

# St. Luke's Parish **Epistle** July 2008 Bladensburg, Maryland

## A Message from the Rector

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

THE GLOBAL ANGLICAN FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE, (GAFCON), has just ended their meeting in Jerusalem. This meeting, depending upon one's perspective, was either a group of disgruntled, belligerent, trouble making, break away bishops, or they were a group of orthodox Anglicans meeting to restore, protect and defend the faith, which they swore to uphold at their consecrations.

The point of debate is the "full inclusion" of gay and lesbian people into the life and ministry of the Church. The progressive or revisionist theology of many in the western world calls for the full inclusion of all God's people into the life and ministry of the Church. On the other hand, orthodox, or traditional theology views the acceptance of such a move as a violation of Holy Scripture, and in fact would argue such theology rewrites the Christian doctrine of creation.

It is absolutely clear these two theological positions are at opposite ends of the theological spectrum, and the two will never meet. It is also just as clear to note these two theological positions cannot both be right; one simply has to be wrong-but which one?

The debate over the "full inclusion" of gay and lesbian people into the life and ministry of the Church diverts our attention from a much larger, and dare I say a more important issue, namely that of SIN. What is sin? Who has the authority to determine what sin is? Sadly, sin is something that is not addressed too much in the Episcopal Church; we hear very little from our pulpits about sin and repentance, and we hear a great deal about God's love, mercy and grace, (acceptance).

I very much believe the Episcopal Church, and for that matter the Christian Church as a whole, should be inclusive. No one should be turned away from the

comfort of the Church and the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ; all are called and welcomed. However, once one is accepted into this holy family, instruction must take place, "rules and guidelines" if you will, to keep us within this holy family and in a right relationship with God. This instruction is nothing less than calling us to holiness of life, not our holiness, but rather into the Holy life of Jesus. We are to be transformed into the life of Jesus. We are to be raised to his level of Holiness, rather than lowering the level of holiness to affirm our sinful state.

So, let us not fall prey to news articles or accounts referring to the GAFCON Bishops as disgruntled, belligerent, trouble making, break away bishops. Let us not fall prey to suggestions that there are more pressing issues, such as feeding the poor, taking care of the homeless or taking care of those less fortunate. The issue at stake is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His uniqueness to man's salvation. All else, though tremendously important, are but by-products of this saving message.

I as your priest am very well aware of my sinful state, and my need for God's mercy and grace in leading me to repentance. I am committed to proclaiming God's unlimited love, grace and mercy, but I am also committed to teaching our responsibility and proper response to God's love in this covenant relationship. I fully believe in God's transforming love and I wish for each of us to be raised to His Glory.

May we all go Forward in Faith as we seek to live in, and serve our Lord Jesus Christ!

Mark<sup>+</sup>

## WEEKDAY MASSES TO RESUME

Our regularly scheduled weekday Masses will resume on Tuesday July 15. Our weekday Mass schedule is as follows: Tuesday 10:00AM; Wednesday 7:00AM; Thursday 6:30PM; Friday 12:00PM. Requiem Mass at 10:00 AM every second Saturday.

### Upcoming Events

**July 4 – Independence Day**

**July 5 – Requiem Mass for Mr. Edwin Freeman Sr.**

**July 12 – Monthly Requiem, Men’s Fellowship**

**July 21 – Vestry Meeting**

**July 22 – St. Mary Magdalene,  
Mass 10:00AM & 6:30PM**

**July 25 – St. James the Apostle,  
Mass 12:00PM & 6:30PM**

**July 27 – Thanksgiving Sunday**

### RIP

Mr. Edwin Freeman, Sr. died on June 14, 2008. Mr. Freeman was a regular at St. Luke’s. He inspired many, including your Rector, with his determination to be in church on Sunday mornings. Mr. Freeman returned to Liberia, his native land in January. May he, and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. There will be a Requiem Mass for Mr. Freeman on July 5, 2008 at 10:00AM. All are invited to attend.

### Men’s Fellowship Meeting

The Men’s Fellowship is scheduled to meet the 2nd Saturday of every month. The next meeting will be held on July 12th at 6:00PM in the undercroft. All men, young and old, are encouraged to attend. The goals of the Men’s Fellowship are:

- To become the spiritual heads of the parish and our families.
- To have fellowship.
- To support one another.
- To be in prayer for the needs of the parish.
- To grow in Christ.

### The Festival of Faith

The annual Festival of Faith is scheduled for September 13, 2008. We are very pleased and honored to have The Most Rev. Drexel Wellington Gomez, and The Rt. Rev. Keith L. Ackerman, SSC as leaders of this year’s event. Please mark

your calendars! Register early and get the reduced price of \$50 per person. This amount includes registration, continental breakfast and lunch. Please visit <http://www.stlukesparish-bladensburg.org/parish.htm> for registration and information.

### Youth Group

Parents, in these difficult times it is important for your child to have Christian friends and to be grounded in the faith. This is your chance to help your child/children. Pleaser contact Fr. Lewis at 301-395 8982 about the youth group.

### Summer Schedule

The Thursday night Bible study and Sunday school hour have been suspended through the summer. Both will resume in September.

### Memorials

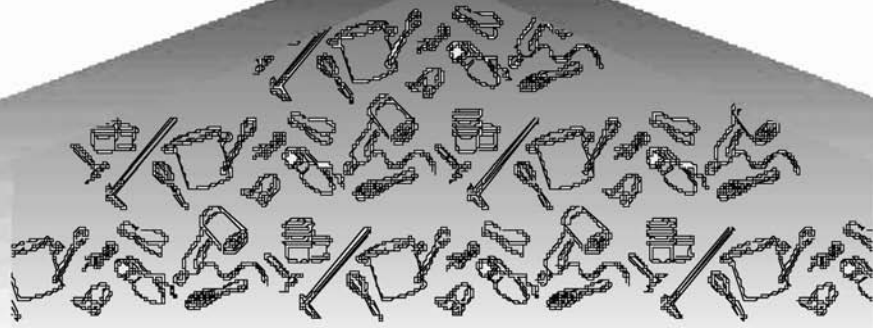
If you would like to have the names of your loved ones placed on a brass plaque, which will be affixed to a pew in the church, you may now do so. This is a wonderful way to memorialize your loved ones in the House of God. The price per plaque is \$300, of course if you would like to donate more, it would be greatly appreciated. Please call the office at 301-927-6466 to place your order .

### Thanksgiving Sunday

The last Sunday of every month is designated as Thanksgiving Sunday. Of course every Sunday is a day of thanksgiving for our Lord’s Resurrection, but we have set aside the last Sunday of every month to express thanks for the many blessings God has bestowed upon us. On the last Sunday of every month, after the Post-Communion prayer has been recited we will have a second collection, asking people to come forward to make a thanksgiving offering.

The idea of a thanksgiving offering comes to St. Luke’s from our brothers and sisters in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Vickey and I have been privi-

*Continued on page 6*



# **YARD SALE**

**12 de Julio, 10:00AM-3:00PM**

**July 12th, 10:00AM-3:00PM**

**IGLESIA SAN LUCAS**

**St. Luke's Parish**

**4002 53<sup>rd</sup> Street**

**Bladensburg, MD 20710**

**301-927-6466**

**(En El Parqueo /Parking Lot)**

Invitamos a todos que nos acompañen en este día para recaudar fondos que irán hacia el presupuesto de funcionamiento de la parroquia.

We welcome all to join us. All proceeds raised will go towards the parish's operating budget.

# Treasurer's Report May 2008

	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>
Operating Income	\$ 67,784	\$ 93,966
Operating Expenses	(68,644)	(95,128)
Net Operating Income (Loss)	\$ ( 860)	( 1,162)
Furnace Funds	400	15,625
Improvement Funds	5,077	5,000
Outreach	9,518	3,665
Total Designated Income	\$ 14,995	\$ 24,290
Designated Expenses	(11,502)	(5,420)
Net Designated Income	3,493	18,870
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 2,633</b>	<b>\$ 17,708</b>

**As of 5-31-08 there was \$12,813.08 in accounts payable that could not be paid in May. These bills are not reflected in the totals above. Our church runs on a "Cash Basis" which means the summary above reflects actual cash received and paid out through 5-31-2008.**

Yours in Christ,  
Karen King

## What Stewardship Means to Me

As I sit here in Afghanistan after a long day of work, pondering my recent arrival here and the months of long, hard days ahead of me, my thoughts on stewardship finally become clear. There's a definite parallel to be drawn between my presence in a combat zone and what true Christian stewardship means to me. There are clearly sacrifices involved in both. Duty and service to a higher cause are also attributes of both. The full use of the talents God gave me in a way I believe glorifies Him is part of why I'm serving here as well, and this should be the goal of every Christian steward, in my humble opinion.

But what is a Christian steward? First, I think it is important to define what stewardship means at its foundation, especially for those who missed Fr. Mark's May 25th sermon. Webster defines stewardship as "the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care." So, taking this basic definition and applying it to our own Christian experience, one possible definition of Christian stewardship is caring for something (or someone) that is of great value; that does not inherently belong to us, but is "given" by God, to us, for safekeeping during our short time on this Earth. God would not give a steward any responsibility without also providing the means (the resources and talents) to carry out those stewardship duties. The resources and talents given to a

steward are gifts given freely by God out of His love, not for the steward's own glory, but to glorify God by safekeeping that which has been "given" to the steward. The steward is God's servant in this endeavor, and many times a servant to others, just as Christ professed his nature in Mark 10:45: saying "Even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve..." Finally, a steward must be prepared for sacrifice, just as any one entrusted with something of great value, something bigger than any one of us, should be. Perhaps, even to the level of sacrifice demonstrated by Christ: "...and to give his life as a ransom for many." Now that's a steward! So, let's go back for a short time to my parallel between my current situation and the Christian stewardship model.

First, it is important to note that I am not here in Afghanistan because I long to be a "hero." No, no, no. I was, and am, very anxious about being away from my wife, my family, and my Church family at St. Luke's. There will undoubtedly be events that I will miss back home, some very important ones; I will not get them back, there is no magic rewind button. I fully intend to come home with all my parts and pieces intact, but I am largely powerless to affect that outcome. This is still a dangerous place. Then why, you might ask, go through this? I truly feel a strong sense of duty and service to my

country, a need to do “my part.” I sense a need, somewhere deep within my core, to take ownership of a very small piece of responsibility for the protection of the service members who lay their life on the line to guarantee our freedoms. Karen and I agreed God gave me talents and led me down a path uniquely designed to support the protection of these service members, while they are doing their job protecting us. In essence, serving the servants. What of the danger that comes with the territory? On my last night in the states, having dinner with Karen before she took me to the airport, I shared a thought with her: “When most every fiber in your being tells you to stay, and you still go, that must be the definition of duty!”

We knew it would be hard on both of us. The sacrifice of lost time together is one thing- the possibility of a much greater sacrifice in this still very dangerous country is yet another that cannot be ignored. But we both believe God has given each one of us many great gifts; one of those gifts is a nation where we enjoy many freedoms, including the ability to freely worship our God as we see fit (try that here in Afghanistan; it ain’t happening unless your god is Allah). This gift, these freedoms we enjoy, come at a price. I salute those who have paid the ultimate price to win those freedoms for us. And, my presence here clearly means I too would pay that price if necessary. I suppose that is the definition of service.

Having shared this story with you, and defined what I believe Christian stewardship is, how does each one of us fit into the stewardship picture? I think each one of us is either a stewardship story in progress or one waiting to happen. In many cases we share stewardship duties of a particular type with our Christian brothers and sisters without even knowing it. But when we are able to identify those things we ought to do as acts of stewardship God is calling us to do, well, it puts a new twist on things. At that point, what we should do becomes our duty; our responsibility; a challenge that includes some level of sacrifice, but also brings great glory to God.

How does one come to an understanding of what God calls them to be stewards of? Only through each person’s personal journey with Christ can one hope to know His plan for us. I’m not going to try to tell anyone in this article what they should or should not take responsibility for. I will, though, point out just a few very

important gifts God has given us at St. Luke’s that deserve as much stewardship as our Parish can muster:

1. The “Faith once delivered to the Saints.” We are recipients of a rich tradition given to us by the Apostles and their successors. This tradition is more than 2000 years old and clearly now under siege, in danger of “Death by Revisionism.” Was this endangered tradition given to us by the Saints for safekeeping? Clearly it was. Hmmm, I smell stewardship responsibilities enough for all of us.
2. Our Church family – Many faithful Christians worldwide have no place to worship due to persecution, destitution, and many other reasons we cannot even fathom. God gave us a beautiful Church facility into which we can walk freely and safely to worship Him. Enough said.
3. A loving and faithful Pastoral team – Even though I was on the Search Committee commissioned to find our Rector, I guarantee you we did not pick our wonderful Priest and his loving, caring wife. God gave them to us, as He also gave us Fr. Erich. There are many faithful Anglo-Catholic parishes without a permanent Rector. Do you think God means for us to keep them safe, to serve them as they serve us? You bet.
4. A rich, diverse community surrounding us –How utterly empty would we all feel if our Church were in some upscale community that had absolutely no needs to be met?

I suppose I’ve made my point. My deadline for this article draws near. I pray I’ve met my goal, which was to provoke thought about Christian stewardship rather than stand (figuratively) in a pulpit and deliver to you “what we must do.” God has gifted us everything that we own, every resource at our disposal, both as individuals and as a Church family. Armed with God’s bounty, we each go on a journey of discovery as we seek His will, how He means for us to serve Him best with the gifts He has given us. I pray for you during your journey of discovery, and ask your prayers for me as my journey continues as well.

God willing, I will see you all again in October! May God bless all of you.

Randy King  
Vestry Member

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“PS. Attended my first "Fallen Comrade" ceremony at 0545 this morning (*the BIG VOICE started announcing it at 0400*) That is when the bodies of personnel killed here go from Mortuary Affairs (*south end of base*) to the flightline (*north end of base*) along Disney Road (*the main road on base*) for the flight back home. The street is lined along both sides for about two miles with soldiers and civilians, saluting as the caskets pass. Very moving ceremony. No pictures allowed. Please pray for the families of these Fallen Ones. Pass this on if your care to.”

Love, R

*The above document really touched my heart. I thought you all might want to see the heart of “our Randy” – but I don’t think you will be surprised at what you read. I am very honored to be his wife. This P.S. is from his email this morning. I can’t imagine just what it is like to be part of the military community in a war zone. He has been in war zones many times, but it can’t be an experience one would ever get used to.*

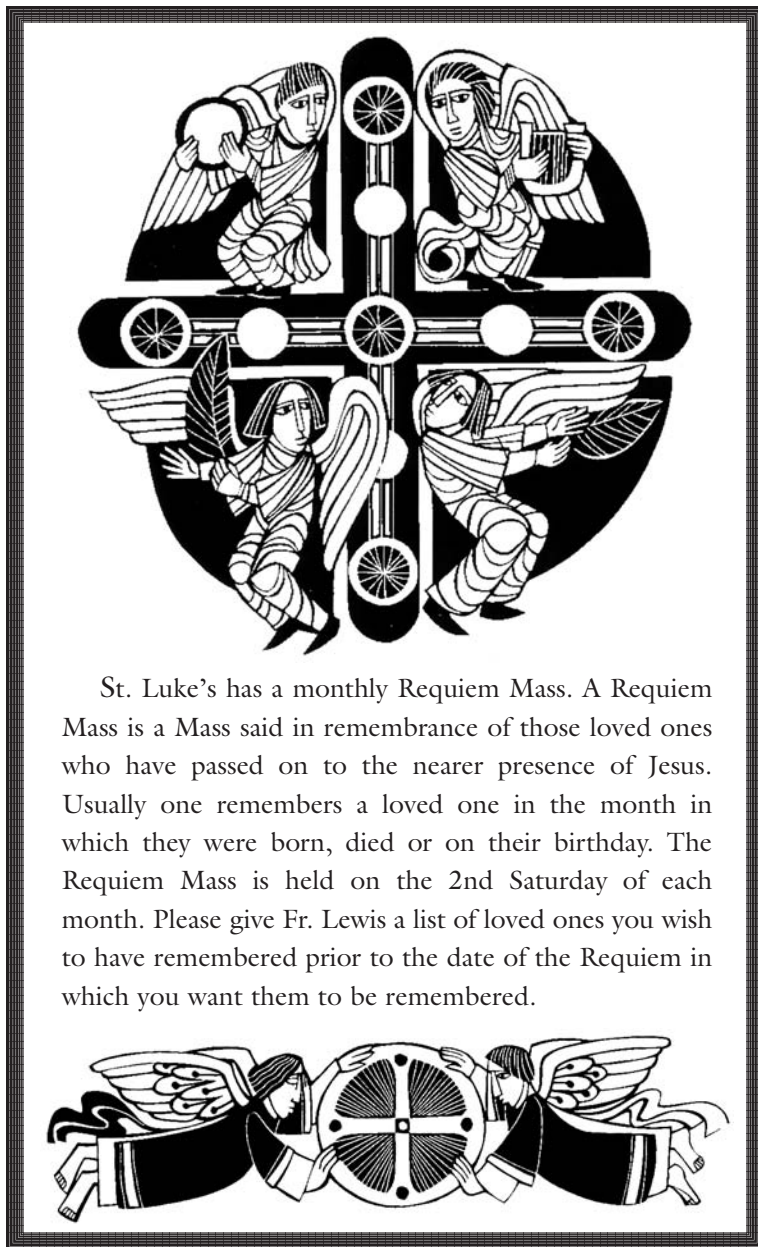
Karen King

**Events** *Continued from page 2*

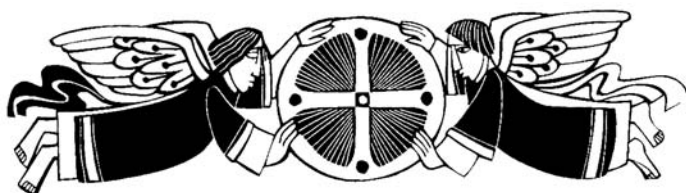
leged to witness the overwhelming joy of the Nigerian people coming forward to offer thanks to God for what blessings they have received. What makes this event that much more special is: 1) they have already given their weekly giving, and 2) for the most part, they are not as wealthy as we in the United States, but give they do. The people of the Church of Nigeria have a good understanding that all things, all possessions, come from God. I would not be surprised if this spirit manifests itself in other African Provinces as well. May St. Luke's also be known as a church filled with praise and thanksgiving. The next Thanksgiving Sunday is July 27th.

**Anglicans for Life**

Anglicans for Life promotes the sanctity of life from womb to grave. During our last meeting we considered the possibility of working with the youth in our parish as part of our pro-life ministry. This is a worthy cause and deserves your membership. Please speak to Gary Schenk for more information about this worthy ministry. Gary's telephone number is 301-474-5721.



St. Luke's has a monthly Requiem Mass. A Requiem Mass is a Mass said in remembrance of those loved ones who have passed on to the nearer presence of Jesus. Usually one remembers a loved one in the month in which they were born, died or on their birthday. The Requiem Mass is held on the 2nd Saturday of each month. Please give Fr. Lewis a list of loved ones you wish to have remembered prior to the date of the Requiem in which you want them to be remembered.



**Wish List**

We are in desperate need of:

- 1. Altar linens      \$250.00
- 2. Altar Frontal    \$500.00



These would make wonderful memorial gifts. If you would like to purchase one of these items, please contact Fr. Lewis.

**2008 Memorials**

Candy Mitchell, the coordinator of memorials, reminds us that:

***The Memorial Book at the back of the church is available for requests for flowers, candles & lights.***

Ms. Mitchell can be contacted at 240-681-3307.

***Memorial items are as follows:***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b><i>Altar candles</i></b><br>per month \$20  | <b><i>Torches</i></b><br>per week \$2  |
| <b><i>Sanctuary lamp</i></b><br>per week \$3   | <b><i>Votive</i></b><br>per week \$2   |
| <b><i>Bread &amp; wine</i></b><br>per week \$3 | <b><i>Flowers</i></b><br>per week \$20 |



# July 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5 10:00 AM Requiem Mass for Mr. Edwin Freeman
6 8th Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 AM Low Mass 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Solemn High Mass 12:30 PM Hispanic Mass	7	8	9	10	11 Benedict of Nursia	12 10:00 AM Requiem Mass 6:00 PM Men's Fellowship Undercroft
13 9th Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 AM Low Mass 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Solemn High Mass 12:30 PM Hispanic Mass	14	15 WEEK DAY MASSES RESUME 10:00 AM Mass with Uncion	16 7:00 AM Mass	17 William White 6:30 PM Mass	18 12:00 PM Mass	19 Macrina
20 10th Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 AM Low Mass 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Solemn High Mass 12:30 PM Hispanic Mass	21 7:30 PM Vestry Undercroft August Epistle Deadline	22 St. Mary Magdalene 10:00 AM Mass with Uncion	23 7:00 AM Mass	24 Thomas a Kempis 6:30 PM Mass	25 St. James the Apostle 12:00 PM Mass	26 Parents of the Virgin Mary 11:00 AM Women's Bible Study Undercroft
27 11th Sunday after Pentecost 8:00 AM Low Mass 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Solemn High Mass 12:30 PM Hispanic Mass	28	29 Mary & Martha of Bethany 10:00 AM Mass with Uncion	30 William Wilberforce 7:00 AM Mass	31 Ignatius of Loyola	2	3

## Remember in Prayer

All readers of *The Epistle* are reminded to keep members of our parish family and friends in our prayers, especially remembering Pearl Edwards, Larry Maske, Charles and Therese Sommerkamp, Chet and Espie Stewart, Sheila Taliaferro, Auburn Traycik, Oretta Williams, Doris Johnson, Alliette Jones, Vivian Murphy, Russ Maske Jr., Bishop

Ackerman and Archbishop Gomez, and all others who are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity. If you learn of any person whom you would like added to this prayer list, please contact Gloria Deigh, tel: 240-687-1647 or email glo4christ@hotmail.com so that these people's names can be included in the next issue of *The Epistle*.

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St. Luke's is a traditional Anglican church in the Episcopal Diocese of Washington

4002 53rd Street, Bladensburg, MD 20710 • 301.927.6466

*Thanksgiving Sunday... Another opportunity to worship  
and give thanks for God's many blessings!*

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**ST. LUKE'S**  
**Parish**  
Bladensburg, Maryland

**An Anglo-Catholic Parish  
in the Diocese of Washington**