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**SORRY FOLKS, THE INN IS BOOKED UP ... GOD HIMSELF  
COULDN'T GET A ROOM HERE TONIGHT**

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*A summer workshop*

## Discerning Your Spiritual Gifts



**August 6/7, 2010**

*A cooperative venture of congregations in District 9 of the Diocese of Newark*

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the table in the Center Street hallway**

## Our Last Newsletter?

For over a year now, the Rector has supervised, edited, and produced this newsletter. Except for occasional (and wonderful) profiles, the work has been his alone. The time has come for him to turn over this ministry to a willing amateur (one who does it for the love of it). If you think you may be interested or want to learn more about what's involved, please speak with Barrie. ✕

## The Ministry of *All the Baptized?*

The ministers of the church are lay persons, bishops, priests, and deacons—in that order. So says our prayer book (see p.855). Each and every Christian has a specific and personal vocation to assist in God's divine plan of salvation. According to our Catechism, lay persons are called to represent Christ and the Church and to bear witness to him wherever they may be. Our objective as the church, then, is to find the place where the world's deep need meets an individual's deep joy.

To help in this discovery, it is important to have a permanent discernment group, and we still forming such a group here at Annunciation. This group will act as a "sounding board" with parishioners seeking to discern God's call, whether to ordained or lay ministry. In addition, I will be leading workshops on "Discerning Our Spiritual Gifts" with other clergy from District 9 on August 6 and 7. These activities can help us understand God's calling.

The process of discernment begins with deep listening, and I pay close attention to many signals, messages, and communications—often subtle and subliminal ones. I am also striving to train active listeners on the Discernment Committee, who often hear things that anyone alone would miss. Then comes the hard part: letting people make their own choices. No matter how much we feel we may know what someone's path should be, God gave us each free will, and it is important to respect the choice that each person makes. The still small voice of God speaks in different ways to each of us, and it is a foundational tenet of the Anglican expression of Christianity that each person take personal responsibility for faith. In the end, we clergy need to be more like kind mentors than stern authority figures, as I believe it is our job to invite and suggest, not mandate.

If you think you might enjoy a bit of conversation about *your* calling with some very congenial fellow Christians, please speak with the Rector. We will schedule a time to make this happen. ✕

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## Parishioners' Milestones

*Birthdays:* Elizabeth Craig 7/5, Marilyn Youakim and Lolly Bates 7/9, Eddie Garcia 7/21, Sarah Sarnicki 7/22, Zach Olsen 7/21, Gary Hoag 8/1, Kay Benning, Allan Depken, and Kathiann Krott 8/6, Ling Want 8/8, Clare Simpson 8/17, Nancy Olsen 8/23, Dave Dziemian 8/25, Greg Kouletsis 8/28.

*Baptisms:* Skylar Olsen 7/1, David Dziemian 7/19, Zach Olsen 8/10, Teagan Bellitto 8/26.

*Confirmations:* Does anyone get confirmed in the summer? Of course not. The bishop is on vacation!

*Wedding Anniversaries:* Sue & Gary Hoag 7/1, John and Jan Simpson 7/17.

*Deaths:* Edythe King 6/3. May she rest in peace.

Greg Kouletsis was honored in June by Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County. (See related story, in the opposite column.) He and the other “greyheads” volunteers were awarded their Golden Hammer Award for meritorious service at the annual banquet, held this year in Park Vale. Greg received his award from James Gandolfini, the honorary chair of the event, as four fellow Annunciators looked on with pride.



*Ava Bramson* (at left) graduated from Emerson High School this year. She will matriculate at Wellesley College in the fall. ✂

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## Absent Guests

Each week, we take a second collection at the altar steps on that little chair with a basket on it; you pass by on your way to the communion rail. This is the Absent Guest Plate, and in it we collect money to give away to charitable purposes. Last year, we donated nearly four thousand dollars to such causes, which include organizations and causes we regularly support and emergency funding for natural disasters. Each month in *e-News*, we hope to highlight one of the recipients of this collection. Would someone like to take responsibility for just this feature? It would require less than an hour a month, and would help us all understand better where our outreach dollars are going. ✂

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## We Are the Greyheads

The Greyheads is the collective name for a group of volunteers for Habitat for Humanity of Bergen County. Please note that we spell Greyheads with an “e” while much of the world spells the color with an “a.” Why an “e”? Because we are different, we are unique.



We came together during the winter of 1994-95 at the abandoned fire house in Teaneck. It

was to be a “rehab” job that eventually would consist of two units each with three bedrooms. None of the volunteers that showed up had any experience in rehab work, construction or architecture.

From there we went to Hackensack and faced a project from “scratch.” That is, from a foundation to constructing every bit of the houses including the roof. That site created six units each with three bedrooms. As an aside, it also improved the surrounding neighborhood.

What to do next? A three-story apartment building in East Rutherford. This became a challenge because one unit was to have five bedrooms and the other two to have three bedrooms each. Plus the building material had to be carried up three flights of stairs for the five-bedroom unit. We also had problems with the neighbors who did not understand that we were building affordable housing, not welfare. The project, however, was completed in almost record time. It was during this period that four Greyheads volunteered as “First Responders” to serve at the World Trade Center: Bill Montcrief, Bill Lewicky, Roger DeNisica, and Gregory Kouletsis.

Then on to our pride and joy: Three free-standing buildings with two units in each in a *cul de sac* location in Englewood. Under the supervision and instructions from Bob Preis, these three buildings became “state of the art.”

And now, after 15 years we, six of the original Greyheads, are still active and helping to build affordable housing for the people of Bergen County. Presently in both Garfield and Waldwick and in the near future in Oradell. With the Grace of God, we will go on.

—Greg Kouletsis

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## Special Thanks to...

*Chuck May*, who supervised the repair of the Parish Hall's air conditioning—just in time for the heat wave.

*Grace Oliff*, for organizing such an amazing evening of fellowship and good food in June.

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## A Blast from the Past, and Other News

We heard recently from Lucille Knapik, daughter of William and Annie Hasher. She tells us “My family have been long time parishioners of Church of the Annunciation. We grew up in New Milford and all four children were confirmed at Annunciation. Children of William J and Annie C Hasher: Martin, Emily, Lucille, and Anne. I was married at the church on March 5, 1983: Robert J. Knapik and Lucille A. Hasher. My father is deceased, and my mother Annie resides with my husband and me in Morristown, N.J. We are presently members of St. Peter's Church in Morristown. My mother owns two places in the columbarium at Annunciation and has expressed an interest in selling them. Can you tell me if there is an interest and how we might go about this? I noticed that two long time members of Annunciation were chosen to receive the David Hegg achievement award this year. Congratulations to them. Sorry you could not attend the ceremony. It was lovely and especially meaningful for us as David was a long time Rector at St. Peter's.”

We have also heard from Kay Benning, who wrote: “Just a short note to tell you I'll be staying in Virginia with Jan and Howie for a while. Didn't want to fall behind in my pledge—so am enclosing a check to cover the time I've been away. Do hope all is going well. Have a wonderful summer. I intend to do the same. With love, *Kay*.”

In June, Kay Benning and Ginny Baird received the David Hegg lifetime achievement award from the Diocese of Newark. They have both been stalwarts of this congregation for years, and deserve this honor. Congratulations to them both, and many thanks! ✂

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### The Church of the Annunciation

*A Parish of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Newark*  
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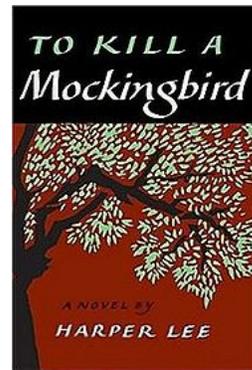
## Finance Report

This feature appears regularly in *e-News*. Here's our financial picture, as of May 30:

	Since Jan.	Annual Budget
Offerings Received	\$39,194	—
Offerings Promised	38,490	91,500
Difference	+704	
Total Income	74,051	139,860
Total Expense	102,984	164,627
Difference	-13,042	-24,767
Unrestricted cash on hand:	\$16,155	
Total pledges for 2010:	\$82,000	

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## Have We Killed the Mockingbird? Technological Progress, Social Justice, and the Decline of Reading in America



A Presentation and Discussion Presented by the Friends of the Oradell Library

Monday, July 26

7 p.m.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the novel by Harper Lee. In commemoration, the Friends of the Oradell Library are hosting a presentation on Monday, July 26, beginning at 7 p.m. Our Rector will speak. All are invited. (If you have time beforehand, re-read the novel or watch the excellent movie, starring Gregory Peck. Both are worth your time!) ✂

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## State of the Union?

You will soon receive a letter in the mail from our Junior Warden, Brian Demay. Although this will be a paper “snail mail” letter, Brian's text will also be posted on our Google group for Annunciation parishioners (another reason to sign up!). I hope every Annunciation member will read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest Brian's message. ✂

—Barrie Bates

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# The Gulf Oil Spill and Fruits of the Spirit

I invite you to consider the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Like the betrayal and execution of Jesus to us Christians, this toxic spill is to all of modern humanity a tragedy of the highest proportion, a disaster of the first order. It will probably turn out to be the worst environmental disaster in human history. *The New York Times* reported that the Minerals Management Service (that's the federal agency that oversees offshore oil drilling): the M.M.S. repeatedly declined to act on advice from its own experts on how it could minimize the risk of an oil spill in general, and the so-called blind-shear ram that failed in this case in particular.

According to a deputy interior secretary, "What happened to all the stakeholders — Congress, environmental groups, industry, the government — all stakeholders involved were lulled into a sense of what has turned out to be false security."

In the case of Jesus' disciples, they were lulled into false security that he was going to make right all that was broken in the world and everyone would come to worship him as son of God. In the case of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, we were all lulled into false security that we could drill into the earth at a point that is five thousand feet below the surface of the ocean, to a depth of more than eighteen thousand feet, and could do so without incident, accident, or—in this case—real disaster.

And the events leading up to the disaster now seem quite odd indeed—or at least ironic. In some ways, they seem to line up nicely with the events leading up to the crucifixion. A great rush of enthusiasm and hope—dashed in an instant.

In a relentless push to maximize profits, British Petroleum instead now finds itself ready to post the biggest financial loss ever seen on a corporate ledger. The ramifications (including the full environmental impact) will not be known for years—but we know to expect serious unemployment along our southern coast, and serious damage to many—if not most—pension funds in Great Britain.

Now, we have a choice—as individuals, as a nation, and as a world. We can act like the disciples did at first, and wallow in our dashed hopes, lash out in anger at each other or some scapegoat (like B.P. or the President), or retreat into hiding from any

meaningful encounter with the world that is so very, very dangerous.

An editorial cartoon suggests another alternative. It shows a woman in her crocs and sweatpants, wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with the flag of the United States: a typical American. She is drinking from a disposable plastic water bottle, carrying a disposable plastic grocery bag, in which there is meat raised using eight times the fossil fuels needed to produce vegetable protein. The cartoon is entitled "A Walking Oil Spill."



That's right. We have a choice about whether to embrace the oil-dependent lifestyle of modern-day America or to begin to take slow, steady steps in another direction. We have a choice about whether to consider those disposable plastic bags as "free," or to begin to imagine a world with one less oil rig, one less landfill, one less garbage collection, and—yes—one less oil spill. We have a choice about whether to continue to eat antibiotic- and hormone-infused beef that is raised on corn that is grown with petroleum-rich chemical fertilizer, or to revive meatless Tuesdays or consider grass-fed Thursdays. And if we take those first tentative steps into a new and different tomorrow, we will be using the gospel narrative as a template for our lifestyle.

We will be like the first disciples, who did *not* argue about whether they had really seen the resurrected Jesus or had a dream, who did *not* consider why founding the church could be harmful—but how it could be *helpful*, to them, to their friends and families, and to the entire world. They had no idea that we would still be trying to figure out the mystery of life two millennia later. They had no idea we would encounter technological wonders and modern-day disasters of epic proportion. They had no idea we might find their example helpful. They just did what they believed was the right thing. And we should do the same.

In the words of St. Paul, if we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us seek to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. You know: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And when we put our hand to the plow to till the field to plant the seeds of righteousness, let us not look back—but forward, into the coming reign of God. ✠

— *Barrie*