

The Epistle

March 2013

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN! THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED!

We are now in the closing weeks of living out the gift of Lent. The colors remain subdued; petitions are being added to the Cross that adorns the front of our worship. We are soon preparing to walk those final steps with Jesus.

Last Sunday's gospel lesson reminded us that God is looking out across the horizon for the prodigal son and daughter that lives within each of us. God anxiously awaits a glimpse of our leaning heart, ready with a banquet to welcome us home. Lent reminds us of the lonely places that remain hungry for evidence of God's presence, healing and peace. Lent gives us the courage to examine whether or not we believe that God is possibly bigger than our own stories of hurt and pain.

Holy Week is the Church's invitation to take our lives and lay

them at the foot of the Cross. Palm Sunday reminds us that on this journey of faith we truly live between the tensions of "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" – and – "Crucify Him, Crucify Him!" A Tenebrae service on Tuesday recalls the prophetic promise that Jerusalem will be restored as God intended and that the Light of Christ can not be extinguished. Wednesday night will be a time of quiet reflection and prayer, letting organ music and the words of poets and sages soothe our wearied hearts. Maundy Thursday assures us that no matter what or how we call upon Jesus, he both feeds us and kneels and washes our feet. Good Friday beckons us to feel and understand that all that will ever seek to destroy us has been put to death. Holy Saturday calls us to wonder what kind of Love seeks out the lost and opens wide the prison gates. The triumph of the Vigil of

Easter and Easter Sunday says that death has been defeated and every tear will be wiped dry, every burden lifted, and every sorrow turned to joy.

Holy Week and Easter are a stunning mosaic of the Christian faith. Participation in Holy Week shapes us. Liturgy acts like grains of sand making the rough places smooth and straightening the crooked paths. Take in the sights and smells. Come feast at the table. Simply come and let the Liturgy do her work in you.

Faithfully,

Lynell+

The Rev. Canon Lynell Walker
Priest-in-Charge

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The results are in! The results of the General Ordination Exams (GOEs) came in and I did very well. I am pleased that I even passed moral theology and ethics, an area in which I have not had any formal church classes! The Bishop commented at the Congregational Leadership meetings at Trinity Cathedral that he was pleased with my performance on the GOEs. The next step in the process is going before the Standing Committee and Commission on Ministry on April 18th & 19th to see if they will recommend me for ordination to the transitional diaconate.

I have been enjoying my time at St. Matthew's and am thankful for all of your support for both my ministry and for the ministries of St. Matthew's. This Lent I have been facilitating a Tuesday evening study group using a program from Church Divinity School of the Pacific "Elemental Theology: Our Entangled Nature". The program asks all of us to look beyond a human centered reading of scriptures and our faith to one that embraces all of God's creation. It includes short video presentations and a set of discussion questions. We are having a wonderful and lively dis-

cussion and I look forward to bringing the program to St. Paul's when I return.

Speaking of returning to St. Paul's... my last Sunday as St. Matthews will be April 14th and I will return to St. Paul's on Sunday April 21st and Andrea has already promise (or is it warned me?) that I will be scheduled to serve that day. While I am looking forward to returning to Sunday Worship at St. Paul's, my hope is that I will be able to find opportunities for both congregations to work together.

GOOD FRIDAY OFFERING

Since 1922, Episcopalians have supported the ministries of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East through the Good Friday Offering. Through the work of the Episcopal dioceses in the Middle East, Christians maintain a peace-making and stabilizing presence in the region, serving their neighbors regardless of faith background. St. Paul's will continue the tradition started in 1922 again this year and send all donations received on Good Friday to the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East.



Holy Week – the best retreat ever.

Holy Week, of all the weeks in the Church year, offers the richest opportunity for Education and Spiritual Growth. These ancient services, especially Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, were designed to fill deep spiritual needs. From the point of view of Education and Spiritual Growth, Holy Week is the most popular retreat ever offered, with a format tested over two millenia. Its free! Don't miss it.

Liturgy is experiential education. For a Christian community that believed but mostly could not read, Holy Week grounded Christians in the scriptural stories of Christ's death and resurrection. For a Christian community that longed for deeper experience of Christ, and sought it in pilgrimage, they offered a rich emotional journey that mirrored Christ's passage from death to life. These interconnected services are work, they require emotional commitment, spiritual courage, and time. But a deeper experience of Christ's passion and death means a deeper experience of his resurrection.

Bible Challenge Meet Up

We made it through Leviticus! The Bible Challenge Meet Up celebrated an endurance feat Saturday March 2. Reported toughest days of reading included the ordeal of priestly ordination (think blood-lots of

blood); and mind numbing repetition at the end of Exodus (God says it, then Moses says it again, chapter after chapter). But thoughtful reports on the best moments included some of the tough material. One reader said "God loves color!" after absorbing the details of the Tent of Meeting, the traveling temple of God., made of red, purple, blue and gold. Another reader loved Leviticus for the importance of holiness, the acts of reverence, and the sense of the immediate presence of God.

We'll continue to meet, usually on first and third Saturdays. Our format will be Best and Worst, the passages that bring you close to God, and the passages that make you wonder why? WHAT? How? As we've found, the best can shed light on the worst, and vice versa.

Is it too late to start? We're all seeing the importance of reading the Bible as a whole. No, its not too late to start, if you are willing to devote some effort to catching up, especially in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy means "second law," meaning a second take on Exodus Leviticus and Numbers, so you could start there and catch up later.

Ain't Got Rhythm? Taiko

Drumming is a Blast. Simple drumming patterns turn into a whole body dance. I was a

skeptic, but even I could keep the beat most of the time, and drumming was incredibly energizing and fun. I brought two friends who otherwise probably would not have walked in the door of St. Paul's – and they loved it. Grandparents, if you're a little daring, this could be a fun outing with a grandchild. Sharon Kennedy brought us Taiko drumming after attending her grandchild's recitals and thinking "I want to do that!" It really is fun.

Centering Prayer

Centering Prayer is a form of silent meditation grounded in the Christian monastic tradition. Sacramento area Centering Prayer Groups offer a free quiet afternoon at beautiful Mercy Center Auburn every month on the 2nd Sunday. If you arrive at 1:30 you'll receive a brief half hour introduction to the practice, followed by 2 twenty minute sits, and a period of reflective sharing. You'll be plugged into a community that has weekly meetings at St. Michael's Carmichael, St. Francis, and other area locations. The St. Michael's group has an outreach meditation ministry to Folsom Prison. The Centering Prayer Community also offers daylong retreats at Mercy Center, and 4 to 10 day retreats at locations throughout the US.



ALLELUIA ! - NOT NOW!!!

What do you mean, "Alleluia! - Not Now?"

Alleluia is an expression of praise, joy, exaltation, inexpressible delight, and wonder at what God means to me, what God has done for me, how God treats me; so what do you mean, "No Alleluias ??????"

Tis true: Alleluia is a fun word to say, since it is the one word that applies ONLY to God; it is the one expression that is used to let God know how important He is, how significant He is, the special role that He plays in our lives. We should shout "Alleluia!" to God every day of our lives. He deserves no less.

But.....the Alleluias! disappear from the liturgy for a period of 40 days around this time of the year; the time of the year the Church observes the season of Lent. You don't hear the word at all during this penitential season, not even one time. So what's going on – if I am thrilled to let God know how I feel about Him, why does the word Alleluia! become silent

and unused for this time period? Should I stop praising God during Lent?

No, not at all. It is right to praise God 365 days of the year, and it is appropriate. But – the word Alleluia is removed from the liturgy and our lips for a very important reason. It is to remind us that this is no ordinary time of the year – something special should be happening during the 40 days of the Lenten season as we prepare for the joy of Easter.

It is a time to reflect, to think, to ponder, to wonder, to expect, to become introspective. It is a time of reminder. We reflect on our sins and how we have missed-the-mark. We think about God's great sacrifice in sending Jesus to remove our sin and shame. We ponder what the world would be like had Christ not come in human form. We wonder just how great God's love can be for us. We expect that God will renew us and will assist us to become more of the servant that He was in the person of Jesus. We become introspective

and let our lives become changed – because He lives, we can face tomorrow, because He lives all fear is gone, because I know who holds the future, and life is better just because He lives.

To help us accomplish this, we simply remove one word from our vocabulary: Alleluia. Not in our lives, not in our liturgy. So when we are ready to utter the word during Lent, we stop and are silent. We think, instead, about the season. We remember that this time of the year is indeed – different in many ways.

And keeping Alleluia away for a time, helps us to get ready to proclaim it joyfully, with great enthusiasm, when the word returns in our lives and the liturgy at the Easter Vigil. The victory is won, God has done it for us because of His love for us. We are joyous and share in His victory. Therefore: ALLELUIA!

TREASURER'S CORNER

Doug Clay, Treasurer

Being new to the position of Treasurer for St. Paul's, I must admit to being on a steep learning curve for all the intricacies of church finances. Before anything else, I want to thank John Paul Olafson, our outgoing Treasurer, for his work during the past several years of keeping the dollars straight. The help he has given me in to understand how this all works has been invaluable. "Thank you John Paul."

St Paul's budget for the 2013 year has been approved. In summary the finances of St. Paul's are anticipated to be:

Pledge Income	\$68500	
Total Income		\$99315
Administrative expenses	\$ 4525	
Building overhead	\$24000	
Diocese apportionment	\$11000	
Programs	\$ 4625	
Outreach	\$ 2750	
Payroll & Benefits	\$53392	
Total Expenses		\$100292
Difference		(\$ 977)

I would like to note that budget numbers are at best estimates. In planning the budget income has been estimated conservatively and expenses have been estimated to fully cover plans developed during our current long range planning process. The vestry and I remain committed to the best use of all the church assets under our care as well as growth of our parish ministry.

PARISH WORKDAY REMINDER

On Saturday March 16th we will gather and spend time readying our facilities for Holy Week and Easter. Most of our efforts will be concentrated on the exterior of the building, but there will be indoor projects, too. If you've not already signed up to help, you are still more than welcome to join us! The work will begin around 9AM, and we should conclude by 3PM. Come for all or part of the time as your schedule permits!

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS



At the March Vestry meeting, we prayerfully considered and discussed four proposed budgets for 2013. One was a "flat" budget which was essentially the same as last year's budget. The others ranged from a budget for growth to a "dream" budget if money were no object. The Vestry accepted the growth budget as presented by Treasurer Doug Clay. While the budget does carry a proposed deficit of \$977, we believe it supports the ob-

jectives and action plans developed as part of our long range planning.

The Vestry also approved utilizing a third-party vendor to process our payroll. This will ensure paychecks are issued timely, and all taxes and forms completed in compliance with current laws.

The Vestry approved Rik Rasmussen for ordination to the transitional deaconate in June. He must still meet with the Dioc-

esan Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee.

Chris Cacciatore received Vestry approval to become a Lay Eucharistic Minister.

The next Vestry meeting is Tuesday April 16th at 6:30PM at St. Paul's. Unless otherwise noted, Vestry meetings are open to all members.

Palm Sunday

"When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen..."

Luke 19:37

Easter Vigil Potluck Dinner

Our annual potluck dinner before the Great Vigil of Easter service will be at 6:00PM in the Parish Hall. Sign-up sheets will be on the communications table at the back of the church beginning March 17th. Please bring a dish to share. Everyone is welcome!

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday	Sunday March 24, 2013, 8:00AM and 10:00AM
Tenebrae Service	Tuesday March 26, 2013, 7:00PM
Meditations and Music	Wednesday March 27, 2013, 7:00PM
Maundy Thursday	Thursday March 28, 2013, 12:10PM and 7:00PM
Good Friday	Friday March 29, 2013, 12:10PM and 7:00PM
Easter Saturday	Saturday March 30, 2013, 8:00AM
East Vigil Potluck Dinner	Saturday March 30, 2013, 6:00PM
Easter Vigil	Saturday March 30, 2013, 8:00PM
Easter Sunday	Sunday March 31, 2013, 8:00AM and 10:00AM



EASTER FLOWER DONATIONS

Donations for Easter flowers may be made by completing this form and placing it with your donation in the offering plate at any service or mailing it to the church office. Donations received by Friday March 22, 2013 will be noted in the service bulletins at the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday services.

In thanksgiving for _____

In memory of _____

Donated by _____

Donation amount: _____



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OPEN MINDS**

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St. Paul's Vestry

Diane Richards, Senior Warden (2014)	Rik Rasmussen (2014)
Alex Larkey, Junior Warden (2014)	Leigh Stamets (2015)
Doug Clay, Treasurer (2015)	Daryl Reiber (2015)
Andrea Patten-Weerakoon, Clerk (2016)	Keith Askew (2016)

Clergy and Staff

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