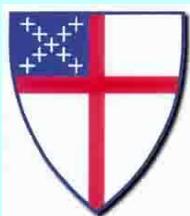


February
2015

The Anchor



Office Hours

Thursday

10:00 a.m.

to

1:00 p.m.

Look inside for:

Events &

Services

Birthdays &

Anniversaries

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SUNDAY

WORSHIP

@

10 AM

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WEBSITE:

stnicholasde.org

St. Nicholas' Episcopal Church/ 302-368-4655

The ANCHOR of our soul is Jesus - Hebrews 6:19

From the Pastor's Pen



Greetings,

It is a joy to be here with you at St. Nicholas, filling in for Elizabeth during her leave. You are truly a warm and welcoming congregation. I am looking forward to being with you through Sunday, March 1, the day when Elizabeth returns from her leave.

Lent is coming soon. On February 18th, Ash Wednesday, we will begin the annual observance of those forty days. By the way, the forty days of Lent do not include Sundays. If you count the days from Ash Wednesday without Sundays, you arrive at the fortieth day on the day before Easter. So the projects that you undertake to keep a faithful Lent should be done Monday through Saturday in the Lenten weeks, but beginning on Ash Wednesday. Lent is an excellent time to work to grow stronger. A great Lenten practice would be to take time each day to practice a skill that will be useful every day from now on.

For most people Lent would be a good time to deliberately practice forgiveness. In the Lord's Prayer we ask God to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Here's a way of practicing forgiveness that really works (at least, it has worked for me many times). I also describe this practice in the Lenten booklet that St. Nicholas publishes called "Homegrown Devotions."

Read a psalm or other bible passage about how forgiving God is. Read this aloud to yourself over and over. Psalm 130 is a great example of such a passage of scripture. It is written in a voice that speaks for each of us to God. It says to God, if you were to count all our sins we would never be able to face you, but because you are forgiving and because of your steadfast love for us as we are, we can count on you forgiving our sins.

By reading the scripture passage and by meditating on how forgiving God is to us, we should be able, with God's help, to pass on that forgiveness to others. The first step in doing this can be to sit down and write out "I forgive (name)."

Write this several times for each person whom you want to forgive, every day, until you really feel forgiving toward that person.



Although it seems unlikely, you will be surprised to see how well this works.

Once you have done this, if possible, try to get in touch with that person, meet with them for a talk, and tell them that you have forgiven them. This may not be possible for every person on your list.

In the catechism of our church, in the Book of Common Prayer, at page 855, there is the question, "What is the mission of the Church?" The answer given is "To restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ."

One way to pursue this mission is to take up a Lenten discipline of practicing forgiveness. Once you have practiced this in Lent, you can add this discipline to your daily practice on a year round basis.

Again, thank you for welcoming me into St. Nicholas. I am glad that I will be here with you as Lent begins.

Sincerely, Fr. Ed Pease

Announcements

ECUMENICAL ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE
at St. Nicholas on February 18 at 7 pm

JOINT LENTEN SERIES: "ANIMATE BIBLE"
Feb. 24 - Session One at Nativity Church in New Castle
6:30 to 8:30 pm with soup and bread supper

HOMEGROWN DEVOTIONS -- our St. Nick's homemade Lenten devotion aid is well underway. Our parish writers, plus some friends, former members and/or clergy, either have or will soon be sending in their thoughts to be compiled into a booklet for your use during Lent. With the February 4 deadline for sending in writings, (which may be before you read this), we hope this cooperative effort brings out the best of The Spirit in those with writing assignments and generously gives to all of us a shared understanding of Scripture as well as of others' thinking. What a gift!!

Please try to be in church on Sunday, February 15, to receive your copy or arrange for a friend to bring yours to you. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18 - early this year. We are unable to mail to local members, but look forward to sending the booklet to our international audience in Ghana! (Thank you, too, Rev. Canon Victor Acquaye for participating in this yearly project!)

Again, many thanks to all of you who wrote for the first time (yes, it's a bit scary, but I'm sure you did fine in expressing yourself) and to those for whom this exercise in prayer, meditation, and writing is a welcome and regular part of winter.

--Wanda Simons, for the production team

"For most people Lent would be a good time to deliberately practice forgiveness."



What is "Mission?"

The Rev. Titus Pressler who teaches at Pittsburg Theological Seminary (and who taught me at General Theological Seminary) described what "mission" means in his blog, "Titus on Mission," on February 4, 2015:

"Numerical growth is desirable, without question. New Testament writers were not shy about counting heads as they described the ministry of Jesus and the growth of the early church—and neither should we be shy about numbers amid the challenges of the contemporary church. Whether in Cambridge, Zimbabwe, Peshaware or Vermont, I've been an assiduous head-counter. Attendance and membership figures say something about the vitality of a ministry, the internal networking of a congregation, and the outreach of the people of God.

The mission of God, though is something different. Mission is sending and being sent across human social boundaries to bear witness in word and deed the reconciling work of God in Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. That's it bearing witness across boundaries. The first and most significant boundary for any community is the very boundary that defines the community, as in 'our congregation, our parish.'

When we reach beyond who and where we are to meet and work with others not part of our community—that is when we are distinctively on mission. Ministry is the full range of service to which God calls us whether inside or outside. Mission reaches beyond ourselves. That's why "outreach" is the most common synonym for mission. And every church community is called to reach beyond itself, not for the sake of growth, but for the sake of God's mission."

When **Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori** visited Delaware on January 7 & 8, she was asked what she thought the Episcopal Church would be like in the future. She responded by talking about her vision of our future by referencing "Five Marks of Mission." Here they are from the Episcopal Church's website:

The Mission of the Church Is the Mission of Christ

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

We recognize with gratitude that the Five Marks of Mission, developed by the Anglican Consultative Council between 1984 and 1990, have won wide acceptance among Anglicans, and have given parishes and dioceses around the world a practical and memorable "checklist" for mission activities.

How do you understand "mission?" What sort of mission are you engaged in?

Blessings on your . . . **February**

Birthdays

8 Lynn Grier
9 Susan Colvin
12 Barbara Scira
13 Sue Greenplate
24 Avalon Scira
25 Amy Bowman Danko

Baptisms

1 Wanda Simons
2 David Chandler
27 Quie Shuhart

Marriages

6 George & Jennifer Meredith



What is the United Thank Offering

United Thank Offering (UTO) is a ministry of The Episcopal Church for the mission of the whole church. Through United Thank Offering, men, women, and children nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God. These prayers of thanksgiving start when we recognize and name our many daily blessings. Those who participate in UTO discover that thankfulness leads to generosity. United Thank Offering is entrusted to promote thank offerings, to receive the offerings, and to distribute the UTO monies to support mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and in invited Provinces of the Anglican Communion in the developing world.

What can each of us give thanks to God for?



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