



LENT 2023

THE CANTERBURY TALES

The Seasonal Newsletter of St. Thomas of Canterbury Episcopal Church

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Pictures left to right: The creche and nativity on Christmas Eve; a salty, taste test experiment during February's intergenerational sermon; Advent Wreath Workshop on the first Sunday of Advent; a visit from St. Nick during a Sunday service; a snow-covered St. Thomas on January 29th

FROM THE RECTOR

Returning Home

When I first moved to Milwaukee some 15 years ago, one of the first friends I made was Emily. We were both in our early 20's and became fast friends. She was in law school, and I was working 50-70 hour weeks at a local nonprofit. Still, somehow we managed to see each other at least twice a week if not more. Even as our lives changed over the years - new jobs, marriages, out of state moves and so on - we continued to stay close, always making time for a phone call or traveling to see each other.

Just a few years ago, when my world was turned upside down in a season of great loss and grief, I slowly fell out of contact with Emily. She would still call, leave voicemails, send emails, mail birthday and holiday cards, but I always struggled to respond. I didn't know how to function, yet alone be a friend, in this new terrain. Of course the feeling of shame only grew with every unreturned call. Finally, after a year of nearly no communication, I worked up enough courage to give Emily a call on her birthday. I was anxious about how she might respond, how I could explain my silence over the past year, how I could assure her that her friendship was still something I held tightly and cherished despite my inaction. It was the middle of the work day, and I expected the call to go directly to voicemail. Instead she picked up after just one ring, and playfully exclaimed, "it's about time! I've been waiting to hear your voice."

In a few weeks time we will enter the season of Lent. On Ash Wednesday we will hear the invitation to a Holy Lent, a penitential season of prayer, fasting, self-denial, repentance and study of scripture as we move deeper into the heart of our faith, the Paschal mystery which promises that our lives are found within the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. For many, Lent can leave a bitter taste in the mouth as our liturgies and practices speak unreservedly about our mortality, failings, limitations and sin. Lent isn't shy about naming the reality of our state or the state of the world. Still, even in the presence of such blatant honesty, I hear an invitation - an invitation to return home.

The Rt. Rev. Glenda Curry, Bishop of The Diocese of Alabama, once said that home is the place you go where they always have to let you in, but with God home is the place we go where God wants to let us in. God invites us to surrender all of shortcomings, secrets, mistakes, worries, shame, and anything else

that stands in the way of us knowing God's mercy, love and grace - which is to say anything that prevents us from returning home.

While I struggled to see and accept it at the time, each of my friend's biddings was an invitation to relationship, an invitation to receive love and return home. She didn't keep a log of my silence. She faithfully showed up again and again, because that is what love does. Love doesn't give up on us.

This Lent, as we hear the call to confession, as we take on or give up practices and habits, know that we do not do these things for the sake of penitence alone, but rather we receive them as an invitation from God to return home. I do not believe that God stands with a list in hand waiting for us to properly confess before extending mercy and forgiveness, but rather uses the tools of confession and repentance to bring us back into right relationship, joyfully declaring, like my friend, "I've been waiting to hear your voice!"

In what areas of your life have you wondered far from home? How might God be inviting you to return? Perhaps your response to these questions can serve as arrows to how you travel through Lent this year. If you don't know where to begin or feel utterly lost, rest in the grace that God, who is perfect love, never gives up on us. And I be happy to be a companion in your questioning and discernment.

grace and peace,

Melesa+

The Rev. Melesa McEwan Skoglund

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

In The Episcopal Church private confession is called reconciliation of a penitent (BCP 447). In response to the question who should use this rite, we commonly say, "all may, some should, none must." If you would like to discuss the rite more or schedule a time to for reconciliation, please contact me directly. Confession and anything shared will be held in confidence.

FORMATION

Lent 2023

Soup and Stations

Wednesday, March 1, 8, 22, 29, 6:30-8:00pm

The Stations of the Cross is an ancient practice that began as early Christian pilgrims made their way through Jerusalem to retrace and remember the final moments of Jesus' passion and death. Each Wednesday we will meet in the Parish Hall for a light soup dinner at 6:30pm and will then move to the sanctuary at 7:15pm to walk and pray with the stations of the cross using a simple liturgy.

We ask that you sign up in advance if possible via the link in the eNews or the sign up in the Gathering Space in the back of the church so that we can ensure we have enough soup. If you would like to host by bringing a soup to share, please talk with Mtr. Melesa.



Memento Mori: Remembering Your Death

Sundays, March 5-26, 9:15am-9:45am

Every year Lent begins the same way - with Ash Wednesday where we hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." This Lent you are invited to linger in those words in a weekly discussion on death and dying. Come for one session or stay for all four; the topics for each week are provided below.

March 5 | What Scripture says about death and dying

March 12 | What the Episcopal Funeral Rite says about death and dying

March 19 | Ordering your affairs

March 26 | Planning your funeral*

**Throughout the season of Lent funeral planning forms will be available in the narthex. No matter how far away it may be, thinking about your own funeral service now and making your wishes known can be a comfort to you and your family in all sorts of ways.*

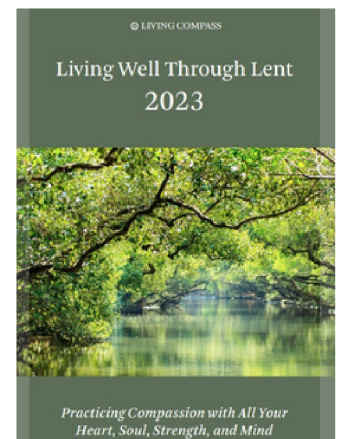


Lent Devotional

If you are looking for a way to walk through Lent with intention, we invite you to pick up a devotional booklet from Living Compass. Living Compass is a organization that, "Outfitting individuals, families, congregations, and organizations with tools and training for the journey toward wellness and wholeness." They offer a variety of materials for individuals and congregations, and this Lent's theme is Practicing Compassion With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind. From the devotional:

This devotional is intended to be used for daily personal reflection as we journey through Lent. We begin each Sunday with a reflection written by one of our guest writers. Every other day of the week begins with Scripture or a quote, followed by a reflection, and then "Making it Personal" questions, which offer an opportunity for you to reflect on the readings as they relate to your own life and spiritual journey.

The booklets will be available in the church office and at the ushers table in the church.



PREPARING FOR LENT & HOLY WEEK



Ash Wednesday, February 22

12:00pm Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

7:00pm Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes



Palm Sunday, April 2

8:00am Eucharist with Liturgy of the Palms

10:00am Eucharist with Liturgy of the Palms



Maundy Thursday, April 6

7:00pm Eucharist with Foot Washing & Stripping of Altar

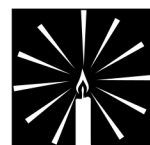


Good Friday, April 7

2:00pm Greendale Cross Walk starts at St. Thomas

3:00pm Ecumenical Service at St. Alphonsus

7:00pm Good Friday Liturgy



Easter Vigil, April 8

8:00pm Easter Vigil Liturgy with Lighting of the New Fire and Eucharist



Easter Sunday, April 2

8:00am Eucharist with Liturgy of the Palms

10:00am Eucharist with Liturgy of the Palms

Easter Egg Hunt to Follow

The above icons are from Paramentics, with the exception of the Easter icon from The Rev'd Sarah West at visiolectio.com

ABOUT THE TRIDUUM

Holy Week culminates in the final three days, known as the Holy Triduum. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are some of the most important days of the Church year. Together they are a three-day movement that is one extended liturgy that drives us into the very heart of the Paschal Mystery, which is to say the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus and the life we find therein.

The Triduum concludes with one of the most dramatic services of the Church, the Easter Vigil, that begins with the lighting of a new fire and Paschal candle that is processed into the church. At the Vigil we hear the full story of salvation and make the first Easter proclamation.

Easter Flowers

Every Easter the parish is decorated with flowers thanks to the generous donations of parishioners. If you would like to make a contribution to this year's flowers for Easter services, envelopes are available at the usher's table or you can give online through our website. If you would like your donation to be in memory or celebration of a person or event, please indicate so.

All donations must be submitted by Sunday, April 2nd, to be included in the bulletins.



Call All Easter Bunnies

Want to help us spread some Easter joy? We are looking for 2-3 households to help us prepare for our annual Easter Sunday egg hunt. The job includes stuffing the eggs prior to Easter Sunday, and helping hide the eggs on the morning of the hunt. If you are interested, please let Mtr. Melesa know!

OUTREACH

Diaper Drive

March 1-26

In March we will be collecting baby/toddler diapers and wipes for Milwaukee Diaper Mission. Milwaukee Diaper Mission partners with local social service agencies to provide a reliable source of basic essentials for the families they serve. Their partners include food pantries, home visiting agencies, mutual aid groups, and organizations that support families through pregnancy, birth, and postpartum. Items will be collected in the parish library.

Outreach Partners



February 2023

The February Outreach Partner is the Haiti Partnership, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee. For over 40 years the Diocese of Milwaukee has partnered with local leadership in Jeanette, Haiti to offer educational and health services.



March 2023

The March Outreach Partner is the Hospitality Center of Racine. The Hospitality Center, a ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee, provides food, shelter, and security for the underserved in Racine.



April 2023

The April Outreach Partner is the Clergy Discretionary Fund. According to the canons of the Episcopal Church, these funds are to be used for "such pious and charitable uses as the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall determine." Over the past year the discretionary fund has been used help individuals with rent or utility payments, to purchase food, to assist with preparations for job interviews, and to help fellow parishioners meet unexpected expenses.

To give to our monthly outreach partner, use an outreach giving envelop or write outreach in the memo line of your check.

Upcoming Dates

Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich Making

Monday, February 13 at 4:00pm

Monday, March 13 at 4:00pm

Monday, April 10 at 4:00pm

Each month we make 300 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to be distributed the following Saturday through The Gathering's weekend meal program in Milwaukee. All ages are invited to join in the sticky fun each month!

What is Diaper Need?

Diaper need is the lack of a sufficient supply of diapers to keep an infant or child clean, dry, and healthy.



1 in 3 families struggle to afford diapers on a regular basis.

Federal assistance programs (like SNAP and WIC) do not support families with diapering supplies.



- Babies who remain too long in a soiled diaper are exposed to potential health risks
- Most child care centers (even free and subsidized facilities) require parents to provide a day's supply of disposable diapers
- Many parents cannot go to work or school if they can't leave their babies at child care

Outreach by the Numbers

\$1,172 Collected for The Guest House in January

300 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches made each month to be distributed to those in need of a meal by The Gathering

NEWS & EVENTS

Episcopal Youth Collab

Sundays from 5-7pm, February 22, March 22, April 23

All students in middle and high school are invited to join Mtr. Melesa for the Episcopal Youth Collab! This is a monthly gathering of Episcopal youth across the Milwaukee area. Each gathering will include a pizza dinner and social activities. Our first meeting, on February 22, will be at St. Paul's Milwaukee where we will do some church spelunking!

Annual Meeting Results

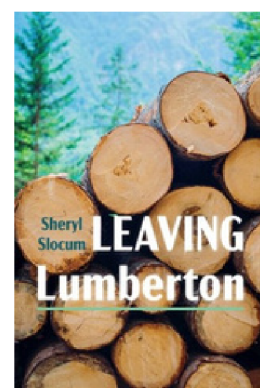
The Annual Parish Meeting was held on a snowy Sunday, January 29th. Eric DeGroot and Diane Piontek were elected as new members of the Vestry. Erika Stoving was elected for a third year as Senior Warden, and Kathie Beuscher was elected for a second year as Junior Warden. Kathie Beuscher, Todd Domenget, Margaret Done, and Sheryl Slocum were elected as 2023 Diocesan Convention Deputies.

Sheryl Slocum, Book of Poetry

Just this past December, parishioner Sheryl Slocum, had a book of poetry published titled, *Leaving Lumberton*. From the book's description:

Lumberton is a real town in an area historically denuded by clear-cut logging where the abused spirit of the land pervaded both place and people. The poems in this book explore various kinds of abuse and spiritual impoverishment as well as growth of awareness and healing. The journey from desolation toward wholeness proceeds in ordinary ways: waiting quietly like a bare field under a wide sky, noticing the budding lilac, or simply taking the next first step. We can leave our Lumbertons.

Congratulations, Sheryl! You can find the book on several online retailers including Amazon and Barnes and Nobel.



Remembering Pam Kasper

On Monday, January 16th, a memorial service was held for long-time parishioner, Pam Kasper. Pam was the faithful editor of the Canterbury Tales Parish Newsletter for many years, and we are grateful for the way her dedication held so much of our parish life together. May her soul and all the souls of the departed rest in peace.



DIOCESAN BEAT

Update on the Trialogue

The Episcopal dioceses of Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, and Milwaukee are exploring how reunification to one diocese may better equip us to be the church God is calling us to be in these times. This discussion began in the summer of 2021, and has been named *The Trialogue*. Members of the Trialogue task forces and steering committee gathered for the first time in person Saturday, January 14, in Stevens Point to hear a presentation on adaptive leadership and change by the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, bishop of the Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania and bishop provisional of the Diocese of Western New York, followed by a round-table discussion on their respective work so far and the challenges and opportunities ahead. You can read more about that meeting and stay in the loop on other Trialogue news by visiting www.episcopalwisconsin.info.

As the Trialogue moves forward, feedback and insight from parishes is needed. **On Sunday, February 19th, at 11:15am, you are invited to learn more about the trialogue discussion and progress to date, and share your hopes, concerns and questions.** A light lunch will be provided. Please email Mtr. Melesa to sign up or to get more information.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays

February 12	Mary O'Malley	April 1	John Cram
February 16	Bob Stewart	April 4	Mark Slyfield
February 16	Meghan Kluessendorf	April 5	Jan Lee Brzezinski
February 16	Rev. Melesa McEwan Skoglund	April 6	John O'Malley
February 25	Diane Piontek	April 7	Sheryl Slocum
February 28	Jerry Lent	April 10	Sharon Owen
February 29	Sue McKnight	April 12	Maggie Stoving
March 3	Jenny Bartholomew	April 16	Rich Richmond
March 5	Cheryl Carstens	April 16	Victoria Celsor
March 11	Tammy Knapton	April 18	William Zeman
March 22	Kat Worzalla	April 19	Jill Yoerin
March 23	Lisa Chmielewski	April 23	Clarence Totsky
March 29	Marie Brzezinski	April 25	Erika Stoving
March 29	Matt Done	April 27	Nancy Grimm
March 31	Joan Lamson	April 28	Virginia Mazur

Anniversaries

March 20	Jerry & Ruth Lent
March 31	Tom & Barb Labisch
April 10	Todd & Nikki Domenget
April 13	Brian & Mandy Klumb
April 18	Ron & Linda Thorson



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