

## From the Desk of the Senior Warden

This month I am thinking a lot about ministry, especially the ministries I am involved in and how I am using the precious time that the Lord has given me. Of all the ministries I am a part of, the Drama Ministry is the biggest surprise to me. I have tried to get out of the Theatre for years. There are many reasons for this, most stemming from the extraordinary pride that I can't seem to shake off when I am involved in a show and the hangover of my formative theatre years before I gave myself and my art to the glory of God. I thought I had retired from the theatre when I left Westmont College's department in 2001, but it keeps grabbing me and dragging me back in, much against my will. For that reason alone, I am becoming convinced that this is the will of the Lord. Unfortunately for me, I have some skills, some wonderful training and a stellar education in theatre. Too bad for me!

By the time you are reading this, we will be only three weeks from Opening Night of DRIVING MISS DAISY (October 23, 24, 25). What is the biggest difference between the theatre I am doing now and the theatre I was doing twenty-eight years ago? Love. That is the only thing that lasts. Caring and compassion for each other in the process, and caring and compassion for the audience who comes to see the play. That's it. Love is all that lasts. Not our hard work, not the best finished product we have to offer. Certainly not our pride. Our desire to do theatre that moves you must come from our love for you and not from our desire to be praised and our fear of being criticized.

Thirty years ago, I was working on productions that were funded. With money. That were staffed with well trained professionals. Where each person wore one hat. Not several. Now the work I do is not about the production at all. It starts with the people and is really only about the people. I am blessed to work with my husband and several dedicated amateurs who never say "no" and who have rearranged their lives, time and again, to offer themselves to this gift to you, the audience. Long ago, I was taught that theatre cannot be analyzed or considered complete without the live audience, and that has never been truer than now. All of us have been working on DAISY for months and months, at home on our own and at the Parish Hall together, but it won't be a play at all until you are there. That is the Drama Ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Melissa Cochran, Senior Warden