

A Holy Lent

The Feast of Christmas, as we well know, always falls on December 25th. Likewise, the Feast of the Epiphany always falls on Twelfth Night, or January 6th. Only these two major Festivals in the Church year have fixed dates. All the rest of the major Festivals of the Church year are set by the Queen of Feasts, Easter. The date of Easter is always the first Sunday following the first full moon following the Spring Equinox. Easter can be as early as March 22 and as late as April 24th.

When Easter is early, Ash Wednesday falls in early February. The season of Epiphany is short and the season of Pentecost is long. When Easter is in late April, the season of Epiphany is as long as it can be, and the Season of Pentecost is shortened. This year Easter is early; Ash Wednesday falls on February 5th. In the blink of an eye we speed from the glory of Christmas to the starkness of Lent.

Lent is intended to be a holy period of simplicity, quietness, meditation, and reflection. In the Book of Common Prayer, the Ash Wednesday Liturgy beginning on page 264, all Christians are called to keep a Holy Lent. We are called to do so by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word.

Self examination is difficult. It is always so much easier to see the faults in others than to see the even bigger faults in our lives. We forget that when we point our finger at someone else, three fingers are pointing at us. We condemn others because we know how guilty we are in our own thoughts, actions, and deeds.

True repentance is likewise difficult to achieve. It is easy to say you are sorry, but much harder to really mean it. It is even harder to actually live like you mean it.

All of us need to spend more time in prayer. Prayer is conversing with God. God desires us to talk to him about everything. Most people are guilty of giving God a few hurried minutes, often as an afterthought. Doesn't God really deserve the best we can offer Him?

Fasting and self-denial. Now there are two words that are no longer fashionable in our society. In a world filled with over-abundance, fasting and self-denial are considered quaint practices used by few. In truth, fasting is a powerful tool to remind us of how much we have and how little others have. Fasting sharpens the mind and allows us to focus on the needs of others. One day a week spent in fasting, with the money saved given to the poor, will open our eyes in a whole new way to what is truly needed for a full and satisfying life. This small action of self-denial will pay huge dividend in our spiritual lives by feeding us as only God can.

Finally, reading and meditating on God's holy Word. How much time do we spend reading the paper, looking at articles on the internet, responding to emails, reading the latest hot novel? While each of these activities can be very useful, bring joy and gladness to our lives, and most importantly help us be better at what we do, they don't help us in our spiritual lives. Only reading, really deeply reading and meditating on the Bible, can help us do that. There is so much in the Bible. People have spent lifetimes reading and studying it. The more they study, the more they know that it is not humanly possible to discover all that can be found between Genesis and Revelation.

Use this Lent wisely. Carve out some time to spend with God and your Bible. Find a quiet place where all distractions are pushed aside so you can really focus on what God is saying. God wants to tell us how deeply he loves each and every one of us. It would be a truly great shame were we not to hear Him because we have surrounded ourselves with too much human noise.

May God always bless and keep you.

With deepest affection.

Fr. David

*"Many things I have tried to grasp and have lost. That which I have placed in God's hands, I still have."
-Martin Luther*

February Happenings to note:

- 1 -Great Hall in use -evening
- 2- Great Hall in use
- 5- **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 5-8pm**
- 6- Ash Wednesday (3 services)
- 7- MOPS 9am
- 8- Stations of the Cross **begins**
-Great Hall in use -evening
- 9- E. Deanery **Ultreya** at Holy Trinity, Wyoming
-Youth Retreat
-Great Hall in use
- 10- ECW Secret Pal Party 1pm
- 13- Wed. service 6pm, Lenten Program **begins**
-Potluck 6:30p
- 14- Senior World Luncheon 11:15am
Happy Valentine's Day!
- 16- Vestry Retreat 9am-3pm St. David's
- 17-**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
- 18- Office Closed
- 21- MOPS 9am
-Ministries in Education afternoon gathering
- 22-Ministries in Education
-Jesus Tells Me So at All Saints, E.L.
- 23-Ministries in Education
- 26- Vestry Meeting
- 29- Great Hall in use -evening
- Mar. 1-** Great Hall in use
- March 2 is St. David's Day-** We will celebrate with a Potluck after the 10:30 service!

Thank You

Submitted by Gail Donovan

*My Dear Friends,
Thank you so much for surrounding Dad, Patricia,
and me with your prayers these past months. Dad
liked to worship at St. David's with me and enjoyed
meeting and talking with many of you. He*

*marveled and appreciated that you were praying
for him and understood why I always speak of you
all as family. Dad's faith was strong and he was
ready to begin his new life, knowing that his
daughters are loved and cared for. The many
beautiful cards, kind words, and hugs are much
appreciated.*

Gail

**Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Feb. 5, 2008, 5pm-7pm**



SHROVE TUESDAY

**If you're looking for a sign from God to get
back to church, this is it!**



Curate's Corner

Lent? Already? Where has the time gone?
Yesterday it was Happy New Year and the day
before was Merry Christmas. Today it's "OK, one
more pancake, but after that, NO MORE!"

Actually, I like Lent. Not in the self-deprecating way,
or the overly penitential (not to be confused with
penitentiary), *(continues on next page)*

but in the it-all-leads-up-to-this way. I like the season because it is dramatic storytelling and it is the time when the Bible most feels like a story worth reading! From the temptation in the desert (Matt 4), the woman at the well (John 4), to the triumphal entry (Matt 21) on Palm Sunday, this story leads up to perhaps the most exciting moment in all of scripture: Jesus' death and resurrection. We know the pieces of that story so well (the last supper, Judas' treachery, Peter's thrice denial, the cross, the darkness, the incredible empty tomb), but it is the story that precedes it that matters. Few of us felt like reading the final Harry Potter before starting the others, nor would we be satisfied only reading that seventh book over and over. In fact, that book only makes sense as the conclusion to what came before it. I feel that way about Lent. It's a supershot of Christian adrenalin so that we can make the climb to our most important moment!

It's hard to feel that way at the beginning of February, I know. It's cold outside. As I write this, there's snow and the forecast for Sunday is 10 degrees. We have just gotten over the birth story, and the Wise Men just showed up for their annual trip to the front of the church. You are no doubt saying "I'm not ready." I don't blame you. I feel about the same way.

But when are we really ready? When do we say to ourselves "Let's do this! Let's do church today!" or "Let's make this the best expression of thanksgiving that we can muster!" or "Let's go out into the community and prepare the Kingdom of God!"? Never. Do we do this when the weather is warm? When the grass is green? How often do we really push ourselves to do the work in which we were called? Is cold and snow really an excuse?

As good Episcopalians, we know doubt uphold the traditions we were taught: give something up for Lent (preferably something decadent like chocolate or caffeine). If you're like my family, you do the opposite, recognizing in Lent the opportunity to take something new on. I'm thinking of splitting the difference for Lent. How about 'doing' for Lent.

I know what you're thinking: "doing? What's that about?" or else "how does one 'do' for Lent?" or else "no, you don't know what I'm thinking!" But anyway, my point is this: I'll be doing for Lent. I'll be standing and sitting and reading and helping and talking and listening and shoveling and writing and praying and teaching and loving for Lent instead of

'being'. I'll respond to the environment and watch for opportunities. Pretty hokey, I know, but not something any of us is really used to. We're used to our traditions and our experiences and our memories and our we've-always-done-that's and our descriptors: happy, friendly, kind, nice, well-behaved, appropriate, fun: that we so seldom use to describe the present or others. Lent is a time for doing!

Of course, we'll be 'doing' with solemnity, but that's sure better than being solemn.

The Rev. Drew Downs
Curate

Joshua the Church Mouse

Boy the church looked really pretty for Christmas. It seems like there were big red poinsettias everywhere! The Christmas tree with the manger under it is always my favorite and I love to hide in the straw behind the donkey. The music Christmas Eve was like listening to the angels sing. Everyone did a really great job making the church beautiful.

Marjorie Allemeier is home from visiting family and thanks everyone for their prayers and support in her loss of Kent. Keep **David Bell** in your prayers as he continues to have pain in his shoulder and has a hard time using his arm. Thanks to **Steve Bolin** who put together framed photographs of the Sanctuary at Christmas to be given to our shut-ins. **Fr. David** began delivering them before he and **Nancy** left on their cruise. **Pearl Brooks and Edith Cole** were busy during the Presidential Primary helping with elections right in our Great Hall. Thanks to **Nancy Burns** for going out to VanAtta's and picking up extra poinsettias given to us by VanAtta's. Keep **Dave Byers** in your prayers as he has been really sick in bed lately. **Larry Byers** continues to make beautiful wooden flag cases to be given for any Michigan soldier who dies in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also makes them for any service member here at St. David's whenever and wherever they die. **Jason Chapin and Tanya Carpenter** and their **daughter Kylie** have moved to Lansing from Portland and are living at Waters Edge on Canal Road. **Kerry Chapin** is looking for a few homes to clean. If you need a housekeeper or other help
(continues on next page)

around the house, let Kerry know. Her rates are very reasonable and her work is excellent. Keep **Bill Hawes** in your prayers as he has lost a lot of weight lately. The doctors are running tests to see if they can find anything. Keep **Teresa Housler** and her daughters in your prayers. Each have been having serious medical problems. **Jon Jackinchuk and Sarah Kolb** have announced that they are getting married on August 16, 2008 here at St. David's. That is really exciting! **Francis and Carolyn Jacobs** lost a huge pine tree in their front yard during the wind storm on a Sunday morning during Advent. It pulled the electrical wires right off their house. Shortly afterwards, a deer ran into the car **Patrick** was driving damaging the car some. **Carey Draeger** will soon be heading south to cook on the sailing ship again. We expect her back for a brief time before heading north to Traverse City to do the same. Keep **Chip Kiebler** in your prayers as he recovers from knee surgery. Keep **Ruby Klanecky** and her son, **Jeff** in your prayers. **Jeff** had a kidney transplant and is recovering. Pray also for the **donor Kurt**, his daughter April and special friend Lois Keep **Sue Kohler** in your prayers as she has been sick and just can't shake the bug. Keep **Dan Paff** in your prayers as he tries to find a teaching job. Keep **Lore Tuttle** in your prayers as she recovers from surgery on her right hand. Exciting news of future weddings; **Paddy Donovan** is engaged to **Paul Rafchke** and **Rachel Stanton** is engaged to **Peter Perez**. Be sure to thank **Adam Williams** for keeping the church parking lot and the sidewalks cleared of snow.

Youth Corner

Submitted by Rev. Drew Downs

As we begin our discernment process for youth ministry, I continue to welcome not only input, but prayer for the Spirit's influence in the development of our Youth Ministry program. This is an opportunity for us to gather all of our resources together to determine the best means of moving forward. This means that we should learn about what we "used to do" and what we've seen "work" somewhere else. But it is also the opportunity for us to say what we like and what we would want. It is a time to determine what is best for the spiritual development of the specific generations represented in our youth program.

Most of us have at least a little bit of knowledge about generation stuff. We know about Baby

Boomers and the World War II generation (or 'The Greatest Generation' according to Tom Brokaw) and Generation X. Most of us know that today's teenagers and early twentysomethings are Millennials (formerly Gen Y). Our infants and toddlers and grade-schoolers represent another generation entirely that has yet to find its voice, let alone a name! In church, like the world around us, we like to talk about people as if not only every 15 year-old were the same, but that every 15 year-old is *always* the same and has *always been* the same. Boy, could that be further from the truth!

And this isn't really about "society today" or the supposed "erosion of the public school system" or any specific external event. This is about an environment that has formed a group of people to be individuals that are different from, but recognizable in their parents. That is why our efforts should be about appealing to these two generations, in whatever way we can. As a Gen Xer, I don't buy into the things that are attempts to 'win' or woo me in a particular direction, but I want to know that I have a stake in the game. Many Millennials have presupposed that stake.

Regardless of the generation to which you belong, I ask that you join me in seeing each of our youngest members as truly that: full members and participants in the life of this parish that is doing the incredible and difficult work of supposing that they may do the work of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Upcoming:

Winter Retreat 2008 on **February 9th-10th**: open to 3rd-8th graders.

We'll be sledding and swimming and hanging out in Portland, MI.

Holding our World in Prayer on **February 22nd- 23rd**.

A diocesan workshop that will be held at St.

David's. Appropriate for many of our youth

and something that should have high

participation by the host congregation.

Nightwatch: Sr. High on **March 29th -30th**.

I'm awaiting updated information about this, but the Sr. High Nightwatch is looking to be in Chicago this year.

DIOCESAN MISSION TRIPS SCHEDULED

The Diocese is planning mission opportunities in 2008. The missions will provide hurricane disaster relief along the Gulf Coast. *(continues on next page)*

The first mission is to New Orleans, Friday May 9th through Sunday, May 18th. The second mission is to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Friday, September 19th through Sunday, September 28th.

Episcopal Relief and Development has made a long term commitment to rebuild the Gulf Coast. Devastation from the hurricanes is so massive whole communities have been obliterated. The Diocese of West Michigan is partnering with the Diocese of Louisiana and Mississippi in this endeavor. Both the Dioceses provide accommodations once volunteers arrive at the mission site. Beds, lavatories with hot showers, stoves, refrigerators, phones, snacks, and necessary amenities are at each camp. Mission sites have a director and staff to address each volunteer organization's group and individual needs.

Rebuilding communities continues to be the greatest need of both Dioceses. Volunteers need not possess construction skills. On site crew leaders provide basic instruction before each work day begins. The Diocese of West Michigan will also be providing training opportunities before leaving for each mission. The needs of the mission site change weekly, even sometimes on a daily basis. Transporting individuals, food preparation, serving meals, distributing clothing, counseling, data input, and camp maintenance are all possible alternatives to reconstruction.

Volunteers range from ages eighteen to eighty. All work is valuable, and each mission volunteer makes a significant contribution to Gulf Coast renewal. Qualifications needed are the desire, time, patience, and flexibility to do what is needed to serve Christ for nine days. Of course, skilled labor is always a plus.

Travel to the mission sites will be by passenger vans. There will be an overnight to and from the Gulf Coast. Transportation, motels, and meals to the missions are an expense. That is why each parish in the Diocese will receive a request from the Bishop for a contribution of five hundred dollars to defray volunteer costs. No volunteer will be denied the opportunity of a mission trip experience because of finances.

Parishes can further help the Diocese achieve its goal of fifty (50) volunteers per mission trip. Articles will be sent to Diocesan organizations via email. Please reprint the articles in your publications. The articles will contain details of the missions and who to contact for further information, or submit the names of volunteers.

Beginning in February, speakers will be available to parishes. In many cases, an experienced Gulf Coast disaster relief volunteer will accompany the speaker on a parish visit. A number of parishes now have an E.R.D. Parish Representative who can assist with preparations for the visit.

For more information, or to submit volunteers for either or both missions to Louisiana or Mississippi, contact the E.R.D. Diocesan Coordinator Terry Dorcy at tjdorcy@aol.com, or call 269-349-3625. Terry's address is 2571 Bluestone Circle, Kalamazoo, Michigan., 49009.

YSP

Once again it's time for **St. David's ECW Secret Pal Party**. This year the party will be held on **Sunday, February 10**, with a potluck right after the coffee hour (12:30/1pm). Bring a dish to pass and join us for a meal and fun. Current participants will find out who their secret pal was over the past year and choose a new name for the current year. If you have never participated you are welcome to join in. It is a nice way to meet the other women of St. David's. New members, current, and past members are welcome to come and join the fun. If you care to participate for this year, fill out the triplicate sheet that will be located in the mailroom and drop it in the Valentine box. Any questions, please see Carolyn Jacobs or call her at 622-1983.

Area Episcopalians sponsor new movie

Submitted by Deacon Drew

On **Friday, February 22nd at 7:00 pm at All Saints Church in East Lansing**, there will be a special viewing of the new documentary **For the Bible Tells Me So**. The film is open to the public.

The following is excerpted from the film's website:

Can the love between two people ever be an abomination? Is the chasm separating gays and lesbians and Christianity too wide to cross? Is the Bible an excuse to hate?

Through the experiences of five very normal, very Christian, very American families -- including those of former House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt and Episcopalian Bishop Gene Robinson -- we (continues on next page)

discover how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child. Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, Harvard's Peter Gomes, Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Reverend Jimmy Creech, FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO offers healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity.

And where does St. David's fit into this discussion? How has our response to recent controversy over sexuality affected the way we are perceived in the community? Join us for the viewing of the film on the 22nd with co-hosts the Rev. Kit Karlson (All Saints) and Carol Mader (St. Augustine's) and a discussion afterward.

The sponsors of the film are the Lansing Area Episcopal Project (LAEP) and the Lansing clericus of the Diocese of Michigan. LAEP is an organization that convenes representatives from the Diocese of Michigan and Western Michigan, including St. David's, in a joint ministry to the greater Lansing Area.

Directory Changes:

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Ash Wednesday Services
Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes:
7am, Noon, 6:30

Lent Service Schedule:

Sunday: 8am, 10:30am (with choir)

Wednesday: 6 pm
6:30p Potluck, 7:15p Lenten Program

Friday: 9am, 7pm Stations of The Cross

Newsletter DEADLINE for March Edition is February 17.

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