



# A Light in the Sacristy

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

## FROM THE BISHOP



One of the newcomers at this year's All Commissions Day was the Diocesan Altar Guild. Co-directed by Elinor Kornhauser and Martha Hippee, the Guild promises to become a good resource for altar guild members throughout the Diocese. It will also be helpful to have our own altar Guild for Diocesan worship events, such as Convention, or deaconate ordinations. I see the

Guild becoming a gathering place to share experiences, a resource center for new vestment creations and other ideas, and a teaching forum where you can learn about liturgical practices and the deep history of your ministry.

From my first parish as a curate, I appreciated the opportunity each month to meet with the Altar Guild for worship, as well as the monthly check in about upcoming events. I heard of their faith journey, which often involved the quietness of the sanctuary when setting things up or cleaning things away and being all alone in the presence of the Holy. It is an experience priests often share with altar Guild members.

At the Diocesan level, there would always be a group of guild members sewing vestments every fourth Thursday at the Los Angeles Cathedral Center. We may not be able to commit to such a such a schedule, but perhaps using the three cornerstone events of our Church year - All Commissions Day, Ministries Retreat, and Diocesan Convention - and adding a fourth in September as an annual meeting at the Cathedral in Des Moines, there will be time to grow together in this wonderful ministry of beauty and spiritual preparedness to which God has

*(continued on page 3)*

## Contents:

	<i>Page</i>
Bishop's Letter.....	1
Co-directors Letter.....	1
Prayer Corner.....	2
Diocesan News.....	2
Looking Ahead.....	2
Feast and Fast.....	3
Simnel Cake.....	4
How Does Your Garden Grow?.....	4

## Spring 2006 Issue # 1

Published Quarterly

### Co-Directors:

Elinor Kornhauser  
1453 Birch Dr.  
Mason City, IA 50401-2563  
(641)423-3209

Martha Hippee  
407 28th St.  
Des Moines, IA 50312-4405  
(515)244-5824

Newsletter preparation:  
Jeanne Roland,  
St. Mark's, Des Moines

## CO-DIRECTORS LETTER

The first issue of our Newsletter is an introduction of sorts. An introduction of ourselves, certainly, but more importantly, an introduction of the Diocesan Altar Guild of Iowa. As co-directors, our single mission is to be of help, of help to each one of you. We will want to know how we can serve you better. We hope to present a variety of workshops, training programs, a newsletter, maintain a sewing room and loan closet, and even create a lending library - thus uniting all parish altar guilds. Elinor has for many years overseen an exceptional sewing room at St. John's, Mason City, where her group of accomplished stitchers has made chasubles, stoles and altar hangings. We plan to establish a sewing room in the central section of the diocese, accompanied by a loan closet.

We hope this quarterly newsletter will educate and inform, and we plan to include seasonal articles as well as suggestions on the best way, for instance, to iron linens or clean brass. We encourage your participation by sending us a beloved prayer, or an original prayer, for the "Prayer Corner," the names of members to include in our prayers, reviews of books that are especially relevant to altar work or that are spiritually meaningful, helpful "how-to" ideas that work in your sacristy, and even a picture of your altar guild activities and a brief article about the event.

July 14 to 16 is the annual Diocesan Ministries Retreat at Grinnell College. Dorm living is the "mode" and much camaraderie is the "norm". Among the tracts offered will be a Diocesan Altar Guild workshop devoted to making purificators and other pieces of linen conducted by Phyllis Melton. Our January workshop at St. Timothy's in West Des Moines had a small but very enthusiastic group, some coming from as far away as Emmetsburg and Algona. *(See picture on page 2.)* It was a good beginning and we hope attendance will increase at future workshops. We look forward to seeing you in Grinnell.

Faithfully, Martha and Elinor

## DIOCESAN ALTAR GUILD NEWS

The 2005 hurricanes in the Gulf Coast Region gave Eleanor Kornhauser of St. John's Mason City, an idea that must be shared. Chair of St. John's altar Guild and Co-Chair of the DAG Altar Supply, Kornhauser said, "I tried to imagine what I would do if Iowa were in a situation similar to that of the Gulf Coast dioceses after the hurricanes' devastation. How could I quickly replace lost communion vessels? I found that I could do it, and for under \$20 per parish."

After a hurried shopping tour, Kornhauser came up with a collection of "Emergency Altar Communion Ware." For chalices, she selected Libby goblets, sold in packages of four for less than \$10. For a large paten, she chose a small glass pie plate, while a plain, glass plate for a pillar candle made an attractive smaller paten. At a mere \$1.92 each, salad dressing cruets made by Anchor Hocking double as wine and water cruets. A Rubbermaid storage container made a more than satisfactory bread box, and large, white Vanity Fair napkins (opened out flat) filled in for corporals. Folded into thirds, the napkins were turned into purificators, and a Kleenex dinner napkin folded into thirds made a lavabo towel. At less than \$1 each, small glass candle holders were readily available. Another find was that several stores offered 4 ft. x 2 ft. folding tables, suitable for a temporary, free-standing altar, for about \$20 each.

In addition to assembling this "Emergency Altar Communion Ware," some practical advice to offer: Considering the length of time electricity might not be available, fortified wine, such as a cream sherry, may be substituted since it requires no refrigeration. A bay leaf placed in the storage container for wafers will keep bugs away. Used paper communion "linens" may be held in a plastic bag with cotton balls from holy oil and then all items burned about once a month.



In recognition of the need for parishes to have emergency plans, Kornhauser's array of "Emergency Altar Communion Ware" was photographed and the photographs placed on St. John's website. Try it and see <http://www.stjohnsepiscopal.org/AltarGuild/index.htm>

*(Reprinted from The National Altar Guild Association "Epistle" - Winter 2006)*

## UPCOMING DATES OF INTEREST

- March 19 - Iowa State Day at Washington National Cathedral
- April 28 - Traditional English Tea, St. John's by the Campus, Ames. 12:00 Noon and 3:00 P.M. seatings.
- May 25 - Ascension Day to Pentecost, "Cathedral-to-Cathedral Run" with the Bishop
- July 14-16 - Ministries Retreat, Grinnell. Altar Guild Workshop included
- September - Workshops and Luncheon at St. Paul's Cathedral, Des Moines

+++++

### All Commissions Day - 2006



Back row - Elinor Kornhauser, Mason City, Martha Hippee, St. Paul's, Des Moines,  
Front row - Orvilla Elleby, Ames, Kay Arnold, St. Luke's, Des Moines, Jane Bruner, Algona, Sue Gress, Emmetsburg

### PRAYER CORNER - THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

"God, in all that is most living and incarnate in Him, is not far away from us, altogether apart from the world we see, touch, hear, smell, and taste about us. Rather He awaits us every instant in our action, in the work of the moment...He is at the tip of my pen, my brush, my needle - of my heart and of my thought.

(Teilhard de Chardin)

#### Keep In Our Prayers:

Barbara Lindapp - St. John's by the Campus, Ames  
Pat Coyle - St. Luke's, Des Moines  
Eleanore Coffey - Trinity, Emmetsburg  
Suzanne Merrill - St. Paul's, Des Moines

## LEARNING TO FEAST AND FAST

*"I invite you therefore, in the name of the church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance, by prayer, fasting and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."*

(BCP page 265)

Those words, intoned at the Ash Wednesday service, describe the recommended manner by which fasting may be observed during the penitential season of Lent. Lasting 40 days, omitting Sundays, the season ends with the sacred, final days of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Forty days, some might worry, is long time to do without the comforts of favorite foods or to find time in an already crowded daily schedule for added reading, prayer and meditation, let alone for self-examination and repentance.

Yet in her article "Fasting and Feasting" (*The Living Church, March 1, 1998*) the Rev. Kathleen V. Price, assistant rector at St. John's, Chevy Chase, MD, finds otherwise. Flatly stating, "This is a season to fast, but that's not just about not eating," she points out that Lent is about giving up control, "about letting God be in control of our lives." If we insist on being in charge, she says, then God cannot be. "Lent is about accepting the gift of Grace."

Price warns that good deeds must be done for God's purpose, not our own, and that we should practice through self examination of our motives. "True faith" she says, "is...expressed in true worship...seeking God's approval, not our friends'...our rector's...our bishop's. True faith is...praying, whether or not we are seen, whether or not it's in the Book of Common Prayer...reaching out to those in need, whether or not it is noticed...seeking God who has already sought us."

Learn to fast and feast at the same time, Price advises and then provides a list of suggested ways this is possible:

*Fast from destructive attitudes and closed minds;*

*feast on openness.*

*Fast from complaining and criticizing;*

*feast on praise.*

*Fast from jealousy;*

*feast on compassion.*

*Fast from pride;*

*feast on humility.*

*Fast from piety;*

*feast on holiness.*

*Fast from selfishness;*

*feast on serving others.*

*Fast from doubt;*

*feast on hope.*

*Fast from hate;*

*feast on love.*

As a spiritual discipline, fasting is considered to be cleansing, an act of contrition and preparation. What do you need to fast from before the dawn of Easter's light? And, what will be your feast?

+++++

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

called you. Thank you for your contribution to our common life of faith in your acts of service. God bless you as you enjoy this new opportunity to bridge the distances of your sanctuaries, and support one another.

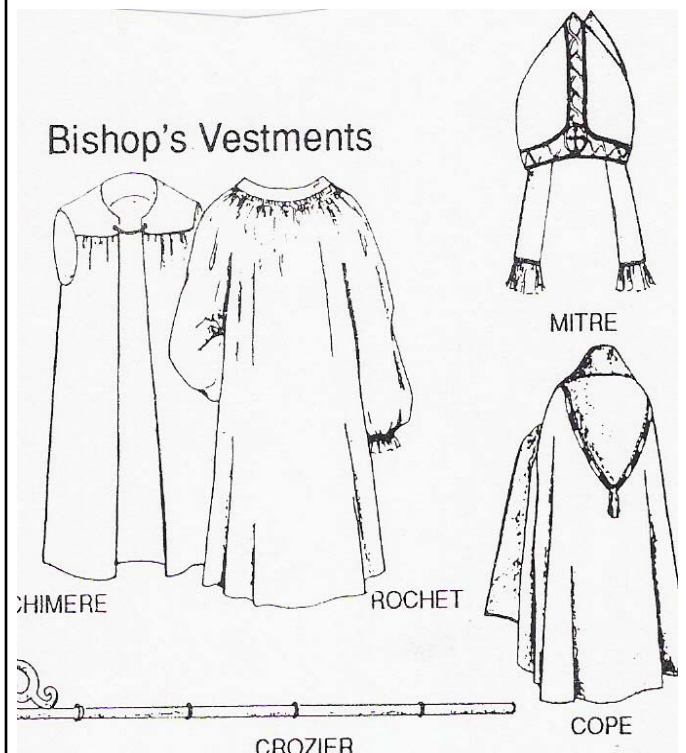
Bishop Alan Scarfe

+++++

## WHEN THE BISHOP VISITS

1. When the Bishop visits your parish, lay out register books, confirmation and reception certificates, the service book...and a WORKING PEN.
2. During the Bishop's visitation, Altar Guild members should help with divesting, putting the vestments back in their case.
3. Have a hymnal and an extra bulletin in the sacristy before the Bishop arrives, with the opening hymn marked.
4. When the service is Evening or Morning Prayer, the appropriate attire is either cope and mitre or rochet and chimere.
5. If the Bishop is NOT celebrating, he may administer the sacrament to the people in cope and mitre.
6. Inspect your Bishop's chair for rough spots that could cause pulls and snags on the vestments.

### Bishop's Vestments



## ALTAR GUILD DAY AND SIMNEL CAKE FOR MID-LENT

It has been suggested that a day be set aside in honor of Parish Altar Guilds. "Mothering Sunday," the fourth Sunday in lent might be just the right day. On this Sunday the altar Guild vests the altar and pulpit in rose paraments, if they are available. Following the service a display of vestments, hangings, and communion vessels might be arranged in the Parish Hall. Explanatory cards could be used to tell, briefly, the origins and uses of the articles shown. An old custom attached to this special Sunday in Lent is serving "Simnel Cake," baked by the members of the altar guild, to each person present at the coffee hour. The word "Simnel" is thought to be derived from Latin for simila, meaning wheat flour. Several recipes exist, some including the saffron mentioned in the ancient rhyme:

*She who would a Simnel make  
Flour and saffron first must shake  
Candy, spices, eggs must take  
Chop and pound 'till arms do ache:  
Then must boil, and then must bake,  
For a crust too hard to break.  
When at Mid-Lent thou dost wake,  
To thy mother bear thy cake.  
She will prize it for thy sake.*

This one is simple and super, claims on admirer.

1/4 pound butter	1 cup white flour
3/4 cup white sugar	2 ounces citron
2 eggs	1/2 cup currants

Cream butter and sugar thoroughly. Add beaten eggs and mix well. Dredge fruit in flour and stir it in.

Bake 45 minutes to an hour at 300 degrees. Makes one small loaf. (There is no leavening except eggs.)

+++++



To find out more about the "Easter Bonnet Blitz," see article in *The Iowa Connections* - March 2006 or write Donna Scarfe at [fynehats2@aol.com](mailto:fynehats2@aol.com)

## HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

by June J. McInerney

Remember the nursery rhyme line, "How does your garden grow?" Lent gives us the opportunity to prepare the garden of our souls for the promise of resurrection, salvation, and everlasting life. Much like a real garden in early February, many of us find our gardens grown fallow during the winter with bracken, fallen leaves, and a variety of dead plants left over from last season. Now is the time to clean up the garden, plan its layout, and reflect on how to assure a bountiful harvest during Easter and Pentecost. Lent, the beginning of our planting season, prepares our soil for the Easter blossom. What we plant in our early preparations is what will grow within us. Gardens, vineyards, metaphors of planting, sowing, and reaping harvest of the gifts of God are used extensively in our traditional literature. Christ uses these metaphors in many of his parables. In John 15, he tells us who the tender of the garden of humanity is. "I am the true vine, and my father is the vinedresser."

Before his crucifixion, Jesus went to pray in the garden of Gethsemane. Even in the midst of his darkness, Christ sought out a garden, a place that gives forth life, to prepare himself for death. During Lent, we are called to prepare ourselves, to till the soil of our souls, to nourish the seeds when they are planted.

We do not plant and cultivate alone. God is the master painter and his son the head gardener. We and those around us are also gardeners. Some of those we meet have gardens in which Christ has already planted his seeds which have taken root and blossomed. Others have gardens which have grown fallow and are not ready to receive the plantings without major tilling and preparation. This is what Lent is about—the tiling and replenishing of the soil of our gardens to plant the seeds of God's gift and promise so we may blossom in his love.

Like tilling the soil of a real garden, preparing for God's gifts in our souls can be a backbreaking, painful chore. For any strong plant to take root, the soil must be malleable, soft, well watered and sunned. Too much water, and the seeds will drown. Too much sun, and they parch, wither, and die.

This Lenten season, let us take stock of our gardens, reflect, plan, and prepare. How much reflection and Sabbath time do we need to refresh and renew ourselves, basking in the sun of God's glory? When do we take the time, on a daily basis, to work in our garden? What weeds and dead plants do we need to uproot?

How does your garden grow?

reprinted from *The Episcopalian*, February 1989