



CHRIST CHURCH

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The Rector's Chronicle

Lent, Holy Week, and Easter 2016

Dear friends in Christ,

In this Chronicle I want to look ahead to Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. There are many opportunities in the coming months for each of us at Christ Church to deepen our faith through worship, prayers, outreach, fellowship, and adult learning.

On February 9, we will gather for our annual Shrove Tuesday celebration in the Undercroft. Pancakes and sausages will be served beginning at 6:00 PM. We are using this celebration as a food pantry collection day; please consider bringing and donating some large boxes of cereal. Lent begins the next day on February 10 which is Ash Wednesday. Services will be offered at 7:00 AM, 12:00 PM, and 7:30 PM. At our 7:30 PM service with full choir we welcome Bishop Allen K. Shin, Bishop Suffragan of New York, as our celebrant and preacher. I have known Bishop Shin for many years – we served as curates (not at the same time) at Saint Mary the Virgin in Times Square. I believe that Bishop Shin is the first bishop in the Episcopal Church of Korean descent. He has a deep academic and campus ministry background and served as Fellow and Chaplain at Keble College, Oxford University for many years after he was Curate at Saint Mary's. After Oxford he returned to the United States to serve as Rector of Saint John's Church, Huntington, New York, and in 2013 he was elected as our Bishop Suffragan. He is a professionally trained opera singer, he a very holy man, and he and his wife Clara are good friends. If you can find a way to be at Christ Church for Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday you will get hearty doses of outreach, fellowship, music, prayer, penitence, and a connection to the wider church that we are a part of. It should be a good and holy beginning of Lent.

As a priest I am often asked to offer some Lenten message of guidance and encouragement – something that speaks to the personal journey each of us tries to make through Lent. Conveniently the Ash Wednesday service offers excellent guidance, and I will do my best to encourage you to try to live into Lent, as it states in the Prayer Book, “by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word”.

Self-examination and repentance is something we do in a little way every time we pray the General Confession in church. On Ash Wednesday and on the Sundays throughout Lent the penitential portion of our service is amplified quite a bit, and on Sundays it is moved to the beginning of the service. Take the opportunity that our worship offers in Lent to determine what might be separating you in any way from fully loving God or your neighbor. I make a Sacramental Confession each Lent to a

priest in our diocese. I find it helpful to name my sins, and I take comfort in the fact that someone is praying for me and on behalf of the church is offering me counsel and absolution. If you are interested, I am always available by appointment to hear a Sacramental Confession. The Prayer Book gives some basic information about the sacramental rite of Confession: “When the penitent has confessed all serious sins troubling the conscience and has given evidence of due contrition, the priest gives such counsel and encouragement as are needed and pronounces the absolution... The content of a confession is not normally a matter of subsequent discussion. The secrecy of a confession is morally absolute for the confessor, and must under no circumstances be broken.”

There are numerous opportunities for **prayer** at Christ Church in Lent. Each Sunday we will offer our regular 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM Eucharist. Each Sunday night throughout Lent and continuing through Palm Sunday at 5:00 PM we will offer the Way/Stations of the Cross followed by a simple Eucharist around the altar – on days when it is warmer and dry this service will be offered in the Garden of Resurrection. The Way of the Cross is a wonderful way to meditate and pray on the passion prophecies and narratives found in the Bible. I think sometimes people associate the Way of the Cross with Roman Catholicism, but our Anglican tradition values this devotion as well. The service is made up entirely of prayers from the BCP or passages from the Old and New Testament woven together. I have discovered that my understanding of the prophecies and passion narratives deepens a bit each time I pray and walk the Way, and I invite you to join me one, some, or every Sunday evening in Lent. We will continue to offer Morning Prayer on Tuesday at 10:00 AM throughout Lent. If you want to pray the office on your own I recommend Saint Bede’s online Breviary which can be found here: <http://www.stbedeproductions.com/breviary/> Another good resource for prayer is the 2016 Lenten Meditations booklet available outside the parish office and in the Narthex. These booklets offer a short prayer and a personal mediation for each day of Lent. Taking the time in Lent to pray can be a wonderful way to broaden and deepen your regular prayer life and begin a practice that can continue into Easter and beyond.

The concept of **fasting and self denial** might be foreign to many Episcopalians today. Many modern “fasts” have turned into simple observances that generally don’t reach the level of self denial. For example, giving up meat on Friday makes less sense if that means enjoying a weekly night on the town downing sumptuous Sushi Rolls, Coquille St. Jacques, or Buttered Dover Sole (I’m getting hungry just writing this!). I think if you are going to give up something for Lent, there ought to be some self sacrifice involved so that your mini sacrifice in some way mirrors the complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ who gave his life. In the past I have given up something I truly enjoy and used the money saved to support some charitable program related to a church Outreach ministry. Our Prayer Book notes that there are two major Fasts (with a capital F no less) in the year: Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. On those days I do not eat (or eat very little) until the day is over.

Our worship services give us a regular opportunity to **read and meditate on God's holy Word**. That said, our Adult Christian Learning Committee has put together a very impressive curriculum for Lent. The full brochure is enclosed in this Chronicle. We are gathering each Tuesday evening in Lent and we have excellent people coming in to lead a range of discussions and classes. You can learn about the monks and nuns in the Episcopal Church from Sister Faith Margaret, about going on a real life Pilgrimage from Nancy Mead who has made numerous pilgrimages, about the Passion Narratives from Father Peter Powell who is a New Testament scholar and teacher, and about the rites of Holy Week from

me. Each of these programs is offered on Tuesday evening at 7:30 PM. On Thursdays we will continue to offer Bible Study at 10:00 AM; please feel free to join the group!

Lent leads into Holy Week and Easter. The schedule is below:

- March 20 is the Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday.
 - 8:00 AM – Said Eucharist of the Passion with Blessing of Palms
 - 10:00 AM – Sung Eucharist of the Passion with Blessing of Palms.
 - 10:00 AM – The Church School will meet in the Undercroft for a Seder.
 - 5:00 PM – Way of the Cross and Eucharist (in the Garden, weather permitting)
- March 24 is Maundy Thursday
 - 6:00 PM – Mediterranean Potluck Supper in the Parish Hall ¹
 - 7:30 PM – Sung Eucharist with Foot Washing and Stripping of the Altar.
- March 25 is Good Friday
 - 12:00 PM – Passion Liturgy with Communion from the Reserved Sacrament
- March 26 is Easter Eve
 - 4:00 PM – Youth Group & Confirmation Class make pizza
 - 5:30 PM – Pizzafest & Potluck Dinner in the Parish Hall ¹
 - 7:30 PM – The Great Vigil of Easter
 - 9:00 PM (ish) – Potluck Dessert & Champagne Reception in the Library
- March 27 is Easter Day
 - 9:00 AM – Sung Eucharist
 - 10:15 AM – Festive Coffee Hour & Easter Egg Hunt
 - 11:15 AM – Sung Eucharist

The liturgies of Holy Week are marvelous and have a fascinating history that is outside of the scope of a Chronicle. That said I have enclosed a very detailed look at these liturgies for those who might be interested in going far, far deeper. I am looking forward to living into these Holy Seasons with you all for the first time. I hope that you will be able to come to some (or all!) of our special services and events in Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. May you have a blessed and holy Lent, and when we get there a very happy Easter!

In Christ and with fondest affection,



The Reverend Matthew Hoxsie Mead, Rector

¹ These dinners are opportunities for food and fellowship for the entire parish and especially our singers, acolytes, clergy, and ushers who will be preparing for the 7:30 PM service, but it is not part of the liturgy in any way. Bring food to share or just show up!