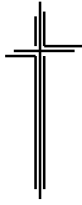


# E~Portion



St. Francis Episcopal Church  
70 Highland Street  
Holden, Massachusetts 01520

Volume 54 No. 7  
July/August 2009

## *Collect for Independence Day*

*Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn; Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

*(The Book of Common Prayer, page 242)*



I recently finished reading Joseph Ellis' *American Creation*, which focuses on five key "moments" in early American history beginning with 1776, including the winter at Valley Forge and through to the Louisiana Purchase. One of the key "moments" that Ellis explores is a question that continues to be debated to this very day: how much power should belong rightly to a centralized federal government and how much power rightly belongs to state and local governments? One of the key players in that argument was James Madison, who articulated what Ellis calls a version of sovereignty that was at once "shared and divided." He goes on to say that the genius of Madison was the notion

that "government was not about providing answers but rather about providing a framework in which the salient questions could continue to be debated." Ellis further notes that this insight "turned an orthodox assumption on its head (p.123)."

My appreciation for those whom Ellis calls in an earlier book the "founding brothers" has risen over the past five or six years through the work of Ellis, David McCullough, Ron Chernow, and others. As we celebrate Independence Day I am mindful that this American experiment continues to unfold and that it is not "automatic." The collect on the front of this issue of *The Little Portion* asks of God the "grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace..."

It is a truism to note the similarities between the polity of The Episcopal Church and the American government; many of the same people were involved with shaping both. This summer our General Convention will gather in Anaheim, California, and I hope you will keep our elected deputies in your prayers. We are a "messy" Church in very much the same way that our American democracy is messy. Sometimes people expect an Archbishop (who has no canonical authority over the American Church other than persuasive influence) or the Presiding Bishop (whose powers are, as the title itself suggests, fairly limited) or a Diocesan Bishop to "fix things." (Of course, because we are both Episcopalians and Americans we radically disagree about what a "fix" would look like, but that is a different conversation altogether.) The truth is, however, that in the end our form of polity is also about "we the people"—in our case, about the baptized community. Ultimately decision-making in our form of polity resides in the pews.

Moreover, I think Ellis' point about the federalist debates rings just as true for The Episcopal Church. Our form of governance turns "orthodox" assumptions of those who define church hierarchically (where ultimate authority resides in the office of the pope) or by submission to a list of "fundamentals" (the Southern Baptist option) on its head. The genius of our polity is that we have a church that is "not about providing answers but rather about providing a framework in which the salient questions [can] continue to be debated."

Of course, the media likes to convey its version of truth in "black and white," so it has a notoriously difficult time reporting on what happens at General Convention. They set things up into neat categories

and try to define the “sides” and ultimately decide who are the winners and who are the losers. We get set up to look for clear-cut answers to come out of a General Convention, but my point is that it is not really structured to provide that kind of clarity.

Moreover, like the U.S. Congress, General Convention is not “them” but “us.” The deputies from each diocese, -bishops, clergy, and laity- are elected each year at diocesan conventions in Springfield and Boston, Newark and Trenton, Albany, and New York City. The work that will be done in Anaheim is ultimately work that must continue in local dioceses across this land, in very different contexts.

I love Mary Oliver’s latest collection of poems, entitled *Evidence*. One of the poems in that collection is entitled “Mysteries, Yes” and it concludes like this:

Let me keep my distance, always, from those  
who think they have the answers.  
Let me keep company always with those who say  
“Look!” and laugh in astonishment  
and bow their heads.

I expect and anticipate that when our deputies gather later this summer they will do what Episcopalians do best: they will bow their heads and pray together. They will seek God’s guidance and preferred future and they will not all agree on what that preferred future looks like. But out of that prayer I trust that, with God’s help, we will continue to be a people who are open to God’s mission in the world. Out of that prayer I trust that, with God’s help, we will continue to seek and serve Christ in all persons and find ways to love our neighbors as ourselves. Out of that prayer I trust that, with God’s help, we will continue to open ourselves to being “instruments of God’s peace” in all that we say and do. If we are looking for more than that, and especially if we are looking for “answers” or certitude in a morally complex world, then we almost certainly will end up disappointed.

Faithfully,

*Rich*

**Special note** Our rector addressed the Wachusett Regional High School's "Class of 2009" at the annual baccalaureate service this year, which was held in the high school auditorium. The full text of his remarks to the graduates can be found at <http://www.stfrancisholden.org/documents/Baccalaureate2009.pdf>



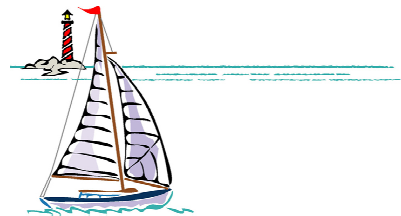
### **Summer Worship**

From July 4/5 to August 29/30

services of Holy Eucharist will be celebrated on

Saturdays at 5:00 p.m. and Sundays at 9:00 a.m.

(There is no Wednesday night service during these months.)



The office will be closed the week of July 6–10.

From July 13th through August 28th the parish office will be open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



The deadline for the next Little Portion is **Thursday, August 20<sup>th</sup>**. Please have all information to the office by this date. You can leave it in the office mailbox or email it to [stfran@verizon.net](mailto:stfran@verizon.net). Please note this issue will include all information for our return to regular worship and ministry schedules.

The Little Portion will be mailed on Thursday, August 27th.



*The Book of Common Prayer*, which guides our worship as Episcopalians, was last revised thirty years ago, in 1979. Much has changed in the world, including the liturgical world since that time. Among other things, the Anglican Church in New Zealand updated their Prayer book in 1997. In past years we have used some of these liturgies for a season at a time as a way to hear things through new ears; many persons have commented that it helps them to

think about their faith in new ways. The Worship Committee has decided to use one of these Eucharistic Liturgies at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday and 9:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings during July and August of this year, with the possibility of doing so again during the Epiphany season 2010.

What do you need to do? First of all, we hope that you will come and worship during these summer months and take your bulletins home with you from worship. The Worship Committee's next meeting will be on Wednesday, August 5. If you have comments/questions/thoughts/reflections/praise/criticism we hope that you will share your thoughts with a member of the Worship Committee before that meeting.

- Jena Bastardo, Nancy Brunelle, Sam Davenport, Julie Mankowsky, Charles Nwachukwu, Linda Rayworth, Jon Rooke, Rich Simpson, Craig Stanovich, Jill Williams



**Many thanks to the Church School teachers who served this past year.**

Erica Rayworth, Katie Anderson, Jon Rooke, James Simpson, Bryan Diehl, Sarah Trafton, Pat Sullivan, Joe Grinstead, Chris Fafard, Dave Fafard, Chelsea Stanovich, David Diehl, Cindy Boyan, Catie Simmons, Conor Boyan, Kyle Berglund

**And those who helped with the Saturday night program:** Bev Giarusso, Linda Mercier, Elisa Heinricher, Alex Heinricher, Laura Caswell, Alex Nowak, Dianne Thibeault, Lindsay Russell

Susan



St. Francis will host a family picnic Saturday, August 29th, at 2:00 p.m., right here on our beautiful grounds. There will be lots of fun for all ages with, of course, delicious food. So, please mark your calendars and save the date.

This will be a great opportunity to catch up with all your St Francis family, after the summer, but before life gets into full swing in the fall. More details will follow.



We come to the summer months, that long period in the Liturgical Year called Ordinary Time, a time to reflect on God's goodness and enjoy God's beauty. St. Francis will have a couple of mission projects over the summer: we will be accepting outdoor clothing and farm tools for the Many Hands Sustainability Center, the partnership between Dismas House in Worcester and the Many Hands Community Supported Agricultural project in Barre. You can bring these to the Mission table in the narthex.

We will also be collecting food for the Wachusett Pantry and asking you to bring specific items in each week for July and August. There will be more about that in the bulletin.

On June 20th Kathy Diehl brought her El Salvador Subcommittee together for a mini-retreat at St. Clare House. Plans were made to follow-up on the June 6-7 weekend how we might discern our next steps on that journey. We are grateful to the Vestry for releasing an additional \$5,040 for Fundacion Cristosal, funds that will pay for the purchase of livestock for the Hasta la Cosecha project.

Finally, please keep the youth group in your prayers as they journey to Loveland, Colorado, for their mission trip.

Jim Bourque



Three shawls were blessed on Saturday evening and all three taken. Still a demand for this wonderful Ministry.

#### CALLING ALL KNITTERS

A plea has come in for Caps For All Ground Troops. If anyone is interested in knitting for this group please contact me. A simple cap knitted in worsted weight.

These must be in dark colors (black, dk brown, dk green, dk grey), as they are for ground troops so they are unable to wear anything colorful. Store bought caps may also be sent. There is also a need for yarn and cash for postage. Sorry if this sounds like begging.

#### PS4FS

We are still finding families and making contact. The response is so amazing. The feeling that their loved ones are not forgotten is so heart warming. One of our members is working toward getting names of Marines. This we hope to start in the fall.

Beryl Turner



#### **Church League Softball**

A sign-up sheet and schedule are on the table in the narthex. Games are played on Sundays at 5:00 p.m. beginning Sunday, June 28th.



#### **Wachusett Night at the Worcester Tornadoes!**

Worcester Tornadoes vs. New Hampshire \* Tuesday, July 28th at 7:05 p.m.  
Hanover Insurance Park at Fitton Field

Enjoy a night of baseball with friends, neighbors, or co-workers and celebrate the Wachusett Region! If you live or work in Holden, Rutland, Sterling, Paxton, or Princeton, you're entitled to these discounts:

Tickets Only:      VIP seats: \$7 (regularly \$14)  
                                    Box seats: \$5 (regularly \$10)  
                                    Grandstand: \$3 (regularly \$6)

Pre-Game Picnic: \$20 (regularly \$25) All-you-can-eat buffet

For more information call 508-792-2288

**From the Parish Register**

January - June 2009

Baptisms

Russell Neil Parker  
John Robert Chisholm

Confirmation

Kate Arleah Apholt  
Patrick James Pope  
Jonathan Brian Rooke  
Jenna Lee Schmit

Reception

Richard Farrell

Funerals

David A. Yankus  
Paul R. Benoit

Transfers out

Connor E. Joyce  
Kellen F. Joyce  
Charles J. Manero  
Diane C. Manero  
Nicholas C. Manero  
Craig S. Miller

Transfers in

Eleanor D. Benoit  
Myron E. Benoit  
Betty Ann Degon  
Patricia D. Gulachenski  
Dennett Harley  
Emily Harley  
April Harley  
Donald R. Haynes  
Ann M. Haynes  
Jeffery W. Heath  
Karen A. Heath  
Courtney S. Heath  
Elizabeth A. Heath  
Pamela M. Jolicoeur  
Adam J. Jolicoeur  
Brittany A. Jolicoeur  
Joan A. Nack  
Robert Tanning  
Jennifer Tanning  
Bobby Tanning  
Emily Tanning



Thank you everyone who prayed for and supported me during my recovery from last October's bicycling accident. Happy to report that I am just about 100% back and yes, golfing, swimming, and....yeah, bicycling! (I can't help it—it's in my blood!) As for bicycling, I will only ride during daylight hours.

Please continue to pray for my sister, Sallie, who continues to recover from back and neck surgery.

Peace and God Bless,  
Steve Donkin

