

THE WAYFARER

October 2007

SPECIAL STEWARDSHIP EDITION! *Your Favorite Articles Will Return Next Month*

A monthly journal for Christians who worship at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Berea, Ohio

Phone (440) 234-5241 E-mail: Stec1@sbcglobal.net

Walking the Disciples' Path

2007 Stewardship Campaign

by Troy Thomas

This past summer, Gayle has consistently preached on the topic of spirituality in our personal and parish life here at St. Thomas. Our spirituality was tested early in the year when the Vestry realized that the 2006 pledged income for the church was not enough to cover our basic 2007 expenses. As you know, our spirituality carried the day and we raised enough to provide slightly better than basic necessities (i.e., full-time clergy, music, heat, air-conditioning, etc.). However, we didn't raise enough to cover expenses beyond our basic needs, such as paid clergy to cover those occasions when Gayle is unable to lead the congregation through a Sunday church service or for desired outreach activities.

Obviously, the amount of money the church raises through pledges is of utmost importance to the Vestry. For without pledge commitments, the Vestry can not appropriately maintain the church and provide the services that we have all come to expect. For this reason, the Vestry has decided to act as the Stewardship Committee with respect to the 2007 Stewardship Campaign activities. We want to ensure that this year's Stewardship campaign, which we are calling "Walking the Disciples' Path" gets our full attention and is fully linked with our 2008 budget and initiative planning activities.

Gayle asked me to lead the Vestry and the parish through this year's Stewardship planning activities, which is why I have written this article for The Wayfarer. In addition to the Vestry, Bob Englund has volunteered to help with our Stewardship activities. We decided that in the spirit of Walking the Disciples' Path, we would keep this year's campaign focused on the basics: spirituality; making a commitment to God; time, talents and treasure; and last but not least, striving to achieve the biblical tithe (i.e., giving 10% back to God).

Beginning in September, you started receiving communications from the Vestry and Gayle about stewardship. This issue of The Wayfarer is primarily

focused on stewardship. For those of you who are able to attend Sunday services, we plan to provide bulletin inserts to further raise your awareness on this important topic. Also, we have decided to revise our pledge cards from the generic format we have historically used to one that is personalized to you (or you and your spouse). Pledge cards this year will include the amount of your current pledge plus the "kicker" additional pledge that you made to the church to help us cover our basic expenses. It is important that our 2007 pledges (for the 2008 church year) total more than the committed pledges this year, which is why we are reminding you of your current total pledge amount on the pledge card.

Stewardship Sunday, the day that you are asked to make your pledge, is November 4, 2007. If you are able, we ask that you attend one of the Sunday services and make your pledge. Between now and then, we ask that you reflect on your spirituality, relationship with God, and what St. Thomas means to you. We ask that seriously give thought to raising your pledge. While not everyone in the congregation is in a position to tithe to the church most everyone can figure out a way to dig a little deeper and give just a little more to God, which is a step towards the biblical tithe and Walking the Disciples' path. For those of you who are unable to give more financially, we ask that you give more of your time and talents or that you actively recruit a new member to St. Thomas.

Following each service on Stewardship Sunday, we will celebrate with cake and punch. If you are unable to attend church on Stewardship Sunday, we will mail you your pledge card. Once a pledge card is returned, we will symbolically acknowledge your step on the disciples' path by placing a footprint shaped name card on a disciples' path banner that will be hung in the church. Please return your cards promptly so we can reflect your step on the disciples' path. Any pledge cards not received a couple of weeks after Stewardship Sunday will be followed up on by the Vestry.

On behalf of the Vestry, I want to thank you for your current support of St. Thomas and for praying between now and Stewardship Sunday for the inspiration and courage to raise your pledge.

How this is going to work!

Our stewardship campaign is being run a little differently this year, and we want you to know what is going to happen! So here is the overview:

1. You are going to get lots of information! In letters, in the Wayfarer, in meetings at church, there are many opportunities to find out about the current situation of the church, about pledging, and about deepening your relationship with God in your giving!
2. You will get a pledge card in the mail. If you have pledged before, it will have your past pledge amount and what we would ask you to prayerfully consider giving this year so that we can meet our expenses. If you haven't pledged before, you will get a blank card that you can fill out.
3. Pray!!! Please prayerfully consider how much you can raise your pledge of time, talent and treasure.
4. You will turn the card in during your worship service on November 4th! Or you can put it in the mail as close to that as possible!
5. After each service on November 4th we will have a cake and coffee to celebrate. We decided that in light of our current financial situation, cake would be sufficient!
6. When we receive your card, we will put a footprint with your name on it on the Disciples' Path in gratitude and recognition of your support of St. Thomas!!!



Giving Back to God

Those of us living in the western suburbs of Cleveland have fairly comfortable and secure lives. We are not in fear of tsunamis, hurricanes, raging wildfires, or volcanic eruptions; we're neither in a war zone nor a flood plain and the last earthquake in the area was in the news only because a number of people reported feeling the earth move a little. Surely we have problems typical of all living situations: job, health, interpersonal relations, etc. but these are encountered anywhere and must be considered as the experiences of living. And when our

problems reach a reasonable resolution, we say "thank God" just as when we hear of others suffering disasters we say "thank God we're not there". We use the term a lot. But what action follows?

How do we go about thanking God? Probably what first comes to mind is giving aid to those who suffer from the kinds of disasters listed above; we contribute money, time, and effort to help our troubled brothers and sisters. We also contribute to organizations engaged in finding cures for the diseases that plague us and caring for their victims. We take part in walks, runs, games and other activities organized to raise money for charities. And of course we contribute to charitable organizations that feed and shelter those less fortunate than ourselves. This listing could go on and on, but the point is that we are giving of our surpluses to help our fellow beings. And this is what we mean by giving back to God.

There is one other major way to give back to God and that is to contribute to God's church. It takes money to maintain and operate the church so that services are available to parishioners, newcomers, and visitors. One might not think utilities, office, building maintenance, and other nuts-and-bolts costs fit the category of giving back to God, but without them the church would not be there to fulfill its mission: doing God's work.

The prime question in every contribution activity is "how much?" Unfortunately, there is no "fair share" sign posted. The biblical answer to this is the tithe, which is ten percent. In modern practice the obvious follow-up question is 10% of what? For the combined charitable contributions and church pledge over a year it can be taken as 10% of your income. And this is a *goal to be worked toward*. We can't expect everyone to reach this goal, especially young families just starting out and people on limited, fixed income.

What is *most important* is that you *think about your advantages* -- what you say "thank God" for -- *and act* on these thoughts *by giving back to God!* At the end of the year, you may find you are short of the goal. That is okay; you are now *consciously working at giving back to God* and next year you may well do better.

-- Bob England



My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to have followed Jesus 2000 years ago? I have tried numerous

times to put myself in the group of disciples. To imagine what that life would have been like. How must it have been to hear Jesus' own words, to watch him heal and raise from the dead, to share a meal and have him bless it, to have him look in your very eyes and love you ?

I also think that there must have been times when the disciples were hungry and tired from their wanderings. When the crowd pressed in so tightly and was so demanding it was suffocating. When it was hard to understand why Jesus did the things he did. When the other disciples were irritating, haughty or "unchristian".

Kind of like church is today. Moments of great joy, inspiration and care. Moments of disappointment, pettiness and frustration. Our theme for stewardship this year is that we are all "Walking the Disciple's Path". And a life of discipleship, of truly following Jesus, requires joy, generosity, and building community.

Disciples are generous with their time, talent and treasure. All three are needed to build the Kingdom of God. And we don't give of those things because we love St. Thomas or because we are afraid for its future. We give because as disciples we experience God's great love for us,

God's abundant generosity. We see the difference Jesus makes in the world and in our lives. And so we give back a small part of what has been given to us, joyfully, in deep gratitude, to continue the work of Christ in the world. We have to do this as part of our relationship with God!

When we give of ourselves joyfully, we build the Body of Christ, we build community, we grow our church. We need everyone to decide what the cost of discipleship is in their lives, and to joyfully pay up! Together, we walk that disciple's path and change ourselves and the world! What a joy to be walking with you! Gayle+



St. Thomas Prayer

Please say this prayer at 8:00 each morning throughout the Stewardship Campaign. We will all be lifting our hearts to God to fulfill our mission to bring the love of Christ into the world.

Dearest God, our Creator and Sustainer. We thank you for this day and for all your many blessings. Thank you especially, for your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. We pray your Holy Spirit will visit every person so that there may be Peace. We ask your mercy on the sick, and all who suffer from hunger, homelessness or any other distress. Give us a reverence for your creation and make us ever aware of your presence in our lives. And please bless St. Thomas as we open our hearts to your will and mission for our church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Written by Pat Wielinski



- from the Warden's Den

Pennies for Malawi?

Autumnal Greetings to everyone! October is my favorite month of the year – gorgeous leaf colors, bright blue skies with less humidity, and perfect temperatures. Oh, and my mother's birthday is the 11th (Happy

Birthday, Mom!). I hope you all can get outside as much as possible and marvel at God's bounty as the leaves fall from the trees.

As you know, we have embarked on our *stewardship campaign at St. Thomas*. Funding our operations properly becomes more challenging with each passing year, not to mention giving the aid we are called upon as Christians to provide to those in need in our community. *How you respond will determine what we can do and what we can't do in 2008 to meet these vital needs.*

With that in mind, I want to talk to you a bit about *pennies*. One can't help but notice that big "Pennies for Malawi" jug in the hallway which the Daughters of the King have put out. I imagine you've put some pennies in it as I have. (I wonder what they do if you put nickels and dimes in the jar instead of pennies? Do they throw them out? And just where *is* Malawi anyway? Sounds like Africa to me, but it could be some Indian reservation in Canada, don't you think? Questions, questions...)

Anyway, I've been thinking about that jug. I can see why collecting pennies from hundreds of Episcopal churches around the country could really add up to some big money for the poor in Malawi, so I'm sure it's a good idea. But what about what *we* collect to give back to God at and through St. Thomas? *Are we giving the equivalent of pennies* back to our Creator, the One who makes *everything* possible in our lives? To Jesus Christ who actually *died* for our sins on the cross?

As you think about what your financial commitment to St. Thomas will be for 2008, please ask yourself some questions: will that commitment meet or exceed your car payment? Your entertainment budget? What you spend on your hobbies? Vacation?

I could go on, but you get the idea: do you spend more on "things" than you do on God and God's people? That's the real question, isn't it? That's the one question I challenge you to think about and answer honestly. I promise to do so myself.

Frankly, when you do, I can't help but be confident that you'll join me -- and your Vestry -- in giving to your God through St. Thomas Episcopal Church as you never have before!

If you have any questions about anything going on at St. Thomas (especially regarding our finances or our

stewardship campaign), please seek out a Vestry member for answers: Becky Shank, Gary Cline, Elaine Willis, Lynn Vincent, Joan Foster, Tom Halliday, Troy Thomas, Jan Smith, or me -- Dave Warburton. Thanks!

- Dave Warburton,
Senior Warden



Your Diocesan Assessment at Work!

I often hear grumbling about the amount of money we pay to the Diocese. It is a sizable chunk of cash, especially when things are tight for us. However, I think it is important to realize what we have gotten back from them this year. St. Thomas has benefited very directly from the money that all churches pay into the system. We have been given:

\$5000 for the campus ministry program
\$8300 for the STAR program
\$1000 for the childcare grant
\$ 100 scholarship for training for
Christian Education

If you add it up, the Diocese has paid more money for ministry at St. Thomas than we have budgeted for ourselves. On top of that, it has provided for free all the training and materials for the Natural Church Development Program.

Partly we have gotten smart about the generous resources that are available to us and are using them more effectively. But if every church didn't pay their assessment, that money would not have been available to us. In being grateful for all that we have received, maybe we can be less anxious about paying our fair share.

A Week in the Life of the Rector

Our venerable senior warden read an article in another church paper about how their rector spends his time, and thought it might be interesting for me to report on the same thing. I have thought a lot about what to say here because my weeks are all so different. One of the things that I love about this job is that it is always new and changing and exciting. On the other hand, I once had a kid ask me if I am ever here during the week or if I just work on Sundays. So maybe a little information is a good thing!

My week starts on Tuesday. I clean off all the mail and messages and mayhem that has accumulated. I make my list for the week. I am a list person, and I like to lay out my life and cross things off. This week my Tuesday morning list included things like writing bulletin announcements, picking music for the 5:30 service, writing the bulletin insert on stewardship, calling about the BW concert series, advertising upcoming events, contacting new college students, writing thank you and welcome notes, organizing worship for the coming week, writing and distributing the vestry agenda and the rector's report...you get the picture. Tuesday afternoon I try to stay in the office and get my major writing (because it is quiet) and sermon preparation done. I usually have a service and/or a meeting Tuesday night.

On Wednesday, I try to be in the office in the morning. It tends to be my meeting day. I meet with parishioners, heads of our parish organizations, or community members. In the afternoon, if I don't have a diocesan meeting, I visit shut-ins and people who are sick. I try to visit 3-5 people a week. I often have meetings Wednesday night, including vestry and the Community Meal.

On Thursday, I have the 10 am service and often have meetings after that with parish members. I go over parish finances that day. I often have clergy lunch meetings at noon. In the afternoon, I try to visit people. Thursday is also the day sermon-panic sets in. If I haven't written it out yet, it usually happens on

Thursday. I am also planning for last minute weekend issues, checking the bulletins, and starting to think about what needs to be done for the following week. I am also constantly answering email. On average, I answer about 40-50 emails every day. This starts early in the morning, as I try to answer all the emails I can at home before I come in so I have time to actually get something done when I get here.

My catch up day is Friday. By now, my list should be mostly done, and whatever isn't has to be cleaned up. There are last minute emails to youth group members and Sunday morning meeting participants and calls to people who are sick or I haven't seen for awhile. I do any visiting that hasn't been done. I am often shopping for Sunday events, maybe youth group or campus ministry meals. Details!

Saturday morning begins as early as I have to get in to finish what hasn't gotten done. I have often been into work and left before most people show up for whatever is going on. Two Saturdays a month I have morning meetings and one Saturday I have TORCH. I try to save one Saturday per month for the kids, but since they sleep in, I am often here in the morning anyway. Saturdays are also days for baptismal instruction, some diocesan meetings and youth gatherings, and hospital visits.

Sunday is the end of my week, always a 12 hour day. Two services and meetings in the morning. Visiting or meetings or getting myself organized in the afternoon. Sometimes I squeeze a soccer game in there. There is the 5:30 service and campus ministry in the late afternoon. I also can attend the students' recitals or events that day, and often have youth group or confirmation class, or maybe adult forum. It is a big and wonderful day, however it goes. And I am especially grateful to have Monday off (aside from answering emails and phone calls of course...). And then, it starts again!



INFLATION AND ST. THOMAS

Government economists have been quite proud of the fact that they have kept inflation reasonably in check in the recent past in spite of wild fluctuations in energy prices and the “robust economy” trumpeted by the administration. The numbers, as indicated by the Consumer Price Index, bear that out; the average rate of inflation over the last five years is about 2.7% per year, and over the last ten years is 2.5% per year. Just the same, the indicated change in the cost-of-living is 25% in the last decade and 13% in the last five years. The effect of inflation is devastating when family income does not keep up with inflation. It seems there is a growing part of our population facing this problem.

An institution that relies on donations for income faces a similar problem. Its livelihood depends on maintaining (and pleasing) its contributors, but if its essential costs outrun its income, how can it maintain services and programs? And how can it keep an effective staff if employees can't be paid enough to keep up with their costs? This is the problem facing St. Thomas; our pledge income has not kept up with rising costs over the last five years. Our reserves were depleted and the “Kicker Program” last winter was required to meet our immediate cash flow problems.

Our route from here is to continue to grow and increase our contributor base and to revitalize our stewardship program, to encourage those who can to increase their pledges, to encourage our parishioners to adopt proportional giving, and to encourage those who can to adopt the Tithe as a goal to reach for in their giving back to God.

Regarding proportional giving, we ask that you go through the exercise of comparing what you get from God with what you give back to God in thanks. What you get from God should be your income (collective if you are doing this as a family) expressed in whatever terms you think right (gross, after taxes, etc.) and what you give back should include your church pledge and any other charitable giving that you feel comfortable claiming as a gift back to God. For example, if your income is \$40,000 per year, you pledge \$55 per month (\$660 per year) to church and make other charitable gifts of \$140, then you give back to God \$800 (660+140) and the fraction of your return to God is 800 divided by 40,000 = 0.02, or 2%. We will send each of you a calculator worksheet for doing this with a pledge card before pledge Sunday.

We **DO NOT** want to know what this number is. It is for you and God to know. We hope you will use this number (as-is or adjusted) to calculate your pledge in future years. If you find a need to adjust the number either up or down (hopefully up), know that you will continue to be a cherished member of our church community.

One thing we can all be sure of : as time goes

on, St. Thomas' budget will grow and the pledge income from our present parishioners will lag behind. *For this reason, St. Thomas must continue to grow in size and must maintain a revitalized stewardship program.* Included in this *Wayfarer* is a calculator worksheet to help you with your pledge before pledge Sunday.

-Bob England

*Don't forget to include St. Thomas
in your will
and estate planning!*

From the Editor

Friends – You can see how important “the finance issue” is to St. Thomas' future. Please prayerfully consider your pledge for the upcoming campaign!

Our Postal Patron this month is Mr. Bart Hancock. This gift helps defray the costs associated with printing and mailing the *Wayfarer*. Thanks for this generous donation, Bart!

Please consider being a Postal Patron! There are **no more** postal patrons lined up for future issues of the *Wayfarer*. If you are interested in being a Postal Patron, the cost is \$50. Contact me (stecwayfarer@sbcglobal.net) or see Debbi in the office for more information.

Fall is arriving. It's my favorite time of year. I hope you are able to get outside and enjoy all that God gives us!

- Laura D'Amato, Editor

St. Thomas Vestry Members

Dave Warburton - Senior Warden

R. Janney Smith - Junior Warden

Elaine Willis - Clerk

Gary Cline

Joan Foster

Tom Halliday

Becky Shank

Troy Thomas

Lynn Vincent

The Rev. Gayle Catinella (Rector)

Tim Cooper & Laura Pinney (Co-Treasurers)

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH – OCTOBER 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00 Closed AA Meeting	2 6:00 Centering Prayer Service 7:00 Foster Parenting Meeting	3 12:00 Noon Free Concert & Lunch 8:00 Women's AA Meeting	4 CLERGY DAY 10:00 Midweek Eucharist 7:30 AI Anon	5	6 E.C.W. 9:30 am Pet Blessing - Noon
7 Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost 8:00 Rite I 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 Rite II 11:30 Coffee Hour Noon Adult Forum: The Nicene Creed 5:30 Contemporary Worship 6:00 pm Campus Ministry	8 7:00 Closed AA Meeting	9	10 8:00 Women's AA Meeting	11 10:00 Midweek Eucharist 7:30 AI Anon	12 6:30 Los Amigos Episcopales	13 Youth Group TORCH at St. Adalbert's 1:00 - 5:00 pm
14 Twentieth Sunday After Pentecost 8:00 Rite I 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 Rite II 11:30 Coffee Hour 5:30 Contemporary Worship 6:00 pm Campus Ministry ** Parish Budget Meetings After Each Service	15 7:00 Closed AA Meeting	16	17 8:00 Women's AA Meeting 12:00 Noon S.T.A.R. Concert & Lunch	18 10:00 Midweek Eucharist 7:30 AI Anon	19 7:00 Los Amigos Episcopales Dance at Trinity Cathedral	20 D.O.K. Spring Assembly 9:30 - 2:30
21 Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost :00 Rite I 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 Rite II 11:30 Coffee Hour Noon Youth Group Bowls 2:00 Nursing Home Serv. 5:30 Contemporary Worship 6:00 pm Campus Ministry	22 7:00 Closed AA Meeting	23 6:00 Healing Prayer Service 7:30 Adult Forum: Political Reporting	24 8:00 Women's AA Meeting 7:30 Vestry Meeting	25 10:00 Midweek Eucharist 7:30 AI Anon	26 Diocesan Youth Event	27 Diocesan Youth Event
28 Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost 8:00 Rite I 9:15 am Sunday School 10:30 Rite II 11:30 Coffee Hour 5:30 Contemporary Worship 6:00 pm Campus Ministry	29 7:00 Closed AA Meeting	30	31 8:00 Women's AA Meeting 5:30 Berea Community Meal			

DON'T MISS THESE UP-COMING EVENTS...

Los Amigos
Episcopales
Dinner

Friday, October 12th
6:30 pm

**Youth Group
T.O.R.C.H.
At St. Adalbert's
Saturday
October 13th
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

Sunday
October 21st
Youth Group
Bowling
at Noon!

Tuesday
October 23rd
7:30 p.m.
**Adult Forum:
Political Reporting**

Linda Kinsey will talk
about how the media
tells us about the
candidates and issues
in an election.

**S.T.A.R.
Wednesday, October 17th at Noon**

**Free Concert Featuring:
Barbershop Chorus**

**Immediately Followed by a
Free Fall Picnic Lunch
Sloppy Joes, Chips & Dips,
Raw Veggies, Pies and more...**

**Diocesan Youth Event
Friday October 26th
thru
Sunday October 28th
Be There!**

Come Help
At the
Berea
Community Meal
Wednesday
October 31st at
5:30 p.m!
St. Thomas Sponsors!

Los Amigos Episcopales
Dance at
Trinity Cathedral
Friday, October 19th
7:00 p.m.

*Daughters of the King
Spring Assembly
Saturday
October 20th
9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.*

*Friday, November 2nd 7:30 p.m.
Adult Forum Book Club
"Historical Fiction"
Bring your favorite book of historical fiction
and let's talk about what we learn from it.
Bring hors d'oeuvres and a beverage of your
choice!*

*Stewardship Sunday
Don't Forget to Join Us
For the
Parish Breakfast
On Sunday, November
4th
At 9:00 a.m.
See you there!*

Save a *LITTLE*, give a *LOT* to St. Thomas!

Below we have listed some common items you may purchase regularly (on a weekly basis). By NOT BUYING just ONE of these items each week throughout the year, look at how much you could save to donate to your church!!

ITEM	PRICE	X52 =	\$SAVINGS FOR ST. THOMAS
McDonald's Big Mac	2.79	X52 =	\$ 145.08
Starbucks Latte (Lg.)	3.65	X52 =	189.80
"Two Buck Chuck" Merlot Wine	2 Bucks	X52 =	104.00
Dairy Queen Peanut Buster Parfait	3.99	X52 =	207.48
Milky Way Candy Bar (2.5 oz.)	.70	X52 =	36.40

SEE HOW IT ALL ADDS UP FOR ST. THOMAS???

(P.S. In order to make sure that each of these items was worthy of denying to help our church, I felt obligated to sample them personally. Thank you. DW)

ST. THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
50 EAST BAGLEY RD.
BEREA, OHIO 44017



