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February 2012

THE RECTOR'S REFLECTIONS...

By Rev. Kershaw

The latest viral video getting media attention is "Why I hate religion but love Jesus." Jeff Bethke, the 22 year old video maker and star, offers a rhyming, rapping argument for why religion (i.e., the institutional Christian church) is so far removed from Jesus of Nazareth. The CBS Morning Show had Bethke on the show for a mild debate with their religious correspondent, Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Edward Beck.

Bethke's argument is nothing new. Dissatisfaction about the gap between organized religion (the Church) and Jesus' words as recorded in the gospels has fueled many changes in the last 2000 years. I don't mind the video. I may not agree with everything he says, but I applaud Bethke for being creative enough and courageous enough to proclaim the Gospel in a way that seems fresh to him.

I found Fr. Beck's response patronizing ("Yo Jeff, let me give you a holler from the collar. I don't think it's religion you should be dissin'. I think it's the nuance that you're missing"). Responding as a rapper, dressing "secular young" in a turtleneck instead of clericals, and then explaining why the video was wrong, was patronizing. The religious establishment faced off against the prophetic upstart. It wasn't a pretty picture.

I think Bethke is more right than wrong. I don't think he was missing the nuance, at all. Fr. Beck used national TV to put this kid in his place, which is a shame. The church is frequently distanced from what Jesus taught. The church is imperfect. The church is a hospital for sinners. The church sometimes gets lost in power grabbing, financial anxiety, hobnobbing with the elite, and other sins that Jesus proclaimed were not the way things were in God's kingdom. Over the years, the church has excluded people for various reasons...those reasons usually rooted in fear, rather than in the radical love of Jesus as seen in the Gospel.

Truth be told, the church is guilty of not always listening to Jesus' words. A young adult, of a generation that features members largely not churchgoers, is obviously reading the gospels and challenging the church to be consistent with Jesus' teaching about the kingdom. The problem is that Jesus' words are hard. The Gospel is radical. Rarely is the church as radical.

We in the church need to listen to voices from outside the church, voices from the likes of Jeff Bethke, reminding us of why we exist and for whom we live. Granted, Bethke oversimplifies the complexity of being a church in a difficult world, but he challenges us to be true to Jesus:

"...if grace is water, then the church should be an ocean;

it's not a museum for good people, it's a hospital for the broken;

...if Jesus came to your church, would they actually let him in?"

Check it out: www.cbsnews.com/8301-505266_162-57363805/priest-gives-video-star-holler-from-the-collar/.

Peace,

Susan +

BISHOP ELECTION 2012

by Charles H. Montgomery, Delegate

A Prayer for the Election of a new Bishop

Holy God, we pray that you help us in our search for a new bishop. Guide the members of our Diocese charged with overseeing and implementing the search with skill and open hearts, and of managing the transition to a new bishop with sensitivity and grace. Inspire worthy servants of your church to stand bravely for election. Send your Holy Spirit upon the delegates who will vote for our next bishop. Support our new bishop every step of the way, and give peace and knowledge of service well done to our retiring bishop, Gene. Give us all patience, wisdom, and that gracious hospitality of soul that allows us to hear your voice and see your face in each other, even when we differ. Through Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

An Update on the Coming Election of the New Bishop

Here's the schedule.

- For several months, and even now, work has been going on at the Diocesan level principally by two committees (those of Search & Nomination and Election & Transition) with Bishop Gene Robinson in an advisory status.
- On 3/15/2012 the bishop candidates' names will be made public.
- On 4/22/2012, at the monthly meeting of Western Convocation in the Church of the Epiphany in Newport, the attendees will work on creating a list of questions to pose to the candidates at the "Meet and Greet" sessions (see following lines).
- There will be opportunities to get our congregational members' thoughts and advice regarding the upcoming Meet and Greet sessions.

(Continued on page 4)

PARISH ELECTIONS

by Rev. Kershaw

At Annual Meeting on January 22, Joe Aldrich was elected Treasurer for the remaining one year of an unexpired term. We thanked Sue for her seven years of excellent service. Sue and Joe are already working hard on the transition between Treasurers.

This year is an important year for delegates and alternate delegates as it is the Bishop Election year. Charles Montgomery and Sue Bauer were elected delegates, and Sarah Downing was elected an alternate delegate. There are still openings for a three year Vestry term, one delegate, and two alternate delegates. The Vestry will appoint willing people to these openings, in accordance with St. John's by-laws.

The Annual Meeting went well. Thank you to all who attended, not only for their donations to a delicious lunch, but also for their insightful comments and support of the work of the Vestry in 2011.

ANNOUNCEMENTS and NOTICES



First Friday Fellowship Potluck Dinners

February 3rd, 6 pm.

Please bring a dish to share (main, salad/vegetable, or dessert). These monthly dinners always feature delicious food, warm fellowship, and scintillating conversation. Bring a friend to a night of good food and good fellowship!

Ash Wednesday Services

February 22nd, Noon and 7 pm. The liturgy of the day invites us to begin a holy Lent by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. The service is based on the beautiful liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer, includes the imposition of ashes, and concludes with Holy Communion. St. John's is a caring community that offers infinite respect and radical hospitality to all who enter its doors. We welcome all to the altar who are seeking to know God in this holy season. For more information, please call the Rector, the Rev. Susan Kershaw, 756-4533.

Breakfast & Bible during Lent

Starting on February 26th at 9 am., we'll begin viewing a DVD series, "Embracing Emergence Christianity: Phyllis Tickle on the Church's Next Rummage Sale." The DVD notes invite us to join with Phyllis Tickle, author, historian and keen cultural observer, in examining the changing face of Christianity and culture. Tickle surveys two thousand years of Western history, identifying the great upheavals that occur in Western culture and Christianity every 500 years. The last was the Great Reformation of the 1500's; the next is happening now. Tickle's style is engaging, and her words are challenging. She asks us to think about the implications of this "Great Emergence," both culturally and spiritually. She challenges us to identify the key questions and issues that need to be addressed. Where might we be headed next?

The nine o'clock hour may seem early, but think of it this way--you won't have to rush to be at church on time! Please join us for six weeks of considering where God may be leading us.

Mark Your Calendars...

Western Convocation Meeting Sunday, April 22, 2 pm, Epiphany, Newport.

This is a very important meeting. All delegates and alternates are encouraged to attend, as well as anyone in the parish interested in the questions asked of the candidates at the Meet & Greet sessions.

(More announcements on page 4)

FEBRUARY

February 5, 2012		Holy Communion Rite II (BCP)		5 Epiphany	
Isaiah: 40:21-31	David Adams	EM: Pete Harrison	Ushers: Greg Pierson & George Curchin	Teaching: Mary Schoppmeyer	Nursery: Whit Aldrich
Psalm: 147: 1-12, 21c	Elinor Ackerman	Cruc.: Pete Harrison	Counters: Greg Pierson & George Curchin	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
1 Corinthians: 9:18-23	Pete Harrison				
Mark: 1:29-39	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Mary McHugh		Flowers: Mary McHugh			
February 12, 2012		Holy Communion ROW (Booklet)		6 Epiphany	
2 Kings: 5:1-14	Clif Cooke	EM: Greg Pierson	Ushers: Pete Harrison & Mary Schoppmeyer	Teaching: David Adams	Nursery: Joe Aldrich
Psalm: 30	Eric Herr	Cruc.: Greg Pierson	Counters: Pete Harrison & Mary Schoppmeyer	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
1 Corinthians: 9:24-27	Greg Pierson				
Mark: 1:40-45	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Mary Schoppmeyer		Flowers: Lyn Cooke			
February 19, 2012		Holy Communion Rite II (BCP)		7 Epiphany	
2 Kings: 2:1-12	Joe Aldrich	EM: Sarah Downing	Ushers: Darrow Clark & Jim Wickwire	Teaching: Charlie Montgomery	Nursery: Sue Bauer
Psalm: 50: 1-6	Mary Schoppmeyer	Cruc.: Sarah Downing	Counters: Darrow Clark & David Adams	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
2 Corinthians: 4:3-6	Sarah Downing				
Mark: 9:2-9	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Betty Williams		Flowers: TBA			
February 26, 2012		Holy Communion ROW (Booklet)		1 Lent	
Genesis: 9:8-17	Jim Wickwire	EM: Mary McHugh	Ushers: Sue Bauer & Joe Aldrich	Teaching: Mary Schoppmeyer	Nursery: Whit Aldrich
Psalm: 25: 1-9	David Adams	Cruc.: Mary McHugh	Counters: Jack Pratt & Samaira Aldrich	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
1 Peter: 3:18-22	Mary McHugh				
Mark: 1:9-15	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Georgie Haight		Flowers: N/A			

MARCH

March 4, 2012		Holy Communion Rite II (BCP)		2 Lent	
Genesis: 17:1-7, 15-18	Eric Herr	EM: Pete Harrison	Ushers: Greg Pierson & George Curchin	Teaching: Mary Schoppmeyer	Nursery: Joe Aldrich
Psalm: 22:22-30	Jim Wickwire	Cruc.: Pete Harrison	Counters: Greg Pierson & George Curchin	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
Romans: 4:13-25	Pete Harrison				
Mark: 8:31-38	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Mary McHugh		Flowers: Mary McHugh			
March 11, 2012		Holy Communion ROW (Booklet)		3 Lent	
Exodus: 20:1-17	Elinor Ackerman	EM: Greg Pierson	Ushers: Pete Harrison & Mary Schoppmeyer	Teaching: David Adams	Nursery: Whit Aldrich
Psalm: 19	Clif Cooke	Cruc.: Greg Pierson	Counters: Pete Harrison & Mary Schoppmeyer	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
1 Corinthians: 1:18-25	Greg Pierson				
John: 2:13-22	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Mary Schoppmeyer		Flowers: N/A			
March 18, 2012		Holy Communion Rite II (BCP)		4 Lent	
Numbers: 21:4-9	Mary Schoppmeyer	EM: Sarah Downing	Ushers: Darrow Clark & Jim Wickwire	Teaching: Samaira Aldrich	Nursery: Sue Bauer
Psalm: 107:1-3, 17-22	Joe Aldrich	Cruc.: Sarah Downing	Counters: Darrow Clark & David Adams	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
Ephesians: 2:1-10	Sarah Downing				
John: 3:14-21	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Betty Williams		Flowers: N/A			
March 25, 2012		Holy Communion ROW (Booklet)		5 Lent	
Jeremiah: 31:31-34	Jack Pratt	EM: Mary McHugh	Ushers: Sue Bauer & Joe Aldrich	Teaching: Charlie Montgomery	Nursery: Joe Aldrich
Psalm: 51:1-13	Elinor Ackerman	Cruc.: Mary McHugh	Counters: Jack Pratt & Samaira Aldrich	Coffee: <i>Hosts Needed!</i>	
Hebrews: 5:5-10	Mary McHugh				
John: 12:20-33	Rev. Kershaw				
Altar: Georgie Haight		Flowers: N/A			

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- The Meet and Greet sessions with the candidates will be held on 5/1/2012 (at Exeter High School in Exeter), 5/2/2012 (At Holderness School in Plymouth), and 5/3/2012 (at St. Paul's School in Concord). It is likely that our delegates and alternate delegates will go to the one in Concord. At these meetings, each candidate will make a formal presentation and after that there will be one-on-one time with each. Soon thereafter, the issue of delegate discernment as to who might be the most appropriate person to become our bishop, will come into play. Or so it is hoped and prayed about.
- On 5/19/2012 the delegates and, if needed, alternate delegates will vote in plenary session in Concord.
- On 8/4/2012 the new Bishop will be consecrated, the planning for which is being done by and will be supervised by the Subcommittee on Consecration.

(Continued from page 2)

Art After School

The expanded program now meets every Wednesday that school is in session, 3:30 - 5 pm. Our enrollment is over 15! In February, we'll be exploring the style of Mondrian, making crayon-resist Valentine's cards, learning how to use digital photos to create unusual self-portraits, and learning about the cubist painter Picasso. Thanks to team teachers Racheal Scott, Joan D'Alessio, and Sarah Manning, as well as moms Bonnie McPherson and Melanie Marsden. We're having a great time. Please help us share the word about this great program.

Thursday Friends

We've changed the group's name (again!) to something that speaks to our focus: a gathering of friends for fellowship and crafts which meets every Thursday night, 6:30 - 8 p.m. We knit, sew, do various crafts, teach skills, or learn new skills. In February, we'll be working on some simple bead projects for next year's Christmas bazaar, and preparing to create "ditty bags" for the Seafarers' Friend ministry in Portsmouth, NH. Come out and join us for good conversation, hot tea, and service built on using our skills to help others.

Calendar

Monday	Rector's Day Off
Wednesday	Noon, Eucharist
Thursday	6:30 p.m., Thursday Friends
Sunday	9 a.m. Breakfast & Bible 10 a.m. Eucharist, Children's Class

Next Vestry meeting

Wednesday, February 8th, 6:15 p.m. in the Parish Hall.



St. John's Episcopal Church

Westminster and Elm Streets
Walpole, NH 03608
Phone: 603-756-4533

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, *Presiding Bishop*
The Rt. Rev. V. Gene Robinson, *Bishop of New Hampshire*
The Rev. Susan de Puy Kershaw, *Rector*

Vestry

Dan Scott, Sr. *Warden*
Sarah Downing, Jr. *Warden*
Joe Aldrich, *Treasurer*
Mary Schoppmeyer, *Clerk*
Sarah Manning, *Vestry*
Charlie Montgomery, *Vestry*
1 Vestry vacancy

Other Leaders

Richard Smid, *Organist*
Peter Harrison, *Pledge Treasurer*
Janet Wickwire, *Altar Guild*

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