



OUTLOOK

December 2009 Newsletter

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.



December 1, 2009

Advent is upon us and with the coming of the season we at the Church of Saint Asaph begin the Advent Conspiracy. To conspire is to engage in a common act for a specific purpose often undermining or even evil.

An Advent Conspiracy sounds rather ominous at first. I do assure you there is nothing evil about this particular conspiracy. Who is involved? The Advent Conspiracy is a collective of churches across many denominations who agree to encourage four practices for this season of Advent resulting in one objective.

The four practices are as follows: Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love All. Steve Lindsey has led us in the first of this series in one of our Adult Formation sessions. Please come and hear about the Advent Conspiracy in the remaining sessions. A DVD is available to share after the Season; a book by the same title is also available on line or at one of the local bookstore chains.

The objective of this particular conspiracy is a hope that in keeping Christ in Christmas, parishes around the world might consider making a generous gift to Living Water International- a not for profit, non-religious

organization that seeks to provide clean drinking water to every person on the planet. Something we simply take for granted, the turning on of our tap and the ability to drink that water without reservation is something that most people in the world have never experienced. Living Water International seeks to dig wells and provide the resources for people across our planet to have access to that which we believe is the norm. Oh that it is was the norm for all people. Your Vestry has already agreed to send a portion of our Offering for this project.

Perhaps, however, the greater objective is to cause a shift in how we live our lives. Think globally, buy locally; buy from local growers; plant gardens locally, encourage cottage industry; support businesses that offer living wages; recycle, recycle, recycle. Here is a real conspiracy that encourages and celebrates the worth of all people. Here is a conspiracy that encourages real stewardship of the gifts we have been given. Here is a conspiracy that suggests the few should not live at the expense of the many. There will be a host of catalogues and other offerings on a table in the Parish Hall on Sundays for the next few weeks. If you have a catalogue or favorite charity or project you would like others to know about, then please bring the information for our table.

This year is only our first year at the conspiracy. Like any worthwhile plot, I believe that it will grow throughout this year and we may even discover that living and giving in a new way is the best way.

Happy Conspiring and a Blessed Advent,
Barry J. Harte+

ICONS Sunday



V. Blue Lemay, the creative energy behind ICONS Sunday.

Experience Christianity in a Completely Different Way

The icon (eye-con) of God



ICONS Sunday is an innovative and holistic approach to worship which combines spirituality with popular culture. This worship engages you at multiple levels—scriptural, intellectual, psychological, aesthetic, musical, literary, cinematic, political, and communal—so that an experience of Christian, cultural, and popular icons can be directly connected to your everyday life. We explore everything from Flannery O'Connor and Mother Teresa to Bob Marley and South Park.

For December 13, 2009 on ICONS Sunday, the topic is "CATCH A FIRE," and here is what will possibly be, read, shown and discussed:



- Native American Myth:** Navajo, Creation Myth
- Christian Music:** Katie Reed, Baptize Us with Fire
- Mystic Writing:** Richard Rolle, Fire of Love (Prologue of Richard Rolle)
- Painting:** Ian Francis, Baptism of Fire
- Video Documentary:** Bob Marley and the Wailers-Catch a Fire Part 4 (9:52)
- Film clip:** Catch a Fire, directed by Philip Noyce (2006)

ICONS Sunday

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday at 5:00 pm
St. Asaph's Episcopal Church
27 Conshohocken State Road
610-664-0966
<http://www.saintasaphs.org/Welcome.html>



Blue and Dr. Betsy Morgan, Professor Emeritus, of Eastern University

Dr. Morgan was our inspiration on story telling for the November 22 ICONS Sunday. Dr. Morgan challenged us to be open to surprises in our encounter with old stories.



In attendance were several of our folks from St. Asaph's and students from Eastern.

I don't know how many of you have engaged in conversation with Blue beyond her significant attention to ICONS Sundays, but ask her about her interest in stained glass. She is presently working on a 1,000-piece stained glass—*Carravaggio Supper at Emmaus*.

Education

Adult Christian Formation
By Steve Lindsay

The Lectionary for the Month of December

The readings for the Sundays in December are:
Please use this list to prepare yourself for worship.

Date	Readings
Sunday 12/6/2009 Advent 2C	Malachi 3:1-4 Canticle 4 or 16 Philippians 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6
Sunday 12/13/2009 Pentecost 23 Advent 3C	Zephaniah 3:14-20 Canticle 9 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18
Sunday 12/20/2009 Advent 4C	Micah 5:2-5a Canticle 3 or 15 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)
Sunday 12/27/2009 Christmas IC	Psalm 147 or 147:13-21 Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Galatians 3:23-25;4:4-7 John 1:1-18

Stewardship

Stewardship Month, November 2009



You are looking at the Stewardship Committee—from top to bottom, **Mary Allen, Teresa Wallace and Kristen Stewart**. Each gave us a personal appeal and witness as to what St. Asaph's means to them and why pledging is important to the life

of our church. If you haven't committed your pledge, please do. Although November was Stewardship Month, the committee hopes you know that giving is ongoing.

Below is Kristen's message about pledging:



When I told my grandpa, a life-long Lutheran, that I'd been asked to be on the Stewardship Committee at St. Asaph's, I sort of thought he'd be proud of me. Instead, he

*groaned and muttered: "I always tried to get out of being in that group." This, from the man who did everything from dying eggs for his church's annual Easter Egg hunt, to fixing the toilet in the main bathroom. Could this really be worse than plumbing? Apparently, yes. In his mind, asking people for money is *that* bad.*



I'm from a generation of over-communicators. We post everything we do on Facebook and Twitter. So I guess I'm not uncomfortable with talking about cash, and giving some of it to my church. What does make me uncomfortable is watching that offering plate come around every week. How much do I put in? You scramble around in your purse for that extra \$5 floating around in the bottom. You're silently resentful when the person next to you brandishes an already neatly written check, ready to go. And let's be honest, a part of you is thinking: Is this really what I should be thinking about in church, when I'm supposed to be in communion with God? I think the answer is "no."

That's what's so ideal about the process of pledging we do every year. You do it when you have a few private moments to really think about it. Maybe at home, when you can look at your budget and look at what St. Asaph's means in your life. Maybe in the car, when you finally have a few minutes to yourself. Maybe you have a little chat with God, and see what He thinks on the subject. Then you write down what you'd like to give in 2010 on a St. Asaph's pledge card. Decide how

often you want to give it. And it's done! No panic, no angst, no drama. You've made a decision you're comfortable with, and can commit to for the next year. Next time the offering plate comes around, you're sitting pretty. You've already decided what to give when it counts most.

Kids and Youth

Rite-13

On Saturday October 24th the Rite-13 group of **Mary Chawaga, Kevin Harte-McCormick, Margaret Nelsen, Breonna Obeng, and Emma Ragsdale** hosted a Haunted House at the church to raise money to combat hunger. The group raised over **\$150.00** which was used to purchase turkeys for the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Thanks to all who helped with the Haunted House especially **Fr. Barry, John Barrett, Kathy Hubbard, Jay Love, Chuck Nelsen, Smith Ragsdale, and John Silva.**

On Sunday, November 29, **Steve Sheeran** was busy coordinating the Advent wreath-making workshop following the 10 am service. Families were really into this craft. Teresa Wallace made sure that families were fed—boxes of pizza were on hand.



A Sunday School classroom where children are involved in Godly Play.

Plans for the Christmas Pageant are underway with several of our young families involved. We will see this important part of our Christmas on Sunday, December 20 as part of our 10 am service. Call the office if you or your child hasn't been asked to participate.



Pageant 2008

**Behold what you are; become what you see.
(St. Augustine)**

Outreach



Ruth Sperber, executive director of Eldernet is engaged in a forum with some of our congregants before she spoke at our 10 am service. Eldernet is one of the recipients of our food pantry along with NorthLight Community Center. Below Ruth's car is packed and ready to return to the Eldernet site where the food will be distributed to the elderly.



Thanksgiving at NorthLight Community Center and Just Children Head Start

50 reusable bags were packed for 25 families holding ingredients for the Thanksgiving holiday meal. In addition, turkeys were bought and included in the bags

for Just Children families. NorthLight had another group supply them with turkeys.

Joanne Behm and Mary Allen, co-chairs of this project thank you very much for your generous response of food and money for this needy drive.

Thanks also to our friends from **Bala School** who gave generously in money and food to achieve this abundance. And, we are so proud of our **Rite 13** group who not only packed the bags, but contributed the proceeds from their Haunted House Halloween event to support this Thanksgiving drive.

Christmas for the Just Children Head Start Parents and Children

Save the date of **Saturday, December 12 from 12 noon to 2** to help with our Christmas Party for Just Children. If you haven't been asked, talk to **Nicky Garvan or Connie Stelzenmuller** to volunteer. We need folks to help with crafts, setup, cleanup, games.

As we did last year, we will setup a room for parents to choose unwrapped gifts for their children 2 to 5 years. These gifts will then be wrapped by us. While parents are shopping, children are being engaged in crafts and games. This is our second year for this event. It was really successful and lives up to one of our mission statements of making children important in the life of our church.

We are asking for your donations of unwrapped toys for children from 2 – 5 years. Suggestions include: Puzzles (under 25 pieces); hard board books; dolls, push toys; card games; board games--age appropriate; memory games; matching games; play doh with assorted extruders and shapes.

Please leave your unwrapped toys in the vacant office across from **Lynda Staton's** office, our parish administrator.

Recalling last year's Just Children Christmas Party:



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Music and Arts

Roy Harker, director of Music and Arts



Laura Barton: Oil on Canvas
January 8 through February 7, 2010
Opening: Friday, January 8, 2010



**Christina Johnson : Fiber Artist and Quilter
Exhibit through January 3, 2010**

Those of us who met Christina at the opening were taken with her lovely personality. Her exhibit gave me a sense of warmth and well being. Below is a photo of Christina with one of her favorite quilts that she named *Tribute to Dad Gallery Wall*. Her father died in 1982; she completed the quilt in 2007. I asked her about the colors in the quilt. She said her dad was a musician. He played the violin and he liked to sing so she got the idea to use color combinations from a Duke Ellington piece *Black, Brown and Tan* to symbolize her Dad's love of music.

A portion of her quilt collection was inspired by a grant that she received from the Independence Foundation to study textile surface design in Ghana West Africa in 2002.



Diocesan Convention

Below are photos from our 226th Diocesan Convention. Held at the Convention Center on Saturday, November 14. Jay Love, Joanne Behm, and Steve Lindsey were our delegates. Our Priest-in-Charge, Barry Harte, was also in attendance along with Steve Chawaga who sat at the "head" table as the Diocesan Parliamentarian.

The convention is where the budget for the diocese is passed along with other resolutions.



Congregation

I am always amazed at what our parish members achieve and their commitment in what they do at the local, regional and global levels. I received the following from **Norman Hjelm**:

I'd like you to know about a major international and ecumenical project in which I am involved. The personal factor is not important, but I feel strongly that local parishioners -- as at St. Asaph's -- should be aware of some of the things that are going on.

A group of churchpersons with broad ecumenical and international experience are starting a study that will surely take many years, on "The Role of the Christian World Community During the Cold War" Scholars -- secular historians and political scientists -- of the Cold War at places where Cold War studies are going on in a major way (e.g., Harvard, Yale, London School of Economics) quite readily say that the role of the churches is one of the major missing pieces in understanding what was really going on during that period. In ways that most Americans do not understand, churches played a very major role during this period (1948-89) particularly in the Communist countries of Eastern Europe. Our study is focusing on organizations like the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Communion, et al. We also have contacts in the Vatican, although its archives are not easily accessible.

While I am by no means an expert in these matters, although I have personal stories to tell, I find it exciting to be involved. At present I am the chief American contact person. In the latter part of November I will be going to an executive meeting in Bratislava, Slovak Republic to help plan a major academic seminar on this topic to be held in late spring or early summer of 2010, also in Bratislava.

I feel strongly that churchgoers should be aware of such projects



Yes, believe it or not that is **Mary Chawaga**, 15, and so grown up, talking to her friends and family at her recent Quinceanera celebration.

I asked Mary to talk a little about this traditional Latin celebration and here is what she had to say:

A lot of my friends will be celebrating Sweet 16's and I wanted to do something different that no one else would have. Also, it was a chance for me to be more involved with the heritage.

My Grandpa (Mom's dad) is from Buenos Aires and my mom grew up there and her 2 sisters and 1 brother were born there too.

There really was no ritual. Traditionally, a Quinceanera is a celebration for a woman getting ready for marriage and is held in a catholic church and is a very formal event where my Quince was just a birthday party.

We gave out alfajores, which are a treat (like a brownie), in the party favors and we gave out charms to all the girls which is a traditional thing to do at Quinceanera's.

Mary wanted me to especially thank Audrey Dempster and Sandra Haye who prepared the food and decorated our parish hall with lots of white tulle with lights.

Mary, your dress was great, but your shoes were so classy. Congratulations!



I asked **Jonathan Zellars** to tell me something about himself for this newsletter. He is an interesting guy, has been in attendance at many of our functions and supports the mission spirit of this church. I was curious about his love of photography since I seldom see him without his camera. Here is what Jonathan had to say about himself:

*A friend of mine, **Ann-Marie Kirk**, was having an Art Opening at Saint Asaph's in September 2008. During the event I was greeted by a few kind faces who seemed genuinely concerned about who I was and how I had found my way to this beautiful space.*

Months ago I met with Father Barry related to my being at Saint Asaph's and asked what/if any was my role? Naturally, Father Barry answered in such a perspicacious response, that it became one of those answers within the question that one is asking. (Mmmh?) I had concerns as to whether I would fit in. I visited many churches over the years, (Presbyterian, Quaker, Baptist, etc..) and came across what I perceived to be a reserved, chilly reception from many of the members. I do understand human nature enough to

know that when new people arrive, it takes time for both parties to warm up to one another.

However, without being pressured I decided to return that Sunday for service. I don't actually recall the sermon, but I know that I did feel a sense of oneness within the group; and that made me feel good; so, fourteen months later I've been returning every Sunday. (Haven't missed a Sunday yet!

I grew up in a Baptist environment-but never joined. I lived in the Mount Airy section of the city for the past 30 years, but lived for a short time at 54th & City Avenue, across from Saint Joseph's University

I picked up the camera years ago while living in Europe, (Scandinavia. I really didn't get serious about photography until I started teaching at Drexel University. I was working with Professor Andrew Verzilli on an international project that involved the development of a World Cultural Center in downtown Philadelphia.

One day he was leading a workshop with a group of students and I asked to use his camera to document the presentation. Well, he gave me a look that said quite bluntly " Are you serious, you want to borrow my camera?!? I knew that I had made a grave error. He laughed and said, 'Come with me young man.' The next thing I knew we were downtown in a camera shop viewing the many types of photographic equipment that were on display. He told me to pick out one that I felt would work best for me. I picked out the Minolta 500. He said, " are you sure this is the one you want?" I said, "yes," and he immediately purchased it and said; "Okay! It's yours! Now let's get back to work! We both left the store laughing. He was a great human being and an excellent teacher!

Since I was a teenager, I was always involved with non-profit community organizations, such as Community Cancer #13, the United Way, AmeriCorps/Vista, the Nationalities Service Center, etc.;

I've never been married, but came pretty close on a few occasions. Perhaps the one thing that kept me from committing, was the fact that I didn't want anyone else to have to share the heartaches which I knew would lie ahead for the journey of the struggling artist.

I believe in a divine God, creator of the universe. One who knows my innermost thoughts and feelings; and to whom one day I shall be accountable.

Diocesan News--Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania

Middle East Study Group

Peter Doris, Chair
Mary Allen, Secretary



On November 19 Saint Asaph's hosted Warren Clark, Executive Director, of Churches for Middle East Peace. In his talk to an audience of approximately 50 Episcopalians from

around the Diocese of Pennsylvania Warren, brought both diplomatic and religious perspectives to the search for a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

Warren explained France and Great Britain, after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War One, carved up the Middle East into spheres of influence putting Syria and Lebanon under French control and the territory we now know as Israel and Palestine under British hegemony. The British responded positively to the appeals of Jewish organizations for assistance in promoting immigration to Israel as a home for Europe's Jewry before, during and after the Second World War. At no time during these decades were the wishes of the people who lived in this territory, the Palestinians, consulted.

Ambassador Clark deftly brought us from the British decision to defer to the United Nations precisely how the desires of Palestinians and Jews for self-determination would be addressed, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the 1967 War between Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan through to the present state of affairs between a first world economic and military power, Israel, and the Palestinian people, living since 1967 in Gaza, the West Bank of the Jordan River and in East Jerusalem under the control of the Israeli Defense Forces-a stateless people.

Here Warren Clark made the case for the role of his organization, Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP). The Episcopal Church USA is a member of the coalition of Christian churches that funds and directs CMEP. As both Palestinians and Israelis have accorded the United States a central role in their peacemaking efforts, Warren argues Christians are an important part of American civil society in supporting the Obama Administration's efforts. In fact both the Administration and the Congress will take their legislative and peacemaking cues from organized groups of citizens. Many of us have the order confused and are waiting for our legislators to lead. Warren's talk

reinforced the message that the way to advocate for peace is just the other way round. Concerned Episcopalians have the right to petition their representatives, saying we want a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians and not a unilateral American support for a 42 year occupation of Palestinian territory by a government and an army supported unilaterally by United States tax payers.

November 19 was a rainy evening. Those who braved the downpours were treated to a talk by an expert committed to helping United States Christians find their voice in support of peacemaking, which is in the vital self-interest of the United States, Israel and the

Palestinian people.



I am writing to invite all who are interested to plan ahead and come to the next meeting of the Middle East Study Group at St. Asaph's Church, on Conshohocken State Rd., 1/2

block west of City Ave. (behind LA Fitness). We meet at 7:30 pm, this time on Thursday (note the change!), January 14th, 2010.

I hope everyone had a grateful Thanksgiving.

Peace, Mary Allen

Property



As part of Friends' Central Service Days eight students: **Evan McVeil, Janelle Purnell, Regena Clay, Nathaniel Hurwitz, Zack Barron, Sam Spector, Nicole Wolfson and Spencer**; and one faculty member: **Melinda Yin** spent three days at St. Asaph and Bala House. For two days they worked with Steve Sheeran on the church grounds. On their first day they helped feed and protect the gigantic oak by the labyrinth and the large beech in the inner circle by breaking up the compacted ground around the trees' drip lines, putting edging around the

trees and covering the surface roots with peat moss, mulch and leaves. On their second day they put new wood chips on the path from the kitchen door to the playground entrance. On their final day they assisted the Bala House teachers. The students will return in May for two more Service Days.

November Work Day

Thanks to **John Chou, Katherine Kurtz, Teresa Wallace and Doris Weimar** for braving the drizzle to help protect and feed more of the large trees on the campus.

Book Review

By Carolyn Ramsey

The annual St. Asaph's Book Club Christmas party potluck supper is at **6:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 7**. We will discuss the book *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout. Everyone is invited to participate. Just let me know what dish you will be bringing. Ramsco@hotmail.com

Loaves and Fishes



Casablanca Night at St. Asaph's

Karen Love and Gwen Hauser, the co-chairs of this event should be pleased with the response to this fabulous evening. What a good time we had at Casablanca Night on Saturday, November 21. The committee transformed our sanctuary—not into Rick's Café—but into something more beautiful. The white flowers, tablecloths and candlelight sparkled under the imagination of **Jane Carton; Ed Lawler**, accompanied by **Pat Wood** on piano set the mood for the evening; **Audrey Dempster and Sandra Haye**, transformed the Parish Hall into a Moroccan tent with swags and drapes. Credit and thanks also to **Roy Harker** for helping with the music; **Linda Sterthous** for pulling her strings with merchants for many of our auction items and **Teresa**

Wallace who spent the entire evening with the children—feeding them and keeping them entertained with games and videos. Then there was **George Milner**, our auctioneer for the evening, smiling in his effective way as he encouraged the bids during the live auction.

You must know of course that there was a large important behind-the-scenes committee making decisions, spending hours on planning this event and who also provided the wine and did the cooking for us to enjoy such a wonderful feast. We all thank you so much.

Now for the numbers: 105 people attended the event and \$10,214.00 was deposited for the work of the church. Wow!!





Greening of the Church

Carol Linfoot and Joan Frank will organize our pot luck supper before the greening of the church on **Thursday, December 17**. Wine and nibbles followed by pot luck supper at 6:30. Look for the signup sheet. For more information contact Carol at clinfoot@verizon.net.

A new Advent Wreath, hanging over the altar, greeted us on the first Sunday in Advent, November 29, 2009.



Flower Guild

Once again the Flower Guild asks for your help in donating cuttings from your garden for greening the church on Thursday, December 17. We like white pine, Douglas fir, boxwood, juniper, holly, cedar, yew and whatever else you have. You can deposit your greens on the cloister porch. Do not wait until the 17th. We will take your cuttings starting now.

Your \$10 donation for poinsettia plants to decorate the church would be wonderful and appreciated as many of you have done in the past. Thanks.

We distribute the newsletter via e-mail. If you change your e-mail or if you wish to receive a black and white hard copy, **call the office at 610-664-0966** Our newsletter is also available on the St. Asaph website at www.saintasaphs.org

A last minute plea came in from the **Philadelphia SPCA** asking for volunteers to walk their dogs. Due to budget cuts they now need to rely more than ever on volunteers. Communicate with Beverly Keefer bpkeefer@earthlink.net If you are interested.

Welcome Guests:

St. Asaph's is a place that expects guests: people of all faiths, race, nationalities and walks of life; urban and suburban; rich and poor, gay and straight; families and singles; young, old, and in-between. We view hospitality as an important part of our ministry, and we hope you will feel welcomed here.

PRAYERS

Those for whom our prayers have been asked:

Nico Clothier and his family, Eve, Phillip Allison, Everett William Frank, Geraldine Lindsay, Kayte Reeves, Joan Schroeter, Glenn Stroud, and Raymond Weston, Sr.

Those who have died in the parish: Violanda Grossi (Connie Stelzenmuller), Dorothea Dent (Samantha Longdin), Virginia Graves, (George Graves) Joseph Touchstone, (Phyllis Touchstone), and Florence Sheeran, (Steve Sheeran).

St. Asaph's Church is a house of prayer for all people and a community that works to be progressive in belief and inclusive in practice.

Contact **Connie Stelzenmuller**, stelzen@verizon.net, newsletter editor, to submit articles or to request changes.

Sunday Schedule

- 8 am, Contemplative Communion
- 9 am, Spiritual Formation for all ages
- 10 am, Parish Eucharist
- 5 pm, Emerging worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)

Holy Days as announced

Summer Schedule

9:15 am

Parish Staff

Roy Harker, *Director of Music & Arts*
Kathy Hubbard, *Children's Formation*
Steve Sheeran, *Youth Formation*
Lynda Staton, *Parish Administrator*

Parish Vestry

Neil Desnoyers, *Accounting Warden*
Teresa Wallace, *Rector's Warden*
Janet Barrett, Joanne Behm, Chris Dennis, Nicky Garvan,
Michael Kaufmann, Katherine Kurtz, Mary Chris Lindsay, Lori Wernersbach, Bob Powell, 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*
The Rt. Rev'd Ed Lee, *Assisting Bishop*

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL -- PLEASE HANDLE PROMPTLY

OUTLOOK

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

On the web at
www.saintasaphs.org

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