

The Episcopal Church of
SS Peter & John
169 Genesee Street
Auburn, New York 13021

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Return Service Requested

The Gospel Messenger

True Worship † Powerful Community † A Heart for the Lost



March 2023

My Sisters and Brothers in Christ;

Grace to you and Peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;

Lent is upon us, and even though Lent and Easter are late this year, it feels like it has come quickly.

Lent is one of my favorite seasons of the Church year. I love the different seasons, because it lets us change some of the rhythms of our everyday lives and how we worship. You may have noticed already some different things in worship on Sundays. There are no Alleluias during Lent. We are confessing our sins at the beginning of the Liturgy, the blessing at the end is replaced with a penitential benediction. Even the music has a different character. All because this season is not about triumphalism, but instead about, reflection, recognition of our flaws and a time to prepare for the Crucifixion and Easter!

Along those lines we will have an adult formation on the Mondays in March viewing videos from Episcopal Relief and Development and discussing together on Zoom. We will also be starting up noon Eucharist on Thursdays. A sign that things are still returning to “normal” post pandemic.

We had a beautiful Ash Wednesday service last week. It made me mindful of some writing from the Old Testament scholar Walter Bruggemann on that very subject;

“An Old Identity Made New Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. —Isaiah 55:6–7

These verses are a familiar call to worship or a call to repentance, not a bad accent for Lent. The face of God shown here is of a Lord near at hand, ready to forgive, a God of grace. But this is a God to whom a turn must be made, a God of demand, a God of demand ready to be a God of grace . . . not just hard demand, not just easy grace, but grace and demand, the way all serious relationships work. The imperative is around four verbs, “seek, call, forsake, return,” good Lenten verbs. But this is not about generic repentance for generic sin. I believe, rather, the sin addressed concerns for Jews too eager to become Babylonians, too easy to compromise Jewish identity, Jewish faith, Jewish discipline—in order to get along in a Babylonian empire that had faith in other gods with other disciplines. The imperatives are summons to come back to an original identity, an elemental discipline, a primal faith. I suggest, moreover, that these are just about the right imperatives for Lent among us Christians. For I believe the crisis in the U.S. church has almost nothing to do with being liberal or conservative; it has everything to do with giving up on the faith and discipline of our Christian baptism and settling for a common, generic U.S. identity that is part patriotism, part consumerism, part violence, and part affluence. The good news for the church is that nobody, liberal or conservative, has high ground. The hard news is that the Lenten prerequisite for mercy and pardon is to ponder again the initial identity of baptism . . . “child of the promise,” . . . “to live a life worthy of our calling,” worthy of our calling in the face of false patriotism; overheated consumerism; easy, conventional violence; and limitless acquisitiveness. Since these forces and seductions are all around us, we have much to ponder in Lent about our baptismal identity. Lent is a time to consider again our easy, conventional compromises and see again about discipline, obedience, and glad identity. And the climax of these verses: that he may have mercy . . . for he will abundantly pardon. Isa. 55:7 The word to the

compromised deportees is that God's face of pardon and mercy is turned exactly to the ones who reengage an identity of faith.

God of grace and demand, you challenge us to reclaim our baptismal identity as those whose lives are built on your call and your promises—not on the easy, seductive forces around us. Stir our hearts that we may engage your transforming word anew and rediscover its power to save. Amen.”

Brueggemann, Walter. A Way other than Our Own: Devotions for Lent (pp. 2-3). Presbyterian Publishing. Kindle Edition.

Grace and Beauty,

John +

Father John †

ON-LINE WORSHIP

Sundays - 10am Worship Service

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/97774056978?pwd=ZytJSVZjWmt3MUdSMk13U1JaaGNLZz09>

Meeting ID: 982 7706 2680

Passcode: 435902

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Other Zoom Worship Schedule and Numbers

Tuesdays – 10am Bible Study

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94333886777?pwd=WnNKSncyQkkzS1g0Yjc3ZGIVbk1PQT09>

Meeting ID: 943 3388 6777

Passcode: 577455

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Wednesdays – 12pm Worship Service

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/95528786615?pwd=Z01DVGdvcG5XeVBIUVRMKzFFVVBjZz09>

Meeting ID: 955 2878 6615

Passcode: 634665

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Monday – Tuesday – Wednesday – Thursday – Friday

MORNING PRAYER – RITE II

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/john.rohde.16/>

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/92662278952>

Meeting ID: 926 6227 8952

Dial by your location

+1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 926 6227 8952

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ac4XCk34Dn>

Vestry Voice

The February Vestry meeting began with an opening devotional. The January minutes were approved.

Our gas and electric is very high. Are we being conservative, are there areas where we might be losing energy and not be aware of, can we get NYSEG to do an energy audit? Father John will contact them and find out about this. The January financials were approved.

The Soup Kitchen has received large donations from the Auburn Elks Club, the Skaneateles Ecumenical Food Pantry and the Prison City Ramblers.

We need to recruit new members. Father John will be starting an in-person weekday Eucharist service starting in March. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday there will be a lay lead evening service. We will be placing an ad in the Citizen listing our Easter Week services.

There is continued concern about security at the church. With starting evening services, we need to be more aware of people's security. No one should walk to their vehicle alone; it should always be two or more people. It was suggested that we get some people together to discuss this issue and come up with some recommendations on things we can do. We should contact the local police department and find out what they can and can't do, what is reasonable and actionable, ask for their recommendations.

The meeting closed with a benediction and blessing by Father John. Next Vestry meeting will be March 14, 2023.

From the Soup Kitchen

With the high price of groceries our numbers are ever increasing. Of course, with the high price of groceries our costs are also ever increasing even if our numbers remain stagnant.

We can always use more volunteers. We have some people leaving for various reasons, vacations, change of work shifts, etc.

What I am really in need of is someone to help me write and follow up on grants. This, for me, is a very necessary but a time-consuming task. If you know of someone in the church, or anyone in the community, that could help me out it would be greatly appreciated.

Peace & Blessings,
David Ward, Director
SSPJ Soup Kitchen
(315) 730-5898



Remember to change your clocks.
Daylight Saving time begins March 12th

Volunteers

We are in need of volunteers to read and/or acolyte at the 8:00 and 10:00 am Sunday services. If this is something that you would be interested in doing, please contact Father John (315-391-3821) or Cathy Darby (315-253-7118).

Lenten Adult Formation

Mondays in March 3/6, 3/13, 3/20, and 3/27 all at 7PM on Zoom

We'll be looking at some videos prepared by Episcopal Relief and Development titled 2023 Lenten Meditations. These can all be found on the Episcopal Relief and Development web site.

3/6

We'll watch this Video prior and discuss on the evening of 3/6

Care of Creation

3/13

We'll watch this Video prior and discuss on the evening of 3/13

Relational Faith

3/20

We'll watch this Video prior and discuss on the evening of 3/20

Restoration

3/27

We'll watch this Video prior and discuss on the evening of 3/27

See As God Sees

You do not need to make all of these sessions, just the ones that might work for you.

This Zoom link will be good for all 4 sessions.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84572537643>

I hope some of you will attend!

John +

Father John †

Rachael Held Evans
10 Fasts & Disciplines

1. **Practice the prayer of examen each day.** This daily spiritual discipline (credited to St. Ignatius of Loyola) invites the participant to concentrate on the experiences of the past 24-hours through four prayerful stages: presence, gratitude, review, and response. Mars Hill Bible Church has a helpful guide [here](#), and A New Liturgy just released [a series of songs, prayers, and Scripture around the examen](#). (For more ideas and variations on the traditional examen, check out [Ignatian Spirituality](#).)
2. **Traditionally, Christians abstained from eating meat during Lent, so consider joining millions of Christians around the world in this fast.** It's a great way to connect with the historical, worldwide church and to become more mindful about the food you eat
3. **For families with children:** Make a [thorn wreath](#) with your family or Institute a [Way of Light wreath](#) or an [Easter Tree](#) (via Ann Voskamp) You may also want to check out this fantastic [list of Lent ideas](#) for families, which includes eating fish sticks on Fridays, making paper chains, donating, and keeping a gratitude jar.

4. **Do a personal or group study around *Forgive Us: Confessions of a Compromised Faith*** by Soong-Chan Rah, Mae Elise Cannon, Lisa Sharon Harper, and Troy Jackson This powerful book provides historical information, reflection, and prayers around Christian complicity in sins against God's creation, indigenous people, African Americans and people of color, women, the LGBTQ community, immigrants, Jews and Muslims. Not only is this book informative, it's also practical, providing well-written prayers of confession and lament (appropriate for both personal and corporate use) as well as ideas for repairing relationships and pursuing justice.

5. **Pray the offices for 40 days.** The Daily Office, or the Divine Hours, consists of four times of prayer each day: morning prayers (Matins/Laudes), midday prayers (Sext), evening prayers (Vespers), nighttime prayers (Compline). If it's your first time praying the hours, I recommend using Phyllis Tickle's *The Divine Hours, Pocket Edition*.

6. Recent news has brought the plight of persecuted Christians from around the world back into our collective consciousness. **Consider devoting a few minutes each day, for 40 days, to learning about and praying for our brothers and sisters suffering for their faith.** For ideas, check out Open Doors and Voice of the Martyrs. You may want to begin by praying specifically for the families of the 21 Coptic Christians recently executed in Egypt. Here are the names of those killed:

Milad Makin Zaki
Abanub Ayyad Atiyah
Majid Sulayman Shihatah
Yusuf Shukri Yunan
Carlos Bushra Fawzi
Bishoy Astafnus Kamil
(brother) Suma'ili Astafnus Kamil
Malak Ibrahim Sanyut
Tawadaros Yusuf Tawadaros
Jirjis Milad Sanyut
Mina Sayyid Aziz
Hani Abd-al-Masih Salib
Bishoy Adil Khalaf
Samuel Alham Wilson
Izzat Bushra Nasif
Luqa Najati Wanis
Isam Bidar Samir
Malak Farraj Abram
Samih Salah Faruq
Jabir Munir Adli

7. **Make or purchase Anglican Prayer Beads** and devote yourself to praying through them three times a day.

8. **Go on a mini-pilgrimage.** Set aside a day (or even a weekend) during Lent to visit a nearby monastery. A couple years ago, I spent a weekend at St. Bernard Abbey in Cullman, Alabama, and it was a really enriching time for me. I especially enjoyed walking through their outdoor stations of the cross. Many monasteries welcome overnight guests and allow them to participate in prayers and meals. Just be sure to

call ahead to make a reservation and learn about the community's policies. Or, visit a church that has a labyrinth and walk the labyrinth, or a church that has a unique work of art you have always wanted to see.

9. **Get creative with what you “give up.”** A few years ago, I gave up sleeping in for Lent and found that fast surprisingly challenging and meaningful. I committed to rising just before dawn each day to pray, which not only broke my night-owl habits but also turned my heart and mind to the significance of the pre-dawn dark in the death and resurrection cycle. As Barbara Brown Taylor says: “...New life starts in the dark. Whether it is a seed in the ground, a baby in the womb, or Jesus in the tomb, it starts in the dark.” I learned a lot in those quiet, dark moments.

Other things you might want to consider “giving up”: social media, cynicism (replace with wonder, compassion, and hope), perfectionism, legalism, TV, sugar, reading authors and bloggers who tend to look and think like you, comparison, etc. **One fast that has crossed my mind this week is the idea of giving up the consumption of people for Lent.** Our culture (through social media, reality TV, celebrity gossip, etc.) has so profoundly commodified people—actual human beings— it's become a phenomenon we hardly even notice anymore. Only recently have I been contemplating the significance of this trend, catching myself in the act of commodifying and consuming other people and also experiencing the pain of being commodified and consumed myself. I'm not exactly sure what “giving it up” would look like, but I'd like to try.

10. Join me in reading *Falling Upward: Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* by Richard Rohr.

Celebrate the life and faith of Harriet Tubman March 10

The Episcopal church is gathering virtually on March 10th for a new observance of Harriet Ross Tubman, honoring her 110 years after the day of her death. By act of 2022 General Convention, this year is the first time she will be honored on this day, prioritizing her as one of the great cloud of witnesses that inspire our faith. All are invited to wonder about this amazing woman together in a zoom gathering March 10th at 8pm Eastern time, and through videos suitable for children and adults, including a welcome message from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

Rev. Will Bouvel and Jen Enriquez are honored to have created an offering that will lift up Harriet's unstoppable and inspiring Christian discipleship. Their previous work in storytelling through their program Tell Me the Truth About Racism informs their approach to wondering about Harriet and exploring how her faith is connected to the many well known (and some lesser known) things that she did.

Their offering will include some video reflections on her life and faith, including a montessori based story of her life suitable for children, and a video pilgrimage to Harriet's birthplace on the Eastern shore of Maryland. Video offerings are posted here. <https://www.tellmethetruthaboutracism.org/tell-me-about-harriet>

The zoom gathering on March 10th at 8pm Eastern time will invite the church to wonder more deeply about Harriet's life and also why we as the Episcopal Church are celebrating her and lifting her up. Register



Calendar of Events for March 2023

Sundays:	8:00 am 10:00 am 12:30 pm	Worship Worship w/Music – Livestreaming Centering Prayer
Mondays:	8:30 am 11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Morning Prayer – Facebook/Zoom Event Soup Kitchen
Tuesdays:	8:30 am 10:00 am 11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Morning Prayer – Facebook/Zoom Event Bible Study – Zoom Event Soup Kitchen
Wednesdays:	8:30 am 12:00 Noon 11:00 am - 12:00 Noon 11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Morning Prayer – Facebook/Zoom Event Worship – Zoom Event Clothes Closet Soup Kitchen
Thursdays:	8:30 am 12:00 Noon	Morning Prayer – Facebook/Zoom Event Worship – In-Person - Community Room
Fridays:	8:30 am	Morning Prayer – Facebook/Zoom Event
Saturdays:	11:00 am - 12:00 Noon 11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Clothes Closet Soup Kitchen



Mon., Mar. 6 th	7:00 pm	Lenten Adult Formation via Zoom
Mon., Mar. 13 th	7:00 pm	Lenten Adult Formation via Zoom
Tues., Mar. 14 th	7:00 pm	Vestry Meeting
Wed., Mar. 15 th	5:00 pm	Ultreya Meeting via Zoom
Mon., Mar. 20 th	7:00 pm	Lenten Adult Formation via Zoom
Mon., Mar. 27 th	7:00 pm	Lenten Adult Formation via Zoom

Jan. 2023 - Actual vs. Budget

		<u>Jan 2023</u>	<u>Budget</u>
INCOME	Offerings	12,365.00	7,885.95
	Other	2,073.33	1,947.50
	Legacies/Bequests	-	-
Total Income		<u>\$ 14,438.33</u>	<u>\$ 9,833.45</u>
EXPENSE	Gas, Electric, water, sewer	3,514.12	1,666.67
	Salary & Benefits	9,445.21	10,195.03
	Insurance	5,141.75	1,333.33
	Other	2,761.35	3,167.50
Total Expense		<u>\$ 20,862.43</u>	<u>\$ 16,362.53</u>
	sale/purchase of securities	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net Income		<u>\$ (6,424.10)</u>	<u>\$(6,529.08)</u>