

Excerpts from the Rector's Remarks at the Annual Meeting

Last year we moved our annual meeting from Tuesday evening to a Sunday afternoon after the Holy Eucharist because we sensed that what we do in celebration and thanksgiving for God's grace is not divided into worship and business.

Having a Sunday meeting allows us to celebrate adults, children and families together more easily and provide a more open forum for questions should there be any. **Your vestry and I encourage your questions and challenges as we seek to worship God and serve the needs of this community.**

There are too many people to thank individually this morning, with the exception of three without whom St. Barnabas, as we know and love it, would not be possible. And those are Lindsay, Donald, and Sue. Though Lindsay is our priest- and a most extraordinary teacher and pastor, Sue and Donald practice their own ministries of welcome and love right along side those of us who wear collars. Thank you, blessed trinity, from the bottom of my heart.

Our interactive sermon today asked us to respond to the idea of inviting Jesus into our homes. My response is that we welcome him through our lively Sunday school and thought-provoking study groups where we talk about him. We welcome him with our beautiful music sung to his praise. We welcome him by decorating his house- our church- with care and reverence. And we welcome him into our hearts in our prayers.

We welcome Jesus by responding to the needs of others, with our annual outreach, or when a crisis occurs. Whenever someone reaches out a hand for help and we respond, we welcome Jesus.

It has been my experience this year that we have become, -through our attention to these ways of welcome- a magnetic place, drawing others to experience the blessing of this faith community. **This is a real number: we have 26 new members**, not counting

From the Rector

their children. That is extraordinary growth in an environment where many churches are seeing decline.

But there are other real numbers that we are facing as well, and those numbers tell a different story, one that your vestry and I are working very thoughtfully and prayerfully to manage, but now we need to come to you and

ask you to join us in this work.

For many years it has been the case that a very few benefactors have often made our budget whole. Sometimes this was one extremely large gift; occasionally it was a few very large ones. We may have been a little too cautious in the past in telling you all about how such a very few people (sometimes as few as two), made up a disproportionate amount (sometimes 30%) of the money we need to run this church every year. Please understand; St. Barnabas has been incredibly blessed by individual generosity. But too much reliance on a few big gifts isn't fair to the givers, and isn't really safe for the church. Peoples lives and circumstances change, and we need to look to ourselves to manage the impact to our common life should someone need to adjust their giving. **With this new understanding, we need to ask ourselves what we can do to support the ministries we love having today for the years to come. In real numbers, we are \$50,000 short of being able to sustain our current operations.**

This long-standing situation (of having a few very large pledges) has had an impact on our giving parish-wide. We have probably looked better on paper than we really were and didn't realize that one pledge changing, or one family moving, could result in the immediate loss of a staff position. That has happened before in 2008 when Joel's position had to be eliminated and was only able to be reinstated in 2009 by virtue of one generous gift. But this information may not have been as clearly stated then as we are doing

Continued on page 2

2011 Brag Fest

From the Assistant Rector

I AM SUPPOSED TO GIVE YOU the Assistant Rector's report, but as I reflected on the past year and all of the wonderful things I got to do with you, I think that this could more adequately be described as a Brag Fest.

In 2011, we expanded our offerings for Christian Ed for parishioners of all ages. In Lent, Nora and I began offering a weekday Bible Study that I have continued to lead on Wednesday mornings. Our Bible Study has included the Gospel of Mark, Genesis, Exodus, Job, Jonah, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, the Nativity stories, and currently the Book of Acts. At this rate, we'll soon have studied the entire Bible!

In the Fall, we launched a series of dinners and conversations centered around spiritual topics like prayer

and angels that has been rich and fruitful. Our adult Christian ed offerings have been well-attended and in the Spring, two adults were confirmed by the bishop along side the youth.

The children of St. Barnabas continue to keep the Sunday School teachers, clergy, and their parents on our toes. Last Spring, the teachers, Sunday School directors, and I chose new curriculae to help us keep our bright and curious children engaged. We welcomed three new teachers this year and are hopeful that some of you might join us upstairs in the fall.

The youth group has been meeting monthly, striking a balance in our events between service, learning, and fun. We visited the Seamen's Church Institute in February and raised over \$1000 for it by selling plants during the Thrift Sale in May. We have led

craft projects for the After School program at San Andres, acted out the Easter story, discussed the X-Files, climbed the walls at Chelsea Piers, and shot each other with paint balls.

I call this report a brag fest because I feel so blessed, so lucky that I get to be a part of your lives in all of these ways. I am bragging to you about you! Watching the kids take the pageant script I co-wrote then ham it up and make it better than I could have imagined, reading the Lenten devotionals that many of you wrote, talking about angels and faith and doubt, sharing a bowl of soup with you during the Clothing Sale. I look forward to all that the next year will bring and I thank God for calling me to be your Assistant Rector. †

—Lindsay

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Continued from page 1

now. If we cannot find it within ourselves to increase our total pledges by \$50,000 per year (or 12% per pledge) it will happen again. We will lose a staff person. But we will lose much more than that, we will not be who we are today as a church.

The bottom line is this, we need to increase our giving across the board by 12%, or we will have to continue balancing our budget in ways that we don't feel good about, and that we cannot sustain beyond this year.

So, this current vestry and I have

already reconsidered our pledges and, in raising them, have covered to first 20% of our shortfall. We know we need to take a leadership role as we invite you to imagine ways in which you might relook at your own financial support of St. Barnabas, because we don't want to build a church on a foundation that looks too much like an upside down triangle.

You will be receiving a letter in the mail in the next few days, letting you know how you may respond- if you choose- to this request for increased, sustained giving. In the meanwhile, should you want to speak with someone about your pledge, you may call me, or be in contact with our Stewardship Chair and newly re-elected

vestryperson, Rich LeBuhn. Both of us may be reached through the office. We encourage your input and feedback.

As we look back on 2011 in gratitude and forward to 2012 with hope, I pray that more and more we grow in the knowledge and love of God and neighbor, seeking to reach out and share God's abundant gifts with others.

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with us as we seek your will for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. †

From the Music Department

CONCERT BY VISITING CHOIR Sunday, February 12 at 5:00 PM

THE STOWE SCHOOL CHAMBER CHOIR from Buckingham, England, will present a concert for us in **Colwell Hall on February 12, at 5:00 PM.**

Stowe School is a co-educational, private school situated in Stowe House, one of the grander houses in England. The house was begun in 1676, and construction continued with famous architects, Sir John Vanbrugh, William Kent, James Gibbs, Robert Adam, Thomas Pitt, and Sir John Soane, over the next 100 years. It became one of the most important houses and estates in the country, the home of the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos. With the death of the third Duke in 1889, after a few other owners, the house was acquired by Stowe School in 1923.

Among the graduates of Stowe are Sir Richard Branson, David Niven, Prince Rainier of Monaco, and Hugh Williamson-Noble.

The choir is on tour in the New York/New England area and will be performing at various locations including the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Phillips Exeter Academy, the First Congregational Church in New Canaan and St. Barnabas.

There are about 20 students in this group of singers, and they will perform a program of some sacred music as well as pop, jazz, and music theater pieces. It should be a great event for all members of the family.

We are asking for a **donation of \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 for a family** to help defray some of our expenses of advertising and hospitality for this program.

Some parishioners will be hosting members of this school choir overnight in their homes. We would seem to have a place for most of the choir, but we may need one or two more homes of parishioners who can accommodate a few students. If you would like to volunteer a bed and breakfast, please leave a message with Sue Stanley at the church office.

February 12 at 5:00 pm. See you!

— **Donald Butt**

Clothing Sale Grants

It's that time of year again, when we are gearing up to accept and review grants from the 2011 Clothing Sale! Grant Forms are available in a binder on a shelf located in McCormack Lounge. You may contact **Hanna Gyory** if you would like a Grant Form emailed to you: **laurahanna50@gmail.com**. The form is also available on the Church website. Please fill out the Grant Form and put it in the binder for the Grant Committee to review. The deadline for submitting grant requests is **Sunday, February 5th.**

The Clothing Sale Dinner is **Wednesday, March 14th at 7:00 p.m.** If you have any questions, please contact **Sarah Gardner at (914) 591-2733, sarahwg@optonline.net.**

BRIEFS & BULLETINS

Upcoming Midnight Run dates:

February 10 & March 9



"Off campus" event announced by Sandy Summer-Parks

I am pleased to be able to present a concert on **Tuesday, February 28** featuring the works of Franz Schubert ("The Shepherd on the Rock"), four songs by Reynaldo Hahn, and Aaron Copland's settings of some of Emily Dickinson's most beloved poems.

Irvington's own James Sadewhite, clarinetist will be joining me along with Christopher Oldfather, pianist. It will be

held at the **Grinton I. Will Auditorium, 1500 Central Park Avenue, Yonkers** in the Pincus Auditorium at **2:30 p.m.**

Singing is much like communion to me as the composers, now long gone, live on in their music and bring to life the the poets they chose to set as well. I'd like to share this communion with any and all of you. I call these concerts the "Heavenly Ore" series, because the music and poetry help us reach down to mine our depths and carry us upward on wings of Gold and Silver.

Certainly the Emily Dickinson poems set by Aaron Copland are just the right material for this experience. I hope you can share it with us February 28th.

St. B Book Group

The next meeting of the St. B Book Group will take place on **Wednesday, February 15th at 7:30 p.m.** in the church lounge. We will discuss *The Wrong Blood*, by Manuel de Lope.

Hope to see you there!

— **Lea Carmichael Richardson**



Interested in playing Bridge?

We're gathering a group and Lynn Foster would love to speak with you! Call **Lynn at 922-1785.**



InCommon

**The Church of St. Barnabas
15 North Broadway
Irvington, NY 10533-1898**

The Rev. Nora Smith, *Rector*
The Rev. Lindsay Lunnum, *Assistant Rector*
Mr. Donald G. Butt, *Music Director*
Ms. Sue Stanley, *Parish Secretary*
Mr. Ron Lillo, *Sexton*



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MISSION STATEMENT: The Church of St. Barnabas, Irvington is a Christian community, grounded in the Episcopal tradition, which celebrates the love of Christ through regular worship, fellowship and music. Our goals are to grow in faith, both within ourselves as individuals and by welcoming others from a variety of backgrounds and stages of life, and to reach out and share God's abundant gifts with others.



**This select British student chorus will perform
a repertoire of sacred and secular music.**

**Sunday, February 12th at 5 p.m.
The Church of St. Barnabas, 914-591-8194
Suggested donation \$5 per person.**

Refreshments to follow.