



THE MESSENGER



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

Volume 29, Issue 3

March 2011

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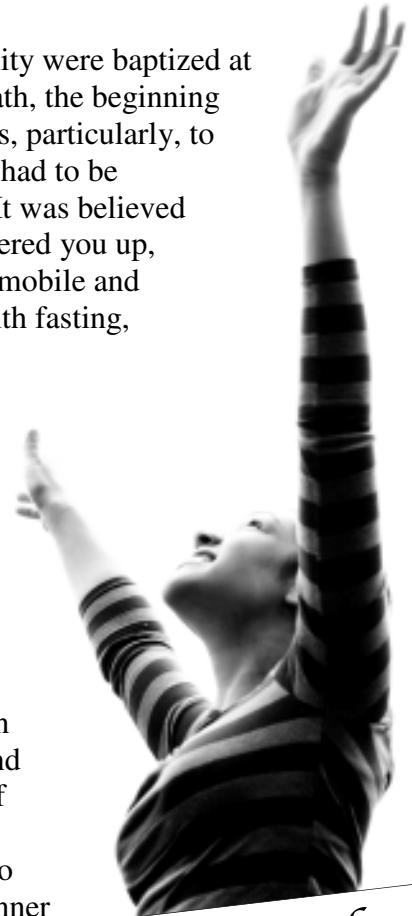
The Archbishop of Canterbury Explains the Purpose of Lent

"In the earliest centuries of the Church, newcomers to the Christian community were baptized at Easter. It seemed to be the obvious time to do it – Easter, the conquest of death, the beginning of new life – and so it was that it came to be the common practice for bishops, particularly, to baptize and anoint new believers at that great feast. But of course, believers had to be prepared for this event, prepared by instruction, and prayer, and self-denial. It was believed that self-denial; fasting and extra prayer was something that, as it were, limbered you up, rather like doing exercises for some great race. It made you more spiritually mobile and agile. And so that period of preparation for baptism came to be associated with fasting, with prayer and with self-denial.

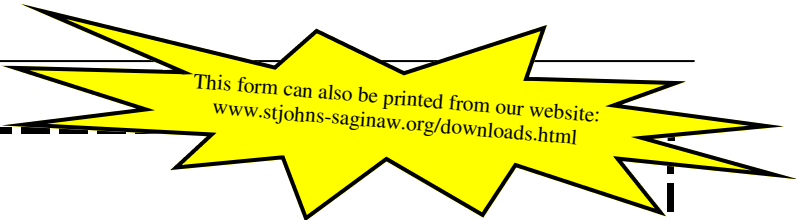
That's how Lent began. A period where people were thinking about baptism, about the beginning of new life, whether literally as new converts to Christianity or – for the rest of the church – people wanting to renew that sense of commitment. And still, on Easter Eve, at this day people will renew their baptismal promises in a solemn service in church.

But that also became associated very early on with the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, fasting and praying and discovering what God was asking of him. In the Gospels we're told that Jesus goes straight from his own baptism into the desert to confront the Devil and to overcome temptation. And that forty days in the desert became a great image that controlled the sense of the pre-Easter fast, that pre-Easter preparation. During this period, it became more and more common for churches to strip away some of the decoration, to make themselves look a bit simpler, a kind of outward manifestation of the inner stripping and the inner austerity that was going on. ...

[continued on page 5]



The Archbishop says "It's not about feeling gloomy for forty days; it's not about making yourself miserable for forty days; it's not even about giving things up for forty days. Lent is springtime. It's preparing for that great climax of springtime which is Easter - new life bursting through death."



EASTER FLOWERS & MUSIC FUNDS

Donations to St. John’s Easter Flower & Music Funds provide the flower arrangements, decorations, and guest musicians that we enjoy during the Easter Season. Although contributions of any size are welcome, please consider a minimum gift of \$20.00. (Gifts of \$100.00 or more will be given special designation.)

DEADLINE: Sunday, April 10th

I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the St. John’s Easter Flower Fund.

I would like to contribute \$ _____ to the St. John’s Music Fund.

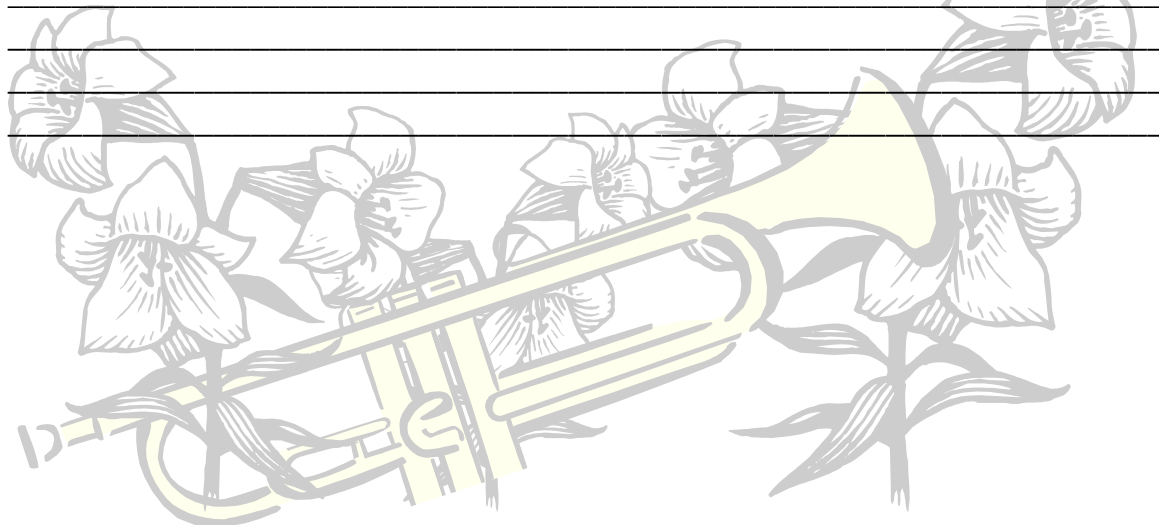
Please make checks payable to **St. John’s Episcopal Church**. Indicate on the check “Easter Flowers” or “Music Fund.” Please seal your check and a copy of this form in an envelope and place it in the offering plate or return it to the parish office.

Name: _____

This contribution is given: (check one)

_____ In grateful thanksgiving for (e.g. blessings received, an important person in your life, an anniversary, or birthday)

_____ In loving memory of:



Happy Birthday!

- 1 Sharon Reardon
- 2 T.J. Luxton
- 7 Nicholas Jacquain
- 7 Evelyn Williams
- 8 Janet Cosenza
- 8 Beth Garza
- 8 Marriana Renna
- 9 Keith Birdsall
- 11 Erin Reardon
- 12 Elizabeth Braun
- 12 Bill Scharffe
- 12 Jerry Young
- 13 Jim Magyar
- 14 Sue Dikeman
- 14 Jim Shannon
- 16 Sage Morley
- 18 Vanessa Daugherty
- 19 Marcella Marcet
- 19 Ashley Strahm
- 20 Jordan Hernandez
- 20 Xavier Magyar
- 22 Cynthia Lange
- 22 William, Jr. Vlassis
- 24 Vera Hoganson
- 24 Ron Swarthout
- 24 Brett Yeager
- 26 Nancy Bovill
- 28 Valerie Harrell
- 28 Matthew Hoffman

Thank You

A HUGE thank you to **Sonni Maygar & Kathy Humpert** for your efforts coordinating the new children's service that started in February.

Thanks to **Bill Frederick, Sue Brigham, and Pat Lynes** for helping fold and assemble bulletins, newsletters, and other special projects in the office each month.

Thank you **Sue Ludwig** for your special touch to our lunch bag outreach program. Your donation of hats and gloves help keep our neighbors fed and warm!

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. 20 - Mar. 5	Susan Daugherty	249-1989
Mar. 6 - Mar. 19	Janis Rump	798-3892
Mar. 20 - Apr. 2	Jim & Marsha Braun	793-5015

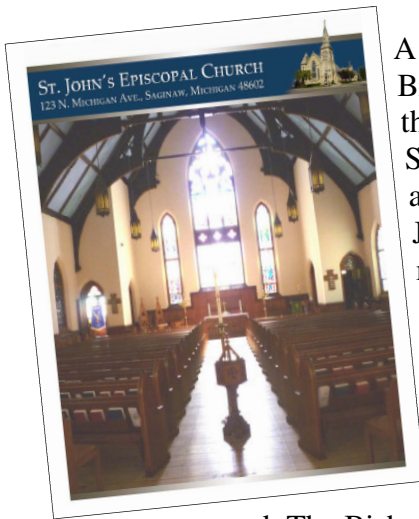
Vestry Members:

Janet Cosenza	401-0853	janetcosenza@charter.net
Bill Frederick	781-0002	wfrederick@tm.net
Jane Girdham	790-8712	kgirdham@svsu.edu
Connie Grantham	695-2088	grantham@hotmail.com
Marcia Hoffman	793-8354	hoffman1982@sbcglobal.net
Sue Marquardt	790-0656	r-s-keyofc@sbcglobal.net
Duncan Redfield	799-7893	redsailor7@yahoo.com
Burriss Smith	792-4775	smithbr@chartermi.net
Dennis Thom	793-9562	dennisthom@sbcglobal.net

Warden's Report

One of the (many!) things I've learned in the past two years is the tremendous number of things that a Rector and staff do to make the operation of the church seem so smooth, efficient and comforting. You know – like the duck that appears to be gliding effortlessly across the pond, but in reality is paddling like crazy beneath the surface? And that's with a Rector. Imagine the fun without one! We can't say "thank you" enough to Jan, Kevin, Amy and Al. They've picked up duties and projects that they certainly didn't sign up for and committed time and energy that goes way above and beyond the call. Paddlers extraordinaire, to be sure.

But have you noticed that St. John's is blessed with lots of wonderful paddlers – with more surfacing (pun intended) all the time? Something needs doing – someone steps up. In the transition time between Rectors, we're learning a great deal about each other and who we are as a parish. In fact that's one of reason why rushing a search is not such a good thing.



A quick note regarding the status of the Rector search. Keith Birdsall has graciously (with a minimum of arm twisting) taken on the role as chair of the Search Committee. As you know the Search Committee is essentially the Vestry, augmented by additional parishioners Ellen Redfield, Barb Ilkka, and Bernie Jones. On February 17, Keith and I had a very productive meeting with the Bishop and Elsa Presentin. With very minor edits, the Parish Profile was approved and it is now posted on our website (http://www.stjohns-saginaw.org/downloads/parishProfile_stjohns-saginawMI.pdf) (Take a few minutes to look it over. We think it captures our story and describes our desired future quite accurately.) We are working well with the Bishop's office and are moving in the right direction at the right

speed. The Bishop informs us that there have already been inquiries and we are expecting our first candidate names very soon. We're excited!

We know that people can put up with lots of uncertainty if information is available and timely. That's our goal in this time of transition. Hopefully the "Voice from the Vestry" will be a key piece of the communication puzzle. Both Marcia and I will continue to bring key information to the congregation on the third Sunday of each month – more often if necessary. We'll also be keeping in touch through the website, the Messenger and weekly bulletins and announcements.

Please stay in touch also – either electronically, by phone or in person. During this transition time working and talking together is even more critical.

Keep paddling!

Faithfully,

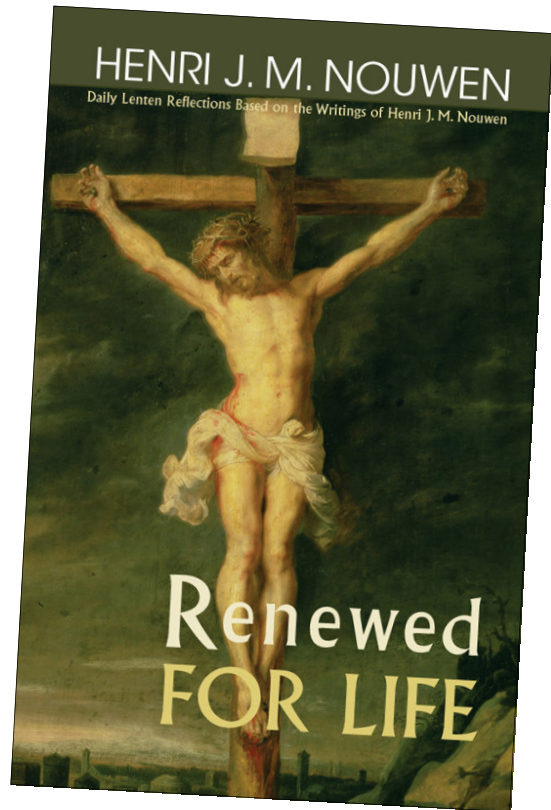
Burriss Smith
Senior Warden



Lenten Study: Renewed for LIFE

The season of Lent, like Advent, is short and to the point. What point, exactly? Advent, for instance, was a time of expectation and hope. Lent is a time of self-awareness and reflection. For 40 days we are given a liturgical window to examine ourselves and the tasks ahead of each of us. Jesus spent this time in the desert, prayerfully seeking wisdom and courage to begin his public ministry. He resisted temptation and braced himself to take on what was literally the weight of the world. What weight do you carry? Family? Job? Finding a purpose? How do we lift it so we can tackle the tasks at hand? *Are we meant to feel so guilty during Lent or is there something more?*

St. John's is making the booklet, **Renewed for Life**, available to its parishioners for Lent. This booklet of **daily Lenten readings** is based on the writings of Henri J.M. Nouwen, one of the most popular and profound spiritual writers of the past century. Each reading includes a Scripture verse, a meditation from one of the works of Henri Nouwen and a concluding prayer from Ash Wednesday to Easter. Copies are available in the Community Room and can be used for self or group study.

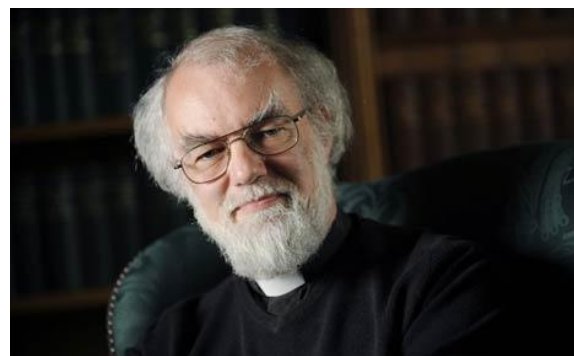


Looking for more? **Each Sunday during Lent, you are invited to join us at 9:00am to discuss the readings of the week.** Here, we will grow both in our understanding of our Savior, and of each other.

The Purpose of Lent Continued... In the middle ages, in many English churches, the hangings and the decorations in church were replaced with hangings of very coarse cloth – sack cloth. People would sometimes wear sack cloth and the beginning of Lent was marked by a ceremony where ash was placed on people's heads in memory of their mortality – Ash Wednesday. In general, the color used during Lent for vestments and hangings - if it wasn't the use of old and shabby cloth – the color would be purple, a somber color associated with judgment.

But it's important to remember that the word 'Lent' itself comes from the old English word for 'spring'. **It's not about feeling gloomy for forty days; it's not about making yourself miserable for forty days; it's not even about giving things up for forty days. Lent is springtime. It's preparing for that great climax of springtime which is Easter – new life bursting through death.** And as we prepare ourselves for Easter during these days, by prayer and by self-denial, what motivates us and what fills the horizon is not self-denial as an end in itself but trying to sweep and clean the room of our own minds and hearts so that the new life really may have room to come in and take over and transform us at Easter.”

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St. John's Lunch Bag Program - It's more than a sack lunch to recipients and volunteers alike.

To touch a Life - to feed the Body - To do ministry on behalf of Jesus. Is this what comes to mind when we think about St. John's lunch bag program? Well, maybe it should be.

We are all aware of the ever-present need that exists in our local community and throughout the entire area for help to those less fortunate than ourselves. In St. John's Gospel 12:8 Jesus says "The poor will always be with you, but you do will not always have me." And so, here at St. John's, we have tried our best for several years to offer what we can to meet a portion of that need with our Lunch Bag Program.

Staffed by volunteers Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to Noon, we are able to provide a simple sack lunch for those who come to our door. But I have found in doing this ministry - and it truly is a ministry - that it can mean much more to those who receive it and is a blessing to be able to give it.

Most of the time, any individual who comes to us will simply say "Thank You" for our offering. I generally respond with "You're Welcome" "Have a Blessed Day" or "God's Peace to you." There have been times, however, when someone will linger and ask about the Church, our particular beliefs, or even ask for prayer. (Prayer can be a very simple thing and God will help you with it.) One person actually said to me "This is more to me than peanut butter in a sack." and so I asked "What is it then?" His response was "This is the love of God and it shows me that someone cares."

What more can we do as brothers and sisters in Christ than to show one another the love of God? This simple act can touch a life, feed the body, and minister to the spirit of God that resides in all of us, on behalf of the Lord Jesus. If you would like to be a part of this ministry and receive God's blessings as well, please contact the parish office at 793-9575.

God's Peace,
Dave Humpert



12th annual Operation Hope Tote!

Each Lent St. John's teams with the City Rescue Mission for Operation Hope Tote! We fill totes with a range of personal care items and the City Rescue Mission spreads the hopeful message of Easter to members of the community most in need. In 2010, St. John's was one of the leading contributors with 40 bags. This year, **we've requested 50 bags** to fill and with your help we can do it!



Here's how it works:

1. Pick up a Hope Tote and yellow Contents Slip from the community room
2. During the season of Lent, fill the Hope Tote with a variety personal care items (from the list)
3. Return the Hope Tote to St. John's by Palm Sunday (April 17)

What a great way to spread the message of HOPE in our community!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Pancakes for supper! You bet! This fun Anglican tradition strives to get rid of all the “fat in the larder” before Lent arrives on Ash Wednesday. Join us **March 8th at 6:00pm** for a light evening of food, fellowship, and fun, including “putting away the Alleluia” until Easter Day. A donation of \$5 per adult (children \$2.50) is requested and tickets may be purchased at the door.



Ash Wednesday Services

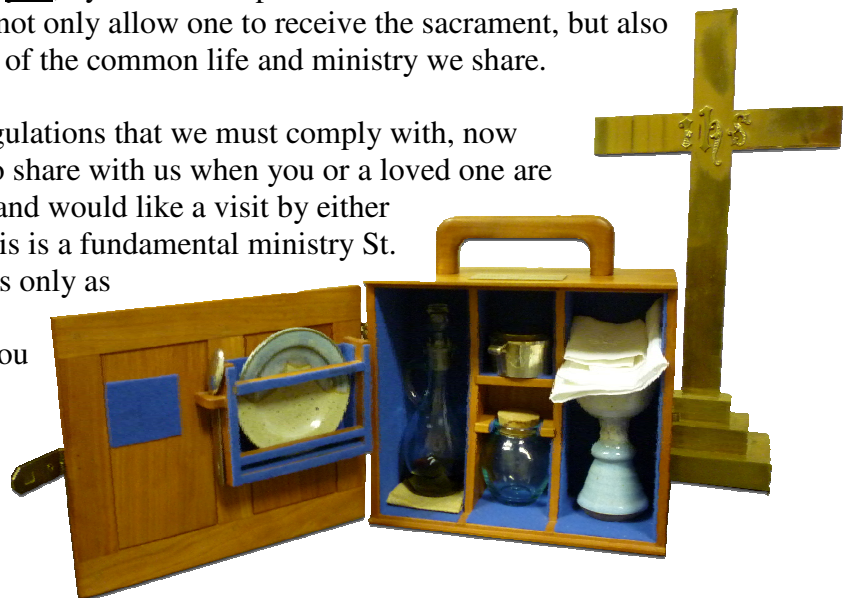


Ash Wednesday, **March 9th**, is the first day of Lent. On this day, Christians focus on their complete sinfulness and the necessity of Christ's suffering and death to insure their salvation. The ashes we incorporate into the service are referred to many times in the Old Testament as signs of sorrow, mourning, humility, and repentance. Join us for one of two special services on **Ash Wednesday (noon and 6:00pm)** to mark the beginning of this important season and remind ourselves exactly why Easter is such a celebration!

Taking Church Beyond Our Walls – Home Communion

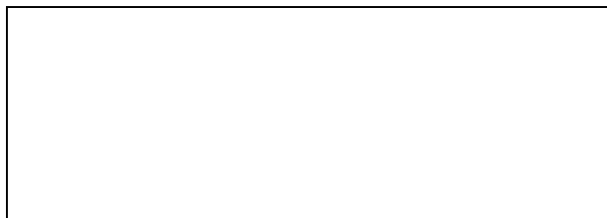
What is Home Communion? Whenever you or a loved one is in the hospital or homebound, St. John's can bring the church to you, by means of a pastoral visit/Home Communion. Pastoral visits and Home Communion not only allow one to receive the sacrament, but also keep us all connected in terms of the common life and ministry we share.

Today, with all the privacy regulations that we must comply with, now more than ever we need you to share with us when you or a loved one are in the hospital or homebound and would like a visit by either the priest or parish visitor. This is a fundamental ministry St. John's continues to offer and is only as effective as all of us working together. If you or someone you love would like a visit, please contact the parish office by either email at jan@stjohns-saginaw.org or phone 793-9575.



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

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How will you observe the season of Lent?

<i>Attend an Event or Special Service?</i>	March 8	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
	April 15	Lenten Fish Supper
	April 17	Palm Sunday Breakfast
	April 21	Maundy Thursday Service
	April 22	Good Friday Service
	April 23	The Great Vigil of Easter
	April 24	Easter Day Services
<i>Participate in a Special Project?</i>		Saginaw Rescue Mission – Hope Totes
<i>Participate in a Book Study?</i>		Lenten Series: <i>Renewed For Life</i>

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