

THE WEEKLY WORD

EPIPHANY PARISH OF SEATTLE . MARCH 5, 2012

Ash Wednesday

As Christians, we weave a peculiar rhythm into our lives and days. We are a half step, out-of-step with secular culture. While those around us focus on goals and milestones, we *sync our souls* to God's ancient rhythms of birth, death, and rebirth – to the seasons of the earth – to the story of Christ.

As winter sets in each year, we look ahead with hope to the coming of the kingdom and combat the darkness with light. At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Christ in an act of anamnesis, of remembering through participation and celebration. Jesus' presence gives light to the world. And fittingly, throughout the season of Epiphany at Epiphany, we look for inspiration in what we see all around us.

Now, we enter the sacred season of Lent – a time for contrition and reflection. In these days, it is appropriate to look deeply in the mirror and reflect upon the inner workings of our souls. It is a time to face our demons, wrestle with them in the wilderness, and wait... for the resurrection.

People choose to observe Lent differently; some give up something, others take something on. Whatever it is, change something that will affect your daily life in some significant way. That might be giving up coffee or wine, adding a spiritual practice, or changing your eating habits.

I have recently heard people talk about setting aside time for daily prayer. Some people are intentionally watching less television and spending more time in community – developing relationships. It is also a good time for prayerful reflection about something in your life that may be bothering you. Set aside these weeks for thoughtful reflection.

Whatever you decide to do, do something, give something up – take something on. Make this season different in some way and live into that difference and see how it transforms you.

The gospel reading for Ash Wednesday was a portion of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew and it focuses on three spiritual practices: giving to the poor, prayer, and fasting. For this gospel's original audi-

continued...

ence, formerly Jewish/new Christians, these practices would have been familiar, yet redefined in the light of the kingdom of heaven.

There are seven ancient spiritual practices shared by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike and they are: daily prayer, weekly Sabbath, annual Holy Days and seasons, pilgrimage, fasting, tithing, and the common meal. These practices comprise the rhythm in our lives and Lent is a perfect time to re-center in these practices.

By doing so, we are sharing another ancient tradition of the church, the preparation and formation of adults in the church during the season of Lent. Beginning in the 4th century, adults would begin a process of formation just after Easter and continuing throughout the year. On Ash Wednesday, they would formally enter an intense time of preparation until their baptism at the great Vigil of Easter. In our modern day, when most people are baptized as infants or young children, it makes sense to rededicate ourselves to a period of preparation and formation.

Like our predecessors on their journey, we too are called to examine our lives, to make a commitment to spiritual practices and discipline, and to follow the beckoning of the Holy Spirit.

In the Episcopal Church, we observe two days of fasting each year, Ash Wednesday and again on Good Friday. By denying ourselves food and drink from sun-up to sundown, we are focusing our bodies and minds on God. We are redirecting our attention beyond the self to God and through that, ironically, the self is changed.

In a social-science commentary on the gospel, I came across a description of fasting as, “part of the mourning pattern”. When we are sorrowful or grieving, we are in fact protesting the presence of evil. Our not eating is a form of communication, something like not speaking to others when one is angry. Whereas our silence expresses displeasure, fasting says, help me in my affliction. This year’s Ash Wednesday gospel reading instructs us to stop disfiguring our faces while fasting and instead redirect our communication from our neighbors to God.

Fasting is an important part of our tradition. It is referred to in three of the four gospels and also in Acts. But, it is in Matthew’s gospel that it appears the most perhaps indicating its significance in this particular version of the story. Whether it is Ash Wednesday or Good Friday, try it. See how you respond in your body, in your mind, and in your soul.

We are also reminded of our Christian responsibility to give alms to the poor. Yet we are admonished to give only in secret, so that even our left hand doesn’t know what the right is doing.

What matters to God isn't **how much** we give, but **why** we give. Do we give money for recognition, notoriety, or fame? Or, do we give out of a deep desire to share our God-given abundance with others?

And the cornerstone of all faith is prayer. Without prayer, the church doesn't exist. Without prayer, our relationship with God is severely impaired. Prayer is mysterious and simple and complex and beautiful. It can be frustrating and boring or it can be transformative and life altering.

Through our participation in worship, we are engaging prayer. Each time we gather as community, prayer is at the center, whether at a service or a class that begins in prayer. Prayer is showing up on a regular basis, in the same place, at the same time, with a consistent prayer you know by heart. Whatever it is you **do** this Lent, **do something**.

Kate+

Stations of the Cross—Fridays in Lent

“Every Friday in Jerusalem, Franciscan monks take groups of pilgrims down the Via Dolorosa, the road Christ may have walked on his way to the cross. Stopping at each of fourteen locations that mark events in the final days of Christ's life, the pilgrims recall the Passion story and offer prayers for the world.”

from *A Walk in Jerusalem* by John Peterson

Using John Peterson's *A Walk in Jerusalem* as a guide, we will join with Jesus in his Passion every Friday in Lent at 6:00 pm in the church. Offering a contemplative experience as we sit with icons of the Passion and walk with Jesus in our minds, this forty-five minute service features scripture, guided meditation and prayers that apply the Passion narrative to today's world.

As a preparation for Holy Week, we will offer a special expanded Stations on Friday, March 30. This special service will place us in the experience of walking the Stations in modern-day Jerusalem. Those who have been to Jerusalem before and those going on the next Pilgrimage are especially encouraged to attend this special hour-long service.

Julia's Place

It can seem unceasing, the solicitations for time, and especially money. The needs are so great, and the problems so intractable, it's hard to know how to help. Write a check? Write a letter? Buy a bumper sticker?

Money is a necessity; almost nothing gets done without at least a little money. That means writing checks is essential and always welcome. However, even knowing that you are helping in a necessary way, donating money can leave you feeling removed, without directly affecting individual lives.

There is an opportunity right here in our neighborhood to provide hands-on, face to face help for men, women, and their children, who have, quite simply, run out of options.

It's called Julia's Place, and it is located in the basement of Madrona Grace Presbyterian Church. It provides a warm safe place to have a rib-sticking meal, do homework, visit with other families, and sleep in a secure building, instead of a car, bus, or hospital waiting room. They can house 14 men, women, and their children, for one to two weeks at a time.

It is affiliated with Mary's Place, in Belltown, which offers daytime programs for homeless and formerly homeless families. The walls are painted, the beds are made, the families are ready to move in.

But there aren't enough volunteers to open the shelter.

Julia's Place is looking for 13 groups to commit to one-week blocks, four times a year, people who can provide transportation, cook dinner, chat with guests (maybe even help with homework), and spend the night. The shelter will be open from 5:00 pm to 7:30 am.

There is no minimum size for teams. Mary's Place will provide training and support. Look around, talk to your friends, see who is ready to do something they have likely not thought about before, or have wanted very much to help, but had no idea where to begin.

Volunteers do not have to be 'church people'; any interested group will be welcomed. If you would like to volunteer, or know someone who would, please contact Liz McDaniel, the family services coordinator for Mary's Place, at liz@marysplaceseattle.org.

Eileen Riley

WEDNESDAYS IN LENT

Please sign up weekly for the Book Study Potluck
in the Church Narthex after Sunday services.

EVENING PRAYER AND LENTEN SERIES

The Life of St. Francis of Assisi

Presenter: Doyt Conn

Wednesdays: 2/29, 3/7, 3/14, 3/21, and 3/28

Time: 6:00 pm Evening Prayer with Lay Homilist;
6:30-8:00 pm Potluck and Discussion

Location: Great Hall

We study and celebrate the life of St. Francis as an example of how to love God and in so doing magnify our souls and transform our selves and the lives of those around us. Participants in this class are asked to read **AS MUCH AS THEY CAN** of *Nikos Kazantzakis' God's Pauper*. This historical novel based on St. Francis's life is a beautifully written introduction to Francis's awakening and understanding of who God called him to be. Among other things, Francis mastered the discipline of seeing in everyone—friend or foe—a teacher; he acquiesced with joy to the will of others, believing God had a purpose for each. Francis became a hugely powerful figure and lived twenty years in his ministry. His journey took place against the backdrop of a deep schism in the church and a longing for a more authentic Christianity. Exploring his journey opens up a way for us to talk about our own relationship with Christ and with each other and about what we want our church to be.

Tips for finding Nikos Kazantzaki's book

entitled *God's Pauper* OR *St. Francis of Assisi*..:

- St. Mark's Cathedral Shop still have copies available and they will be available at their shop on a first come first serve basis.

LENTEN SUNDAY SERIES

The Darkest Night of the Soul

The Dilemma Posed by Job's God, Job's Wife, and Job's Friends

Presenter: The Rev. Dr. Frank Anthony Spina

Sundays: 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, and 4/1

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: Great Hall

The Book of Job has been a classic, engaging people who revere the Bible as Scripture and those who do not. It seems to deal with the universal problem of pain: Why does a Good God allow evil in the world? That is a daunting question, but Job is even more troublesome, for the protagonist's horrendous condition is not the result of some generic misfortune, but of God's own manipulations. What might such a book teach us about our faith?

Week 1: "The Job We Know and Love" (Job 1—2)

Week 2: "Damn the Day I Was Born!" (Job 3)

Week 3: "With Friends like These . . ." (Job 4—14)

Week 4: "The Intimidating Whirlwind Speech" (Job 38—41)

Spring Children & Youth Formation

Class/Age Group

Location

9:00-12:30pm

Childcare (Ages 0-4)

Nursery (below the Chapel, next to the Choir Rm)

9:15-10:15 am

Activities (Ages 5-10)

The Meeting Place (New preschool classrooms)

Road to Rome

Lower Floor Classroom Christie House

(Grades 5-6)

Rite-13 (Grades 6-8)

Lower Floor Christie House

10:30 -11:15 am

Godly Play

Various Rooms, Check signs on campus

(PreK-Grade 4)

5:00-7:00 pm

Youth Community

Varies from Week to Week

(Grades 6-12)

+TEC - THIS SUNDAY, MARCH 11

Discernment

Presenter: Diana Bender

Sunday: 3/11

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: Library

Are you considering a change in your life? A new career? A baby? Retirement? Perhaps you just have a yearning or a sense that something is missing or could be better in your life or work? There are so many ways to make decisions (and so many choices facing us!). Sifting through and deciding what to do can be daunting. The idea of “following God’s will” can seem old fashioned - - and yet, aren’t there those times when things just feel right or when doors just seem to open? Is that God speaking? Join us to explore the idea of Discernment and consider ways to invite God more deeply into our lives and decisions, aligning our spiritual, life and career paths into one. This class will be a combination of theory and practice. Each week we’ll try a different tool or approach to discernment and be assigned some practical homework.

Week 3: Discernment and Spiritual Practices -- Over time, discernment is most effective within the context of regular spiritual practice. We’ll explore these practices and tools for discernment further and each person will consider what discernment steps might be most helpful.

UPCOMING +TEC CLASSES AT EPIPHANY

Date	Class One—Great Hall	Class Two— Library
3/11	Book of Job	Discernment
3/18	Book of Job	Haiti After Quake
3/25	Book of Job	Haiti After Quake
4/1	Book of Job	Haiti After Quake
4/8	<i>Easter – No Classes</i>	

LOOKING AHEAD—BOOK STUDY WITH KATE

The People of Haiti After the Quake

A Book Study and Conversation

Presenter: The Rev. Kate Wesch

Sundays: 3/18, 3/25, and 4/1

Time: 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Location: Library

On Tuesday afternoon, January 12, 2010, the world changed dramatically for at least three million people when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked Haiti, a fragile country in no way prepared to withstand this kind of devastation. Many thousands of people died, many more were injured, even more were left homeless, and the damage to buildings and infrastructure was frighteningly severe. The road to rehabilitation and stability will be a long one for this small nation. This class aims to begin a conversation at Epiphany about Haiti, about its people and culture, possibly generating some ideas about the impact our parish can have on this part of the world.

We will begin our conversation by discussing the popular book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World*, a biography of Dr. Paul Farmer written by Tracy Kidder. Published in 2003, this book is fascinating and easily accessible. I'm sure many of you may have already read it. Our discussions will focus on selected chapters.

Call, e-mail, or drop by the Parish Office to sign-up for this class and receive a reading list of selected chapters for discussion. We have

several copies of the book available in Christie House waiting to be borrowed.

In a New York Times book review, Abraham Verghese has this to say about the book: *"Mountains Beyond Mountains" is inspiring, disturbing, daring and completely absorbing. It will rattle our complacency; it will prick our conscience. One senses that Farmer's life and work has affected Kidder, and it is a measure of Kidder's honesty that he is willing to reveal this to the reader"*

(Abraham Verghese is the Marvin Forland distinguished professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio. His most recent book is *Cutting for Stone*.)



Lent—Easter 2012

Services at Epiphany

Weekdays & Saturdays	Epiphany Chapel Open for Prayer	8 am—5pm
Wed, Mar 7	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Evening Prayer	6-6:30 pm, Chapel
Thurs, Mar 8	Prayer	12:30-1 pm, Chapel
Fri, Mar 9	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Stations of the Cross	6-6:45 pm, Church
<i>Sun, Mar 11</i>	<i>Holy Eucharist</i> <i>The Third Sunday in Lent</i>	<i>8 am, Church</i> <i>10:30 am, Church</i>
Wed, Mar 14	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Evening Prayer	6-6:30 pm, Chapel
Thurs, Mar 15	Prayer	12:30-1 pm, Chapel
Fri, Mar 16	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Stations of the Cross	6-6:45 pm, Church
<i>Sun, Mar 18</i>	<i>Holy Eucharist</i> <i>The Fourth Sunday in Lent</i>	<i>8 am, Church</i> <i>10:30 am, Church</i>
Mon, Mar 19	Evening Prayer—St Joseph	6-6:30 pm, Chapel
Wed, Mar 21	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Evening Prayer	6-6:30 pm, Chapel
Thurs, Mar 22	Prayer	12:30-1 pm, Chapel
Friday, Mar 23	Meditation	8:30-9 am, Chapel
	Stations of the Cross	6-6:45 pm, Church
<i>Sun, Mar 25</i>	<i>Holy Eucharist</i> <i>The Fifth Sunday in Lent</i>	<i>8 am, Church</i> <i>10:30 am, Church</i>

Nervous?

A local congregation recently started hosting eight homeless guys once a week. I rode in the van for the first run. Our homeless friends were surprisingly anxious. “Just remember,” I told them, “the people at the church are as nervous as you are.” My message to the church helpers was about the same. “Remember, the guys coming to sleep in your library are just as nervous as you are.” The jitters are now gone. It’s been four weeks. Today I got this email forwarded to me:

“I wanted to give you a quick summary of our experience last Friday. In short, it was great! Great guys, great organization, great service.”

Epiphany Parish has done a wonderful thing. They felt the fear, counted the cost, and took the risk. Nervous? Sure. But they didn’t let that stop them.

I have walked down some pretty dark streets and alleys through the years. There have been conversations with some rough looking folks. Risky business, maybe. But there is a bigger risk in doing nothing. I don’t want people dying because I’m nervous.

Lord, grant us courage in the time of uncertainty, for the sake of those who are at risk in our city.

By the Rev. Rick Reynolds in **Nightwatch News, March 2012**

MEDITATION CORNER

When attention is filled with simple recognition the will immediately drops and distance disappears. A silent dialogue begins and moves beneath the spoken words. A communal flowing of gifts and recognitions, an experiential weave in which language encounters a wordless intellect and what is seen and heard is purely received: heart to heart, spirit to spirit. All things reduced to a very subtle two: I and Thou. Then the two is able to discover that it has become one Whole. One Holy movement as all things coming into being. God, unmoved spreading across the waters.

An Invitation for You: **Epiphany Guided Meditation**

Wednesdays and Fridays, 8:30—9:00 am in the Chapel

Pieter Drummond

PARISH PRAYER LIST

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHOSE BIRTHDAYS FALL BETWEEN

March 4-March 10: Aiden Artzt, Andrea King, Parklyn Neil, Margaret Whitlock, Anne Hofius, Julie Gould, Harrison Probst, Sallie Ragsdale, Monica Nelson, Hudson McKinney, David Weld, Amy Wheeler, and Jasmine Young.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE ON OUR CYCLE OF PRAYER: Scott & Jennifer, Corinne, and Leah Bromagen; Sue & Artie Buerk; Bill Bultmann; Beverly Burleson; and Eleanor Burton. We pray for the communities served, parishioners, staff, volunteers, Vestry, and Priests of St. James (Kent) and St. Columba (Kent).

YOUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR CONTINUED HEALING AND STRENGTH FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH WHO ARE ILL OR GRIEVING:

Paul, Bette Sprague, Beth Briggs, Coralie Swanson, Connie Gaines, Barbara Ward, Barbara Himmelman, Rosemary Callison, Kay Schack, Veronica, Ashle, Ruth Ingham, Bob Bergman, Piper Simmons, Sherry Taylor, Kory, Carin Barnes, Lou, Morgan Brinley, Helen Wisdom, Sid Malbon, Gregg Waddell, Andy, P.J., Tom Pelphrey, Jamie, Kathy, baby Baush Twins and family, Yamy Xolocotzi, Ginger Ackerley, Dougald MacMillan, Anne, Bruce, Adrian, Cyril Urwyler, the Griffin family, Ruth Marie Close, Tim Murray, Alice, Raymond Krystyniak, Mimi, Laura, Anthony, Cassie, Bob, Duncan, Cindy, LaVerne Green, Erik Grafe, Hannah Moderow, Robert Barnes, Ryan Michael Eaton, John Baker, Claudia Eland, Sara Perkins, David Weatherford, Ethel Patton, Lou Lorton, and the Robinson family.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED: Rebecca Mai Poynton.

Dear Epiphany,

Occasionally we review and cull the prayer list. If we have removed someone in error or you would like to have someone removed or added please contact Emily in the Parish Office. The same invitation applies for birthdays.