



PARISH NOTES

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The First Sunday in Lent
February 21, 2010
Vol. 51, No. 23

FEBRUARY 21

Adult Formation Lenten Series Begin

It's the first Sunday in Lent and we begin two series for adults. All are welcome at either of these programs, which begin at 10:10 a.m. on Sunday, February 21.

Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy: The Bible & the Brahms *Requiem*

This seven-week Bible study and meditation will be led by the Rev. Richard Israel in the Dining Room.

The Brahms *Requiem* differs from traditional Latin requiems by its emphasis on consolation, reconciling the *living* with the idea of suffering and death. Drawing on his deep faith and knowledge of Scripture, Brahms takes us on a journey, not necessarily from grief to hope, but *through* grief to hope.

The topic of the first session is "Blessed Mourners." The *Requiem* begins at the graveside. Yet its focus is on the living, not the dead. As we listen to the opening chorus, we will reflect on the Beatitudes and Psalm 126 which offer us the hope of God's enduring comfort in the midst of grief.

Apostleship in the Library: *Living Question 5*

At every baptism we attend, we are invited to renew our own baptismal covenant by affirmation of the Apostles' Creed, and by our response to five questions (BCP p. 304). The last of these five questions asks, "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?"

Join St. Paul's Racial Reconciliation Action Group Sunday mornings in Lent as we explore what this might mean in the church, and how we might become increasingly attuned to issues of justice among groups in our culture. In the first session, we will view *Free Indeed*, a short film produced by the Mennonite Central Committee, introducing the topic of "white privilege." Questions? Contact the Rev. Lisa Hackney at lhackney@stpauls-church.org.

See You at the Youth Llama Party!

Attention all 7th through 12th graders! The Youth Group is collecting money to purchase a llama through the Heifer Project. The Heifer llama will be given to a community in Latin America, where its fleece will be woven into warm clothing to wear or sell. We're having a Llama-themed party on Sunday, February 21, during Youth Group to celebrate our llama donation! Contributions are still being accepted. If you have any questions or to contribute, please contact Clara Coughlin at ccoughlin@stpauls-church.org.

Practicing Our Faith

Practicing Our Faith will consider compassion on Sunday, February 21, at 10:10 a.m. in the Chapel of the Cross. Compassion is a feeling deep within ourselves—a "quivering of the heart"—and it is also a way of acting, being affected by the suffering of others and being moved to act on their behalf. Buddha and Jesus are the most well known exemplars of compassion, and it is the central ethical virtue in the two religions that developed from their teachings. The practice of compassion increases our capacity to care. It reinforces charity, empathy, and sympathy. It is an excellent practice for the season of Lent, as we come to terms with our own shortcomings, reach out to consider the needs of others, and walk the path of self-examination and prayerful reflection. Join Kate Gillooly and others as we seek to think, feel and act "outside of ourselves" by practicing compassion.

Eighth Grade Judson Visit

All 8th graders are reminded that Sunday, February 21, is a Judson Sunday! Please be present in your classroom at 8:50 a.m. in time to prepare to lead worship at Judson Park. As always, we need drivers! This is an excellent activity for parents and sponsors to share with their confirmands. Questions? Contact Clara Coughlin at ccoughlin@stpauls-church.org.

Cleveland Reading Camp

All who are interested in helping to plan the Cleveland Reading Camp are invited to a meeting on Sunday, February 21, at 12:15 p.m. in the O'Hear Room.

Here We Are — Again

Is it just me, or does the time between seasons of Lent seem to be getting shorter and shorter? It seems like only a few months ago that St. Paul's Rector Alan Gates was wrapping up his seven-week Lenten reflection on the Seven Deadly Sins, and yet, here we are again. For those who missed his preaching series the first time around – or for those who might wish to refresh their memory, the seven sermons can be found on the St. Paul's Web site (www.stpauls-church.org, click on Resources, then Sermons). The series provides a helpful framework for delving into the Lenten task of self-reflection, and I commend it to you again this year.

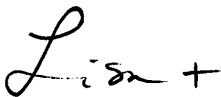
I suspect for most of us, that the sin (or two or three?) that most troubled us last year is likely the same one that we face again this year as we undertake our Lenten discipline of self-examination and repentance. It is true that, on occasion, particular situations or people can lead us into (new and exciting) unhealthy behaviors. However, the much more common scenario is that we each seem to have our own habitual way of falling away from closeness to the Divine. Over time, and even for some of us throughout our entire lives, we seem to encounter the same ongoing struggle for spiritual health that could be said to be 'characterological.'

Perhaps you are prone to undue fear. Perhaps you descend into anger too easily. Whatever your particular spiritual Achilles heel, Lent provides a regular opportunity to look at your self — your whole self — and to turn one more time more fully into the loving gaze of the God who created you; to ask for forgiveness; to ask for God's healing and for the grace to be transformed.

It can be a bit demotivating when one realizes at the Ash Wednesday service that, "Oh dear, I was working on this same issue last year, wasn't I?" Really, how many years can we claim surprise at the results of our spiritual inventory? Our spiritual recidivism is not, however, a reason to turn away from the disciplines of Lent — quite the opposite. It is when we realize that it is only God who can transform our lives that we are free to ask, without shame and without fear, for God to work in us — to bring us to fullness of life and relationship with God and others. If it takes God a lifetime to accomplish it, then so be it.

May this Lenten season provide you with the opportunity to, once more, intentionally bring yourself — your whole self — before God's loving gaze. May the assurance of God's love give you courage to truly know and love yourself, and may the fruit of repentance be yours, that is, a life transformed.

In Christ,



The Rev. Lisa Hackney, Associate Rector

Wednesdays in Lent

Have you chosen your discipline for Lent? Our Wednesday evening programs can fulfill your worship, kinship and discipleship needs!

Children's Program Moves to 5 p.m.

Children of all ages and their parents are invited to the Library on Wednesdays in Lent from 5 to 6 p.m. for *Children's Literature As Windows Into Spirituality* — a look at children's books that explore religious questions. Led by members of the Church School Board, our time together will include story time, discussion, crafts and games. Feel free to bring your favorite story to share as well.

Eucharist, a Meal and Discussion

Plan to join us at 6 p.m. for *Holy Eucharist* followed by a meal served by one our parish groups at 6:30 p.m.

Stay for the series of book and video discussions on economic and human rights issues in Africa and Afghanistan hosted by Global Missions Action Group (GMAG):

The Challenge for Africa

Ann Farmer, Chair of GMAG, will lead the first discussion on Wednesday evening, February 24, from 7 to 8 pm. This session will include an introduction to the series and a discussion of the book *The Challenge for Africa* by Wangari Maathai.

All are welcome to attend this special Lenten series. It is not necessary to read all of the books to be discussed in this series. Pick up a packet of book reviews, papers by African leaders, and other materials for \$3 in the Parish Office. Contact Bob Cheshier, (216) 229-2946, for more information.

The Circle of Quiet and Labyrinth

will also be available in Tucker Hall every Wednesday. Childcare will be provided from 6 to 8 p.m., if requested, for those who wish to attend these evening offerings. Call the Parish Office in advance if you need child care. Make St. Paul's Wednesdays in Lent a part of your discipline this season!

January 2010 ~ Bursaries

In December each year, every 12th grader in South Africa hopes to pass the national matriculation exam given at the end of high school. Schools with the names of their passing students are published in the newspaper, with recognition for those who pass with honor. Articles and editorials follow, extolling or bemoaning results *this* year, and comparing the percentages of students passing from various schools. But then what? Like high school graduation in the US, matriculation does not qualify an individual for employment above manual labor, if that, especially coming from township schools like Masiphumelele.

One morning we met with Andrew Smith, who took over the running of the Masiphumelele Corporation, a 401C organization founded by John and Carol Thompson, an Anglican couple from New Hampshire. Masi Corp and its volunteers are helping a few students obtain government bursaries (funding) and/or sponsors. Who will help the other thousands navigate a system which they know little about and in which they are poorly equipped to evaluate their potential?

The twelve-year-old little boys, who seven years ago became the Masi Knights chess team under Rich's coaching, are growing up. Tall, handsome Anovuyo Popo (Ano) matriculated this year and wants to be a teacher. We will take him to Masi Corp volunteers who will help him evaluate where he should go from here and how to get there.

We ask your prayers for all the Masiphumelele students and students all over the world, who face the almost insurmountable task of continuing their education in order to rise above the poverty from which they come.

Faithfully, *Mary and Richard Nodar*

Reading Camp Book Drive!

New or gently used children's books are being collected in Tucker Hall until March 19 with a goal of 300 books. All collected books will be donated to Reading Camp in Cleveland or Kentucky. Thanks!

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2010
THE FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT**

SERVICES

- Holy Eucharist, 7:45 a.m.
The Rev. Alan Gates, *Celebrant & Preacher*
- Holy Eucharist, 9:00 a.m.
The Rev. Alan Gates, *Celebrant*; The Rev. Lisa Hackney, *Preacher*
- Holy Eucharist, 11:00 a.m.
The Rev. Richard Israel, *Celebrant*; The Rev. Alan Gates, *Preacher*
- Holy Eucharist, 5:00 p.m.
The Rev. Lisa Hackney, *Celebrant & Preacher*

READINGS

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

FELLOWSHIP

8:00—9:00 a.m. Parish Breakfast

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

- 9:00—10:45 a.m. Preschool Session
- 10:00—10:45 a.m. Grades 1-6: *Lent I: Wilderness Companions (Luke 4:1-13)*
Grade 7: *Jesus and the Disciples: What Did They Talk About?*
Grade 8: *Judson Visit*
Grades 9-12: *Faith vs. Fact*
- 10:45 a.m.—noon Preschool Session
- 6:00—8:00 p.m. Junior & Senior High Youth Groups

CHRISTIAN FORMATION FOR ADULTS

- 10:10 a.m. Adult Formation: *Sowing Tears, Reaping Joy — The Bible and the Brahms Requiem*, led by the Rev. Richard Israel (Dining Room)
- Adult Formation: *Apostleship in the Library — Living Question 5* (Library)

Tickets Available Now for St. Paul's Spring Musical presented by Drama Dreamers. Buy your tickets in Tucker Hall on February 21 and 28 and at the door at each performance. \$7 per person, 12 & under are free!



**Friday & Saturday,
March 5 & 6
at 7 p.m.**



**Sunday,
March 7
at 2 & 7 p.m.**



PARISH NOTES

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
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TIME-VALUED MATERIAL—DO NOT DELAY

ON MY MIND...

What's (Not) in the Bible

A recent piece in the Sunday paper featured famous movie misquotes – lines recited so often we might believe they are authentic. James Cagney never said, “You dirty rat.” Neither Ingrid Bergman nor Humphrey Bogart ever cajoled the Casablanca pianist with, “Play it again, Sam.” And while movie adaptations may have had Sherlock Holmes saying, “Elementary, my dear Watson” – Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s books never did.

This got me thinking about utterances sometimes thought to be biblical, which are nowhere in holy writ. In fact, some are quite foreign to scriptural precepts. Here are a few that come to mind.

“*Charity begins at home.*” Attributed to various originators, none scriptural, the phrase may have some truth if linked with Jesus’ commandment to “Love your neighbor as yourself.” But when used to dismiss our responsibility towards those at some geographical distance from us, the phrase is an unscriptural cop out. As I like to say, charity may begin at home, but it certainly does not end there.

“*God helps those who help themselves.*” Like many non-scriptural sayings attributed to the Bible, this one comes from Benjamin Franklin. I wonder if Ben was familiar with the Parable of the Good Samaritan?

“*To the victor belong the spoils.*” The phrase was coined by a U.S. senator in 1831, referring to political appointments

and patronage. Applied more broadly as a proverb for living, the notion has become license for all sorts of self-centered triumphalism. Having just read a new history of the Cold War, I am reminded that one of the shining moments of our national history was the Marshall Plan, in which this aphorism was eschewed.

“*Cleanliness is next to godliness.*” John Wesley said so in 1791, and parents nagging their kids routinely claim divine authority for this one. But despite the esthetic and hygienic benefits of cleanliness, sometimes God really is found in the not-so-tidy places. Cleanliness was nowhere in sight at Calvary.

“*Love means never having to say you’re sorry.*” Okay, so maybe nobody thinks this one came from the Bible, but some people seem to think it’s true anyway, so I feel obliged to disagree. The line, from the film version of *Love Story*, is sheer nonsense. Part of any loving relationship – with family, with deepest friends, or with God – is acknowledging when we have been wrong or have hurt the other. John Lennon is reputed to have said, “Love means having to say you’re sorry every fifteen minutes.” That might be overdoing it. But then, ... it is Lent, after all.

Faithfully and fondly,

WHO WE ARE

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Our Mission

St. Paul's is a living, evolving community of Christian people who worship together according to the Anglican/Episcopal tradition. We seek to know God and God's will for us; to care for each other; and to support each other in the exercise of our ministries among our neighbors and in the wider world.

Parish Notes

Deadline for submissions is **Tuesday at noon**, 12 days before the Sunday publication date. Items may be edited for space and/or clarity. Kim Fry, editor (216) 932-5815 ext. 214 kfry@stpauls-church.org