

St. Faith's Annual Report for 2010  
Prepared by the Rev. Jennie Lou D. Reid, *Priest-in-Charge*

St. Faith's continues to exhibit the characteristics of a stable and strengthening church. Sunday attendance has not diminished, and we have managed to pay all of our bills, including our assessment and loan to the diocese, in spite of a long dry spell without any income from the outside preschool on our campus. God has blessed us with a spirit of mutual love and delight in the fellowship we share, as well as a spirit of welcome to those God sends our way. As I have considered the year just past, I am grateful for our Lord's care and hopeful for the venture of the year ahead.

In **worship** we have continued to include a Children's Sunday every month, where our younger members read lessons, lead prayers, serve as ushers, help the preacher interpret the scripture of the day, and sing at the Offertory. Wednesday evening contemplative worship featuring chant in the style of Taizé have dotted our calendar. Baptisms this year included the third generation of one St. Faith's family, the wedding of young people a member connected with us, and four funerals that have saddened our community. Here I am speaking of our beloved Sisters-in-Christ Allyson Artmann, Elaine Dingley, and June Bullock, and Brother Josh Abell.

Also following our established pattern, we have continued to offer weekly Holy Eucharist at the Church twice on Sunday mornings and at East Ridge on Wednesday mornings; three services on Ash Wednesday (two at the church and one at East Ridge Chapel), a Festive Easter Eucharist at 10:00 A.M., a spirited Pentecost celebration (with new dove kites fluttering over the heads of worshippers in the pews during the procession and recession, as well as the Acts reading offered simultaneously in several languages), a Festive All Saints' Day with Daughters of the King sitting together in their white and blue; a visit from St. Nicholas of Myra on the Sunday nearest December 6 (the date of his calendar observance); Breakfast with Santa on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent; a family Eucharist with Children's Christmas Pageant (faithful and funny as the animals explained the events of the 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas) and a Midnight Mass (preceded by Christmas music offered by the Senior Choir) on Christmas Eve, as well as Holy Eucharist on Christmas morning; and a Carol Fest on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas. In addition, the DOK again sponsored a Lenten Quiet Day in March and an Advent Evening Service in December, and offered worship for the nation on the National Day of Prayer in May. Bishop Frade celebrated Confirmation, Receptions, and First Communion during the annual bishop's visit. Father White prepared the candidates for Confirmation and Reception, and Valerie Hrasar and I taught the Children's Communion Class.

For a second year, we said "Farewell to Alleluia!" with a short liturgy near the end of the Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, provided a Lenten Devotion for Individuals and Families ("The Spirit Speaks through Stone"), and chanted the Great Litany in procession on the First Sunday of Lent. We enjoyed a full Holy Week with Morning Prayer on Monday; Tenebrae on Tuesday; our last Soup and Study with Compline on Wednesday; Agape lamb dinner, Holy Eucharist, and Stripping of the Altar on Maundy Thursday; The Good Friday Liturgy with the Passion in word and art at noon, and Stations of the Cross with the Remonstrances in the evening on Friday; and the Great Vigil at 7:00 Easter morning. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, when we

hear John's Gospel account of the Risen Jesus' appearance to his disciples at the beach, we gathered at Bayfront County Park in Homestead for worship, a parish picnic, family games and swimming. Again on the Wednesday before Christmas our children sang Christmas carols at our Eucharist at East Ridge and eagerly handed out a Christmas ornament for each resident in attendance.

There were also a few new worship events. During Lent I challenged folks to participate in the Daily Office Club, which involved a commitment to pray two of the four daily offices each day of Lent and to meet with several other participants once a week to share the experience, questions and insights. I updated my daily office book and made it available to support this endeavor. On the first Sunday of Lent we experienced Lenten Lessons and Art, a prelude to the Lenten Soup and Study series on the "Passion Narrative in Word and Art." Since October 31<sup>st</sup> fell on a Sunday, we took lessons from the "All Hallows' Eve" service in the *Book of Occasional Services*; some worshippers arrived in costume (as all were invited to do); and for the sermon, the Halloween School Marm explained terms associated with this holiday. A Halloween party in the parish hall followed the 10:00 service. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent we experienced Advent Monologues and Music – well performed by our actors and singers. That will be fun to do again after cutting each monologue in half! Our last new offering was a peaceful bit of solace we called Blue Christmas, designed as a time for acknowledging a sorrow that is dominating the holiday this year and to receive God's healing comfort. The ten people who came found the service meaningful and are eager to spread the good news of its success to others for next year.

Finally, we were intentional to offer blessings throughout the year. Weekly we offer blessings for those celebrating birthdays or anniversaries. At holidays we add blessings for travelers. In June we bless those who have graduated from high school or have received any higher degree, and in August we bless students and teachers returning for another academic year. This year we added a blessing of nurses near National Nurses' Day in May. On the Eve of St. Francis' Day, we celebrated the Blessing of the Animals as we worshipped around the tree just outside our church entrance. We were pleased to have some visitors (of the two or more-legged variety) who read about this service on the website and came especially for the blessing. It was a wild, wonderful and happy day – with good weather to boot!

It takes many hands to turn the cranks that keep the engine of St. Faith's **Administration** running. Your Vestry has taken an active role throughout the year. We offer special thanks to our retiring members: Ed Frye (Senior Warden), Tracey MacDonald, and Marcea Paul (delegate to Diocesan Convention). Don't even think about relaxing your valuable involvement in this church! However, we will give you a day off. Continuing to contribute will be Ann Marie Abell (completing the term of Stephen Branch, who has moved to Atlanta), Larry Ventura, Pat Whipple, Eileen Alvaranga (Treasurer), Jim Piersol (Junior Warden and Pre-school liaison) and Susan Price (pre-school liaison, lay participant for the Nehemiah church revival project, and delegate to Diocesan Convention). Gloria Normann continues to serve as the Clerk of the Vestry, and Wilwn and Larry have concentrated on the finances, including leadership on the dinner and silent auction, as well as for the Homestead Air Show. The dinner was delicious and well-run thanks to the coordination of Jennifer Clarke; display, sign-in and check-out went smoothly thanks to Tracey and Cameron MacDonald; bids climbed thanks to the hawking of Larry V.; and the musical track from Reggie Paul provided a festive atmosphere. All of you

helped make this venture a success by making and donating items, soliciting donations from businesses you know, inviting friends to attend the event, and bidding a bit extra just to help our church. Our proceeds of \$7,100 were about \$1,000 more than in 2009. The Vestry would like to continue with this fundraiser in 2011, although we will have to find a new location because Signature Gardens has closed. The Air Show was more fun than exhausting this year thanks to the two fabulous teams of volunteers and the wonderful weather!

Besides the Vestry contributions, we want to acknowledge the on-going support of Terry Scavella, who assists with our bookkeeping and reporting, and of our Merry Mailers and Bulletin folders Norma Darby, Daphne Delapenha, Valrie Gayle, and Pat Whipple. And of course, Gloria holds everything together, like Super Glue with a warm spirit and a wary eye. Perfection!

Our Leadership Retreat in January and two subsequent Calendar Planning sessions have drawn together leaders of our diverse parish organizations. We will be holding the Leadership Retreat for 2011 on January 22. Participation by all ministries will ensure a fruitful outcome. The Leadership Retreat is a time for imagining where God is leading us to become and calling us to serve in 2011 and beyond. We will also identify concrete 1<sup>st</sup> steps in response to the vision we discern together. The subsequent Calendar Planning gives us a place to coordinate the activities of our diverse ministries so that all can flourish. I believe we need to meet for calendar planning approximately every other month, with a break in the summer.

Our ministries cover a variety of areas. **Ministries of communication** include our Outside Sign (managed this year by Stephen Branch, Tracey MacDonald, and a secret angel), the Ridge Runner (Marcia Hitchins, editor; with help from Tracey MacDonald, Junior Ridge Runner editor); and St. Faith's website (Jim Piersol, webmaster; with wonderful help from photos of events you send him!).

**Ministries of fellowship, learning and service**, grow out of the Youth Group (led by Tracey MacDonald and June Bullock when she had the strength), the Young Adult Ministry (YAM, led by Vashti Dunker), the Daughters of the King (Susan Price, president); and the Episcopal Church Women (Tracey MacDonald, president). The Youth Group sponsored the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, made Palm Crosses for Palm Sunday, and went to Youth Camp at Dayspring, in Southwest Florida. YAM members attended the "People of Color" conference at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN, and helped with St. Faith's Halloween Party. DOK sponsored three worship events (previously listed) and gathered together in their white and blue for the All Saints' Corporate Communion and for June Bullock's funeral, where they served as ushers. The ECW worshipped together at a Holy Eucharist on ECW Sunday; held its annual Fudge sale at Valentine's; gave out the United Thank Offering little blue boxes in the spring; coordinated the Fathers' Day breakfast; established an ingathering of UTO gifts in November; and (under the able and energetic leadership of Norma Darby) sponsored the Elaine Dingley Memorial Tea for a packed house, who were treated to wonderful refreshments, talented soloists, a fashion show, and a delightful lecture from Dean Cori Olson on the art of brewing the perfect cup of tea. The ECW also put up and decorated our two Chrismon trees. This year's beautiful artificial trees are a donation from Signature Gardens just before closing its doors permanently.

Our **Outreach** Ministry with the greatest on-going impact is of course our Food Pantry, supported in part by Episcopal Charities of Southeast Florida and in part by all of us. Your week-by-week support is essential to the success of this venture. This project has also been adopted by an ECW at a nearby church, as well as the alumnae group of a sorority, which brings a generous donation of food and sometimes toiletries for our Pantry. One day during the December cold snap, these friends brought a pile of knitted mufflers, to offer a bit of welcome warmth. Our participation Souper Sunday on the day of the annual Super Bowl football game, adds cans of soup and stew to our Pantry shelves as well. Our baskets providing a feast at Thanksgiving for needy families in our midst and our Snowman project to gather toys at Christmas have been dear to our hearts. This year the toys went to families who are clients of our Food Pantry, as well as to poor children in a nearby public school. There was a mountain of toys in the office by the time Christmas week arrived! This brought joy to children, as well as to grandparents who could not have given their precious grands a gift without these donations.

Tom Graf and Marcea Paul continue to coordinate the **Pastoral Care** Ministry of our Eucharistic Visitors, who are quietly yet faithfully taking Communion to those who cannot come to church. Marcea is interested in expanding the parish response to seniors, even to those we do not know yet but who live in senior communities near our church. She and Tom have initiated a monthly Sunday afternoon worship service at the Palace in Homestead, and the response has been heartwarming. Perhaps you would like to assist with this ministry.

**Liturgical Ministries** enhance our worship. The Altar Guild, led by Christine Piersol, provides clean linens and polished metal for our services week in and week out, as well as for special events, like Ash Wednesday, Tenebrae, outdoor worship (such as the Easter Vigil), and worship services in the parish hall. Acolytes are led by Josh Bullock with recent help from Agnes Alexander and on-going support from Father White and Tracey MacDonald. Acolytes participated in the Diocesan Acolyte Festival again this year. Lay Readers and Chalice Ministers serve faithfully and seamlessly fill in for each other whenever the need arises. If you have expressed interest in participating in these ministries and are not on the new January-February schedule, please remind Mother Reid and Gloria Normann of your continued interest. We would like to expand our list of ministers, but we have distractible memories! Last but by no means least is our Music ministry, led by Norma Darby and supported by our talented organist John Mahannah, as well as by the singers in our Senior and Junior choirs. I have made a concerted effort to broaden our experience with settings of the service music. I hope this has expanded your enjoyment of our worship. You are now skillful singers of Simplified Anglican Chant, which we use for the psalm each Sunday. And I think you will feel at home with the music when you travel, as you are bound to know the majority of settings played in Episcopal churches everywhere. Sadly, John Mahannah will be leaving us at the end of January. John lives and works in Broward County and has begun to find the commute no longer feasible for him. Please make a special effort to attend John's last service on January 30 to help us celebrate his ministry and wish him well.

Our **teaching** seeks to respond to the needs of our members of all ages. Donna Lewis and Tracey MacDonald plan the Sunday School curriculum for our children. Vashti Dunker plans the Bible study for the Young Adults. I plan the adult study. This past year, in addition to the Lenten series, I led a mid-summer movie series of films about Jesus: *The Gospel according*

to *St. Matthew* (an Italian film); *Jesus of Nazareth*; *Ben Hur*; and *Godspell*. In the fall I taught a series on Benedictine Spirituality, using the book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily* by Joan Chittister, a prolific writer who is a nun in the Order of St. Benedict. Our community is also blessed with a fine lay teacher, Tom Graf, who usually teaches from the pulpit but is willing and able to help in many capacities. Tom, we are truly grateful for your insight, your wonderful stories, and your caring spirit.

We also have a number of ministries that bring life to **St. Faith's welcome**. Pat Whipple and Norma Darby work hard to welcome newcomers and help them connect to our parish. Jennifer Clarke has stepped in to coordinate our ushers. Marcea Paul leads our weekly Hospitality, with generous and able help from Carol Bertoli and a host of other volunteers. Special food events this year have included the Fathers' Day breakfast in June, the Independence Day picnic in July, Ice Cream Sundaes for the Ministry Fair in August, the International Sunday potluck lunch in September, the Halloween Party in October, the Stewardship breakfast in November, and breakfast with Santa in December. These ladies become the recipients of hospitality by St. Faith's men on Mothers' Day. And on Maundy Thursday, Val and Norma Darby and John Mahannah have done the cooking for the Agape Lamb Dinner. Gourmet! Barry Bullock and his crew led some of these projects, but the whole Hospitality team is at the ready to support our fellowship after worship with refreshments. Marion Chin supports our welcome by manicuring our gardens, and Luz Espona Perez-Iturbe keeps the linens clean in our nursery. Our nametag ministry can help us connect to each other more easily, and now we have the ability to prepare a magnetic nameplate for all who need them as they arrive. Please help each other by wearing your nametag! (We keep them on metal cookie sheets at the back of the church, but I guess we should collect them as people are leaving coffee hour, instead of before they go there!)

My own **goals for St. Faith's in 2011** are predictable. I would like our weekly attendance to grow and our financial situation to become more stable. I expect that we will continue with the hearty outreach ministry of our Food Pantry. I am hoping we can recruit more of our members to support newcomers from the day of their first visit until they become involved in some ministry in the church. I would like to connect more of our members in a ministry of the church. (From this report you can see how varied the opportunities are!) I am expecting our pre-school to become fully established, and I intend for our leaders to provide whatever support we can to facilitate this effort. Finally I long to develop a fellowship opportunity for our parish men. At the Leadership Retreat on January 22, we will put together a list of goals for St. Faith's that we all will strive to support through our various ministries. I look forward to seeing how God will bless us with abundant life in 2011!

To the glory of God and for the love of God's people,

*Mother Jennie Lou Reid+*

(The Rev.) Jennie Lou D. Reid+