
Pentecost 2008

The Messenger

of St James' Church, Texarkana, Texas

The Parish Church as Abbey

by Chuck Warnock

Models for how we should do church are not in short supply. Seeker-sensitive, purpose-driven, emerging, missional, traditional, liturgical, ancient-future, and the like all have their merits. I am really interested in the *church-as-abbey* concept myself. I have read extensively about the early Celtic Christian church and find it intriguing and encouraging. In that research I identified 10 characteristics of the church-as-abbey, as I call it, or abbey church, for short. Here are the essential characteristics, or marks, of what I mean when I use the *church-as-abbey* model:

Worship. The *church-as-abbey* has at its heart the practice of worship. But worship that is public, powerful, and brings one into the presence of God through some type of intentional liturgy, whether formal or not. But not every parishioner of the abbey will attend every service. The idea is not to get everyone to one service, but to provide opportunities for worship that abbey adherents can participate in regularly, if not weekly.

Arts. The church-as-abbey celebrates creativity as a gift from a creative God. The arts reflect our connection to creation and God's creative power. The arts are expression, statement, witness, and beauty for a world that needs all of those things.

Hospitality. The abbey was open to all who needed its hospitality and help. Monks, even those fasting, would interrupt their discipline to greet and welcome those who came into the abbey's confines. Welcoming the stranger is a vital part of the abbey's ministry.

Economics. The abbeys were self-supporting, engaged in cultivating fields, raising livestock, operating public markets, and giving employment opportunities to the community. I read about a church the other day that also operates a farmers' market, and has been doing so for years. I am exploring the agrarian movement, particularly as it attracts followers of Christ.

Learning and scholarship. The monasteries became the centers of learning, preservation of sacred and literary manuscripts, and schools of instruction. The amazing Book of Kells is the prime example.

Catechesis and spiritual direction. For new converts, the abbey provided initial instruction. For more mature converts, the abbot or abbess provided spiritual direction and aided in spiritual formation.

Rule of life in community. The Rule of St. Benedict is the most famous of these "rules of life" but there were many others that defined the monastic community's social and spiritual interaction.

Ministry to the marginalized. The poor, hungry, disenfranchised, sick, old, and disabled found help of various kinds within the abbey's compound.

Peace and justice. St. Patrick was the first person in recorded history to speak out against the Irish slave trade. Patrick's appeals eventually resulted in the end of the Irish slave trade, of which Patrick himself had been a victim. Patrick also prevailed upon the Irish kings and warlords to live in peace with one another, as much as they were able. The abbey bears that same responsibility today.

External missions. Priests, including some of the well-known figures such as Columba, went on extended “missions” to areas removed from the abbey. In a reimagining of this practice, the missional church-as-abbey establishes external groups but groups with ties to the abbey church. This is the area with which I am struggling now, but I believe it is a core part of the abbey concept. These groups are not “missions” in the sense of international missions, but rather are groups that are “distant” from the abbey either in travel, culture, or status, but that have a connection to the abbey as “mother church.”

But, you say, “Where is evangelism, ministry, and education — those staples of the church as we know it today?” The 10 marks of the abbey church above contain evangelism, ministry, and education, but from a new perspective. George Hunter, in his intriguing book, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism*, says that in the Celtic Christian abbey “belonging” came before “believing.” Prospective converts were incorporated into the community before they became hard-core believers in Christ. Not a bad model for us today, which is one of the main reasons I like the abbey approach. □

Christian Education News

YOUTH SUNDAY, PENTECOST, MAY 11

9:30 in the Great Hall

A sign language interpretive dance to Lamb of God by “Driven”

10:00 Mass

Graduates Honored:

High School: Taylor Douglas, Jake Gerber, Lindsey Hackett, Kasey Hagar, James Storey

University: Carey Stanley, Meredith Power

Our Youth as Readers, Ushers, and Acolytes

Excellent Attendance Certificates Presented

Following 10:00 Mass, Great Hall

Reception by the Women of the Church honoring our graduates and youth

APPRECIATION SUNDAY, MAY 18 FOLLOWING THE 10:00 MASS

We appreciate our volunteers!

ALL CHURCH HAMBURGER/BRAT COOKOUT AT THE REC CENTER

Bring a side dish(salads, baked beans, chips) or a dessert(cookies, brownies) and your entire family. Join the Christian Education Department, the Youth of St. James’, and the Brotherhood of St. Andrew’s as we celebrate a very successful Christian Education year and show our appreciation to our many volunteers.

POOL WILL BE OPEN for the strong of heart.

Sports equipment available for “pick up” games

COME, PREPARED TO HAVE AN OLD-FASHIONED GOOD TIME!!

Junior EYC (Regular meetings: Sundays 6 PM to 7:30 PM)

Sunday, Apr. 13 Regular EYC meeting
Sunday, Apr, 20 EYC Lunch Out – McAlister’s Deli
Sunday, Apr. 20 Regular EYC Meeting
Sat. Apr. 26 SPRING into Action Diocese project 7AM to after 8:30 PM
Sunday, Apr. 27 LAST Regular EYC Meeting!
Sunday, May 4 Confirmation with the Bishop’s Visit and 6 PM Jr. EYC Fun Dinner
Sunday, May 11 Youth Sunday
Friday, June 6 8:30 PM-9 AM Laser Quest Lock-in with other Diocese Churches
Sunday, June 8 YOUTH BBQ LUNCH!!!

Senior EYC (Wednesdays 7 PM to 8 PM – New time in April 6:30-7:30 PM)

Wednesday, Apr. 16 6:30 PM EYC Lesson - Church Jeopardy!
Sunday, Apr. 20 EYC Lunch Out – McAlister’s Deli
Wednesday, Apr. 23 6:30 PM EYC Lesson – Meet at Marble Slab
Wednesday, Apr. 30 LAST EYC regular Meeting – Dinner Out
Sunday, May 4 Confirmation with the Bishop’s Visit
Sunday, May 11 Youth Sunday
Friday, June 6 8:30 PM-9 AM Laser Quest Lock-in with other Diocese Churches
Sunday, June 8 YOUTH BBQ LUNCH!!!

Save the DATE!!

Annual EYC BBQ!!
June 8th, 2008 after the 10 AM Service
Don’t miss the wonderful Food!

May Birthdays

Andrew Knight	1
Calvin Moore	3
J. D. Phillips	3
Stephanie Crane	3
Mary Nell Short	5
Don Holder	5
Thom Wakefield	6
Michael Lowe	7
Charles Cochran	9
Cliff Short	10
Jennifer McMahan	10
Mary Couch	12
Dave Clark	12
Meredith Maynard	12
Sue McCrossen	13
Bruce Cannedy	14
Dorothy Burns	15
Caty Burks	16
Clayton Shores	17
Michelle Shores	19
Lauren Hehmeyer	21
Andy Robbins	22
Peyton DeLoach	22
Cozetta Finley	25
Donna McGee	26
Paul Patterson	26
Mandolynn Perry	26
Marian Hill	27
Jean Howard	28
Steve Douglas	29
James Thomas	29
Bethany Dowd	29
Jackie James	30
Joy Knight	31

June Birthdays

Trey Schroeder	1
Marge Allen	2
Debbie Knaupe	3
Ann Coleman	3
Williams Higgins, Jr.	4
John Carson	5
Wade Fowler	7
James Elliott	8
Sandra Powell	8
Barbara Cannedy	9
Pat Poulos	10
Jake Gerber	11
Alan Trimble	15
Ann Drummond	15
Abigail Hill	15
Candy Smith	16
Mike Mitchell	17
Don Mitchell	18
Michael Strayhorn	18
Steven Firmin	18
Nick Pappas	20
Wynne Tidwell	20
Reid Bruner	21
Becky Stewart	22
Roxanne Schoen	22
Gusten Brosin	22
George Poulos	23
Ducky Knight	23
Leighsa Bean	26
John Easley	28
Sann Terry	28
Fred Whitson	29
John Rogers	30
Raeann Mitchell	30

May Anniversaries

Don & Melissa McCoy	1
Eddy & Susan Johnston	11
Michael & Lorelei Lofton	14
Kelly & Julie Tidwell	15
Howard & Barbara Davis	21
Steve & Ann Douglas	21
Kip & Robin Townsend	21
Mike & Diana Lowe	23
Alan & Tanda Jolley	25
Ed & Roxanne Schoen	25
Richard & Lindy Lawrence	26
Bill & Virginia Caller	27
Ed & Leisa Burke	28
Jay & Betty Young	29

June Anniversaries

Ken & Carlene Liles	1
Don & "Mike" Mitchell	2
Fred & Sandy Whitson	3
Glen & Lova Wile	3
Billy & LouAnne Harrell	3
Trey & Megan Schroeder	4
Michael & Carrie Gray	18
Al & Susan Williams	20
Henry & Pat Horn	20
Bo & Nancy Malone	22
Don & Gail Crisp	23
Douglas+ & Traci Anderson	24
Tom & Marcia Collins	24
David & Jackie James	24

THE AGENDA

Please save for future reference

- Sunday, April 20th** **Fifth Sunday after Easter**
Quiet Eucharist at 7:45am
Christian Education for all ages at 9am
Sung Mass at 10am
Jr EYC at 5:30pm
- Monday, April 21st** **Vestry Meets at 5:30pm**
- Sunday, April 27th** **Sixth Sunday of Easter**
Normal schedule in effect.
- Wed., April 30th** **Final Wednesday Night** before summer recess
Adult Class, Faithweavers, Sr EYC at 6:30pm
Sung Compline at 7:45pm
- Sunday, May 4th** **Ascension Sunday**
Normal schedule in effect.
Visitation of the Bishop of Dallas at 10am
Adult Choir and Boy Choir singing.
Reception following.
- Tuesday, May 6th** **A Service of Thanksgiving for Florence Nightingale**
Sponsored by the Nursing Association
Sung by the Men and Boys of St James'.
Reception following.
- Sunday, May 11th** **Pentecost Sunday**
Quiet Eucharist at 7:45am
Christian Education for all ages at 9am
Sung Mass & Sunday School Graduation at 10am
Girl's Choir singing.
- Friday, May 16th** **Brotherhood of St Andrew' Red Meat Dinner**
Tickets available from the Parish Office.
- Sunday, May 18th** **Trinity Sunday**
Quiet Eucharist at 7:45am
Sung Mass according to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer at 10am
Bell Choir ringing.
- Sunday, May 25th** **Corpus Christi**
Quiet Eucharist at 7:45am
Sung Mass at 10am
Final Adult Choir Sunday.