

33712 *Who Lives Here?*

With a major sigh of relief last Monday, our Fr. Robin put two 2020 grant applications from St. Augustine's in the mail to diocesan headquarters in Sarasota.

One of the applications seeks money to do work in our own neighborhood. But before we can make a difference here, we have to be able to answer the question, "Really, who are our neighbors?"

This much we know: Most of the people living in our zip code are between the ages of 4 and 23. Diversity – racial, age, ethnic -- is very high, 80.5% here, but only 33% across the U.S. And while the largest population group is African-American (73.9%), the fastest growing ethnic group is Asian.

Overall, our neighbors' level of education is well below average and there are far fewer than average married couples and two parent families.

All of this information and more comes from the US Census Bureau. The raw data is sifted, distilled and organized by First View 2005 and then made

**'most are
age 4 to 23'**

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So You're Curious ...

Next Sunday is called Mother's Day, but here at St. Augustine's we'll celebrate **All Women**. Every lady can expect to be honored by the men of this church for the immeasurable color they continue to bring to our lives. Our celebration is about gratitude and admiration, about fascination and wonder. Yes, it's all true: our lives of astounding diversity begin with gender experiences. Hear! Hear!

Tryouts today! Okay, *try-ons*. We'll have S, M, L, XL and 2X t-shirt samples, so you can order what's best. Just \$7.00 upon delivery. Why? So that we all make an impact at our annual Mass On the Beach on Sunday, June 4th at Ft. De Soto Park. We'll wear good-quality, attractive **Pentecost red t-shirts** -- emblazoned with a good celebration message on the back. Yes, you too can be a billboard for the church! *continued on back page*

From a Good Book

Here's Why You're an Episcopalian

- * Over sixty percent of our members have fled other denominations -- as adults.
- * We believe that love without justice is cheap sentimentality.
- * It's where the Holy Spirit is alive and well, daring to say something new.
- * Where flesh is not something dirty, but what God became!
- * Things which had been cast down are being raised up!
- * Resisting fundamentalism since 1785.
- * We believe that God loves you, and there is not a thing you can do to change that!
- * In the Episcopal Church doubt is so okay that we name some parishes St. Thomas.
- * Where faith is God's gift to us, not our gift to God.
- * Where the Bible is taken seriously, not literally.
- * Where the word of God is a person, not a book.
- * Where God forgives you as you forgive others.
- * Where you don't have to hang up your brain at the door.
- * Where God continues to become flesh.
- * To this recovering Roman Catholic, Christianity never tasted so good!
- * Because Desmond Tutu is one of our bishops.
- * God loves you before you decide whether you love Her.
- * I can pass the Creeds with a lie detector, but I rejoice that my Episcopal Church doesn't require one!
- * Here was the kind of intellectual integrity I had despaired of finding in Christians. I was completely hooked.
- * Because we don't think unity means conformity.
- * People encourage us to develop our own ideas. I think that's cool, how they treat us like people with valid opinions instead of idiots that can only believe what others tell them.
- * The Episcopal Church is the place where I learned to 'Seek the Truth, Come What May.'
- * We approach belief with an almost Talmudic playfulness, preferring dialectical ambiguity to dogmatic rigidity.
- * You folks may fight like hell with each other from 9am to 5pm but at the end of the day you put your arms around each other and say, 'Oh nuts. Let's go have a drink.'
- * We take our liturgy seriously, but not solemnly.
- * My parish welcomes everyone regardless of sex, orientation, race, nationality, church affiliation, or seriousness, just as God does. She's Black, you know.
- * Holy smoke!

Edited from Louie Crew's 101 Reasons to be an Episcopalian

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.

Our Neighbors in 33712 *continued*

available to organizations like our diocese.

Population in our neighborhood will grow rather slowly *First View 2005* projects. It is estimated that only about 381 people will be added between 2005 and 2010, bringing the area's population to 27,048.

The majority have major concerns about prejudice, crime and safety, finding adequate food and affordable housing.

They are also concerned about being able to find spiritual teaching. This report presents information about our neighbors' church involvement (it is high) and their preference for mainline Christian churches runs high also -- about 87%.

Nevertheless, Fr. Whitlock reminds us, "Our work here is not about promoting St. Augustine's. That distinction has to be clear to all us all the time. Otherwise we'll look manipulative."

Our work here in this neighborhood has to be planned on the basis of what people living around us want -- what they think will make their lives better, Fr. Whitlock added.

So what is it that our neighbors want? Census data can guide us, certainly. But what we can truly count on will come from meeting these neighbors, from sidewalk conversations with them, and maybe from simple questionnaires.

"We just can't wait until we get some grant money to do this," declared **Mary Clowers**.

"We have to get started now," added **Mary Jones**.

"Amen!" agreed the vestry.

Paint Schemes, Kitchen Cabinets, Flower-beds and Microphones?

Why does this church newsletter focus on such things? Aren't those worldly topics inappropriate here? Shouldn't our church focus be about things more spiritual?

Yes, a church is one place where people go to look for God -- not because God stays there, but because that's where there's help for their hunt. So our news is about this community's looking for God.

We think we're building a nice place where we can feel good about inviting friends to join us. We're sprucing up the place for a spiritual treasure hunt.

Q: How many Episcopalians does it take to change a light bulb? A: Change it? What do you mean, change it? My mother donated that light bulb to this church!

75th General Convention Countdown to Electing

26th Presiding Bishop

It's just six weeks away. In Columbus, OH on Sunday, June 18, a simple majority of the bishops voting will be sufficient to elect the Episcopal Church's new Presiding Bishop. He or she will preside for 9 years, through 3 triennial General Conventions.

A House of Deputies, made up of both laity and clergy, must concur with the voting of the House of Bishops. Then the bishop-elect will address both houses but does not take office until November 4 at Washington National Cathedral.

There are seven nominees, one woman and six men, four nominated from committee and three by petition. Although the bishops will be sequestered, the vote tallies will be made public and voting will continue until a simple majority is reached.

To see complete bios on each nominee, see www.episcopalchurch.org/ens.

So You're Curious ... *continued*

Here are three folks you might want to call or send off a card to: **Koren Allen** is a new mother for the fifth time. Daughter Faith is now 9 days old. They're waiting at 2931 Dr. MLK South, 33705 (368-4514). And **Nat Caines** has just come home from the hospital. He's at 1831 63rd Ave. South, 33712. Call him at 867-1581. And Nat's cousin **George Fleming** has not been 100% for quite a while. He'd love some company. Give him a ring at 867-4456.

This week **Fr. Robin** and **Judy Krug** commute to Dayspring for a weeklong experience called Start up! Start Over! It's to train those who believe that church is about the transformation of people's lives.

So what have YOU discovered for the upcoming **Service Auction**? What service will you offer to the rest of us that we'll bid up for the church's financial needs? Your great grandma's shoo-fly pie? Three hours of garage clean-up and haul-away? "**Minimal overhead! One-time only! Everyone can do this!**" Will you do gutter-cleaning? House-cleaning? Closet cleaning? Hard-drive cleaning? Sell your skills for a great cause. Buy a surprise for yourself!

**This Is an Episcopal
Church.
You're Expected to Ask
Irritating Questions!**

