

St. Paul's News

475 State Street Albany, New York 12203

EMPTYING TO BE FILLED

Lent is the springtime of the Church year, a period of preparation for Easter. God's gift to us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the sending of the Spirit is life in all its fullness. Too often the catastrophe is that there remains an undertow in daily life which carries us away into negativity and forgetfulness. Renewed lives become old again.

It's probably not so strange that Lent has a hard time catching on in the popular mood. For much of contemporary living, centre stage is held by the individual consumer of life operating on his own profile and image to produce a trimmer, more effective person. When religion is a do-it-yourself project, God becomes a value-added asset in the process.

By contrast, the Christian faith promises new life; life in all its fullness to those who open themselves up to God, emptying themselves so that they can be filled with the life that flows from the Triune God.

Lent is not a time for reinventing the self by a supreme effort. It is a time for opening up to God and seeing through some of the

shadows inside us. Jesus the Anointed One faced a swell of temptations in the desert. He saw through the fantasies of power and possession and emerged equipped by the Spirit for his work.

Lent in the desert a time to reduce some of the chronic hype and pressure which plagues



us; a time when we protect ourselves a little more from the daily bombardment of images and stimuli, the pressures which keep us trapped with trivialities.

It is the pressure points in your own life that become the promptings to use Lent to grow in faith. Avoid Mass-Media more and let yourself not hear so much, watch so much, consume so much, so that you can be liberated from the sick hurry which dulls our capacity to hear the still small voice.

Lent is the time to live more simply in order to tighten up

the drumskin, so that God's drumbeat can be heard more clearly in our lives. It is a time for carving out some solitude so that we can become aware of those senses which are deadened in daily life. The choice is yours. You have to decide what is most relevant.

Just giving up chocolate, which can be resumed in a great binge on Easter Day, does little good and can easily fill us with an unhelpful sense of spiritual achievement. Lent is an opportunity for Spring-time cleansing and we can encourage one another in observing it. Why should Weight Watchers have a greater care for one another's progress than followers of Jesus Christ?

Pastor

THE VISITOR

One day, a man went to visit a church. He arrived early, parked his car, and got out. Another car pulled up near him, and the driver told him, "I always park there. You took my place!"

The visitor went inside for Sunday school, found an empty seat, and sat down. A young lady from the church approached him and stated, "That's my seat! You took my place!" The visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing.

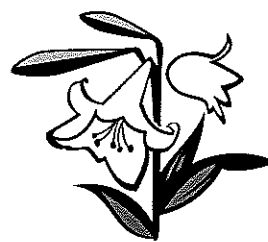
After Sunday School, the visitor

went into the church sanctuary and sat down. Another member walked up to him and said, "That's where I always sit. You took my place!" The visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but still said nothing.

Later, as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood, and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. Someone from the congregation noticed him and called out, "What happened to you?"

The visitor replied, "I took your place."

EASTER FLOWERS



It is time to order flowers to place on the altar for Easter.

Available this year are lilies, mums, azaleas, and tulips. The price is \$10 per plant. Please see Frances VanAcker to place your order.

STEWARDSHIP MARCH 2009: "NEWNESS AND BALANCE"

In March we observe the beginning of spring, that season of the year in which the plants that lay dormant during the winter begin to grow again. It is also a day on which there is balance—twelve hours of sunshine and twelve hours of darkness.

Spring is a good reminder of these two important things about stewardship—newness and balance! By God's grace in Jesus Christ we are freed from the failures of the past and freed to live in the present with purpose and look to the future with hope. How refreshing a new start is!

Balance is the other important thing associated with wise Christian stewardship. The Rich Fool in Luke 12:13-21 lost his stewardship balance and the result was disastrous. He already had more than enough to meet his personal needs and when he was blessed with even more he decided to tear down his barns and build larger ones where he could store up all his goods for himself and take life easy with the attitude of "eat, drink and be merry." Jesus called him a fool because he tried to store up riches for himself but was not rich toward God.

LENTEN SOUP-SUPPER-SERVICE SERIES



Finding a Grown-Up Faith: Five Steps to a Faith that Works

What questions of faith do you struggle with? Do you share your faith with others? Do you question faith and its place in your life? Do you understand clearly Jesus' place in your journey of faith? Journey this Lent toward a wider understanding and sharing our faith:

March 4, 2009

ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

St Paul's Lutheran Church
Pr Rees-Rohrbacher

March 11, 2009

DEEPENING YOUR FAITH

St John's Lutheran Church
Pr. Hempel

March 18, 2009

JESUS AND FAITH

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Pr. Victorson

March 25, 2009

PRACTICING FAITH: FAITH IN ACTION

First Lutheran Church
Pr. Strawn

April 1, 2009

SHARING FAITH

Holy Spirit Lutheran Church
Pr. Knarvik

Join us for supper each Wednesday of Lent starting March 4, 2009 @ 6PM - Liturgy @ 7.

We in the United States of America live in a very materialistic culture. There is the emphasis on getting ahead, building a solid nest egg and saving up for retirement. Now, if these things were kept in a good Christian balance, the picture would not be so bad. The danger is that we try to keep all these material things for ourselves with too little concern about the purposes of God or the needs of others. The Rich Fool had so much he could have at least shared his excess with others in need. He could also have generously given for the support of the "church" of his day. If he had done that then all would have benefited, including him. But he didn't and he died a lost and condemned sinner.

How can we take advantage of new starts in stewardship and maintain a good balance as we manage the material riches God pours down upon us? One simple plan for keeping balance is to adopt and follow the 1-1-8 principle. This plan involves giving the first 10% to God in response to His great love for us and for the support of His work in this world, then saving or investing the next 10% and finally living on the remaining 80%. Mathematically it adds up perfectly. In practice it can be a real challenge, one that seems unreachable to many who may currently be trying to live on 100% (or more) of their income.

It may not work for everyone to adopt the 1-1-8 plan immediately, but what joy God's people can experience as they move in that new direction for balance. Oh, by the way, many Christian stewards have learned from experience that they can give more than 10%, save even more than 10% and live very comfortably on less than 80%.

May God grant to all of us His grace, good judgment and discipline to take advantage of each new start and manage our material blessings in a way that honors Him, blesses others and refreshes us!

CLUSTER INGATHERING

St. Paul's Center for homeless women and their children began in 2001 when St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Rensselaer merged with St. Timothy's Lutheran Church in North Greenbush. Faced with the decision of what to do with a 100 year old building in the inner city, a task force learned that shelter beds for homeless women and children were the most critical unmet need in the country.

Residents receive support and services in the areas of counseling, parenting, homemaking, budgeting, literacy, pediatric and maternal health care, mental health, substance abuse, domestic violence, education, job training and placement and permanent housing.

During the months of March and April, our cluster churches will gather items for St. Paul's Center – new or gently used – pots and pans, bedding (comforters and sheets for single bed only), silverware, mixing bowls, cooking utensils, dishes, cups and glasses, couches, dressers, and baby items (Diapers in various sizes and wipes.)

We'll also accept monetary donations for the Angel Fund which is solely used to purchase items for the mothers and children to help with the basics in setting up a home. Items may be left in the back of the church.

ST. PETER'S LIFELINE

St. Peter's Lifeline is offering FREE INSTALLATION for the month of March. With Lifeline, you are able to get immediate help in an emergency. Lifeline secures an immediate response – just by the push of a button. Lifeline reduces the risk of living alone and offers protection 24 hours a day, 365 days a year! Call now for your safety: Lifeline can prevent an accident from turning into a tragedy. Phone # 525-1004.

SPONSORS FOR BULLETINS AND NEWSLETTERS

Many years ago we had sponsors for our weekly bulletins and monthly newsletters. This greatly helped with the paper and printing costs. It was decided at the Voters' Meeting to start this up again. If you are interested, please call the church office or leave a note in the offering plate. The sponsorship for the weekly bulletin is \$10 and the newsletter is \$50.

K.I.T.S

SAVE THE DATE for a trip to the Mac Hayden Theater on June 28th to see "Hello Dolly". The performance is at 2pm and will be followed by dinner at Winding Brook. The cost is \$40.

LETTERS(From our "Christmas" Family)



To Whom it May Concern,
Thank you so much for the gifts. You have made it possible for our family to

have a wonderful Christmas. We are all very grateful.
John



Happy Birthday- March

- 10. SHIRLEY SPLATT
- 15. VIOLA STEVENS
- 19. DANIEL STEVENS
- 20. ALYSSA MCCOY
- 29. JEAN MULLIGAN
- MRS. JANET SNAY
- TSHEPO SIMPSON

WORSHIP HELPERS

ELDER
Zwelonke Ushe

LENT: A FAST FOR THE SENSES

Our worship and liturgy during the sacred season Lent is a "fast for the senses" - intentional removal or limitation - much as some limit food or drink. We use some unfamiliar ritual as an invitation to re-examine your faith and encourage a re-thinking of your relationship to God, to self, to others, and to the world.

The custom of veiling cross and crucifix during the weeks of Lent calls attention to the sign we contemplate during this holy season even as we deny our eyes. A fast for the eyes suggests, too, a parallel fast for the ears; a fast for all the senses. This can be particularly important in our affluent society, where we are daily bombarded with advertising messages that urge instant self-gratification, at almost any expense.

Our Lenten journey begins each year with Ash Wednesday - one of

the most solemn days in the Christian calendar. The ashes are an ancient symbol of cleansing and a supreme symbol of mortality. Imposition of ashes is a contemporary sign of our connection with the natural world. Human beings, flora and fauna, stones, and stars - - we are all made of the same stuff.

We follow the tradition of omitting Processions until the great entry of Christ on Palm Sunday. Within the Order of the Service, the Gloria is Omitted, and more austere texts and musical settings are used: "Lord, now you let your servant" (Nunc Dimittis) rather than "Thank the Lord," for example. Holy Communion is a strong confession of faith, particularly in its Eucharistic prayers. A healthy restraint during Lent heightens our the joy of our Easter celebration.

Denying ourselves increases awareness and yields a deeper sensitivity to our world. The effect is profound when powerful song and symbols return with flowers at Easter: Wow!

The March Newsletter is sponsored by Annette Kahler. Thank You Annette!!

DATE	FLOWERS	SERVICE STEWARD	Communion Assistant	Coffee Hour
Mar 1		Sheryl Baum	Tina Harris	Voters' Meeting
Mar 8	Andrew VanAcker	Sheryl Baum	Diane Kingston	The Calamaras Family
Mar 15	The Hempels	David Devaprasad	Diane Kingston	Sheryl Baum
Mar 22	Lori Seim	David Devaprasad	Lori Seim	The Kingstons
Mar 29	Mary Boshea—Spring is here!		Tracy Devaprasad	The Kahlers

March 2009

St. Paul's Monthly Planner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																													
1 9:00 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT FORUM 10:00 AM WORSHIP	2 7:00 PM PLANNING COUNCIL	3 7:30 PM DARTS at 1st Cong.	4 6:00 PM Soup Supper/ 7PM Midweek Service at St. Paul's 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal																																																																																
8 9:00 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT FORUM 10:00 AM WORSHIP	9 12:00 PM Albany Maritime Ministry Meeting	10 7:30 PM DARTS HOME vs. New Covenant	11 6:00 PM Soup Supper/ 7pm Midweek Service at First Lutheran Church 8:00 PM Choir Rehearsal																																																																																
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29 9:00 AM SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT FORUM 10:00 AM WORSHIP		31 7:30 PM DARTS Cluster Meeting at First Lutheran Finals	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Feb 2009</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">Apr 2009</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: small;"> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>				S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		
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