

Ministry Reports for 2007 Annual Parish Meeting

Acolytes - Paul Appleby

This year our number of Acolytes has been reduced due to matriculation, moves, etc... We are happy to have brought on board two new acolytes: Paul Appleby IV, and Yasmeen Duncan. In addition our acolytes thoroughly enjoyed our year-end trip to the Netherworld Haunted House.

Administration - Christen Erskine

This year at Atonement the Administrative Volunteers (the A-Team) have assisted the office on a weekly basis. Each week these dedicated volunteers label, stamp and mail all of the ministry reminder cards and fold the bulletins. On a monthly basis a group of 2 or 3 volunteers gathers to fold, label, stamp and sometimes insert pages into The View (from High Point Road), our newsletter. In addition, the A-team has been involved in assisting the Evangelism Committee in mailing information about the Joyful Wednesdays in June and the new Fall Schedule to 1,500 neighborhood homes, and 5,000 homes received information about our Advent and Christmas Programs. The A-team has also supported Stewardship at Atonement with 3 congregational mailings, Evangelism and Incorporation with information about the new fall schedule, and the Rector with annual Easter and Christmas letters. Effective communication at Atonement is made possible by these folks, ministry leaders providing information and the office staff (compiling, editing, printing, and e-mailing). We look forward to using the folding machine that was donated by Atlanta Shakespeare Company.

Adult Choir - Ben Leaptrott

The Adult Choir practices every Sunday under the skilled guidance of Ben Leaptrott. With the three service schedule, the choir now meets at 10AM and rehearses for one full hour. Anyone who is interested in joining the Adult Choir is invited to talk to Ben.

Art Ministry - Clara Blalock

Monthly art exhibits at Atonement provide an attractive venue for local artists and artists groups to showcase their work. We have shown the work of many established artists as well as some who are having their first show. On several occasions the art ministry group has provided the food, wine and music for artists who don't have the resources to do that. A portion of any sales is given to the church as a donation. These funds are then available for other ministries that need more than their budget allows, and have been used for, among other things, new plantings.

New shows are hung at 7:30PM on the first Thursday of each month. When the work is in place we gather for conversation, refreshments and guitar music by Fred Harp. We have a devoted group of "regulars" and always welcome newcomers.

Baptism Ministry - Katherine Miller

One baptism took place at Atonement during 2007. The Baptism Ministry team commit to pray for the child and the parents. Additionally they work with the family to determine the

services that can be offered at Atonement, and work with the Rector as necessary to provide those services.

Building & Grounds - Richard Herren

With the invaluable help of Ham Henson and other leaders, we solicited proposals and personal interviews from architectural firms to study our existing facilities with the intent of evaluating physical plant adequacy for the present and possible needs for the future. After interviewing the responding three firms, and checking credentials, the building and grounds committee recommended Young/Goldsmith to the Vestry, and they were subsequently retained. This preliminary study is completed and will be presented to our membership a few weeks into 2008. This project is conceptual in nature but revealing in what we may have thought our needs to be and what the facts actually attest. Hopefully this study will be a launching pad for constructive analysis, discussion, and a commonality of goals for the growth of Atonement.

Nancy Grim will be the Chair for Building & Grounds Committee. Nancy is a professional in building management and will bring that expertise to the planning, maintenance, and vendor relationships that are critical to our mission of serving God, our members, and community. Nancy is currently writing scope of work and soliciting bids for the opening of our front woods to give us much needed street appeal. No large trees will be removed; the goal is to raise the canopy, clear smaller saplings and under-growth. We have met with Sandy Springs authorities to ensure City code compliance. Within safety concerns, hopefully this project will be a combination of hiring experts and the best efforts we as members of Atonement can bring to the project.

Centering Prayer - Lesley-Ann Drake

A place to practice Centering Prayer was offered every Wednesday at 11.15AM throughout 2007. All are welcome.

Children's Choir - Nan Nowell

The Children's Choir met every Sunday this year. We sang about once a month in the 10:30 service until the three service format began. Now the children have their own service and we are working out a system for getting them to sing together in the 11:15 service. The children are now learning their parts for the Christmas pageant, which involves all non-adults this year. We also have an appointment to go caroling at Belmont Village retirement home the week before Christmas.

Christian Formation - Adults - Cliff Post

We began the year by looking at the theme of the resurrection in the Old Testament. This was led by Dr. Eric Baretto (who teaches at Emory). We reviewed "A Celebration of Discipline" by Richard Foster (a series led by The Rev. Trawin Malone and reprised during our Summer "Wonderful Wednesdays" by Father Malone and Lesley-Ann Drake). Summer mid-week fellowship also featured the Johannine letters and Gospel of John, led by Paul Appleby. We began the Fall by looking at God's appearances to people in the Bible (Theophanies) with Dr. David Garber (who teaches at Mercer), and finished this series by looking at several widely recognized Christian Mystics in the Church, a separate offering led

by Carl McColeman and Cliff Post. We will end the year with an examination of the Messiah, led by The Rev. Joel Hudson. Hopefully, our approach of mixing content, live speakers, music and video presentations has fed your spirit, mind and senses this year.

Christian Formation - Children - Paul Appleby

Our children's Christian formation classes have continued to provide solid spiritual care and grounding for the children of Atonement. We have had several visitors to our classes, both as a result of our Movie Night (at which we have had over 30 visitors in addition to our Atonement faithful), and shifting to the three service format on Sundays. We look to continued growth in the coming year.

Christian Formation - Youth - Paul Appleby

Our Youth Christian Formation group has raised money to fight hunger in Atlanta and participated in the Community Food Bank's hunger walk, volunteered at Trinity Soup Kitchen, and enjoyed a Youth Lock-In, in addition to year-round Sunday morning formation.

ECW (Episcopal Church Women) - Melissa Malone

ECW can be a rich source of fellowship, spiritual and personal growth, as well as an opportunity for inreach and outreach, uniquely suited to and supportive of, women. The 4 team structure that had been set up last year was retained and new team leaders were appointed. The ministries of emergency food, snacks for the Sandy Springs Mission, delivery of Altar flowers and support for funerals continued. The Women's Book Club and the WomE.N.S group were also brought in under the ECW umbrella.

Eucharistic Ministers & Eucharistic Visitors - The Rev. Trawin E. Malone

Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors are required to be members of the Episcopal Church of the Atonement, and are subsequently licensed by the Diocese for a 3 year term; they can be re-licensed at the Rector's request.

Eucharistic Ministers are present at every service to read the Old Testament lesson, lead the psalm, read the Prayers of the People, and help with the administration of the Sacraments. In 2007 nineteen people served in this way.

Eucharistic Visitors take Eucharist to members of the parish who cannot attend regularly scheduled services for some reason. Four members of the parish are currently licensed to be Eucharistic Visitors.

Evangelism & Incorporation - Bill Monk

The definition of evangelism is making disciples. The purpose of incorporation is to help disciples find a place of community and ministry within and outside the walls of the parish. To that end, the emphasis of the Evangelism and Incorporation Committee for the year 2007 has been visibility. In order to make disciples and to incorporate disciples into the life of the Body of Christ, the world needs to know that we, as a church, exist.

We have raised the visibility of who we are in several different areas. Each member of the committee visited other congregations to see how they do evangelism and incorporation. The committee discovered that, while we are not where we would like to be in many areas, we have made great strides in most. There is a greater awareness of how we look to visitors.

The committee has suggested and incorporated new signs and an intentional program for greeters.

The committee has developed and promoted advertising and publicizing what we are doing and who we are at Atonement. Three mass mailings have gone out to the greater community. A group of folks put door hangers on mailboxes in the nearby neighborhood. We have advertised our events in the newspaper. We have opened our doors to groups in the neighborhood.

Above all, we are striving to bring people into a community that has opportunities for ministry, spiritual growth, and fellowship. The next step is for the community at Atonement to go out into the world in order to do ministry in the world.

Finance - Ben Dupree

In 2006 and 2007 our budgets reflected "an investment in the future" with significant funding for our Christian Education ministry. While we did not "break even" in 2006 and we may not this year, our belief is that we are called to respond to the Great Commission, and as such, this investment is part of what we are called to do by Christ.

In 2008 we will hold the net budget to approximately the same amount as in 2007, being \$375,000. [The actual budget is approximately \$389,000 but a specific gift will reduce the net budget to approximately \$375,000.] Because of certain uncontrollable increased costs (insurance, estimated utilities, etc.) other areas of the budget had to be reduced. Salaries of our devoted and hard working ministers and staff are currently scheduled to remain the same as they were in 2007, without increases for costs of living.

The Finance Committee and the Vestry are committed to being good stewards of your gifts of treasure and to move as we feel best serves our commitment to outreach and service. Please remember your church if you are able to pledge or give more in the coming months.

Flower Guild - Beth Ellis

This past year has flown by and faithfully, each member of the Flower Guild has completed her assigned Sunday with a beautiful and hopefully, inspirational altar arrangement sometimes complemented with a side arrangement. Each of the ladies in the guild work independently to put together a work of art in fresh flowers to express appreciation to the Lord for sharing His creation with us and in the hopes that these arrangements will add to your spiritual worship.

We welcome any comments, suggestions, and donations, and returned or donated vases. We would also welcome anyone who enjoys creating arrangements or wishing to know more about flower arranging as this is an art form that is never completely learned but built upon, year after year. Come and share in the joy of the Lord.

Greeters - Roy Wright

This year the Greeter Committee has been in full swing with approximately 30 members of the Atonement community participating in this important ministry. The Greeters have welcomed about 60 visitors to Atonement so far this year. Members of the committee greet people before the 8:00, 9:00, and 11:15 services, welcoming visitors and newcomers alike, as well as providing a friendly welcome to regular attendees. This year the committee obtained two red aprons with "Welcome" and "Ask Me!" embroidered on the front in order to be easily identifiable, particularly to visitors to Atonement. Additionally, the committee held two

dinners at Atonement to give the greeters a chance to meet and get to know the fellow greeters and to discuss any good news and experiences the greeters have had in their role and to discuss any concerns about the activities of the committee.

Liturgy & Music - Howard Grimes

The Liturgy and Music Committee meets monthly to decide arrangements for the Sunday liturgy and the special feasts and seasons of the Church year and to determine the best practice for the Christian liturgy at Atonement.

This year the Sunday liturgy was rescheduled to three services:

1. To restore a focus and integrity to Sunday worship that was lacking in the present 10:30 liturgy.
2. To provide new, attractive worship opportunities to newcomers that will bring growth and new life to the parish.
3. To provide an improved schedule that allows adequate time for all Sunday morning activities.

On one measure, attendance since September at the three services has equaled or surpassed last year's.

Proposed changes in the sanctuary arrangement to accommodate the new Sunday liturgy service times are being considered. Historic arrangements in synagogues and Eastern and Western churches, as diagramed in Louis Bouyer's *Liturgy and Architecture* – displayed in the gathering area - and a walk-thru of the nave were used to imagine different possibilities. The objective is to accommodate the different worshipping communities in a focused, powerful, stirring liturgy. These proposals await consultation with the Planning Committee for implementation

Outreach - Bill Holmberg and "Mike" Wright

The Outreach Committee acts for the parish in expressing our compassion with those in need in the community.

Financial responsibilities include determining the agencies to support and the amount of that support. Our budget this year was to be 10% of the total pledged, \$25,740. In June we distributed \$12,150 to selected agencies. We are spending \$1,240 in support of holiday activities for Bowen Homes and Holy Comforter. The balance of the budget, \$12,150, is to be distributed at the end of December; however, we have been notified by the Treasurer that these funds are currently not available. The final agency distribution amounts, if any, will be determined at year's end. Please note that in 2006 a total of \$39,000 was distributed to selected agencies.

Non-financial responsibilities of the committee include the following activities: Holy Comforter Dinners, Holy Comforter Christmas Party, Fifth Sunday Programs, Outreach Sunday, Thanksgiving bags of food for Bowen Homes, Christmas toys for children at Bowen Homes, support and volunteer programs at Sandy Springs Mission, CAC, and High Point Elementary, and a fund-raising campaign for the new CAC building.

Parish Life - Paula Caldarella

Parish Life began the year with the annual Epiphany Pig roast in January. In April, the annual Seder Dinner and Easter Sunday luncheon were held. In May, the annual Spring Fish Fry was held. In September, we began a new tradition, "A Night in Tuscany", which the

Parish Life committee plans to establish as an annual event for our church. The Fall Fish Fry was not held in 2007, but we look forward to its return in the fall of 2008. December 2nd, the annual Advent Wreath-Making event was held. This year the event was moved from Sunday night to the Christian Education hour at 10:00. On December 9th, the committee is planning a Dessert Reception following the Lessons and Carols.

Pastoral Care - Lesley-Ann Drake

The members of the committee meet monthly to

- * ensure parishioners on the prayer list have their needs met to the best of the committee's ability

- * ensure the prayer list remains current

- * look for other ways in which the committee might serve those in need of pastoral care.

The Committee ensures Eucharist is taken to shut-ins who would like to receive it, and makes recommendations for the distribution of altar flowers.

Shepherd's Fund - Betsy Candler

The Shepherd's Fund was established in 1996 as an endowment fund with an initial gift of \$25,000. A committee of six gives a percentage of the Fund in one-time grants to those agencies with small budgets to help people in need. This year we have funded 4 agencies and expect to fund an additional 4 or 5 before year end. The Committee has written By-Laws for the Shepherd's Fund which were approved by the Vestry. Serving on the Committee this year were Katie Crawford, Ed Bailey, Howard Grimes, Ham Henson, Fred Spreyer, and Betsy Candler, Chm.

Stewardship - Hulan Webb

This year the Stewardship Committee has tried to communicate more with the congregation. We invited people to attend dinners in small Stewardship groups, based on age, to discuss stewardship and get some new ideas that might help us reach our goals. These groups seemed to stimulate conversation and awareness in the church.

We continued to have our speakers on Sunday and Trawin preached several sermons on Stewardship. We saw more people turn in pledge cards sooner, than in previous years and the response at In-gathering Sunday was overwhelmingly positive.

I have tried to go low key with the information this year, but the excel spreadsheets will return!

Telephone Tree - Patricia Bingham

Through a net-work of 9 volunteers, the Telephone Tree is used to relay information about critical events in the life of the Parish, to those members who typically do not use the computer. This year the 'phone tree was put into action six times.

Ushers Ministry - Patricia Bingham

As of early September 2007, when we moved to three services every Sunday, we have 32 members of our congregation committed to serve at an assigned service on an assigned Sunday, or to be an alternate when available. Ushers have also tried to ensure that service

attendance counts are as accurate as possible and that service sheets are picked up and recycled after services.

V.B.S. - Paul Appleby

This year our VBS, "A Heart for Missions" served over 75 children in the Sandy Springs community, including 30 from the Sandy Springs mission (our largest effort to date). Service projects were created for donation to local hospitals, and the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves while learning about taking the life giving gospel of Christ into their world.

Wedding Ministry - Beth Ellis

This past year presented the opportunity to share in two beautiful weddings. The Jillian Henson/Matthew Gillam wedding was a wonderful expression of the families' talents and sense of beauty displayed through the beautiful floral presentations and wedding parties attires with personal touches within the ceremony.

The marriage of Jenna Greenwald and Jason Conner was as magical as the Henson wedding but in a more simple style as suited the request of the bride. The attendees complemented the exquisite bride and once again, when the music began, the church was filled with a sense of awe at witnessing the outward expression of the inward grace of love.

Women's Book Club

The Episcopal Church Women's Book Club just held its final fall meeting last weekend. We came together for fellowship and fun as we discussed our latest selection. The ministry has been blessed, growing by leaps and bounds. Our initial session last fall consisted of fifteen ladies reading Joanna Weaver's Having A Mary Heart in a Martha World. This fall's session included twenty-four participants, five of whom joined us from outside the parish, reading Francine River's Redeeming Love. Women's Book Club would like to thank Paul Appleby for preparing inspired and inspiring services to open our meetings and Leanne Mehrman for her continued support and service as ministry deputy.

WomE.N.S Spirituality Group - Lesley-Ann Drake

Women met faithfully each week on Monday nights from 7PM - 8:30PM to talk about God in their lives. We learned the art of Theological Reflection, we looked at scripture and practiced Lectio Divina, we reviewed articles and excerpts from books written by scholars such as Thomas Keating and Joyce Rupp, poetry by Michel Quoist and used prayers from the BCP as well as A Prayer Book for the 21st Century. We will continue to meet weekly to explore our relationship with God as we journey together.

Worship Leaders

The Worship Leader reads the second reading at scheduled services, and other readings as requested by the Rector (for example at the Easter Vigil). Seventeen members of the parish served as Worship Leaders in 2007.