

ST. PETER'S NET

St. Peter's by-the-Sea Newsletter



Two weeks ago a catastrophic earthquake struck Haiti. That Sunday we took a special collection to go toward the relief work there and raised nearly \$2,000. It was the largest single collection in recent memory, and a significant contribution that will have real impact on the lives of many. The amazing thing is that it came right on the heels of news that we are facing serious challenges to our parish finances. You showed remarkable generosity and modeled the Christian life.

The very same day we took that collection, the Mission and Outreach Council (MOC) met to discuss plans for an intergenerational mission trip this summer. The MOC is one of our seven ministry councils, and it is given the job of helping our parish fulfill the gospel mandate to "seek and serve Christ in all persons." In recent months they've discussed the possibility of leading our parish on an intergenerational mission trip sometime this year. There is plenty for us to do locally, as Rhode Island certainly knows something about hardship. But the consensus is that stepping outside of our comfort zone, to a place like the Appalachians or Gulf coast, might offer exciting and different contexts for serving Christ.

The idea is that parishioners from St. Peter's (i.e. *you*) will travel not on vacation, not on holiday, but on a trip designed to seek and serve Christ among those in need. Were we to go to a place like New Orleans or Galveston, we would work with local relief organizations and go to work helping a community rebuild after a disastrous hurricane. If we went to a place like the Appalachian mountains of western Virginia, we would work with small rural communities as they struggle against a sort of poverty normally experienced in developing nations. Or if we went to a place like the Navajoland in northern Arizona and southern Utah, we would strive to serve the economically poor but culturally rich native people, as well as witness firsthand the inspiring Episcopal community there.

Both of these things happened that same Sunday — the collection for Haiti and the planning conversation for a mission trip — but they reflect something bigger about what's going on at St. Peter's. I once heard someone say, "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." That is, you have to know what your mission is, what your purpose is, and that must always be at the center of everything you do. When you look at the gospels and read about the life of Jesus, you see that

the main thing for him was embodying God's radical, life-changing love: serving others, offering hope, and restoring dignity. And when I ponder that amazing Sunday here a few weeks ago, I get excited to think that we might be about the main thing, too.

Our mission as the people of God isn't to maintain a pretty building and hope that people wander through our doors some Sunday and decide to stick around. Our mission is to carry God's love far and wide, just like Jesus, and be ambassadors of that miraculous love to this hurting world. We do that when donate generously to relief efforts in Haiti, rather than just worry about our parish budget. We do that when we decide to sacrifice time and energy by serving people in need, even though it's not easy. We do it each and every time we choose to follow Christ's call to serve others in his name.

In the coming weeks, I hope you'll ask Diane Nobles or Ruth Toolan (members of the MOC) about the mission trip. Actually, I hope you'll ask where to sign up. Or maybe you'll volunteer to help with the Food Pantry, or ask Gerry Reynolds about the Soup Troop. Whatever it is, let's keep the main thing the main thing.

Casey+
February 2010

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8:00 - Eucharist with no music

9:00 - Christian Education for all ages

10:15 - Eucharist with Choir and music

11:15 - Coffee Hour

ST. PETER'S BY-THE-SEA

72 Central Street

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www.stpetersbythesea.com

Our St. Peter's Family

We mourn with

- ☞ the family of Georgia Lloyd, who died on December 4. Georgia was a longtime parishioner, and is the mother of Karen Lague.
- ☞ the family of Barbara Sherwood, who died on January 6. Barbara is the mother-in-law of parishioner Beth Vallee.

We celebrate with

- ☞ Gincy Bucklin and Samuel Bunker, who were married in December.
- ☞ Sasha Jane and Lily Sharon Bosack, and Isabelle Aubrey Shobe, who were baptized on January 10.

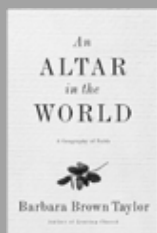
Reading During Lent

During Lent, consider spending more time reading and reflecting on the Christian life. Here are a few excellent books to choose from:

An Altar in the World

by Barbara Brown Taylor
(Canterbury Press, 2009)

Mines the potentially sacred meaning of simple daily activities and conditions, like walking, paying attention, saying no to work one Sabbath day each week; written by one of the greatest living preachers.



Celebration of Discipline by Richard



Foster (HarperSanFrancisco, 1988) *Describes our desperate need for greater spiritual depth and guides people into practices that cultivate that depth.*

Girl Meets God by Lauren Winner (Shaw Books, 2004) *Memoir by a woman in her twenties who converts to Christianity. A thoughtful and enjoyable read.*



The Season of Lent *A Time for Reflection*

During the Eucharist, before we say aloud the words of confession, there is a period of silence. That silence is meant to offer us an opportunity to prepare ourselves by examining our consciences before the words are spoken. In that moment we reflect on those sins we have committed, so that we may genuinely lay those wrongs before God. It is only after an honest period of self-examination that we are able to truly receive God's holy and life-changing forgiveness.



That is sort of what Lent is like. Lent is the ancient season that prepares us for the annual celebration of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. For forty days we strain to quiet our lives, and reflect more intentionally upon those areas that need God's purifying and healing. It is traditionally a time for prayer, fasting and devotion upon Scripture. So this year, follow the example of the Christian Church throughout its 2,000 years, and keep a holy Lent. Come to church, pray often, read your Bible, serve the needs of others, and attend the Wednesday evening forum. When Easter arrives, you will find yourself truly prepared to experience joy.

Entering the Story *Wednesdays in Lent*

From 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesdays during Lent we will gather in the Parish Hall for a simple potluck meal of bread and soup



Jesus Meets His Mother (J. Sierra)

and a time of learning and reflection. This year we will examine the story of Christ's Passion from a different angle, and read it along with someone whose profession would have made them intricately involved in the proceedings against Jesus. Each week we will meditate upon Jesus' arrest, trial and execution along with one of the following contemporaries: criminal lawyer, judge, prison official, prison chaplain, and someone with experience working with inmates on death row. It promises to be a fresh way to bring to life the experience of Jesus. Program begins February 24.

"While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, (and) gave it to them..."

During Lent we will use real bread at communion, and you are invited to help bake it! On two Saturday mornings, February 20 and March 20, come at 9:00 a.m. and spend the morning baking and praying together. RSVP to Casey: 783-4623.

Ash Wednesday Remembering Dust

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” With these words a smudge of ashes in the form of a cross will be imposed upon your forehead — simple words and a simple gesture, and yet so powerful. Ash Wednesday reminds us of our mortality, and invites us to ask God’s gracious and life-giving forgiveness. Rich with meaning, symbolism and holiness, this is one mid-week service you shouldn’t miss. *Ash Wednesday services will be held at St. Peter’s on February 17 at noon and 7:00 p.m.*

Ever wonder where the ashes for Ash Wednesday come from? They are the burned palm fronds from Palm Sunday. If you saved your palm(s) from last year, consider allowing it to be burned in order to create the ashes that will be imposed upon your head. A basket will be left in the rear of the church; simply drop old palm fronds there by Sunday, February 14.

Make sure to add HOLY WEEK to your calendar (March 29-April 3). Of special significance is the Triduum, or the “Holy Three Days” beginning on Maundy Thursday and ending on Easter Sunday. We must remember that before there was resurrection, there was sacrifice.

Annual Meeting Sunday, February 7

The St. Peter’s Annual Meeting will occur on Sunday, February 7, after a combined service at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will take place in the Parish Hall, and this year lunch will be enjoyed as we discuss business, rather than waiting until the meeting’s conclusion. Activities for children and youth are planned for that time, so parents may attend the meeting. This meeting will be extremely important, as we must squarely face the question of what we want to be about as a church in 2010 and beyond. Is it about keeping the doors open and the lights on? Or are we called by God to do more and to be more? Come and lend your voice. *All baptized Christians eighteen years of age and older, who receive communion at least three times a year and pledge financial support may participate fully in the meeting.*

Alcoholics Anonymous meets every morning at 7 o’clock and Narcotics Anonymous meets on Monday and Saturday evenings at 7:30. If you or someone you know is struggling with addiction, these are safe communities that can help you heal. You are not alone.

Adult Forum Come and Learn

You are invited to join Adult Forum every Sunday at 9:15 a.m. for conversation on important and relevant topics. There’s always a pot of coffee and a topic to engage your mind and spirit. When was the last time you really studied the Bible, or learned more about this faith we share: months? years? decades? Come and learn with us.



Instructed Eucharist

When you’re sitting in church on Sundays, do you ever wonder why we do what we do when we do it? For two Sundays we will work slowly through the service and attempt to explain the “mysteries” of the Sacred Mysteries. *January 31 and February 14.*

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

One of the topics Jesus spoke of most often was forgiveness and reconciliation. Hurt, anger, and estrangement are barriers to the kind of lives God wants for us, but how do we overcome them? During Lent we will explore the teachings of Jesus and the examples of places like South Africa for inspiration. *February 21-March 21*



Diocesan Convocation Saturday, February 27

Diocesan Convocation is Saturday, February 27 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Marriott in Providence. This year the speaker is Reggie McNeal, a nationally acclaimed church consultant who has written about the need for the Church to reclaim its mission and purpose as we engage a society that is less interested in practicing our faith. We get so used to just plodding along here in South County that we forget there are people all over the country facing similar issues who are bright, focused and faithful. It is exciting to have Reggie McNeal here, and his address will no doubt provoke, humble and inspire. Scholarships are available for those interested in attending with Casey and members of the Vestry. Call Casey (783-4623) to learn more.



Renewing Your Vows Say "I Will" All Over Again

On Sunday, February 14 (St. Valentine's Day) all married couples are invited to "renew" their marriage vows in much the same way. During the 10:15 Eucharist, couples may publicly declare their renewed commitment to one another and ask God's continued blessing upon their marriage. Following the service, there will be a special extended coffee hour "reception", complete with cake, music, and dancing! All couples who are interested in renewing their vows, or having a Civil Marriage blessed, regardless of the date of your anniversary or how long you've been married, are invited to participate. Contact Barb Bergen (bergen123@cox.net or 401-789-0788) by January 31 to let us know. Each participating couple is asked to donate \$20 to help defray the reception costs.



Noteworthy

- ❖ The St. Peter's Net will be going entirely digital this summer. That means you will need to notify us if you need to receive it by mail. Otherwise it will be emailed to you.
- ❖ The final tally on the 2009 St. Peter's Bazaar is \$5,472! Huge thanks are owed to the volunteers who helped make it such a huge success. Special thanks go to Mary Jane Long, who once again coordinated the event, and whose gift baskets were a huge hit.
- ❖ Due to the generosity of special gift, in the coming weeks the Food Pantry will expand into the space now occupied by the Men's Restroom. This will enable us to provide more food and supplies to our neighbors in need, especially during these tough times.
- ❖ In the October edition of the St. Peter's Net we used a photo of the Blessing of the Animals service taken in 2008 by Selena Millard for the South County Independent. Our thanks to Ms. Millard and the Independent.



Please remember to recycle the St. Peter's Net when you are finished reading it. The Net will go entirely digital this summer, so you must contact the Church Office (783-4623 or stpetersbythesea@verizon.net) by May to let us know if you need to continue receiving a mailed version.