

Tidings

The Newsletter of St. Paul's Anglican Church

February 2018



St. Paul's Anglican Church

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A Message from Fr. Toms

The Solemn Feast of Lent

This month we enter the holy season of Lent. As you think about the observation of Lent, remember the words of the heading in the Prayer Rook on Roman numeral 51: “OTHER DAYS OF FASTING, ON WHICH THE CHURCH REQUIRES SUCH A MEASURE OF ABSTINENCE AS IS MORE ESPECIALLY SUITED TO EXTRAORDINARY ACTS AND EXERCISES OF DEVOTION.” Throughout the church year, throughout our very lives, we are called upon to exercise abstinence. The Christian is to abstain from every appearance of evil. The Christian is called upon daily to deny himself, take up the cross and follow Christ. Lent is not the only time that we deny ourselves. The very mark of the disciple of Jesus Christ is that he denies himself, but Lent is the season when we engage in extraordinary acts and exercises of devotion. Certain kinds of fasting may be one of the disciplines that a person may choose to do during this season, but there are other practices as well. A person may give more time to prayer, more time to the study of Scripture, sacrificing time to those in need, or sacrificing some of our own money to give to the church or charitable causes.

Remember that one of the primary focuses of Lent is repentance. In his book, *Feasts and Fasts* (1848), Bishop John Henry Hobart writes,

The duties of humiliation and repentance are of constant obligation, and are the essential and uniform characteristics of the sincere Christian. But there is great propriety in setting apart a season for the more particular and solemn discharge of duties, which otherwise might be entirely forgotten, or only imperfectly and superficially discharged. When the mournful anniversary approaches of the sufferings and death of Christ, it is highly proper that the Church should lay aside the songs of praise and triumph which distinguished the preceding joyful festivals, and in humility and penitence prepare to sympathize in the sorrows of her Lord; it is highly proper that Christians should call to mind the sins which brought their Saviour to the cross, and express their deep sorrow for them by acts of humiliation and self-denial. The solemn and devout exercises of this holy season tend also to strengthen in the soul the sentiments of piety and virtue, and to prepare us for successfully encountering the temptations of the world. (143-4)

Take time during this season of Lent to examine your life in the light of God’s holy word. During Lent, we should repent of having allowed the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world to crowd out the word of God from our lives. As we deny ourselves various things for the sake of our Lenten observance, let us be reminded of all the other things in life that we may need to give up in order that the word be not choked and bear no fruit in us. Setting a time each day to think of the ways in which we have failed, and the areas of life in

which we need to grow, is a helpful practice during the season of Lent. Let these meditations bring you to the place of repentance and renewed commitment to Jesus Christ.

Some people look upon Lent as such a sad time or year. While it is true that repentance brings a measure of sorrow, the sorrow is tempered by the good news of the forgiveness of sin and the cleansing of body and soul through the sacrifice of Christ. After the season of self-examination and repentance, you will experience the liberating joy on Easter Day when you realize that Christ has cleansed you from sin and given you the power to live a new life in union with Him.

A Prayer for Lent by the Rev. James Skinner (1852)

0 most gracious God, the Fountain of all mercy and blessing, Who desirest not the death of a sinner, nor despisest the tears of the penitent, favourably receive our prayers, and effectually move my heart to a deep and true contrition; that, being pardoned the evils which I have presumed to commit, I may be delivered from the sorrows I have deserved to suffer. 0 Heavenly Father! Thou hast now, once again, called me to lighten the weight of my corrupt body, which presses down my soul, by the long and solemn abstinence of forty days; grant me grace and strength, conscientiously, to observe this wholesome discipline prescribed by Thy Church, and with due mortification of my flesh so to quicken my spirit by frequent devotions, that all my passions and appetites may be buried in the grave of Jesus, and all my affections be prepared to rise with Him at Easter. Meantime, so feed me, Blessed Father, with Thy heavenly Word, that I may devote the remainder of my days to a more perfect renunciation of my corrupt will, and a more constant attendance on Thy glorious promises: through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Who with Thee and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Important Events This Month

Women's Bible Study (Tuesday Evenings at 7:00 P.M.)

The Women's Bible Study is becoming one of the strongest activities of our church. At the present time, the ladies are studying *Resurrection*, by Kristie Berglund. The Women's Bible Study is not only a time of learning the Scriptures, but a means of enriching the fellowship of our church and sharing our prayer concerns. Come be a part of this growing ministry of our church.

St. Paul's Celebrates Its 15th Anniversary

On February 15, 2003, Bishop of Royal U. Grote, of blessed memory, organized our congregation as a member of the Reformed Episcopal Church. God has blessed us tremendously in the past 15 years, and we are more excited than ever concerning our prospects for the future and how God is going to use this body in the years ahead. St. Paul's has touched the lives of so many people, not only in our own local congregation, but literally, around the world. God has blessed us to be a part of growing our seminary, Cranmer Theological House, in Dallas and Houston. We have had a part in planting churches in Croatia, Germany, and other parts of the world. Let us give God glory and thanks for bringing the members of this congregation to this place and this time, and pray that he might continue to use us to have a larger share in spreading His kingdom around the world. We will celebrate our anniversary this year by making it a part of the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 13.

The Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (February 13, 6:30 P.M.)

Since the time our congregation was formed, our church has observed the annual tradition of having a Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, observed by many Anglican churches. This year, we will modify the usual menu by adding chicken and waffles. Come join us for this time of fellowship and food just before we enter the penitential season of Lent.

Making Ashes for Ash Wednesday (February 13, immediately following the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper)

Each year at the conclusion of the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, we have a service where we burn last year's palm branches to be used for the ashes on Ash Wednesday. If you want to have your branches included, please bring them on Sunday,

February 11, or the night of the pancake supper. This little service is a wonderful way to start preparing your heart for Ash Wednesday.

Ash Wednesday Service (February 14, 7:00 P.M.)

The imposition of ashes will take place during a service of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday. Explaining the origins of the term “Ash Wednesday”, Bishop John Henry Hobart (1848) wrote, “This name is derived from the custom that prevailed in the primitive Church, for penitents at this time to express their humiliation, by lying in sackcloth and ashes. By the coarseness of the sackcloth, they ranked themselves among the meanest and lowest condition of men. By ashes, and sometimes earth, cast upon their head, they made themselves lower than the lowest of the creatures of God, and put themselves in mind of their mortality, which would reduce them to dust and ashes.” This ceremony is always one of the most beautiful and moving services of the year. Please come be a part of this service that will prepare you spiritually to begin a proper observation of the Lenten season.

A Quick Look at This Month's Calendar

Feb. 6, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

Feb. 11—Celebration of St. Paul's 15th Anniversary

Feb. 13, 6:30 P.M.—Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Feb. 14, 7:00 P.M.—Ash Wednesday Service

Feb. 20, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

Feb. 27, 7:00 P.M.—Women's Bible Study

Happy Birthday!

Feb. 2—Scot Hixon

Feb. 13—Benjamin Velasquez

Around the Parish

