

Pentecost-tide 2009

Dear Members and Friends,

As I take my own summer break, I want to remind you all that the Long Vac (summer holiday) does not close down our church life! There are services every Sunday and Holy Day, and we have three Movie Nights with cold pot-luck suppers to enjoy. I hope you will keep your worship regular, that you will join in the parish-community evenings, and that you will make every effort to bring along someone to introduce to our wonderfully eclectic parish family.

The growth of our parish is essential not because we need people to pay the bills or take up parish jobs, but because so many people really need what the Church has to offer:

- Knowledge of Jesus, who reveals God in human terms
- A new way of thinking and living
- A safe place to explore doubts, faith, and moral issues
- Adult, informed study and interpretation of the Bible
- Paths to a disciplined spiritual life and union with God
- Sacraments which can make the experience of God immediate and tangible
- A diverse community of diverse opinion respectfully seeking truth together
- A rich and broad heritage of theology, music, and spiritual direction
- An interesting and fun group of people to enjoy

We have this and much more to offer and share. To offer and share what we have is our call and our baptismal pledge. How are *you* living that call and pledge? What are *you* doing about sharing what we have and making the parish grow? Church growth happens because members choose for it to happen as they make people part of the community, not because a priest draws people in by personality or preaching or anything else. Those are fans, not parishioners. Parishioners are people who join us to seek out the Way, the Truth, and the Life *together*, to contribute *themselves* as part of what we can share ***because they feel welcomed, at home, and valued as a contributing part of the group.***

I encourage everyone to make this a summer of growth, to make these months a time of welcome, hospitality, and incorporation. Why not invite parishioners you don't know very well over for drinks, or a cook-out? Why not get a group together for lunch after church? Individuals do not need to become your "bosom buddy" or new best-friend-forever, but you never know where a simple act of hospitality can lead! And you might just include that visitor you don't know really at all, but who shows an interest in our parish. These are the things that give people a chance of finding a place and a welcome here. These are the things that make us grow. ***Try it! And enjoy!***

Affectionately yours in Christ Jesus,



Jesse L. A. Parker
Rector of Saint Johns in the Village