

## **Yes! We Have Agreement with Fr. Whitlock; Next, Bishop's Okay Will Assure Us a Priest-in-Charge for Next 12 Months**

*For He's a Jolly Good Fellow* reverberated through the walls last Monday evening and then outside of our Parish Hall. Why such exuberant singing from a group that has spent ten hours a month for the past five months with their noses to the proverbial grindstone?

"We have a contract!" **Joyce Corn** beamed. "We now have an agreement with Fr. Whitlock as our Priest in Charge here at St. Augustine's. It feels so good."

"I'm very proud of what we accomplished," new vestry member **Michael Griffin** added.

The actual signing of the contract, called a Letter of Agreement, took place this morning at an 8:00 AM called vestry meeting. Three original Letters of Agreement were signed: one for Fr. Whitlock, one for St. Augustine's and another for our bishop. This agreement will become official when it is signed by Bishop Lipscomb.

Here is an overview of the Letter of Agreement.

The Preamble states that:

*By word and action, informed at all times by the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese, the Priest in Charge shall proclaim the Gospel, love and serve Christ's people, nourish them and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.*

The document identifies these immediate tasks:

*Coming to terms with the history of this congregation and its relationships with previous clergy, identifying any patterns which may provide insight for the future.*

*Discovering this congregation's special identity, what it dreams of being and doing apart from previous clergy leadership, and how the parish plans to accomplish this.*

*Renewing and reworking relationships with the diocese, so that each may be a more effective resource and support to one another.*

*Building a commitment to the leadership of the new priest in charge in order to be prepared to*

*move into the future with openness and a commitment to new possibilities.*

All ministries of our parish – with the exception of those reserved exclusively for a priest – are ministries that will be shared by Fr. Whitlock and the members.

Clearly this is a partnership agreement.

The vestry agrees to responsibility for maintenance and expansion – if it serves the parish vision – of the fabric of the church, including both its property and buildings. Vestry members understand that the appearance and utility of our buildings and property are essential for the future growth and spiritual health of the parish.

We have contracted with Fr. Whitlock to be our Priest in Charge for the coming twelve months. He will work 20 hours each week – which includes Sundays and one and a half week days. This is the equivalent of half time.

The contract will be renegotiated in February, 2007 after a review of our mutual parish ministries.

On one Sunday each month, St. Augustine's will allocate the plate offering – not including pledges – to a discretionary fund for Fr. Whitlock to use as assistance to people in emergency situations.

Fr. Whitlock and the vestry agree to *participate in the diocesan program for new ministries and to pursue avenues which may enhance their effectiveness.*

This Agreement becomes effective, retroactively, on February 1, 2006.

"God's blessing," **Mary Clowers** called it.

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### **How Do We Praise God?**

Here at St. Augustine's, we sing, pray -- and some of us raise our arms in praise. Next Sunday at our Homecoming Celebration we will introduce liturgical dance here as well.

St. Petersburg's own **Michael Allen**, a professional dancer with a very remarkable resume', -- and now with his own dance company – is a man gifted and well taught. When he graduated from Gibbs High School, he was awarded a

*continued on back page*

## **Profile**

### **Vestry Rookie: "I Wanted This for Quite Some Time"**

Last Saturday when **Michael Griffin** learned that he'd been elected to his first term on St. Augustine's vestry, he said he was genuinely excited. At "about 50," he's the youngest vestry representative in many years and he's keenly aware of that. He sees a need for some new solutions to old problems, but Michael says he "loves Episcopalian doctrine" and he just hopes to "broaden things a bit."

Michael is working as a recruiter for The Education Station, a free after-school program that transports children K-5 for tutoring two days each week. Part of the Leave No Child Behind effort, the non-profit company has been around almost 25 years. Now its emphasis is on assisting those with FCAT testing problems. Each child when enrolled gets a Hooked On Phonics computer, Michael says proudly.

"I work with parents and young people," he adds, "and I find I can relate to so many ages." Michael feels sure that this experience should help him on the church vestry as well.

"I really have no agenda for this work," Michael insists. "I'm just asking the Lord to lead me as we do His will here in St. Petersburg."

### **NEXT SUNDAY: HOMECOMING! SURELY THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE!**

#### **How Do We Praise God?** *continued*

scholarship to train and later dance with the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in New York City. After performing with them for several years, he joined another company dancing throughout Europe, the Far East and Guam.

It was after returning to the states that he formed his own dance company: the Ministry of Dance Christian Organization. At St. Augustine's, Michael will dance during our service's time of Praise and Worship and then again following communion.

**Shirley Davis**, who is chairing the Homecoming event said, "I am so delighted that Michael is the person introducing liturgical dance into St. Augustine's worship. I've known him since he graduated from Gibbs. This remarkable young man loves God and his dance reflects that. Just look at the name of his dance company! He calls it a Christian ministry."

## **Things You Should Know...**

That budget introduced at the recent **Annual Meeting** includes a category for getting this church **some part-time help** with routine tasks. Our new vestry will be looking at two areas: maybe a person to help with regular cleaning, sometimes called a Sexton; and perhaps a part-time office person to get files and correspondence a bit more organized . . . Ooooh, those rains last week reminded us just how badly our Ford Hall needs significant **roof repairs**. In one back room "the ceiling *is* falling," so vestry member **Claude Reynolds** is looking at every possible way to get the work done at minimum cost. . . .

**Anna Walker** is still recovering from her recent illness and, according to her husband **Mordecai**, "There is progress, but it's slow." Anna is at Pinellas Point Rehab and Nursing Center and she does welcome visitors -- and your continued prayers. . . . Yesterday was another exceptional jazz experience with **The Opposite Sax**, that improvisational quintet with St. A's own **DeCosmos, Laura and Emile**. They had nine members of this church -- including Fr. Whitlock -- in a very appreciative audience at the James Weldon Johnson library on 18th Avenue South. Their performance, designed to involve and educate the audience members, was one of a series of special events for Black History Month. . . . So many things have changed around here that our church's "web site for church-shoppers," [www.staugstpete.org](http://www.staugstpete.org), needed some remodeling too: new photos, some freshened layouts, a few substitutions. Next, some features just for our mem-bers, so, as Fr. Robin Whitlock put it, "It can be our fastest way of getting information out to everyone." Check it out. . . .

With 8 children here last Sunday, **St A's Children's Sunday School** is alive again with Bible stories, craft work and refreshments. . . . **Tom Krug** and **Fr. Whitlock** attended an open house at the new facility of **Community Tampa Bay**, the agency once called NCCJ, the National Council for Community and Justice. Topics: their Anytown summer youth project and some co-operative use of our St. A. facilities. . . .

Next week's **Homecoming Day Breakfast** will be free for all our guests -- and the menu will have even more choices. Sausage, bacon, biscuits, eggs and grits. Plus coffee, tea and juices. That's the good news. Now the other side: we regulars are expected to pay for our breakfast -- but pay in advance. Please pay today for next week. That will minimize the gridlock at the kitchen window.

"... **more\* from St. Augustine's**" is for members and friends of one courageous Episcopal Church in south St. Petersburg, Florida. This weekly newsletter is about candor, recognition, spiritual attitude, nixing hearsay and, yes, unashamed cheer leading. Members Judy and Tom Krug are co-editors; Mordecai Walker is co-founder. Some 65 parishioners are essential to the project. Every issue is available at the church and online at [www.staugstpete.org](http://www.staugstpete.org), our web site for church-shoppers.

