All the Pieces Matter

Building Bethesda’s Tomorrow
Eli and I got a jigsaw puzzle recently. It is amazing how intricate new technology can make the pieces—far more so than was possible in my childhood. No two pieces were alike, and there was very little pattern to go on. The easiest pieces to spot were the corners, of course, and then the edges. But the most satisfying piece to place is always the last one. The last one completes the picture, and without it, a puzzle is just not nearly as satisfying.

I think all this makes for a perfect theme for stewardship this year. Bethesda is, indeed, a complex picture. Sure, there are some key aspects that are easy to spot, like the corners and edges of a jigsaw puzzle. But Bethesda is really the most life-giving, joyful place when the whole puzzle is complete, when every piece is in place.

It may be easy to think that any one financial gift won’t matter. It may be easy to think that small gifts aren’t visible or integral. But that is simply not the case. For Bethesda to continue our strong tradition of faithful worship, learning, and service, we must all pray deeply and act courageously in our stewardship.

Giving to our parish is about far more than paying the bills. Our commitment to regular financial support becomes an outward sign of a deeper life of faith shared together as we grow and as we serve God’s mission.

I hope that each of us will come and enjoy all the wonderful worship and other events we have planned this season, not the least of which is the opportunity to have Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury, here on January 31 when Bishop Eaton makes his first formal visitation to Bethesda. We have so many other opportunities to build and to fill out the picture of what God is doing in this place. And we will expand those opportunities and offerings even more as households increase their generous giving and thereby each piece of puzzle comes into place.

So every time you come here, please know that you are, in the most significant way, a piece of the puzzle. Know that we are stronger when all the pieces fit together in worship, learning, service, and stewardship to form the rich tapestry of grace that God is creating and sharing through our Bethesda Family.

The Rev. James R. Harlan, Rector
On Saturday, January 30, 2016, The Right Reverend Peter Eaton will be installed as the 4th Bishop of the Diocese of Southeast Florida at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral in Miami. Bishop Eaton earned Bachelor of Arts degrees from King’s College, London and Queen’s College, Cambridge. He also attended seminary at Westcott House, also in Cambridge, and was ordained into the Church of England in 1987 by Lord Robert Runcie who was the 102nd Archbishop of Canterbury (1980–1991.) The preacher for Bishop Eaton’s installation will be his friend, Lord Rowan Williams, the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury (2002–2012.) Lord Williams is a prolific writer on religion as well as a renown poet.

On Sunday, January 31, 2016, Bethesda-by-the-Sea will have the honor of welcoming Bishop Eaton and Lord Williams at all three of our services. Lord Williams will be our guest preacher that day, and Bishop Eaton will preside at each service, confirming several of our adults at the 11:00 a.m. service. They will also be our guest speakers for the Adult Forum at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. Please plan on joining us for this very special occasion.

For More Information
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Greg Knight, Director of Children and Youth Ministries | (561) 655-4555 x114 | knight@bbts.org
The reds, oranges, and yellows stream across the sky to the west as the sun goes down on another wonderful
day in Palm Beach. The dusk is broken as candles are lighted around the Garden Chapel at Bethesda, there
will be a 15 minute candlelight service followed by a fellowship hour of fine wines and small bites.

Would you like to join us? Your invitation is on its way to you, and we hope as many members as possible will
join us in February.

As we look forward to 2016, let us not forget some of the triumphs of 2015:

- We started with a target of $1.64m for pledged contributions for the annual campaign and you
delivered—target achieved in full;
- The restoration project for our wonderful buildings continued, with all work funded in full before it
started—target achieved in full.

In 2016 we need to do more; you requested that we add to our ministries and events during the “Ask &
Inform” process in early 2015. We can do this by increasing pledges in 2016, by adding to the Preservation
Endowment for the buildings that we share with the local community, and by making provisions for
Bethesda in our wills and estate plans. Funds contributed to the Preservation Endowment free-up budgeted
funds for building preservation so that they may be redirected to our living ministries. Remember our core
ministries are worship, education, service, and stewardship.

Please strengthen your financial giving to God through Bethesda in 2016 as we Build Bethesda’s Tomorrow.

For More Information
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Bethesda Cares
Meal Ministry

From its very beginning, the Church has been concerned with the ministry of hospitality, caring for both those within its midst as well as the stranger at the door. In a parish the size of Bethesda-by-the-Sea, this offer of hospitality is vitally important, and the Meal Ministry, begun last year, is an extension of Bethesda Cares and another way in which members of our faith community look after each one another in times of need.

After a death in the immediate family, an incapacitating surgery, a new birth, or some other major life event, meal preparation, especially when friends and loved ones may be coming and going, is the last thing one should be concerned about, and Bethesda realizes this. When the church learns about a family’s crisis or major life event, the shepherd for that household will ask if the family would like meals delivered. If the answer is yes, the system begins to work, and the pastoral care staff organizes the ministry through www.takethemameal.com, which not only lays out a schedule for home delivery, but also includes space for special dietary restrictions or preferences as well as any instructions that need to be shared. The schedule on the website allows for individuals/families to sign up for specific dates and include the item(s) that they will deliver to the recipient’s home. The website also affords the ability for individuals/families to order a meal to be delivered and indicate on the schedule from what restaurant that meal is ordered.

In the near future, we also will be organizing a team to meet at the church and cook large-batch dishes that can be stored in a freezer at the church and then delivered to families either when there are blanks in the sign-up form on the website or for other, briefer needs. Keep an open eye for requests from the pastoral care staff for opportunities to participate in this ministry, either signing up to provide a meal or preparing dishes at the church to be frozen for later delivery. If you have a need for this ministry that your shepherd is unaware of, please let her/him know so that we may begin the process and care for you in your time of need.

For More Information
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The Palm Beach County Food Bank rescues, collects, sorts, and distributes food at no cost to local hunger relief agencies. We are committed to fighting hunger and improving food security in our community.

The Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea has supported our efforts by hosting an annual Empty Bowls™ event which is a part of their Feeding in February outreach program. Empty Bowls is a national grass roots movement that has raised millions of dollars for food banks and other poverty programs. All proceeds from the event benefit the PBC Food Bank. In 2014-15 fiscal year, the Food Bank provided more than 5 million pounds of food to more than 100 agencies on the front lines of hunger relief in our community. They helped to serve at least 80,000 food to insecure individuals, children, and families who rely on food pantries, soup kitchens, and feeding programs for help. Additionally the Food Bank served 2,300 children at 31 summer camps in low-income communities, providing nearly 150,000 meals through its weekend nutrition backpack program. They also assisted 800 families to receive SNAP benefits (food stamps) and provide nutrition education and assistance through their Nutrition Driven mobile food pantry.

Empty bowls are a symbol of those who go hungry each day. We welcome you to participate and ‘eat simply’ so others can simply eat at the 3rd Annual Empty Bowls on Friday, February 5, hosted by The Church of Bethesda-by-the-Sea. The soup luncheon, available for a minimum $25 donation, takes place from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall and Garth. With their donation, those who attend this family-friendly event will receive a one-of-a-kind handmade bowl and enjoy a serving of soup and bread with a bottle of water. A variety of delicious soups provided by local restaurateurs will be available, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. Reservations are not required. A takeout option is available by ordering online.

Hunger has no place in our community. Help us make a difference for the thousands of hungry children and families in Palm Beach County who are in need. To learn more about the PBC Food Bank visit us at pbcfoodbank.org.

For More Information

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Thank you to everyone who participated in the Port Ministry’s Save Our Samples Sunday on November 22, 2015. Bethesda collected samples of soap, shampoo, lotion, as well as toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, razors, men’s white crew socks, sweaters, blankets, magazines, and playing cards to assemble 200 Christmas bags that were given to mariners who were at sea on Christmas Day. It was a great activity for the whole parish family and made someone’s Christmas a little brighter. Thank you again for your support.
In the late 1960s, there was a group of dedicated St. Mary’s Guild ladies who held regular open markets at Bethesda to raise funds for the community. The rector at the time, The Rev. Hundson Cary, and the vestry, the governing body of the church, decided that this was just too unseemly for the church. The ladies were told they needed to find themselves someplace else. So as not to be perturbed, the ladies found themselves some rental space, signed a lease, and came back and reported to the rector what they set out to do. His comment to the ladies was “You will be as poor as church mice!” And so with his blessing and a new name, they set off to make history in Palm Beach.

Over the years, the Church Mouse moved from place to place: the Paramount Building, Worth Avenue, and elsewhere. At one time there were two Church Mouse’s, one in Palm Beach and one in West Palm Beach called Church Mouse West. All the while, burning through volunteers at an alarming rate, a volunteer and her board took the reins and brought stability to the Church Mouse. With her foresight and daring determination, she and the board then convinced the church to withdraw $1,070,000 from the church’s endowment and buy the current Church Mouse building. Now burdened with repaying the church for the withdrawn endowment, she soldiered ahead, bringing supporters and naysayers behind her in her wake. And in the end, not only did they repay the endowment loan of $1,070,000, they paid $725,095 in interest on the original church note, paid for improvements to the building totaling $241,274, and gave $1,080,000 to outreach—paying or repaying a total of $3,116,369 in ten years!

She made friends, had begrudging admirers, and had stubborn detractors, but through it all she persevered; keeping the building intact and managing the numerous renters who shared space with the Church Mouse—we didn’t always have the entire 4,500 square feet we enjoy now. She hired, fired, brought in estates, garnered the Church Mouse exposure throughout the world, and she was just simply always there! She had a dynamic board too with the likes of Jane Caruso, Gert Cooper, Fran Sewell, Ron Fick, Andrew “Ott” Miller, Clare Wilson, Margaret van de Water, Peggy Dimm, Ellie Baker, Janet Ware, Anne Winter, and so many more.

There is not one volunteer or agency that doesn’t owe a debt of gratitude to this incredible woman, Mrs. Arlo Prior, for what she unselfishly did to build with her own sweat and tears the Church Mouse we all know today. Arlo, thank you for your ministry!
The Cursillo Movement has its roots in the Roman Catholic Church of Spain, when, after the Spanish Civil War ended in 1939, the men were seeking renewal in a life with Christ. The name itself is Spanish, meaning a short course in Christianity, and is often associated with a 3-day weekend for fellowship and growth in one's faith and spirituality. Pilgrims gain a deeper understanding of the teachings of Jesus and how one can serve Him in a forum of sharing experiences and understanding of one's individual spiritual focus.

New pilgrims attend a 3-day weekend which includes fifteen talks—Grace, Faith, Piety, and Study to name a few—five meditations and a Eucharist every day. The weekend is not a retreat, but an opportunity to meet others seeking to strengthen their faith. It provides an environment to experience the reality of the gift of God's love through shared prayer, individual meditation, worship, fellowship, laughter, tears, and unconditional love.

After the weekend, each person is encouraged to join in the activities of “the Fourth Day” Community. The purpose of the community is to give strength and support to each other as one grows in faith and develops one's own unique gift of ministry.

During the course of the year, Ultreyas are held at various churches in the diocese. Translated as onward, these Ultreyas give members of the movement the opportunity to fulfill their baptismal responsibility—“to go forth as apostles, evangelizing our Lord.” Recently Bethesda had the opportunity to host the Diocese for a Grand Ultreya, which was attended by 150 members.

There are two Cursillo weekends scheduled in 2016:
- Episcopal Women’s Cursillo (No: 111) on May 19–22, 2016
- Episcopal Men’s Cursillo (No: 93) on October 6–9, 2016

In the past, Cursillo was primarily thought of as a source of individual spiritual growth, today, we realize that individual spirituality is just not enough. Our world needs us all to be apostolic and to become “fishers of men.” Should we do any less?

For more information on Cursillo, and if you are interested in experiencing a weekend of ministry, please contact our parish representatives: Georgie Skover (Women’s Cursillo Group) at geoskover@gmail.com or Fred Zrinscak (Men’s Cursillo Group) at zincfl@yahoo.com.

For More Information
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We are delighted to be presenting a special concert by Cathedra on Saturday, January 30, at 7:00 p.m. We seldom present a concert on a Saturday evening, but this is one you won’t want to miss!

Established in 2010, Cathedra has already achieved high acclaim, not least for its “beautiful, blended sound” (The Washington Post). Specializing in music of both the Renaissance and Baroque and a champion of the modern-day composers, Cathedra is a highly skilled ensemble of professional singers, dedicated to bringing the highest form of expression to music from across the ages.

Under the artistic leadership of Maestro Michael McCarthy, the ensemble is resident at Washington National Cathedral (where Mr. McCarthy is Director of Music). Exploring new boundaries of both repertoire and presentation, Cathedra tailors its programming in such a way as to offer authenticity and originality that is both unique and compelling.

In June 2014, I had the opportunity to hear this group perform at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. as part of the annual conference of The Association of Anglican Musicians. The entire conference was simply “blown away” by their stellar performance. The review in the association’s journal stated, “Words simply fail: it was astonishing, ravishing.”

Put the date, Saturday, January 30, on your calendar right now, and plan to attend! The concert begins at 7:00 p.m. and a $15 requested donation will be accepted at the door.

For More Information

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Nearly two-thirds of American adults (65%) use social networking sites. Pew Research reports have documented in great detail how the rise of social media has affected such things as work, politics and political deliberation, communication patterns around the globe, as well as the way people get and share information about health, civic life, news, communities, teenage life, parenting, dating, and even people’s level of stress. ¹

The reason social media has become so popular and widespread is simply because everyone and anyone can do it. You don’t need to be an excellent writer or even be required to know important technical skills. For all kinds of organizations, especially churches, it is the perfect venue to support and spread their message and mission without the high cost of advertising. Did you know that ninety-three percent of social media users believe companies should have a presence in social media? ²

The most successful social media outlet that Bethesda utilizes is Facebook. Our page is quickly approaching 2,000 fans—who are people that “like” our page. Facebook is extremely interactive, so fans can like a post, comment on it, and/or share it with others. When people choose to “share” our posts—re-posting it to their own page—it is then viewed by all of their “friends.” For example, our E-mail Newsletter post on December 3, 2015 was viewed by a total of 527 people of which 289 were non-fans. Non-fans refer to people who haven’t “liked” our church page and viewed a post through an indirect link. Therefore, we reach more non-fans by most of our posts than actual fans. It has become a wonderful way for our parishioners to connect with us online, but it is also an important tool for evangelism as it creates awareness for non-parishioners.

Social media has quickly surpassed e-mail as the leading activity on the Internet and has become the fastest tool of communication in human history. ³ If you are interested in learning about Bethesda’s social media presence, we invite you to the Adult Forum on Sunday, February 7, in the Parish Hall. Renée Boger-Cheifet will be talking and answering questions about the Bethesda’s electronic communications. If you are not already a fan of our Facebook page, please check it out and stay connected by simply “liking” the page.

¹ pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/
² ministrymagazine.org/archive/2014/01/social-media-and-evangelism

For More Information
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Cupcake Sunday

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