

ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ALL SAINTS' E-LETTER

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AUGUST 2018

A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Forty years ago, when I lived in New England, a lot of us enjoyed “Burt and Ernie” stories that exemplified the dry humor of “down east” and the surrounding area. In one such story, Burt went to the county fair, paid a dollar to ride in a hot air balloon tethered by a long rope to a stake in the ground so that it could only rise but not travel laterally. Well, of course, the rope broke and the balloon began to traverse the countryside. At one point, Burt saw a farmer below, tending his fields, and he yelled down, “Where am I?” The farmer yelled back, “You’re in a balloon, you fool!” Every once in a while, it is good to ask, “Where are we?” and especially so in relation to our building project.

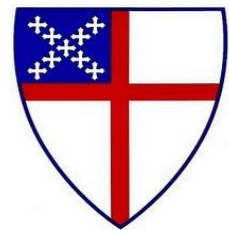
To begin, we are moving right along. Our last Vestry meeting just met the quorum requirements allowing us to consider if we should go forward with the building expansion in the sanctuary and the addition of offices. So many people were out of town. Thinking we needed to be unanimous, we polled the rest of the Vestry and they energetically said “Yes!”. And so it is a go. Unfortunately, General Convention interrupted our work on this for two weeks, but now we are back to refining the proposal that will be the center of our attention when we begin our capital funds campaign. As you would expect, we want to be certain that we have everything as accurately presented as possible with respect to plans and cost expectations.

Putting the finishing touches on this is tedious and exacting work and thankfully we have Shane Jacobs engaged to do just that. No one can guarantee things 100% but we can get close. Reflective of the volatility just in construction materials, my brother, Craig, is putting a metal roof on his garage in Park City outside of Salt Lake City, and he cannot even *get an estimate of the cost of* corrugated sheets of steel. Imagine the headache of an entire building project. But Shane is a pro at this and he will burn the midnight oil to make sure we have the best articulation of our project that can be presented.

So do rest assured that we are moving along. It is an exciting time to be at All Saints’ and while we wait for the finished product of a description of the project, enjoy the fact that the first snow of the year is still four months away. In other words, please thank God for where we live simply by enjoying the gift given us.

Faithfully yours,

Bradley



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GENERAL CONVENTION

By Cynthia Benkelman

General Convention, which was held in Austin, Texas this year, was again an amazing experience, and it was an honor and a privilege to serve as a deputy for the Diocese of Montana. Probably the most exciting, joyful outcome was bringing the Episcopal Church of Cuba back into TEC. Regret for the fact that they were expelled from the church during the Cold War was expressed, but it was eclipsed by the joy of welcoming them back. Si Cuba buttons were everywhere and the crowd went wild when the deputy from Cuba was seated in the House of Deputies.

There was much discussion about a possible prayer book revision with a resolution from the House of Deputies being sent to the House of Bishops. It was then sent back with their revisions. No one got everything they wanted, but everyone got something they desired, which probably means it's a good start! There is space for trial liturgies to be used while the commission on prayer book and liturgy continues its work and study on this. There will be a new prayer book but not until there is more study, more discernment, and a chance for the church to try different options, much like the last revision of the prayer book.

The issue of translations was discussed as not everything we have now has yet been translated into some of the languages that are used. "Dynamic Equivalency," which not only translates but also helps portray the meaning into other cultural contexts, was recommended. This work will continue with the 1979 prayer book and will be essential in any new revision.

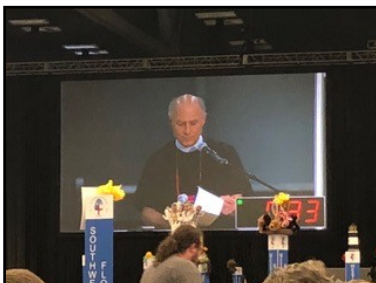
There were many different issues that were new to this convention or were topics that have been in process. To that end, Bradley and I intend to hold several evening meetings where we can present some of the other areas of interest from the convention and answer questions about what occurred.

I was delighted to bring my daughter, Grace, along as a visitor and volunteer. When I asked her what she liked best she said "Meeting Bishop Michael Curry and hearing him preach twice. I was amazed to find out that his sermons were 30 to 40 minutes long, as I could have listened to him for so much longer. The worship was so interesting with all the different liturgies, music and languages. I loved the Episcopal revival. Helping media and registration as a volunteer was fun, too."

Stay tuned for our "What in the World Happened at General Convention" evenings. We will be explaining there what an "Episcopal Revival" is. The Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement is doing some amazing things.

Oh, and about the pigeon....yes, there was a pigeon along with a couple of other friends who served as mascots in the House of Deputies.* In fact, the pigeon had a Twitter account..but more about that later!

(The pictures below and on the following page, are courtesy of Cynthia and Shawn.)



Bradley speaking his mind...



*Your editor can only hope one was a cat.

PHOTOS FROM THE GENERAL CONVENTION



Welcome back to the fold Cuba!



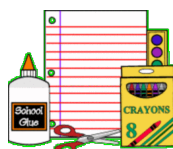
Grace and Bishop Curry



IT'S TIME FOR BACKPACKS!

It's that time again! The annual "back to school" supplies drive is here. Over the next couple of weeks, until **August 12th**, we will be collecting school supplies and monetary donations that will be used to buy gift certificates for students' shoes. They will given to kids in need in the Canyon, Columbia Falls, Whitefish and at the Flathead Youth Home in Kalispell. Thank you in advance for your amazing generosity.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Peterson at 863-2999.



AUGUST 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Day Camp	2 Day Camp	3 Day Camp	4
5 Services at 9 and 11 am	6 Day Camp	7 Day Camp	8 Day Camp Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	9 Day Camp	10 Day Camp	11
12 Services at 9 and 11 am	13	14	15 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	16 Noon service at AS	17	18
19 Services at 9 and 11 am Vestry 12:15	20	21	22 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	23 Noon service at AS	24	25
26 Services at 9 and 11 am	27	28	29 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	30 Noon service at AS	31	

SERMON FOR THE BEST DOG EVER

A good dog and our Lord has brought us together this afternoon. Our love for “the best dog ever,” and the love of Lizzie towards us, and especially Frank and Sue, has drawn us into sacred community. And underlying it all, is the love of God and the redemption of the totality of creation by our Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, we are in this place at this time, not just to remember Lizzie having walked among us, but to recall into our very midst, her presence riding on the coat of arms of Jesus who dwells with us in the prayers, in the hymns, in the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation, and in the fact that, as St. Paul says, we are the vibrant, breathing and active Body of Christ. In short, we are enveloped by God, through Jesus, and as such, enfolded irreversibly and inescapably by our savior. Remember Paul’s words from Romans? Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing. “Yeah, but what about...?” says the sceptic standing outside thinking that he has the ability to stick his finger in God’s eye making God just go away. But insistently, St. Paul reminds us that “nothing” means nothing. And as Origen of Alexandria said in the second century, the love of God is so persuasive and pervasive that even the devil will finally be drawn from hell, abandoning it, simply because of overwhelming love, into heaven. So all this means that we are fine as is Lizzie, now dwelling in a room fixed for her by Jesus having been taken to that place by the same.

Well, if everything is so wonderful, as we are the beloved, and Lizzie is alive and well, loved by God, even though not seen by us in the way we wish, why does her death hurt so much?

This parish misses her profoundly as, quite frankly, she nearly was as much in attendance, as was our Bishop, year after year, and counted in the parish register as equally as would be the Archbishop of Canterbury were he to drop by for a visit. On one occasion, probably eleven years ago, when we broke ground for this, our present campus, my daughter Jennifer was designated as the keeper of the dog during the service, for the Holy Eucharist at St. Matthew’s in Columbia Falls. But her sitting with Lizzie in the back pew was not part of this beloved dog’s program and ultimately, following her crying and nearly howling, she was unleashed, and she raced up the aisle to the altar to be with her dad, finally content, as we all come to be, in the proximity of the presence of Christ in communion. We adored Lizzie.

And for the Brookharts, the ache must be, at times, nearly insurmountable. Despite deep faith and confidence in their Lord, their returning home these days and opening up the door, and not being greeted by their beloved pet, scrapes raw in the heart and mind. Having been part of that club, as many of you have been as well, we all know the hollowness and pain in having had such an absence of greeting when a companion dies. Even Jesus wept at the death of his friend, Lazarus. Of course, we could have avoided all this heartache a long time ago if we just had chosen not to love. But for us, for those who have been called to love, such an option is not in the cards. And as a result, we are destined for tears. That is just the way it is. Welcome to the human condition.

Why, though, is it so unusually tough when a creature like Lizzie dies? Why does this rip us apart in ways that are so devastating? The answer to that may be that in Lizzie, we actually had in our view, an expression of “eternal life” that is the presence of the Kingdom of God playing itself out in our time and place. For all these years, the very promise of God has been revealed, as much as is possible, in our lives, sacramentally in the “person” if you will, of Lizzie.

Lets begin with the fact that you need not go far to see Jesus’s energetic welcome of all. Children, tax collectors, those with disabilities. The Latin phrase, deficient mores, “we have no standards” befits our Lord’s sense of hospitality. And so, when walking back through the front door, the first thing Frank and Sue heard is, “Dad! Mom! Thank God! You are home! I’ve been waiting for you!” “Lizzie, we just when to the post box for the mail. We’ve been gone thirty seconds.” “I don’t care, I love you that much.”

SERMON FOR THE BEST DOG EVER (cont'd)

Such a greeting for all these years leaves a taste in the mouth of Christ not unlike communion. It is the unyielding presence of God in our lives.

Somewhere in the course of the last decade and a half, there is a possibility that Sue and Frank were not at their best. Maybe they were a bit grumpy or otherwise missing the mark in the myriad ways available to us all. And yet, not unlike the father standing at the top of the driveway, every day, looking out in the distant for the wastrel son to return, Lizzie never needed a rehearsed speech by them asking for forgiveness in order to receive her love. Reconciliation was the only thing on her mind. It is how she was wired. "I want to be with you! We've no time for groveling or guilt. Let's go to the Dairy Queen and get a dish of ice cream in celebration!"

When those wounded in heart, body and mind, like the other Lazarus, lying famished outside any compassion of Dives, made their way to Lizzie's proximity we need only remember that it was the dogs who came and licked his wounds prior to the angels gathering him in their arms and taking him to heaven. As you know, a dog's saliva contains a natural antiseptic which can heal, enabling recovery and comfort. When the going was occasionally tough in Frank and Sue's life, Lizzie metaphorically licked the wounded spirit sending them back into the world refreshed and reinvigorated. That was simply programmed into her DNA, in which, by the way, we share 84% of the same. That 16% that is different accounts most likely for poverty, war, and alienating behavior in the world around us.

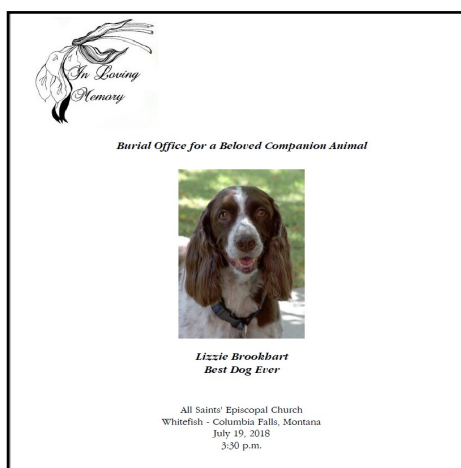
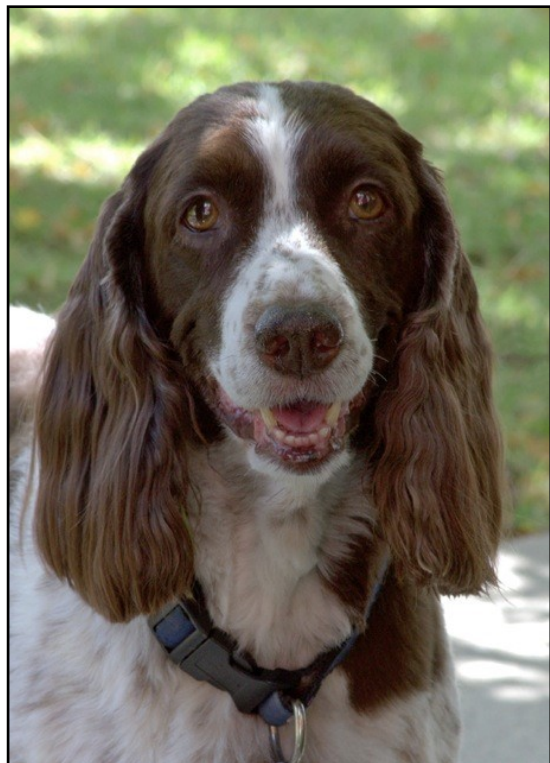
And occasionally, when maybe feeling unworthy of the grandeur of life given Frank and Sue, and all of us, it was Lizzie who reminded them and all who met her the same sentiment of Jesus', "I'm glad you are here. You have made the difference in my life. That's why I have given myself to you in totality."

My having said all this makes it understandable if you are possibly confused. "Has, for the last few minutes, the preacher been talking about Jesus or Lizzie?" What a nice wonderment to have. Well, due to the fact that the revealing of Christ is supposed to be business as usual and common place in our lives such confusion is actually a blessing. All we've been asked to do is open our eyes and hearts to receive the love of God voiced by every nook and cranny of creation.

In a few minutes, our pilgrimage today will take us to Holy Communion. There will be a moment when we hear the words, "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven." Note we don't say, with some of the company of heaven. We say, "all." "God saves both humanity and beast." says the psalmist. So, when we get to that place, listen, if not with the ear, with the heart. For within the promise to come of simple consecrated bread and wine, as common as will be the taste of those gifts upon the tongue, also will be the joyful howling of heaven. And if you then dare to ask, "So Lizzie, you are alive and well?" be prepared to hear back from her, "Why wouldn't I be? The grace of God is sufficient and all has been made new. Heartache and despair have been put to flight. It is all about love, redemption, salvation, eternal and everlasting life. And as always, I'm at the gate waiting for you. Until then, every Sunday, I'll see you in the Eucharist." And I also believe she adds, "I love you and thanks for the terrific ride you gave me. I had a blast which, to no one's surprise, has turned out to be a foretaste of the heavenly banquet."

Amen.

IN HONOR OF LIZZIE...THE BEST DOG IN THE WORLD



The church office will be closed the two weeks of day camp.

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*Glory to God, whose power, working
in us, can do infinitely more than we
can ask or imagine: Glory to him
from generation to generation in the
church, and in Christ Jesus forever.*

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UCPZ_oAI6n1GwSPS5dIAkzdA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPZ_oAI6n1GwSPS5dIAkzdA)

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