

PARISH UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter for Friends and Members of Church of Our Saviour Parish
 2405 Clearview Drive • Glenshaw, PA. 15116 • 412-486-5171 • 412-487-4520

NEWS & NOTES

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 14 Patrick Guiste
- 18 Caroline Stiehler
- 19 Kathy Brown
- 19 Warren Neiger
- 23 Dorothy Donley

Our Sympathies

To Jim Edge and his family on the recent death of his mother, Gladys Edge. Gladys was grandmother and great grand mother.

Our Sympathy

To Ernie Bold on the recent death of his wife, Caroline. Caroline was the mother of two sons Kevin and Mark and grandmother to two grand children.

A Note From Joanne and Bob

Poor us, we're stuck in Florida on sandy beaches with fresh orange and grapefruit trees providing us wonderful breakfast treats. We worship in a great church here that we found years ago in Dunedin and they have some wheelchairs that their families have offered when loved ones no longer need them. We thought that The Church of Our Saviour could use a wheelchair or two, if someone had one they were anxious to give away. One could be used upstairs in the church and another kept downstairs.

Discipleship Opportunities 2005

One Year Bible Reading

Read the bible through in one year.

Alpha Course

Celebration dinner January 11.

Course begins January 18.

Intercessory Prayer

Every Tuesday from
 6:00 – 6:30 p.m... at church.

Freedom in Christ Retreat

February 24 – 27

Cursillo

Men – February 17-20.

Women – April 21-24

Co-ed – September 29-October 2

Men's Group

1st & 3rd Saturdays, 7:30 am

Neighborhood Welcome Bag Outings

dates to be announced

From the Rector

Rector's Annual Report 2004

The Church of Our Saviour has a lot to be proud of in 2004. Beginning with the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity, threats) meetings in the spring, we came together to take inventory, evaluate our "swot's," and determine how to move forward in our mission.

One key result was that we established ourselves as a Christ-centered, biblical, and historical parish in support of our bishop and our Anglican heritage.

We also established action teams to address four key areas of our church life; communication, worship, outreach, and property. As a result, we have redesigned our website, newsletter, and road signs (to be installed in the Spring), we have expanded our contemporary music team while maintaining our traditional music, we have instituted the welcome bag ministry to newcomers in the area, and we have evaluated our building needs, devised a plan for repairing and upgrading our facility, and begun work on a new handicap bathroom in the old library.

In addressing our financial needs, we have revamped our accounting system, installed a new treasurer, and drawn up a three year plan to get us into a balanced budget condition. Along side of the financial plan we have instituted a discipleship program to help us and our newcomers grow in our faith.

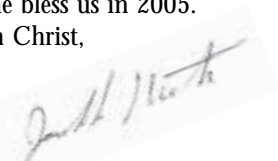
With all the above improvements we still managed to reach out in ministry to others through our missions giving, Angel Tree, Samaritan's Purse, RAFT Project, Woolly tree, Christmas baskets, and countless other individual acts of caring.

With all of these foundational improvements in progress we now must move forward with the challenge of reaching new and unchurched people. The most fruitful program so far is the Alpha course. We are now on our second Alpha course with 15 – 20 participants including 8-10 newcomers. This is tremendously encouraging and should inspire us all to believe that God is doing a great work among us.

In summary, we have come a long way in 2004. We have faced our situation, made changes, and set a course for the future. We have a lot to be proud of and thankful for. We need to continue to grow in our faith and in our love for the Lord Jesus and one another; and we need to pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send us out into the harvest field to reach his people. What an exciting privilege and opportunity. May he bless us in 2005.

Yours in Christ,

Joseph




FEB Calendar of Events

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

- Sunday** 8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist Rite I
 9:15 a.m. Adult Education, 10:30 a.m. Family Service & *Children's Ministries*
- Tuesday** 6:00 p.m. Intercessory Prayer time
 6:30 p.m. Alpha Course
- Wednesdays** 12:00 noon Healing Service and Lunch
- Thursdays** 6:30 p.m. Contemporary Worship Practice
- Saturday** 1st & 3rd weeks at 7:30 a.m. Men's Group

Schedule for February

- Wednesday, February 9** 12:00 p.m. Service (no Lunch)
 7:00 p.m. Ash Wednesday service
- Friday, February 11** 6:30 p.m. Adult Valentine Party
- Sunday, February 13** Church Army and TESM Students at 10:30 Service
- Monday, February 14** 7:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting
- Thursday, February 18-20** Men's Cursillo
- Friday, February 25-27** Freedom in Christ Retreat

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Please pray for the all the parishioners in the bulletin.

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ALPHA is back

The ALPHA celebration supper on January 11, 2005 was a great time and we had 5 new guests who came with some of the participants of the Fall Alpha crowd. We had a good dinner and some good testimonies and another great talk by Nicky Gumbel. A total of ten guests from outside the parish came to first night of the Winter ALPHA course on January 18, 2005, giving us a total of 21 participants and team members the first week.

In addition there were about 6 others who were expected who did not make the first night. It looks like about half the participants of this ALPHA course will be friends and relatives of past participants so it looks like our efforts to invite others have been rewarded. Please pray for all the participants in the Winter ALPHA that their lives will be blessed with a greater knowledge and experience of Jesus Christ. Pray for the team also as we seek to allow Christ to work through us.

Annual Meeting 05 Recap

The lunch was delicious and many thanks go out to Pat Purdy, Juliann Trischler, Barb Grundler, Kathy Walzer, Sally Knapp, and the other helping hands.

First order of business was to recognize Lee Gilch for his devoted service as Senior Warden. With the half-year absence of the junior warden, Lee J wore multiple hats and truly served beyond the call of duty. The new vestry was elected as follows: Warren Neiger, Brenda Grundler, and Eileen Meyer were elected to full terms, and Kathy Walzer was elected to fill a one year vacancy.

The hot item on the agenda was the budget discussion regarding the church's mission outreach giving. In an effort to decrease the 2005 budget deficit, the finance committee recommended a number of budget cuts including a decrease in our missions giving from 10 per cent of our annual income to 7 per cent. The reduction was accepted for one year noting that we are a generous parish and desire to continue the tithe as we are able.

The bottom line was that our principle focus needed to be the Great Commission and local outreach to unchurched people. Bright spots on that front are the Alpha course, our discipleship plan, and various outreach programs (see article in newsletter).

Easter Outreach Project

The Church Army and Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry have volunteered to come along side of the Church of Our Saviour to assist in outreach to the community. On Sunday, February 13, Richard Priestly from the Church Army and students from TESM will be joining us for worship and discussing some ideas at coffee hour. Come meet and talk with these faithful helpers.



My Testimony ... Kathy Walzer

When I was 7 years old, my family decided unanimously to attend the Church of Our Saviour. I soon knew the whole service by heart but it was not *in* my heart and I could not understand it. So I decided at a young age that Christianity did not make sense and I gave up trying to understand it. But God had not given up on me.

On Easter Sunday, 1971, when I was 16 years old, I came somewhat reluctantly to church with my parents and found that God was waiting for me. Evidently I had an appointment that I did not know about! I could feel His presence from the moment we walked into church and I knew something was about to happen.

That day the Holy Communion service that was so familiar to me became fresh and new as if I were hearing the words for the first time. From the opening prayer I learned that God knows all about me and from Him "no secrets are hid" and I wanted to flee. All through the Scripture readings and the sermon I could feel His presence in the room and I felt as if I was being addressed personally by the words I was hearing. I knew God wanted something from me.

After the general confession, the vicar pronounced these "comfortable words" of our Lord Jesus Christ from Matt. 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."

I realized that an invitation was being extended to me. The vicar read a couple of other Scripture passages and then this one from I John 2:1-2, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." At that point I realized what I had probably heard a hundred times before - Jesus loved me enough to die for me. And it made sense. I said, "Yes" to Him and I was immediately filled with a deep, abiding, and indescribable joy as He filled me with His Holy Spirit.

My life has never been the same since. I began reading the Bible immediately and growing in faith, taking on a whole new outlook on life as the Holy Spirit worked in me to conform my thought to the way of God revealed in the Scriptures and to transform my character to be more like Jesus. The Lord began healing me of depression and of all the emotional disfunction in my life. Within a few short months, I felt as if I had come out from under a dark cloud that had been over me for half of my life. His healing and transformation continue even today as my Lord and Savior also continues to equip me for the privilege of serving Him and helping others to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ and in their understanding of His Word.

