RAMON’S REFLECTIONS
The leaves on the trees are beginning to turn from their usual green into the oranges, browns and bright yellows that signal the start of fall and the not-so eagerly anticipated season of winter. Whether we like it or not, living up in these parts of the world reminds us that change is inevitable and that while it is often painful, it is also often a sign of new and better things to come. As Christians we not only have to deal with death; we also have to acknowledge the gift of resurrection and new life. And so, I encourage you to enjoy the colors and the cooler weather and to acknowledge that change is inevitable, but always mindful that with every change there is an opportunity to for new beginnings and a reminder that spring and Easter are only 6 months away.

FROM OUR SENIOR WARDEN
On Saturday morning, 16th October 2010, more than one hundred eighty clergy and lay leaders of the diocese of Newark, gathered at St Elizabeth’s Church, Ridgewood, for Vestry University. This was a full day conference organized by the Equipping Action group of the Diocesan Council. Among the attendees were your wardens and vestry members, David Bruce, James Porter, Marcia Pinkett-Heller, Jason Baynes and Aubrey Thompson, who was also a presenter on the subject of Episcopal Polity. We were also very pleased to have attending with us Sydonie Porter, our Stewardship chair. Getting to St. Elizabeth’s for me is always challenging, even with GPS. I often hear how badly located our church is, being in the middle of a residential neighborhood, that people can hardly find their way to. As I tried to find my way to St. Elizabeth’s again, it was confirmation for me that our location is not so bad. St. Elizabeth is located in the hills of northern Ridgewood. The roads are winding and narrow. On this particularly beautiful autumn morning, adding to the usual challenges was a closed bridge (no doubt stimulus funds at work) that necessitated a detour. After turning around a few times, I came upon a police officer and stopped him for help. Before I could utter a word, he said to me, “I know, you are looking for St. Elizabeth’s.” Shortly after arriving at St. Elizabeth’s, I was greeted by Marcia, who happily told me that it was only with the help of a Good Samaritan that she had found her way. This good person had driven ahead of her to ensure her timely arrival at this almost hidden diocesan treasure.

The workshops presented addressed many issues that arise as we try to manage the business of our parishes, and living in covenant with each other and God. Subjects ranged from taking care of our priests to taking care of our buildings, and included sessions on stewardship, treasurer’s nuts and bolts, and crafting effective vestry meetings. Clare, Jason and I attended the session on structuring vestry meeting that are life-giving and help foster a Christian community. As the vestry, we are a microcosm of the congregation that we believe God is calling us to become. How we
pray and how we teach people to pray, is an important aspect of our spirituality. The vestry leads in cooperation with the clergy. The vestry is canonically and legally required but has its formation in the early church as found in ACTS 6:2-4, “The twelve called the whole company of disciples together and said, ‘It would not be fitting to neglect the word of God in order to assist in the distribution. Therefore, friends, pick seven men of good repute from your number, men full of the Spirit and of wisdom, and we will appoint them for this duty; then we can devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word’.”

The stewardship workshop, Stewardship as Life, covered ways to make stewardship an integral part of year round congregational life. For Sydonie and me, this was especially timely and important. Stewardship offers us the opportunity to become disciples. We are stewards and caretakers of Christ’s church. One way to make stewardship year round and not seasonal is to design our church life to respond to the needs of our community and thereby developing a relational culture. Above all, stewardship is a spiritual discipline. We must be intentional in our giving. This means we give of the first fruit. We give off the top, not what we have left over.

Attending these conferences for me is life-giving. I leave feeling refocused, strengthened and equipped to do what God is calling me to do.

FROM OUR JUNIOR WARDEN

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

As we enter into the third and final quarter of year two thousand and ten (2010), I am forced to wonder where has all the time disappeared. Of course, it also compels one to reflect on what has been accomplished, and moreover, what is left undone or incomplete.

Wherever this self analysis takes us, be assured that through it all God has been in our midst and will always be there through thick and thin. I call your attention to the following:
Psalm 91:1- "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty". And, Hebrews 13:5(b) - God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you".

OUR MINISTRIES

I would like to share with you at this time a glimpse of the work ahead for the Parish Health Ministry, and, the United Thank Offering.

THE PARISH HEALTH MINISTRY

Our First Assistant schedule will now be available in the Sunday Service Bulletin.

Monthly meetings continue on the third Sunday of every month following the 10:00AM service.

Our first Annual Mothers/Nurses Recognition Luncheon was held on Sunday May 2nd of this year. We are projecting that our second event will be held on Sunday, May 1, 2011. The venue should be announced shortly.

On Saturday, November 6th, the Parish Health group will meet at 4:00pm to:

(1) Take an inventory of the medical carts for reorganizing and replenishment of supplies.

(2) Prepare a Plan of Work for the year 2011.

Blood Pressure screening is scheduled for
Sunday December 5th immediately following our 10AM service.

UNITED THANK OFFERING MINISTRY

The United Thank Offering Breakfast will be held on Sunday, November 21st. At this breakfast you will receive all the pertinent and current information about the workings and value of the United Thank Offering Ministry.
The U. T. O. Ingathering is scheduled for Sunday, December 5th. Please be sure to bring your offering on that Sunday.

Acts 20:35 - "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak; remembering the words of the Lord Jesus himself said: IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE."

Yours In Christ,

Clare E. Thompson
Junior Warden

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

By Mary Sue Kaplow

Christ Church Outreach has applied for a grant to the Commitment to Serve/Ventures in Mission Fund. The grant application is in review and a decision will be made in December. As a major part of the application we expressed our goal to open our pantry which is now opened two Saturdays a month to include every Saturday. This will take many extra volunteers to shop for and staff the pantry. As our stewardship campaign begins, a commitment to this project would be most appropriate.
The semi-annual dinners for the homeless will remain as scheduled. The Family Promise Shelter is still in the process of being structured to fulfill all its requirements. As all such projects have many angles that need to be squared off, the group still has to deal with the bureaucracy of town permits and building inspectors to address all the issues involved. This will be another area where stewardship will come into play.

Since our Summer newsletter we have fed 54 people through the pantry, 98 people at the homeless center in Hackensack and have blessed and presented 18 prayer shawls, 13 of which have gone to Dover Air Force Base for families of fallen soldiers. We continue to collect small personal hygiene items for the wounded warriors in Afghanistan. We can all be proud of what our small congregation has done with outreach and our new goals will take us to an even higher level. Thanks to all.

THE NATIONAL ACOLOYTE FESTIVAL

By Gloria Hall

On Saturday, October 9, 2010 the Father Ramon, John Reid, Paul Cunningham, Amir White, Christopher Hall, Michael Cunningham and I went on the road to Washington, DC. It was the Thirty-First Annual Acolyte Festival at the Washington National Cathedral. We gathered at the church at 4:00 am on Saturday morning and went on the road for a most enjoyable and spiritually moving day. The wonder of seeing so many other faithful people reaffirming their commitment to the service of God. The banners from all over the country, the numbers from everywhere, the joy of worshipping in the National Cathedral.

The Right Reverend John Bryson Chain, Bishop of Washington presided over the service and he was assisted by The Reverend
Gwendolyn W. Tobias, Director of Worship, Washington National Cathedral.

In attendance were 169 churches, 734 acolytes from 20 states plus the District of Columbia. Also in attendance were 116 vergers. I learned something that day. What is a verger? I could figure it out by looking the persons who were uniquely dressed and the services they performed. A verge is a rod or staff symbolic of an office as that carried before a church official in processions. A verger is a person who carries a verge before a bishop or a dean. The verger is a church caretaker or usher. It was also the 2010 Conference of the Vergers Guild of The Episcopal Church.

So many people in attendance the farthest was from Van Nuys, California and Seattle Washington. The oldest serving acolyte was Howard Anderson at 62 years from Saint Matthew’s Pacific Palisades, California at 71 years of age. At press time there was 41 congregations like ours who were attending for the first time. There were seven of us. Father Ramon, John Reid, Paul and Michael Cunningham, Amir White, Christopher Hall and I.

There were a number of workshops but we decided to see a little of our Nation’s Capitol and surrounding area. I hope that when we go next year we can stay a little longer. There were some really wonderful workshops such as FUNdamentals of a Eucharist – They used members of the congregation to explore the Christian worship celebrated for over 2000 years. Another inviting workshop was Jubilation Streamers. Every time I saw streamers I thought of Aubrey Thompson and the streamers that we have used during our worship. They said let your colors fly. We are only limited by our imagination.

I mentioned the Vergers – There was a High School Verger Program. The description also very inviting, Explore a successful program that employs the experience and leadership skills of high school-aged acolytes to serve as verges in Sunday services. In the process these high school vergers increase parish-wide acolyte proficiency and free the celebrant to concentrate on the worship service itself. It is believed that this program has been successful in attracting a retaining the active participation of students throughout their high school years. Mmmmm…something to consider as we grow.

It was an honor and a privilege to attend and I look forward to next year.

**Sunday School Observes National Children’s Sabbaths Weekend**
By Joyce Baynes, Sunday School Director

The Theme for 2010’s Children’s Sabbaths Weekend was “Blessed to be a Blessing” and we, at Christ Church, certainly felt blessed to have our Sunday School students as lay readers, ushers and presenters at the Holy Eucharist service on October 17th. As Gwendolyn Forde did the first reading about Jacob wrestling with God and prevailing, Tamia Ejekpokpo the psalm assuring us that God will always watch over and protect us, Kobi Mitchell the second reading from Paul’s letter to Timothy imploring him to stay focused on spreading God’s Word despite temptation and suffering, and Christopher Hall’s Prayers of the People calling upon us all to ask God to bless us so we may be a blessing, we were inspired and proud of our young people. Later in the service Kurefe Ejekpokpo read the Affirmation of Faith reminding us of our reliance on our faith in God and our need to listen to His Word for guidance.

Before the Peace, our Sunday School teachers, Safiya Brown, Gloria Hall and Jennifer Irish, led the children in the sharing
of some of their blessings. They spoke about noticing God “when I get an A on my test”, “when I beat the computer on a video game”, “when I find something that I lost”. The children also had a meaningful discussion about justice and shared their definitions of justice with the congregation. Each student in the older group wrote a prayer with their wishes for all children and Masai Young from the younger group spoke about the need for all children to be healthy and safe. A special “thank you” goes out to our junior ushers, Justin Batson and Masai Young who handled their responsibilities admirably.

In order to put this year’s theme “Blessed to be a Blessing” into action, the Sunday School has chosen to be an ongoing blessing to children in Haiti. The students at the school in Trois Mats, Haiti need benches, blackboards, a lunch program, textbooks, uniforms and salaries for their teachers. Sponsoring one child’s education at the school costs $30 per month. We are asking each Sunday School student to contribute $3 per month and to join with one or two members of the parish to fulfill a $30 monthly pledge for a Haitian child. We were delighted with the enthusiastic reception of this idea by the children and by the adults in the congregation. Of the ten Haitian children presented on the 17th, five are fully sponsored and the other five are partially sponsored. We look forward to completing the original ten and may add two or three others in the coming weeks. What a marvelous way to share our blessings!!

STEWARDSHIP AS A WAY OF LIFE

By Sydonie Porter

Disturb us, Lord, when
We are too pleased with ourselves,
When our dreams have come true
Because we dreamed too little,
When we arrived safely
Because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess
We have lost our thirst
For the waters of life;
Having fallen in love with life,
We have ceased to dream of eternity
And in our efforts to build a new earth,
We have allowed our vision of the new Heaven to dim.

Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,
To venture on wilder seas
Where storms will show Your mastery;
Where losing sight of land,
We shall find the stars.
We ask you to push back
The horizons of our hopes;
And to push back the future
In strength, courage, hope, and love.
This we ask in the name of our Captain, Who is Jesus Christ.

The above inspirational prayer by Sir Francis Drake reminds us of the importance of Stewardship. We live in an abundant and generous society, yet we are surrounded by the haves and the have nots. We must let go of ourselves and give to others. In order to do this, we must strive to tithe.

This Stewardship season, allow yourselves to be disturbed from your area of comfort and help people grow through the use of your time, talent and treasure.
Remember to serve the Lord with generosity, cheerfulness and joy.

TIMETABLE FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRICKY TRAY

By Anne VanVelthoven
Tricky Tray Chairperson

January: Pick a date (usually the 3rd Saturday in September).

June: Start mentioning it during the announcements on Sundays and put it in the bulletin. Email congregation and put “wish list” suggestions for items needed in the bulletin.

July: Since Sunday School is over, items can start to be collected. Stress the fact that we only want NEW items. Keep reminding everyone that we don’t want any food items until the beginning of September.

Charles starts the process of applying for State and Township permits. A list of gifts, with their approximate value (we usually compile a similar list from the previous years’ program.) Announcements sent to local papers advertising the Tricky Tray.

August: Continue on a weekly basis reminding everyone of the upcoming event. Let everyone know how many gifts we’ve received and the number of gifts we would like to have. As gifts come in, wrap them up if necessary and log each one in.

September: We’re down to the wire. Food is ordered. Kitchen people know their jobs. Tables cloths, napkins, plates, etc. in fall theme colors, naturally, are purchased. Tickets can be sold after Church. Food gifts and food for the food basket can be brought in now.

Thursday before the event: Final draft of the program is printed.

Friday night is set up time (the night before the big event). Tables and chairs brought up from downstairs. Tables are set. Gifts arranged by number with matching cups. Ribbons attached to gifts for a festive touch. 100 copies of the programs are printed.

Saturday, the big day: Final touches applied. Posters advertising Tricky Tray posted around Church. 2 people are at the side door selling tickets. 50/50 tickets sold inside. When numbers are called, helpers, usually some of the kids, distribute gifts to the winners.

Finally, it is clean up time. After that we count the profits.

AND THIS YEAR’S AMOUNT WAS $2,229!!!!!!

Thank you everyone for all your help. Thank you for your continues generosity and support.