



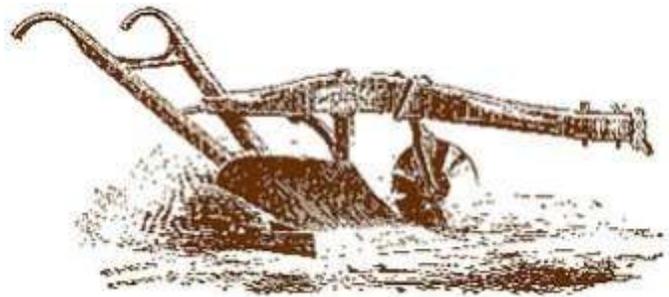
The Bells of Saint Mary

March 2011

With My Hand on the Plow: Emerging Grace

As you walk by the door to my office, you will see on the door a sticker that says “Grace Happens”. It has been on my door since the day I moved into that office, July 1, 2007. It is something that I believe. More than believe, it is something that I can witness to as truth. My life is a witness to that statement.

From the adoption of both of my kids, to my ordination, to my many years of being with Deborah, to the work we have done together to re-build our church since my arrival, the list continues on a daily basis of awareness of the presence of the Living God in my life and in our midst. Grace Happens.



The call to ministry we share, to *“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”* (Matthew 28: 19-20 NRSV), never diminishes or changes. What we must do is live into the call. What we must do is to understand that since Grace Happens our job is to share the life we live inside the Grace Margin created for us by Jesus in our lives. It determines our existence. It sets the course for all our actions. We, who are the most blessed of all people, must share our blessings with others. Scripture is so clear on this subject. We are

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not to hide our light...we are to share it with others. We are to invite others to be part of this feeling of Grace that we have. We are to give away what we have, our knowledge, our treasure, our lives to others so that they can join us in the Grace-filled life. As we gain clarity on what that means, what that feels like, we are better equipped to be disciples and tellers of the message. Emerging Grace is all about that.

At the end of March, St. Mary's will partner with St. Peter's for a weekend workshop entitled Emerging Grace. The brainchild of the Rev. Eric Law, founder of the Kaleidoscope Institute, a program dedicated to "competent leadership in a diverse, changing world", Emerging Grace will provide ways for a small group of us to learn

new ways to reach out beyond our church walls, to spread the word about St. Mary's to our community. In the initial phase of the work, there will be eight lay leaders trained for each congregation. Those eight will in turn, be charged to train eight more, each, so that we will begin to grow our congregation in the skills of evangelism in a new way, an emergent way that takes the church to the community, instead of waiting for the community to come to us.



*Children assisting with the February 27th service.
(Mike Munson photo)*

It is my belief that ours is a wonderful and loving congregation. It is my belief that **God has called us together to share what we know and believe about God's presence in our lives, and to understand more fully, why our hearts are so full of love and gratitude...so full that we need to tell others. I look at the work we do in Outreach ministry.**

I see Fitch Hall filled for the Senior Saints Luncheon or the Spring Tea and understand so much about our congregation. I see your dedication to the Red Shirt Project and the Good Samaritan House, and know that it is the love of God that

makes these projects happen. That God has filled each of you with a knowledge of love and graciousness is so clear, so easy to see when I see you in ministry. From our Stephen Ministers to our Lay Eucharist Visits, from Holy Rollers and Casserolers to our Communication Team and E-Mail blasts; phone tree calls and our website...we are busy and active in ministry. But it is time to take all of these gifts of ministry that we share with one another, and begin to share them with more and more people who do not currently attend this church.



Deacon Judy Lin proclaiming the Gospel lesson in Taiwanese, and Jared Richardson read it in English.

(Mike Munson photo.)

At our Annual Meeting I said these words to you:

The key to growing our church is three fold: one, it is entirely up to you to invite someone to church. There are 145 of you that come to church with regularity, and if you will bring somebody with you, then our church will grow. I promise you good liturgy, done well, with wonderful music, lively preaching, and a welcoming, loving community of believers to share your friends with. If you get them here, then we have a good chance of keeping them with us...but first, you have to get them here. Be proud of your church...I am.

Two, get involved in the ministry of our church. The first call from God is to service. Let me say that again. The first call from God is service. God wants you to serve Him. When you serve Christ's body, the church, you are serving God. Come around. Come visit us. Stop and chit-chat for a minute or two. Mow the grass. Pull some weeds. Help the Altar Guild. Come to classes. Be a greeter. Be an usher. Be involved. The church is here for you...now you be here for the church.

Third: Nobody likes a grumpy church. If there is something you don't like...tell me. I have no chance of reading your mind, or addressing your needs if you

don't let me know what they are. I want you to be happy in your life and relationship to the church. Seek happiness. Remember that God wants you to be happy. Try starting each day saying "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." And then get out of bed and begin your day.

So there it is. We have the chance here to engage in some new ways of looking at and doing ministry. I want you to join in, wholeheartedly, with the **process. Don't be afraid of change...embrace it. It does not mean that we will be turning away from who we are...it means we will be turning to the call from God to share what we have and know with others. It means we will be walking confidently with God at our side. It means we will be doing whatever we are doing together...and together is how Jesus sent out his disciples, and is how we will be sent out as well. You are equipped with your ideas, your hearts, and your love. We need to focus on some ways to effectively share them others...so we will begin by sharing it with your church...so that we may learn how to welcome others to the Grace Margin that is St. Mary's. There is a banner that hangs in the hallway next to Dave's room that reads "It is Good to be Here!" And so it is, and I sure am glad you are here.**

With my hand on the plow,
Fr. Michael



*Rev. Chuck Stacy brought a spare ballot from the first free elections in South Africa to the February 6th service.
(John Beeler photo)*

The World
by
William Robert Brown

The world is a wonderful playground for those who are able to play;
it offers a lot to them what has got,
to them what is able to pay.

The world offers fun and excitement to those who can handle peace;
who like to be told to go for the gold
your kicks and your licks from the chase.

Now, life is nice when you're healthy, with love of life in your eyes;
yes, life is nice when you're wealthy, just healthy, wealthy and wise.

There's more to life than adventure, the blessings money can't buy;
the love from a friend who's true to the end;
the help from a kind passerby.

Now there's a mys'try to living,
yes there's a secret to learn,
that if your heart is in giving,
the Lord out gives in return.

The world will not help you to heaven,
it promises pie in the sky;
you have to beware,
you have to take care you don't miss the bliss by and by.

The greatest joy you can dream of is when you kneel on your knees the Lord will
fill you with His love the moment that you believe.

So don't let your status depress you,
and don't let your faith come apart;
just keep up your chin thru thick and thin,
and you will find peace in your heart.

The glorious scheme, the Lord will redeem,
for you are the Lord's work of art!

Submitted by Deacon Judy Lin.

We are His hands

The Outreach Committee is sponsoring two projects in March that are targeted toward Lompoc's homeless and/or needy residents:

- 1) Peanut butter and jelly will be collected in a container in the narthex throughout March. Small to medium plastic jars are the best options.
- 2) Personal size soap, shampoo, toothpaste, and other toiletries will also be collected.

The food items will be delivered to the Lompoc Food Pantry for distribution. The toiletries will be distributed through the Bridge House.

Questions? Please contact Peggy Gould @ 733-4892 or Molly Gerald @ 737-1809.

STEPHEN MINISTRY TRAINING COMING SOON

Stephen Ministers are lay caregivers who help priests and congregations provide personal caring ministry for as long as people need it. Their role is not to solve problems for people, but rather to help them -- through prayer, trust, and support -- to find strength and courage.

Stephen Ministers usually serve for at least two years, after an initial 50 hours of training. Training focuses on the importance of prayer and listening, and how to provide support and encouragement without rushing in as an adviser or problem-solver.

St. Mary's is offering this training with classes beginning March 25. There is a \$50 cost of materials, but some financial help is available. If you are a good listener and this ministry is calling to you, please let Linda Everly, 733-3969, Kay Rowland, 733-3383, or Nancy Straight, 733-3868, know as soon as possible. You may also call the church office. It is a very rewarding ministry and you will receive lots of support from your fellow caregivers.

Linda, Kay, and Nancy



OPPORTUNITY - *Would you like to assist in hosting? Thursday, April 7 St. Mary's will host Bishop Mary and the clergy from Deanery 1. Small pot luck . Let me know if you would like of to prepare salad, sandwiches, drinks or dessert. Please call Suzy Griffin at 733-0831.*

Thanks Suzy for being the contact.



March Birthdays

Isla Hill	3/02
Sophia Smith	3/02
Boyd Bonnell	3/08
Scott Coe	3/09
Richard [Skipp] Frenk	3/09
Heidi Holdsambeck	3/09
Alexandria Adams	3/12
Kiara Ricci	3/12
Edythe Ortiz	3/15
Dan Unrue	3/15
Roger McConnell	3/17
Gabriel Belizavio LeRoy	3/19
Lara Schmeiser	3/19
Louise Larson	3/20
Keith Wright	3/26
Kathleen Clarke	3/29
Nancy Faragan	3/31
Dylan Prothero	3/31
Irene Cunningham	3/31

Sunday Eucharist
8:00 AM and 10:00AM

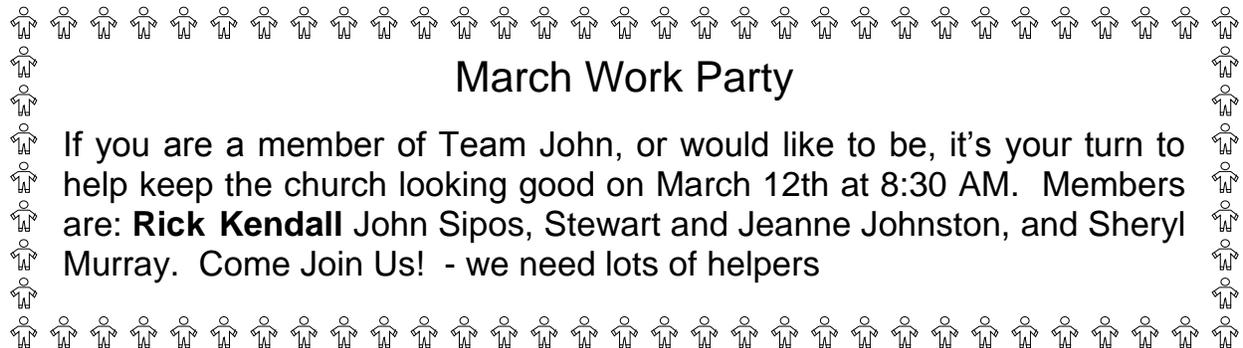
Church Office Hours
Monday - Thursday 10 AM - 4 PM

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E-Mail Addresses:

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vestry@stmaryslompoc.org
- Bells Editor:
john.beeler@verizon.net

To keep up to date on church events, please visit our website www.stmaryslompoc.org often, especially the **calendar** page in the menu on the left margin.



March Work Party

If you are a member of Team John, or would like to be, it's your turn to help keep the church looking good on March 12th at 8:30 AM. Members are: **Rick Kendall** John Sipos, Stewart and Jeanne Johnston, and Sheryl Murray. Come Join Us! - we need lots of helpers

Financial Statement

(As of January 31, 2011)

	As of 01/31/2011
Undesignated checking & savings	\$74,806
Designated checking *	\$43,619
Parish mortgage	\$349,338

	Actual Jan '11	Budget Jan '11
Income	\$30,155	\$24,683
Expenses	\$27,718	\$26,705
Net income/(loss)	\$2,437	(\$2,022)

BURN the MORTGAGE fund:	\$47,893
Transfer to General Fund in 2010	\$36,000
* BURN the MORTGAGE Designated Acct.	\$11,893

Looking for the
Calendar?
Click here.



Bede the Bat

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

Question: are you good at taking tests? When you were in school and the teacher announced a pop quiz, did you panic or were you certain that you'd make a decent grade? ("Decent" meaning at least a "C" so your parents wouldn't yell or threaten drastic measures like grounding, no phone, no TV or whatever would make your life a dreary mess for a week.)



There are all sorts of tests in life. Not all of them have to do with school. Trials and snares are everywhere you look. For instance, a figure skater works and practices, suffers injuries and then goes out for his competition program and falls and falls again. What happened? So does he give up or fix what's wrong? There's a great program waiting to be performed and the next time he skates to center ice, it's there. Then there's the man who has worked hard all his life and then, suddenly, he's laid off. Now what? Will he give up or keep going until he finds another job? You know the answer. He'll prevail. Then there's the medical test. Bad news. Where to go from there? You've got the right answer again. Through faith and medicine, you get well. It's a matter of faith in yourself and faith in God. It is that feeling that God's grace is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. To feel this is to know that we, too, can overcome the difficulties that beset us.

The reason you know the right answers to these tests and trials is because of who you are. You are a Child of God. You have been taught by the example of Jesus, whose trials were the most fateful and faith-driven in all of human history. He asked that the time of trial (the cup) be taken away. He knew what he would face and, because of the manner in which he faced it and what the grade would be in the end, we are enabled to have the faith that we, too, can overcome. Our failures, our fear of failing and our eventual outcome depends on how we face those demons. Our faith and our courage are illuminated by the courage and faith of Jesus. The skater's faith that he can overcome and excel, the man's faith and persistence and the person who received the poor medical report, but who believes he can win in the end -- all of these people are led by the example of the One who overcame it all. He overcame the world.

Sooner or later, we all face trials. Some are merely blips on the radar screen of life. Some are matters of pride, while others are life-threatening. Jesus faced His trials with faith in His Father's plan. Surely our small trials are no match for His, but we can follow His example and learn from it. Soon we will begin the Season of Lent. As our church moves forward into the future, we will build on what know to be good and true about our heritage. We will move into the future with anticipation. There will be a time of testing and trials, but Lent is a time for giving up old ways and learning new life-giving ways. We know that at the end of Lent is the greatest triumph that ever happened -- Easter morning dawned. May it dawn for all those who seek Him. Lent never lasts forever and joy cometh in the morning. Faith is the operative word.

Blessings from Bede

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 interceded on behalf of those we bring to You now in prayer:

Sally Goetsch, Catherine Gibson, Ron Davis, Almedia Hutchinson,
Rachel Williams, Ella Dunn, Stan Sheldon, Sheila Holley,
Isla Hill and Patty Townsend.

...and the members of our Armed Forces, including:
Mathew Schmieser, Sean Diggs, Brandon Howell, Bill Free, Emily Ortiz
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

Editor’s note: Patty Townsend is one of my cousins in Porterville, CA. She is being treated for breast cancer. Thank You for your prayers on her behalf.

In Our Next Issue:



LENT

Keeping Lent in Your Household

In other centuries, Christians had fixed rules by which to keep or observe Lent. Particularly in matters of food and drink, the Church devised such guidelines as no meat during Lent. In our time, the Church invites us to choose our own ways of renewing our commitments. Among the many possibilities are:

Self-examination and Repentance

The word repentance comes from the Greek word *metanoia*, literally “a change in direction”. Christian self-examination and repentance are not about wallowing in guilt over past choices, but about seeing new choices we can make and finding the support we need to make those choices daily. A father apologizes sincerely to his teenaged daughter. A young girl decides not to participate the next time her friends are teasing the unpopular newcomer. A woman decides to change jobs rather than continue making a **product she doesn't respect. All these people are** choosing repentance: they are changing the direction of their lives.

Prayer, Fasting and Self-denial

The Church links these together as another way to remind us that prayer is not just a set of words we say, but a life we live. In other times, fasting might have meant only one meal per day, taken after sundown. Growing up, many of us might have given up candy for Lent.

In our own day, it might be time that we need to deny ourselves in order to give to others. One person might choose to cut back the time she spends on the computer in order to be more present to her family. Another person might choose to give up television one night in order to help out at his local soup kitchen.

Reading and Meditating on God's Holy Word

Hearing the stories of our heritage, the stories that invite us into new ways of encountering God, ourselves and our world can help us deal with the pressures we face as we strive to make new choices for ourselves and our households.

Things to Do With Your Household

HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN CAN:

- ◆ **Choose a character from the Bible that you wish to learn more about.** After reading his or her story, work together with the children to illustrate or dramatize the story.
- ◆ Encourage each other to make good choices. This week, praise each other for good choices, creative problem-solving and just plain showing up day after day.
- ◆ **If adults in the household participate in an outreach ministry, consider ways you can invite children to share in that ministry.**

HOUSEHOLDS OF ADULTS OR ADULTS AND TEENAGERS CAN:

- ◆ Choose a new way to share scripture with one another throughout the season. Households might pick a book of the Bible to read aloud to one another, or might invite a different household member each night to tell a gospel story to the others.
- ◆ **In the pilgrimage through Lent to Easter, many use the names of Christ to give focus to their prayers.** Invite each person to speak a special name for Jesus, for example, *Shepherd, Bread of Life, Friend, Light, etc.*

Then pray:

Jesus, walk with us through Lent
and bring us to the joy of Easter.
We are waiting for you. *Amen.*

A HOUSEHOLD WITH A SINGLE ADULT CAN:

- ◆ **Choose to read one book of scripture in more depth throughout Lent.** You could pray a different psalm each night before dinner, or plan to read one of the four gospels straight through during the days of Lent.

“In these days, let us add something beyond the usual measure of our service, such as private prayers and abstinence in food and drink. Let each one, over and above the measure prescribed for him, offer God something of his freewill in the joy of the Holy Spirit.”

— St. Benedict
Rule for his monks

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