

“Defining Component of Our Identity: Outreach” They Say

“I’m tired of hearing that St. Augustine’s might not survive,” announced **Calvin Knight**, gesturing to friends. “I think we should be confident. Talk about what we’re doing now. Plan for the future. We’re going to be here for a long time.”

Today, as if on cue, our vestry and priest will meet to discuss a major parish plan for the next five years. Earlier this month each chair of a parish committee gave **Fr. Whitlock** their group’s long range plans including specific activities, timelines and measurable goals.

“I’ve organized those plans around three major themes,” Fr. Whitlock explained, “revitalizing our member base, renewing our mission focus, and reclaiming outreach as the defining component of our identity.”

There is an immediate impetus for completing this parish plan. Our diocese has dedicated a total of \$150,000 to be awarded this year as grants to individual parishes “to support and encourage congregational vitality,” according to the Diocesan Council. Deadline for the grant applications is this coming Monday, May 1.

St. Augustine’s will submit two grant packages totaling over \$62,000 in requests. Based on our parish plan, these are projects the vestry believes will strengthen our parish.

Fr. Whitlock has prepared one application for the overall ministry of our parish. *continued on back page*

Fr. R. To Join Seminary Board

Our priest in charge, **Fr. Robin Whitlock**, has accepted an invitation to join the board of directors of the St. Petersburg Theological Seminary.

“I was pleased to be asked,” he said, recalling his luncheon meeting with **Rev. Dr. Manuel Sykes**, president of the seminary, **Attorney Michele Shutz**, president of the school’s board, and vestry member **Judy Krug**.

“Your priest is just the kind of person we’re looking for,” said Ms. Schutz. “He’s highly educated, seems to have an understanding of clergy needs -- and also what the community would respond to. Best of all, he’s from the south side, where we want to grow.”

This meeting was scheduled to explore ways for St. Augustine’s and the seminary to work together. “There were such exciting possibilities that *continued on back page*

So You're Curious ...

That ornate wrought iron cross that now adorns Ford Hall turns out to have a colorful past. **Calvin Knight** says he had it fabricated locally at Downing's Forge at the request of a long-ago priest. How long ago was that? Calvin answers this way: Downing's charged just \$30.00, for design, fabrication and materials! It sat atop our church until last year when a newer style aluminum cross was salvaged from another church.

There is a rumbling that we may resurrect the **Service Auction** fund-raiser. That's a day at a restaurant where folks offer services for sale to the highest bidder. Creole suppers, three hours of yard work, babysitting, help with your taxes, com-puter instruction, even window washing. No overhead and the church reaps all the cash: this is almost painless. Whatcha got to offer?

"Churches: your best days are coming!" That's the message of a 5-day Episcopal Church experience called **Start up! Start Over!** It's said to be for those who believe that church is about the transformation of people's lives. **Fr. Robin** and **Judy Krug** are enrolled at Dayspring May 8-12. They are expecting practical, goal oriented congregational development and growth training.

Note that today our celebrant is wearing a new **wireless microphone**. Although our **Fr. Robin** has a strong voice, those in the kitchen were not hearing much of our worship service -- and surely a few others will appreciate the additional sound reinforcement. Some months ago the old mic, a type used by hobbyists, just gave up. So on Friday **Tom Krug** installed a professional system that he found barely used.

Masses on the Beach? We just discovered that St. Peter's also will be partying at Ft. DeSoto on Pentecost Sunday. So how can St A's make a splash? We hope everyone *continued on back page*

Born to Koren Allen and to this congregation yesterday, April 29 at 8:15 AM, baby girl "Faith" weighing 7 lb. 14 oz.

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

Defining Component: Outreach, Say Two Grant Applications *continued*

A second grant application, written by **Judy Krug**, requests funds to establish St. Augustine's as a center for adult Christian formation in the St. Petersburg Deanery.

The first application requests \$50,000 to help us "revitalize (our) member base, renew our mission focus, and reclaim outreach as the defining component of our identity."

As a parish we commit to three accomplishments.

1. "Canvass the surrounding neighborhood and invite its diverse population to join and celebrate (our) unique heritage and tradition..."

2. "Recommit to the future vitality of the parish...with a long term stewardship formation program...while reflecting on scripturally based principles about stewardship as a spiritual discipline."

3. "Reestablish the focus of the parish through Christian Formation so that (this parish) can fulfill her call to participate in the Great Commission."

"I believe that St. Augustine's has a unique witness and character," Fr. Whitlock said, "one which we need to celebrate here in South St. Petersburg." Receiving a grant from the diocese will, he believes, allow us to move ahead without first checking on the health of our bank account.

St. Augustine's as a center for religious education for adults? "Yes. Absolutely," assured Judy Krug, describing the second grant application. "With our parish commitment to education, we're a natural site for this kind of ministry." The grant application states that the center will, "provide on-going Bible study and significant seminars...to encourage and facilitate a maturing Christian faith...and bring exceptional current theological thought and

Masters Awarded in Theology

Yesterday in New Orleans **Ann Whitlock** was awarded a Masters of Theology in Pastoral Studies by Loyola University. Ann and daughter **Maria Elena** flew to New Orleans to participate in the commencement ceremony at the Jesuit university founded in 1912.

"Ann's focus was on ministry in the real world of working people," explained her husband, **Fr. Robin Whitlock**.

"Her final paper was a synthesis of all she had learned, but it had to specifically address the question, 'Where is your ministry now?' So her paper was about her faith journey so far and where that journey might take her now with her new degree."

St. Augustine's has many educators as members and this church has a strong history of honoring advanced study. Today we are especially proud of Ann who accomplished this milestone in her life work.

Congratulations to Ann Whitlock, M.A.

resources to our community."

The primary goal, as stated in the application, is for participants to be able to "articulate clearly and honestly the God they worship, the Christ they experience and the Spirit that gives them life."

"I'm so persuaded we can pull this off," Judy said. "We have the support of St. Petersburg Theological Seminary, Community Tampa Bay, St. Peter's Cathedral, and best of all, over 35% of our members already actively participate in Bible study and seminars. That's huge! I bet there isn't another parish around that can claim 35% of their adults are studying at church."

To Seminary Board *continued*

came out of that time we spent with Dr. Sykes," Judy Krug added. "For instance the seminary is looking for a southside site where they can offer courses for pastors and laity. St. Augustine's offers a lot of what they are looking for: we're easy to get to, have good parking, we're handicapped accessible, and our church has attractive space for classes."

Fr. Robin will soon tour the seminary, located near Bay Pines, meet some faculty members and "get a sense of the place."

So what kind of classes might we see here? Anything from the Theology of Paul, Judaic Studies, even Tai Chi. Yes, the seminary is offering a summer class titled *Tai Chi and Spirituality*. **Dr. George Pierce**, our former priest, is teaching it.

No formal proposals have been offered yet, Fr. Robin noted, "but this is a serious opportunity for our vestry to consider."

So You're Curious ... *continued*

will sport a new red tee-shirt ("St. Augustine's, Pentecost 2006 ... Enjoying the New Church"). We'll be at a new North Beach pavilion, larger and nearer to the water. Worship will again be at 10:00 in the great outdoors. You can count on the same great selection of picnic foods and foolishness, both available all day. **Claude Reynolds** is organizing things this year, based largely on the good systems developed in past years by **Rudy and Deloris Gabbidon**.

Shhhhh. The Men's Club is cooking up something special for all the women in the parish on May 14, Mother's Day. **Michael Griffin** and **Tom Krug** are acting very secretive about this.

