

March 7, 2019

“Our mission is to celebrate God’s transforming Love in Jesus, by following where Jesus’ Love is calling us to serve the community”



Ascension This Week

**Lent Around Here
— from Fr. Bill Baker**

On Sunday, March 10

— 8 am Said Eucharist

— 10 am Sung Eucharist

Sunday School meets in the Undercroft at 10am

— 11:15 am Coffee Hour

— 2:30 pm Service at Lakeside Manor

— 6 pm AA meeting

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Inside this issue:

— “Lent Around Here”
Fr Bill’s message

— Lenten programs and how we will arrange our schedules while Fr Bill is serving two churches as Priest.

— Meetings and Events for the next few weeks

— Photos from the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper

So we begin the season of Lent. I like to think of Lent as a journey. In some ways when we start a journey, we know where we will end. When we start a driving journey, we usually know our destination. We start this Lenten journey and know that it will end on Easter Sunday. The stuff in the middle is the part of the journey that offers us the opportunity to work on ourselves--to work on our souls.

I believe that Lent can and should be a time of self-reflection. How will each of us prepare our lives for the salvation that Jesus offers us through his cross and resurrection on Good Friday and Easter Sunday? What will your Lenten discipline consist of this year?

I want to encourage each of us to make an offering of self-sacrifice. One way we discussed to do this, and I promised to give more information about, includes serving others. This article will shine a light on the first opportunity to work with the poor and each week we will get more information about a volunteer opportunity here on Staten Island. **St. Mary’s Episcopal Church operates a food pantry the first Saturday of every month. The pantry operates from 4:30-6:30 and begins with a shared meal.**

Guests arrive around 4:30 pm and are served a full meal on real plates with real linen napkins. The number of guests varies each month, but one month they served dinner to 80 people from the community. After the guests finish eating, they are invited to shop at the food pantry for nourishing food for themselves and their families. St. Mary’s needs lots of volunteers to make the pantry work. Volunteers can arrive around 4:00 pm to set up the food in the pantry. Volunteers also serve the meal to the guests and then sit and eat with them.

Part of the experience centers around sharing the meal and all volunteers are invited to sit and talk to the guests while they share the meal and while they wait their turn to shop in the pantry. Although most of the food that we collect at Church of the Ascension goes to the Soup Kitchen at Stapleton AME Church (a program we will learn more about in an upcoming newsletter), St Mary’s Church accepts food deliveries any day Monday-Thursday during normal business or on the first Saturday of the month. If you would like to volunteer at the pantry or deliver food items, please call the parish office at 718-442-1527. *(next page)*

As I preached on Ash Wednesday, most of our Lenten journey includes working on our inner self. This should include a healthy amount of self-reflection. In the rest of this article, I want to offer a few ways for us to grow through study and inwardly working on ourselves. I hope that every member will participate in most of these worthwhile activities.

I not only encourage every member to attend the Lenten forums as part of our Lenten journeys, but I truly hope that each member will join one of the groups. **At Ascension we offer the Lenten Program two times per week: Thursday evenings in the rectory from 7:00pm-8:30pm and Sunday mornings after coffee hour.** On Thursday evenings a light supper of soup and bread will be shared during the Lenten Program. The Lenten Program promises to be a wonderful addition to your journey this year.

Many Christians give something up or take on something as part of their Lenten discipline. This year, I have decided to give up alcohol in solidarity with a dear friend of mine who is struggling with addiction to alcohol. Is there some way that you can deny yourself something as a way of understanding Christ's great sacrifice on the cross? Maybe denying yourself sweets or meat might strengthen your soul this Lent?

I also hope that you will consider adding to your prayer life during Lent. If you already pray Morning Prayer, might you add Compline to your daily devotion? Or maybe you will start a time for meditation each morning. Prayer is our constant contact with God. Please talk to me if you want to learn more about how to invigorate your prayer life.

I am going to also add study time to my devotion this Lent. I will both read one of the books from the list that I published last week and study the Bible more during this season. Would you like to study the Bible more? Are you interested in doing it here at the church? Let's talk!

Finally, I will take the opportunity to offer the sacramental rite of Reconciliation. No one showed up at the time during Advent set aside for the Church's sacramental rite of forgiveness. I believe that something happens to us, as Christians, when we say our sins out loud to another person. You should feel free to set up an appointment with me during Lent for Reconciliation. In addition, **I will offer Reconciliation after the 9:30 Eucharist on Wednesday, March 27th and April 17th.** If you are unsure about the service of Reconciliation, please feel free to talk to me about what this means or might look like. We can use the official service or we can just talk.

I pray that your Lenten journey will be both Spiritually fruitful and enjoyable. We need not walk around feeling down or with sour looks on our faces, due to our self-denial or sacrifice. Our Lenten journey should add joy to our life. It is in giving of ourselves that we grow, but we should also feel the love and joy of relationship with God. May God bless our Lenten Journeys!

Blessings, Fr Bill+

Where is Fr Bill??

Fr Bill will work out of the office at St. John's all day on Mondays and half days on Wednesdays after mass and coffee hour at Ascension.

Fr Bill will work at Ascension on Tuesday and Thursday full days and half days on Wednesday mornings.

In addition, Fr Bill has been asked to rotate weeks at Ascension and St. John's during Lent. This rotation will continue until Palm Sunday. Fr Bill will be at Ascension for Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. The week after Easter, he will be on vacation.



The children took down the Alleluia Banner, boxed it and hid it. On Easter when we say Alleluia again they will bring it out and hang it on the Pulpit.



Save the Date: Upcoming Events for Richmond Episcopal Ministry:

***Thursday, March 7:** Adult Forum/Lenten study begins on at Ascension, 7pm in the rectory. A light supper will be served. Meetings continue through Lent.

Saturday, March 9: St John's will hold a St Patrick's Day dinner fundraiser. Time is 6:30PM, tickets are \$30.00. Event includes a DJ, 50/50 drawing, and basket raffles.

***Sunday, March 10:** Adult Forum/Lenten study begins after coffee hour. Meetings continue through Lent.

Sunday, March 31: Annual IPC Joint Lenten Service at 4PM. Location TBA.

*You can choose one or attend both.

A couple of announcements:

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper : We had a great time Tuesday evening. Thanks to Ned Rogers, Roy Williamson and Bill Sorensen for doing the cooking! Pancakes, sausages, apple sauce, fruit and desserts! The children took the Alleluia Banner amid lots of noise from tambourines, put it in a box and hid it—to be restored to its place on Easter Sunday! On the photo page you will see the children hiding the Alleluia Banner.

Also —Yarn Needed: Nancy W. needs yarn to make more hats for our sisters and brothers at Lakeside!

Lenten Study Program this year

We will offer our Lenten Series twice a week for the 7 weeks of Lent--on Sundays after Coffee Hour and on Thursday nights at 7:00 pm in the rectory. Because Fr. Bill will be at St. John's on some Sundays, Ned Rogers will lead the Sunday morning sessions. Fr. Bill and Cindy McCloskey will lead the Thursday evenings in the rectory. A light supper of homemade soup and bread will be offered during the evening sessions.

– Statement from Fr Bill regarding the program:

“For our Adult Forum/Lenten Series during Lent we will use a program called “Following the Way of Jesus” published by the Episcopal Church. My seminary classmate wrote the curriculum and I participated on the committee for the IPC that chose to use this for all the Episcopal Churches on Staten Island this year.”

In the event of a pastoral emergency or personal need, Fr. Bill welcomes calls to the rectory (718-447-4501) or his cell (917-863-1516).

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