

# The Epistle

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA 94901

## Our Mission Statement

We are called to be a diverse and inclusive community of Christians in the Anglican tradition.

We offer a compassionate haven for reconciliation, spiritual growth, and commitment to social justice.

## Thoughts from the Rev.

Last month at our General Convention, the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops approved the selection of the Rev. Gene Robinson to be ordained bishop along with many other worthy candidates. Normally the approval of candidates does not make the headlines of our secular newspapers, but as most of you are I'm sure aware, this time it was different. The Rev. Gene Robinson's approval was the focus of our national media because he is a gay man who lives with his partner. He is the first openly gay person elected as bishop in the Anglican Communion (of which we are a part) and largely for that reason, his nomination and approval received more than the usual amount of interest.

Here in the Bay Area, and more specifically at St. Paul's, his election and what it means for the larger Episcopal Church, has been welcomed by the majority of people. And yet I know that there are some of you who do not agree with the decision that was made and have mixed feelings about where the Church is headed. For all of us, whether we rejoice or despair, this is a time of recognizing God's presence in our midst. When I start getting overwhelmed with all that is happening in our world and my life, my spiritual director always asks me, "Where is God in all this?" The question always brings me back to the reality that I wish to live in a God-centered world, not a me-centered one. How I respond to the events in my life that I like or don't like, says more about me than about God, and even as a person of faith, I have to be constantly reminded that God is always there.

In his closing sermon from the General Convention, Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold spoke about his experience of the convention and what he was taking away. And what he saw in the midst of the conflict and disagreement, was love. He says, "This 74th General Convention has been... about love at work in a community that heretofore had been able to live with both/and realities and now was forced to make an either/or decision. And yet, in doing so, something has happened that is larger than any one perspective or even the decisions this Convention has made. Paradoxically, our differences writ large have stripped us of our facile civility and plunged us into the vast sea of the divine agape. That is not to say one position is right and the other wrong. It is to say that God in Christ is with us."

God in Christ is with us and will always be with us as we continue to seek out our way to the divine presence. It is up to all of us to search out our role in God's continually unfolding universe, most especially how to do so when our beliefs differ from those of our neighbor. Much of our General Convention was spent doing just that, and it will continue as long as our Church exists. As we strive to be God's people in this world, let us remember that the love by which we are surrounded comes from a greater power than us alone, and as the Presiding Bishop prayed, "May its reconciling force heal us and whole us for the sake of God's world." Amen.

Peace,

The Rev. Lynn

## ONE PERSON'S LAY GUIDE TO ATTITUDINAL HEALING

*by Neville Armstrong*

It has been suggested to me, by the other Vestry Members no less, that I write a short article in the Epistle about Attitudinal Healing. I am gratified by their apparent interest in this subject but believe that most of us have little idea what it is all about. However, it may behoove us to learn more about Attitudinal Healing, if only because the phrase keeps popping up these days in our service bulletins on a regular basis! I must preface my remarks by stating that this is certainly not the definitive article on the subject.

Attitudinal Healing relates to the concept put forward almost thirty years ago by Dr. Gerald Jampolsky, a child psychiatrist who found that he could learn much about living from young children, in particular those who were suffering from a terminal illness. He developed a "process" which has enabled many others of all ages and situations worldwide to choose a new way of looking at many aspects of their lives; in particular their judgments and perceptions as they journey towards that ever-elusive quality of Inner Peace. The inclusion of the word "Healing" refers to the active promotion of a positive attitude which is regarded as the essential ingredient for a state of successful well-being, both physical and mental, no matter at what stage of "health" or dis-ease the person is.

Let's now get down to attitudinal healing (that is, with small caps). What about changing my attitude towards some of those beliefs that keep getting in the way of finding more joy and fulfillment in my life? Dealing with those nagging preconceptions which somehow still go around and around in my mind (and body) and cause so much conflict? Maybe that's what attitudinal healing is about. What prompts me to approach the subject here in this way is that my connection with Attitudinal Healing has shown me over and over again that sharing with others from my own experience and circumstances brings out the true teacher and student in me. For a start, I was reared very much in the "old" established tradition to respect my elders, no matter what they expounded, and

that directive does not easily disappear. (Particularly the idea about "medical care"-- my father was a well-respected physician, who presented himself to all as a vastly authoritative figure on the subject.) I found along the way that some of the principles I held dear did not work very well for me--after a very long time desperately trying to make them do so! What happens when my parents' admonitions do not fit my situation and I sense that I may not get what I so much want? I am left to fend for myself, and then I often feel like a long-lost child. I look around for a safe caring place in which to find some support and understanding.

There is no ultimate authority who will direct us with these matters, even for those of us who profess to have a belief in God. In all the maze and plethora of "how-to" books, programs and other media messages, where do we look for a solution? Attitudinal Healing would suggest that we look inside ourselves for the answer, that we take a leap of faith and "let go" of as many of the fears and judgments as we reasonably can. And so some of us will look for a safety net of a caring and confidential group, where the participants share a common goal of Inner Peace. In essence, I see this small group experience as an opportunity to be true to myself, to pursue only my own healing, but at the same time be open to others in an open and loving manner. For some of us, it seems to fill a real need!

I would like to end with a short quote from the author Charles Swindoll:

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company....a church....a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you....we are in charge of our attitudes.

In the end, as always, life is up to us!

## **IN THE KNOW:**

### **Sunday Service Leaflet Announcements:**

When submitting a request to have an announcement included in the service leaflet, please keep the wording to a concise two or three lines. By planning ahead information may also appear in the monthly *Epistle*, on bulletin boards, pamphlets, etc. If you have questions, please contact Judy Felton in the Parish Office at 456-4842.

**Interested in forming a St. Paul's bocce team?** Call John Surinchak at 472-2112.

**Christians in Recovery is on summer break. Watch the announcements for further updates.**

**Attitudinal Healing Group meets Tuesdays 6:00 pm-7:30 pm in Duncan Hall.** For further information, see Neville Armstrong's article on page 2 or call him at 454-4015. (*Note: Group does not meet third Tuesday of the month.*)

**St. Paul's Healing Team meets the first Wednesday each month at 5:00 pm.** Anyone interested in learning about healing prayer, Intercessory prayer and membership on the team call or see John Surinchak at 472-2112

**HopeKeepers** meets Tuesdays, 10:00 am-12:00 pm in Duncan Hall. **HopeKeepers** is a support group and ministry for individuals with chronic illness and/or chronic pain. We recognize not all illnesses are physical. You need not be "disabled" by your chronic illness, and it need not be a life-long problem. We focus on Biblical solutions, not on illnesses. Please, give us a try and share your solutions, as we share ours.

**HopeKeepers** is also looking for volunteers.

Volunteer forms are on the table inside front door to Duncan Hall, fill them out and drop into the *Epistle* basket by the office. For more information call Marilyn 415-457-6709 or 415-457-6247

## **Your Group Here**

*If your group needs to announce it is forming or discontinuing or just a reminder that it is available please submit pertinent info. To "In The Know" and e-mail the Epistle or place in Epistle basket.*

### **VOLUNTEER FOR THE SUICIDE PREVENTION & COMMUNITY COUSELING HOT LINE.**

It's 3:00 in the morning, you lie awake, your thoughts racing. The rent was due three weeks ago, your marriage is splitting up, you maybe losing custody of your children. Your life has become like tangles in a young girl's hair.

As you lay there, each minute feeling like an hour and the pain is so incredible you begin to formulate a plan, a way out; all the way out. No one would care-well, maybe your kids will miss you. Maybe a friend, maybe two friends, might miss you. Now you're in a quandary--taking your own life seems the only solution, yet you know, somewhere you know suicide isn't the answer. Maybe you even understand that it's a permanent solution to a temporary problem.

Just between you and God, haven't you felt that way at some point in your life? Different circumstances, but the same feelings: uncared for, life spiraling out of control...I suspect, if you're honest, most of you have to admit you're been in that place. Maybe on the very edge between life and death, or maybe you've just had a passing thought. Either way you need help and the sooner the better. We're blessed in Marin with *SUICIDE PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY COUNSELING* to turn to (24/7).

SUICIDE PREVENTION & COMMUNITY COUNSELING is looking for volunteers. The people who answer the phones for people in trouble do not just wander in, they are highly trained volunteers. A training class will begin **September 9, 2003** and run from 7:00 pm-10:00 pm every Tuesday ending on **October 4, 2003**. (Including one Saturday class, October 4, 2003 from 10:00 am-5:00 pm.)

For more information or to register please call 415-499-1193 ext. 692 to schedule an interview.

## Parish Profile

By Marion Cedarblade

Felicia Demann is sad. Very sad. And for good reason. As she watches television, she sees her former neighborhood and street in Monrovia, Liberia being shelled. They are the targets of troops of rebel war lords, and troops organized by the President Charles Taylor, who came to power thru a coup d'etat. The continuing fighting has been going on since 1980 when democratically elected President William Tolbert was overthrown.

Felicia's joyous laughter is still there, but it is not the deep down carefree laughter she once exhibited. She has lost two brothers in the fighting and a beloved uncle was shot by a firing squad along with other leaders of the country. She has one brother, two sisters, cousins, nieces and nephews and many friends still in Monrovia. She especially worries about an aunt, a surrogate Mother, she has not heard from in weeks.

Felicia, a life long Episcopalian, born and raised in Monrovia. She went to church related schools and came to the United States for college in Washington, D.C.

She since earned a second B.A. this one in Human Relations from Dominican University.

Felicia joined St. Paul's when her oldest daughter Akousa was four. A second daughter, Yah was born in San Rafael and immediately captured the attention and hearts of the entire congregation. She was the Helen Robinett of her day. Akousa, a college graduate, is presently working in research at Oakland's Children's Hospital and plans to go to medical school. Yah is entering her third year at Dartmouth University and has her eye on law school.

How does Felicia cope with the anxieties in her life? She says it is her faith that brings her through. She has been sending what money she can spare to her family in Liberia. They are short of food, clothing and basic survival items. Members of this congregation have been generous in helping her over the years. Felicia is now looking into a trust arrangement which could offer tax deduction for donors.

Former close ties with the United States lead Felicia to hope that the United States government will help with peace making between the factions in Liberia. The people are worn thin with war. Liberia was organized by former American slaves who emigrated to Liberia. Its flag, constitution and pledge of allegiance are all modeled on those of the United States. Citizens of American heritage are known as Americo-Liberians. Please keep Felicia and her family in your prayers.

### ***St. Anne's Guild Announces...***

#### **CHRISTMAS BAZAAR & RUMMAGE SALE**

**Saturday , November 8, 2003.** We need ***YOU*** (the whole parish!) as you do your fall cleaning to please set aside and donate the following as soon as possible:

*Jewelry-1 piece of jewelry you don't wear anymore*

*Linens-something you don't use anymore*

*"White elephants"-1 of those "things" sitting around that could be a "next to new gift"*

*Collectibles and of course toys books, videos, appliances (that work!) clothes, anything to do with Christmas.*

Tax receipts are available. Thanks to all who have brought rummage so far. Together we'll make this year the best ever!!!!

The Deadline for October *Epistle* is September 10, 2003 4:00pm.  
No Exceptions!!!

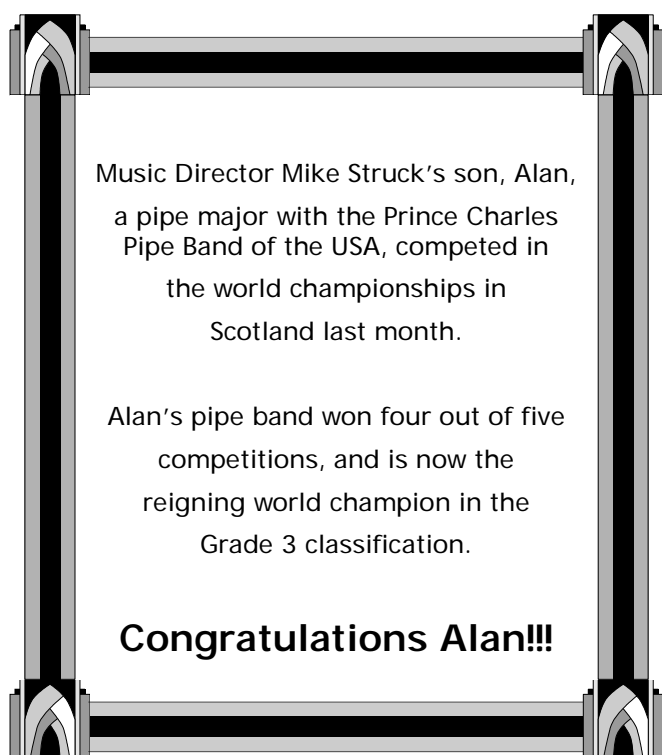
## CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

*The best remedy for external noise and sound that you can't control is to let to of your resistance to it and let it happen. External things are not obstacles to prayer. It is just that we think they are. By fully accepting external distractions that you can't do anything about, you may get a breakthrough into the realization that you can be in the middle of all the noise on earth and still experience this deeper attentiveness. Take a positive view of external difficulties. the only thing about which to take a negative view is skipping your daily time of prayer. That's the only no-no. Even if your prayer time seems fraught with noise and you feel like a total failure, just keep doing it.*

Open Mind, Open Heart

Father Thomas Keating

Please join us for meditation, silent prayer and *centering prayer* each Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm before the 6:30 pm Holy Eucharist. Both beginners and experienced participants are welcome. Instruction in *centering prayer* is available **by prior arrangement with Chris Olson, 415-479-0409.**



## POWER OF PRAYER!

*By Nancy Skinner*

Candido Garcia is on our prayer list and is from Guatemala and is known and loved by the folks in Bolinas. On July 6, 2003 he was found unconscious and was flown to John Muir Medical Center in Walnut Creek. He has a wife and ten children in Guatemala. Candido was sending \$200 a month to keep them in food and clothing. He had been in a coma for a long time, but is coming out of it and is back in the world. He is awake and able to speak. His right side is bad and will need much therapy. The folks in Bolinas are collecting money to send to his wife in Guatemala so she can feed the remaining seven kids at home. (the kids run in age from 2 to 15) So far the people in Bolinas and elsewhere have raised \$7,280 and hope to finally raise \$30,000 which will keep the family together until the last child is 18. Someone has offered to match any donation of \$50 and over, so any donation of \$50 will net \$100 to the Garcia family. If you can help Candido's family, please send a donation to the Fund for Candido Garcia, c/o the Bank of Petaluma, 11400 State Route 1, Pt. Reyes Station, CA 94956. If you have any questions call Mary Bromwell at 868-1412.

Regardless of your ability to donate, please pray.

John Surinchak leads the Healing Team at St. Paul's. They, and a few other dedicated folks, pray daily for the people you have asked the Church at large to remember in prayer. They also pray for the whole of God's church, the leadership and those who serve St. Paul's.

If you would like to join in this daily prayer commitment, or would like your prayer request to remain private, please speak to any one of us or contact **Marilyn Thompson** at 415-457-6709 or 415-457-6247 who coordinates and disseminates the prayer lists for St. Paul's, and also schedules private Healing Prayer and Home Communion.

## Engaging God's Mission

By the Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg

Receive, repent, reconcile, restore. That was the theme of the 74 General Convention of the Episcopal Church. It was an historic convention that consented to the election of the Rev. Canon V. Gene Robinson as bishop of New Hampshire and allowed dioceses to continue exploring same-gender blessings.

The Convention's logo urged people to "Engage God's mission." Both the theme and the logo find their roots in our catechism's answer to the question, "What is the mission of the Church?"

"The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."

We have still to fully live into the themes of Convention. Early on in the Convention many people weren't sure we could do that. There was the glare of the international media. Protestors greeted us outside the Minneapolis Convention Center during that first week. Their slogans on their signs are not fit to print here.

By the second week, they were gone. From my vantage point as a reporter for the *Convention Daily*, I believe the way I saw people behave during the trying days that followed put us in good stead for the next days and months as we sort out the future of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Both Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold and House of Deputies President George Werner forbade any outbursts of celebration or protest after the votes on Robinson and same-gender blessings. Prayer and the invocation of the Holy Spirit's guidance surrounded each of the decisions. Opponents of each action were given time and attention before the whole Convention to state their dismay and sorrow.

Those actions established an attitude pervaded the rest of the Convention. Bishops and deputies were quiet, thoughtful. Speakers in both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies weighed their words.

Here was how Presiding Bishop Griswold saw it.

"What has been remarked upon, again and again, is our civility," he said during his sermon at the Convention's closing Eucharist. " I think, however, that our civility is not the point. It is not civility that has been at work among us, but love. To be sure there has been a certain amount of sinfulness on all sides, but there has also been a tremendous amount of grace at work as well. *(Continued on page 7)*

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

PLEASE PRAY FOR: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR 1 2 3 6 MONTHS (Please circle) (If not marked 1 mo.)

REASON FOR REQUEST: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON REQUESTING PRAYER: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE/EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIVATE PRAYER LIST ONLY? \_\_\_\_\_ HOME COMMUNION DESIRED? \_\_\_\_\_

PRIVATE HEALING PRAYER DESIRED? \_\_\_\_\_

“Love is not just a feeling: it is a matter of the will. And the willingness of many of you who are deeply distressed by certain actions of the convention to stay, quite literally, at the table, is a profound act of love for which the community can be grateful. Some have felt obliged to leave the table. While we must respect their freedom to do so, it is very much my prayer – and I am sure yours as well – that they will find themselves able to return. Their leaving diminishes us all.

Love takes other forms as well. It is love that gives us the desire to enter into the pain of the other and to bear it as one’s own. It is love that gives us the desire to exercise restraint and forbearance for the sake of one’s brother or sister.

“What has this convention been about and what do I take away? This 74th General Convention has been about love. It has been about love at work in a community that heretofore had been able to live with both/and realities and now was forced to make an either/or decision. And yet, in doing so, something has happened that is larger than any one perspective or even the decisions this Convention has made. Paradoxically, our differences writ large have stripped us of our facile civility and plunged us into the vast sea of the divine agape. That is not to say one position is right and the other wrong. It is to say that God in Christ is with us.”

The truth is people all over this Episcopal Church of ours are in different places about these issues. In the hours after the votes on Robinson, the truth seemed to have a three-fold feel to it.

Some people declared it to be Good Friday. The Bible and the teachings and tradition of the Church had been sullied and trampled. The Episcopal Church had become an apostate church. For them this was the truth they told their neighbors. They wept. They walked out of the House of Deputies. Some went home. Some went to pray. Some returned with what they called the ashes of repentance smeared in the sign of the cross on their forehead. They said they were not leaving but that the church had left them and moved to a place where they could not go.

Other people declared that they had lived through Good Friday and that it now felt like Easter. They had come out of the tomb of exclusion and entered the light. The Church had interpreted the Bible in a way that further illuminates the word of God for this people in this place in this time, just as it had when the issue was slavery, or divorce or the role of women in the church. This was the truth they told their neighbors. The Church, they said, was helping God do what God has always promised to do: make all things new and transform God’s followers in the process.

For still others, it was and still is Holy Saturday. Presiding Bishop Griswold told me a story on Thursday afternoon of a bishop who came to him after the House Bishops had consented to Robinson’s election. He told Griswold that he was in the tomb. It felt like something had died. He said he knew that resurrection comes. He said that he believed in the truth of the resurrection and so he was not without hope. “But,” he said to Bishop Griswold. “Please don’t try to push me out of the tomb too fast.”

The truth is some of us believe we got to this place too fast, or that we never should have gotten to this place. Others would say, “Not fast enough.”

Late in the Convention, I interviewed a man far on the other end of the theological spectrum from me. As we talked I realized that he loved this Church and Jesus just as much as I did. I realized that bonds of this sort might just hold us together during the next days and months as we sort out the future of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Over and over again I heard people call each to that bottom line. Our membership in the body of Christ unites us. It is the relationship that calls us to the table again and again. It gives us bread for our journey from Minneapolis into our future.

*[The Rev. Mary Frances Schjonberg is the assistant rector at Christ Church in Short Hills, NJ. She covered General Convention for The Convention Daily, published by Episcopal Life (the national church’s monthly newspaper). She served as a seminarian at St. Paul’s from 1998 to 2000.]*



# HOMECOMING AT ST. PAUL'S

Save the date ... September 14th

One service at 10 a.m.

Fun for the kids

Barbecue picnic lunch

A ministry faire

Join us as we launch the new church year!

\$5 person/\$10 family



*St Paul's Episcopal Church*  
1123 Court Street  
San Rafael CA 94901-2909

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SAN RAFAEL, CA  
PERMIT NO. 37

Website: [www.oldstpauls.org](http://www.oldstpauls.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL-Please deliver before 9/1/03