

St. Aidan's Episcopal Church

# AIDAN'S AGAPE

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2011

PENTECOST/ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

"The Little Church with the Big Heart"

## From the Rector

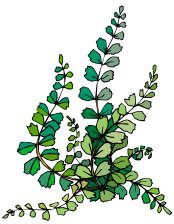
### Reflections on Gardens and Churches

The other day I was working on the garden in my front yard and I realized that I was looking at a metaphor for our parish and churches in general in today's world. When I moved here in December of 2007, there were several areas of my yard that were heavily shaded and fairly damp. Sharon Metz suggested I come over to their house and dig up some ferns that they had in their back yard. So I did that and built two very nice beds of ferns.

Fast forward to this spring. Following a series of storms that brought limbs crashing down on my neighbor's car, he decided that the trees between our two yards had to go. So a crew came out one day and three large pine trees were taken down. As the summer progressed, the sun beat down upon one of my lovely fern beds. I realized that the health of this bed was severely compromised. In fact they were being scorched by the sun and even though the bed had a sprinkler on it, the water dried up too fast. I tried to increase the time the sprinkler ran, but the sun was just too much. So I had a landscape person come in and come up with plantings that will work in the new conditions. The ferns have been moved into another shady area and hopefully will come back next spring.



Something had changed in the environment that I had no control over and now what had been lovingly planted was now dying. The church world today is very similar. Carefully planted and cared for parishes are struggling in a world where the conditions of the world have radically changed. There is a book out there that many of you may know entitled "Who Moved My Cheese" which is about changes in the business and financial world. I understand there is a similar book out now called Who Moved My Church that looks at what has changed in the church world.



Our visioning team is surveying how our landscape has changed and working to plan our way ahead to a future with a bright garden of God's love. Over the last month I have been engaged in some of the "Look Around" phase. As part of that I have been in conversation with several parishes around the country who are thriving. I was interested to hear that at St. Martin's in Williamsburg their 8:00 service is now populated with almost as many young families as older congregants. The reality is that is when it is most convenient for them to attend. They have even had to open their nursery for that service! Another parish in Wisconsin has a 5:00 Saturday Rite 1, Rite 3 (Enriching our Worship) at 8:00 on Sunday morning for young families, a traditional Rite 2 at 10:30 and a praise service on Sunday evening at 5:00 for youth.

There is a way forward for us that builds on our strengths and takes into consideration the changing church world we live in. A piece of that examination will be our History Night where we look back at what we have done well in the past and where we have struggled. This will help guide the Look Ahead phase that will take place during Lent this spring. Please take a moment to read the information about our History night later in this newsletter.

I pray for God's blessings as we labor in his garden.

Mark+

# Hands to Heart to Head

**Senior Warden, October 2011**

Christianity is a religion of *doing*. We can have deep discussions of whether the Apostle's Creed or Nicene Creed better defines Christian orthodoxy, but at its heart Christianity is all about putting the Gospel into practice, not theoretical discussions of angels dancing on pinheads. So often we choose to lead with our heads instead of our hands or our hearts; so my proposal to you today is to try being a Christian with your *hands* first, and see how your *heart* and *head* follows.

By "head" I mean your ego. That shallow part of you that sees things in black/white, us/them, right/wrong. I once heard someone call it "your reptile brain" – perhaps the oldest evolutionary part of your brain wired to ensure survival in a dog-eat-dog world. Being modern 21st century beings, we spend a lot of time looking at things rationally, and we're firmly convinced (especially if you're an engineer) that is the best way to approach things. Christ really doesn't care about all this rationality. He wants the deeper part of you where all that irrational love lives. So instead of trying to be an intellectual Christian, try just getting out and *acting* like a Christian.

St. Aidan's has always gotten a good turn-out at events like Stop Hunger Now or Vacation Bible School that eschew theological discussions and just help folks. Putting the Gospel into action with your hands exposes your heart to the working of the love of Christ. It is through these self-denying actions that you get closer to God. You are slowly replacing your will with the will of God. These actions will guide your heart in making decisions out of love, not from your reptile brain. Now that you can see the results of your actions you have a better vantage point for those theoretical discussions of Song Book selections and transubstantiation vs. consubstantiation.

We have two big opportunities coming up this fall for you to give your hands and hearts a workout. First is the annual pledge campaign. In keeping with the "hands first" theme, we are focusing on our ministries and what they need to be successful. We need both your money and your time to make these demonstrations of the Gospel at work meaningful and successful. The second opportunity is the upcoming series of Vision Team events where we chart a course for St. Aidan's based on what our *hearts* (not our heads!) are saying about who we are called to be.

Which is a nice segue into why we use "call" so much when talking about discernment and the work of the church. Jesus is *calling* your heart, not your head. Your heart knows what the right thing to do is, and decisions of the heart (like forgiveness) come without guilt. Your head can make moral decisions too, but as soon as the ego creeps in, so does guilt. Please don't guilt yourselves into pledging or participating in the visioning process, but do put your reptile in a cage for a while and listen to your heart.

**Fred Parkinson, October 2011**  
**Senior Warden**



## From the Vision Team

The Vision Team continues to meet and work on developing our mission and vision statements. This past month we put together plans for our Look Back activities which include our History Night. Please read the article below about History Night and please plan to attend. This will be an enjoyable and important evening.

During October Mark visited Virginia Seminary for the Fall Convocation. While there he took a side trip to St. Aidan's in Alexandria. The team had read an article about them in the Episcopal Church Foundation on line magazine and thought it would be a good idea to make a visit.

They were founded two years before us and started with the same A frame "portable" chapel. That building was

struck by lightning in the late 60s so they have a different worship space. What Mark found was that they are facing almost identical issues to ours today. What was interesting was the discernment method that they are using for their vestry. They are using the Listening Hearts program for committees. This is based on the Listening Hearts method for discerning God's call for individuals. The team plans to spend time at our next meeting looking at this and we are very excited by what we have seen so far.

As part of that we would like to invite all members of the parish to learn more about listening to God's call for us and Mark will offer an Advent Retreat based on Listening Hearts. Please see the article for details

## St. Aidan's Hosts a History Night on Nov. 5

As part of our ongoing visioning effort, the Vestry and Vision Team would like to invite you to participate in the upcoming St. Aidan's History Night. This will be an enjoyable evening that will begin with a potluck supper. During our gathering time before we eat you will be invited to take part in several fun activities to get to know more about our parish. We hope that those of you NEW to the parish will come to meet those who have been here a long time.

### **Why Have a History Night?**

**It** is impossible to understand the present without understanding the past

**Every** congregation has myths about itself, as well as a history composed of positive and negative experiences

**It** is only when we come to terms with the past that we can move freely into the future; what can we learn from our history?

**There** are people who have knowledge of and have experienced significant events in St. Aidan's history; the evening provides a forum to share and record these stories so they won't be untold and lost

### **Desired Outcomes of History Night**

**Involve** participants in the excitement of the ancient art of storytelling; involve everyone in piecing together our story.

**The** emphasis of the evening will be on sharing the stories.

**Provide** exhibits made up of historical items for sharing (parish registers, record of services, photo albums, etc.). Other research can take place prior to and following the evening. Results can be shared as convenient.

**Gratify** and enlighten elder members and newcomers alike as we record the experiences of the years.

**Provide** an opportunity for fellowship for all ages gathered together in community.

**Turn** the stories into meaning statements about St. Aidan's.

**When: Saturday, 5 November, 6:00 – 9:00 PM**

**Where: St. Aidan's Parish Hall**

**What: Pot-Luck Dinner with wine provided followed by small group discussions**

Please RSVP by e-mailing your response to Nancy Newhams, ([admin@aidanvba.net](mailto:admin@aidanvba.net)), or by filling in the sign-up list located in the parish hall. Please indicate how many participants will be coming, along with the type of dish you plan to bring; appetizer, main dish, side dish, or dessert. Childcare will be provided. Please contact Nina Rodriguez

([nina.rodriguez@verizon.net](mailto:nina.rodriguez@verizon.net))

Come help us celebrate All Saints weekend by sharing your St. Aidan's story and acknowledging the saints that have made our parish great for the past fifty years!

## **LISTENING HEARTS ADVENT RETREAT DAY DECEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup> 9:00-1:00**

"Mark, I just don't know what God wants me to do. How do I tell if it is God or something else that is leading me down this path? What is God doing in my life?" These are questions that I hear on a weekly if not daily basis.

**Listening Hearts , Discerning Call in Community** has been around since 1991 and is a very helpful way to explore this question. I am planning on using this method with the Vision Team and also with the vestry in a committee setting, but first and foremost, this is a way for individuals in a community to discern what and where God is calling them to do.

Have you wondered about how to listen for God's voice in your world? Come join me for a fascinating morning of examining how God calls us to service.

### **Parking Lot Update**

King's Grant Assisted Care Living has completed all the permits and now has financing for their expansion. They plan to add a memory unit for dementia and Alzheimer's patients as well as some additional assisted care beds. Part of that expansion is the construction of a new parking lot. Many of you will remember that they contacted us about a joint use parking lot on the land between our two properties and this project is now set to start.

The lot will be for the most part on the far side of the drainage ditch that runs behind the church. We own all of the land up to the current parking lot and the new lot will be connected to that lot. We will be able to use that lot for extra parking on Sundays and other big events like the Fall Fair. King's Grant house will construct new sidewalks to the back entrance to the narthex (lobby), over to the handicap ramp by the Hospitality Room and a sidewalk all the way around the side of the church to the front parking lot. They will landscape the area. They have put the job out to bid since the parking lot must be built before they can start the expansion of their facility.

They have paid us \$50,000 to be used to move the air conditioning units outside that back entrance and to make repairs so that the entrance is more inviting and attractive. Any money that is not used for this will go into a capital improvement fund for future major expenses like roof, narthex carpeting and other large capital expenses.

### **FALL CLEAN-UP DAY-----SATURDAY DECEMBER 10, 8AM-NOON**

As usual, we will rake the leaves and tidy up the building for Christmas.  
Please mark your calendars now, and plan to come and help for just an hour or 2  
The more the better, and the kids can play in the leaf piles.

# FALL FAIR REPORT

As this newsletter goes to press we do not have final totals, but here is a quick look at the Fall Fair results

First of all, the fair was a great success given the new format. The committee believes that we have laid the groundwork for even more successes in the future. Almost all of the vendors had a good day, and with more advance notice we should be able to expand the number of vendors (and the money they generate from renting space).

Here are some details reported out to the vestry by Chuck Marks

1. Total Gross - \$5576.90 (we are still taking in some money )
2. Minimum Net - \$3800 (we will work all the bills out by the end October) - (last year's Fair raised \$3579.36)
3. Some interesting statistics from our new food format: 58 dozen oysters and 43 1/2 dozen oysters sold; 103 beers sold; 160 hot dogs / brats sold; 90 BBQ sandwiches sold; 108 bowls of soup sold; 260 soft drinks sold. I estimate that we had about 300 folks served.
4. Vendors generated \$280
5. Kids games covered their expenses and raised a small amount However, they really drew the crowds in. When the kids stay and play for as long as two hours, you know they are going to eat and the parents are going to shop!
6. Bake Sale (nearly sold out) & Pickles (sold out), crafts, books, plants, EYC, scarecrows all evened or beat their numbers from last year. The book sale in particular was very successful.
7. Although more work was required the day of the fair, my rough estimate is that we cut our total workload by 60% in the new Fair format. This format also has the ability to grow - rummage sale format is capped on growth.

*A note from Mark:* A huge thank you to all of the volunteers who made the day such a success. I am confident that within a year or two you will see the money generated double. I know parishes in the area that serve 3 or 4 times as many meals. Everybody I talked to said they planned to come back next year. I talked to one person who drove over from Newport News just for the oysters!

## Advent Conspiracy Coming to St. Aidan's

**Advent** begins November 27. A season of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ, Advent can be a stressful time. Preparation for holiday festivities exhausts us. Advent often passes leaving us with an empty feeling of missed purpose. This Advent, the Outreach Committee, invites you to transform your Advent by joining the Advent Conspiracy at St. Aidan's.

So what is the Advent Conspiracy? It's an innovative way to engage in authentic worship and giving. In 2006, five pastors decided to make Christmas a revolutionary event by encouraging their faith communities to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More and Love all. The response was overwhelming and the Advent Conspiracy was born.

Stay tuned for specifics of the Advent Conspiracy at St. Aidan's this year.

## Beginning Ringing: Learn to play handbells



Have you ever thought you would like to ring handbells but had no idea how or where to start? Now your chance is here! Bell director Ned Davis will teach beginning ringing to teens and adults at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays. Come and give it a try...no musical ability needed.

## What the Youth are Doing

October was a busy month for the youth of Saint Aidan's! We went to October Weekend, helped with the fall fair, and attended a U2Charist at Emmanuel.

Now, the last two months of 2011 are beginning to look just as exciting! We will be taking a group of 10th-12th graders to Happening #57 at Chanco November 11-13 for a youth-run, youth-planned fun-filled weekend. We are also planning to take a group of 6th-9th graders to Chanco for November Weekend (the junior high version of October Weekend) on November 19-20, and, beginning in November, we will be sporadically attending the contemporary service at Old Donation on Sunday afternoons.

Of course, the end of November sees the beginning of the Advent season and there are many wonderful ideas floating around - from service days to attending special church events throughout the convocation, so stay tuned!

## Head Start Children Get Birthday Gifts from St. Aidan's

Each of the 17 children in the Head Start program receives a "birthday box" on his or her birthday as a gift from St. Aidan's. Each box contains such items as workbooks, crayons, a Beanie Baby bear, drawing paper & colored pencils and markers. Donations make these gifts possible. Each box's contents cost approximately \$30, and money is needed to support this project. Please consider helping these children celebrate their birthdays with a contribution marked for "Head Start"



## Nursery Help!!!!



We have seen a marked increase in the need for nursery care during Sunday School and the 10:30 service. Having a well staffed nursery is critical to welcoming the young families who are critical to our future as a parish. Currently the same three volunteers are volunteering and we really need some additional help. If we could get two or three people more, then nobody would have to do it more than once every six weeks or so.

If you are willing to help with this critical ministry, please contact Ginger Gray [ygray8@cox.net](mailto:ygray8@cox.net) or 757-641-7525. If we want families with young children we must support them!

## Vestry Highlights

- Pledges – YTD 98 percent of pledges are current.
- Broken icemaker in kitchen has been replaced.
- Fair was a success! Net this year approximately \$3800 vs. last year \$3500. Final figures will be forthcoming.
- New Parish Directory is available on line.
- Priority Repairs: Repair/Replace roof and AC units
- **UPCOMING:**
- History Night: November 5, 5-9, pot luck. Remembering the Past to Plan for the Future.
- Holiday Ministry: Holiday posters for sign up will be going up next month.
- Fair Recap: A meeting will be Oct 30 after 10:30 service.
- Club 567: Members are planning a Treasure Hunt for the Head Start kids in December.
- Seton House: In January a Game Night is planned for Mentoring Seton Children of Prisoners Program. Volunteers are needed to play games with children.



Preparing for Jesus's birth with scripture, singing and ringing.....

Mark your calendars, now.  
Watch for reminders as we begin to celebrate Advent.

Sunday, Nov. 27

8:15 AM and 10:30 AM

First Sunday  
of Advent



Sunday, Dec. 18

10:30 AM

Advent Festival of Lessons and Carols

Lessons alternating with congregational singing and  
selections performed by our Handbell and Senior  
Choirs



Saturday, Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Services

5:00PM

5:30 PM

Special Music  
Family communion service &  
Pageant/Junior Choir

10:30 PM

11:00 PM

Christmas Music  
Organ/Strings/Senior Choir  
Candlelight Service/Senior Choir

Sunday, Dec. 25 Christmas

9:00 AM

Quiet Communion Service



# NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS



11/02 Marijane Harrison  
 11/02 Robert (Bob) Jonas  
 11/02 Derek Russell  
 11/02 Jeffrey Williams  
 11/03 Maria Crouse  
 11/03 Pattie McCallum  
 11/04 Melissa Rice  
 11/06 Joyce Kirkpatrick  
 11/06 Carl Masulonis  
 11/07 Peter Demchuk  
 11/07 Dona Katz  
 11/07 Patrick Lenahan

11/08 James A. Metcalfe  
 11/10 Albert Dickson Jr.  
 11/11 Judy Clay  
 11/12 Joyce Beaman  
 11/13 Caroline Exner  
 11/14 Ashley Alley  
 11/14 Beth Bennett  
 11/14 David Crouse III  
 11/16 Carl Timmons  
 11/17 David Crouse, Jr.  
 11/17 Scott Miller  
 11/17 Ann Poole

11/17 Pamela Tiger  
 11/18 Dennis Farrell  
 11/18 Peter Summerlin  
 11/19 Joseph Leach  
 11/22 Micah King  
 11/24 John Reid  
 11/25 Deborah Alley  
 11/25 Bob Byng  
 11/25 Yvette Dinapoli  
 11/26 Will Seeley  
 11/29 Mark Buckner  
 11/30 James Bennis



# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

12/01 Esther Weichbrodt  
 12/01 Tabitha Villaluz  
 12/03 Matthew Crouse  
 12/05 Chane' Williams  
 12/07 George Bryant III  
 12/07 John Hamilton  
 12/09 Jessica Epps  
 12/09 Mary Schofield  
 12/11 Helen Master

12/12 Frances Tiger  
 12/13 Tristan Simmons  
 12/16 Tom Metz  
 12/18 Jeanne Bergren  
 12/18 Betty Kennedy  
 12/19 Ryan Dougherty  
 12/19 Kenneth Kirkpatrick  
 12/19 Holly Waide  
 12/21 Katie Simeone

12/21 Emily Ventker  
 12/23 James M. Metcalfe  
 12/25 Diane Gregoria  
 12/27 Christopher McCallum  
 12/27 Jennifer Timmons  
 12/28 Amanda Meadows  
 12/31 David Demchuk  
 12/31 Bob Harrison Jr.

## ST. AIDAN'S EPICOPAL CHURCH

3201 Edinburgh Dr.  
 Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Rt. Rev. Holly Hollerith *Bishop, Diocese of Southern Virginia*  
 Rev. Mark D. Wilkinson *Rector*  
 Nancy Newhams *Parish Secretary*  
 Jamie Dougherty *Music Director*  
 Ned Davis *Handbell Director*  
 Dennis Farrell *Sexton*  
 Sue Wells *Pastoral Care Coordinator*

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(after hours extensions )

1 = office 2 = rector 8 = Pastoral Care

### The Vestry

|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Michael Canonica | Chuck Marks     |
| Serge Demchuk    | Sharon Metz     |
| Jeff Diamond     | Fred Parkinson  |
| Barbara Duke     | Beth Simeone    |
| Peggy Fanney     | Susan Summerlin |
| Shannon Gray     |                 |

Senior Warden: Fred Parkinson  
 Junior Warden: Serge Demchuk  
 Treasurer: Jerry Alley  
 Register: Jane Bass

### Pastoral Care Associates

|               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Peggy Fanney  | Ed Smith        |
| Jessie Greene | Sue Wells       |
| Gwen Daniels  | Connie Williams |