

Celebrate What? Celebrate Us!

Forget what your mother told you about modesty. Ignore your church's teaching about pride. We're going to brag. And boast. Yes, even praise and flatter ourselves. We're going to get all puffed up.

Why? So much has happened this year in our parish. And so many good things have come to our members that **Margaret Smith** and **Mary Clowers** thought we needed to celebrate. "Whatever has been important to you in the last 12 months, that's what we want to hear and honor," explained Mary.

Our Celebration Party will be Saturday, August 27th, 4:30 in the parish hall. ECW will prepare finger food and beverages. "We want party preparations to be so simple that everyone will be ready to have fun," Margaret said. "Invite everybody, your family, your friends -- anybody who's had something good, big or little, happen to them this year. And," Margaret added, "that should be a crowd."

The Not-So-Big Church

From "A Thriving Little Church" by Keith Drury, Associate Professor of Religion, Indiana Wesleyan University

"Last Sunday, while stuck on the coast of Oregon, I attended a wonderful Presbyterian church. It was a thriving congregation and I marveled at the service.

"... What haunted me as I left -- no, it outright irritated me -- is how this little church of 52 people seemed so successful, so thriving. Didn't they know they were considered a failure among the church growth gurus? What right did they have to act so happy, so joyful, so satisfied with their little dinky church of 52? A church of 52 isn't viable -- haven't they read the same books I have?

"... I left church last Sunday wondering what these people had that most churches have lost. We are always reaching forward for success. Always striving, but never thriving. Our sense of thriving always seems just around the corner -- when we reach 100, or 300, or 1,000, or after we get our new building.

"But it is seldom a present-tense experience. Like drinking seawater, we can't get enough, and the more we drink, the thirstier we get. Yet, this little church of fifty-two seemed to focus more on being the church, than growing the church.

"I can't get that little congregation out of my mind. They have something to teach us all."

Words From St. Augustine

God does not command impossibilities, but by commanding admonishes you do what you can and to pray for what you cannot, and aids you that you may be able.

Readings for Next Sunday

Old Testament: Nehemiah 9: 16-20. Even to the disobedient, God is "gracious and merciful."

Psalm: Psalm 78. God's gifts illustrate the praiseworthy deeds and power of the Lord.

Epistle: Romans 8: 35-39. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 14: 13-21. Evening came with hungry crowds, Jesus fed them with 5 loaves, 2 fish.

So Now Who Do I Contact?

Sr. Warden: **Mary Clowers** 864-3568. Talk to Mary about needs for pastoral care.

Jr. Warden: **Joyce Corn** 540-0655. Talk to Joyce about church buildings, maintenance, cleaning, etc.

Parish Treasurer: **Greg Duckett** 866-1508. Talk with Greg about parish budget, your giving, etc.

Deacon: **Mack Bauknight** 328-7686. Talk with Mack about spiritual needs.

Vestry Members, your representatives:

Sandra Anderson 328-1827

Inez Ford 327-9693

Hazel Hudson 343-4157

Mary Jones 867-7702

Judy Krug 525-5044

Theresa Martin 866-6649

Claude Reynolds 422-2395

Mordecai Walker 898-6543

Rudy Gabbidon 866-1077

Our Parish Website Address is: www.staugstpete.org

"... more from St. Augustine's," for members and friends of a courageous Episcopal Church in south St. Petersburg. This aims to be more than a weekly newsletter: it is about recognition, spiritual attitude, nixing hearsay and unashamed cheerleading. Members Judy and Tom Krug are co-editors; Mordecai Walker is co-founder. Some 65 parishioners are essential to the project.*