

# The Parish Broadside - St Peter's Anglican Church

Autumn 2007

## What Happened Last Summer?

Although Summer is often viewed as downtime by many, the life of our parish continued throughout this past Summer and was actually quite busy.

July witnessed a great deal of activity at the Rectory. Once the old tenants moved out, the site was appraised by a sub-committee of vestry and decisions made as to how to improve the building in preparation for advertising it for new tenants. Many cosmetic improvements like light fixtures, smoke detectors and general clean-up were carried out. Improvements of a more significant nature included new flooring for the entranceway, kitchen, pantry and one bedroom. There was also extensive painting in hallways and various rooms and cupboards. In total \$4,567.00 was spent on improvements to this structure which is one of the three major building assets of the parish.

When advertised, Fr Hebb had to contend with three competing interested groups the very first morning. The lease was signed a few days later. A nice young couple with three school age children now live in the rectory.

August also witnessed our Parish's continued participation in the St Michael's Youth Conference at Bouchtouche. This year, a record, three youth from our parish participated. With instructors from all over Eastern Canada and youth from throughout Maritime Canada the Conference saw its highest participation rate in over ten years. Bishop Miller, as well, visited the Camp this year to observe first hand the enthusiastic spirit and energy which animates the event.

I can only continue to highly recommend this unique Anglican, Prayer Book based camp, to our Youth and encourage participation. I dream of the day when all our recently confirmed attend this very special camp as part of our Parish's ongoing offering to the Youth of our Church.

## ACW Annual Bazaar



Saturday November 3, 2007

Annual Turkey Supper  
October 13: 4:30- 6:30  
Parish Hall: \$10.00 adults



Review of F. E. Peters,  
*Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam. A New Edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004)* by Dan Wilband, former student assistant at St Peter's

Amid the buzzwords of today's 'post-9/11' world, with much talk of a 'clash of civilizations' and of the religious differences that define our current geopolitical climate, few publications could be more important and timely than the new edition of F. E. Peters' *Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*.

As its Preface observes, this book was originally published twenty-five years ago, at a time when, by coining the term 'Judeo-Christian,' twentieth century scholars of religion widely recognized the deep interconnectedness of the Jewish and Christian traditions of belief in God, Scripture, the prophets, revelation and moral teaching. Islam, however, was usually studied as a wholly separate entity, grouped with Eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. In contrast to this approach, Peters presents a history that includes Islam within the very same monotheistic tradition whose origins are in the Middle East, whose faith is historically rooted in the revelation of God to Abraham, and which could more rightly be called the 'Judeo-Christian-Islamic' tradition. Whereas mainstream media presents us only with images of extremist terrorism and violence, most of us in the West are now surprised to learn that Muslims worship the God of Abraham, that they recognize Moses, Jesus and Mary as uniquely inspired and holy people, and that they also

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## What's Happening Now !

Fall is now upon us and things are booming at St Peter's Sunday School. Record attendance is how our Fall term has begun - it is so nice to see all the young faces and so many very young faces indeed. I wish at this point to congratulate and thank all the parents and grandparents who are making this possible - keep up the good work!

As well as October 7<sup>th</sup> being Thanksgiving Sunday, the week following we witness the start-up of Parish Bible Study at St Anne's Court. This fall we will begin the study of St Mark's Gospel. October 13 is the date for our Annual Turkey Supper - our major fundraiser of the year.

Sunday October 21<sup>st</sup> we look forward to the presence of Bishop Claude Miller and the confirmation of four young candidates on that day. This special event will involve a pot luck meal in the Parish hall following the service, including the presentation of gifts and certificates at that time. All are not just welcome but strongly urged to attend and show your support for our candidates and their families. This event also constitutes our bishop's official 'visit' to our Parish this year and thus doubles as an opportunity to meet and speak with Bishop Miller.

November 3<sup>rd</sup> is our ACW's major annual fund-raiser effort in the form of the Bazaar and luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. Please do set this lunch hour aside so you can attend and support this unique annual effort. Scheduled early this year so as not to conflict with either the Remembrance Day weekend or Christmas bazaar's later in the month, the ladies hope for a good show of support.

November will also showcase the 'liturgical prowess' and preaching style of two visiting clerics, Canon James Irvine and Archdeacon John Sharpe. These reverend gentlemen will be conducting services the first two Sundays of the month while Fr Hebb is again in London conducting funded research on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lambeth Conferences of Anglican bishops.

Donations for flowers for any



service, anniversary or event can be given to Maria Matthews.

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promote ideals of peace,  
forgiveness, and sanctity of life.  
Peters' detailed and readable  
history helps to correct our  
ignorance.

Lamenting the persistence of  
the untranslated 'Allah' in most  
Western languages, Peters  
emphasizes the fact that Jews,  
Christians and Muslims all  
worship not only one God, but  
the *same* God. That is to say, they  
all believe in the God who created  
the world out of nothing, who  
made humans in His image, who  
made a covenant with 'Abraham  
and his seed forever,' and who has  
spoken to his people through  
various prophets and events  
throughout world history.  
However, many of today's Jews  
and Christians, and even some  
Muslims, appear to think that they  
are worshiping different gods.  
Peters begins his book by noting  
that: *Judaism, Christianity and Islam  
are all children born of the same Father  
and reared in the bosom of Abraham.  
They grew to adulthood in the rich  
spiritual climate of the Middle East,  
and though they have lived together all  
their lives, now in their maturity they  
stand apart and regard their family  
resemblances and conditioned differences  
with astonishment, disbelief or disdain.*  
He then proceeds to describe  
these 'family resemblances' over  
the course of eight enlightening  
chapters, each of which explores a  
different theme through a detailed  
historical narrative.

The first section describes the  
approach to Scripture within each  
of the three 'Religions of the  
Book.' Each religion agrees that  
God has revealed himself  
authoritatively in a given Book,  
but whether that Book is the  
Hebrew Bible, the New  
Testament, or the Quran is  
precisely what separates Jews,  
Christians and Muslims. Jews  
believe that the fullness of God's  
revelation is contained primarily in  
the Law or Torah, and also in the  
Prophets and other revealed  
Writings. Christians accept that  
same revelation, and also believe  
that Jesus himself, rather than  
writing a book, was in his own  
person the fulfillment of the Law.  
His life and sacrificial death sealed  
a 'New Covenant' between God  
and his people, which was  
foreshadowed in the Hebrew  
Bible and then described in the  
inspired writings of his followers,  
in what we know as the 'New  
Testament.' Although rejecting the  
doctrines of the Trinity and the  
Incarnation, Muhammad too had  
a strong sense of this line of  
prophetic revelation which had  
created the Judeo-Christian  
tradition; he placed himself within  
that same line, when God

belivered to him a 'final' revelation  
through the angel Gabriel over a  
period of twenty-two years. The  
Book produced by this event in  
the early 7<sup>th</sup> Century is called 'the  
Recitation' [in Arabic, *al-Quran*].

Peters then goes on to describe  
the three religions' understandings  
of God's promise to Abraham,  
and the claims of each to being its  
rightful inheritor. He also offers a  
detailed discussion of community  
organization and hierarchy within  
the various stages of ancient  
Judaism, within the Christian  
Church before and after  
Constantine, and within the  
Islamic *umma* ['community'] and  
the emergence of the *Dar al-Islam*  
[the 'Abode of Peace']. Other  
chapters deal with the themes of  
Law, Tradition and Worship as  
they appear in the history of all  
three religions. The final chapters  
include more theological  
discussion, and descriptions of the  
mystical, monastic and ascetic  
aspects of each religion, as well as  
their various ways of thinking and  
speaking about God. Peters  
maintains a heavy focus on their  
interconnectedness, but he also  
clarifies their important  
differences.

The crucial relation of each  
religion to Greek culture and  
philosophy at various stages of  
their history is also underscored.  
In the brilliant academic world of  
9<sup>th</sup> Century Baghdad, it was  
Muslim scholars who preserved  
and interpreted the scientific and  
philosophical knowledge of the  
ancient world. Through Moorish  
Spain, the fruits of this learning  
would later be taken up by  
Western thinkers such as St  
Thomas Aquinas and St  
Bonaventure, as well as many  
European scientists and  
mathematicians, all of whom  
looked to the wisdom of the East  
after the European 'Dark Ages'  
came to an end. Indeed, the  
European Renaissance is heavily  
indebted to Muslim masters like  
Avicenna and Averroes, as well as  
to Islamic traditions of  
architecture, medicine and even  
their systems of bureaucracy.

The world and international  
politics have changed much in  
recent times, and for various  
reasons Muslims have again  
achieved a noticeable presence in  
the West. Peters' history offers us  
a clear view of the *convivencia* [or,  
'living together'] of Jews,  
Christians and Muslims  
throughout our long shared  
history, as well as the real tensions  
and differences we have from one  
another. The new edition of  
*Children of Abraham* is a therefore  
timely arrival, which might help to  
reawaken us to important aspects  
of our own past and common

heritage, which we may all have  
forgotten.

### A Hymn's Story

A well known and often sung  
Harvest hymn is Martin Rinkart's  
"Now Thank we all our God." A  
powerful hymn of adoration and  
praise, the context of its composition  
in the sense of what time and place  
is little known. One could be  
forgiven for assuming that Rinkart  
lived in a prosperous location at a  
happy time in history. One could  
hardly be more wrong. Rinkart lived  
in the years 1586 to 1649 in what  
was later to become Germany. He  
was the Lutheran pastor of the  
church at Eilenberg. Sadly, this was  
the time of the vicious inter-  
Christian conflict known as the 30  
Years War. As Protestant and  
Catholic armies sea-sawed back and  
forth across Germany, the region's  
population plummeted from 16  
million to roughly six million.  
Rinkart's city, being walled, was a  
refuge for the homeless and  
distressed but also, due to its walls, a  
scene of sieges and vicious battles.  
Due to the many refugees, coupled  
with the sieges, the population  
repeatedly suffered from outbreaks  
of disease and famine. During the  
plague of 1637 Rinkart was the only  
living minister left in the  
beleaguered city. The following  
words and sentiments are a  
testament to a deep Faith, a Faith  
which realizes the limitations of  
human good intentions, a Faith  
which knows all too clearly the  
shortness and uncertainties of this  
life, and above all, a Faith which  
knows, trusts and hopes in God's  
good will and Providential  
oversight.

*Now Thank we all our God,  
with hearts and hands and voices;  
Who wondrous things has done,  
in Whom this world rejoices;  
Who from our mothers' arms  
hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love, -  
and still is ours today.  
O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us,  
and keep us in His grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills,  
in this world and the next.  
All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son, and him who reigns  
with them in highest heaven,  
the one eternal God,  
whom heaven and earth adore; for  
thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.*