



The Wider Circle

"Shape a circle ever wider and a people ever free"

Volume 15 Number 3

March 2017

March Dates:

- 1; Ash Wednesday
- 2; Lenten Prayer Program begins
- 5, 19; Sunday School
- 12, 19, 26; Adult Forum

Upcoming Dates:

- April 9; Palm Sunday
- April 13; Maundy Thursday
- April 14; Good Friday
- April 15; Great Vigil of Easter
- April 16; Easter Sunday
- June 10; Capitol Pride Parade

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Letter from the Rector

Dear Friends,

One of the gifts the Episcopal Church has to offer us is a way of thinking about time, the rhythms of the year, and an alternative calendar to order our lives by.

After Thanksgiving when the culture gears up for secular celebrations of "Christmas," we are invited into the season of Advent in which we anticipate and prepare for Jesus' birth.

In the winter days of

January when the days are shorter and it gets dark earlier, we are invited to celebrate Epiphany, the season of light.

And when the waning days of winter are giving way to early spring,
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Lenten Program: Contemplative Prayer

Please join me for a six week Lenten program focused around personal intention, prayer and opening to God. We will meet on Thursdays at 7pm in the church sanctuary starting March 2nd (the day after Ash Wednesday).

My intention is for our group to support one another as we move through prayer, silence, reflection and sharing from the heart.

The theme for this Lenten program is: "rekindling the flame." Amid this year's difficult current events, I have found myself fo-

cused on light as a symbol of hope and spiritual sustenance.

While in the news and in my Facebook feed expressions of anxiety and anger have in some cases exceeded my ability to absorb them, I am also noticing something remarkable. This remarkable thing is a growing flame of loving kindness and faith.

People are coming together to be trained in non-violent intervention when witnessing racism and harassment. Communities are publicly welcoming and committing to support

immigrants, members of the LGBT community and other groups that feel threatened in the current climate of our country. People are joyfully knitting hats for marches and making food to support people travelling to attend marches.

We have seen this at St. George's. People are, in essence, participating and coming together. The altogether useful, mobilizing energy of anger is being channeled into peaceful actions. People are lighting one another's flames in unexpected, unanticipated
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The Wider Circle
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St. George's
Episcopal Church
Glenn Dale Parish
P.O. Box 188
7010 Glenn Dale Road
Glenn Dale, Maryland
20769

301-262-3285
(voice/TTY)
302-262-0666 (fax)

office@
stgeo.comcastbiz.net

Website:
stgeorgesglennedale.org

The Rt. Rev.
Mariann Budde,
Bishop of Washington

The Rev.
Connie Reinhardt,
Rector

Send submissions to:

The Rector,
rector@
stgeo.comcastbiz.net

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel,
editor
jbevandangel@yahoo.com

Glenn Dale Parish Vestry

Roy Peterson,
Senior Warden
Dan Ryan,
Junior Warden

Ingrid Charlton
Diane Clark
Charlotte Colvin
Tim Dangel
Terry Doyle
Mark Fehling
Michael Mangiapane
Jay Tobias

Lee Rowe,
Clerk
Mary Frances,
Treasurer
Ed Neuschler,
Bookkeeper

Mary Rogers,
Convention Delegate
Karen Horrocks,
Alternate

Letter from the Rector (cont.)

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we are invited into the season of Lent. Lent is the forty-day period before Easter which gives us opportunity to assess our relationship with God and the state of our spiritual lives.

It is a time of self-examination, of attempting to tune out the static and tune into what is deeper and more endur-

ing in our spiritual journeys and the teachings of Jesus.

It is a time to reflect on the life and teachings of Jesus and the sacrifices he made, not in a guilt-inducing way, but as an invitation to be clear-eyed about the areas where we fall short and how we can work on those areas – all in order to be more fully who God calls each one of

us to be.

Lent is an invitation. It is an opportunity. It is a gift.

It begins on March 1, Ash Wednesday, and takes us up through the final days of Jesus' life. I hope you will join me for the journey.

Blessings,
Connie+

Sunday School and Youth Happenings

Sunday School dates for March are the 5th and 19th. Sunday School begins at 9:00 am in the classrooms downstairs.

The season of Lent begins on March 1, and for the duration of Lent we will “fast” from both Alleluias in our liturgy and from the instruments the children give out for the final hymn. The instruments

will make their joyful return for Easter on April 16.

Speaking of Lent, a group of our 6-10 year olds have made a Lenten banner which will make its debut on Sunday, March 5.

If you haven't heard, the High School Youth Group will be going on a mission trip at the end of June. The congregation is invit-

ed to support the high schoolers as they continue their fundraising for the trip. Look for announcements at services for their latest fundraiser.



An Invitation to Journey With Matthew

Reading the bible is one of those things many Christians understand is important, and mean to do – but don't always actually do.

As we move into the season of Lent, you are invited to read the bible and

reflect on it with others as we “journey with Matthew” – or read the gospel of Matthew over a fifty-day period. Participants would read the daily selections on their own, then meet weekly to discuss and reflect on the

readings.

Day and time will be determined based on the schedule of those who would like to participate. If you want to learn more or want to sign up, please speak with Connie+.

Vestry Reflection – Learning Through Teaching

In her book, *An Altar in the World*, Barbara Brown Taylor introduces diverse ways to experience the presence of God beyond the sanctuary on Sunday morning stating, “the whole world is the House of God.”

I’ve always had a sense of God’s presence when I am out in nature or hearing or singing music.

This happened in December as I attended a performance of Handel’s *Messiah*. While the Annapolis Chorale sang, the Scripture verses on which a movement was based were projected on a screen. As I read the verses I became intrigued with how Handel treated the scripture musically and with the fact that the life of the New Testament Messiah was told mostly through Old Testament passages.

So I began reading about the construction of the

Messiah. I have been an educator for fifty years and, professionally, have taught ninth graders, college undergraduates and graduate students and teachers subjects such as earth and space science, educational psychology, educational research, and testing and evaluation.

More informally I have taught Sunday school and Bible school. One of the important things I have learned over the years is that if you really want to know something, teach it. My wife was fearless in her willingness to conquer a new topic in order to teach it; I learned this from her too.

During Holy Week in 2014, while in confirmation, I became intrigued with the Jewish law and how it contributed to Jesus’ arrest, trial, and crucifixion. I began to read more about the Jewish Law and ended up teach-

ing the Adult Forum on the Jewish Law and Jesus for four weeks. Later I did the same thing with the Prophets.

I am about to embark on a new adventure for the Sunday Adult Forum during Lent and Advent this year – to examine Handel’s *Messiah* from its Biblical sources. It will be a bit out of order as I will do the Lent and Easter portions in March and the Advent and Christmas portions next Advent.

We will examine the Biblical source of some of the arias/choruses, how Handel presents it, what the original interpretation would have been and how Handel uses it to tell the story of Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection. We will also listen to portions of the *Messiah* and maybe even sing along.

While I have a lot of learning to do yet before the Forum begins on March 12, I am looking forward to the journey. So if you’ve never sung the “Hallelujah Chorus”, come to the Adult Forum March 12, 19 and 26, and April 2.

- *Tim Dangel*

The Sunday Adult Forum during Lent and Advent will explore Handel’s Messiah from its biblical sources. The Forum will meet March 12, 19, 26, and April 2.



Lenten Outreach

At the parish meeting this month, parishioners had the opportunity to cast their votes for the organization which will receive the Lenten Outreach.

The voting was very close, with only 1 vote separating two of the organizations. So the committee decided to divide the Lenten Outreach evenly between the DC Diaper Bank and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

These two organizations both provide assistance to people, but in different ways.

The DC Diaper Bank provides direct service in the form of diapers, wipes, and other needs for young children whose parents would not be able to afford them. They work through a number of agencies in the Washington area including Maryland and Virginia to provide the needed diapers etc for distribution.

Very locally, organizations in Greenbelt, Riverdale, and Landover

receive baby supplies from The DC Diaper Bank and distribute them to people living in our general neighborhoods.

The Southern Poverty Law Center provides legal services to fight discrimination and injustice in several areas. They provide direct service in the form of legal representation, and also indirect service as they work to ensure that rights of people are protected by focusing on legislation, and working toward enactment of laws and practices that will ensure just treatment for vulnerable groups.

They work in 5 separate, yet interrelated areas:

Children's Rights— They work to ensure that vulnerable children in the Deep South have equal opportunities, especially in the area of schools, and protection of children with disabilities.

Immigrant Justice— Here they work to provide workplace protections for immigrants, and also to

ensure that immigrant children receive the education to which they are entitled.

LGBTQ Rights— They strive to protect LGBTQ kids from harassment, and force states to recognize the rights of same sex couples.

Economic Justice— Many people in this country are victimized for being poor. They work to guard against predatory lenders, and for bail system reform to decrease the number of people being imprisoned for being unable to pay bail.

Criminal Justice Reform— They are working to use litigation to end the mass incarceration, and to root out racial discrimination which exists in the system. They are also seeking to reform the Juvenile Justice System.

The Outreach and Social Committee hope that you will support these two worthy organizations in the typical generous St. George's spirit.

The Lenten Outreach donations this year will support the DC Diaper Bank and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Please give generously this season to support their amazing work.

Ash Wednesday Services March 1

This year's Ash Wednesday services are on March 1st at 7 am and 12 noon in the Chapel, and 7:30

pm in the main church. All services include Holy Eucharist and imposition of ashes.





Everyone enjoyed our family day—and hopefully they learned about gratitude too!

In Search of Musicians for Holy Week!

Have your vocal chords cried out, *Why have you forsaken me?* Why not bring them back to life during Holy Week?

We're in search of musicians – singers and others

– who want to resurrect their love of music on Palm Sunday (Apr 9), Maundy Thursday (Apr 13), Good Friday (Apr 14), Great Vigil (Apr 15), and/or Easter (Apr 16).

Talk to Seth (or email seth.stgeo@gmail.com) and let's put the passion back in Holy Week! Any and all levels of participation are welcome!

St George's Episcopal Church, Glenn Dale Parish

7010 Glenn Dale Rd.
Glenn Dale, Md 20769

Phone: 301 262 3285
Fax: 301 262 0666
<http://stgeorgesglennedale.org/>

Mission Statement:

The mission of St. George's is to build a Christian community of love and support that actively seeks and includes all people.

We commit ourselves to spiritual growth through worship and education that empowers us to follow Christ's example in the world.

Contemplative Prayer (cont.)

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ways. This is subversive to darkness, because where our lights live, darkness does not. In this I find potential, hope, strength and a renewed faith.

What is more peaceful and serene than the eye of a flame? Have you ever noticed it, the flame's center all white and blue and still? That is where I find God. That is where prayer comes alive in my life. It is the inner stillness beyond all the hubbub and layers of sounds and distraction, anger and "should" and plans and stuff that distract me. It is the "hello."

It is God speaking.

During this Lenten program, I hope to create a safe and supportive space for us to rekindle our flames, whatever that means for each of us, through contemplative prayer.

There is no right way to pray. I will introduce a variety of prayer forms to help us become quiet. My hope is that in this stillness we may each come to more clarity and rest in God while also holding one another with love and kindness. We all experience God differently; I very much look forward to

learning what rekindles your flame.

What Rumi said about fire speaks deeply to me. Rumi said that "a candle loses none of its light by lighting another." A flame is strong, loving, firm and true. It doesn't yield to darkness. It doesn't hesitate to share of itself. It can seem dangerous to those that don't care for it and tend it. In that flame I see God and I see potential. I am eager to hear and know what you see in God's light and in the quiet of prayer, reflection and supportive sharing.

