world a better place?"

It is in this spirit that we present our Transfiguration Youth Mission Trips for the summer of 2010. Our High School students will be participating in the Appalachia Service Project July 3-10, and our Middle School students will go to New Orleans June 13-19. Each of these trips are an opportunity for our students to be a force for good in places that really need it. They will be the light of Christ shined into the darkness that brings

hope to the hopeless. If you're a student, I want you to be a part of these experiences. I know your life will be changed. If you're not a student and want to participate, I hope you'll consider helping us make these trips possible for all of our students. Please contact me if I can give you more information. jhoneyman@transfiguration.net

My Very Own Book



By Joy Daley

Book Suggestions

- Clifford The Big Red Dog books
- Curious George books
- Berenstain Bears books
- Junie B Jones books
- Magic Tree House mysteries
- A to Z Mysteries
- Harry Potter
- Geronimo Stilton
- Any sports stories
- Any Caldecott or Newberry
– award winning books

Books by Author

- Lynne Reid Banks
- Judy Blume
- Jan Brett
- Eric Carle
- Beverly Cleary
- Roald Dahl
- Bill Martin
- Patricia Polacco

Please visit

www.myveryownbook.org
for additional information.

A couple of months ago I had the opportunity of meeting Helen Van Auken who is the founder of *My Very Own Book*, a non-profit organization. *My Very Own Book* runs reading incentive programs in elementary schools in low-income neighborhoods. They currently serve over 1,500 students in three schools – one in Dallas ISD, one in Plano ISD, and one in Richardson ISD. Participating students are rewarded for minutes read at home with a certificate and a new, free book of their choice every six weeks. This program encourages children to read outside of school hours, increasing literacy skills, and putting new books in the homes of families who often can't afford the luxury of purchasing their own books. Students will experience the joy of earning and owning their very own books.

Helen came to see me right around the time some of us from Transfiguration participated in our diocese's Justice Revival. This Revival encouraged parishes to partner with neighborhood schools who need our help. It is one way our church can reach out to those in need beyond our parish within our community. It is another way for us to live into our call to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

With all this in mind, Helen helped me get connected with Celina Cardenas from Richardson ISD and we have been partnered with Spring Valley Elementary school located at 13535 Spring Grove Ave. Taking up a book collection during Lent with the help of Helen's organization, *My Very Own Book*, will be our first official act in our partnership with Spring Valley Elementary School. Transfiguration's Women's Book Club will be leading this effort. We will be collecting only NEW BOOKS on four Sundays during Lent – February 21, 28 and March 7 and 14. Look for the clearly designated book bins in the tower cloister and flyers posted on our bulletin boards for further details or contact Clare Lattimore from our Women's Book club. Remember that the books donated must be new books. Suggestions in the sidebar will guide your shopping. This is only the beginning of our school partnership, but what a wonderful way to begin and a very significant way to live into the holy season of Lent. Remember the words from the epistle to the Corinthians we hear on Ash Wednesday, "See, now is the acceptable time; see now is the day of salvation!"



The Polk Family Home Dedication

By Joy Daley

Sponsored by Cochran Chapel United Methodist Church, Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration, First Presbyterian of Dallas, First United Methodist of Coppell, Lovers Lane United Methodist Church, North Park Presbyterian and Oak Cliff Presbyterian.

My name is Michelle and I am a single mother of two amazing children. For the past seven years, I have worked full-time as a dental assistant at a children's dentist office. It has always been a dream of mine to become a homeowner and Habitat for Humanity is making that a reality!

My son, Jordan is six years old and attends the first grade. He loves to watch college football! Morgan is my beautiful five year old daughter who loves to play "tea party." My children are my joy and I love them with all my heart.

For the past two years we have lived with my parents. It has been a blessing to have my family close-by as I grieve my divorce from my husband. However, the space is crowded and I am thrilled to have our own rooms in our new home!

I have had a wonderful experience with Habitat for Humanity. They have helped me every step of this process and I am very grateful. I will be able to tell my children that I achieved my dream for our family and they can also achieve their dreams.



Michelle Polk with family and friends on dedication day.



The Polk family new home

Food Pantry – The North Texas Food Bank welcomes you to your new home with a starter kit of pantry items when you move in. Congratulations.

Cleaning Supplies – The Lamplighter School donated these cleaning supplies for you so you can always have your home as clean as it is today!

Tool Box – These tools are a gift from Dallas Habitat. We hope you will keep your home in good repair.

Presentation of Keys – This is the key to your home. YOUR home. May these walls keep you safe, may the rooms be filled with happiness, and may the door be open to new friends and happy memories.

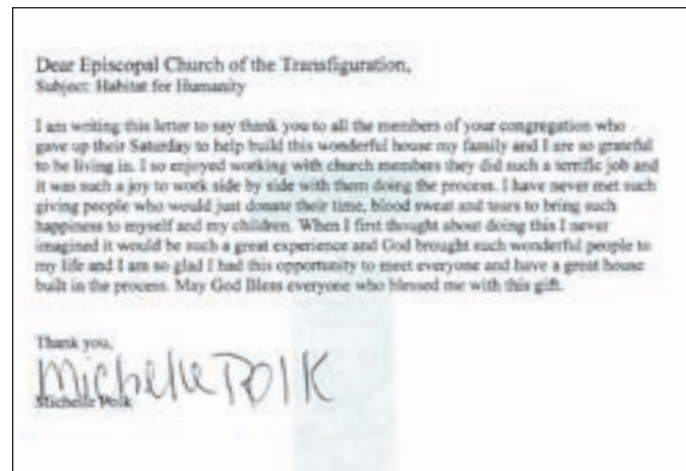
The Polk Family Home dedication ceremony began with a greeting from Steve Goldmann, a Dallas Area Habitat for Humanity Board Member. There was an opening prayer, an introduction of the family & sponsor recognition. Next the presentation of gifts:

Bread – When we break bread and share in a meal, we are a part of a community that cares for one another. May you share many happy meals together in your home.

Wine – When we share in a glass of wine, we celebrate the joy in our lives. May your home be filled with great joy and happiness.

Flowers – Flowers are God's reminder of new life and growth. May you grow in spirit and love in your new home.

Bible – Christians are a people of the Bible. We believe that these words come from God to teach us, nurture us, challenge us, and provide us with words of grace and hope. May God be in your home.



Lent & Holy Week Christian Formation

Children's Ministry

By Gaye Lynn Huddleston

The season of Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Good Friday, presents many opportunities to teach and share traditions of our faith with our children. It would be difficult to explain the joy of Christ's resurrection to our young ones if we didn't help them understand Christ's journey to the cross. Be diligent this year as you enter into Lent. Involve your children in a family Lenten discipline that helps all involved come to an understanding of sacrifice and great blessing.

I understand it is difficult for families to attend extra Lenten activities on school nights, so I strongly encourage your family to make weekly attendance during the Christian Formation hour,

a spiritual discipline this Lent. Pre-Kindergarten – 6th grade Christian Formation classes will focus on learning about Christ's passion during the six weeks of Lent. They will talk about ways Jesus then and we now, experience temptation, prayer, helping others and forgiveness.

A daily devotion book has been written for your families to use at home, as well. This small book will allow you to read a daily scripture verse then ask family members to discuss a question of the day. Hopefully this little book will help your children continue their Lenten journey between Sundays. It will be available in the Gathering Space beginning February 14.

Holy Week Preparation Workshop

The Children's Ministry Department will once again host a Holy Week Preparation Workshop on Sunday, March 28 for 4th – 6th grade children from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. During this time together we will explore the events of Holy Week through study, fun and investigation.

Children's Services

Then, Maundy Thursday, April 1 through the three High Holy days of the Triduum, bring your children to the services offered specifically for them:

Ash Wednesday – Preschool aged children will meet in the Children's Chapel for a short imposition of ashes service and art response time. A service for elementary aged children will be held in the Children's Gathering Room in the Church Life Center. This service will be a simplified, instructive imposition of ashes. During the Eucharist, the children will be invited to stand around

the altar and participate with the priest. Service time is 6:45 p.m.

Maundy Thursday – Preschoolers will gather in the Children's Chapel for prayers and an art response time. Elementary aged children will gather in the Children's Gathering Room in the Church Life Center. This service, though simplified, will mimic the liturgy in the Nave with foot washing and stripping of the altar. The service will conclude with the children and priest going to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Service time is 6:45 p.m.

Good Friday – Preschoolers will gather in the Children's chapel for an age appropriate Stations of the Cross and art response time; followed by the sharing of Hot Cross Buns. Elementary aged children will begin their time together in the Children's Gathering Room, in the Church Life Center. We will walk, with acolytes, around the

14 stations of the Cross created by the Christian Formation classes (outside, weather permitting) and listen as children read the portion of the story appropriate to each station. Following the stations, we will eat Hot Cross Buns and enjoy an Easter art project. Service's are held at 11:45 a.m. and 6:45 p.m.



Adults & Youth

By Virginia F. Holleman

This year for our Wednesday Night Lenten Series, we are very pleased to have Dr. Roy Heller, Associate Professor of Old Testament at Perkins School of Theology at S.M.U. Dr. Heller will be leading a discussion on the previous Sunday's reading from the Hebrew Scriptures. With a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Old Testament from Yale University, Dr. Heller is well qualified to lead us in a short course in the earlier history of our salvation entitled "The Gospel Before the Gospel: How the Old Testament Proclaims the Good News." Our evenings will begin at 6:00 p.m. in the Nave with Holy Eucharist, followed by a simple meal in Roper Hall served by one of our parish organizations. We will then continue from 7:15 until 8:15 p.m. with Dr. Heller's presentation and discussion.

We are grateful to the following groups who have volunteered to prepare a light supper for us:

February 24 Fig Youth
 March 3 Fig Bridge Group and ROSES
 March 10 Episcopal Men's Fellowship
 March 17 St. Hilda's
 March 24 MOM's Group

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|------------------------|---|--|--|
| Opportunities for Lent | <p>Brown Bag Lenten Book Study</p> <p>Wednesdays, February 24, to March 24, 12:00 Noon in the Vestry Meeting Room of the South Building. Mother Joy Daley will lead the discussion of <i>A Hidden Wholeness, The Journey Toward an Undivided Life</i> by Parker J. Palmer.</p> | <p>Women's Lenten Book Study</p> <p>Thursday, February 25 to March 25, 7:00 p.m. in the Parlor. The group will read and discuss <i>Blowing the Lid Off the God Box: Opening Up to a Limitless Faith</i> by Anne Robertson and <i>Gift from the Sea</i> by Anne Morrow Lindberg.</p> | <p>Taize Service on the Labyrinth</p> <p>Sunday February 28 7:00 p.m.</p> |
| | <p>Episcopal Women's Forum Lenten Meditation and Complimentary Soup Lunch</p> <p>Thursday, March 11, 11:30 a.m., led by Deacon Liz O'Donnell.</p> | <p>ECW Lenten Retreat for Women</p> <p>Saturday, March 6, 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Roper Hall. Lenten Day of Reflection led by Gabriella Bondy, experienced retreat leader.</p> | <p>Open Walk on the Labyrinth</p> <p>Sunday March 28 2:00 p.m.</p> |

 Join us for the Easter Egg Hunt in the Tower Cloister at 10:30 a.m. on Easter Sunday!



Two Events Kick-off

By Joel Martinson

Transfigured Nights presents two musical events which will begin the dedicatory year celebrating our new Richards, Fowkes & Co.'s Opus 17. The first, a March 7 recital by Yuri Ashelevich, Associate Principal Cello of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, will utilize some of the accompanimental stops of the organ, as well as our 1985 Willard Martin harpsichord. The second will be the Organ Dedication itself, the 11:15 service on Sunday, April 18, followed by two identical recitals that afternoon featuring the internationally-acclaimed organist James David Christie.

For those unfamiliar with organ dedications, it is customary for a church to bring in a well-known artist from outside the community who is a musician of the utmost caliber and is well-equipped to demonstrate the various tonal possibilities and capabilities of a new instrument to the audience in a relatively short time (70 minutes of music). Mr. Christie was chosen by Fr. Godwin and me, as he is friend to a number of organists in the Dallas area, either as a colleague of theirs at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music or as a student of the famed French organ teacher Marie-Claire Alain. He has a direct tie to Transfiguration in that he was the first organist to join the artist agency operated by our former Director of Music Howard Ross in the 1980s and 1990s, during which time Jim performed a recital on Transfiguration's Skinner-Sipe organ now located in the south transept. Mr. Christie is a great friend of mine and is also one of my all-time favorite performers, having given some of the most memorable recitals I have heard. He is also an ardent supporter of the Richards, Fowkes & Co. firm, and was a fellow student of co-owner Ralph Richards at Oberlin. Because of the enthusiasm for our new organ in our parish, the Dallas-Forth Worth organ community, throughout our region and even US as a whole, and the limited size of our nave, we have planned two recitals for which complimentary tickets will be required, similar to our Christmas Eve services. See details on page 11 for more information.



Organ Dedicatory Year 2010



Recital – *Yuri Anshelevich, cellist*
March 7, Sunday, 7:00 p.m.

One of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's most popular recitalists, cellist Yuri Anshelevich, will perform with Joel Martinson at the organ and harpsichord in works by Scarlatti, J. S. Bach and others. Mr. Anshelevich will also play unaccompanied solo works by John Tavener and Donald Crumb. The recital will also premiere a new work for cello and organ specifically composed for Mr. Anshelevich and inspired by the sounds of our new organ. Russian-born, Yuri Anshelevich made his recital debut at the age of nine, and five years later earned acceptance at the famed Moscow State Conservatory. That same year he won First Prize in the Cello Division of the All-Russian Competition, which led to studies with world-famous cellist Mstislav Rostropovich. Currently Associate Principal Cello with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, he has served on the faculty of Southern Methodist University and as artist-in-residence at the University of Dallas.



Organ Dedicatory Recitals – James David Christie
April 18, Sunday, 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.

James David Christie pulls out all the stops in two duplicate recitals on the day of the dedication of the Richards, Fowkes & Co. Opus 17. Mr. Christie holds positions as the Distinguished Artist in Residence at the College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA, and Professor of Organ at the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music, Oberlin, OH. He also serves as an adjunct member of the Wellesley College music faculty. His has previously held positions at Boston Conservatory, M.I.T. and Boston University, and has served as organist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1978. His performances around the globe are heralded for their outstanding musicality, virtuosic brilliance, diverse programming, and masterful use of each instrument he encounters. Mr. Christie is certain to delight us with his artistry on Opus 17. Complimentary tickets are required for both recitals, and will be available from March 1 on. A gala reception will follow the 7:00 p.m. performance. Child-care will be provided for both recitals.

Fifty Years & Counting

Looking Back and Moving Forward – An Ordination Anniversary Perspective

By The Rev'd Gene Baker

Since I'm coming up on fifty years as an Episcopal priest, Father Godwin invited me to reflect on those years for Crossroads and also to preside at the altar on the Wednesday night closest to my anniversary date. I was ordained on the Eve of St. Matthias, February 23, 1960, in the little ranching town of Cotulla, Texas. If you spot an old guy with a clerical collar sitting on the right hand side of the nave at the 11:15 service, it's likely to be me.

It was an all day affair. Bishop Everett Jones arrived that afternoon in time for baptisms, confirmations, and "dinner on the grounds." After that he dedicated our new church of St. Timothy's and that evening there was my ordination.

Those were halcyon days in the Episcopal Church. It was growing by leaps and bounds. Like many others, I was a convert from conventional Protestantism. While I was in college I discovered *The Book of Common Prayer*. In fact, I fell in love with it as it was an extension of John Wesley's service in the back of the Methodist hymnal. I didn't feel that I was leaving Methodism so much as going home to its origin. One reason I've been disappointed in the new Anglican Communion Covenant is the absence of the most important thing that has held the church together over the centuries and that is the Prayer Book. Wherever I've served or visited these past fifty years, and however the liturgy is conducted, the Eucharist has opened with the same powerful words of Archbishop Cranmer, "Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid..."

My first few years as a priest were at two little missions down in the Texas desert, the one in Cotulla, already mentioned, and Holy Trinity, in Carrizo Springs. I was very young, very naïve and inexperienced but the people were always very supportive. Then, in 1960, I had an invitation to spend my vacation visiting a priest friend in London, Ontario. I met my future wife there. I also met the bishop of a missionary diocese on the western side of Hudson's Bay, the Diocese of Keewatin, which means "north wind." This was Bishop Hives who invited me to spend a few years serving under him in the Anglican Church of

Canada. Jean and I were married by then and, feeling adventurous, left for the far north driving my faithful old Rambler. Our destination was Thompson, Manitoba, a new company-owned town about six hundred miles north of the American border. I was to establish a parish and become its first rector. I would also have responsibility for nearby missions with the Crees and Meti peoples. ("Meti" refers to descendents of Indians and French fur traders.)

This was fascinating work but I discovered I was in over my head. Perhaps I should have spent more time fishing at the nearby lakes and rivers. Instead, I was counseling people with all kinds of emotional and spiritual problems. I worried about my lack of training. After my time was up in Manitoba, we headed for Hollywood, California. A summer training program at the American Institute of Family Relations had caught my attention and it seemed like a way to improve my counseling skills.

That was the summer of 1965, and it was truly a time of reliance on God. Jean and I had little money and, though I had arranged to do supply work at nearby parishes in Los Angeles, it wouldn't be enough. We hoped that we would survive somehow, and we did. In fact, we were able to find a lovely apartment near the Institute. There was always food on the table and gas in the car.

Before the end of that summer I received an invitation from the rector of Christ Church in Oak Cliff, to come and establish a church-related counseling center there. Here was an opportunity and a challenge to use what I had learned in California.

We were at Christ Church a total of four years. The new counseling program was going and I was ready to move on. There was a new and exciting degree plan at UT Arlington. So my next step was to get another degree, a master's in clinical social work. I ran on two tracks after that. One was as a psychiatric or clinical social worker for the next forty years, and secondly, serving Christ as a visiting supply priest on Sunday mornings. During that time I have been in most of the small parishes and missions of the diocese



Fr. Baker with Fr. David Petrash and an acolyte in front of the Church of our Merciful Savior, Kauffman, Texas following a special celebration of Fr. Baker's fifty years of ordained ministry.

I have had many setbacks through the years, as have you. I lost my first marriage as some of you. However, as long as I am with others and serving them, whether Episcopalian or not, I don't get discouraged. Even as the institutional church as we have known it seems to be going through tough times, shedding members even, I believe that God is asking us to be faithful and to remain in covenant with him. If we can do those things God will see us through. Who can say for certain right now where the Holy Spirit is leading us? Certainly we are being asked to swallow our pride and to open ourselves to being led. Those are tough things to do, right there.

I decided to make the Church of the Transfiguration my home base for several reasons. One is the high caliber of the clergy. I've known J.D. for many years. Secondly, the liturgy and the music are carried out with great sensitivity to the words and the meaning behind them, and those are very important to me. Occasionally I may be called away to preside at the mass in one of the other churches but then you'll find me right back here, as the Fig is now my spiritual home.



It's in Our Hands – 2010 Census – Everyone Counts

By Joy A. Daley

You may remember this reading from Christmas Eve. It reminds us that the whole idea of taking a Census has been with us since Biblical times. Here in our country this year, 2010, is the year for everyone to be counted. The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every ten years. The good news is, that unlike Mary and Joseph, we don't have to travel anywhere to participate in the census. All we have to do is complete the census questionnaire that is sent to us.

“Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David’s town for the census.”

Luke 2: 1-4

Transfiguration is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to spread the word about the 2010 Census and help achieve a complete and accurate count of the U.S. population.

The census defines who we are as a nation. Every year, the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion to state, local and tribal governments based on census data. Accurate census data help determine congressional representation, grant funding and guide local decision-makers on where to build new roads, hospitals, housing, schools, places of worship and more.

As a place of worship, Transfiguration is committed to supporting the varying needs of our members and our community at large. Pledging our commitment to the 2010 Census is another way to improve the quality of life in our community, another way to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to make sure every-

one is counted, that everyone counts. Just as we consider exercising our right to vote part of our Christian responsibility, completing 2010 census questionnaire's is part of our duty also.

In the coming months, we will update you about important census-related news or events. We also will share information about key 2010 Census operations, including:

- **March 2010:** 2010 Census forms are mailed or delivered to households.
- **March – April 2010:** Be Counted Program is implemented. Census forms are available at select public sites for individuals who did not receive one by mail.
- **April 1, 2010:** Census Day, the official day of the population count. All 2010 Census responses should represent the household as it exists on this day.
- **May – July 2010:** Census workers will visit households that do not mail back their forms to take a count in person.
- **Dec. 31, 2010:** Census Bureau presents the 2010 apportionment counts to the President of the United States.
- **March 2011:** Census Bureau completes delivery of re-districting data to states.

Visit: 2010census.gov to learn more.

Why Transfiguration?

By Ellen Dingwall

In this edition of The Crossroads journal, we hear from Betty Prickett. Betty shares with us how she and her husband, John, found Transfiguration, why they are here and what keeps them with us. Being invited to a church function, class, or special service by a friend is often the way folk come into a church. It is up to those of us already here to welcome these friends with open hearts and minds. Our parish family does a wonderful job welcoming the strangers among us and for that, I am very grateful. We all need to consider inviting a friend to a church function sometime. This is a special place that we call our parish home, and I don't know about you, but I would like to share the joy that is the Transfiguration family with friends who may not already have a church home.

My first experience of Transfiguration was to attend a class taught by Sharon Turner called Imaging Pathways. I met some of the ladies at the church in this class and really enjoyed myself. A seed was planted.

My friend, Kathey Roberts, invited me to attend a Sunday school class with her taught by Gary Stuard about female Christian mystics. This was another time for me to meet and experience more church members. It was a lively and stimulating class.

I had mentioned to Kathey that John and I were looking for a church. I had been an Episcopalian in my teen years and was being drawn back. Kathey encouraged me to attend some of the services and John came, too. I had found a home and John seemed to feel the same way.

We decided to join and attended Michael Merriman's introductory course. It was grand and we met more people that we enjoyed. We also met more of the staff. What a loving and "fun-loving" group they are! I felt cared about.

My next group experience was the church trip to Ireland. It was another opportunity to get to know more members. It was fun, fun, fun! Now I feel at home because I see familiar faces. If we are not sitting in our "regular place" at the 11:15 service, people notice, especially JD. It is nice to be missed and we love this church and the warmth and loving acceptance that permeate the staff and members.

Betty Prickett



John & Betty Prickett