

St. John's Good News



From Reverend Sarah...

Dear Friends,

We began our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday with an invitation: *"I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent"* (BCP 265). The key word in this sentence is "invite." Lent is an invitation to go on a journey, to explore how God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are active in our lives and how that knowledge will lead us to a new way of living. It's an invitation because God's gift of free will gives us the choice, God can't force us. So Lent, is an invitation that we can accept or refuse.

Despite our response to the invitation, our church calendar keeps pace with time so that Lent continues with the cycle of months and years. Yes we can refuse to observe Lent but there is a cost. When we say no to Lent, to a time of coming closer to God, we say no to the natural longing for the divine. We try to deny that we need God in our lives and instead place our faith in materials, relationships, and abusive ideologies.

The climax of Lent is the *Triduum* of Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Each day tells a distinct part of the pre-Easter story. On Maundy Thursday we re-enact Jesus washing his disciples' feet and then sharing the Last Supper of bread and wine. At the end of the service the altar is ceremonially stripped. On Good Friday, with the church bare, we offer solemn prayers for the church and the world in remembrance of the Crucifixion. Communion is given from bread and wine that was blessed the previous day. Lastly, on Holy Saturday, the day Jesus was in the tomb, we gather for prayer as we await the Easter Vigil that evening. This is the holiest time of the year.

Yet the services for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Holy Saturday are often the least attended. This is true for many reasons from schedule conflicts to lack of interest but I think the underlying reason is that we are afraid to accept the invitation. This second invitation of Lent is to face our own pain, both past and present, as we live through the events leading up to Easter. It's an invitation to walk with Jesus from the upper room to the cross and finally to the grave.

Contd.

March 2018

[Winter Worship Schedule](#)

**Sunday Morning
8am Rite I
10am Rite II**

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Inside this issue **Page**

From Rev. Sarah, March Events	1-3
ECDS and Outreach	3
Word Search	4

This is not an easy invitation to accept. It means looking, poking even prodding at those places where we feel pain, where the world feels pain. For some the pain is too large or scary to face. Not many of us are willing or able to do this so we decline the invitation. Again, there's a cost. By declining this invitation we deny that God sees and knows our pain. We choose to believe that we suffer alone which only increases our suffering.

The wisdom of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday is that God can't be separated from our pain and suffering. God walked with Jesus on his path to the cross just as God walks with us on our paths. And so I re-invite you to observe a holy Lent through prayer, fasting almsgiving and most of all to saying yes to God's invitation to Holy Week.

Peace,

Sarah

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### **MARCH EVENTS**

***Come experience the last week of Jesus' life through  
worship and fellowship!***

**Holy Week Schedule**

**Palm Sunday, March 25: The Day Jesus Rode into Jerusalem**

8am and 10am Procession of the Palms and Holy Eucharist

**Tuesday, March 27: Blessing of the Holy Oils at St. Paul's Cathedral**

11am-1pm with brown bag lunch (carpool leaves at 10)

\*\*Please note Bible Study will be held 2pm-4:30.

**Maundy Thursday, March 29: Jesus' Last Night with the Disciples**

12:00pm Washing of the Feet and Holy Eucharist

6:00pm Agape Meal

7:00pm Washing of the Feet, Holy Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar

**Good Friday, March 30: The Day of the Crucifixion**

12:00 and 7:00pm

3pm Ecumenical Good Friday Service at Blessed Sacrament Church, Saugus

**Easter Vigil, March 31: Waiting for the Resurrection**

7:00pm

**Easter Sunday, April 1: Alleluia!**

8am and 10am

**DIOCESAN SPRING LEARNING EVENT, SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 9AM-4PM.** This year's annual diocesan Spring Learning Event will engage with the need for dialogue among people with different perspectives, passions and experiences. Congregations and worshiping communities across the diocese are invited to gather a group and come together with others to acquire and share techniques and inspiration for establishing the church as a gracious place for dialogue on challenging topics and for expanding the possibilities for reconciliation and transformation. It's not too late to register so speak with Rev. Sarah if you are interested in attending this event.

**LENTEN PROGRAM CONTINUES: FINDING NEW LIFE IN JESUS!** It's not too late to join! We begin each Sunday at 11:30 for food, conversation and presentation. Together we are exploring how our worship of music, prayer and readings show us how to deepen our relationships. There are no right or wrong answers—just time to share what is on our hearts. Although not everyone loves small group conversations, it's vital we hear as many voices as possible. \*\*Please note we will not meet on Sunday, March 11.

**BIBLE STUDY CONTINUES WITH "A JOURNEY WITH LUKE."** Along with other Episcopalians across the country we are reading the Gospel according to Luke with the book "A Journey with Luke." The gospel is broken up into small pieces to be read each day as well as a written meditation, discussion questions and closing prayer. When Rev. Sarah is away the group will lead itself on March 6 and on March 13 The Rev. Patrick LaFortune, a deacon at Church of the Good Shepherd in Reading, will lead discussion on Days 31-37.

**WELCOME THE REV. CANON BILL PARNELL ON SUNDAY, MARCH 11.** While Rev. Sarah is away we welcome The Rev. Canon Bill Parnell as our supply preacher for the 8am and 10am services. Rev. Bill serves as The Canon to the Ordinary which is similar to the role of a Chief of Staff for our Diocesan Bishop Alan Gates. Several of us have attended deanery conversations, co-lead by Rev. Bill, about creating opportunities for churches to collaborate on programs and projects. Please extend a hearty St. John's welcome to Rev. Bill!

**SERMON CONVERSATIONS ON MARCH 18: HOLY WEEK.** On Sunday, March 18, at the 8am and 10am services our sermon conversations will focus on Holy Week: the historical events, the spiritual practices, and the impacts for our world. These 7 days, Jesus' last week on earth, forms the heart of the Christian story—a story that must be retold every year through communal worship and study.

**YOUTH GROUP MEETS SUNDAY, MARCH 25 NOON-2.** The Youth Group will meet 3/25 to return to planning a Youth Worship Service which will now be in April. We are still in the process of planning the sermon, prayers and music so please bring your favorite songs, poems, Instagram posts, etc. We also start planning for the 30 Hour Famine which will be Friday, April 27-Sunday, April 29—sign up with Rev. Sarah or Diana White! Also, please speak with Rev. Sarah if are willing to donate a meal for the meeting on March 25.

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the months of March and April we will continue to collect travel-sized shampoo, soap, lotion, lip balm, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and emergency rain ponchos for toiletry care packages to be distributed to patrons of The Bread of Life, as well as Every Child Deserves to Smile families. If you have any questions, please contact Jeanne Seaboyer 781-662-4342/ jmseaboyer@gmail.com



EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO SMILE

Thank you to all who donated food and paper good items in February. **The families appreciate all that we do!**

As the turnover at the motel has been great, we will continue to collect paper towels, paper plates, plastic utensils, microwaveable meals, pasta & sauce, granola bars, soup, crackers and snacks through the months of March and April. Guests are also in need of can openers, large bowls for cooking in a microwave, serving spoons, metal silverware, dish towels, pot holders, etc.

Donations may be left in the Every Child Deserves to Smile collection container in the vestibule. The next **quarterly meeting** traditionally held in March has been moved to **April 5, 9:30AM in the Hurl Room**. All are welcome to attend.

The next meal date will be Sunday, April 22nd. Look for the sign-up sheet in Ashworth Hall to volunteer to join our kitchen crew from 3PM-5PM. If you have any questions or wish to volunteer to prepare a meal, please contact Jeanne Seaboyer at 781-662-4342/ or jmseaboyer@gmail.com.

Word Search

W A R J G Y K G T Y R X Y U S P F
 L O W B E Z K R Y Y I E B S M A R
 A S C R I P T U R E C C Q H C L E
 M G H G F C U D Z D K R X N O M M
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 G A E L I C M M L I M E R I C K E

Crocus ~ Emerald ~ Equinox ~ Fasting ~ Gaelic ~ Kyrie ~ Lamb
 Lenten ~ Limerick ~ Maundy ~ Palms ~ Patrick ~ Prepare
 Scripture ~ Shamrocks ~ Sprouting ~ Veneration ~ Vigil

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**Officers:** The Reverend Sarah van Gulden, Priest-in-Charge ~ T. J. Martin, Sr. Warden ~ Fritz White, Jr. Warden ~ Phil Littlehale, Treasurer ~ Janet Lancaster, Asst. Treasurer ~ Sandy Mears, Clerk of the Vestry

**Vestry:** Brenda Caggiano (2019) ~ Dale Coogan (2021) ~ Al Coppola (2021) ~ Paul Felci (2020) ~ Sandy St. Clair (2019) ~ William 'Bill' St. Clair (2021) ~ Jeanne Seaboyer (2020) ~ Jenna Sharwood (2020) ~ Diana White (2021)