

**February 13, 2020**

**“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

**More On Spiritual Gifts  
— from Fr Bill Baker**

On Sunday, February 16

- 8 am Said Eucharist
- 10 am Sung Eucharist
- 11:15 Coffee Hour
- 2:30 pm Service at Lakeside Manor
- Friendship Dinner, 5:30–7:30 pm

Inside this issue:

- “More on Spiritual Gifts” an article from Fr Bill Baker
- Can You Help? request.
- Black History Educational Month Series at Christ Church
- Save the Date events and meetings, and a few announcements

Each week, I think more people listen to my sermons online, than at church. It’s great being able to reach people all across Staten Island, The US and even the world with my sermons. (I know I have a friend in Jerusalem who listens often.) What is even better is that some of my friends engage me about the topics covered in the sermons.

After this week’s sermon on Spiritual Gifts, one of my friends sent me a message to discuss the topic. In case you haven’t heard it yet, I said that sometimes we have our lights put out by others who don’t appreciate the gifts that we offer. I used the example that some people say we don’t need your gifts or try to knock down those who seem overly confident.

My friend thought my example was good, but she said she believes in our churches that more often someone comes in and just takes over. Maybe with our busy lives or just because they are organized or just because they are the person in the church who “does everything” others just allow certain personalities to dominate and do a lot of the work or take leadership more often than others.

I thought about all the churches I have been involved in. This seemed like a more prevalent issue with Spiritual Gifts. Most churches have a handful of people that do most of the work and for some reason, others just let them. My friend, tends to be a doer. She openly questioned how many times she might have dampened or distinguished someone else’s light by taking over.

And how often have people ceded their power, denied or refused to use their gifts, and allowed those “doers” to do (all or) most of the work. We fleshed it out and I thought about it more later. Yes, there are those people who are openly hostile to others, and, through their harsh words might inhibit someone’s light from shining, but most probably, the way that church folks stop someone from using their Spiritual Gifts happens when a strong personality takes charge or those who are unsure about leading, give up control.

Of course, most church events need a clear leader. We need people who express their leadership and use their Spiritual Gifts in order to get events planned and help get stuff done, but we all have seen instances where the same people do most of the work and others, hang back and watch, not using or expressing our gifts.

God really needs all our gifts and every single one of us to do His work in the world. How many in our church are really expressing and using our Spiritual Gifts fully? I do not ask this to sound judgmental. We all have Gifts of the Holy Spirit and God asks us to figure out how to use them. As I said on Sunday, we all need to continue to discern our Spiritual Gifts and how God wants us to use them throughout our lives. Pray about what your gifts are and how God wants YOU to use them. Find ways to deepen your understanding of those gifts and how you might use them for the coming of the Kingdom—speak to a trusted Spiritual leader, attend a workshop or study scripture or other books to help you discern. God needs all of us--let’s get to work!

Blessings, Fr Bill+



At the St Martha’s and Vestry Installation Brunch at the Hilton Garden Inn



*Beginning Thursday, March 5th at 7:00 pm Fr. Bill will host the first Lenten Series & Soup Suppers in the Rectory. This year the Lenten Series- "The Signs of Life", from the SSJE, explores the signs and symbols at the heart of Christian worship. This free 5-week offering encourages individuals and groups to explore the riches of our worship traditions, liturgy and sacraments, and the art and architecture of our worship spaces, revealing the full meaning of these signs, deepening our experience of Christian vocation and guiding us toward ongoing conversion.*

**Light:** When we see by the light of Christ, everything that is close to us, things as simple and as vital as light and water and food and shelter and community – everything – is transformed into a vehicle of grace. ...

**Water:** ... Baptism is a sacrament of surrender, the sacramental act of letting go of fear and control, making friends with the unknown, and beginning to trust that God will sustain you, even in the midst of chaos and death.

**Food:** When we remember food is life, we gain a better understanding of what it means to ask God to give us our daily bread . . .

**Shelter:** The liturgy itself shelters us, the same patterns unfolding, again and again, day by day, week by week, year by year. ...

**Community:** Being in loving relationship means that the truth of our very selves will be revealed.

***BLACK HISTORY MONTH EDUCATIONAL SERIES***

During the month of February, Christ Church will host an educational series dealing with the issues of slavery, racism, and religion in Staten Island. The format for the series will be fellowship, presentations and conversations with learned professionals who have studied this material and are able to help us with these issues.

**All presentations will be held at Christ Church New Brighton, 76 Franklin Avenue, SI, NY 10301. Call 718.727.6100 for more details.**

*Refreshments will be served. The schedule is as follows:*

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Slavery, Religion, and Resistance on Staten Island, 1640 -1800.**

**Presenter: The Rev. Dr. George McClain**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 09, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Sundown Towns on Staten Island? A look at past and present housing discrimination.**

**Presenter: The Rev. Dr. George McClain**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Slavery in Staten Island and its lasting legacy on race relations.**

**Debbie-Ann Paige, Staten Island Museum**

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**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2020**

**4:00 pm - 6:00 pm**

**Frederick Douglas Memorial Park**

**Presenter: Duane Felton, Esq.**

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*Refreshments will be served.*

**All are invited to share in this education series, to be informed, and to learn how we can be anti-racist in a culture of division.**

## Save the Date: Upcoming Services, Meetings and Events:

**Sunday, February 16:** Third in the Black history Month Educational series at Christ Church, 4:00—6:00 pm. See flyer in this newsletter.

Please join us at **5:00 pm on Saturday, February 15**, and every third Saturday of the month for a **healing service at Ascension**. As many of you know, Arthur Ullstrom has a spiritual gift of healing prayer. On February 15 he will be joined by Dcn. Geri and Fr Bill for the laying on of hands and prayer for healing.



**Sunday, February 16:** Don't forget the next monthly Friendship Dinner is Sunday, February 16, 5:30 to 7:30 at Ascension Church. This is a wonderful opportunity to socially meet those of other faiths bringing us together through the One common to us all: God. It is Pot Luck and you are asked to bring a vegetarian dish; vegetarian so that all may eat. Of course we will need volunteers to set up, clean up and meet and greet. Let us be welcoming not just with our Hall, but with a host of Ascensionites known for our warmth and friendliness! —Cindy

**Tuesday, February 25:** Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper served with sausage, fruit & coffee, masks and beads. Our treat! Freewill donation only. Colorful clothes and costumes are encouraged.

**Thursday, March 5:** The first meeting of the Lenten Study Group at Ascension at 7:00 pm in the rectory. See the flyer in this newsletter for details.

**Lenten Service at St. Alban's Church:** The IPC Lenten Committee is planning an Evening Prayer Service with hymns to be held at **St. Alban's Church on Sunday, March 15th at 4:00 pm**. The theme of the service will follow the SSJE 2020 Lenten study "Signs of Life - Why Church Matters - Light / Water / Food / Shelter / Community."

**Saturday, May 9:** Save the Date for the Episcopal Church Women's Annual Meeting. More information will follow closer to the date.

### Can you Help?

On Sunday, February 16, after coffee hour, I will put the tables in place for serving at the Friendship Dinner (5:30—7:30 pm), and put out the paper plates, napkins, and plastic utensils. Your help will be very much appreciated.

—Janine

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<http://www.ascensionsi.org/>