

Can We Still Believe in Miracles???

by Father Todd Cederberg

"Miracles are a retelling in small letters of the very same story which is written across the whole world in letters too large for some of us to see."

-C. S. Lewis, Miracles

In our world there is very little room for what is unpredictable. In fact, we have in many ways excelled in trying to eliminate the unpredictable. We buy insurance, draw projections, manage expectations, all of which make us feel somehow more in control and confident about the future.

Yet disconcertingly, the unpredictable sneaks in. A diagnosis of cancer or the irrational behavior of a teenager or spouse, and suddenly our world is scrambled.

We are then faced with a question: Can I come to God and take comfort from him in spite of difficult circumstances, or should I doubt him, wondering whether he really cares. Surely if God really cared he would make these problems go away. He'd do a miracle.

Though biblical scholars disagree in their conclusions about miracles, there is a remarkable consensus about their place in the New Testament. Biblical scholar Joachim Jeremias summarized that "even when critical standards have been applied to the miracle stories, a demonstrably historical nucleus remains." Along with his teaching and preaching, Jesus actually *did* miracles. The miracles, Jeremias affirmed, "were particularly important to Jesus." And that experience continued into the early church, where "signs and wonders" accompanied the apostles' daily preaching.

So I scratch my head on the edge of this great mystery. On the one hand, I affirm that healing and restoration is God's desire for every one of his children. So when we hear Padre Walter Barrientos, one of our Bolivian partners, announce his complete healing from what had been diagnosed as terminal throat cancer, we feel the need to proclaim and celebrate. Only months ago he visited us, and many assumed it might well be the last time.

What incredibly good news for this friend of ours.

It is also, however, my job to walk with others through agonizing times in which there is no miracle to be seen. To watch people try to cope with their circumstances, and to find God in the midst of them, can be a very humbling process. Cancer, unemployment, betrayal - wrench the gut in ways that take us to the limit of faith, and force us to wonder how to relate to a God who can seem so remotely distant.

We are reminded by Scripture, however, that God is never remotely distant. He is constantly close and faithful to us. He is working on our behalf, keeping his promises to tenderly care for us even in the heat of the battle. He never says "No" to the things we need, but rather provides generously.

"For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. ... Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come." -2 Cor. 1:20-22

So what about miracles? Do I deserve one? Can God be counted on to come through for me?

Absolutely. I like the Lewis quote above. The context for miracles is that they so surround us that we cannot see them. They are not for particularly good or special people. Everyone who opens themselves to the love of God gets theirs. For some it comes in the shape of healing from terminal cancer. For others, it comes when the struggle with cancer is finally done, and their souls are welcomed into glory. For some, it comes when money appears out of nowhere to meet a critical need. For others it comes because of a job and a paycheck. Miracles are not unusual to the people of God. They are the stuff of life. They are the bread we eat. They are the water we drink. They are like breath to those who love Jesus.

**February 17, 2010
Ash Wednesday**



Services

**7:30am ~ Chapel
12:15pm ~ Chapel
7:30pm ~ Church**



**Samuel Hsu
Pianist**

**All Chopin Recital
Friday, February 26
7:30pm in the Church**

Featuring
*Hommage à Chopin:
Fantasy on
"This Is My Father's
World"*



Episcopal Day School

Turn Your Gold To Green!

We are having a Gold Party on Wednesday, February 10 from 8:00am-12:30pm in Ashton Hall. Bring all your gold, (yellow, white, any karat), platinum and sterling silver, earrings, chains, pins, bracelets, vintage watches, US coins (1964 and older) and even that old class ring! Broken chains, one earring, not sure what to bring? Bring it all! The jeweler will check it, weigh it and you leave with the GREEN! The Day School receives 10% of the proceeds.

“Island Getaway” Spring Fundraiser

The Day School Silent Auction and Dinner will take place at People’s Light & Theatre on Saturday, March 20 from 7:00-11:00pm. Tickets may be purchased in advance for \$50/person, \$90/couple, or at the door for \$60/person, \$100/couple.

If you would like to donate an item for the Silent Auction, please email Barb Condit at barbc@good-samaritan.org. We are looking for vacation homes, services, gift certificates to restaurants, tickets to sporting events, gift baskets, etc. Proceeds benefit the Day School.

2010-2011 Enrollment

The Day School is now accepting enrollments for children age 2 through Kindergarten for the 2010-2011 school year. The registration fee is waived for Good Samaritan parishioners’ children. Enrollment forms are available on the Day School website (www.goodsamdayschool.org) and at the information center in Fellowship Hall. Feel free to call the office (610-644-6181) to set up a tour to see our teachers and students in action!

Scrip Gift Cards

Thank you to all the parishioners who bought grocery, restaurant and store gift cards during the holiday season. We appreciate your support! Acme, Giant and ShopRite gifts cards are always available for purchase in the day school office. A list of participating retailers is available at www.glscrip.com.

Women’s Book Discussion Group 2010 Reading Selections

submitted by Joan Evans and Annette Toebe

February 23: *Those Who Save Us*, by Jenna Blum (historical fiction). For fifty years, Anna Schlemmer has refused to talk about her life in Germany during World War II. Her daughter, Trudy, was only three when she and her mother were liberated by an American soldier and went to live with him in Minnesota. Trudy’s sole evidence of the past is an old photograph: a family portrait showing Anna, Trudy, and a Nazi officer. Trudy, now a professor of German history, begins investigating the past and finally unearths the dramatic and heartbreaking truth of her mother’s life.

March 23: *My Stroke of Insight: a Brain Scientist’s Personal Journey*, by Jill Bolte Taylor (non-fiction). A 37-year-old Harvard-trained and published brain scientist records her life after a blood vessel exploded in her brain. Based upon her academic training and personal experience, Jill helps others not only rebuild their brains from trauma, but helps those of us with normal brains better understand how we can ‘tend the garden of our minds’ to maximize our quality of life. An amazing and educational read!

April 27: *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks (historical fiction). Inspired by a true story, *People of the Book* is a novel of sweeping historical grandeur and emotional intensity. It traces the harrowing journey of the famed Sarajevo Haggadah, a beautifully illuminated Hebrew manuscript created in 15th Century Spain. The history of this Jewish prayer book parallels that of the persecution of the Jews, but many of the major characters in each era are Christian or Muslim.

May 25: *The Faith Club*, by Ranya Idliby, Priscilla Warner, Suzanne Oliver (non-fiction). A ground-breaking book about Americans searching for faith and mutual respect, *The Faith Club* weaves the story of three women, their three religions, and their urgent quest to understand one another.

Vestry Corner

by Joanne Gillespie, People's Warden

The January meeting of the Vestry was held on Monday, January 11 following Evening Prayer. The meeting was called to order by Fr. Todd and began with an opening prayer offered by Fr. John. The minutes of the December meeting were approved and will be available on the Church of the Good Samaritan website.

Mac McCausland presented the monthly report from the Discernment Committee. For details, see "Discernment Committee Update" on page 6.

The Reverend Simon Barnes reported on the Leadership Committee. We currently have two seminarians, Seretha Curry and Sam Ferguson. Todd Brewer has been ordained and is currently seeking a position. The PACM has been meeting with Steve Lyband and has unanimously confirmed his call to ordained ministry within our church. Steve is currently a Hospice Chaplain and usually attends New Chapel.

Bob Anewalt reported that we erased our YTD deficit and ended the year with a surplus of \$71,130. He once again reminded us of the magnitude of December 32nd.

Jeff Moretzsohn presented the updated 2010 numbers, which initially showed a deficit of \$189,940. The Vestry proceeded to discuss what was needed to help balance the budget. We are aiming for a \$2,000,000 balanced budget. Noteworthy items: the budget consists of a staff of a Rector and two Associates. The Vestry and Senior Staff are working together to finalize a balanced budget that does not affect staffing.

Charlene Fitzwater presented a report on Stewardship, highlighting the blessings of the 2009 surplus and the Stewardship commitments made by parishioners. There have been 32 new time and talent commitments. These names have been passed on to the ministry heads. Total pledges are \$1,413,421 (at the time of this writing) with an objective of \$1,700,000.

Pastor Beverly's report was presented in her absence. She highlighted upcoming Women's Ministries events. Jim Fitzwater will be taking over the leadership role of the Stephen Ministry (from Jim Ferguson) and hopes to send two or three people to leadership

training this year. Recruitment for Prayer ministry on Sunday morning continues. Susan Starke (our parish nurse) continues to be a blessing in the pastoral care of our parishioners.

Ronnie Tousignant reported on Human Resources and Administration. Included in the Strategic plan are plans to formulate a staffing plan to meet strategic priorities, publish and distribute the employee manual, form an HR committee and call a new rector.

Stew Crumpler presented the Worship Cluster report. Rich Zuch is taking over music for the liturgical services, Gary Gress is the interim organist, Martha Koeneman continues her role as assistant. Bill O'Meara has taken over New Chapel leadership and music. Owen Osbourne and Tom Connett will be assisting Bill. Betsy Williams is transitioning to Altar Guild Leadership and Lynne Kocher will be transitioning out. Stew will continue to head ushers. Tracy and Stew are working to coordinate roles of ushers and greeters.

Joanne Gillespie reported on the Pastoral Care Cluster. We have had more people in the hospital over the past few months than any time in the past three years. This has increased demand on both clergy and the parish nurse.

Chuck Kramer reported that the Christian Financial Counseling group has received 50% more clients than last year.

The nominating committee final report was given by Rusty Smith. Nominations for Vestry in 2010 for a three year term include: Bob Anewalt (second term), Steve Ross (second term), Brenda Schantz, Chuck Gregan and R.J. Snell. Stew Crumpler is running for the position of Diocesan Deanery representative. The annual meeting will be held on February 28 at 6:30pm, following a potluck supper at 5:30pm.

The meeting was adjourned in prayer led by Ronnie Tousignant at 10:03pm.

Respectfully submitted,

The Wardens of the Church of the Good Samaritan



All ages and talents are welcome!

Dinner 6:00pm *sponsored by Men's Ministry*
Talent Show 7:00pm

Juliet Cooke ~ Talent Organizer
Jenn McMahan ~ Logistical Coordinator
Men's Ministry ~ Spaghetti Dinner

*Entry Forms are available online
and in the atrium.*

December & January Membership Statistics

Births:

Hailey Rose McGonigal to Randy McGonigal & Michelle Hernandez

Ruby Rose Goerke to Aaron & Heather Goerke

Rudy Aaron Goerke to Aaron & Heather Goerke

Carter David Connett to Tom & Allison (Kunz) Connett

Baptisms (1/10/10):

Dylan Cardwell (Adult)

Madeline May Rosen

New Members:

Jessica Cardwell originally from the Catholic Church

Transfers Out:

Larry & Lynn Lembo

Linda Carrington & Family (to South Carolina)

Patricia Ashton to St. Paul's West Whiteland

Chris & Debbie Garven & family (to Florida)

Robert & Valerie Henry (to Lancaster, PA)

Daniel & Julianna Hoch (to Reading, PA)

Peter & Judith Lake to Springton Lake Presbyterian Church, Newtown Square

Congratulations!

by Rusty Smith



Esperanza worker and patient

Through the Outreach Committee, Good Samaritan has been providing financial support to Esperanza Health Services and community connections with their Kensington neighbors

including the Free Church of St. John. Since 1989, they have made and will continue to make a lifesaving difference through healthcare and spirit care to our neighbor families in Kensington. We're thankful for the ways God has blessed Esperanza and the North Philadelphia community during 2009, including some very exciting news from December of last year.

On Wednesday, December 9, President Obama announced that Esperanza was selected as one of 85 community health centers nationwide to receive a grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act for the construction of a new health and wellness facility in North Philadelphia's Hunting Park community. The total grant award of \$6.5 million will be used to build a 28,000 square foot facility on the site of an abandoned manufacturing warehouse near the intersection of N. 6th and Cayuga Streets. We praise God for his great provision for Esperanza through this grant award, and for his continued faithfulness to Esperanza and to the North Philadelphia community!

According to Susan Post, Esperanza's Executive Director: "We are excited to build this new facility in Hunting Park, and we see this grant as a real blessing from the Lord for our community." "Thanks for your continued prayers for Esperanza in 2010, as we prepare to undertake the planning and construction of this new facility, and as we continue the expansion at our Kensington Avenue location." Compelled by the love of God in Christ Jesus, in cooperation with the Church and others, Esperanza Health Center is a multi-cultural ministry providing holistic, bilingual and bicultural healthcare services to Philadelphia's Latino and underserved communities.

God's Giving Miracle

by Charlene Fitzwater

Our year-end financial stewardship was spectacular at Good Samaritan. While two significant shortfalls were anticipated, faith-filled giving in December addressed them both. We have been blessed!

In November, we were projecting a \$50,000 operating deficit for the year. Then, there was a snowstorm and very light plate collections one Sunday in December, which added to concerns about the deficit. But the last week of 2009 was very different. Contributions in the daily mail, parishioners dropping off checks, and phone calls for people to give by credit card equated to a year-end rush. The faithful giving throughout the year and exuberant year end resulted in a \$71,130 surplus.

Additionally, we faced a \$251,000 funding shortfall on the Sanctuary Fund bridge loan due January 31, 2010. After the vestry identified designated account funds to cover \$132,000 of the loan balance, the loan shortfall of \$119,000 remained. Letters to the parish requested support to meet the bridge loan shortfall. A parishioner, who wished to remain anonymous, offered to match gifts from people who were not part of the original three-year campaign with an amount of low five figures. Many have responded, and we were able to tell the bank that we will repay the loan by the January 31 due date.

One parishioner vividly described her experience of giving. Several secular and Christian requests urged her to give to their worthy programs. What she realized was that her heart was with the ministry at Good Sam and that her treasure should go in support of Good Sam as well. As she put her additional contribution in the plate, she felt lighter and joyful. That was God moving in her heart and her response to Him was faithful. That was what was happening with so many in our church family. That was God's miracle working through many, many people.

“...Everything comes from you
and we have given you only
what comes from your hand.”
1 Chronicles 29:14



Wonders in the Impossible
Women's Retreat March 19-21, 2010
Avalon, New Jersey
Speaker: Nancy Filkin
Registration ends February 14
Some scholarships are available

For those of you who have not experienced a Good Sam Women's Retreat, we encourage you to break out of your cocoon and join us this year. You will fly afterward!

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13

Bridge of Hope Mentors Needed

by Rusty Smith

Good Sam has supported and been involved with Bridge of Hope for a long time. In the past, we have provided mentorship teams for moms and their children who are in the BoH program to solve their problems of homelessness or home insecurity. This is a great program, well managed with outstanding results and a proven track record.

We have the opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of a family desperately in need of our Christian love and care. A team of 8 to 12 will be needed to carry out the program over the course of one year. If you are interested in joining or want to find out more, please contact Scott Lasser (scottlasser@hotmail.com, 610-608-1239) or Rusty Smith (rustysmith@verizon.net 610-644-1654).

Bridge of Hope website:
<http://www.bridgeofhopelcc.org>

Notice to members of the Church of the Good Samaritan regarding nominations for vestry:

In accordance with the by-laws of the church, any member of the parish may nominate qualified persons for the Vestry and Deanery/Diocesan representatives. Nominations must be received at least three weeks before the annual meeting (by February 7) and each nomination submitted shall be signed by at least 25 qualified voting members.

Nominee qualifications: Baptized Christian and confirmed or received in the Episcopal Church, must be of age eighteen years or older, worshippers in this parish as their usual place of worship for at least one year, shall appear on the records to have contributed to its support during the preceding calendar year.

Voter qualifications: Baptized Christian, sixteen years or older, worshipper in this parish for one year or more, record of support for the last calendar year.

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## Church of the Good Samaritan Annual Meeting 6:30pm, Sunday, February 28, 2010

Potluck Dinner 5:30pm in Ashton Hall

Dinner Assignments:

A-L ~ Main Course to serve 8

M-S ~ Salad, side dish or vegetable to serve 8

T-Z ~ Dessert to serve 8

The meeting will begin at 6:30pm in the church.

## D<sup>3</sup> Night at Good Sam

*by George Scheffey*

On Friday evening, March 19, Men's Ministry will be hosting D<sup>3</sup> Night at Good Sam. That's "Desperate Dads Dinner," to coincide with the first night of the Women's Retreat! More details will be forthcoming in the March Samaritan, but mark your calendars for a night of food, movies and other fun for the young ones, and a break from dealing with a meal on Friday night. (Any Moms who aren't on the retreat are more than welcome, too!!)

## Discernment Committee Update

We are pleased to announce the recent completion of our Parish Profile. This document includes not only Good Samaritan's rich history, but the hopes and desires of our present congregation as expressed in our many Discernment Gatherings. We especially want to thank Lisa Balch, our "in-house" graphic designer, along with Hartley Connett, Linda Davis and Charlie Smith, for helping us create an attractive presentation of the many faces of Good Samaritan and the myriad ways we are committed to living and spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We will be posting the Parish Profile to the Good Samaritan website where you can view it, beginning January 31. On that Sunday we will also be providing some additional information about our work during the announcement time at all the services.

At this writing, with the completion of the self-study phase of our process, we are finalizing details on the application process, and will begin receiving names of potential candidates in February. We cannot overemphasize the importance of and our gratitude for your continued prayers for our work.

As always, we can be contacted at our dedicated email: [goodsamdcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:goodsamdcinfo@gmail.com), or by written communication to our mailbox in the parish office.

On behalf of the Committee, Mary Ernst and Mac McCausland, Co-Chairs



## Standing Rock Men's Retreat

Our friends on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota have invited us to participate in a Men's Retreat with them. It will be held April 16-18, 2010. We will fly from Philadelphia early that Friday morning and return late on the following Sunday evening. Our own Fr. Todd will be the retreat leader. The theme and other details are being worked out. If you are interested, please let Robb Russell know by email ([robb@drexel.edu](mailto:robb@drexel.edu)). This represents a great chance to share and encourage our partners as we all seek to walk out the Christian life.



### Marketplace: Egypt Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace June 28-July 1, 2010

Imagine what it was like to live and work in a dusty, bustling, noisy city along the Nile in ancient Egypt. You would hear the buzz about the goings on in Pharaoh's palace. You might work with people who worshiped many gods, and perhaps hear about someone who worshiped only one God. Perhaps you'd wonder about the new guy Pharaoh has put in charge of storing and distributing food. Some say this former prisoner has the gift of interpreting dreams!

This year, Marketplace will immerse children of all ages in Bible-time culture, helping children and adults explore what it might have been like to live in a culture that had never heard of the one true God. We will experience new traditions, taste new foods, try new arts and crafts, and discover that God never leaves us alone through life's trials and triumphs.

We would love to have your child join us! Mark your calendars!

Marketplace is a wonderful opportunity for you and your family to participate by using your gifts and talents to reach deep into our community to show and tell others about God's love! If you are interested in joining our team, I would love to hear from you! Please contact me in the church office at 610-644-4040 x206 or by email, [jennifer@good-samaritan.org](mailto:jennifer@good-samaritan.org).



### The Marriage Course Seven Sunday evenings beginning February 21 6:00pm-8:30pm Ashton Hall

The Marriage Course is for any married or engaged couple who wants to build a strong and lasting relationship, especially:

- Those who want to enhance their marriage
- Those in the first five years of marriage
- Those at a challenging stage in their marriage, e.g. the birth of a child, a career change, teenagers at home, the "empty nest"
- Those struggling with issues in their marriage.

This course, while based on Christian principles, is very helpful for any couple with or without a Christian faith or church background. Childcare will be available. The cost is \$135/couple, which covers course materials and catered dinners. Financial scholarships are available. Please contact Tracy Defina, 610-644-4040 x212 or [tracy@good-samaritan.org](mailto:tracy@good-samaritan.org) for more information.

### Good Samaritan Installs an AED

*by Susan Starke*



What is an AED? An AED is an Automatic External Defibrillator, a device that has been demonstrated to save more lives than CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) alone. The device enables the user to assess the heart function of a person who has collapsed, and if necessary, administer a shock to the heart to re-establish a normal heart rhythm. Several parishioners were trained on using this device in October, and there are many within the parish who have taken the course in other places. Studies have shown that CPR saves approximately 10% of those needing assistance, where the AED, with CPR, can save 85% to 90%.

The AED is located in Fellowship Hall, near the First Aid kit, by the Food Closet. Please make a note of its location, so that if an emergency arises, you can access it quickly. It is installed in an unlocked box, with an alarm. Please feel free to contact Susan Starke, Parish Nurse, with any questions (610-644-4040 x207, [susans@good-samaritan.org](mailto:susans@good-samaritan.org)).



## **The Church of the Good Samaritan**

212 West Lancaster Avenue Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301

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# ***Winter 2010 Events Calendar***

February 5-7

High School Winter Retreat

February 10

EDS Gold Party

February 14

1st Communion Sunday

Youth Everything Party

February 16

Samaritan Deadline

Shrove Tuesday Spaghetti Dinner & Talent Show

February 17

Ash Wednesday

February 20

Winter Welcoming Dinner

February 21

Connecting Coffee with Clergy

Youth Confirmation Class begins

Alpha Marriage Course begins

February 22

Prayer with the Vestry

February 23

Women's Book Discussion Group

February 26

Samuel Hsu Chopin Concert

February 27

Lenten Quiet Day

February 28

Potluck Dinner & Annual Meeting