

An Update from the Rector

May 7, 2010

The end of the business week brings with it a combination of gratitude and exhaustion in so many for much hard work over the last six days. The message of the day is this: St. George's has a very large number of members to whom great thanks are owed for their tremendous help in the ongoing clean-up of the church facilities. Certainly the parish has been very fortunate with outstanding professional contractors and clean-up crews on site this week. But as soon as ways for volunteers to help were carefully identified early in the week, we have been blessed by abundant, warm-spirited, and passionate volunteer labor. Some members have been at the church on multiple days for hours on end, many for extended after-hours work or while taking time off from jobs, and all have contributed to a week of great progress. The difference in the facility between Monday morning and Friday evening is considerable and, frankly, surprising.

I pray each volunteer - those who have been here to work on the church, and those who have signed up to volunteer in some capacity in the coming days - knows of the deep gratitude of the parish leadership for your dedication and generosity.

I must take this opportunity also to thank our vestry leadership, members of a newly-created remediation oversight committee, the Altar Guild, other committees of the church, and our staff. I feel I must mention by name the outstanding leadership of our two wardens, Bryan Essary and Eb LeMaster. These two have spent untold hours at the church this week, and we could not possibly be better served by these key lay offices. We are in very good hands. I also wish to thank our Parish Administrative Officer, Laura Zabaski, and Facilities Manager, Thomas Lynch, as well as our sextons for their own tireless commitment to the church this week. Laura and Thomas have been the epitome of reliable competence and steady, non-anxious presence. I have told them both that God sent them to us for just such a season as this.

Once more I must share my sense that we have "a long row to hoe." The clean-up, remodeling, and renewal of our facilities will take much time and investment on our part, and we are only just beginning the process. We acknowledge the sadness in the air here. But I pray we can be vigilant to pray for God's blessings to light upon us anew from a dark place, to regard the future as a fresh opportunity for the church more than a cause for fretful anxiety.

A key if also difficult lesson for the mature Christian is to accept the reality that being a person of faith does not remove us from the bad things in life. But being a person of faith is also to trust that our God is one who is ever prepared to bring new good out of anything that happens in life. We are wise to remember the words of Joseph in the Book of Genesis: **"even though you intended to do me harm, God intended it for good..."** (Genesis 50:20). As we approach a fresh new weekend from a very different place let us be thankful that God's essentially good providence can be trusted. As witness to this truth, I invite you to read the report below from Karlen Garrard.

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