

# Carillon

## St Barnabas Episcopal Church

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Our Mission: To Share the Love of Christ / Compartir el amor de Cristo

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Borrego Springs, California

December 2005

Volume 8, No.12

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### *Reflections from the Desert*

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## Turn Prayer Into Action

I once heard a wise person say “patience is a virtue not given to the young.” If this is true, most of us in Borrego should feel blessed to be candidates for the virtue of patience! Our methodical, measured life style gives us the advantage of putting issues and concerns into the broader context of a longer-lived experience.

Our society rarely values patience and waiting. In a society of email, cell phones and instant coffee, we have to have it yesterday. Yet, our desert flowers teach us a different lesson. The ocotillo, for example, shows us that what appears dead is merely waiting

for a few drops of moisture and then transformation from brown to green occurs. However, for humans, waiting should not be equated with doing nothing. Christian faith must translate prayer into action.

Why in December am I calling attention to the virtue of patience? The reason is that, according to our worship season, from November 27th through December 24th we are in the season of Advent and during this time we are encouraged to “wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”

**...“wait in joyful hope  
for the coming of our  
Savior, Jesus ...”**

Again the Altar Guild is offering everyone in Borrego the helpful gift of the Advent calendar. Each day carries a unique message, its own picture and text for our reflection. By beginning each morning with a different focus, we can use that day to plumb its meaning and turn prayer into action. Based upon that text, what good initiative is God’s grace inviting you to take? The answer can be as varied as the people who use the calendar. Very early in this process one possible action to which you may be called would be to contact Nancy Bye, the directress of the Altar Guild, to ask for several more copies of the calendar which you could distribute or mail to family and friends for their edification. She can even tell you how (without an envelope) and for how much you can mail them.

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*During October and November, Borregans Haddon Salt, Richard and Nohemi Mills and Joanie Cahill visited Trinity Church in Pass Christian. Here are their accounts. Photos by Joanie Cahill.*

## Haddon Salt's Visit

(as told to Victor Levine)

Haddon Salt visited our sister church, Trinity Episcopal, seven weeks after Katrina hit and in a recent interview described the devastation. What was left of Trinity was the framework and stairs, a miracle perhaps that even that survived the fifty foot wave from hurricane Katrina that struck the community of Pass Christian on August 29, 2005.

Trinity is an old church, founded in 1851. The building was destroyed by the Camille hurricane in 1969 and rebuilt in 1971. The rector is The Rev. Dr Christopher Colby who ministers to a congregation of roughly the same size as St Barnabas.

Pass Christian is a small, tourist community on the Mississippi gulf coast similar in some ways to Borrego. It has a population of around 6500 and this swells during the tourist season. Lying west of Gulfport and south of Harrisburg, it is close to Biloxi and within striking distance of Mobile and New Orleans.

Haddon was in Mississippi for a total of six days in mid-October. While there, he visited friends, attended prayer meetings and talked generally with folks who had returned, along with volunteers from across the country who had come to help both Pass Christian and Trinity rebuild. He also helped to clean out the rubble from the church in order to facilitate a service set for the following Sunday morning, which was attended by twelve parishioners.

The Pass Christian community was hit hard. It was in the eye of the hurricane and the damage was



extensive. All the road and other identifying signs had been washed away or destroyed. A large number of homes were wrecked by the fury of the hurricane, along with casinos, businesses and public structures.

Haddon described a chaotic scene reminiscent of the bombings of British cities he remembered from the Second World War: houses reduced to rubble and public utilities gone, including phone, electricity and

**“...a chaotic scene reminiscent of the bombings of British cities...”**



He described the response as “The uniting pioneer spirit so typical of the American character.”

Symbolic of that determination, he said, was the flower he saw growing in the rubble. He described that as an apt metaphor for the spirit of the people, all pitching in to rebuild the community and indeed make it stronger.

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## From Joanie Cahill

What strikes you most is the rubble. I visited Pass Christian on Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, nearly eleven weeks after the hurricane. There was debris everywhere, sometimes organized into piles, mostly not. It’s as if the entire town was turned into a solid mass of rubble and people were trying to reclaim it, one chunk of debris at a time.

**What strikes you  
most is the rubble.**

I was attending a conference in Mobile, Alabama for my job. After the morning keynote speaker, I borrowed a rental car and headed for Mississippi. It didn’t look far on the map; just head west on the interstate

and at some point cut south towards the Gulf and Pass Christian.

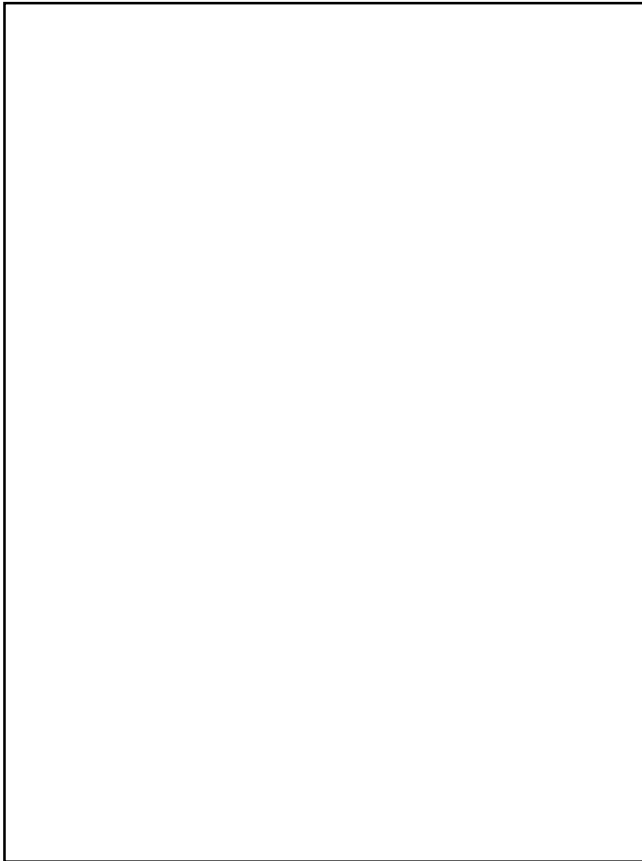
Mobile had suffered some damage, but as I drove westward the evidence of Katrina increased. I knew I was in trouble when I left the interstate and ran smack into... traffic! With so many roads still full of rubble and so many bridges out, traffic was just not moving in Gulfport. When I finally got near the water, I came upon another kind of roadblock, a military checkpoint. The neighborhoods on the waterfront were still so damaged that traffic was closely controlled at the few entry points that had been cleared. Between the debris, the military’s ra-

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water services. He said the devastation penetrated as far as 100 miles north of the coast.

Despite the chaos, however, there was an ongoing effort to bring matters under control. College students and other volunteer groups were camped in town, as well as around Trinity Episcopal. They had come from all parts of the US. One of the central distributing outlets Haddon described was the Coast Episcopal School, somewhat inland of Trinity, which dispensed food and water and cooked meals to the volunteers, returnees and all those in need.

What encouraged Haddon was the optimism among the survivors and certainly among the volunteers.



*Trinity Church in November, being readied for services.*

zor wire and armed checkpoints, things weren't looking too friendly.

A state police officer gave me directions to the right checkpoint for Pass Christian. Words poured out of his mouth in a deep Southern drawl, but I thought I got it. It sounded easy enough until I discovered that there were no street signs anymore. Hmmm. I meandered west and south on the streets that seemed to be the most clear of rubble and was rejected by two more checkpoint "Charlies" before I stumbled into what used to be Pass Christian.

With all due respect to the people who'd been clearing debris for almost three months, the place was a mess. You've heard it all on TV, "Indescribable... overwhelming... unbelievable devastation..." And it was. But when you see it in person, it wrenches your heart.

I got directions to Trinity from some locals, and made my way to the shell of a once graceful building in the most beautiful setting of oaks and white sand beaches you can possibly imagine. Reverend Colby

was out of town, but I met a hardy group of volunteers from New York, Kentucky and Texas who were getting the church "ready" for services the next day. They invited me to join them for lunch at "God's Katrina Kitchen", a soup- kitchen tent set up down the beach, and I did.

These folks were moved to drop everything and drive to Mississippi because they knew they had to do something. With such total destruction, it's hard to imagine how to even begin to offer help. So we just do. We give money. We drive to Mississippi. We bake cakes for the fund-raiser at Christmas Circle.

Nothing will ever be the same for the people of Pass Christian. We at St. Barnabas have so much, and have so much to give. One piece at a time, we can help them clear the debris, reclaim their church and rebuild their community.

**Sources of additional information include:**  
[www.katrina.passchristian.net/emails\\_katrina](http://www.katrina.passchristian.net/emails_katrina)  
[www.katrinapics.passchristian.net/trinity\\_church.htm](http://www.katrinapics.passchristian.net/trinity_church.htm)  
Diocese of MS: [www.dims.org](http://www.dims.org)  
Haddon Salt: [hsalt@netscape.com](mailto:hsalt@netscape.com)



*Trees like this, decorated with debris were a common sight.*



*Trinity church's piano was flung about two blocks, landing on the far side of the cemetery.*

## **From the Mills**

We visited Trinity Church on November 15th. We spent nearly two hours touring the devastated town, taking pictures, and visiting Rector Christopher Colby and his charming wife Debbie. The church is about 300 yards from the beach. It has an elevation of 14 feet but the storm surge was 28 feet so the walls and the interior were washed away. Fortunately most of the old stately live-oak trees in the town and around the church withstood the onslaught.

The church frame is made of steel girders and they remained along with most of the roof. There were 3 other buildings, school, office, storage, etc. that

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*Gravestones, some from the 1700's were tumbled as if placed in a clothes dryer.*

were blown away. The only file cabinet found, two blocks away, contained cemetery records. Only half of the parishioners remain, about 35. The rest lost their homes and are gone, maybe to never return. Those still in town are living in half demolished houses, tents and RV's.

FEMA has supplied a large number of RV's and tents, as well as feeding stations. Colby had high praise for FEMA in MS, contrary to poor planning in New Orleans. We were impressed with the activity of Federal and volunteer workers. The town was teeming with trucks hauling away debris.

**“...when you see the devastation you would not want to wake up each morning and face it for another day.”**

The town was almost completely destroyed as our pictures will portray. It is like a town demolished by heavy bombing in WWII. The streets were also badly damaged and it was difficult to get around, particularly with all the salvage trucks running. Pass Christian and adjacent Bay St. Louis, probably suffered the most complete destruction. I have seen these places in better times and they were the ultimate in old south charm. I think some of the novel, *All the King's Men* was located in this area. The tragedy is that the area has suffered several major hurricanes and Katrina will not be the last. But the people are determined to rebuild and rebuild stronger; they are to be admired.

Colby estimates rebuilding the chapel and the church plant will cost \$3.5 million. They have \$1.5 million in insurance and \$250,000 in capital funds. So they need to raise another \$1.75 million. We asked what was his most urgent need and he said it was prayer and money. We also asked about other needs in the Parish and he said there were several parishioners who had stayed and were living in terrible circumstances. Colby and Debbie, by the way, were fortu-

nate because their brick house, at 25' elevation, suffered only about 3' of inundation; they lost most of their furniture and appliances. They are living there but eating at one of the feeding stations.

We expressed admiration for their fortitude. But I assure you when you see the devastation you would not want to wake up each morning and face it for another day. I recommend we give them some financial help and a lot of prayer.

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## **“We Will Stand With You”**

Bishop George Packard, after a bishops' meeting in late September, announced the formation of a companion initiative, “We will stand with you.” It gives structure to churches willing to form partnerships with devastated parishes in Louisiana and Mississippi.

Recently, Alex+ announced that he and his vestry unanimously agreed to name **Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>** their first “We will stand with you...” day, beginning a partnership with Trinity Church, Pass Christian, Mississippi. Trinity is a small rural parish.

The entire offering from the two services at St. Barnabas on this fourth Sunday in Advent will be sent to Trinity. The St. Barnabas Altar Guild is also planning to make a small donation. These are the first tangible gestures in what is intended to be an ongoing relationship providing, hope, love, courage, and financial help to a beleaguered sister parish.

The Altar Guild of St. Barnabas has prepared a lovely Advent Calendar, and 50 copies were sent to The Rev. Christopher Colby, the rector of Trinity Church, so that he could distribute them to members of his parish.

For further information: [nancybye@cableusa.com](mailto:nancybye@cableusa.com) or 760-767-4781

-Nancy Bye

## *The People's Corner*

by John Drum, *The People's Warden*

### **Back to Basics**

During these times of divisiveness and controversy in the Episcopal Church and much of the Christian community, it is probably a good idea for all of us to “return to the basics.”

Our *Book of Common Prayer* provides the guidance that is very useful. Might I suggest that it is very informative to read “An Outline of the Faith” (commonly called the Catechism) beginning on page 845, to be followed by the “Articles of Religion” starting on page 867.

By taking the time to study these historical statements of faith, we realize how unimportant some of the media headlines and rhetoric become.

We often talk about the “founding fathers” of our country with reflection and respect. I would suggest that the Church’s “founding fathers” have given us the tools and guidance to take a rational and logical approach to the present and future for our church and the communities in which we live.

As we seek stability in our Christianity, the Book of Common Prayer is a cornerstone of knowledge and guidance.

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## *Vestry Report*

by Nancy Bye

### **Hip, Hip, Hooray!**

EVERY MEMBER OF THE 2005 VESTRY WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING NOVEMBER 28!

The discussion of how best to protect the St. Barnabas properties and possessions from flood waters continues. This is a very real part of your vestry’s work—our mandate, in fact. But our valley is a flood plain and all grapple with questions of how to preserve what man has built here. We continue to make a conscientious effort to resolve how much we need to do to protect the labyrinth, the parking lot, our buildings, and public lands around us. We value your experience, your ideas and your comments.

Hip, hip, hooray! Our new treasurer, Margaret Orenyak, presented her financial committee’s proposed budget for 2006. We found it generally sound, reasonable, and welcome! We will vote on it at the December meeting, and present it to you at the annual parish meeting in February. Meanwhile, we ask you to complete your 2005 pledge payments if you have not. Oh yes, and we hope you can make a modest and helpful increase for 2006. All together now, hip, hip, hooray!!!

### *Reflections continued from page 1*

What is important is that we use each day well. Live today - in joyful expectation. “Joyful” since you already know the good outcome of your waiting; “expectation” because you have not yet attained it. Elsewhere in this issue *The Carillon* gives us suggestions for Advent prayer (Wednesday afternoons at 4pm; Sunday, December 18th at 5pm), study (Mondays at 5:15pm; Thursdays at 4pm) and action (Friday, December 9th Fund Raiser for Trinity parish, Pass Christian MS; Sunday, December 18th collections). The above is meant to assist us in making our own decisions; there will be many other possibilities about which only you know.

What is important during this Advent is to prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus by intentionally using our time, talent and treasure in joyful expectation of the birth of Him whose life changed that of others and who now invites us to be patient as, with His grace, we too change into the masterpiece God intended us to become.

Sincerely,  
Alex+/Nancy+

# Mark Your Calendar

## December

Dec. 1, 8 & 15 4pm Women's Bible Study  
Dec. 7 12 noon Women of St. Barnabas meet at Evelyn Park's home  
Dec. 9 7am Baked Goods Fundraiser at Christmas Circle  
Dec. 14 6pm Sarah's Circle and Men's Group  
Dec. 18 Sunday collections for Trinity church, Pass Christian MS.

## January

January 8 Twelfth Night party at the rectory, 5-8pm  
January 15 Stewardship Sunday - 7am and 9:30 am

## HOLIDAY SERVICES

### LESSONS & CAROLS

Dec. 18th at 5pm

### CHRISTMAS EVE:

8:30pm Holy Eucharist

### CHRISTMAS DAY

8:30am Holy Eucharist

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

Sunday Holy Eucharist at 8:30am

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