

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

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Pentecost - July - 2009

In Celebration of Ned Caum

A Sermon by The Ven. Richard I. Cluett

Trinity Church, Athens, June 3, 2009

The Reverend Canon Edward L. Caum. Or as he preferred, simply, Ned. Or as he has been so ordained by those who love him, *The Pope of the Valley*.

This thoroughly lovely man has died to this life and risen to a new life, and we are here today to thank God for him and for his part in our life, and in the life of each one here, and in the life of those who could not be here today, and in the life of the church, and in the life of the community. And we are here to commend him gratefully and prayerfully and joyfully to our God who has prepared a place for him in the heavenly realm.

You can imagine the greeting, the welcoming, and the banqueting that met Ned on his arrival. We have it on the authority of no less a personage than the prophet Isaiah. *On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food...*

I can imagine such a banquet prepared for Ned, cooked entirely on the barbecue grill. Perhaps pork chops, or maybe even a butterflied leg of lamb that had been marinated and roasted to perfection. Corn on the cob roasted on the grill, too. Big fresh tomatoes with a little salad dressing, and sourdough bread warmed on the grill, as well.

I can imagine it because Ned cooked that dinner once when I was staying with him and Barbara next door at the rectory. It was, indeed, a heavenly banquet.

The good news about all this is that Ned is now receiving the divine hospitality of the God who created him, and loves him, and redeemed him, and consecrated him as deacon and priest, and supported him, and released him from the bondage of his tired, hurting body, and now has received him home as one of his own.

How fitting that is for a man who exemplified hospitality in his own life? Welcoming all. Inviting all. Engaging all. No matter who. No matter what. No matter when. No matter what was being sought or requested.

He would say things like, *Of course, you can do this. I will help. Of course, I will come. Come on over for dinner. Hi, it's Ned, I just called to say Hi.* And on and on go the examples of his hospitality.

Who here was not encouraged by Ned, or visited by Ned, or telephoned by Ned, or counseled by Ned, or loved by Ned. (I must say that I do not know many few of us who ever received email sent by Ned. Just not his thing.)

But hospitality, now that was at the core of his identity. That is how and who he was created to be. And in living out that identity in his life, he attained to a good measure of the stature God had prepared for him and to which Jesus had called him.

In the Gospel from John that was just proclaimed, we hear Jesus speaking to his followers, telling those he loved, those who represented many of the same sorts and conditions that make up the human family today, telling each one of them; *In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.*

That is the divine hospitality of God, and it was incarnate, embodied, in Ned Caum.

And not only that, it also is what happened to Ned in this last surgery. Jesus came and got him – and took him to himself, so that where Jesus was, there Ned would be also.

And that is how it will be for each of us when our time comes.

(continued)

My wife, Patricia, and I were telling Ned stories the other day. I expect that has been going on in many different settings and gatherings these past few days. I said that I was feeling a deep sense of personal loss, of being bereft of all that was my friend Ned. Perhaps others have similar feelings.

She remembered a line from a poem by William Butler Yeats. It begins his poem *Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen*.

Many ingenious lovely things are gone

That seemed sheer miracle...

That is an apt expression of my take on the death of this multi-faceted person.

Many ingenious lovely things are gone

That seemed sheer miracle...

There were so many dimensions and interests to him. Such things as the great outdoors – the beauty and power of mountain, and stream, and lake, and ocean; hunting, rifles, hunting catalogues, novels of all kinds, lectio divina – that prayerfully meditating on the word of God, the study of scripture, conversations with friends and family, good food, following the Weather Channel with fierce curiosity about what's coming next, administering the sacraments of the church, caring for God's people, travelling around the country to visit his family, and so much more.

I have met a few saints in my life, people with a much bigger capital S than I have. Ned is one of them. Saying that is not to confer on him some status of perfection. None – I repeat, none, of the saints I have known, or even read about, were without flaws, vulnerabilities, and imperfections – including Ned. Those who know him best and love him best know best what they were. What was important, though, is that he discovered them, named them, owned them, and eventually won out over them.

By what power... I think we all know.

So, a question I have is, *which room in the Father's house do you think Ned will occupy?* Or will he move from room to room in full expression of his all interests and dimensions? I think he will move from room to room to meet those who are there.

If you were fortunate enough to be here at Trinity for the celebration of the Feast of Pentecost on Sunday, you would have heard a moving and lovely homily by Trula, now the priest of this parish. Trula truly captured the nature of the man and the nature of God's part in his life – and in ours.

I hope that she or others will see that it printed, because I think it will bring comfort to those who read it – as it did to me.

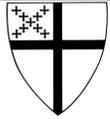
One of Ned's great gifts was his ability to bring the Gospel home to those who heard him preach; to bring it home in such ways that it touched them, was made more real and immediate for them, supported them, and led them further into the experience of God's love and care for them. Trula is a worthy successor as shown in her Pentecost homily.

She spoke about God the Holy Spirit as the Comforter – which is a good translation of the Greek word, *Paraclete*. Jesus said that God will send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and we remember that especially on Pentecost.

God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and the gift of Ned Caum, who in his time has been the comforter, advocate, and guide for so many.

And we have been given one another to comfort, and guide and care for – as he cared for us. To be with one another in such ways that we bring comfort and strength and a sense of purpose and future. What a great and wonderful final gift from this good man and from the God he loved and served so well.

So... do not let your hearts be troubled... not for Ned, nor for Barbara and the rest of his family, nor for yourself. Rather, rejoice in his life, and in his release from suffering, and in his entrance into the glorious company of the saints in light, and in the gift he has given us in bringing us together.



Trinity Episcopal Church - July 2009

Pentecost

Diocese: July 5: The TV ad campaign of the Episcopal Church in Northeast PA; July 12: The General Convention of the Episcopal Church; July 19: North Parish: St. John's Church, Ashland, Holy Apostles Church, St. Clair, and Christ Church, Frackville, The Rev. James Smith, priest, The Rev Dolores Evans, priest; July 26: The ministry of the Evangelism Commission of the Diocese of Bethlehem, The Rev. Canon Andrew Gerns, chair

Trinity: July 5: Hazel and Ron Hunt, Ruby Jenney; July 12: Paul and Emily Kelley; July 19: Marcel and Donna Lamb; July 26: Tom, Kathe, Michael, Alex, Elizabeth and Patrick Maneval

Anglicans Around the World: July 5: The clergy and people of the Phulbani in North India; July 12: The clergy and people of the Diocese of Portsmouth in the Province of Canterbury, England; July 19: The clergy and people of the Church of Pakistan; July 26: The clergy and people of the Diocese of Rhode Island

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Kajo-Keji: July 5: St. Emmanuel Pro-Cathedral, Canon Yoasa Wurube, Canon Henry Leju, Canon Dr. Oliver Duku, Canon Elikana Duku; July 12: Tipere Parish, The Rev. Mary Kwiansuk July 19: Walilo Parish, The Rev. Samuel Pianile; July 26: The 1000 members of the Mother's Union			1 <i>Timothy Cama</i> <i>Paul Kelley</i>	2 <i>Bruce Barton</i>	3 <i>Vickie Wood</i>	4 Independence Day
5 Pentecost 5 P-9 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour <i>Alex Maneval</i>	6	7 <i>Sean William Clare</i>	8 <i>John & Wendy Murray</i>	9	10	11 <i>John & Barbara Strange</i>
12 Pentecost 6 P-10 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour	13	14	15	16	17 <i>Abby Davenport</i>	18
19 Pentecost 7 P-11 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour Vestry Meets	20	21	22 St. Mary Magdalene <i>Blake Allan Forbes</i>	23 <i>Justin Bailey</i>	24 <i>Rhonda Hooper</i>	25 St. James, Apostle <i>Bishop Paul</i>
26 Pentecost 8 P-12 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour	27	28 <i>Carlyle Hooper, Jr.</i> <i>Mike & Shelley Barry</i>	29	30 <i>Ron Hunt</i>	31 <i>Andy Patterson</i>	

July Highlights

July 19 - Vestry meets

A note from Barbara and Ned's family:

Ned taught me that when you begin to try to thank people by name, you will always forget someone and then feelings could be hurt. Well, I am going to try anyway.

We couldn't have gotten through this without all the kind things you all did. Jack, who rebuilt the sign, our neighbor Joe, who arranged for the lettering, Marnie and Dan for working hours on the garden making it lovely for the end of the funeral. Hildegard, Don, Marie, Marnie, Barbara and everyone who made the reception so lovely

(and here's what Ned warned me about ... I'm going to forget someone. Forgive me, please. I was so much in a fog.) Kay for playing the organ, Fanna for the flowers and for being a greeter, John for reading and being the rock that he is. Ben and Trula for taking care of so many things and just being there. Rick for his wonderful sermon; clergy who drove hours to be here; Bishop Paul for making the trip so soon after his own surgery.

The kids and the other 25 family members who made it here from all over the country and how we all held each up; myriad friends who fed us, held us and helped with the massive job of clearing out Ned's house, a task which is still not done.

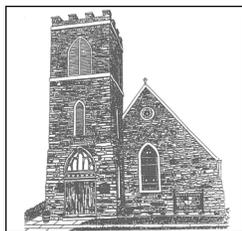
Mary Beth for being such a calming presence and helping me understand that you don't get through something like this in a month. She said, "don't make any decisions for a year." She is very wise.

Thanks aren't enough for what you have all done. I can tell you that Ned left us in great peace, full of humor and grace. It doesn't make losing him any easier, as you know, but he did say, the night before he died, "I know that whatever happens, I will be fine. I just feel sorry for the rest of you poor suckers left behind."

Isn't that just so him? Humor and his funny crooked smile to the last.

Love, Barbara

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July at Trinity