

The Reverend Canon Bradley S. Wirth, Interim Rector
All Saints' Episcopal Church
P. O. Box 1923
Whitefish, MT 59937

July 1, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We have a lot of things going on this Summer and I wanted to make sure you had the schedule in time to be able to save the dates.

To begin, we will have a parish wide picnic on Wednesday evening, July 14th, beginning at 6:00. This will be a special occasion in which we can welcome all the new folks who have joined our community over the last year or so. All Saints' will provide the hotdogs, hamburgers, chips and drinks and we are inviting others to bring salads and desserts. As usual, there will be a sign up sheet in Memorial Hall to help us anticipate how much food to purchase. And, to help make this the wonderful event it will be, we have people building additional picnic tables. Many thanks to them for that! It will be a great evening filled with fun. Please plan to attend.

Two weeks later, again on Wednesday evening, July 28th, beginning at 6:00, we will have another picnic, and following dinner, we will have what many might think is a rather unusual "program." I am asking all who are interested to come together that evening and develop an outline for their burial service. Some are probably thinking, "You have to be kidding!" but I'm not. In the height of the time of year when we watch life grow all around us, both flora and fauna, this seems like a natural time to remember that when we die, life is changed, not ended. As such, it strikes me as very appropriate during the season of lots of light to put together simple instructions for the church to celebrate our entrance into everlasting life. Hopefully I can help people do this and thus take care of a responsibility we all have.

Then, on Wednesday evening, August 25th, also beginning at 6:00, I would like to call us together for a parish picnic with a "town hall" style meeting following in which we will talk about our property issues and the state of our building project. As you know, we are waiting now for the Environmental Protection Agency out of Denver to investigate the pollution found in ground water under the Whitefish property. This evening's program sponsored by the Vestry will give all a chance to ask questions and to provide feedback to the parish leadership, including those who serve on our building committee. We hope, by that time, to have more information concerning the Whitefish property, but even if that is not the case, at least the time together will provide an opportunity for all of us to get on the same page.

On Sunday, August 29th, we will celebrate Back to School Day Festivities honoring our youth. Please see Cynthia's letter for more details.

Finally, concerning picnics and barbeques, the Annual Parish Picnic will take place on Sunday, September 12th following the 11:00 a.m. service. This has been a great tradition and we wanted to schedule it in the late Summer thus avoiding the rains and snow of fall. More will follow on this.

All of these functions will take place, at least in part, on our grounds. To that end, I want to thank all who have worked so hard to make them pleasant and inviting. And besides those who are volunteering in cutting the lawn, we also have the Green Thumbs Volunteers who meet on the first Thursday of each month, from 5 - 6:30 p.m. to weed and do other gardening chores. Grab some gloves and bring some gardening tools as well, and join them in making this place shine.

For all of these events (including the above “Green Thumbs”), we will have a sign up sheet in the Parish Hall but please remember that you can always RSVP to Mary Alice using either our phone (862 - 2863) or our email, office@allsaintsmt.org and let us know your intentions.

In October, the Bishop will be visiting us on Sunday, October 3rd. As has been our practice, we will have one very festive service that day, at 11:00 a.m. It is the occasion for the Bishop to see what we are up to, conduct confirmations and receptions and he will install the new Acolytes as well. Always following these visitations is a reception to celebrate the ministry of those who were received, confirmed, or who reaffirmed their baptismal vows. For those who may not know him, this is a time for you to meet Bishop Brookhart as well.

Since **October 2nd**, is the closest Saturday to St. Francis Day, we are tentatively scheduling the **Blessing of the Pets at 2:00 p.m.** on the church grounds. Later that afternoon, Bishop Brookhart will probably meet with the vestry. As this is also the weekend following Diocesan Convention in Bozeman, September 24 - 26, a lot will be going on.

I also wish to tell you that in connection with the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to England and Scotland September 16 - 19, 2010, the Vestry and I have been working on a letter, over the last several months, to have published as an advertisement in *The Interlake, The Whitefish Pilot, The Hungry Horse News and The Flathead Beacon* which will say two things. The first will commend the Pope on making it easier for disaffected Anglicans and, in our case, Episcopalians, to join the Roman Catholic Church with minimal difficulty. We see that as a strong move in ecumenism. The second thing we will do in this letter is invite former Roman Catholics, who no longer attend church, to consider coming to All Saints and experience The Episcopal Church. We believe we should be equally welcoming to people likewise searching for a new spiritual home. I will preview that letter in the context of a sermon near the time of its publication.

I hope everyone is having a splendid summer filled with the joy found in our magnificent surroundings. Be safe and delight in the grand opportunities found in this corner of God's fabulous creation.

Faithfully yours,

Bradley S. Wirth
Interim Rector