

FEBRUARY 2011



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The Independence

The Monthly Newsletter of Dignity/Philadelphia for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Catholics & Friends

25 YEARS AT ST. LUKE'S

Jim DeSimone, President

This month, Dignity Philadelphia celebrates 25 years of worshipping and fellowship at our current location at St. Luke and The Epiphany. We have found a home that is inviting, comforting and welcoming for us, and all of our guests. For this, we thank the congregation and leadership at St. Luke and The Epiphany. We are truly all sisters and brothers in Christ.



To celebrate our 25 years worshipping at this site, Reverend Rodger Broadley will concelebrate at our liturgy on February 27, and we will have a special social to follow. Please, make every effort to join us for this liturgy so we can all personally thank Rodger for his congregation's hospitality toward us over the past 25 years!

REFLECTIONS ON DIGNITY PHILADELPHIA'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY AT CHURCH OF ST. LUKE AND THE EPIPHANY

By Michael J. Rocks

I first attended Dignity Sunday Mass in 1976. A friend at the bars told me about a group of gay Roman Catholics- Dignity- who had Mass on Sunday evening at 7 pm in Center City. I had just read in the Philadelphia Catholic Standard and Times that a Mass for Dignity had been celebrated at St. Rita's Church recently, but that the Archdiocese had put an end to the St. Rita's Mass, and the Archdiocese denied that there was any ministry to gay and lesbian Catholics in Philadelphia.

I found out that was wrong. My friend went with me to my first Dignity Mass, which was held in the basement of 250 S. 12th St. The members entered down a steep set of basement stairs from the street. The room was really just a basement. Burlap had been stapled to the ceiling and some religious and gay symbols were hung on the walls about the room. The basement was filled to overflowing with worshippers and some were sitting on the stairs right out the door onto 12th St. The celebrant that first evening that I attended was Paul Morrissey. There was no music for the Mass but Paul had brought a record player and played hymns that the community sang along with. I volunteered to help develop a Music Ministry and the next week I helped start "live" congregational singing that has been at the heart and soul of the Dignity Sunday Liturgy from the earliest days.

The Chapter was growing and the basement on 12th Street no longer served our needs. We found a home for our Sunday Liturgy at Trinity Memorial Episcopal Church at 22nd and Spruce Sts. Father Temme, the pastor, allowed us to rent a large room on the second floor that was used during the week as a day care center. We would move the day care furniture off to the back of the room and set up our worship space in the front of the large room. Dignity Philadelphia worshipped at Trinity Memorial Church for about 8 or 9 years before Trinity decided to make major renovations to the space and Father Temme referred us to Father Rodger Broadley at the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany. We negotiated a lease with St. Luke and the Epiphany and now we have been celebrating Mass there for 25 years. One of the critical differences in our relationship with St. Luke's is not only that we rent space from St. Luke's Episcopal, but we also have shared ministry with them. During the worst days of the AIDS crisis, St. Luke's donated their sanctuary space for memorial services for those who

died from AIDS. Scores and scores of Roman Catholic Memorial Masses were celebrated for gay Catholics whose families could not bury their loved ones from a Roman Catholic parish, either because the deceased was gay or had died from AIDS. Dignity musicians played and sang at each of those liturgies.

Once Dignity moved to Trinity Memorial for Sunday evening Mass, we also rented the first floor space at 252 S. 12th St. (now occupied by Spruce St. Video) and named it Dignity House. Although we did not use the space for our own Sunday liturgy, the space was used as a worship space for Integrity for gay Episcopalians and Beth Ahavah, the gay and lesbian Jews. Dignity used the space for smaller gatherings and for committee meetings but the space served as a meeting place for numerous other gay groups like Gay AA. The first meetings of the AIDS Buddy System were held at Dignity House.

Shortly after moving to St. Luke's for Sunday liturgy, we gave up Dignity House and moved our offices into St. Luke and the Epiphany.

Many other gay and lesbian groups have met at St. Luke's over these years--- ACT UP, Gay AA, AIDS Hospitality Center. St. Luke's has supported Dignity's Ministry to GBLT Catholics for 25 years now not only by providing space but also by sharing the same goal- the reach out to those abandoned by the mainstream churches. Over those years we have seen the renovation of the downstairs worship and office space. Dignity has used the upstairs sanctuary as needed over these years. St. Luke's has courageously suffered through difficult times even being questioned at one time by the Episcopalian Church for sometimes "going too far" in their outreach to abandoned souls.

As a way of commemorating the passage of 25 years of shared space and shared ministry, Dignity has invited Father Rodger Broadley, Rector of St. Luke and the Epiphany as homilist and concelebrant of a Dignity Sunday Mass February 27, 2010.

DIGNITY'S HOME FOR TWENTY FIVE YEARS

By Jimmy Calnan

Designed by Philadelphia architect Thomas S. Stewart in 1839, the Church of St. Luke and The Epiphany was completed in 1840 for St. Luke's Church, one of the churches that formed the present parish. It is one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture surviving in the City.

The site was selected after other locations at Broad and Locust Streets and 13th and Spruce Streets were rejected because of cost. The land was acquired for \$15,000. Stewart's design was chosen over six other plans submitted by several prominent architects including Thomas Strickland. The original plan included a steeple; however, a lack of funds forced them to abandon that plan. A contract was approved to build the Church for \$30,000 plus \$200 for the self-supporting gallery.

The body of the church looks much as it originally did when the building was consecrated on October 16, 1840. The Philadelphia Public Ledger reported at the time: "The interior is exceedingly beautiful and chaste. Without pretending to give a detailed description, we state that above the floor every thing, even to the glass of the windows, is of a pure white, and

Quotations for Pondering During Black History Month

(not to be confused w/ Monthly Munchie)

"I was raised to believe that excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism."

~ Oprah Winfrey

"Laundry is the only thing that should be separated by color."

~ Author Unknown

"Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Defining myself, as opposed to being defined by others, is one of the most difficult challenges I face."

~ Carol Moseley-Braun

"Our nation is a rainbow - red, yellow, brown, black, and white - and we're all precious in God's sight."

~ Jesse Jackson, speech at Democratic National Convention, San Francisco, 17 July 1984

Celebrate Black History Month

in every section of the church is introduced the richest and most elaborate carving and molding in wood and plaster. Even the organ is of this color and in this style. It is praised as a superb instrument. The pews are represented as of oak and the damask covering them is of a corresponding color. The effect is remarkably fine.”

The Chancel has undergone the most dramatic changes over the years. Originally, it was only eight feet deep and a semi-circular platform extended into the body of the church. It had a raised central pulpit behind a reading desk and communion table.

In 1853 the Chancel was torn down and a new one built in the current shape. The platform extending into the Church was removed and ten new pews added. A richly carved elevated pulpit was built to one side and a lectern placed on the other. Carved wooden benches for clergy were built on the sides and an altar placed against the rear wall. An altar rail was also added at that time. On the walls above, were inscribed the Ten Commandments and the Creed. The central circle in the ceiling was painted glass lit from windows above. In 1890 and 1891 the current brass pulpit and lectern replaced the wood ones.

When the merger with the Church of The Epiphany took place 1898, the organ from Epiphany was installed in the Chancel. Until 1925 when the current Austin organ was installed, the Church had two organs, the original in the gallery and the chancel organ.

In 1899 the Chancel was once again extended into the body of the church. The renovation of 1906 achieved the current look of the Chancel. The tile floor and choir stalls were installed at that time. The mosaics of St. Luke and of the symbols of the Epiphany designed by Sawyer and Flintoff were added in 1912.

The altar was moved away from the wall and placed in its current position in 1976. The cross above the altar was also added at the same time. The stained glass windows on the main floor were added gradually between 1876 and 1899. Those in the gallery representing the Apostles were installed in 1912.

The Baptismal font, now located in the narthex since 1976, was first placed in front of the steps to the chancel. It was given to the church in 1856 by George L. Harrison, a prominent businessman and vestryman for many years. The chapel north of the Chancel was built as a Baptistery with a bequest from Asa Whitney and the font was moved there in 1876.

The Chapel and Parish House on the south side of the Church, designed by Frank Furness, was built by the Harrison family in 1876. Originally, the wall to the church was removed and pews placed in the chapel extending into the Church. The wall was

replaced in 1891 when an addition was added to accommodate the Sunday Schools.

Extensive renovations to the lower level of the building were completed in the 1980's to provide access for the disabled and to make the space attractive for the numerous community groups using the building, such as Dignity/Philadelphia since February 1986.

The exterior of the building was for many years painted brown. It was changed to white in the late 1960's. The garden between the church and parish house replaced a patio in 1965.

The building is an historic landmark registered by the Philadelphia Historical Commission and is listed in the Historic American Buildings Survey of the Library of Congress.

STEERING COMMITTEE MOTIONS FOR FEBRUARY

At the January 2011 Steering Committee the following two motions were made:

“Feb. 50/50: Motion #1: made by Jimmy Calnan, second by Anjeanette Milner, “Be it moved that the Feb. 50/50 be designated to the GLBTS Student Union at the University of the Arts.” Passed unanimously. (See below for description.)

“Motion #2: made by Jimmy Calnan, second by Pat L., “Be it moved that an Ad-Hoc Committee for the DignityUSA Convention be established to coordinate chapter responses; to consist of David Kalinowski, Kevin Davies and Michael Flynn, on their acceptance.” Passed unanimously.

50/50 FOR FEBRUARY – THE UNIVERSITY OF ARTS GLBTS STUDENT UNION



The University of the Arts Alphabet Club is one of three LGBT groups on campus and the only one open to all students. They are a relatively new club in that this is only their 5th semester. Over this past semester they had two major events. The first was a kiki ball to promote safe sex. The group worked in conjunction with another on-campus group, the Peer Support, Peer Education (P.S.P.E). All of the proceeds from this went to an HIV/AIDS awareness benefit hosted by P.S.P.E. and the Dorothy Mann Center (located in St. Christopher's Hospital).

The next event was a candlelight vigil for the youths who had taken their lives due to bullying and harassment. The speakers included Malcolm Lazin of Equality Forum, Brian Sims formerly of Equality PA, the President of the University, as well as a few representatives from the school. The group had other smaller events such as informational bake sales.

This semester three events are being planned - a movie night where they spotlight LGBTQ friendly films, a demonstration for National Day of Silence, and a demonstration called Live Homosexual Acts which they hope will be a city-wide event.

DIGNITY/PHILADELPHIA REVISED MEMBERSHIP FORM BEGINS JANUARY 1, 2011 FEBRUARY RENEWALS – PLEASE CONSIDER DIGNITY/USA MEMBERSHIP

The Steering Committee has made a commitment to have a closer relationship with DignityUSA and they need your help. Please, when renewing your Dignity/Philadelphia membership also join DignityUSA. Please visit the DignityUSA website (<http://www.dignityusa.org/>) to see all the work DignityUSA does for us.

Over the years Dignity/Philadelphia has been one of the largest chapters in DignityUSA and we need to reclaim that position.

What does it mean to be a member of DignityUSA? By being a member of DignityUSA, you make a commitment to a national, if not international, organization and become a voice for GLBT Catholics and our friends. The media works with, and knows, DignityUSA and reaches out to the national office when a counterbalance viewpoint is sought.

Please speak with a member of the Steering Committee if you would like more information.

TOGETHER, our Voices are heard – locally, nationally and internationally! Let yours be heard – join both Dignity/Philadelphia and DignityUSA.

BROAD STREET MINISTRY UPDATE

Volunteers will once again be meeting Wednesday, February 23 at the Broad Street Ministry to help serve at the No Barriers Dinner. Please sign up at church during the social hour, or email

Jimmy Calnan (year1826@aol.com) and let him know you will be helping out at this event. He can be seen- in his beautiful blue T-shirt - in an Internet video on Broad Street Ministries, dated 9/10 “Dreaming of a new kitchen.” Also on this video you can see some of the Dignity volunteers: Linda – who appears to be the only one working!, Larry, Kevin, and Joann also play minor parts in this video. BUT we can all play major roles by showing up and helping out at this monthly volunteer event.

TIDBITS AND PIECES:

- Two beautiful cards were sent to Dignity Philadelphia from Calcutta House. And it appears that all the residents signed these. Pictures taken at the event were not included in the newsletter since we were not able to get permission from the residents to publish their picture.
- Dignity Philadelphia has 158 members, per Dignity Vice-President. Anniversary pins will be given out to members this Spring.
- Parking update: See a member of the Steering Committee for a special placard for parking next to the church.
- Don't forget we have the Emergency Community Fund; member can access this by talking to Dignity President or one of the coordinators from Community Life. Two members were helped during the holiday period.
- Cleaning for a Reason
If you know any woman currently undergoing Chemo, please pass the word to her that there is a cleaning service that provides FREE housecleaning - 1 time per month for 4 months while she is in treatment.

All she has to do is sign up and have her doctor fax a note confirming the treatment. Cleaning for a Reason will have a participating maid service in her zip code area arrange for the service. <http://www.cleaningforareason.org>

Please pass this information on to bless a woman going through Breast Cancer treatment. This organization serves the entire USA and currently has 547 partners to help these women. It's our job to pass the word and let them know that there are people out there that care. Be a blessing to someone and pass this information along.

- The Book Club will be reading “The Scarlet Letter” for their next meeting. If you are interested in discussing Hester Prynne, please contact a member of the Community Life Committee for more info.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS (weekly mass at 330 S 13th Street between Pine and Spruce Streets)

February is Black History Month

- Fri., February 4 Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's upstairs
- Sun., February 6 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.
- Sun., February 13 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.
- Mon., February 14 St. Valentine's Day
- Sun., February 20 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
- Mon., February 21 Presidents' Day
- Wed., February 23 Broad Street Ministry – (see *article*)
- Sun., February 27 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
Con-celebration with R. Broadley re: Dignity @ St. Luke's (see *first page*)

March is National Women's Herstory Month

- Fri., March 4 Prayer Around the Cross, St. Luke's upstairs
- Sun., March 6 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
Steering Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.
Eucharistic Liturgy and Healing
- Tues., March 8 International Women's Day (see *below*)
- Wed., March 9 Ash Wednesday
- Sun., March 13 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
Fast and Prayer for AIDS
Liturgy Committee Meeting at 4:30 p.m.
- Thurs., March 17 St. Patrick's Day
- Sun., March 20 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**
- Fri., March 25 International Women's Ordination Day
- Sun., March 27 Eucharistic Liturgy at 7 p.m.**

When: Tuesday 8 March 2011

Where: Everywhere

What: International Women's Day (8 March) is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. In some places like China, Russia, Vietnam and Bulgaria, International Women's Day is a national holiday.

Why: Suffragettes campaigned for women's right to vote. The word 'Suffragette' is derived from the word "suffrage" meaning the right to vote. International Women's Day honors the work of the Suffragettes, celebrates women's success, and reminds us of inequities still to be redressed. The first International Women's Day event was run in 1911. 2011 is the Global Centenary Year



PRAYER INTENTIONS

Please sign our Prayer Intentions book if you have anyone you would like the community to remember in our prayers.

The deadline for the March 2011 newsletter is February 20, 2011.

New Steering Committee

- Jim DeSimone – President
- Pat L. – Vice President
- Linda Barrett - Treasurer
- Joanne Collins – Secretary
- Jim Clay – Liturgy Committee Coordinator
- Michelle Perrone & Dolores Vera – Communications Co-coordinators
- Jimmy Calnan – Education Committee Coordinator
- Anjeanette & Suzanne, Community Life Committee Co-coordinators
- Chaplains: Barbara Gindhart & Rev. Ron Hoskins



The Catholic Christian Tradition in the L/G/B/T Community
Celebrate Who You Are And Embrace The Person God Calls You To Be!
Yes, I want to be a member of the Dignity family!

I am joining as a **new member** I am **renewing my membership** **Address Change**

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Numbers: cell _____ **home** _____ **work** _____

Email address: _____ to receive Dignity/Philadelphia's Newsletter (*The Independence*) and the latest news via email blasts. Your support through your dues to Dignity/USA will entitle you to voting privileges in national elections; subscriptions to the monthly Dateline and Quarterly Voice; discounted registration for biennial conventions and other Dignity/USA events; and access to Dignity News email list and chat groups.

Scholarships are available for Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA memberships. Contact the Dignity/Philadelphia Vice President for more information (vp.dignityphila@gmail.com).

The total amount of your dues and donations to both Dignity/Philadelphia and Dignity/USA may be included in one check. We will forward your Dignity/USA dues/donations and your contact information to the Dignity/USA national office.

Please enclose your check, payable to Dignity/Philadelphia, and mail to: Dignity/Philadelphia, P.O. Box 53348, Philadelphia, PA 19105.

Individual annual dues:
 Dignity/Phila \$20;
 Dignity/USA \$30
 \$ _____ **Total**

Couple's annual dues:
 Dignity/Phila \$35;
 Dignity/USA \$60
 \$ _____ **Total**