



# A Light in the Sacristy

A newsletter for and about the Altar Guilds in the Diocese of Iowa

## FROM THE BISHOP



Sometimes we learn old lessons anew by unexpected tragedy. In September 1992, the parish hall at St Barnabas', Eagle Rock (where I was rector) flooded. Water teemed into a corner of the building where the nursery stood from an upstairs toilet, crossing diagonally over the main hall

into the opposite corner just above the nursery. Not only was the wooden floor destroyed but, of course, we discovered asbestos lining walls and ceilings. Soon the building looked like a scene from a space movie, as inspectors moved from room to room looking for asbestos. Every space was kept isolated by plastic partitions until declared clean. Only the culprit, the upstairs main hall was a free zone, and so we took all the items out of each room and cupboard and piled them up in the main hall.

One day the senior warden and I took one look at the pile of decades of ministry refuse and said; "Let's chuck it!" Decades of Sunday school resources, old music, and old furniture were thrown into the dumpster. But we also found some old gems, including a set of tall floor to above the altar-sized wooden candle sticks. We held on to them.

The flood however was not the only thing we had to pass through that year. As painters were putting the finishing touches to the now newly renovated Parish Hall, they smelled smoke coming out of the church. The sacristy was on fire - an arson fire as it turned out set by someone who must have

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## CO-DIRECTORS LETTER

Happy New Year! It is indeed a pleasure to begin the new year with a guest column written by two members of St. John's by the Campus (Ames) Altar Guild, James Stone and Bob Elzer. Orvilla Elleby, their altar guild director has 35 devoted and active members in her altar guild, including three husband/wife teams and another gentleman who has indicated an interest. We hope their lively and passionate words will inspire other directors to attract men, as well as sons and daughters, to work at the altar. Altar guild ministry is not necessarily a "female" calling. Men who enjoy baking could be asked to bake the bread used at the altar. Husbands like to help their wives change frontals, clear the credence table and altar, as well as the hymn board. It is just a short step to making them "official" members. Thank you Jim and Bob.

Also included in this newsletter is an excellent report by Elinor Kornhauser on Pat Crane's workshop at the national Altar Guild Association meeting during General Convention in July. Many of you have purchased Pat's fine book "With These Hands...A Practical Guide to Sewing Church Linens" at the Grinnell and St. Paul's workshops. Pat has done much to restore the practice of providing our churches with handmade linens. Pat writes, teaches workshops and runs her own linen business. Perhaps one day we could lure her to our diocese.

While shuffling and rearranging clippings and papers for, one hopes, an organized new year, I found what I think is a beautiful reflection or meditation and would like to share it with you. It is titled "Those Who Love":

"Two statements I have read lately seem to carry a special a special meaning at the beginning of a new year. One is from the classic of a century ago,

*(continued on page 2)*

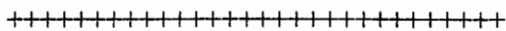
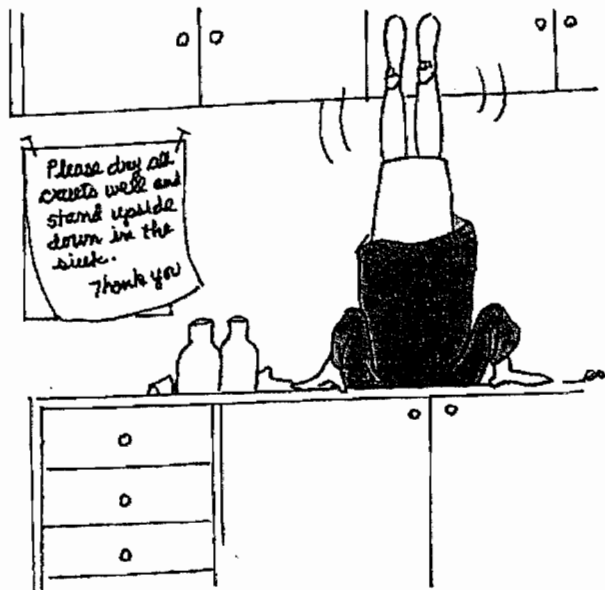
# SACRISTY SECRETS



The question has been asked many times if palms should be burned on the ground. If you intend to use the ashes, burn the palms in a container (an old metal wastebasket or a large tin can is fine.) Sift the ashes using a tea strainer to remove any large pieces of palm. Any leftover ashes or pieces of palm should be buried in the garden. If you are just planning to destroy leftover palms you can either clear a spot in your garden to burn them right on the ground or burn them in your fireplace. Remove the ashes (from the fireplace) and bury them.

Glass cruets can be cleaned with denture cleaner and rice in a little water. Shake gently.

Crystal cruets may be cleaned with un-popped corn kernels and a little water. Shake gently.



## UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

July 20-22 18th Annual Ministries Retreat, Grinnell.

Altar Guild will offer a tract/workshop on Ecclesiastical Embroidery in silk and metal with instruction in making stoles, led by Phyllis Melton, St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines.

September 27-29 Fall Clergy Conference

October 6 Diocesan Altar Guild Fall Workshops, Trinity Cathedral, Davenport

Nov. 2-3 155th Diocesan Convention, Des Moines

Throughout 2007 "Carbon Footprint" Workshops, Diocese of Iowa

## THE CO-DIRECTORS' LETTER

(continued from page 1)

"Walden" by Henry David Thoreau: "Only that day dawns to which we are awake."

Here is a reminder that we can miss so much of what God offers us. We can miss the very wonder of being alive, of having one more day to enjoy. We can miss the heroism in people around us, and the beauty of life's unheralded surprises.

The other statement is from the biographical novel called "Those who Love" about John and Abigail Adams. The author wrote: "Life is for those who love."

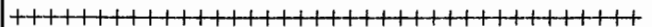
What a relevant reminder in this era of hate, bitterness, suspicion and fear! We do not live until we love.

We learn the art of living when we learn the art of loving. Here is the real test of our maturity. Even our body functions better when we love; hate ties us into inner knots. Even a person's face has a special light when it is expressing love; hate twists and distorts all our features.

Both statements make it clear that it is all up to us: we are free to decide whether we shall be awake, and whether we shall love."

New Year Blessings and Love to All.

Martha and Elinor



### PRAYER CORNER



Build we each the other up:

Pray we for our faith's increase,  
Lasting comfort, steadfast hope,  
Solid joy and settled peace.

More and more let love abound:  
never, never may we rest,  
Til we are in Jesus found,

Of our paradise possessed.

(Charles Wesley)



### MEMBERS TO KEEP IN OUR PRAYERS

Ruth Swenson, St. John's by the Campus, Ames  
Barbara Lindopp, St. John's by the Campus, Ames  
Ida Gilliland, St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines.

## MEN IN THE ALTAR GUILD ....WHY NOT?

by  
**Jim Stone and Bob Elzer**

When Orvilla Elleby, Directress of Altar Guild at St. John's by the Campus Episcopal Church in Ames, Iowa asked us to write an article for the Diocesan Newsletter, we were impressed but wondered why? Then when she said we might possibly be the only men in an altar guild in the Diocese, we were energized. It's not clear, nor do we understand why, we may be the only males that feel called to serve the Lord through this most important ministry, but we like it. So we decided to examine if there may be a pattern or stereotype of altar guild members that we fit into.

Jim is a 50+year old Minnesota-born, Iowa raised, entrepreneur who is currently running his third successful business company in Ames. He is a muscular 200+lbs. Guy with a big stock of gray blond hair and possesses a boundless energy (remember that). Jim started his religious training in the Lutheran tradition but with the help of Fr. Paul Goodland is now an enthusiastic Episcopalian who attends 10a.m. service except an occasional early 8 a.m. service. He is an active participant with several church committees and activities who, along with his equally energetic wife Gay, forms one of three husband and wife teams of St. John's Altar Guild.

Bob is a 68-year-old retired corporate executive who managed companies in the U.S. and England. He and his wife moved to Ames a little over four years ago from, of all places, Florida. Bob is a tall, less than 200 lbs, sort of skinny guy who only remembers when he had hair, but also has boundless energy (remember). He has been an Episcopalian for 21 years and faithfully attends the 8 a.m. service each week. Along with Bob's wife, Marti, forms another husband and wife team of St. John's Altar Guild.

As you see, we (Jim and Bob) are quite different in life history, physical stature, and employment but we do have those qualities that we believe all altar guild members have. They are:

1. We truly love the Lord, the Church and our church family, and
2. It's that boundless energy that we see first hand when working with our altar guild family members.

Could it be that the altar guild work keeps you young and involved? So far we have not been involved with washing and ironing, however, polishing silver has been one of our memorable endeavors. By the way, how do you get polish out of your fingernails?

Take heed men, come on in and join the guild. Take our word for it, you'll like it!

## FROM THE BISHOP *(continued from page 1)*

hated their time as an acolyte for they started the fire with acolyte robes and priest's vestments. Lest we be unsure as to the motive for the fire being hatred, the arsonist had stomped on a chalice for good measure.

The church itself was untouched by the fire except for smoke damage, and so we spent our next few months in the parish hall. There in all their newly discovered finery stood the wooden candle sticks on either side of the makeshift altar. They were never forgotten again.

When Lent came round the next year and we were back in church, we decided to remove all brass including the candlesticks and replace them with the wooden set. And so they were used every year during that season - a reminder that in Lent God calls us to shed much of what we begin to collect which may not be that essential. The wooden candle sticks led us to remove all covering except a plain altar linen on the altar, and suddenly the fine wood of the altar shone through. I would have loved to have removed the brass altar rail each season - it could have been done - but did not have the courage. The candlesticks and the simple altar arrangement spoke volumes about God's call to simplicity which is a hallmark of Lent.

It does not take a flood or a fire to become sensitive to overused embellishments in our worship space. Or to the recovery of that which evokes simplicity. It is after all *a gift to be simple, a gift to be free, 'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, and when we find ourselves in the place just right, twill be in the valley of love and delight. When true simplicity is gained to bow and to bend we won't be ashamed, to turn, turn, will be our delight till by turning, turning, we come round right."*

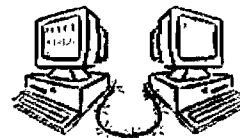
+Alan

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## NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, in a text only format, please send your email address to Jeanne Roland at

[JeanneHR@peoplepc.com](mailto:JeanneHR@peoplepc.com)



## '...WITH THESE HANDS...'

by

Elinor Kornhauser, Diocese of Iowa Altar Guild  
via the National Altar Guild Newsletter, Winter 2006

The title of Pat H. Crane's very practical and easy to understand booklet on making Eucharistic linens, *With These hands...A Practical Guide to Sewing Church Linens*, could well have been the name of her workshop at the NAGA meeting in Columbus. If you didn't learn the "how-to" it was because you were not present.

Crane furnished paper squares to show students how to fold hems, creating the right angles needed for mitered and bulk-reduced corners. While Crane explained the process, her instructions were also displayed by an overhead projector.

Pre-organized kits provided stitchers with a square of proper weight linen, a length of sewing thread, a length of embroidery floss and a proper sized needle, accompanied by Crane's explanation of thread weight and needle size. As her students folded their linen, pinned hems and prepared to make the miter cut, Crane moved among the tables checking their work and demonstrated the steps involved.

Next, Crane explained the method of hemming and the need for tiny, close stitches that can survive countless washings and ironing. The length of thread for hemming, she said, was to be no longer than 18" and can be pulled through the groove in a cake of beeswax to keep it straight. As hemming work progressed, Crane asked workshop participants to change their needles to the embroidery floss and begin work on the small cross drawn in the center of each linen square.

Then Crane explained the technique to begin and end a row of stitches securely, with no knot and no visible tails. The choice of one of two embroidery stitches was permitted - a tiny chain stitch or a back stitch. The work was to be smooth and not raised on the linen. Crane continued to circulate among the work tables, answering questions, demonstrating sewing and embroidery techniques, holding the fabric over her index finger in lieu of a hoop for such small work.

Students had the opportunity to leaf through her booklet, which includes lists of resources and embroidery design, as well as prices for fabric cuts and custom made linens. The author may be contacted at (860)529-4936 or [cranepat@juno.com](mailto:cranepat@juno.com).

(At press time NAGA president May Sherrod reported receiving 16 purificators completed over the summer months by participants in Pat Crane's linen workshop. More are expected to follow. Completed linens will be turned over to the 2006-2009 Missions Chair for distribution. Ed.)

## PANCAKES FOR SHROVE TUESDAY

*There was a piece of ground full of lentils...*  
2 Samuel 23:11

1 cup lentils  
3 eggs  
1/4 cup honey  
Olive or sesame oil

Spread lentils on an ungreased pie plate or baking sheet and roast in moderate (300 degree F) oven for 20 minutes. Lentils should be completely dried out and easy to grind.

Grind lentils with a nut or coffee grinder, or mortar and pestle, until they are powdered into the texture of flour. Set aside.

In a large bowl, beat eggs. Add honey. Mix well and add ground lentils, blending thoroughly into batter.

Oil a griddle or large pan and cook like pancakes.

Serve with Tabbouleh salad, steamed vegetables or a sweet with grape honey or date syrup.

## TABBOULEH SALAD

*So the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and parched grain, on the very same day.*

Joshua 5:10, 11

1 cup fine-grained bulgar wheat  
3 cups boiling water  
1 bunch scallions (spring onions) finely chopped  
2 cups parsley, chopped  
4 tablespoons vinegar (or lemon juice)  
1/2 cup chopped radishes  
Salt to taste  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
1 teaspoon sharp prepared mustard  
Romaine lettuce leaves  
1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, finely chopped (optional)

In a large bowl, cover the bulgar wheat with boiling water. Let soak for 30 minutes or until tender. Drain the wheat and combine with all other ingredients except lettuce leaves. Marinate and chill for several hours, or overnight, in refrigerator. Heap salad on a platter and arrange lettuce leaves around it so that they may be used as scoops. This is an excellent luncheon dish.

From *The Good Book Cookbook*, Goodman, Marcus & Woolhandler, Fleming H. Revel, Baker Book House Company.

## ANCIENT CHRISTIAN WRITERS



EGERIA  
DIARY OF  
A PILGRIMAGE

## What's It All About?

Beginning Ash Wednesday, altar guilds everywhere shift into high gear. Soon after the feast days of Christmas and Epiphany come the 40 days of Lent, culminating in the intense preparations for Palm Sunday, Holy Week and, finally, Easter. What's it all about, some weary altar guild workers may wonder.

Amidst all the cleaning, polishing, ironing and flower arranging, guild members are reminded to build into their schedules time for themselves. They must allow themselves the luxury of daily withdrawal to some private corner for prayer or time to walk a labyrinth, to pray using prayer beads or to meditate. Time is needed to remember and focus on, for whom or what it is that they labor. To remember, also that they are an integral part of the rich liturgy in which the altar guild ministry is privileged to exist. A liturgy both ancient and new.

It is not until part of a diary written by a woman named Egeria was discovered in an Egyptian monastic library in 1884 that much was learned about the ancient rites of Holy Week. Egeria is believed to have been an abbess or nun from Western Europe, who traveled to holy places in the Sinai, Palestine, Egypt, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor around the end of the fourth century. Her detailed accounts about the services and ceremonies observed during her pilgrimage are highly regarded by liturgists, as well as by students of early church architecture.

Especially prized are Egeria's accounts of major celebrations of the church year that she witnessed at Jerusalem between approximately 381 and 384 AD. Egeria wrote about the Palm Sunday procession to the top of the Mount of Olives and its later return down from the Mount and into the city. She also described Maundy Thursday and the Eucharist celebrated in the Martyrium, a large basilica built by Helena, mother of Constantine. Following the Eucharist, a cross was erected in the church courtyard at the supposed site of Jesus' crucifixion. On Good Friday, a service of psalms, readings, hymns and prayers, lasting from noon to three o'clock, was held in veneration of the supposed true cross of Christ. In time, these rites were carried back to Western Europe and became part of its liturgical customs.

In a 1994 NADAG (National Association of Diocesan Altar Guilds) newsletter, former president Phyllis Hayden wrote of her extended conversation with the Rev. Dr. Louis Weil, then professor of liturgics and church music at Nashotah House, Wisconsin.

"The extraordinary thing about the new (1979) Prayer Book is that virtually all of the Holy Week material was never part of the official tradition of the Prayer Book." .... "Thus, over the years, a great number of our parishes had looked to the Roman Catholic Church for supplementary material and had taken over practices associated with Roman Catholic worship."

Also, "...it is only in the late 1940s, after World War II, that the Roman Catholic Sacred Congregation under Pope Pius XII issued what they called "The Restored Rites of Holy Week." This made these Rites available at a time when, among Anglicans and Lutherans, there was a great sense of a void, a serious pastoral lack, in the Rites of Holy Week."

"With introduction of the rites of the BCP 1979, the Episcopal Church has come to take into account the research which has gone on for the past century and which, in the last 30 years, has already had significant impact on the pastoral practice of the Church. The Prayer Book has taken an ecumenical approach in that valuable resources from other traditions may be used in our own Anglican forms of worship. Also, it has built upon the pastoral insight that Holy Week, especially the Lord's resurrection, is the key to the Church's celebration of Christian faith. That kind of focus demands a place in the year where there is an intensity of gaze on the part of the Church, a time where we really look in depth at what God has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This is what Holy Week is all about!"

# The Liturgy of the Palms



Carrying of palm branches in procession and blessing of the palms is now provided for in the Prayer Book, pages 270-271, for the Sunday of the Passion, Palm Sunday.

"When circumstances permit, the congregation may gather at a place apart from the church, so that all may go into the church in procession."

"The branches of palm or other trees or shrubs to be carried in procession may be distributed to the people before the service, or after the prayer of blessing."

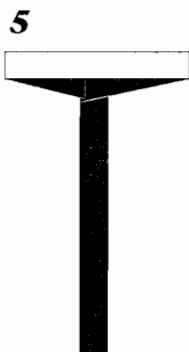
The blessing: "...Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life;..."

"During the procession, all hold branches in their hands, and appropriate hymns, psalms or anthems are sung..."

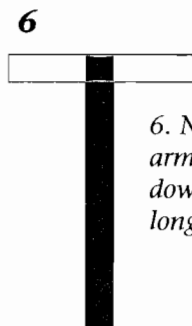
History tells us that when Egeria was in Jerusalem during the 4th century, she wrote that the people would go to the Mount of Olives and take olive boughs or perhaps palms to carry in procession. This was the real procession of the community in imitation of what our Lord had done with his disciples. The whole idea was that to repeat the act was to participate in the event.

The rubrics of the Prayer Book for Palm Sunday indicate that branches of palm are carried. One may also make small crosses later from the palm carried in procession. The blessed strip, or palm cross, is much more than a kind of holy object.

By request, the following instructions are provided for you so that you, too, can make palm crosses for your church, to keep as a Bible marker or to take to the sick.



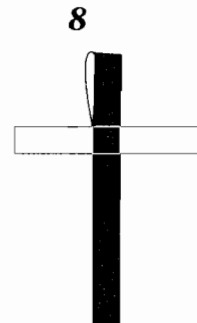
5. To make the arms of the cross, fold this same short end to the left across the top side, then turn under on the other side. The arms of the cross should be of equal length and of double thickness.



6. Next, fold the arms of the cross down toward the long end.



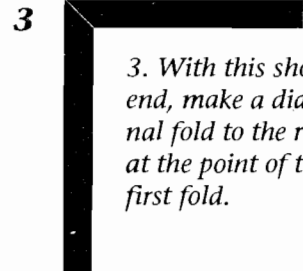
7. Then, bring the long end up and insert through the top fold, pull tight.



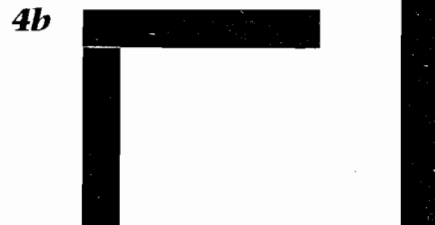
8. To complete the cross, bring the same long end toward you and insert in same fold pulling down just far enough to make a nice looking cross.

1. Cut a palm strip 13 inches long and a little less than 1/2 inch wide.

2. Fold forward 5 inches from top end. Short end should now be on top.



3. With this short end, make a diagonal fold to the right at the point of the first fold.



4. Then wrap the short end snugly around the back side to the left (a) and up and tightly over the front to the right (b).