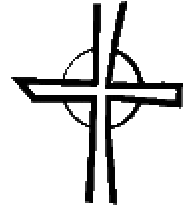


St. Matthew the Apostle, Oriole Anglican Church
80 George Henry Blvd., North York, Ont. M2J 1E7

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THE SPOTLIGHT SPRING 2008

Join Us for the Greatest Occasion of
our Christian Year!

The Easter Vigil is the most important and most sublime feast of the Christian Year. The observance of the Vigil had begun by at least the 3rd century of the early Church. Its purpose is to give the people of God a sense of unbridled joy. It was written to bring people together, to remove barriers, and to create a new focus of unity among believers. It is the Church at its best, liturgically and communally. Indeed, we might say that all the other celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, on Sundays and at other times, are to be understood through the lens of the Easter Vigil.

The Vigil moves us from the wilderness of Lent to the cross and then to the empty tomb. It begins with these words: "For this is the Passover of the Lord." The Great Vigil of Easter is the Passover of the Lord because, through hearing his Word and celebrating his Sacraments on this evening, we share in Jesus' victory over death. Since the Easter Vigil is the fundamental event for our community, just as the Passover/Exodus event was and is the fundamental event for the Jewish people, it is for this reason that the reading of the story of the Exodus is always heard at this Easter Eve service.

Thus, the deacon or cantor will sing to the Lord a joyous Easter song on this special night:

This is the night, when you brought
our fathers, the children of Israel, out
of bondage in Egypt, and led them
through the Red Sea on dry land.

This is the night when all who
believe in Christ are delivered from
the gloom of sin, and are restored to
grace and holiness of life.

This is the night, when Christ broke the
bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious
from the grave.

It is our baptism that has brought our passover from death to life. The apostle Paul says about our being joined with Christ in our baptism, "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. . ." The Vigil on Easter Eve has been, from its inception, the culminating step that leads to Baptism for those who are preparing to join the Church.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came "as the first day of the week was dawning." It was dawn on that first Easter Sunday, and the tomb was already empty. Sometime between dusk on the night before and the dawn of the following day Christ "broke the bonds of death and hell, and rose victorious from the grave." Hence, those about to be baptized, as well of the rest of Christian community in solidarity with them, would come to spend the night before each Easter watching and awaiting in expectation.

Their evening's vigil began with the reading of the creation story. Then the night continued with recitation of God's promise made to Abraham and

Sarah of heirs and of a nation formed from his descendents. Then followed the story of the renewal of that covenant after Abraham's offspring failed to keep their side of the agreement with their God. Then came stories recounting the promise to God's people of their redemption, the gift to them of new hearts and a new spirituality, of new life and the restoration of their community. When mixed with Psalms, hymns, and prayers, these readings lasted most of the whole night.

After this recitation of the history of God's saving work with his people, the yet-to-be-baptized were taken into the water for the baptism. They were placed facing to the west, towards the very darkest part of the sky that was now brightening with the dawn to the east. Those about to be baptized were asked questions to see if they then renounced Satan and all of his works, if they renounced the powers of this world that corrupt and destroy, and finally they were asked if they renounced the sinful desires of the flesh.

When they had passed this solemn examination, they were next stripped and placed facing to the east, where the sky had brightened, and their examiners questioned them again. They asked if the candidates for baptism now turned to Jesus and accepted him as Saviour. The questioners asked if the candidates put all of their trust in his love. Finally, those about to be baptized were asked if they submitted themselves to Jesus' lordship.

When the candidates had all accepted these challenges, their sponsors led them to the bishop for their baptisms. After coming from the water of baptism, the sponsors anointed the newly baptized with sweet smelling oil. After that they were clothed in white. Then, for the first time they could now join with their new sisters and brothers in Christ for the entire service of the Holy Eucharist and share in Jesus' body and blood in the Communion.

Even amidst the secrecy for fears of their safety and the worst persecutions, early Christians faithfully continued to celebrate the mighty acts of their salvation history through these rituals of bringing and new converts to the faith through baptism. Thus we still today light the New Fire and then the

Paschal Candle and then our own candles. Finally, at the shout of "Alleluia, Christ is Risen!", the lights of the whole church building come on as we remember the ancient rites of the church at dawn on Easter. Bells ring and the organ fanfare leads us to sing the Gloria in Excelsis.

By the time we have come to this completion of the Vigil and the beginning of the first Eucharist of Easter, we participants in this liturgy will have participated in all the mighty acts of salvation history. We will have renewed our baptismal vows, renouncing Satan and the powers of darkness and affirming our faith in Jesus Christ. Where there had been the darkened church from the ending of the Maundy Thursday service through Good Friday, the Paschal candle of Easter now burns to remind us that Christ, the light of the world, is risen indeed.

Standing at the Paschal Candle, the deacon has intoned these words, "Father, how wonderful your care for us! The power of this holy night dispels all evil, washes guilt away, restores lost innocence, brings mourners joy. Night truly blessed in which heaven and earth are joined – and we are reconciled to God." These words form no empty formula. They speak of the joining of "things human and things divine," of vanquishing the darkness of this night and being mingled with the lights of heaven.

It was so in the body of Jesus, this joining of things human and divine. It is what happens in our baptism, this joining of things human and divine. It is what happens at the table to which we shall all shortly come, this joining of things human and divine. The life, suffering, death and resurrection of our Lord are all joined to us in word, in water, in bread and wine.

With our life now become a part of his life and his life one with our lives, each of our lives becomes governed by his life. The consciousness each of us has within one's own self now becomes one with the consciousness of him who lives within us. Our hearts within each of us beat one with his. Our hands become governed by his hands, our feet guided by his feet, our mouths governed by his words. Our lives have joined to the Christ who is life itself. Having defeated all the powers and terrors of death by his dying and having been raised

as one with him, we are now one with each other in the community of his love.

Each story of ours is now part of his story, and we are now to spread that story farther abroad, continuing to share it with others who may not yet have heard it. We spread this good news most effectively, not just with our lips, but by the way we live our lives, constantly renewing, as we have just done on this evening, our baptismal promise to reject the darkness, and to live by Christ's light.

May you all have a joyous Easter!

The Rev. Canon Bradley Lennon

St. Matthew's moves forward

At the last annual general Vestry held on February 17, 2008, St. Matthew's showed that it was ready to look beyond the walls of the Church and start looking outwards into the surrounding communities.

Fr. Bard reported on the progress achieved so far on our mission into the Parkway Forest Area, and a motion was passed to continue this mission. This was indeed a change to the normal vestry meetings where we looked at the past, but at this vestry, we looked to the future, and the decision is in line with the charge given by the Bishop to grow our Church.

As a result of this approval from Vestry, an ambitious budget of \$272K was presented and accepted by the congregation represented by those present. This is an increase of \$46K (or 21%) over the 2007 actual.

This is a significant increase, and most of it is in the area of personnel costs, where we will need extra staffing to support this mission work. The staffing we envision will include an assistant curate (who we may share with a neighboring parish), and either a full time or another part time secretarial assistant, so that office help will be present at all time during normal working hours. These extra salaries plus corresponding benefits will account for \$35K of the total increase. We have also budgeted for rental space within the community in which this mission is present and also for training of volunteers within the project. This represents another \$8K of the increase

These expenses will be covered through some extra Fundraising, Licensing Fees from organizations utilizing

our building, additional envelope giving and hopefully a grant from the Diocese.

Through envelopes, we have budgeted to raise an extra \$24K. New families joining our Church will offset some of this, and the remainder is expected from the current base, as we show our support to the Vestry motion. This means that we are asking an additional \$4 per week from each family. A Diocesan survey shows that St. Matthew's average annual giving of \$853 is well below the Diocesan average of \$1004. This additional \$4 will put us at about average.

What does this \$4 per week mean to the actual out-of-pocket amount?

All charitable donations are tax deductible. If your annual giving is below or at \$200 per year, your taxes are reduced by 15.5% of your donations. Above that, it is at 29%. The table below shows your net weekly amount based on your current level of charitable donations.

Charitable Donations Level	Additional Donation	Tax saved	Annual Net	Weekly Net
0 to \$100	\$ 208	\$33.32 to \$ 46.82	\$ 174.68 to \$161.18	\$ 3.36 to \$ 3.10
\$101 to \$200	\$ 208	\$ 46.95 to \$ 60.32	\$ 161.05 to \$ 147.68	\$ 3.10 to \$ 2.84
Over \$200	\$ 208	\$ 60.32	\$ 147.68	\$ 2.84

If we all do this, we will meet our ambitious budget. We will continue to be light in this community. We will be telling our story beyond the walls of the Church. We will be a model parish for the Diocese.

Exciting times are ahead for this parish, if we succeed in this venture, and there is no reason to believe that we will not be successful if you fully support this project.

Because of the significance of this budget, the finance committee, together with the Wardens and Advisory Board, will be reviewing this budget at June again, and if necessary will do so on a quarterly basis.

Please support this vestry decision, and consider prayerfully how you can help to make this happen.

Respectfully submitted
Clifford Wong
Parish Treasurer



TORONTO Youth SYNOD

Are you...

- ? 14–30 years old?
- ? a member of St. Matthew the Apostle-Oriole Church?
- ? passionate about sharing your gifts with the church community?
- ? willing to engage in thoughtful discussions about your role as a young Christian?

Do you...

- ? feel a need or desire to connect with other young people in the Diocese?
- ? want to get involved in Parish life, but don't know how?
- ? want to use your gifts to help share the teachings of Jesus?
- ? need to get away for a weekend to spiritually recharge with other young Christians?

Youth Synod is a gathering of young people (14-30yrs) who are passionate about shaping the future of the Anglican Church. Youth Synod is an opportunity for young people to share their visions for the Church and make their voices heard.

We meet over three days: pray together, worship Christ, share ideas, socialize, and create a vision for youth in the Diocese of Toronto. You will also enjoy music, food, worship, fun, spending time with your bishops, and friends old and new. It is an awesome weekend experience, run by youth for youth.

Date: **April 25-27, 2008**

Location: **Seneca College
Newnham Campus**

1750 Finch Ave. East
Toronto, Ontario M2J 2X5

Cost: **\$150** (But your parish, and your Episcopal Area will each pay \$50 towards the total so this will only cost the delegates \$50)

Please see Sasha Jansz or Megan Roberts or Fr. Brad for more information.

THE SERVICES OF HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Maundy Thursday, March 20 at 8:00 p.m.

Commemoration of the Last Supper, Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar

Friday, March 21 at 10:00 a.m.

Good Friday Liturgy, Via Dolorosa, and Stations of the Cross

Saturday, March 22 at 8:00 p.m.

Great Vigil of Easter, Service of Light, Renewal of Baptismal Vows and First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Sunday, March 23

8 a.m. Day of the Resurrection

10:00 a.m. Choral Procession and Sung Eucharist