

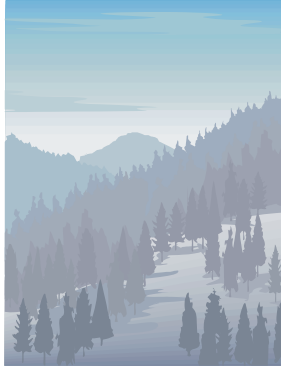


St. Mark's Epistle

March 2008

View from the Mountain...

During these later days in February, my view from the mountain has been snow...and more snow. I have to admit that I've had the February blues which normally hit me each year, but when the thermometer registers minus 10 and the high for the day is 15 degrees F then the blues settle in like the snow that has



lain on the Rectory lawn for the past three months. In March, as a gal from the South, I've been used to the promise of the first crocuses, daffodils, and the blossoms of forsythia. Living here, I know not to look for that until May. As I listen to members of the parish as you gather at various times through the week, formally and informally, I suspect I'm not alone in this longing. That is, unless it is the thrill of ice fishing, snowmobiling, or skiing that gets your blood pumping - then you might not be looking for the crack of the ice as the thaw of spring arrives.

In the midst of this we have Lent; a season of letting go, sorting through, and living with the starkness of the barren landscape of our inner lives. We long for spring to come and Lent to be over with Easter bringing the promise of spring and new life. We've been living this out liturgically with the omitting of alleluias and no flowers on the altar. We've stripped down our morning service to omitting our songs. Besides experiencing the beauty of the service where there are greater periods of silence, we may just come to appreciate and hunger for the joyful music we make for the glory of God, even if it comes from a digital machine. We're a congregation that struggles to have quality musical offerings without a musician. Living into this - not trying for a period of time to make it work - I hope we will find our prayers more focused

for finding a way to have a church musician for our parish, which is critical for the spiritual enrichment of our parish life. Yet, we have been blessed to have "Gil," our digital musician playing for us each Sunday, and as we live in this in-between place and trust that God will make a way for us.

I acknowledge that I've asked a lot of this parish, especially in the shift in our morning worship times, but more so, in asking you to be open to new patterns of worship. We are Episcopalians, and we like the nicely worn groove of our place in the pew, the familiar prayers of our collective memory banks. Thank you for stepping up to the challenges that change brings and saying, if not by word, through your presence each Sunday, that you are willing to embrace a future that God is creating for us here at St. Mark's Episcopal Church.

In my prayers this week, I've been remembering with thanksgiving one person who was a tie to a past time in this parish, and that is Fr. Art Parker. Word came early this week that Fr. Parker died of causes that have yet to be made known to us. Many of you are experiencing a loss of a friend and mentor in your faith life. The effect of his leaving the parish almost eight years ago has been an echo that has resonated in the parish's sense of loss and longing to hold on to the past.

Acknowledging this has been part of the parish's healing process and giving thanks for his life is an important part of our on-going story. I've been asking myself what Fr. Parker, as Priest in the church, would appreciate as a way of honoring his gifts of ministry and friendship. I sense that, rather than a memorial service where we would get caught up in eulogizing him, that we make monetary gifts toward something we can use within the liturgical life of this parish. This could be a new altar hanging, a chasuble and stole, or something else that would be a more lasting memorial of his life in the Church and in particular, in this parish. I am going to be speaking of this with the Vestry and

the Alter Guild, and we will let the parish know in the near future how you may respond and participate in making an offering of thanksgiving for his life and ministry.

Only a few more weeks and we will walk the way of the Passion of Christ. We do this hard thing, trusting in the promise of new, restored hearts, minds, bodies and spirits. We are able to walk the way of the cross because the most real thing of our life together is that we are Easter people, even when we're in the wilderness of Lent. *Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!*

Blessings, Ellen

Children and Holy Week...

Holy Week, which begins with Palm Sunday, is a very "liturgy intensive" time for children and adults. Most parishes will celebrate Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday. Older children (and their parents) will benefit from some instruction on what to expect if they are to participate in these liturgies. The focus for young children should be Easter Sunday with its joyful celebrations. We begin this at St. Mark's with an afternoon Easter Egg Hunt & a Movie at the Parish House (this year at 3:00 p.m.)

Our task for planning programs in the parish for this Lenten journey need to consider the needs of children, as well as adults. We must, first of all, allow children to be children. Our task at church is to provide a welcoming and safe environment for children to grow in their faith. Planning scaled down versions of adult activities is not always the best avenue to take. Children, by learning Bible stories, participating in the church's liturgy, and feeling valued and welcomed by all, are gathering the building blocks of their faith foundation.

We ought to be able to plan Lenten programs for children that assure them that Jesus, that tiny baby in the Christmas pageant a few months back, is the friend and Savior. Their lives will have many "Lenten moments" to deal with, but we must all remember that we are "Resurrection people." Sundays, even in Lent, are feasts of the Resurrection. ***"Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Alleluia."***

Resource: Earthen Vessels: A Newsletter for Christian Educators, Ms. Donna Triplet

Fr. Arthur Parker...

Fr. Arthur Parker, who served our Parish for 12 years from 1988-2000, passed away on Monday, February 25, 2008 of a massive coronary. He leaves his son, Stacy, daughter-in-law Kim, and two grandchildren, Drake and Olivia. If you would like to send condolences to the family their address is: 115 Pinecrest Dr, Gilford, New Hampshire 03249. Fr. Parker will be remembered for his great sense of humor, his jovial laugh and for helping to make St. Mark's Vestry a true "working vestry." As Rev. Ellen mentioned in her "View from the Mountain" we will be selecting an appropriate way to honor his contributions to our parish at a later date and will be sure to let everyone know how they can contribute.

~Karen DeOrdio

Mission Updates...

The Knit 'n Stitch Prayer Ministry has welcomed three new members recently...Shirlene Czaja has joined us beginning to crochet again and is so willing to get on with projects to help others. Karen DeOrdio, having just retired, is with us and also learning to crochet, and Pat Linscott, who is so busy, is quite the knitter, though she is used to 4 needle knitting and we only use two...we can all learn a lot from Pat! What a joy it is to have three new members bringing our group to 11. How the Lord has blessed us all. God hears our prayers for others and our fellowship with one another is outstanding.

We also have two home knitters...Jean Palano and Emma Morin who cannot join us on Mondays but contribute projects that are outstanding. Between the two of them, they have made shawls, lap robes, and so many scarves...they keep their hands busy knitting, crocheting, and praying for others...actually that makes our group total 13! A big thank you to both: Jean and Norma.

The Leprosy Project has received an enormous number of stamps in the past month...one large bag and many envelopes full of cancelled stamps (cut correctly leaving part of the envelope) have been placed in the Leprosy Box in the back of the church. Thank you all for bringing them in, God will bless you for all you do for his children.

I must tell you about one of our shut-ins...she will know who she is...she has sent me an envelope of cancelled stamps along with money to help with the cost of mailing...she does this every few months. This is such a selfless act on her part; the love of God is in her heart as she passes these stamps along to me. This is her ministry as she is home bound and what a wonderful project for her to be doing. Each time her envelope arrives at my home, I feel so blessed to know her.

Our Prayer Chain ministry has a new coordinator...me, Barbara Fiske. Terry Molleur has stepped down as the prayer chain e-mail contact person to give her time to work with the altar Guild. As the new contact person for prayers, I will be working with Meta Cardin (as Terry did) and can be contacted via e-mail at Fiskebarbara@verizon.net or by phone at 413-743-0289. Meta can be reached at 413-743-2203.

Our prayer chain is strong and has had so many prayers answered...the Lord has been good to all of us as we remain faithful to his request to pray without ceasing.

~Barbara Fiske

Macaroon Cookies...

14 oz. shredded coconut

14 oz. Can sweetened condensed milk

2 tsp. Vanilla

Mix all ingredients together and drop by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 8-9 minutes, until edges start to brown.

Variations:

add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup baking cocoa for chocolate

or

add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of crushed, slivered almonds and top w/melted chocolate.

Enjoy!

~Carol Tetlow

Promise of Summer Festival...

Coming Saturday, June 7, 2008, St. Mark's Episcopal Church's *Promise of Summer Festival*, featuring a plant sale, baked goods, arts & crafts, along with "good eats" on site. A quilt/wall-hanging will be donated and raffled. If you'd like to be on the planning team, please contact Pastor Ellen as soon as possible. More information will be coming later in March & April.

~Rev. Ellen

Girl's Nite Out...

Our first "Girl's Nite Out" is planned for March 27th. Lenten obligations, Holy Week and Easter will be behind us and we'll be able to relax and enjoy each other. If one of you ladies out there would like to organize March's dinner, please talk to Terry Molleur. It's really easy, and a duty we agreed to share at the very first "Girl's Nite Out." Please mark your calendars and get ready to share a good time. Details will be published in the church bulletin and posted on our website www.stmarksadams.org.

~Terry Molleur

The Great Vigil of Easter & Easter Sunday...

As part of the Easter celebration, we will have the first service of Easter on Saturday night, March 22, as the light begins to dim. This is *The Great Vigil of Easter*. More and more this first service of Easter is becoming a norm for Episcopal Churches and this will be the first time that we will add it to our schedule at St. Mark's.

What is this service like?

The Service begins with candlelight. While the congregation is in the darkened nave, holding their own candles, turned toward the door, we will light a new fire on the portico. From this fire, which is blessed, the Pascal Candle is lit and as it is processed through the nave, those in the pews will light their candles from the Pascal Candle. Once the priest, liturgical team and choir are in their respective places, the Exsultet is sung (see the Book of Common Prayer, page 286-87). What follows are prayers and readings from the Old Testament which tells the story of the Passover of God and the new life that God brings to hearts, minds and bodies. We bless the waters of Baptism that we share in Christ and re-affirm our Baptismal vows. Then, we light the altar candles and proclaim "Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia."

The service continues in the format with which every one is familiar when we have Eucharist. What a wonderful way to begin Easter, after having gone through the Good Friday mystery! What a way to teach our children about the beauty and wonder of Easter. We will continue with the Easter celebration on Sunday morning, March 23, at 9:00 a.m.

Dr. Dwight Killam will be the guest organist for the Saturday and Sunday Easter services.

What is the Exsultet?

The Exsultet (Latin for "rejoice") is one of the most beautiful vestiges of solo repertoire that has survived the nearly 2000-year history of Christian music. The glorious singing of the Easter Proclamation is a song of praise unique and unequalled in liturgical hymnody. If it is not possible for a deacon to chant this hymn, a priest or a layman may do so, although with certain adaptations. The Exsultet is structured in three sections. The first is a poetic "fanfare" with three exclamations, each beginning with, "Rejoice," (Exsultet in Latin). Then follows a sort of "Preface," making up the body of the hymn, wherein the parallels between the Old Testament Passover and the joyful Resurrection of Christ are extolled. The Exsultet ends with a prayer that the Almighty Father accepts the offering of the Paschal Candle and the Church's evening sacrifice of praise."

Easter Memorials...

If you wish to make a donation toward Easter lilies, please submit it to the parish office no later than Thursday, March 13. List your name and the name(s) of the people you would like to honor, the slip below can be used if you wish:

EASTER MEMORIALS

Your Name: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

St. Mark's Youth Council...

*Invites you to attend their
Second Easter Egg Hunt
w/Dinner & A Movie*

- WHEN:** Saturday, March 22nd
- WHERE:** St. Mark's Parish Hall
- TIME:** 3:00 pm
- MOVIE:** To be announced
- DINNER:** Provided by the Youth Council
- RSVP:** raggedcfan@yahoo.com or amajoa@verizon.net by March 9th, please!

~Joann Delisle

Holy Week Schedule...

- March 16:** Passion Sunday/Liturgy of the Palms
- March 19:** 7 pm, Stations of the Cross
- March 20:** 7 pm Maundy Thursday Service & Vigil of the Reserved Sacrament at the Altar of Repose (Be sure to sign up on sheet in the back of the church.)
- March 22:** Children's Egg Hunt: 3:00 pm
The Great Vigil of Easter: 7:00 pm

From the Mouths of Babes...

Higher Power

A Sunday school teacher said to her children, "We have been learning how powerful kings and queens were in the Bible times. But, there is a higher power. Can anybody tell me what it is?"

One child blurted out, "Aces!"

Say a Prayer

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Johnny, wait until we say our prayers."

"I don't have to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do," his mother insisted, "we say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Johnny explained, "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook!"