



THE BEACON

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

February, 2010

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Every Sunday

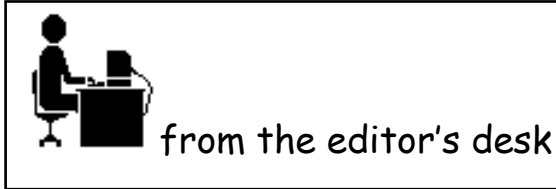
8:00a Holy Eucharist
9:15a Church School
9:30a Service w/ Eucharist
and music

Father Bill's Message

The other day I was flipping through Albert Camus' book, *The Fall*, and came upon the place where Camus has his hero, Jean-Baptiste Calmence, state: "Do you know that in my little village, during a punitive operation, a German officer (during the war) courteously asked an old woman to please choose which of her two sons would be shot as a hostage? Choose!—can you imagine that? That one? No, this one!" Can any of you imagine what it must have been like for the old woman? She'd been told that she couldn't save both. Her choice was an either-or. What a crisis of love she must have encountered."

As we approach the Season of Lent, I'd like you to ponder the fact that God had a similar problem. Theologians and Christian writers throughout the years have all commented that God couldn't save Jesus from the cross if God were to save the world. God couldn't do both. It was another either-or issue. Either Jesus had to die or the world had to die. And Jesus through his communion with the Father knew this and willingly marched toward Calvary where the nails of human violence and hatred attached him to the cross. This was the choice made and the reason that people of faith give God thanks and praise.

Fr. Bill



Happy New Year! It seems strange to be wishing you this in February, but the January *Beacon* was composed before Christmas. Seems like a long time ago. Sharyn and I celebrated Christmas three – actually –four times. We spent part of Christmas Eve in Holliston with the family of a woman Sharyn works with, then we came to St. Stephen's for the evening service.

Christmas morning we left for Millbrook, NY, to celebrate the holidays with our daughter Dawn, her husband Nick and his family.

Next, Sharyn and I spent a weekend early in January in Tallahassee with family. We left Massachusetts in 20-degree weather only to find Tallahassee, and indeed most all of Florida, shivering in the same temperatures. Unlike New England, people were unprepared for cold like this. Every newscast was full stories of winter calamities: pipes freezing, homeless people seeking shelter and the lack of adequate facilities to house them, and most of all, stories of citrus farmers struggling to keep their crops from freezing.

When we left four days later, we left Tallahassee still in the grips of the weather. In fact, it was colder in Tallahassee than in Boston!

So we're into the second month of 2010. The weather—as New England weather will—teases us with sunny, relatively warm days, only to bring us crashing down to the cold, hard reality that winter is not yet over with numbing temperatures that barely reach into the teens. Poet T.S Eliot writes that "April is the cruelest month." Bet he never spent a February in New England.

But February can be a time of somber reflection. Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday mark the beginning of Lent. We are asked to spend time thinking about the last days of our Lord's life and what that can mean to us 2000 years later. Churches, including St. Stephen's, prepare special Lenten programs to help us in this time of preparation.

Somehow or other, I think that this mostly cold weather can be an appropriate time to think about our Christian lives and how we might be better able to lead the kind of life Christ wants us to lead.

Peace

frp



Announcing

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Monday, February 15, at 7:00pm. All vestry meetings are open to the entire parish. Parishioners wishing to include items on the agenda are asked to contact one of the wardens or the rector no later than two (2) weeks before the meeting. Vestry meeting agendas and minutes will be regularly posted on the bulletin board between Fay Hall and the narthex.

- ★ **A Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** will be held on **Tuesday evening, February 16th**, in order for us to eat "our fats" before the start of the Season of Lent the next day (Ash Wednesday). This year we even have two parish groups who would like to host (the Youth Group and the Men's Group). Which one will it be, or will they join forces? Stay tuned for the answer!!
- ★ **Ash Wednesday is February 17th**. We'll have special services with the distribution of ashes at **12 Noon and 7:30 PM**, with a children's gathering at 4:30 PM to bury the alleluias.

kidshealth.org/teen/index.jsp?tracking=THom;
http://kidshealth.org/parent/

- ★ If you wish to **donate to ERD's Haiti Fund**, visit www.er-d.org or call 1-800-334-7626, ext. 5129. Gifts can be mailed to Episcopal Relief and Development, P.O. Box 7058, Merrifield, VA 22116-7058. Please put "Haiti Fund" in the memo line of all checks.
- ★ Our new adopted soldier is *Ana Flores*, a Chaplain's Assistant in Afghanistan. She wants to share any items she receives with her team in order to boost moral. To start, we are asking for basic personal care items such as deodorant, soap, toothpaste, brushes, Axe is a popular fragrance for the men; pony tail elastics and barrettes for women; socks, stationary, razors, and shaving cream for everyone. There is a more complete list of items that the troops would appreciate on the Mission and Outreach/Peace and Justice table in Fay Hall. Any help you can give will be very much appreciated by our troops.

Youth Group Yard Sale Coming This Spring!

Spring cleaning season is just around the corner! As you sort, organize, and clear out your unneeded treasures, keep the Youth Group Yard Sale in mind. We would love to take your treasures and recycle them to those who want or need them. Watch for more details on date and time. What could be better, lighten your load, save the planet, and support the Youth Group!

Thanks for your support!
The Youth of St. Stephen's

Prayerful Notes

My dental hygienist recently relayed a cute story about her 3-year-old daughter. Kirsten has been taking ballet classes for about a year now. (They start them young these days.) Recently her class was canceled, due to a snow storm. The teacher called to say they would be having a make-up class on Saturday morning. Mom asked Kirsten if she wanted to go to the make-up class and she said yes. Saturday morning came and Kirsten was really excited! Mom was pleased to see her so enthusiastic over her class. Upon arrival however, her mood changed dramatically. As she lined up with the other girls, she had a look of confusion and disappointment on her little face. When her mother asked what was wrong, she exclaimed "Mommy, where's all the make-up?"

This humorous little story brought to mind a recent Gospel reading. It was the story of when Jesus arrived at the temple and was horrified to see it had been turned into a market place. In a rare display of anger, he overturns the tables and shouts "How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!" *John 2: 16b*. The Jews challenge him to perform a miraculous sign to prove on what authority he speaks. Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in 3 days!" *John 2: 19*. The Jews took this literally, assuming that he meant the building. They had no more clue about what he meant, than 3 year old Kirsten did about her make-up class.

We know he was speaking of his own body, the place where God dwells. After his death and resurrection three days later, they saw with new clarity, the true meaning of his words.

God also dwells within each of us. In *1Corin. 6 : 19*, we read: "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, who you have received from God and that you are not your own?"

I hear this as a spiritual message on self-care, which seems rather timely, as we enter this holy season of Lent. Lent is a time of self-

examination and repentance, of looking within and listening closer to God's direction for our lives.

In our faith tradition, many of us "give up" something for Lent, typically a favorite food. While not a huge sacrifice, for me it serves as a reminder of Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

As I reflect back on the things that I have "given up" for Lent, through the years, none of them were particularly healthy foods that were beneficial to my well being.

If we truly see our bodies as the dwelling place of God, self-care is essential to our spiritual life. Eating right, getting proper rest, exercise and spending time in prayer are part of a holy regimen. This is not an easy thing to do in our fast-paced society. We are human and we will all fall short but perhaps Lent is a time to reflect on what areas we are most in need of working and take positive steps in that direction.

Wishing you a blessed Lent.

Blessings Always,

Phyl Endicott

The following are courtesy of the Christ Church *LINK* in Pittsburgh, PA.

"The best vitamin for a Christian is B1"

"Under same management for over 2000 years"

"Life has many choices, Eternity has two. What's yours?"

"Prevent truth decay. Brush up on your Bible"

"It's hard to stumble when you're down on your knees."

"Forbidden fruit creates many jams."

"Christians, keep the faith...But not from others!"

"Satan subtracts and divides. God adds and multiplies."

"If you do not want to reap the fruits of sin, stay out of the Devil's orchard."

"Don't let the littleness in others bring out the littleness in you."

A Prayer for the World

By Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations. Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.

Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows. Let the warmth of the sun heal us whenever we are broken. Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly. So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color.

Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness. So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors. And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors.

Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty. And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven. Amen