



Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church

Service through Worship, Worship through Service

June, 2008

QUARTERLY MEETING and ELECTION OF OFFICERS OF THE MACE CHAPTER—June 14

The next meeting of the Mace Chapter of the Vergers' Guild will be held at St. John's Episcopal Church in La Porte, Tx from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The Rev. Lacy Largent will be our speaker. She has served as chaplain at Camp Allen, spiritual director for several Cursillos, and is currently the Episcopal presence at the Port of Houston and the Seafarer's Center.

St. John's is located at 815 S. Broadway and we will meet in the large brown building behind the office. Go to www.stjohns-laporte.org and click on Our Location for a local map and a link to MapQuest.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Election of Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer will be held at the June 14 meeting. Once elected, the new officers will be installed at the end of the June 14 meeting. The candidates nominated so far are Joe Sturdevant for VP and Patricia Shepherd for Secretary/Treasurer.

Term of office for each position is two years, as outlined in the bylaws. Anyone can serve more than one term. The office of president may be held by the same person for

only one repeat term.

The bylaws were modified during the last quarterly meeting of the Mace Chapter. They were changed, primarily to allow for half the board to be elected one year and half the next year, in order to allow for "corporate memory" to be present across the years. The revised bylaws are listed on the website.

A VERGER IN THE MAKING: VYONNE CARTER -JOHNSON

With her voice sounding like a trained chorister, she reads the lessons for this Sunday's service. Vyonne Carter-Johnson, a member of St. George's and St. Patrick's in Houston, is deeply involved in ministry at her church. "I've done everything here -- except choir because that is my husband's gift!" she chuckles. "Now I feel called to something more."

With the blessings and encouragement of her rector, The Rev. Carol Blaine, Vyonne is now a verger in training, a process that takes independent study, on-the-job training, and up to two years hard work to get national certification.

"St. George's and St. Patrick's is a small parish," says Rev. Carol. "It is beginning to grow, and as the solo priest here, I need the competent assistance that Vyonne can provide. The timing is right for this ministry here." While most of the members live near the church and are elderly, more and more folk are being drawn to the relaxed contemporary service at 9 am and the more formal service at 11 am. Vyonne attends both services, acting as LEM, lector, encourager to the acolytes, and whatever else is needed to make the services flow properly. She is already acting the part of verger, by taking many of the mechanical details for the services off the shoulders of Rev. Carol.

So, what is a verger? A verger is a dedicated lay minister within the church who assists the clergy in the conduct of a worship service. While the common image of a verger is that of a layperson leading a very formal procession in a cathedral, many small parishes within this diocese are now finding that a verger is a very helpful ministry within their churches. Often the details are too much for a lone priest to "do" alone. As an appointee of the rector, a verger will tend to mechanical details, allowing the clergyperson to concentrate on the sermon and pastoral details of the service at hand.

As a trainer for Exxon Mobil, Vyonne is used to hard work and organization. She carries that skill, along with a great curiosity and faith into her service at St. George's and St. Patrick's. You can see her excitement on her face, as she acts out her new calling. And when you see her, ask her about her other interests -- like taking up percussion instruments a few years ago. She now plays the hand belltower during the services. "My adventure into percussion instruments has helped me with the timing on my readings as a lector," she explains with enthusiasm for another new found gift.

Easter Vigil hint

Suggestion for lighting the Paschal Candle at the Easter Vigil

From Liturgy: Worship that Works website

Many of us at the Easter Vigil will have seen variations of: someone shining an electronic torch in the darkness, matches used to light a candle or taper, which is used to light the Easter fire, from which is lit the Easter candle. The torch and the candle lighting the fire always appears to me to water down the powerful symbolism and I have always tried to light the fire directly. Now I have been given a wonderful tip, which I have permission to share with you.



Rev. Frank Logue is a church-planter, beginning a new church community [King of Peace](#) in 2000 with three people: his wife, his daughter, and himself. Now about 150 people worship there regularly. Frank writes:

"In lighting new fire at King of Peace, we use the following trick which is easy to do and very effective for the Easter Vigil. The fire is lit in a copper fire pan (see photo) outside the church right in front of the front doors. We are in South Georgia and have never had any problems with beginning outside as the weather is usually quite pleasant. The fire is set with good hard wood that has been soaked in lamp oil, but sits dry, stacked together with smaller pieces of kindling underneath. Under that kindling is a wad of steel wool. One side of the teepee shaped fire is open to allow the celebrant access. At the right time I lean down and, us-

ing a 9-volt battery I have palmed in my hand, that is not visible to the congregation, I touch the contacts of the battery to the steel wool and withdraw my hand in a smooth motion so that I reach in, touch the heart of the fire, pull my hand out and the fire begins to spark, then flame. In a couple of minutes we have a blazing new fire. One long thin piece of hard wood has only a tip soaked in lamp oil. I take this from the fire and use the burning wood to light the Paschal candle. Most everyone knows how this trick is done and anyone who asks is told, but beyond the trick of it, the ease of lighting a fire like this makes it very effective.

We then move into the narthex for the next part of the liturgy and by candlelight tell stories, and baptize or reaffirm the baptismal covenant. Then when we make the move to Easter in the liturgy, we enter the nave, turn on the lights and everything is ready for Easter with lilies and other spring flowers, white and gold on the altar, etc."

Thank you, Frank, for allowing me to share this hint. God bless you and your community on this Lenten journey.

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BISHOP COAJUTOR ELECTION MAY 24

Our congratulations, blessings and prayers are offered to The Rev. Canon C. Andrew Doyle, who was elected as Bishop Coajutor for the Episcopal Diocese of Texas. The consecration will be held on November 22nd at St. Martin's in Houston. Andy is currently serving as Canon to the Ordinary.

WHAT MAKES A GROUP OF BISHOPS A HOUSE?

It's because they meet as a family – as brothers and sisters in Christ – says Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the Primate of Canada.

Quoted April 18, 2008 in the Liturgy-L listserv.)

BLOOPERS IN CHURCH BULLETINS

Shared by Barbara Boghetich, a SAMS missionary in the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras, 11 February 2006. She will be ordained priest this month.

The fasting and prayer conference includes meals.

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8:00 pm. in the recreation hall .Come out and watch us as we kill Christ the King.

PASCHAL CANDLE

The Book of Common Prayer contains a service called *The Great Vigil of Easter*. The rubric at the end of page 287 states:

It is customary that the Paschal Candle burn at all services from Easter Day through the Day of Pentecost,

The older custom (prior to the current edition of the Book of Common Prayer) was to have the Paschal Candle extinguished after the reading of the Gospel on Ascension Day. Does anyone know the reasoning behind changing this custom?

AUSTIN AREA CONTACT

The Executive Board welcomes Bill Beare/St John's, Austin, as a member of the board. He has been asked to be the Austin-area contact. The Board felt that it was time to pursue including more folk in the goings on in the Chapter, and Bill has graciously accepted the post of Austin-area contact to the Executive Board., so that we as a chapter may better serve the Austin area vergers.

TRINITY/THE WOODLANDS EXTENDS INVITATION TO ALL VERGERS

Trinity/The Woodlands is about to have a new verger. Now that Trinity's new rector is on board, he has called Joanne Welker, Altar Guild Director, to the verger ministry. All of Trinity's vergers have helped with her training since early April.

The investiture service will be **July 20**, a Sunday, at the 11:00 AM service. The vergers at Trinity/The Woodlands would love to have others attend the service. Visiting vergers will vest in the parlor and be in the procession, as is the custom.

OUR THANKS TO:

Joe Sturdevant, Eileen Brightwell Hicks, Ron Robertson, Martha Martz, Patricia Shepherd, Bid Drake, Peggy Metcalf, and others for their efforts relative to the Mace Chapter booth at Diocesan Council in Galveston February 15 and 16. The national VGEC banner was secured for use at the booth. Favorite treat for the booth: M&M's in verger blue and verger yellow, with monikers on them identifying them with the Mace VGEC and DOT Vergers. Many clergy stopped to chat about the ministry of vergers,

as did many lay folk who are in the process of becoming a verger. The Chapter is planning to have a booth at the 2009 Council, to be held in Houston at the George R. Brown Convention Center, with Christ Church Cathedral the 2009 host church. Tentative Dates: Feb. 15 and Feb 16. Please consider volunteering to help "man" the Mace Chapter booth next year. Contact Peggy Metcalf (mlfm1943@yahoo.com) to ask about serving at this venue.

APRIL 2008 SEMINAR

Our annual training seminar was held Saturday, April 12, at Christ Church Cathedral. A brochure for the seminar, complete with bios for our speakers, is on the website at www.texasvergers.org. The 25+ folk from for as far away as Waco and Silsbee, attending the seminar thoroughly enjoyed the presentations on servant ministry, how to care for yourself in ministry, who makes a good verger, sugges-

tions on articles and photographs for church archives and the *Texas Episcopalian*. The Rev. Canon Andy Doyle and The Rev. John Price had superb presentations. Andy's presentation is on our website, for those interested.

Next year's seminar is tentatively scheduled for Austin, Texas.

WEBSITE

Our thanks go to Anna Goza for posting to the website Canon Doyle's Power Point presentation on servant ministry at the April 2008 seminar. She has also taken the CD from all the past seminars, categorized the contents, and displayed their titles on the webpage, so that you may read each article at your leisure directly from the website.

Ohhhhh, GOSSIP GALORE: ... DID WE HEAR THE RUMORS CORRECTLY?:

Duke duTeil was seen in Round Rock mid-late January, getting married!! Congrats.

REQUEST FOR ANECDOTES

Please send us your anecdotes about Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday, and all of Lent. How many of your churches had talent shows on Shrove Tuesday? Who buried the Alleluias? Who sent the children looking for shroves? Did anyone go on a food fast? Or “give up” something for Lent? What churches veil crosses for all of Lent, for only Good Friday, for Palm Sunday through Passion Week? Where were the veiling of the crosses taken to the ultimate (veiling the cross on the baptismal font and insistence on veiling the cross on a verge)? And what is your congregation’s custom about flowers, greenery etc on the altar during Lent?

Annual Dues

Annual dues are \$20.00. Please make your checks payable to: Walter Mace Memorial Chapter VGEC and send to: Patricia Shepherd, 5326 Carmen, Houston, TX 77033

Contact Information

We are constantly trying to keep your contact information up to date so that we are able to keep you informed of all activities within our Chapter. Please notify the Communications Officer, Bid Drake at bdrake2939@consolidated.net, whenever there is a change in your address, phone number or e-mail.

Thanks!

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Newsletter

The Chapter newsletter is posted on our website at www.texasvergers.org and e-mailed to all members who have given us their e-mail. If you want a copy mailed to you, please contact our Communications Officer, Bid Drake at bdrake2939@consolidated.net or by phone 926-756-3566. Please provide your name and complete address.

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