

# SOUNDS

Of

Volume 39 No. 42

November 15, 2009

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*Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them; that, by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

## FROM THE RECTOR

At the 11:15 service this week, we shall celebrate the marriage of Cherry Diaries and John Anthony Smith. Lest there be any confusion, let me put it more plainly: A wedding will be part of the 11:15 liturgy this week. In the course of the usual counseling we expect for those who are married here, I suggested this possibility and the couple agreed. Thus we are offered an opportunity to think about marriage, as opposed to the question just of weddings. The two are not one in the same.

There is nothing exclusively Christian about marriage. To the contrary, there is no known society that does not have some form of marriage, although in many cases marriage has more to do with property, the raising of children, and other social customs. Even in our time, so-called “arranged marriages” are not unknown in various parts of the world. In such cases, as Tina Turner famously asked, “What’s love got to do with it?” The answer is, not much.

The idea of marriage becomes more familiar to us in the heritage first of Israel. At the heart of this view is the covenant between God and the people. Nowhere is this more poignantly developed than in the writing of the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC prophet Hosea, who understands God’s faithfulness even in the wake of the trial of his own marriage to an unfaithful wife. It is from the covenant God offered that Israel learned two of the hallmarks of marriage: The monogamous nature of the relationship (Israel was to have only one God), and the faithfulness God displayed, which was in contradistinction to the unfaithfulness with which Israel often responded. Adultery is not only about sex. It is simply not clear to what extent polygamy – more than one wife – was practiced. It was apparently accepted among higher classes, but never encouraged. As one of my former professors told us, the Bible often describes situations it does not condone. So, many Biblical characters had more than one wife, but such is never

held out as the ideal, and it is never, ever applied to the worship of the God of the covenant.

The New Testament does not go on at great length about marriage. Jesus’ first miracle was in celebration of a marriage (Do you know which miracle it was?). St Paul believed marriage to be the best defense against sexual immorality, but his thought was also in the context of his expectation of the imminent return of the Lord.

In time, the Church came to hold the righteous view that marriage exists as part of the created order, seen from the beginning, and that weddings are the public ratification of the natural contract between a man and a woman. The Church stipulated certain provisions of this “honourable estate”: The relationship mirrors that of Christ and his Church, that it is lifelong, that it is marked by love, comfort, honor, and mutual joy, perhaps to include the blessing and responsibility of children.

Space does not permit a long account of the evolution of marriage from purely a social contract to the “honourable estate” it represents today. This must suffice for now: For many centuries, having a marriage blessed (and that is what a wedding is) as part of the Sunday liturgy was the norm, not the exception. Some other time we will consider this liturgical history at greater length. For now, we shall look forward to this celebration as part of our normal Sunday 11:15 liturgy. The notion of being a guest still prevails, for we are all guests at that feast given by the Lamb. In other words, if 11:15 is your normal service, there is no reason not to be present this week. Those who know Cherry and John, as well as those who may not, might consider what it means to be present to witness their vows and to promise to uphold them in their marriage. That is why anyone is present at a wedding, and it is an important role indeed.

## STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE

You may have noticed a few building improvements since last fall. The wood fascia and soffit assembly of the church and bell tower were renovated, the entry doors and chapel window were stripped and repainted, rails were painted, hardware was polished and refinished, various improvements were made to the grounds, and other smaller less obvious tasks performed. This work was accomplished thanks to the efforts of fine contractors, the behind the scenes work of the building committee, the thoughtful consideration of the vestry and the financial gifts of the parish.

Notwithstanding the good feeling that seems to inherently come from seeing conditions improve, it is important to understand that what has been done of late is small in comparison to what needs to be done within the next few years as relates to maintaining the buildings and grounds of Saint Francis Church and Parish Hall. One does not have to look with an overly critical eye to understand what issues need to be confronted: exterior walkways, exterior steps up the main entry, refinishing of pews, reconfiguration of the chancel area, renovation of windows, and replacement of flooring, to name but a few obvious items. Less obvious conditions relating to mechanical equipment, electrical systems, and the organ and its many components also require near-term attention. Also needing attention and significant improvement are the grounds and the physical condition of the Rectory.

The only way to maintain our buildings and grounds and make necessary improvements is through the expenditure of funds. Saint Francis Church has reached a point where significant dollars will need to be spent over the next few years. Challenging economic times unfortunately do not change this situation, and the current financial reserve must be

increased considerably so that various needs can be met.

Doubtless the fact of deferred maintenance is not a revelation to those who have been parishioners at Saint Francis for any length of time, nor is the knowledge that pledges need to increase in order to take on the necessary work. So, in addition to doing the very best we can in terms of our pledge for the coming year, it is important to interact with and encourage others to become more involved both financially and in terms of what talents they may have to offer.

When the current vestry was installed, our Rector instructed us to treat Saint Francis as our house. That simple challenge deserves our serious consideration and reflection because it is only through the financial commitment of the whole parish that Our House can be cared for and our extraordinary clergy and staff properly compensated. If we look upon Saint Francis Church in a spirit of ownership and love, the act of giving changes from an obligation to one of personal involvement and care.

I have been a member of Saint Francis church longer than some, and not as long as others. My wife Janet and I were counseled by Billy before we were married, I have sought his counsel personally, our daughter attended Sunday school, sang in the choir and served as an acolyte. I cherish the friends that I have made at church. The thoughtful words grounded in firm belief that Billy and Phil express have helped develop my faith. For all these reasons and more I have come to understand our Rector's charge that Saint Francis Church be treated as our house – more importantly to be sure Saint Francis is God's house. Its care is our responsibility and challenge. We need to give as generously as we can to return to God in faithful measure from what He has given us.

Steve Wilson  
Junior Warden

## THE THANKSGIVING EVE SERVICE

We welcome you to join us at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, November 25, 2009.

## 2009 COMMUNION ENRICHMENT CLASS

The **First Grade** Session I curriculum is a special course to increase understanding of the Holy Eucharist. Under the direction of **Norma Young** and teacher **Mary Sexton**, the students studied the Liturgy of the Holy Eucharist and prepared to receive Holy Communion.

We have learned about the church service, the seasons of the church year, the different altar vessels and cloths, and the priests' vestments. We've made miniature chalices and patens to use with our miniature altars. We read books and learned hymns and songs about the Eucharist. We have made our own Eucharist books with the homework and class work.

**Mrs. Shand** showed us the priests' robing room and we visited a very special place in the church, the sacristy.

Thank you to the parents who worked so hard every week helping the children with their homework to make this a special experience.

On Sunday November 8, the students received Communion with their families during the 9:00 service and had a special reception for their families during the class time. Our Congratulations to **Carson Rubin, Caroline Schneider, Wesley Smith, Connor Taylor, and Kelly Wilson** who completed the course. These students will now attend the Youth Presentation each week and return to church with the other students.

## JOY AND CONCERN

Please pray for Peggy Cassidy, mother of Robert Cassidy, and Patricia Haines, sister of Polly Sager, who have died

## DR. RUSSELL WHITE SPEAKS AT ST FRANCIS

For several years, Saint Francis Church has helped to support the ministry of Dr. Russell White, a general and thoracic surgeon at Tenwek Hospital in Kenya about 140 miles west of Nairobi. (Victoria Ellsworth is Russ's sister.) One of the largest mission hospitals in Africa, Tenwek provides primary health care to 600,000 people within a 30 kilometer radius, and it serves as a referral center for a much larger region. It has been our pleasure to have Dr. White preach and make presentations at Saint Francis on two occasions. Join us Sunday, November 15th, to hear him preach at the 9 o'clock service and speak at the Adult Forum afterwards.

## CD SALE

Our four compact disc recordings are now only \$15 each and make a wonderful gift or stocking stuffer. Your purchase also supports our music ministry and the *Music at Eventide* series. Copies are available in the parish office during weekday business hours and on Sunday mornings in Saint Francis Hall.

### *Matins*

for the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi

### *When Mirth for Music Longs*

Hymns from Potomac Parish

### *Jubilate Agno!*

A Jubilee Choral Celebration

### *Evensong*

for the Feast of Saint Clare of Assisi

## FAMILY ADVENT WREATH EVENT

A **Family Advent Wreath Workshop** will be held on **Sunday, November 29th, during the Education Hour**. This is a wonderful way to spend time with your loved ones and express your creativity whether you are beginners or accomplished crafters. Of course, individuals who wish to attend are also very welcome. Experienced arrangers will be there to help, so don't let shyness stop you! The cost is \$10 for the materials. Just bring your greens & garden clippers

To reserve your wreath-making materials please contact Christine at the Church office (301-365-2055) or via e-mail at [ctetrault@stfrancispotomac.org](mailto:ctetrault@stfrancispotomac.org).

This is sponsored by the Women of St. Frances.



## CHRISTMAS FLORAL MEMORIALS

You can help St. Francis reflect the beauty of the season and remember the special people in your life by making a donation in their name this Christmas season. Your donation will help pay for the lovely greenery & flowers that will adorn our church on Christmas Eve and help keep in mind those you care about at this special time.

If you would like to make a contribution, please fill out one of the forms that are available on the table in the lobby and return it with your check to Christine in the office or call the church office at 301-365-2055 and then mail in your check.

The donations must be received no later than December 15th so we can ensure that your acknowledgements are made correctly. Please note on your check that it is for **Christmas Flowers**.

Thank you in advance for your generosity.

- The Flower Guild

## LAST CALL FOR THE SENIOR'S LUNCHEON!

NOVEMBER 19, THURSDAY

12 NOON, ST FRANCIS HALL

This pot-luck is something new for us and we're looking forward to it and to your feedback. Please bring a salad, main dish or dessert based on your last name. If your last name begins with **A-F**, please bring a main course, **G-O** bring a salad, and **P-Z** bring a dessert- all ready to serve 4 to 6 people!

Beverages, other than wine, and rolls will be supplied. The cost will only be \$5.00. Please call Christine in the Church Office to make reservations, indicating what dish you will bring.

Our speaker will be Bill Offut, author, retired teacher and Montgomery County Historical Society Speaker. His topic, with slides, is "Montgomery County: A Rich History". This should be a fabulous program!

## UNITED THANK (UTO) OFFERING

FALL INGATHERING - NOVEMBER 22

This is an important contribution of our parish to the welfare of those, particularly women and children, who are suffering around the world in our season of Thanksgiving.

UTO gives us the opportunity to express our thanks to God for all the blessings in our lives. The grants that are made focus on compelling human needs and support the mission and ministry of the church. Every cent you give goes out in grants.

All parishioners will soon receive the UTO Blue envelopes and we ask you to put them in the offerings on Sunday November 22nd. If that is not possible, you can always mail them back to St. Francis Church by that date. Your gift will be well spent. Thank you.

**COMING UP AT ST FRANCIS**

For more information, please visit our website at [www.stfrancispotomac.org](http://www.stfrancispotomac.org)

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

8:00 am Holy Eucharist  
9:00 am Morning Prayer  
Sunday School & Adult Education  
11:15 am Holy Eucharist

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17**

5:30 pm St. Nicholas Training Choir  
5:30 pm St. Clare Girl Choir  
7:00 pm Centering Prayer—Undercroft  
7:30 Vestry Meeting

**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18**

10:00 am Holy Eucharist  
11:00 am Rector's Bible Study  
5:30 pm Jr. High Bible Study

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19**

12:00 pm Senior Potluck Luncheon  
5:00 pm *Sounds* Deadline for 11/29  
5:30 pm Sr. High Bible Study  
7:30 pm St Francis Choir  
7:30 Book Club—Youth Room

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20**

7:00 am Men's Bible Study

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22**

**UTO OFFERING SUNDAY**  
8:00 am Holy Eucharist  
9:00 am Holy Eucharist  
Sunday School & Adult Education  
11:15 am Morning Prayer

The Scripture appointed for the Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
Daniel 12:1-4a(5-13), Hebrews 10 31-39, Mark 13:14-23, Psalm 16 or 16:5-11

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