



TRINITY TIMES

MARCH 2009

Trinity Episcopal Church

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Geoffrey Brown
Clerk
John Lloyd
Treasurer

Al Dorf, Bob Reid
Assistant Treasurers

Christine Gevert
Organist/Choir Director

Gretchen Hachmeister
Sunday School

Lisa Brennan, *Bookkeeper*
Jeff Silvernale, *Grounds*
Junior Wright, *Sexton*
Alexis Dorf, *Trinity Times*

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK:

"Nothing, how little so ever it be, if it is suffered for God's sake, can pass without merit in the sight of God."



-Thomas a Kempis

I have been a private school chaplain four times over the last twenty years. I am entirely accustomed to the adolescent view of "organized religion" with its skepticism and sometimes surly disdain. While my students have always been interested in spiritual ideas and notions, especially from religions that are considered exotic by their shopping mall-based standards, they usually draw the line when it comes to actually participating in religious worship. While they are often comfortable using, and generally misusing, the term "karma" in their statements, the word "dogma" is discomfiting and foul.

Until that moment, that comes to us all, when they must confront mortality. Whether it is a grandparent, parent's friend, or family pet, the spiritual language that they use, as heard on television, is woefully inadequate to express that which they are experiencing. There is nothing in a remote spirituality that can engage their questions, confusion, and grief. There is also little that is verbal that may do so. It is then that they look for something more tactile and much, much more meaningful to address their concerns. It's in that moment of 'Lenten-ness' that they seek religion.

According to contemporary practice, a "spiritual" person abides behind a mask of intellectualism, espouses incomprehensible bits and pieces of a half dozen, largely misunderstood, faiths, and avoids at all costs anything that appears contradictory or in conflict with current ideological trendiness. A religious person is free to seek out true meaning in scrip-

ture and church history, engage in real prayer, confront contradictions and look for meaning beyond that beholden to the petty gods of the world. To be religious is to take the aspects and tenets of the faith with sufficient seriousness and joy that it interpenetrates one's relation with work, family, friends, and life. To be religious is to seize that God-granted courage to engage the world with others.

Which is why Lent, for any religious person, is of particular importance and primacy. Within this season we experience the only two fast days on our calendar and practice some of the most moving, and wondrously non-verbal, expressions in our faith. While one might attempt to do so, and as divinity school professors seem to try annually, there are no words that can improve on the silent witness of receiving ashes on the first day of Lent. There is no art, no music, and no verse of prose or poetry that can be more moving than the sight of the stripped altar at the conclusion of Maundy Thursday or the deliberate narrative on Good Friday.

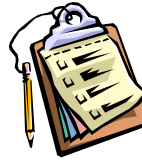
Those of us who are of a quiet witness, in other words, most of us, also find this season one that gives us the opportunity, in paraphrase of Chapter 6 of Matthew's Gospel, to practice in secret that which God sees in secret. Contemporary spirituality seems rather showy, designed as it is to highlight the spirituality of the individual. Religion, contemporary or antique, seeks to address the spiritual needs of the many, reconcile the natural conflicts of life with reasonable expectations for the eternal, and grant greater insight and discernment to our relationship with God. Religion, when properly engaged, also highlights relations with our fellow worshippers who share in quiet witness. The less individual it is, the more powerful and true it is. Such are the benefits of the season of Lent.

In every life there are those Lenten moments, sprinkled as they are with moments of resurrection, reconciliation, and celebration, and in every year there is this season, misunderstood by too many as one glum and dour, which holds within it the power to address those experiences that require our

deepest faith, and prepare for our most ecstatic joy.

Father Rob

NOTES FROM THE VESTRY



The good news from the Vestry is that our pledges are running ahead of last year. This is indeed a tribute to the faithfulness of Trinity's parishioners in difficult economic times. The challenging news is that we will need to have a least one fundraiser in order to make ends meet. A number of proposals have been voiced, but a final decision is yet to be made as to what, where, when and how such an event will be undertaken.

Plans are moving ahead on the pet memorial garden. Parishioner Lynn Gaffney, AIA has provided the drawings and Jane Cooke is responsible for the landscaping proposal.

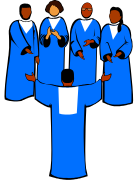
SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS



Gretchen Hachmeister reports that the reinstated Sunday School program is moving along successfully. Gretchen and Cheryl Duntz are the primary teachers, with parents and other parishioners providing support and back up. The children begin with a short chapel service with the vicar and next move on to their lessons for the day and a craft project to go along with the lesson. They then come into the church to participate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Teachers and assistants are welcome! Along with the teacher of the day, another adult is always required to be in the room, so if you aren't quite ready to take on the pedagogical role, consider being simply present to assist as necessary! Speak with Gretchen (860-364-0592) if you are interested in helping out.

SHROVE TUESDAY THANK YOU!



The Shrove Tuesday Evensong was a transcendent experience for all who attended. Our choir was expanded with singers from other churches and under Christine's direction provided an offering to God that fed our souls as well.

Chefs Lynn Gaffney, Bill Backus and Jeremy Dakin managed the grills in the kitchen and provided a delicious pancake and sausage supper with assistance from Alice Tweed and pancake mentor John Lloyd.

The placemats in Walker Hall were drawn by the Sunday School members and provided a special treat for the diners.

Although there was no charge for the supper, we did accept a free will offering to be forwarded to the OWLs Kitchen for their use in supplementing their pantry shelves. A total of \$132.00 was raised.

Thanks to all!



ADULT EDUCATION OFFERINGS IN MARCH

Rob will continue his well received adult education series in March. Since the beginning of the year we have learned about the implications for our faith of current archaeological discoveries, explored the wisdom of Celtic Christians and compared their prayers to that of the Roman Catholic church and begun to consider the Hebrew roots of Christianity.

We will further our understandings of those roots the on March 1 and 8 and then break for a book group.



On March 15, 22 and 29, we will discuss Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan's *The Last Week*. This book, based on the Gospel of Mark, gives a day by day account of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. Its thesis is that Jesus gave up his life to protest power without justice and to condemn the rich for their lack of concern for the poor, a theme that is no less relevant 2000 years after his death.

For further information on the book group, speak to Alexis Dorf at 860-364-0816 or email at alexisdorf@sbcglobal.net.

All adult forums meet at noon in the library. Bring your coffee and expand your mind!

THOUGHTS FROM THE TRACTOR

Things Seen and Unseen



I have my difficulties with the Creeds, as I have noted here before, so I recently was thinking about the Nicene Creed and why it is such a issue for me. (I like things resolved, tied up and finished. That makes being a Christian a really big problem for me as one never gets to the end!)

I hadn't even gotten through the first paragraph when I ran into the proverbial brick wall -"maker of all that is....seen and unseen". I have always thought "unseen" meant things like microbes or quarks or atoms, or things I *can't* "see". Suppose, however, it means what I *don't* see? Suppose it means things I choose not to see, or decide to ignore? Suppose it means being blind to what around me that is of God because I find it "distressing" or "I can't do anything about it anyway"? Then what?

Perhaps I need to look more closely at what is around me and determine to see what I have chosen not to see. Certainly Jesus saw clearly what was around him - a world

of domination by Rome and oppression of those who weren't able to help themselves out of their dirt-poor lives. Jesus did not decide to ignore what he "couldn't do anything about" or to turn away from what was "distressing" about life in first century Palestine.

He did what he could, however, teaching and healing both bodies and souls and trying to restore those who had been discarded by the community to their rightful places. He condemned the conditions which made his society so unmerciful to the neediest and was punished for his efforts by those who refused to hear his message of justice achieved through peace.

I cannot by myself turn the world into the kingdom of God, where everyone has enough and all people are treated with dignity and compassion. But I can choose to see at least some places where things have gone wrong and both work and pray to make them right again. And perhaps then for me there will be fewer "unseen" places that God has made.

-Alexis Dorf

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Address correction requested

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