

## Looking Ahead Just A Bit

From Perrin, your Priest-in-Charge

The Vestry had their retreat a few Saturdays ago, and many things were discussed -- and you'll be hearing about them in due course. But one thing that was discussed was to find ways for the Church of the Epiphany to think of their congregational life in new ways. For as I said in a recent sermon, there is no value in looking back to the way things were at some point in the past -- when the church was larger, and when we had a full-time priest. For we are a small congregation now; and the Church of the Epiphany, along with many, many churches in the Episcopal Church these days, will not be able to afford a full-time priest, nor have sufficient work for a full-time priest to be engaged in. So let's see our small size not as a liability but as a gift from God. As they used to say in the 1970's, small is beautiful. But this will mean that our wonderful works of outreach and our worship will have to be shared by more people -- too few people are presently doing too much, and it's wearing them out.

And let's see ourselves not just concentrating on problems to overcome, but look, instead, for the possibilities to explore. And not become consumed by maintenance matters to keep up with, but with the wonderful world of mission we can be engaged in. And, finally, not to see our church life as one of scarcity and lack, but one of abundance instead. You know: there are churches who see their life as a glass half-full, and others as a glass half-empty. We're a congregation who's a half-full group of people, and we shouldn't act as if we were one whose glass was half-empty.

Now to help to share opportunities around in the area of our common worship, come September I'm going to be doing training for the congregation in all the liturgical responsibilities that go into making our Sunday worship a truly corporate experience. So I'll train the acolytes, the readers, those who administer the chalice, the crucifers, the people who carry the Gospel book, ushers, those who bring up the elements for the Communion -- everybody. And since I know that I can't do this training at other times -- people are too busy, and I'm not around except for Wednesdays, when I'm taking the Communion to shut-ins and conducting the evening Eucharist with prayers for healing, -- I'm going to do this training during the service, early on in it, at the time when, if I were going to have a children's sermon, I'd be giving one. In this way everybody will learn all that goes into having a Sunday service at the Church of the Epiphany. So, over the summer, be thinking about what you'd like to do in our worship, so you can be ready for the training I'll be giving. By the way, the only responsibilities that have specific requirements for them are: crucifer (they must be confirmed, or in the process of confirmation), Lay Eucharistic Ministers (those who take the Communion to those who aren't able to get to church) and those who administer the chalice. These people must be "communicants in good standing" -- that is, as Canon Augusta expressed it to me in an e-mail: such people need to have come to Epiphany from another church with a letter of transfer, be confirmed, contribute to the church, attend church at the three great feasts of the Church, be 16 years or older. If you don't know what exactly these things mean, don't worry; I'll be doing a sermon on them before long.

And, finally, those of you who've never been confirmed in the Episcopal Church or who haven't been received into the Episcopal Church -- think about preparing for Confirmation or Reception when the bishop comes in January. Again, I'll explain what all this means in a sermon.

In the meantime, may you have much happiness this summer with visits with family and friends, and may you have time for Sabbath rest and re-creation.

Perrin