



The Bells of Saint Mary

February, 2011

With My Hand on the Plow: Preparing for Lent

As we begin to prepare for the coming of Lent on March 9 with our Ash Wednesday services, here is some information pulled from a couple of web sites and edited for you. I hope it sheds some light (coming as this article does still in the season of Epiphany!) and helps you to plan ahead for Lent, 2011.

Lent is the forty-day period before Easter. It begins on Ash Wednesday. We skip Sundays when we count the forty days, because Sundays commemorate the Resurrection. Lent begins on 9 March 2011 and ends on 23 April 2011, which is the day before Easter.

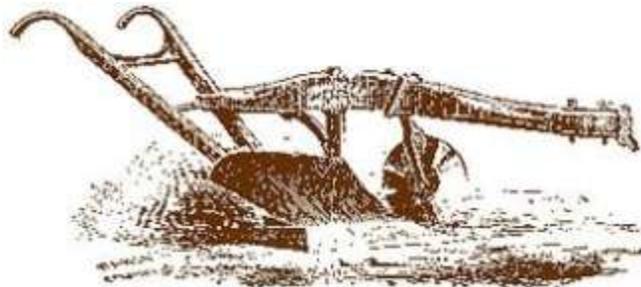
Lent is a season of soul-searching and repentance. It is a season for reflection and taking stock. Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful re-dedicated themselves and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared

for baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' **withdrawal into the wilderness** for forty days.

The purpose of Lent is to be a season of fasting, self-denial, Christian growth, penitence, conversion, and simplicity. Lent can be viewed as a spiritual spring cleaning: a time for taking spiritual inventory and then cleaning out those things which hinder our corporate and personal relationships with Jesus Christ and our service to

him. Thus it is fitting that the season of Lent begins with a symbol of repentance: placing ashes mixed with oil on one's head or forehead. However, we must remember that

our Lenten disciplines are supposed to ultimately transform our entire person: body, soul, and spirit. Our Lenten disciplines are supposed to help us become more like Christ. Eastern Christians call



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this process *theosis*, which St. Athanasius aptly describes as "becoming by grace what God is by nature." (I love that quote!)

There are a few basic tasks that traditionally have been associated with Lent. These are fasting, almsgiving, and prayer. In addition, reading the Scriptures and the Church's Writings can help one grow during Lent.

Fasting:

Most Protestant churches that celebrate Lent do not have rigid requirements like the Roman Catholic Church teaches. However, when we "give something up" for Lent, we are embracing a form of fasting, an excellent spiritual discipline. Some people choose to give up sins (gossip, drunkenness, etc) for Lent. In this way, Lent represents a spiritual training time to overcome evil. Some give up things they have an inordinate desire for, e.g. sweets, caffeine, etc. By giving these up, the person fasting learns to control a particular part of his or her life, which leads to greater self-discipline even when Lent is over. As such in Lent we are able to learn, examine, and get under control our material excesses. Whatever you decide to fast from, remember, as Steven Clark likes to say: "Lent is more than a diet." Lent is about spiritual results, not material ones. So, while losing a few pounds may be a nice side benefit, all fasting should be done for God's glory and spiritual growth.

Almsgiving (Charity):

While Lent is about giving something up (i.e. fasting), it is also about putting something positive in its place. *The best way to remove vice is to cultivate virtue.* Lent has been a traditional time of helping the poor

and doing acts of charity and mercy. While as Christians this is a year round calling, Lent is a good time to examine ways to get involved and to make resolutions to actually do them. Giving alms can be done in more ways than just giving out money to people on the street. It can be done by helping your family, friends, and neighbors out of tight situations or being more generous in word and actions to others. One of the best ways to give alms is to get out of your comfort zone a little bit, maybe by volunteering for a charity or a shelter.

Prayer:

Lent is a good time to develop or strengthen a discipline of daily prayer. A good goal for Lent would be to read Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer everyday. If you already do that, perhaps you could add noon or night prayer (also called Compline). Contemplative prayer, based around the idea of silence or listening for God, is also well suited to Lent. Theology and liturgy should always be prayer, so a good discipline for Lent would be to make an effort to attend worship services whenever possible.

Scripture Reading:

When facing temptation in the desert, Jesus relied on Scripture to counter the wiles of the devil. It is a formidable weapon for us as well. Biblical illiteracy among Christians of all types is rampant and, quite honestly, shameful. Lent is an excellent time to remedy this problem. One way to read Scripture is to use the lectionary in your Book of Common Prayer. The Bible is even online. Check out biblegateway.com or thelectionary.com as a **way to begin. But read it every day...that is**

the best way to start.

Our Lenten season will have lots of opportunities to engage much of what you have read here. Our Lenten Formation programs are all centered on an examination of discipleship. We will spend time in each of the Gospels, and with the writings of St. Paul. Tuesday evenings will be a simple Eucharist at 6 in the evening, followed by a soup supper and a class. We will also continue our Sunday morning Learning Circle

at 9 am for those who prefer a morning class. I hope you will take the time to join in our classes this Lent, and use the time to learn more about your own call to ministry, and how you can use your gifts to benefit others who are also part of the Body of Christ. May God continue to bless you as you prepare for a Holy Lent.

With my hand on the plow,
Fr. Michael+

Sunday Eucharist

8:00 AM and 10:00AM

Church Office Hours
Monday - Thursday 10 AM - 4 PM

Telephone: (805) 733-4400
Fax: (805) 733-4405

[Looking for the
Calendar?
Click here.](#)



Valentines

I received my first Valentine in kindergarten. It was from Richard Center. He gave it to me in the coat closet. It was dripping wet with his mother's perfume. Unfortunately, I did not receive another Valentine until I repeated this story to a male friend in graduate school, who then felt sorry for me, and sent me one. A couple of years later Joe came along and this was no longer a big concern for me. The first gift I ever received from Joe was a bright yellow laundry bag. He noticed that I didn't have one and was using a Laundromat at the time. Now before you start feeling bad for me for the absence of romance in this gesture, you need to know that I was the girl who asked for a Vitamixer instead of an engagement ring. My wedding band stayed on my finger only until the first month of pregnancy. The Vitamixer remained on my kitchen counter for twenty years. In the marriage marathon Valentine's Day is for amateurs. Anyone can purchase a little romance at the nearest Hallmark store. My heart's trophy goes to the long distance runner, the man who has had his eye out for my footing every step of the way. Thank you Joe.

Still, I suppose as one gets older it is nice to be remembered or thought of. So please **join me in Fitch Hall on February 6 after both services as we make Valentines** for the elderly, alone, or shut-in of our congregation. Supplies will be on hand, but feel free to bring any additions you might like. Volunteers will deliver them in time for Valentine's Day.

Trudy Ardizzone, Missioner for Christian Formation

Prayers of the People

We ask that you hold these persons in your Daily Prayers.

Lord, open our hearts to Your perfect will and to Your loving prayerful nature; that we can faithfully intercede on behalf of those we bring to You now in prayer:

Sally Goetsch, Catherine Gibson, Ron Davis, Almedia Hutchinson, Stan Sheldon, Bill Brown, Alicia Garcia-Hamilton, Sheila Holley, Isla Hill and Patty Townsend.

**...and the members of our Armed Forces, including:
Mathew Schmieser, Sean Diggs, Brandon Howell, Carl Free, David Barrett,
Emily Oritiz, Robert Smith, Tom Pittenger, Bob Ramos, and Jeff Bastian**

AMEN+

Please Note:

Prayers of the People will be updated monthly. If you would like to add or continue a name to the POP, please fill out a Pink Prayer Request slip or Pew card, submit via our website www.stmaryslompoc.org, call any of our Prayer Tree members, or email Stephanie Bastian at jeffnsteph95@msn.com. Thank you!

“Whenever two of you on earth agree in prayer, it will be done by My Father in Heaven.” Matthew 18:19

Star Gazing

Robert Browning wasn't planning Christian Formation events when he said, "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" I would have said imagination instead of reach. Our ancient ancestors looked up at the night sky and found connect the dot pictures and stories to entertain and stir their imaginations. Today when we are fortunate enough to even see stars beyond our own glare we may see uncharted territory to explore and dream of space travel. Either endeavor is good. It's Epiphany, the perfect season for star gazing. We can follow the example of the Magi and journey where a star leads us. Or perhaps we can allow ourselves to be humbled by the vastness of the universe while we contemplate our place and purpose in God's creation. Join us on Saturday night February 12 at the planetarium at the Natural History Museum in Santa Barbara for a Star Gazing Party. Telescopes will be available. The planetarium show is about the Mayan Skies. We will meet at St. Mary's parking lot at 5:30. We will arrange rides for those who can't drive. We are willing to provide rides and supervision for all the Sunday School children. Please sign up in advance or contact Trudy for more information.

Trudy Ardizzone

More Christian Formation

Remember to check the church's web page, bulletin boards and Communications Center for more information about Learning Circles and other formation events. In February you can learn how the Episcopal Church is reaching out into the world and how to find out where you can get involved. Just in time for Lent, study and reflect on Sabbath as an act of resistance against our relentless and demanding culture.

Trudy Ardizzone

Financial Statement

(**Note:** Updated with End of Year Data, Not Available at the Annual Meeting)

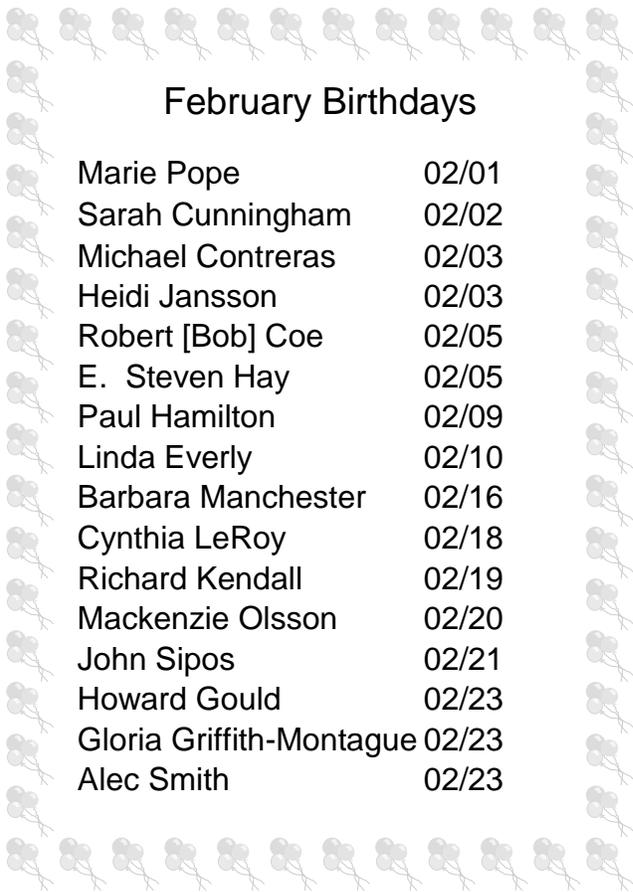
2010 Year End Summary	As of 12/31/2010
Undesignated Checking	\$23,497
Undesignated Savings (Reserve)	\$50,881
Designated checking *	\$34,396
Parish mortgage	\$349,338

	2010 Actual	2010 Budget
Income, Including BTM Transfer [§]	\$364,459	\$355,123
Expenses	\$355,068	\$378,958
Net income	\$9,391	(\$23,835)

BURN the MORTGAGE fund, Inception to Date: \$42,803

[§] Transfer to General Fund for 2010. \$36,000

* BURN the MORTGAGE Designated Acct. \$6,803

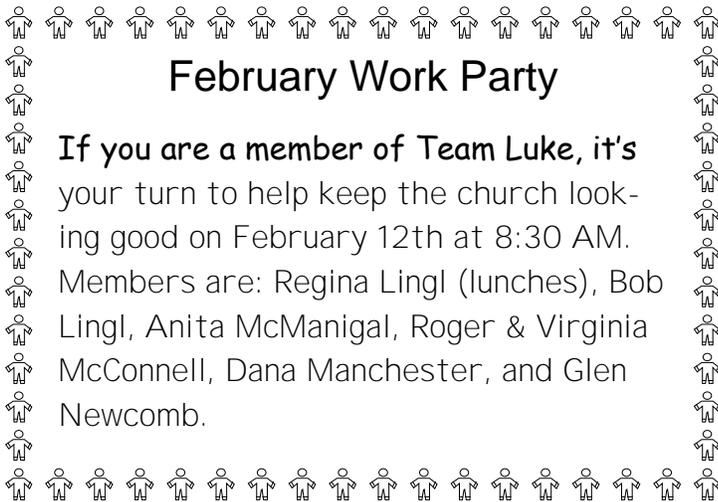


February Birthdays

Marie Pope	02/01
Sarah Cunningham	02/02
Michael Contreras	02/03
Heidi Jansson	02/03
Robert [Bob] Coe	02/05
E. Steven Hay	02/05
Paul Hamilton	02/09
Linda Everly	02/10
Barbara Manchester	02/16
Cynthia LeRoy	02/18
Richard Kendall	02/19
Mackenzie Olsson	02/20
John Sipos	02/21
Howard Gould	02/23
Gloria Griffith-Montague	02/23
Alec Smith	02/23

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- Bells Editor:
john.beeler@verizon.net



February Work Party

If you are a member of Team Luke, it's your turn to help keep the church looking good on February 12th at 8:30 AM. Members are: Regina Lingl (lunches), Bob Lingl, Anita McManigal, Roger & Virginia McConnell, Dana Manchester, and Glen Newcomb.

Bede the Bat

Hello from me, Bede the Bat in the St. Mary's Belfry:

Here it is January and I'm still not over Christmas and New Year's. Big events come on very quickly and there's so much hustle and bustle to get ready for them. Christmas is one of the busiest and, I don't know about you, but I always welcome a sort of let down, a time to catch my breath, a time of reflection. Lent is one of those times.



I don't mean to imply that Lent is a time to just sit and relax. It's not. As Christians, we will be gearing up for one of the most amazing, most glorious, most incredible celebrations. We look forward to such happiness on Easter. We will have lived the sadness of our Lord's final days on earth. We will have wept with his Mother at the cross and followed Mary to His tomb and gazed in wonder at its emptiness. These things are a repetition of what we do each year, and these days before the onset of the Lenten Season are a time of preparation.

This year is an especially poignant one. You might think that Bats don't keep up with what is going on in the world, but I must remind you that we also live here and love our homes and our country. And so, for this Bat, the happenings in Tucson were very sad and, in many ways, as life-changing as being a Christian. I would point to the great sadness of a Mother, who lost a child, and all the other victims of the event. We might never know all of the reasons for this terrible tragedy. It might never be set down in a book for us to read. We can read of our Lord's terrible death in the Bible, and we relive it every Lent and, often, for a long time after that. It is worth pondering at any season of our church year. We watched as the Angel appeared to Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, the birth of the most remarkable baby ever born, the travels of the Magi, the Star, His earthly life and death and His transcendent resurrection.

His message to us was one of love and peace and goodness. I will ponder these things during my preparation for Lent. I will pray that His message resounds once more to men of good will. I will hope with all my tiny heart that whatever caused the tragedy of Tucson will not happen again and that all of us will learn from it. The message is simple, but sometimes living the message is hard. Bats, of all creatures, know that being different is not always a good thing. Often we are not accepted by others. We know prejudice, but we also know that killing is not an answer and that ugly words and actions only breed more ugly words and actions. This Lent, especially, I will try to learn the lessons of tolerance and acceptance of others. I will guard my words for they can wound. I will clear my heart of hateful thoughts, love my neighbor as myself, and try to live as a child of the Father, who makes no distinction of race, creed, color or any other thing that would set His children apart from one another.

And so, as my preparation for this Lent, I will use these words of Hymn 654 as my guide:

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray;
To see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Time to make our Father proud. Blessings from Bede

In Our Next Issue:



Emerging Grace