



Spring 2010

ST. PATRICK'S PRESS

A Publication for the Alumni, Parents, and Friends of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School



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INFINITE VALUE

ON BEING AN EPISCOPAL SCHOOL



Horizons Greater Washington is a newly formed nonprofit that will facilitate a Horizons regional model with programs at each of three Washington-area independent schools, including St. Patrick's, Norwood, and Maret.

Each Horizons site will continue the original mission of Horizons at Maret by providing academic, cultural, and recreational programs designed to empower economically disadvantaged students to realize their full potential.

Horizons is committed to the development of the whole child by providing experiences that build problem-solving skills, foster awareness of community responsibility, instill respect for oneself and others, and encourage a life-long interest in learning.

Goals of Horizons Greater Washington

Through a six-week summer enrichment program and Saturday school year program, Horizons aims to:

- Mitigate summer decline in students' academic achievement
- Improve students' school-year attendance and performance over time
- Build self-esteem and raise students' aspirations and vision for success
- Encourage families to become involved in their children's education

www.horizonsgreaterwashington.org

Experience first-hand the magic of Horizons! We encourage the St. Patrick's community to learn more about Horizons. We have a myriad of volunteer opportunities for students and adults alike, and we welcome visitors to tour the program in action. To volunteer or schedule a visit this summer, please email Executive Director Elizabeth Johnson at ejohnson@horizonsgreaterwashington.org or call 202.939.8885.

Visiting Days at St. Patrick's are July 13 and July 26!



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STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION In accordance with applicable laws and in the interest of being an effective, equitable, just, and inclusive community, St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, family status, economic status, age, or physical disability in the administration of its admission policies, financial aid programs, educational policies and programs, or other School-sponsored programs and activities, or in the hiring and terms of employment of faculty and staff. As an Episcopal parish day school, St. Patrick's gives special consideration in the admission process to active members of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church.

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, 4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW, Washington, D.C. 20007 ♦ 202.342.2805 ♦ www.stpatsdc.org



Grade 7 students participated in various community service projects on their annual trip to Gettysburg, PA. After visiting historical sites, these students spent time tending a community garden.

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Striving to Be Episcopal: *The Work of St. Patrick's*

Peter A. Barrett
Head of School

“Please check the box that best describes your school.”

In creating our School Profile for annual membership in the National Association of Episcopal Schools (NAES), we have 10 choices for “the box that best describes your school.” Four of the options—Parish School, Cathedral School, Religious Order School, and Seminary School—have the further designation of “Separately Incorporated” and “Not Separately Incorporated,” with Diocesan School and Independent School/None of the Above rounding out the possibilities.

Not strictly an independent school—and certainly not a diocesan, cathedral, religious order, or seminary school—St. Patrick's is a parish school that *is not* separately incorporated from the parish that founded it more than half a century ago. (The Day School has its own Board of Trustees, but that body is actually a standing committee of the Church Vestry.) However, that designation and the reality that our relationship with St. Patrick's Episcopal Church is a central, distinguishing feature of life at the Day School only begin to capture what it means to be an Episcopal school, the organizing idea of this edition of the *St. Patrick's Press*.

I have found that parents and prospective parents are rarely interested in the particularities, or even peculiarities, of governance when they ask what it means to be an Episcopal school. It is clear that what they really want to know is how St. Patrick's itself answers the question of what it means to be an Episcopal school on a daily basis—not only in chapels and religion classes, but in all aspects of our shared life.

“The graceful and inclusive manner which is the hallmark . . .”

NAES captures its most frequently asked question in this manner: “What are the principal qualities that distinguish a school as Episcopal?” and responds to that question by describing Episcopal schools, in part, as “Christian communities whose missions integrate spiritual formation into all aspects of the educational experience. Episcopal schools are most distinctive when they are true to this mission and when they do so in the graceful and inclusive manner which is the hallmark of the Anglican approach to education over the centuries.”

Noting that “graceful and inclusive manner,” NAES further describes Episcopal schools as “ecumenical and diverse ministries of educational and human formation for people of all faiths and backgrounds. Episcopal schools are populated by a rich variety of human beings, from increasingly diverse religious, cultural, and economic backgrounds. In fact, the intentional pluralism of most Episcopal schools is a hallmark of their missions.”

In crafting this edition of the *Press*, we have relied in part on the NAES statement that the principles and ideals of Episcopal schools find expression through *school worship* that is creative, inclusive, and a regular part of school life; *community life* that honors and cultivates spiritual growth and supports and nurtures physical, mental, and emotional health; *religious formation and study* that is meaningful and academically substantive and in teaching the Christian tradition fosters dialogue with other faith traditions; and *social justice*, which integrates the concepts of equity, justice, and a just society throughout the life of the school. In the pages that follow, you will find an article that corresponds to each of these four categories, plus a bonus feature in our new Rector's reflections on the nature of Episcopal schools. The Rev. Dr. Kurt Gerhard, himself a veteran chaplain at an Episcopal school, fittingly entitles his article “The Treasure of an Open Mind.”

How does our community value our Episcopal identity?

What difference does it make that St. Patrick's is an Episcopal school? One interesting place to look for an answer to that question—interesting because the data suggest that it makes either little difference or all the difference—is a survey conducted during the 2004–2005 school year. At that time, we asked our community to assist us in evaluating our existing program and in looking ahead for that program. Entitled *Shaping the Future . . . A Dialogue About St. Patrick's*, the survey attracted the participation of more than 320 current and past parents, members of the faculty and administration, parishioners, and friends of the Day School. One of the 30 questions asked respondents to rate the importance of 13 different qualities in considering an envisioned St. Patrick's high school.

“High academic standards” easily attracted the greatest number of “Most Important” ratings and was exceeded only by “Having a strong science program and facilities” among those identified as “Most/Very/Somewhat Important.” It is interesting that of the 13 qualities the survey tested, “Affiliation with the Episcopal Church” was the lowest rated, although 67 per cent of respondents still identified it as important. (“Being a coeducational school,” at 80 per cent, was the next-lowest quality. “High academic standards” came in at 88 per cent and a strong science program at 90 per cent.)

Those results didn't surprise me five years ago, and they don't surprise me now, as I look back on the *Shaping the Future* survey. While a focus on the existing nursery and elementary program rather than an envisioned high school might yield different results, it is clear that being an Episcopal school, in and of itself, is not an essential characteristic for individuals who are already members of the St. Patrick's community—a status that went instead, and not surprisingly, to “High Academic Standards” and a host of related programmatic qualities.


Commitment to St. Patrick's Values

But those results don't tell the whole story. The second highest-rated quality (in terms of “Most Important” and “Very Important” responses) is something the survey called “Commitment to St. Patrick's Values.” Indeed, in terms of being “Most/Very/Somewhat Important,” “Commitment to St. Patrick's Values” actually drew even with “High academic standards.” Survey participants suggested some of what they understand as St. Patrick's values in responding to an earlier question, using words like *character*, *excellence*, *respect*, *nurturance*, and

community. They also identified the abiding concern for students' moral and spiritual development and the expression of that concern in chapel and elsewhere as important components of that set of values. In reporting these results to the community at that time, I observed, “The real strengths of the Day School community include an identifiable set of core values that we accept as St. Patrick's values, general agreement regarding their importance, and a determination to promote those values here and now.”

So what difference does it make that St. Patrick's is an Episcopal school? In terms of the *Shaping the Future* survey—when we look in the right places—it makes a tremendous difference, and parents and others continue to reflect that importance back to us. Actually taking its rightful place alongside high academic standards is that identifiable set of core values that help define St. Patrick's and have their very roots in our Episcopal identity. Rather than finding mere affiliation with the Episcopal Church of interest or importance, the St. Patrick's community focuses on how we respond to the real challenges, the demands, of what it means to be an Episcopal school and express those responses in a set of core values that the community recognizes, accepts, and deeply cherishes. Those so-called St. Patrick's values are our Episcopal identity in action.

In the feature articles that follow, we explore those responses—that is, how St. Patrick's lives out the principles and ideals of Episcopal schools through school worship (Anne Tyler's “Chapel: Celebrating Our Diversity”), community life (the Rev. Amy Yount's “Called to Deeper Connection”), religious formation and study (the Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro's “Achieving Religious Literacy”), and social justice (Ann Adams and Pat Spector's “Relying on the Strength of Knowledge”). In each instance, we strive to do so in the graceful and inclusive manner that should characterize an Episcopal school.

The NAES statement about the distinguishing qualities of Episcopal schools, quoted extensively above, notes that they “invite all who attend and work in them—Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians, Christians and non-Christians, people of no faith tradition—both to seek clarity about their own beliefs and religions and to honor those traditions more fully and faithfully in their own lives. Above all, Episcopal schools exist not merely to educate, but to demonstrate and proclaim the unique worth and beauty of all human beings as creations of a loving, empowering God.” I trust that is the St. Patrick's that emerges from the pages that follow, as well as from the experiences that you and your children have in this place. 

News from the St. Patrick's Community

Students Lead Remarkable Response to Earthquake in Haiti; St. Patrick's Raises \$65,000 in Relief Funds



A Grade 7 student carefully measures portions of food at Washington Hebrew Congregation for delivery to Haiti. Students packaged more than 6,000 meals in one day.

The devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12 jarred the St. Patrick's community, given our longstanding relationship with the town of Buteau and the St. Etienne and Christ Redempteur schools that St. Patrick's has helped build there. Day School students and St. Patrick's community members responded with characteristic generosity, organizing a number of events to support relief efforts.

In a remarkable student-driven effort, the Community Service Club's Jump for Haiti, for which students solicited sponsorships from family members, friends, and neighbors to jump rope during their physical education classes, raised more than \$31,200 for relief efforts in the country.

The Nursery School sponsored its own fundraiser, Change for Haiti, in which Nursery and PK students collected an additional \$1,246 in coins. General donations from St. Patrick's Church totaled \$32,555. The final tally of funds raised through the efforts of St. Patrick's community members was \$65,001. The funds raised will be used to support ongoing relief efforts in Buteau and begin the work of repairing our Haitian partners' church and school, which were severely damaged in the quake.

In addition to fundraising, Grade 7 students partnered with members of the Washington Hebrew Congregation to package more than 6,000 MRE's—or Meals Ready to Eat—that will be sent to families affected by the disaster. Physical education teacher and Haiti Partnership Coordinator Marcy Ference and parish Outreach Committee Chair Marilyn Nowalk recently traveled to Haiti to assess the damage and determine how to best direct our outreach funds. To donate, or for more information on how you can help, please contact Marcy Ference at ferencem@stpatsdc.org. You can read more about their trip at <http://stpatriksepisopalchurch.blogspot.com/2010/05/click-here-to-support-ministries-in.html>.



On left, St. Etienne's Church in Buteau is pictured intact in 2007. Members of the St. Patrick's community were integral in the construction of the building that was severely damaged in the January earthquake, pictured on right.

Environmental Service Day Highlights Integrated Learning Efforts



This Grade 5 student joined her classmates on a river cleanup expedition at Fletcher's Boathouse on the Potomac.

In keeping with the Day School's commitment to service learning, environmental responsibility, and the pursuit of social justice, students participated in an array of activities to mark St. Patrick's third annual Environmental Service Day. As part of the efforts planned to coincide with Earth Day, Upper School students traveled beyond the walls of the classroom and the school to make a difference in both the local and global communities.

Grades 4, 5, and 6 spent the day at Fletcher's Boathouse working with Living Classrooms, where they learned about invasive species, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, erosion, runoff, and marine debris. They also participated in a river cleanup. These activities were chosen by science teachers to ensure strong curriculum connections.

Some Grades 7 and 8 students spent the day learning about composting and building an on-campus compost bin on the MacArthur Campus, while another cohort ventured into the Palisades neighborhood to participate in gardening and greening projects for older citizens—an effort sponsored by our friends at the nonprofit Palisades Village. Yet another group engaged in a task familiar to them from Environmental Service Days past—pulling invasive garlic mustard weed in Glover-Archbold Park, contiguous to St. Patrick's own Foxhall Campus.

While the Upper School was at work off campus, Lower School students marked Earth Day by participating in the "Cool the Earth" incentive program, learning how to make a difference in their daily lives by conserving water, eliminating junk mail, and recycling. Lower School students have also been engaged in a year-long integrated approach to learning about the environment. Spurred on by the innovative approach to thinking about children and nature pioneered by Richard Louv in his book *Last Child In The Woods*, Lower School faculty are working daily to cultivate, enhance, and deepen children's connection to nature and to heighten their awareness of the natural resources

we depend upon every day. The respect for the natural world that such a curriculum provides will, we believe, encourage children to help preserve these very same natural resources. St. Patrick's is working diligently to achieve the goal enumerated in the Board-approved Strategic Plan of working to expand green and global initiatives of which Environmental Service Day—an effort to imbue our students with a sense of global responsibility—is an invaluable part.

Grade 6 Student Takes First Prize in 30th Annual Recitation Contest

This year marked the 30th anniversary of the Michael C. Leuthe Recitation Contest, a competition open to students in Grades 4 through 8. Designed to showcase students' literary, interpretive, memorization, and public speaking skills, the Recitation Contest draws participation and enthusiasm from a wide range of students.

Sixteen of those students, selected as finalists from their grade levels after several preliminary rounds, recited their chosen pieces—either poetry or excerpts from prose—one last time on March 17 before a panel of distinguished judges: Sandy Chamblee (mother of Ryan Hackney '99), John Nicholson (father of Peter Nicholson '80 and Wendy Nicholson Bailey '81), and school friend C.D. Ward.

After difficult deliberations, the judges awarded third place to a Grade 4 student, second place to a Grade 8 student and a Grade 4 student, and the first place title to a Grade 6 student for his rendition of an excerpt from Barack Obama's Speech on Race. The winning student's name will be added to the plaque of past Recitation Contest winners that hangs in the Elementary School library.



The top finishers at this year's Recitation Contest stopped for a photo with the judges who awarded the prizes. The judges are, from left, C.D. Ward, John Nicholson, and Sandy Chamblee.

Game On! 2010 Auction to Benefit the Financial Aid Program Scores Success



Auction Co-Chairs, from left to right, Holly Tyler, Laura Rodman, and Courtney Froemming are pictured here with Head of School Peter A. Barrett. Even in a challenging year, the hard work and enthusiasm of the Auction team and the generosity of the St. Patrick's community enabled the event to meet its budgeted goal for the Financial Aid Program from which approximately one in six Day School students receive grants.

Every March for the past 34 years, the St. Patrick's community has joined together in strong support of the Auction to Benefit the Financial Aid Program. 2010 was no exception, as this year's sports-themed event was a great success.

The Financial Aid Program provides funds to qualified students to attend the Day School who would otherwise be financially unable to do so. Increasing the level of socio-economic diversity at St. Patrick's not only enriches and strengthens our entire school community, but also allows us to more effectively fulfill our Episcopal identity as embodied by our Mission Statement: To "create a diverse learning community of students, teachers, and parents who recognize the infinite value of every participant as a child of God."

During the 2010 school year, nearly one in six students received a financial aid grant. The Auction to Benefit the Financial Aid Program raises nearly one-third of the program budget each school year. Many thanks to Courtney Froemming, Laura Rodman, and Holly Tyler, this year's Auction co-chairs, as well as the category co-chairs, volunteers, and donors!

St. Patrick's Stomp: A Day in the Future Grades 5 and 6 Musical Once More Wows Crowd

For decades, audiences have been "wowed" by the spectacular musical productions of St. Patrick's Grades 5 and 6 students, and this year's musical once again exceeded expectations. *St. Patrick's Stomp: A Day in the Future*, inspired by the global rhythmic theater sensation *Stomp*, featured a variety of musical genres and even some teacher and administrator look-alikes.

Unique to this year's performance was the students' collaborative input on both the narrative and the musical numbers. Music teacher and musical director Laura Petersen constructed the broad outline of the show, but students filled in their own ideas for characters, numbers, and compositions. Students also created the sets for the musical in art class.



Grade 6 students showcase their step skills at St. Patrick's production of "STOMP." This year's performance was unique for the unprecedented number of student compositions.

Upper School Students Take Learning Far Beyond Day School Walls

Each spring, students in Grades 4, 7, and 8 embark on overnight field trips designed to complement the study of American history they undertake in their classes. As part of our commitment to experiential and service learning, St. Patrick's maintains a long tradition of providing opportunities for students to step outside the walls of the Day School.

Students in Grade 8 culminated their Grades 7 and 8 humanities curriculum—which guides students through a study of American history and literature with an end-of-year focus on the Civil Rights Movement—with a trip south to Atlanta and Montgomery, Birmingham, and Selma, Alabama. Among other activities, students retraced the historic 1965 march for voting rights in Selma, visited the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, and visited the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Site in Atlanta.

While the Grade 8 students headed south, students in Grade 4 and Grade 7 headed north to Pennsylvania. Grade 7 students traveled to Gettysburg where, to complement their study of the Civil War, they visited the Gettysburg National Military Park; the renovated Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center; the historic Shriver House, a site dedicated to teaching about the war from the perspective of civilians; and the David Wills House, where Abraham Lincoln completed his Gettysburg Address. After visiting these sites, students spent one day of the trip participating in a variety of community service activities at local sites.

Grade 4 students' Pennsylvania adventure led them to Lancaster County where, building on themes of the Grade 4 social studies curriculum, students gained a deeper understanding of frontier life and railroad transportation that helped Americans move across the country. They enjoyed staying at YMCA Camp Shane, where they got a taste of frontier living and participated in a variety of outdoor activities.



Above: A Grade 4 student learns firsthand about the difficulties of frontier life in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Below: Grade 8 students visited the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, the site of an infamous bombing in 1963 and subsequently a rallying point for the Civil Rights Movement.

Grades 7 and 8 Arts Night Highlights Students' Exceptional Talent



These Grade 8 students—the "Cafe Crew"—joined with other members of their class to bring us *Une Nuit À Paris*.

Halfway through the school year, Grade 8 students chose to focus on either studio art or musical theater for the balance of the year. Their talents were on display during Grades 7 and 8 Performing and Studio Arts Night in May.

Those students who focused on studio art, under the tutelage of Upper School art teacher Kyu-Jin Lee, displayed their portfolios in an exhibit titled *Positions and Compositions*, while those who chose to participate in musical theater created their own musical entitled *Une Nuit À Paris* with the assistance of Upper School music teacher Anne Tyler.

While the evening is designed to showcase our graduating Grade 8 students in particular, Grade 7 students also participated with a handbell performance and Grammy presentations of their own. We offer our heartfelt congratulations to all of our Grades 7 and 8 students and especially those who will be moving on to high school next year!

Passing the Torch: Board of Trustees Welcomes New Chair, Rector, Members



Jane W. Korhonen, CFA, is a partner at Brown Advisory. She is a senior portfolio manager responsible for balanced portfolios for high-net worth and institutional clients. Previously she was an analyst responsible for industries within the health care and technology sectors for both the Large Cap Growth Portfolio and Large Cap Value Portfolio. Prior to joining Brown Advisory, she worked as an equity research analyst for the Howard Hughes Medical Institute in the organization's investment group. Jane received her bachelor's degree from Denison University and her M.B.A. from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. At St. Patrick's, Jane has been an active volunteer, serving as a Room Parent, Auction volunteer, Family Fun Day volunteer and, for the past four years, Treasurer of the Board and Chair of the Finance Committee. Jane and her husband Esko have two children—Grey W '05, M'07, now a junior at Maret, and Olivia W '09, M '11. The Korhonen's live in Bethesda.

On April 11, **The Rev. Dr. Kurt Gerhard** delivered his first sermon as the newly-called Rector of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church. He comes to St. Patrick's from Austin, Texas, where he served both as the senior chaplain at St. Andrew's Episcopal School and as an assistant priest at the Church of the Good Shepherd. At St. Andrew's, Father Gerhard's ministry involved preaching and teaching, as well as serving as an administrator, managing the chaplaincy staff, overseeing more than 20 weekly worship services for children in Grades 1 through 12, and assisting the Head of School with school culture and Episcopal identity issues. Coincidentally, St. Andrew's is also an Episcopal school singled out by our own Head of School Peter Barrett during his sabbatical as a model after visiting a number of schools that had added high schools to existing programs. In his 10 years at St. Andrew's, Father Gerhard was highly praised for his pastoral work, not only with the students, but also with families, faculty, and staff. He is said to have been both a friend and mentor to children and a spiritual guide to adults in the community. During his time at St. Andrew's, Father Gerhard also completed a doctoral program in educational leadership at Virginia Theological Seminary, with a special focus on worship planning with youth.





Patrick M. Steel is senior managing director and co-head of FBR Capital Markets Financial Sponsors Group. From 2007 to 2008, Patrick served as group head of European Investment Banking at FBR International in London. Since joining the firm in 2001, he has managed capital markets and advisory transactions for a variety of companies in the real estate, insurance, financial services, and diversified industrials sectors. Prior to joining FBR, Patrick was the associate administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and was the Senior Advisor for Agriculture at the White House China Trade Relations Working Group. From 1997 to 1999, he served as deputy chief of staff to Secretary Dan Glickman at U.S.D.A.; from 1995 to 1997, he was a special assistant to President Bill Clinton and deputy director for scheduling at the White House; and from 1993 to 1995, he worked at the U.S. Department of Education as a special assistant to Education Secretary Richard Riley. Patrick received his bachelor's degree in history from the University of Pennsylvania, a master's degree in legal and political theory from University College London, and an M.B.A. from Georgetown University. He is a member of the Board of Advisors of Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business Capital Markets Research Center. Patrick is an active member of the St. Patrick's Parish, has served as a Day School Annual Fund caller, and this year was one of the Lower School coordinators for the Annual Fund. He and his wife Lee Satterfield Steel have two sons, Jack 3B and Conor 2B. They live in Washington, D.C.

Judy Heisley Bishop is the President and Executive Director of the Heisley Family Foundation, a private foundation that supports educational initiatives internationally. Judy helped found the Heisley Family Foundation with her father in 1997. In addition to her work with the Foundation, she is an active volunteer. She currently serves on the Board of Trustees of Lake Forest College in Chicago and the Latino Student Fund in Washington, D.C. She serves on the advisory boards for The Isabella and Ferdinand Language Adventures School of Washington, D.C. and the National Outdoor Leadership School in Wyoming. Judy is actively involved with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. Judy received her bachelor's from Lake Forest College and her master's in art administration focusing on non-profit management from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. At St. Patrick's, Judy has been a member of the Development Committee, and the 2009 and 2010 Auction Committees. Judy and her husband Leland have three daughters Emma 2C, Libby 1B and Daisy PK1, and they live in Washington, D.C.



A Special Note of Thanks: **Teresa Clare** completed her lengthy service on the Board of Trustees this spring. We extend our deepest gratitude to her for her many contributions, including her strong leadership of the Committee on Trustees, which identifies and educates new Trustees. In addition, Trustees **Diane Reinke**, longtime chair of the Spiritual Life Committee, and **Rosy Khanna** stepped down this year. We thank them both deeply for their service. **H. Keith Powell** completed his Board of Trustees service, including two terms as Board Chair, in May. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him again for the tremendous leadership he has provided for the Day School. His contributions and those of his family—including the establishment of a new Strategic Plan in 2009 and his work to advance the Foxhall Campus—will not be soon forgotten. His legacy is a St. Patrick's poised to step confidently toward a bright future.

Strong Spring for Lacrosse, Track and Field

Upper School athletes competed successfully in lacrosse and track and field this spring. We congratulate all participants for their enthusiasm and competitive play. St. Patrick's lacrosse program has shown significant improvement this season. Returning players improved their skills, and new players began to hone their own. Varsity girls ended their season with a competitive 4-5-1 record, varsity boys finished 3-7, junior varsity girls 1-5, and junior varsity boys 4-2. The St. Patrick's track and field team, 35 members strong, culminated a phenomenal season by bringing home a second-place banner in the Capital Athletic Conference (CAC) meet in May. The third CAC banner brought home this year, the track and field award will be added to the girls varsity and boys junior varsity soccer banners from the fall season.

Photos: A Grade 8 student rushes the ball upfield, fending off a Woods player's attempt to check her (top left). A Grade 6 student (right) moves the ball aggressively upfield (top right). A Grade 5 student passes the baton to his teammate during a relay (bottom left). A Grade 8 student wins the draw against a Woods attacker (bottom right).



In each edition of the Press, we bring you short biographies of several current faculty and staff members at the Day School. We are proud to share the stories of the many accomplished people who make St. Patrick's the outstanding institution it is.



Ann Adams

Grade 8 Humanities Teacher

Grade 8 humanities teacher **Ann Adams'** teaching career was born as St. Patrick's was itself embarking on a new beginning—the creation of our Grades 7 and 8 program. She had begun substituting at St. Patrick's nearly five years before, as her three children—Isabel '99, Sam W '02, and Jo W '04—were making their own way through the Day School. An editor in the book publishing field in a previous life, Ann fell in love with teaching after her first long-term substitute teaching position and began a masters program (which she recently completed) at Johns Hopkins University. She holds an undergraduate degree in history from Swarthmore College.

Ann's teaching philosophy is encompassed by the following goals: "Try to understand every one of your students. Figure out how to make the learning accessible to them and still challenging. Figure out what is essential to teach. Know your material. Whenever possible, tell a (true) story. Assess often and tinker endlessly as a result." She enjoys the moments when "a cosmically important message about history or literature has been created (not necessarily by me) and appreciated in my classroom." She credits Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs Dan Spector with inspiring her to become an educator when he recommended her for the Grade 8 humanities position after she taught a class and Director of the MacArthur Campus Amy Yount for inspiring her with "her integrity and unlimited giving to every member of our community."

Beyond having three children graduate from St. Patrick's and teaching at our MacArthur Campus, Ann also met her husband Henk Koppen (Annika '03) while he was a parent volunteer in charge of the Publishing Center and she was filling in for Trissy McHenry, as assistant to the Head of Lower School, the administrative liaison to the center. They were married in St. Patrick's Church with the Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro presiding, Thérèse Khan photographing, Anne Tyler playing a medley of every St. Patrick's melody, and Judy Barr in charge of the refreshments!

Ann Adams is the 2010 recipient of the Love of Teaching Award in Honor of Mark Humphreys. The qualities set forth for the award are a dedication and determination to help each child develop to his/her potential, a clear sense of teaching as a craft at which the nominee always strives to get better, a determination and willingness to find what works for each student, an understanding of the importance of collaboration with colleagues, and the conviction that the best students s/he has ever taught are those currently in his/her class. Ann will receive a stipend to augment her instructional program as well as a wooden captain's chair emblazoned with the St. Patrick's logo for her classroom.



Will Cook

Upper School Science Teacher

Upper School science teacher **Will Cook** is a Washington, D.C. native who attended Potomac School from Kindergarten through Grade 12. He then went on to earn his bachelor of science degree in environmental science with a focus on marine conservation from Dickinson College. After spending several years at a marine conservation organization, Will is now completing his first year as a full-time teacher.

"I wanted to move into a classroom where I could interact with young people and educate them about the world that surrounds us," said Will. While he enjoyed his work in conservation, he believed it was important to teach so that "students leave my class with a better understanding of themselves and how they fit into the larger picture."

Will credits Lower School science teacher Martha Estroff and fellow Upper School science teacher Michelle Basile, with whom he worked at a nature-science summer program for many years, with helping him to hone his teaching philosophy and ongoing support and guidance. In his classroom, Will strives to provide the tools for students to understand the world around them in increasingly complex ways. "I think the most memorable learning

experiences are born of hands-on lessons where students discover, reflect, and revisit concepts through a variety of senses. Connecting concepts learned in the classroom to examples found in the world around us is a crucial component of understanding why we study different disciplines of science."

In his spare time, Will enjoys fishing on the Potomac (catch and release) and spending time outside enjoying the fresh air. Will's parents both live in Washington, and he has two younger sisters—one a junior at the College of Charleston and one who works for a documentary film company in New York City.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Will filled two maternity leave positions in the Science Department. He has been appointed to a regular position beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, teaching Grades 3 and 4 science, collaborating with Martha Estroff in the teaching of younger students, and coaching cross country and track and field. The increased staffing will enable St. Patrick's to increase the amount of science in the curriculum.



Shannon Scott

Grade 3 Teacher

Grade 3 teacher **Shannon Scott** earned her undergraduate degree in communications from the University of Maryland, College Park, and spent five years working in the corporate public relations field before earning her master of arts in teaching from Howard University and moving into academics. “I realized that becoming a teacher would supply me with the change I needed and the excitement of attempting something new,” said Shannon about her career path.

One of Shannon’s favorite parts of teaching is watching her students grow academically throughout the year. “When they first come to me in September, they have no idea what their potential is and what they will be able to do by June.” Shannon believes that the most effective way to teach is to figure out how to reach each student through his or her personal learning style. “I want school to be a positive memory for my students . . . I try to achieve that through offering lots of choices in the classroom, allowing the students to create their own paths in their learning.”

In order to refine her skills, Shannon has attended Responsive Classroom training as well as the Writing Institute at Columbia University. She hopes to build on these courses by attending Responsive Classroom II and the Reading Institute. In addition to teaching, Shannon also coaches Girls on the Run, reads, and has recently taken up golf. She is currently planning her August wedding to her fiancée, William Thomas.



Thérèse Khan

Grade 5 Teacher

Grade 5 teacher **Thérèse Khan** spent her early years in Trinidad, where she was born, before attending a boarding school in Saskatchewan for high school. She then moved to Montreal and—after deciding against pursuing her childhood career choices of ballerina and fire fighter—earned her undergraduate degree in elementary education from McGill University. Now completing her 20th year as an educator, Thérèse has taught science, math, language arts, and social studies and been both a homeroom and resource teacher.

Thérèse enjoys helping students grow in their curiosity and guiding them as they discover the world. She believes that every child can succeed and brings something valuable to the teaching-learning process. “We just need to determine what tools or strategies they need to help them achieve their goals. I am not doing my job if a student is not being challenged.” One of her favorite parts of teaching is helping students feel proud of something they have accomplished on their own.

Always on the lookout for opportunities to bring the world into her classroom, Thérèse was thrilled to receive the O’Neill-Carew Fellowship for Excellence in Teaching in the 2008-2009 year and used the fellowship to spend the summer traveling in Turkey. “It has been amazing how that experience has continued to shape my teaching in so many ways. I’m able to share firsthand experience not only with my Grade 5 students as we study early civilizations, but also as a special guest in Grade 6 sharing my photographs and experiences.”

In her free time, Thérèse enjoys photography, traveling, reading, museums, and visiting her family all over the world.



Ellen Cremer

Grade 4 Teacher

Grade 4 teacher **Ellen Cremer**, an avid outdoorswoman and skier, decided to embark on a teaching career after spending a winter in Colorado as a children's ski instructor. She enjoyed her young athletes so much that when she moved back to Washington after the season, she enrolled in graduate school at George Washington University to pursue a degree in education.

Over the next 20 years, Ellen spent time as a homeroom teacher and a resource teacher and also worked for an education non-profit where she trained teachers and wrote early childhood curricula for international schools—a position that allowed her to work in 17 countries including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Ellen believes that teachers must set high expectations for their students. "All students are capable of high-level thinking with a challenging curriculum. It is

necessary to help students raise their own expectations for their own learning." In addition to holding her students to a high standard, Ellen believes that "you have to celebrate everything students do well . . . to help them become more effective, confident, and independent learners."

Asked about her favorite part of teaching, Ellen said, "I love the connections that I make with my students. It's a thrill to feel that I have played a small part in preparing my students for their future. Last summer, I ran into one of my students running on the St. Albans track. He was about to leave for college, and he told me he remembered me as his first grade teacher! That's when I know I've made an impact."

A man with short brown hair, wearing a white clerical collar, a dark sweater, and a light-colored blazer, is sitting on a light-colored couch. He is smiling at the camera. Behind him is a large window with a dark frame, showing green foliage outside. To his right, a lamp with a white shade sits on a small table covered with a floral cloth. On the table is a small framed religious painting of Jesus. On the wall to the left, there is a small wooden cross with four religious paintings.

The Treasure of an Open Mind

*The new Rector of St. Patrick's shares his views on
Episcopal education, identity, and spiritual growth*



The Rev. Dr. Kurt Gerhard
Rector

The Gospel lesson on my first Sunday as Rector of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Day School was about the disciple Thomas who questioned his friends and fellow disciples who claimed to have witnessed the resurrected Jesus (John 20.19-31). Thomas listened to their testimony but then demanded proof. I wondered in my sermon if Thomas might have been the first Episcopalian. Episcopalians put great value on deeper understanding, asking questions, and seeking diverse perspectives to broaden and strengthen faith. The ethic of questioning, doubting, and pursuing wisdom is the essence of the ministry of education so important in the Episcopal tradition and what led St. Patrick's in 1956 to found a school as a ministry to the people of Washington, D.C.

When I was growing up in Nebraska, I pictured Episcopal schools as storied boarding institutions that were geographically secluded and most definitely in the Northeast. I pictured something like *Dead Poet's Society*. Then I moved from the Midwest to Austin, Texas and accepted a part-time position at an Episcopal day school while studying at the Seminary of the Southwest. This experience at an Episcopal school challenged all of my preconceptions. Many years have passed since that first encounter. In that time, I have come to know something about the essence of an Episcopal education and how that identity forms students, families, faculties, and the church at large.

The Episcopal Church affirms and respects various points of view and carefully avoids universals and absolutes. From its system of governance to its liturgy, discussion and mutual learning are essential elements of the Episcopal culture and led to the founding of many educational institutions. The Episcopal ethos allows people with differing, and even contrary, opinions to worship and learn together. Education is, at its root, the pursuit of new knowledge and perspective. Whether it is science, history, math, language, art, theology, or any other discipline, the challenge of education is to open minds to different ideas and perspectives.

“Whether it is science, history, math, language, art, theology, or any other discipline, the challenge of education is to open minds to different ideas and perspectives.”


I discovered that Episcopal education is essentially communion. Communion because when we close off our minds and our hearts to the diversity of the world and even the diversity that exists with those closest to us, we find ourselves in our own fabricated universe. In this false reality, the good people are those who agree with us and the problems are the fault of others. The challenge is to realize that education is not a self-centered enterprise, but one that calls us together as a community.

When we realize the interrelated nature of education, we make a choice to open our minds and hearts to contemplation—to be willing to challenge our own points of view and to trust that God's never-ending creativeness will continually flow through our work together. It is not just teachers passing information to students but a conduit moving back and forth between and among everyone invested in the learning process: teachers, students, parents, trustees, staff, and administrators. Those invested are bound in love; we invite others to love only through loving others. This love is the essence of a good

education provided by dedicated educators, faithful families and, most of all, trusting communities gathered together to learn from each other.

Episcopal schools attempt to form such a loving environment. In my 13 years serving in Episcopal schools, I discovered the treasure of open minds. Open minds have the ability to acknowledge that someone who believes something different is not wrong, that the needs of the world are different from selfish desires, and that respect is the cornerstone of greater wisdom. These pursuits could be found at any fine academic institution, but Episcopal schools ground these core components of reason in the worship and tradition of the Episcopal Church and in the teachings of the Bible. As we pray and respond to God, we shape our beliefs. Community, service, religious formation, and worship form the essential components of Episcopal schools and are the core of the identity of St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Day School.

April marked the beginning of my tenure as the eighth rector of St. Patrick's. I come with experience in churches in Nebraska and Texas, both large and small, and from a Grades 1 to 12 day school serving 830 students and their families in Austin, Texas. I have led more than 3,000 worship services for children from age five to 18. I taught Grade 7 theology for 10 years and more recently Grade 12 world religions and ethics electives. In addition to building relationships with students, my ministry included maintaining Episcopal and school identity with the addition of a high school program and building bridges between faculties on two geographically divided campuses. In 2009, I completed a Doctor of Ministry in Educational Leadership from the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria. My concluding project explored worship planning with adolescents. I was drawn to the ministry of St. Patrick's because I have a strong call to serve in a parish while continuing my passion for education as a way of living into the Episcopal tradition.

The disciple Thomas is a good example of an Episcopalian because he was willing to express his doubt and struggle to understand, in a very public setting, the essence of truth. He may not have been an official Episcopalian, but he represents the tradition well. After a period of doubt, Thomas proclaimed his faith profoundly. Thomas's struggle to understand strengthened his belief in ways that are beyond our understanding. Education empowers us in that same way. We will never agree completely with those around us but, through love, we can honor the diversity of thought and grow in our own understanding. This growth is a result of communion, a radical welcome of other outlooks, which is at the heart of the Episcopal tradition. As I begin my ministry with St. Patrick's Episcopal Church and Day School, I pray that we can grow in understanding as we listen to diverse perspectives. 



Rainbows created by prisms in the windows of the Nave shine on students, parents, and grandparents during this year's St. Patrick's Day Chapel, one of many events at the Day School open to immediate and extended families.

Called to Deeper Connection

The Director of the MacArthur Campus explores St. Patrick's community of faith

The Rev. Amy Yount '77
MacArthur Campus Director

In April, we took our Grade 8 class to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I use the full title of the museum because it is, first and foremost, a memorial—a memorial to the hundreds of thousands of people who lost their lives to the power of human cruelty. Exhibit after exhibit underscores the reality of this destruction and of those particularly targeted by the Nazis, including political dissidents, Roma, homosexuals, people with disabilities and, of course, millions of Jews. The assault of images and information is overwhelming each time, no matter how many times I walk through those halls. Yet there is one particular place in this memorial museum to which I am drawn each time I go.



It is the recovered ark from a synagogue in Germany that the Nazis defaced on one of their historic rampages. Across the top of this battered ark, which once housed the Torah for a Jewish community in a small town, reads a simple yet powerful inscription in Hebrew. The words, translated into English, read, “Know before whom you stand.” I stand in front of this ark, thousands of miles from where it once stood, yet I feel myself on holy ground. “Know before whom you stand,” I read again. The Nazis did not know. Do we?

I ponder this question as we debrief our experience of this trip in class, naming the assumptions our visit has called into question—faith, the goodness of humanity, even our own denial of prejudice. I ponder this question as our class prepares to make its way to Atlanta, Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery to follow the footsteps of those courageous men, women, and children in our own country who confronted prejudice and hatred with staggering courage and vision, helping to shape the future of our nation in ways that many at that time denied were even possible. Adults and children alike, whose churches were bombed and loved ones were murdered, marched in hope and in faith. The pilgrimage we will walk, in the path of their footsteps, cries out to us, reminding us of the power of community rooted in faith, community motivated by a common vision.

Here at St. Patrick’s, we build our community on a foundation of faith. It is this foundation that shapes who we are and who we strive to be with each other. We are not a community of same believers, who agree in all things religious or most things political. We are too richly varied for that, coming from different socio-economic backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and political opinions. Yet it is this foundation of faith that emboldens our Mission Statement and undergirds our daily interactions. We are reminded, as professed

in the words of that statement, that each member of the community is of infinite value, a child of God. Powerful words. Even more powerful when lived in community.

Every week for Kindergarten to Grade 3 and on several occasions at our Kindergarten to Grade 8 chapels, teachers, students, and parents gather to recite the Lower School Prayer. Children and adults together share in the hand motions, touching their eyes, heads, and hearts. “O God, open my eyes to see what is beautiful, my mind to know what is true, and my heart to love what is good.” We ask God to guide our vision, to inspire our understanding, and to impel our actions. We are invited in this prayer to see each other through God’s eyes, and to act accordingly. Our interactions then, with each other and with those we serve, are to be grounded in this sacred vision.

I see glimpses of this vision at work in so many areas of our school life. So much of what we teach, from lessons in circle time in the primary grades to our educational and outreach trips in Grades 7 and 8, aims to help our students understand the importance of respect for all and our commitment to the well-being of others. We nurture inclusion on the playground, risk-taking in the classroom, and sportsmanship on the field. We post our School Creed in every division and turn to its tenets of honesty, kindness, respect, and responsibility in everything from our classroom instruction to our policy against bullying. We embed our service work in deeper understanding of the injustices that cause hunger, homelessness, or poverty, as we endeavor to nurture in our students a deeper sense of empathy and compassion. And the students teach each other and the adults around them as well as they push us to consider doing more. (“So what if we all participated in a jump-a-thon for Haiti? Why not also do a car wash?” “If we can package so many meals in such little time, why don’t we do this work more often?”)

We fall short of this vision, of course, as we strive to uphold it, and it is in those moments of failure that our commitment to community is often most poignantly felt. Yet even in these times, when we can face into our failure, when we can acknowledge our mistakes, then we can learn from them. Upper School disciplinary meetings can be this kind of sacred space. So can walking the Lower School Peace Path. Whatever the venue, the commitment is the same—to know ourselves and one another as members of the same human family or, faithfully articulated, as fellow children of God.

In my many years of teaching social justice, I have turned time and time again to the wisdom of child advocate Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children’s Defense Fund. In her book, *Guide My Feet: Prayers and Meditations for Our Children*, she offers prayers to guide parents, teachers, and congregations in their work with and love of children. Seeing the care of children as an essential act of faith, she urges us to keep the well-being of children central to the decisions that we make, both personally and as a society and nation. Her leadership in this mission inspires me and so do her prayers. They help to define the kind of community I believe we strive to be—a community that looks for the goodness of God reflected in each person and a community whose actions reflect that vision. So I close with her words, words that call us into deeper connection with God and with each other. Although the prayer is written in the first person singular, it is a prayer that transforms singular individuals into collective community.

O God, help me to feel Your presence in everywhere I go today.

To see You in everyone I meet today.

To sense You in all I hear today.

To reflect You in all I do today.

To pray to and trust You in all I experience today.

To struggle to be like You in all I am today.

To speak of and for You in all I say today.

To thank You for everything every day. ☸



Grade 8 Class of 2010 students stop for a photograph while visiting the Eternal Flame symbolizing the ideals of Martin Luther King Jr. during their Civil Rights Trip to Atlanta and Alabama.

Relying on the Strength of Knowledge

How St. Patrick's integrates the ideals of equity, justice, and a just society throughout the life of the school

*Ann Adams and Pat Spector
Grade 8 Humanities Teacher and Nursery Admission Director*

The self-portraits painted by the students in PK1 stand out, on their own, as beautiful works of art. Nursery School teachers Helen Gasperetti and Pascale Pereira are justly proud of the children's thoughtful effort and the resulting bright display that decorated the Nursery hallway last fall. But they know well that their self-portrait unit of study includes important learning beyond the colors, designs, textures, and techniques that captivate most observers.

Ms. Gasperetti described the intentional discussions that the teachers initiate as part of the unit, drawing the children's attention to their various shapes, sizes, skin tones, and eye colors—emphasizing that their individual characteristics make each child unique. In contrast, they also discussed the essential “humanness” shared by all of us, with attributes like flesh, blood, bones, organs, and emotions. With these discussions, Ms. Gasperetti and Ms. Pereira begin a process of educating the children to respect and value their own identity and that of others.

A St. Patrick's education draws heavily on the Episcopal traditions of respect for diversity—not only of faith but also of differences in creed, race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, family status, socio-economic status, age, or physical disability—and a culture of service to those in need. We teach students through our Creed and through our curriculum to live with “Honesty, Kindness, Responsibility, and Respect,” and through our Mission Statement to honor the “infinite value” of everyone as a “child of God.” This is the very basis of social justice—honoring one another's infinite value. We believe that if students at St. Patrick's experience fairness and learn to treat others with fairness, feel accepted and learn to accept others, learn to know themselves in order to know others, and learn to appreciate the value of serving others, they will grow into good, ethical, and just people who work to further these ideals outside the confines of the Day School.

These lessons begin with our three- and four-year-olds in the Nursery School and are expanded and elaborated by the time students reach the upper grades. Students in the Lower School, for example, gather early in the year for a Town Meeting during which they learn or review the four steps of the Peace Path, a traditional Lower School process for resolving conflict that removes teacher judgment and provides students with effective ways to express their feelings in “I messages,” hear the concerns of others, and arrive independently at appropriate resolutions to problems. As the school year progresses, the deliberate instruction that took place in that fall Town Meeting and afterwards in Kindergarten through Grade 3 classrooms will provide what Grade 2 resource teacher Erica Thompson calls “a point of reference” and a route to resolution of children's conflicts. Students will gain skill at listening to others and at crafting and implementing solutions to problems as they put the Peace Path to use on the playground and in their classrooms. Their tendency to see only their own point of view will be tempered as they learn to recognize the perspective of another child and, over time, to extend this perspective-taking more broadly.

The curriculum in Lower School and Upper School exposes students to literature that includes and reflects the history and culture of diverse peoples and affirms their dignity and equal worth. Not only is understanding increased, but every child can see herself or himself in the curriculum. In Grades 4 through 6, students also begin to tackle difficult themes and events in their language arts and social studies reading. Grade 5 teacher Thérèse Khan sums up the role that the curriculum plays in developing empathy and involvement in issues of social justice: “We rely on the strength of knowledge. Understanding what seems different helps to build respect and empathy.” For example, reading the short story “The Circuit” opens students' eyes to the lives of migrant workers and provides an opportunity to grapple with questions of exploitation. Before they leave the Whitehaven Campus, Grade 6 students undertake a three-week investigation called the Identity Project, which asks them to examine themselves, their circumstances, and the situations of others. Each member of the class participates in a series of small-group discussions focused on the study of some aspect of identity.

In the past, students have studied topics such as gender, politics, media, family, and socio-economic status.

In their last two years at St. Patrick's, students sharpen their focus on social justice. They work to distinguish between charity and justice, taking part in a service learning program that moves from examining the root causes of problems to taking part in related service projects. Whether studying hunger and homelessness before volunteering at food banks and shelters, or studying aging before delivering groceries and helping with daycare for seniors, they carry away challenging new ideas and understandings that reinforce the primary tenet of true equity—the infinite value of every individual. Grade 8 humanities teacher Ann Adams sums up the suitability of the Grades 7 and 8 curriculum as a natural catalyst for learning empathy and respect: “With ethics, service learning, and our humanities program covering American history and literature, we have an array of springboards for both exposure to, and empathy-building for, all kinds of difference.”

The National Association of Episcopal Schools defines social justice as “the integration of the ideals and concepts of equity, justice, and a just society throughout the life of the school; the embracing and honoring of diversity; and the inclusion of community service and service learning as part of the life of the school.” Whether at one of the bi-annual Community Conversations on Equity, the wonderful Gifts for Good program initiated by St. Patrick's parents, the Church and Day School's ongoing involvement in Haiti and this year's monumental efforts on behalf of the Haitian earthquake victims, and the exciting arrival of the Horizons summer program, St. Patrick's reaches out and offers itself as a resource to the larger Washington, D.C. community and beyond.

Ultimately, the most important way to achieve social justice is through our collective actions. As our children develop wider and wider circles of understanding and as they come to value the range of differences that enrich humanity, we trust that they will act to further social justice in the world around them. ♻️

Many of the above curriculum anecdotes were adapted from presentations at the November 19 Community Conversation on Equity, where four teachers representing the school's three divisions and its full span of child development addressed the group.



A PK2 student works diligently on her self-portrait.



The Nave is one of the Day School's principal gathering spaces, pictured here during an Upper School chapel.

Chapel: Celebrating Our Diversity

*The importance of creating a
safe space for students*

Anne Tyler
Upper School Music Teacher

St. Patrick's students celebrate chapel weekly from Nursery School through Grade 8. As part of the Day School's commitment to nurture the "inner life" of each child, chapels provide an opportunity and a safe space for students to communicate with God in their own way. While arguably the most recognizable symbol of our Episcopal identity, school worship—chapel—is but one expression of the many ways by which we seek to nurture the moral and spiritual development of our students.



Chapel services at the Day School—from the opening prayers to the choice of music to the homily—are designed to be age-appropriate, inclusive, and community-building regardless of students' backgrounds—be they Episcopal or another Christian denomination, Jewish, Muslim, or agnostic.

*"Open my eyes to see what is beautiful,
my mind to know what is true,
and my heart to love what is good."*

-Nursery School and Lower School Prayer

Opening prayers are a way of centering the community further and inviting them into worship. Whether it be the Nursery and Lower School's prayer to "Open my eyes to see what is beautiful, my mind to know what is true, and my heart to love what is good," or the Upper School's Collect for Purity, opening prayers spoken in unison gather people together to participate in worship.

*"What a goodly thing
If the people of the world
Could live together in peace."*

-The Peace Round

Music performed during chapel is chosen deliberately to reflect the inclusiveness and diversity for which we strive in our community. The Episcopal tradition is rich

in glorifying God with music—songs lift our hearts as we communicate to God in a unified voice. While timeless songs like "This Little Light of Mine," "Inch by Inch," and "All Things Bright and Beautiful" are sung all the way from Nursery through Grade 8, others appeal to specific divisions and age levels. Students in Grades 4 through 8 are able to read and maneuver through the hymnal and other songbooks. Music choices include not only Christian hymns, but Hebrew songs and chants from a variety of sources. "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," "Earth and All Stars," and "Shalom Chaverim" come to us from The Hymnal 1982; "Bless the Lord My Soul" and "Ubi Caritas" are Taizé chants, and "Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing" are songs of African-American origin from *Lift Every Voice and Sing II: An African American Hymnal*. We also recite "Hine Ma Tov," or the Peace Round: "What a goodly thing // If the people of the world // Could live together in peace."

These songs reflect the faiths of our diverse community and the contributions they have made to our own lives. Singing together as a group creates a harmonious community that extends beyond the chapel and into the school day.

*"Stay with me, remain here with me, watch and pray,
watch and pray."*

-Songs and Prayers from Taizé, Jacques Berthier

Chapel strives to create a safe space for students to share their feelings. Students can share their individual petitions during the Prayers of the People. Students in the Lower School raise their hands if they wish and have a teacher or priest come around to listen to their concerns and their joys. In the Upper School, the student-led Chapel Guild leads the worship, reads the traditional Prayers of the People, and then reads the petitions of students who have filled out prayer cards.

Homilies, like the choice of celebratory music, are also designed to be age-appropriate and are based on the principles of our Creed: Honesty, kindness, responsibility, and respect. Using books or even puppets as visual aids, Nursery School and Lower School topics include what makes a good friend, practicing acts of kindness towards others in the community, taking care of our environment, and learning to say thank you. The homily always includes a message about God's infinite love for all of us, no matter who we are. In the Upper School, homilies are more sophisticated and continue to engage the participant to actively seek God in daily life as we live our mission.

Last year in Grades 7 and 8, Taizé services were introduced and are now scheduled once a month. This meditative exercise follows the basic format as the traditional chapel, including singing and prayers but in place of the homily, there is silence. These services are configured to quiet the mind and find God in the silence. Taizé songs are short, the text consisting of a few basic words of faith from scripture. The intent is that the words take on a deeper meaning by repeating the song again and again in a meditative style and an understanding of the text begins to penetrate the participant's whole being. During the group silence, participants begin to open their hearts to God and find peace and love in God's presence. This service has been adapted from the Taizé services in France to fit with the attention span of our young adolescents.

Chapel at St. Patrick's is a special time to gather, the teachable moment where we direct our thoughts towards God. It is a time to sing together, a time for using our voices as a vehicle to give thanks to God, and it's a time to sit together as a community. As our Mission Statement says, we "recognize the infinite value of every participant as a child of God." Chapel time creates an environment where everyone is included and has importance and something to offer. ☦



The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro, Day School Chaplain, meets with acolytes and members of the Chapel Guild to prepare for the upcoming Upper School chapel service.



Grade 3 students perform in the annual Christmas Pageant. It is but one of many opportunities for students to learn the arcs of the major faith traditions.

Achieving Religious Literacy

Whether the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, the Koran, or other religious texts and traditions, St. Patrick's helps students explore their own faith identity

*The Rev. Dr. Marjorie Gerbracht-Stagnaro
Day School Chaplain*

A few weeks ago, I was indulging in my favorite guilty pleasure—reading—more specifically reading Charlaine Harris' newest book, *Dead And Gone*. The novel is the ninth in a series centered on the character of Sookie Stackhouse, a waitress/telepath who shares her talent for mind-reading with others. The mystery, drama, and plot twists embedded in the series are first-rate, but so too is observing firsthand how the character of Sookie Stackhouse wrestles with the lived reality of what it means to be a good Christian.


Sookie constantly inserts a “Word of the Day” from a daily calendar into her spoken vocabulary. She also tries to take what she has learned in church—the Word of God—and weave it into her daily life. Not an easy thing to do as she battles vampires, werewolves, and fairies on a daily basis. In Harris’s latest novel, Sookie makes a reference to “the angel with a flaming sword.” I laughed out loud. “What a great reference to the story of Adam and Eve,” I thought to myself. Then I thought, “Would St. Patrick’s students recognize that comment as one from scripture? Yes! Most especially this year’s Grade 4 Old Testament students, as we just reviewed that story in class.”

In his text *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know—And Doesn’t*, Stephen Prothero observes that while we are the most religiously diverse nation in the world, we are also “a nation of religious illiterates.” Because of compulsory religious education, European students have a strong framework of knowledge when it comes to biblical and religious literacy. However, this is not the case when it comes to American students. Prothero observes how, in his own experience teaching at Boston University, only a few students can name the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, much less a single Hindu scripture. He asserts that we are raising a nation of young people who can’t recognize biblical allusions in Shakespeare, Toni Morrison, or even films like *Pulp Fiction*. For this reason, Prothero posits that there are really four R’s, “reading, writing, ‘rithmetic, and religion,” and that all four subjects must be incorporated into a school’s curriculum for a child to succeed academically.

The National Association of Episcopal Schools notes that religious literacy comes from

strong experiences of religious coursework, community life, service, and worship opportunities. As a product of Episcopal schooling, I know that I would not be who I am today without an education that embraced all four R’s and called me to explore my faith identity through a variety of lenses.

Thank God for Episcopal schools. Thank God for St. Patrick’s, a place that affirms that every student we teach is a child of God and strives to provide an education that reflects that reality. A community that works for religious literacy at all times in all places—in classroom morning meetings, on the Grate Patrol van, in a Grade 6 comparative religions class, in Equity Conversations, as Grade 3 students memorize Psalm 23, as Upper School Chapel Guild members lead worship, as Grade 7 students pack kosher meals at Washington Hebrew to send to Haiti, in schoolwide communications as we promote increased efforts to be environmentally conscious. The list of experiences that promote religious literacy in our own community is endless. The possibilities for spiritual growth at St. Patrick’s are innumerable. May St. Patrick’s continue to be a place that encourages religious literacy and spiritual growth as it empowers its students, faculty, staff, and parents to become more the individuals God calls us to be.

This year, as I complete my twelfth year as chaplain, I wondered what graduates thought about their time at St. Patrick’s. Was their time here one of spiritual growth? I asked, many shared, and here are just a few results. All were asked the same question: How did being a student at St. Patrick’s help to shape your spiritual identity? 

How did being a student at St. Patrick’s help to shape your spiritual identity?

St. Patrick’s expected us to be good students, good people, and good community and family members. I wish every school taught students this. I hope my children, way in the future, have this same opportunity. I believe that the religious aspect raised the bar on the expectation level that the teachers had for us. The environment in school was passed on to our parents. I believe our parents had just as much fun at St. Patrick’s as we did. What was created was a complete world for us to grow and learn in at home and school.

More specific to religion, St. Patrick’s taught me that it’s not how you practice religion, but why you practice. I still am not sure what my religion is in life, but I have faith and St. Patrick’s taught me how to have faith.

*St. Patrick’s Graduate W ’02
St. Andrew’s ’08
University of Montana ’12*

The sense of satisfaction and good that I felt after participating in Grate Patrol is a feeling that I haven’t forgotten yet. It’s one that I still experience when doing volunteer work today, work that I might not have been open to doing had it not been for St. Patrick’s. Now, I travel 30 minutes outside of Bratislava, Slovakia to a Roma settlement once every week to tutor a group of children in English. I also worked to raise money and build a playground for an orphanage in eastern Slovakia, as well as helping to organize a summer camp for underprivileged young Slovaks. I really enjoy these sorts of things, and I think it’s thanks to my experiences at St. Patrick’s that I am now so involved in various forms of volunteer work and in my church community.

*St. Patrick’s Graduate W ’06
British International School, Bratislava, Slovakia ’12*

How did being a student at St. Patrick's help to shape your spiritual identity?

St. Patrick's taught me how to incorporate faith and kindness into my daily life. I learned how to see the goodness in everyone and to forgive, rather than to hold grudges. I also learned how to help others that are less fortunate than I and how the simplest act can be the biggest gift.

—St. Patrick's Graduate W '04, M '06
Madeira '10
Kenyon College '14

Being at St. Patrick's shaped my spiritual identity by teaching me to be open to all types of cultures and religions. From there I picked up ideas of spirituality I could relate to and, as I grew, so did my spirituality. I would not consider myself a very religious person; in fact, I wouldn't say that I believe in God. St. Patrick's taught me that it does not really matter what you believe, everyone believes different things, but staying true to my beliefs and morals allowed me to open my eyes and embrace all aspects of the world that surrounds me.

—St. Patrick's Graduate W '06, M '08
St. Stephens & St. Agnes School '12

I continually think about the lessons I learned in chapel, religion classes, and community service programs while at St. Patrick's when I make decisions, no matter how big or small. I feel very strongly that my time at St. Patrick's made me a more moral person—not that I always live up to the example I was given! As I get older and join different communities, I realize how special the relationships my family and I formed at St. Patrick's are. And due to my time at St. Patrick's, I feel at home in Episcopal churches wherever I may be, and I'm grateful that I will always have that home away from home.

—St. Patrick's Graduate W '02, M '04
Maret '08
Johns Hopkins University '12

My personal religious experience began when I first stepped into St. Patrick's doors in third grade. At that time, I was not very spiritual, due to lack of knowledge on the subject. As I progressed through the years at St. Patrick's and was taught by many wonderful religion teachers such as [Day School Chaplain] Mrs. G-S and [religion teacher] Mrs. K, my spiritual beliefs increased dramatically. Mrs. G-S's many amazing stories really opened up religion to me. I went from wanting to be an acolyte for fun to someone who wanted to be one because I really understood the topic of religion. Religion had opened to me, and if I had not attended St. Patrick's, I would probably not understand religion to date.

—St. Patrick's Graduate W '07, M '09
Maret '13

I was baptized this past summer in a Lutheran church. Over the past few years, I'd been feeling a stronger draw to church and this church was where I wound up; I love it there. But through preparing for this, I kept thinking back to Friday chapel at St. Patrick's and how much that always meant to me; it just kept me grounded and centered and all of that good stuff, and the faith I think I gained there really helped me out a lot later on.

My belief has always been in a God capable of more love and forgiveness than we as humans can even fathom. It wasn't until I got to St. Patrick's that I really started to learn of the loving God I had always known about. There wasn't really an "aha" moment at St. Patrick's, but being that sort of "captive audience" certainly opened my mind and the door to further exploration. Finding my faith has been a journey and it's far from over, but I like it that way.

St. Patrick's Graduate M '04
Edmund Burke School '08
Shenandoah Conservatory '12



One Hundred Years of Gifts: A Conversation with Ted Gleason

Our lives have been defined by the gifts of independent schools.

Anne grew up at St. George's in Rhode Island, graduated from St. Timothy's in Maryland, and taught at Potomac and Dedham Country Day in Massachusetts. I graduated from and taught when school minister at Exeter, later at the Episcopal High School, and Noble and Greenough School in Massachusetts during my years as headmaster. The two of us have spent more than one hundred years in independent schools. These years have shaped our perception of what matters and why.

Now we know the joy and fulfillment of being involved as grandparents at St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School, where our granddaughters are in Kindergarten and Grade 3. St. Patrick's is responsible for our daily good fortune of witnessing the joy of learning. Our granddaughters thrive in an atmosphere of curiosity, passion, inspired teaching, and the opportunity to be part of an Episcopal community, where worship and knowledge thrive.

Every single person with whom we come in contact at St. Patrick's makes us know we are part of the family of St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School. We are welcomed, included, thrilled to contribute. We know of no school community quite like it and rejoice that when Anne and I chose to return to Washington—thanks to our children and grandchildren—we became part of the gift that is St. Patrick's.

Ted Gleason, top left, and his family are pictured above.



St. Patrick's
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

4700 Whitehaven Parkway, NW
Washington, DC 20007
www.stpatsdc.org

Our Mission

St. Patrick's Episcopal Day School strives to create a diverse learning community of students, teachers, and parents who recognize the infinite value of every participant as a child of God. We are committed to developing character, advancing human understanding, and promoting academic excellence in our students in order to prepare them to live with integrity, compassion, and purpose.



St. Patrick's is now on Facebook!
Please follow us.

SAVE THE DATE

School Offices Closed

August 9 - 20

First Day of 2010-2011 School Year

Tuesday, September 7

HAVE A GREAT SUMMER!