



THE MESSENGER



Parish News of St. John's Episcopal Church, Saginaw, Michigan.

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Faith Matters – Lent

Each and every year, Lent, for all of its differences, can feel familiar. With its particular colors, feel, music and, of course the readings, we journey right alongside Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem and the fulfillment of his earthly ministry. No matter how many times I read or hear these readings, I am always impressed with just how different this 'fulfillment' is from what society had expected, especially in terms of who and what the Messiah is about. What makes the familiar truly extraordinary is what we bring into the story, for we are always at a different place in our life when we return to experience this Lenten journey with Jesus to Jerusalem.



I believe one can never run out of new things to discover about the readings for Lent that make the story of salvation become 'our story'; but I believe there is something more. Our lives help to make St. John's who we are today. While our parish has been serving our community for more than 158 years now, it is what we each offer now, rather than historically that helps to meet the needs of today and continues shape our story, and so we each have an important part to contribute. Within this story are certainly accounts of great joy as well as sorrow, celebrations as well as mourning, small and great triumphs and achievements as well as disappointments; but most of all, there are accounts of growth, challenges and pivotal moments.

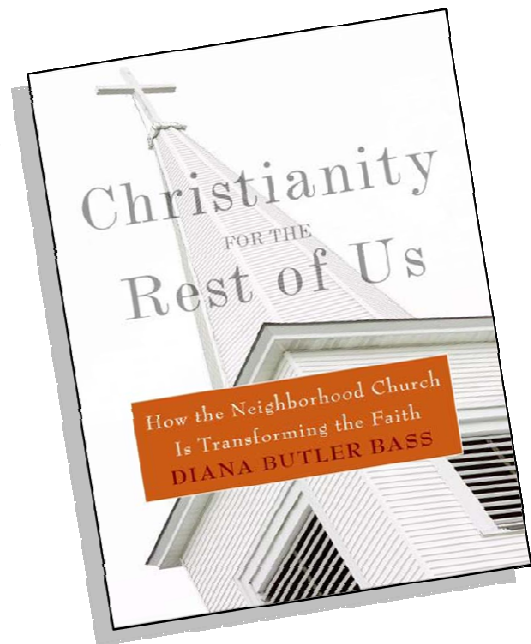
As we explored the idea of our own "transfigurative events" this past Sunday, pivotal moments happen in our own lives, perhaps not on a mountain top or next to the River Jordan, but they do happen for all of us. And with each pivotal moment in our lives, there is both a degree of danger and opportunity, of loss and newness. Certainly this is true for the pivotal moment of becoming a parent! Whether by birth or adoption, there is some danger and opportunity. Everything in your life will change as a result of that moment (at least it should). I found this to be true with the pivotal moment of marriage. I found this to be true with ordination. It is true with our Baptism as well. Everything changes. The danger is that what we have been and known of ourselves ends, and something new emerges. *What have those pivotal moments been for you? What have they meant for your life afterward?* I believe that the meaning of these pivotal moments, our own transfigurative events, is in recognizing that the moment or call or message – this *epiphany*, if you will, is just the beginning. Then comes the extraordinary part of our journey: to live into its implications. In these weeks in Lent, we'll journey with Jesus as he comes down from the mountain and lives into the meaning of the Transfiguration: his Passion. I wonder where this next pivotal moment will be leading *you* – throughout these next forty-some days and beyond. Jesus shows us that the way to truly live into the meaning of this pivotal moment is through what we share in community, by growing in our relationship with God and each other, as well as what we offer in terms of care and service. Lent is a perfect time to discover what this can mean.

Whether your discoveries include the Lenten readings for the first time, perhaps a new or different devotional for these forty days, a special class or group, outreach opportunities, or simply special worship and fellowship, our Lenten journey always calls us deeper into *community* and what we share together. Community means many things to many people, but fundamentally, it is what we bring and share *together*, whether in worship, ministry, or fellowship. To me, community is purposely living our faith *communally*, clearly involving all of us at as many levels as possible, rather than trying to see or even live through 'someone else'. Our sense of community is only as strong as what we, ourselves put into it and Lent is an opportunity to reconnect or establish for the first time the means to praise, learn, share, grow and respond in an intentional way. This Lent, come rediscover what the journey is about both for you personally as well as a community. May you have a truly blessed and Holy Lent!

Looking for a Good Read?

Try Christianity for the Rest of Us. For decades the accepted wisdom has been that America's mainline Protestant churches are in decline, eclipsed by evangelical mega-churches. Church and religion expert Diana Butler Bass wondered if this was true, and this book is the result of her extensive, three-year study of centrist and progressive churches across the country. Her surprising findings reveal just the opposite—that many of the churches are flourishing, and they are doing so without resorting to mimicking the mega-churches' evangelical style.

Christianity for the Rest of Us describes this phenomenon and offers a how-to approach for Protestants who are eager to remain faithful to their tradition while becoming a vital spiritual community.



What to know more? St. John's has obtained special reserved seating at Horizons Conference Center to hear the author speak on April 17th & 18th. If you would like participate please sign up in the Community Room or call the church office at 793-9575.

Saginaw Spirit Hockey!



So when was the last time the local economy did something for you?

March 12, 2009 the Saginaw Spirit is hosting "Faith Night" and offering a terrific group rate for churches. You and your family can enjoy an evening right here in Saginaw, filled with all the thrill and excitement of professional sporting events at a fraction of the cost. If you would like to join your fellow parishioners for a Spirit Hockey Game please:

1. Sign up on the Parish Life board or contact Amy Simons (amy@stjohns-saginaw.org).
2. Have ticket money to Amy Simons (\$8.50 each) by Sunday March 8th.
3. Meet at St. John's ready to carpool and wearing team colors (Red, White, and Blue) by 6:15pm on Thursday the 12th.



Happy Birthday

- 1 Sharon Reardon
- 3 Christopher Oravitz
- 6 Joel Butterfield
- 7 Nicholas Jacqmain
- 8 Janet Cosenza
- 8 Beth Garza
- 9 Keith Birdsall
- 11 Erin Reardon
- 12 Elizabeth Braun
- 12 Bill Scharffe
- 12 Jerry Young
- 13 Emily Morris
- 14 Sue Dikeman
- 14 Jim Shannon
- 16 Sage Morley
- 18 Vanessa Daugherty
- 19 Marcella Marcet
- 19 Ashley Strahm
- 20 Jordan Hernandez

- 22 Cynthia Lange
- 22 William, Jr. Vlassis
- 24 Vera Hoganson
- 24 Ron Swarhout
- 24 Brett Yeager
- 26 Nancy Bovill
- 28 Valerie Harrell
- 28 Matthew Hoffman

Thank You

A huge thank you to Marcia Hoffman and her crew for putting together such a wonderful Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper!

Thank you Bill Fredrick, Sue Brigham, and Linda Buzon for helping assemble the February Messenger. We couldn't do it without you!

Thank you Paul Schaub and Herb Spence for showing up early to unlock the church on the Sundays while Darren was on vacation.

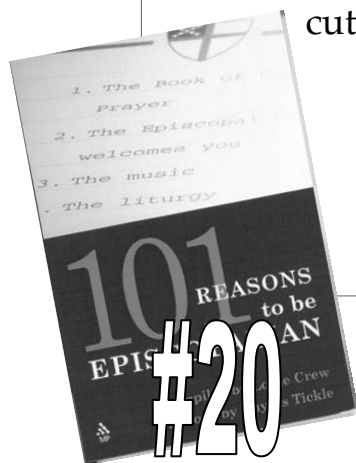
Is there someone in our parish who has gone above and beyond? If you would like to offer thanks, please call the office at 793-9575.

Good Samaritans:

Feb 22 - Mar 7	Susan Daugherty	249-1989
Mar 8 - Mar 21	Janis Rump	792-7127
Mar 22 - Apr 4	Jim & Marsha Braun	793-5015
		793-5551

Where the road to Easter is never a short cut, but you always get there.

*The Rev. Dr. Barbara T. Cheney
Diocese of Connecticut*



Cf. 101 Reasons to be Episcopalian, compiled by Louie Crew. © 2003 by Louie Crew/Morehouse Publishing. ISBN 0-8192-1925-8 e Publishing.

10th Annual Operation Hope Tote

St. John's is teaming up with the City Rescue Mission of Saginaw for "Operation Hope Tote", a fun and simple way we can help serve people in critical need right in our own community.



Here's how it works:

1. Pick up a Hope Tote Kit from the Community Room at St. John's. It's a white envelope with purple type.
2. In side you will find a letter with a more detailed description of the project and a small purple Hope Tote.
3. Fill the Hope Tote with a variety personal care items (listed in the kit).
4. Return the Hope Tote to St. John's by Sunday April 5th.



The Saginaw Rescue Mission will pass the bags out to some of our city's neediest men, women and children on Easter. As explained in their letter included in each kit, the Mission receives no government funding. What a great way to recognize the upcoming season of Lent in our community!

Hope Chests

Our Presiding Bishop, Katherine Jefferts Schori, has designated the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) Sunday. Gifts that day will go to the MDG Inspiration Fund, which is focused toward reducing disease and providing basic health care. In addition, we have **Hope Chests**. These boxes, located in the Community Room are something that you can take home, and use as a Lenten practice as well, contributing money to the chest as part of your family or personal devotions. This money too, goes to the ERD for the Inspiration Fund.

Want more information? Check out the following websites:

www.er-d.org/mdg

www.episcopalchurch.org/

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/



ST. JOHN'S IS A CHURCH CALLED TO CARE, SHARE, WORSHIP, CELEBRATE AND LOVE.

St. John's Stories:

In January, we welcomed new vestry members Bill Frederick, Janet Cosenza, and Burris Smith, and set free Paul Schaub, Bill Vlassis, and Kim Burau. Initially, I planned on asking the outgoing vestry members what they would do with their newfound tons of free time. And then I pictured them all chasing me with their vestry notebooks and smacking me silly.

So instead, after prolonged thought, I decided to ask people at random what activity they are in or have been in that they would describe as their favorite. Most people were quick in answering. Kathie Smith said she enjoyed Altar Guild the most, having the chance to spend time in the church when it's quiet, preparing for the Eucharist, and some alone time with God. Keith Birdsall enjoys being a lector, utilizing his years of teaching and knack of reading aloud. Bill Frederick, who quite likely has done just about everything except Altar Guild and Daughters of the King, feels all of his roles in the church are just continuing his formation as a Christian.



Melanie Hollman finds enjoyment in the social events, the receptions and luncheons; but also the small groups and book studies. They give her a chance to meet and get to know people she might not otherwise get to know. Ellen Redfield named the choir "hands down." It's "a joyful outlet," and a "celebration of God and our beautiful liturgy. Kevin Simons is a great teacher of music and liturgy." For myself, I am torn. I love the choir, the music we sing, the support and closeness we give each other, and LOVE when Kevin sings

soprano just because he knows I love it. However, serving at the altar, bringing the chalice to those partaking in Communion is closest to my soul. I may be having a bad day, health-wise, or just not feeling terribly "Christian" at the moment but that all disappears when I offer the chalice to the little ones trying to dip their wafer to the bottom of the chalice, or to someone I know who is going through a rough time. All the little trials disappear. So for you. Think about your favorite church activity. If you'd like to share it, give me a call, or catch me at a service. I'd love to hear your story.



Karen Parr

ST. JOHN'S IS A CHURCH CALLED TO CARE, SHARE, WORSHIP, CELEBRATE AND LOVE.

NOW is the Time! With only 13% left to go, we really need to hear from YOU!!

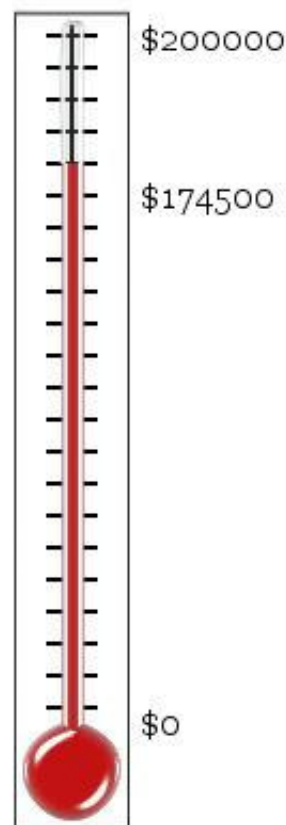
It's true! Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our members who have already pledged, we are now 87% towards this year's stewardship goal. As you are aware, now more than ever, every gift and pledge counts and is needed to not only meet our goals but to continue the ministry we share here at St. John's. Did you know that people have counted on the services and ministry offered ever since our beloved building was constructed in 1883; and on the community of St. John's since it was established in 1851—Thant's 158 years! Now St. John's needs to count on you! You and the gifts of time, talent and treasure truly make a difference!

Did you know that with the 2009 budget, we will be halfway to our goal of eliminating our recurring deficit? It's true and because of your commitment, we can make this happen! The staff, vestry and congregation are all working together to stretch our resources. More volunteers are stepping up and filling in where paid staff has functioned in the past. This faithful stewardship is allowing us to continue to do God's work within the parish and in the community at large.

Your pledge is important and it's not too late to help us close the remaining gap! In order for the budget to work, the vestry needs the clearest picture possible of the funds that are available. We can only do this through the commitment of every member of the parish to continue to share their time, talents and treasure. This past year, your own commitment helped make a difference, financially as well as in our fellowship, and the care, service and programs we offer. We now ask you to consider once more how you can help make a difference. Our congregation is smaller than it once was, so each member is that much more important. For many of us, these are uncertain times. Circumstances change, and when necessary, your pledge can be changed as well. If you have questions or concerns, please call our rector, Darren Elin, at 793-9575, or talk to any member of the vestry.

You count on St. John's. Can St. John's count on you?

Ellen Redfield and Darren Elin+



Parish Potluck

No plans for lunch? Eat with us!

Everyone is welcome to join us March 1st following the 10:30 service for a parish potluck lunch.

If your last name starts with A-L please bring a hot side or salad. If your last name starts M-Z share one of your favorite desserts!



ST. JOHN'S IS A CHURCH CALLED TO CARE, SHARE, WORSHIP, CELEBRATE AND LOVE.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

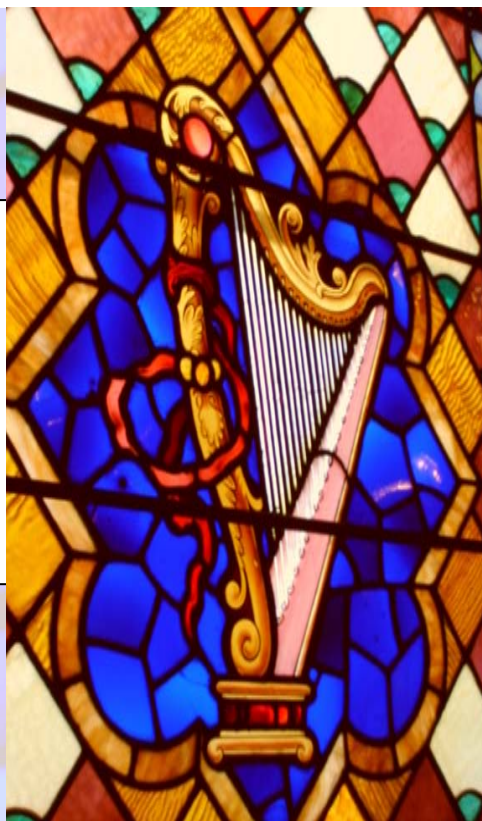
Invites you to join us for...

Choral Evensong

March 1, 2009 at 4:00pm

... with reception following.

The music for the service will include the Lent Prose as sung at King's College in England as well as the Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis in D of Herbert Brewer. Following the service is a reception at the church.



InnoVO

Contemplative Meditative Innovative

Sunday, March 15th at 4:00pm

Followed by a simple supper and fellowship

Many have found this calm and meditative service to provide rest and balance before the start of a busy week. Please join us for this month's InnoVO service and discover for yourself how a simple and open invitation to worship can powerfully renew our relationship with God, and fellowship with each other.

*InnoVO services are on the third Sunday of each month, if you would like to be a part of music, simple suppers, or set-up crew contact **Kevin Simons** at 989-793-9575.

ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
123 N. MICHIGAN AVENUE, SAGINAW, MI 48602-4235

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Change Service Requested



How will you observe the season of Lent?

<i>Attend an Event or Special Service?</i>	March 1	Parish Potluck Choral Evensong
	March 15	Innovo Service w/ Simple Supper
	March 27	Lenten Fish Supper
	April 9	Maundy Thursday Service Agape Meal
	April 10	Good Friday Service
	April 11	The Great Vigil of Easter
<i>Participate in a Special Project?</i>	Saginaw Rescue Mission – Hope Totes Episcopal Relief & Development Boxes	
<i>Participate in a Group Study?</i>	Lenten Book Study Series: <i>Christianity for the Rest of Us.</i>	