



Keeping a Holy Lent

The forty days of Lent help us to prepare for Easter, the greatest Sunday of all! Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts five and a half weeks.

Praying, fasting, and giving to the poor are devotional acts that we are encouraged to engage in during this season. These are three important ways that help us love God and others more. Self-denial in this way can be a truly worthy practice. It is no coincidence that Judaism, Christianity and Islam all have some aspect of fasting, almsgiving, and reconciliation rituals. Giving stuff up is a path to reflection upon what we have and an opportunity to share from our abundance.

In the Book of Common Prayer (1979) we are called to observe a Holy Lent. We find special instruction on page 17 of the Prayer Book, "The following days are observed by special acts of *discipline and self-denial*: Ash Wednesday and the other weekdays of Lent and Holy Week, *except the feast of the Annunciation*; Good Friday and all the other Fridays of the year, in commemoration of the Lord's crucifixion, except for Fridays in the Christmas and Easter Seasons; and any Feasts of our Lord that occur on a Friday." (Italics mine).

In the 1928 Prayer Book these acts of discipline and self-denial were described as follows (in capital letters, no less!): "THE CHURCH REQUIRES SUCH A MEASURE OF ABSTINENCE AS IS MORE ESPECIALLY SUITED TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS AND EXERCISES AND DEVOTION."

How many Episcopalians know that such specific rules exist? Now that you do and if you want to follow them you may consider the Roman Catholic practice of abstaining from flesh meat on Fridays during the year, of having one full meal and one half meal on the weekdays of Lent; and an absolute fast from all food and drink until 6:00 p.m. on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Our prayer books, however, do not spell out the specifics. It is left to the discretion of each person to observe in an appropriate manner. St. Paul may be of help here.

Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one. So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.

I Corinthians 9:24-27

I don't think it matters whether you follow the traditional customs of fasting and abstinence or opt to undertake an additional spiritual devotion instead. I do strongly believe think it does matter that we all endeavor to find spiritual discipline in our lives, especially in this Lenten season. How will you observe the days of fasting and self-denial?

Warmly,

Father Rich+

Lent & Holy Week Services



LENT

FEBRUARY 13TH

ASH WEDNESDAY (WITH IMPOSITION OF ASHES)

7 AM, NOON, & 7 PM

SUNDAY BOOK STUDY

9:00-10:00 AM

WEDNESDAYS

5:30 PM SERVICE

HOLY WEEK

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

8 AND 10:30 AM

HOLY TUESDAY

12:10 PM

HOLY WEDNESDAY

5:30 PM

MAUNDY THURSDAY

6 PM SOUP & SANDWICH DINNER
7 PM SERVICE

GOOD FRIDAY

NOON - ECUMENICAL SERVICE (TBA)

7 PM STATIONS OF THE CROSS

EASTER VIGIL-HOLY SATURDAY

7 PM

EASTER

5:30 AM SUNRISE SERVICE
8 AM
10:30 AM

Meditations on Lent

There are two strands of Christian tradition about mortification. In my mind both stem from the actions of Christ. In his time and in the Hebrew mind they were not seen as contradictory. Since that time especially with the influence of Neo-Platonic philosophy in the church they have been split into an either/or type of action.

The first of these is the one of fasting and prayer. Christ practiced both of these with frequent nights of withdrawal for prayer before returning to teach and heal. This has been taken to extremes in church history with some even preaching self-castration and other forms of mutilation in order to be more fully withdrawn from the world.

The second is that of living fully in the world and enjoying what we have been given by God. Jesus must have been quite a party animal since he was accused of hanging out with wine bibbers, harlots and other assorted riffraff. Today that leads to the thinking that since all is of God, than everything and everyone is good so we don't need repentance since there is no sin.

I see both of these strands as harmful to my life as a Christian. There are three tests I use to determine the middle way. 1. Does this hinder me in my relationship to God? 2. Does this hinder me in my relationship to my neighbor? 3. Does this hinder my neighbor in their relationship to God? If the answer to any of these is yes then I feel what ever is an excess and therefore is SIN since it causes separation in our community.

Christ's fasting was private, he withdrew for it and did not flash it in the face of those around him, in fact he admonished his followers not to "publicly fast" but to be outwardly cheerful when doing so. In this I think that fasting as feeding of the soul, not mortification of the flesh is an important element of private growth in the spirit. For this feeding I often look to guides, both ancient and modern. For me a guide in one who suggests ways to see and go, but is not a road map that spells out a specific route. The history of Gods saving Grace and action that is included in the Bible is probably the most important single guide for me, but there are many others that I use when interpreting the scripture. I will mention two, one old and one quite new that have been meaningful to me. One is "The Revelation of Divine Love in Sixteen Showings" made to Dame Julian of Norwich. This is a truly Christ centric work showing the God man who suffered for me as well as the great love of God for me. The other is "Amazing Grace" by Kathleen Norris. She is a poet and essayist who dares to ask the difficult questions of faith in a way that speaks to me. I plan to spend time with both again during Lent, using them as the core of my Lenten discipline.

-----Reflections from Jim Johnson

EASTER FLOWERS: If you wish to give flower contributions for Easter Day, please use this form so we can include your loved ones' names on the list of those being memorialized. You may place this slip in the offering plate or mail to the church office **BY MONDAY MARCH 25th at NOON.**

\$ _____ Given for Easter Flowers in memory of _____

PLEASE GIVE FIRST (Christian) AND LAST NAMES of those to be memorialized.

Given by: (your name)

SAVE THE DATE FOR
AN EXCITING COMMUNITY EVENT!

A DAY WITH PHYLLIS TICKLE!

Saturday, June 15th at the Holiday Inn, Liverpool
\$75 includes program (9 am to 3 pm), luncheon, and snacks



An expert on religion in America,
well-known and widely followed,
from her transformational work,

The Great Emergence

Dr. Tickle will teach and engage us
as well as her newest book,

Emergence Christianity:

*What It Is, Where It Is Going,
and Why It Matters*

**ONLINE REGISTRATION
OPENS MARCH 1st**

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OUTREACH

The Outreach committee has been in discussion with Loaves & Fishes relative to providing meal support from St. John's parishioners. We have agreed to identify volunteers to assist food service on Fridays. Any parishioner who would like to volunteer for this outreach service please contact Sarah at the Parish Office or Scott Russell at srussell11@twcn.org.

Love Knows No Bounds (LKNB), the not for profit disaster relief organization that we have worked with in the past relative to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and St. John's Faith #5 Church, is developing three rebuilding trips this year. The first will be a trip to New Orleans, March 30 through April 4. The others involve disaster victims in Owego, NY and Staten Island, NY. Dates will be determined and provided in the coming months. If you are interested in participating please notify Scott Russell at the above email address.

Please remember that we continue to support the Kitchen Cupboard with foodstuffs, the basket at the back of the Sanctuary, and with cash, the red can at the same location. Information relative to UTO contributions will be coming soon. ---Scott Russell

New Rector Installation and Renewal of Ministry!!

The Reverend Richard A. Towers was formally installed as our 22nd Rector on a snowy night on January 16, 2013. Although Father Rich began his ministry with St. John's last November, the January 16th service marked his formal installation by the diocese as Rector, as well as St. John's renewal of its ministries.

Bishop Adams officiated at the service. In addition to Bishop Adams, many Episcopal clergy from the Diocese of Central New York, as well as clergy from other local churches and synagogues, attended and wore their clerical vestments.



It was both a solemn and joyful ceremony. Father Coffin read the first lesson and two of Father Rich's friends, Reverend Rich Rose, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Ithaca, and Reverend James Hamilton, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Farmington Hills, Michigan, addressed the congregation, offering their personal thoughts of him.

Our Senior and Junior Wardens, Lloyd Hall and Mary Arlin, announced formally to the congregation that St. John's had chosen and called Father Rich as our next Rector and symbolically presented Father Rich with the keys to St. John's. Representatives from St. John's various ministries, including, Christian education, pastoral care, outreach committee, music program participants, fellowship, acolytes, Episcopal Peace and Justice; Mission volunteers; Altar servers, Intercessors, Altar Guild, Loaves & Fishes; Liturgical Planning committee, Prayer shawl ministry, Lay Eucharistic visitors, Pastoral Care committee, and the Vestry. Each group of participants representing the Parish's proclamation, Parish's prayers, Parishes healing ministries, and ministries of hospitality presented Father Rich with symbols of their ministries, asked him to join St. John's in serving each ministry. They laid their hands on Father Rich's shoulders as they and Father Rich promised to carry on the ministry. The other clergy present, both Episcopal and from other denominations and faiths, also formally welcomed Father Rich to St. John's and laid their hands on his shoulders as they offered to support him in his ministry as our Rector.

The congregation and participants joined together to renew their baptismal vows. After a service of Holy Communion, a very, very happy and thankful crowd proceeded to the parish hall to greet Father Rich, each other and to enjoy a lovely reception.

----Susie Backstrom, Junior Warden

Weekly Altar Flower Order Form

You are invited to donate altar flowers in memory or thanksgiving of loved ones or special events.

Date requested: 1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

The Bulletin will read: The altar flowers are given by: _____

Check one: _____ in memory of _____ in honor of _____ in celebration of _____

Flower variety(ies) or color(s) requested: _____

Donor information: telephone: _____ email: _____

The cost is \$45. Please make checks payable to St. John's with "Altar flowers" in the memo line. If you would like to recognize the birth of a child or loved one with a single rose, the cost is \$5.00. Questions? Contact Elaine LaRocque at 255-2949 or EEL1@cornell.edu.

Musical Notes from the Director of Music

The musicians have been very busy since December, first with preparations for Christmas, then Father Towers' installation, and then our presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. We are truly blessed to be in a parish where music is respected and appreciated, and we all thank you for your support. As I said after *Amahl*, it's easy to forget that all of the St. John's choir members are volunteers. While many churches pay choral section leaders, thus ensuring a nice sound, we don't. Frankly, I think that is one of the strengths of our program; people participate because they love it, and our worship is richer because of it. We also serve an outreach function, with non-members coming to St. John's for concerts and other special musical events, like *Amahl* and our Christmas Eve presentation at 10:30. Some of our musicians attend other churches, coming to St. John's only to sing in the choir. Your support makes all of this possible.

That said, we need new singers, particularly in the children's choir and the adult choir. Children should be in elementary school. It's easier if they know how to read words, but they don't need any musical training or experience; I'll take care of that. Rehearsals are on Thursdays at 4:30 but, if your child wants to sing and that is a bad time, let me know and we'll see what we can do. In the past, we have arranged car pools, rides, and other creative ways for children to participate. It's important for children to grow up knowing that they have a role in worship; 'church' doesn't mean just showing up on Sundays and listening. Choir is the only way that our youngest elementary school children can participate as worship leaders, and it's great for them. They love processing down the center aisle and seeing the service from the choir stalls. It's a positive experience for them, building their self-esteem and giving them poise in social situations. It also gives them a sense of community, and they form lasting relationships with our older musicians, who serve as mentors and friends. Finally, they gain a set of musical skills that will help them be successful in school and community music programs as well.

Adults, too, gain from participating in the choir. Our choir is a family, and we look out for each other. We celebrate each other's joys, and we help each other through the difficult times. It may be difficult to believe, but some of our adults can't read music. Others had no idea how to hear and follow a line other than the melody. While we do have some folks with a lot of musical talent, all you really need to be a productive member of the choir is a desire to worship through singing. We'll take care of the rest. It's true that we sing some of the very best Anglican choral literature, but it is presented in a way that allows everyone to learn it and sing it confidently. If you like to sing, this would be an excellent time to join the choir. We will be soon beginning work on the Fauré *Requiem*, which will be presented during Holy Week. It's a wonderful piece, and it would be great to have a large choir to sing it. Consider joining us on Thursdays at 7:15 PM. [Watch the church bulletin for exceptions to this standing rehearsal.] Finally, don't worry if your work or home life will keep you away from choir rehearsals at times. I believe that these activities make our singers more interesting and organized. We work weeks ahead, so missing a rehearsal here and there won't keep you from worshipping God from the choir stalls on Sundays. And we use our time very efficiently. Even with all of these extra musical events, the choir has had only 3 extra rehearsals since early December.

So consider joining us and lifting your voice in praise to God. Become a 'musical ambassador' for St. John's. As one of my musicians just wrote, "It's music, but it's also community." And for those who prefer to listen, thanks for being such a loyal crowd. I was quite touched that so many of you came to see *Amahl*, often bringing your friends and neighbors with you. *Thanks.* -- Nancy Radloff

Lead Characters



Many thanks to all who helped make our presentation of *Amahl and the Night Visitors* a rousing success: the director, the staff and vestry of St. John's, those who prepared, served, and cleaned up our reception, our attentive audience, our wonderful actors, and their families. It was a great time!



Amazing Shepherds

