

ST. PAUL'S MESSENGER

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THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2015

PRICELESS

DINNER CHURCH FRIDAYS IN LENT

The *ancient future*. That is an expression I am hearing used to describe some things that are happening in the Church these days. One of those things is Dinner Church. The *ancient future* suggests that the path into the future is found by revisiting the structures that shaped the Church in ancient times, and renewing them in the present.

Dinner Church revisits the way that the earliest Christians gathered for worship in the time before dedicated buildings, vestments, hierarchy and prayer books. Instead of Church looking like an auditorium where people go to take part in something prepared for them, it looks like an opportunity to create something together. Instead of being a symbolic meal of a crumb of bread and a sip of wine, it is a real meal which includes a Eucharistic action. Instead of people sitting in rows and listening, Dinner Church takes place around the table and has opportunities for conversation and dialog.

Our Dinner Church will be modeled on what they do at St. Lydia's Church in Brooklyn, NY. As you arrive, you will join a team of people who are making preparations. Some will be cooking, or setting up the room, or preparing details of the service. In time, we will sing a song, and take part in an opening prayer. We will bless the bread and share it and then eat for a while. When the eating is about done, we will hear a passage from Scripture and talk about it, sharing stories from our lives. After this we'll pray, clean up together, sing a song, get a blessing and go home.

To a great extent, this format preserves what is best about our previous Lenten Soup Suppers—the food and the chance to hear each other's stories--and it places them in a Eucharistic context while allowing us to create together rather than rely on others to do the creating for us. Perhaps it is an ancient path into the future.

Want to know more? Here's an article you can read:
<http://reflections.yale.edu/article/seeking-light-new-generation/holy-things-holy-people>

Or better yet, a video:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/philfoxrose/2012/08/a-short-video-about-st-lydias-in-brooklyn-ny/>

Dinner Church will happen on four Fridays in Lent: February 27, March 6, 13 and 20 with a snow date on March 27. Please join us for one or all.

LENT BEGINS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18

Do you ever feel as if you're living on autopilot? The epitome of this experience is when you set off by car to go somewhere, and at some point realize that without thinking about it you are heading to somewhere you routinely travel to instead. Our routines and habits can be useful--they give us a respite from constantly having to make decisions about things that happen daily--but left unchecked they can rob us of our lives.

This is why we need the 40 days of Lent at least once a year. Lent is an opportunity for us to interrupt our routine by taking up or giving up something. If I decide to spend 15 minutes each day praying or reading, or decide to give up listening to the radio while I drive or make some change to my diet, suddenly all of my habits get thrown out of whack. Now I have an opportunity—and perhaps even the time—to wonder about all of the things I do with my time and energy. To ask: Are the things that I am doing making me into a more loving person? If I continue in the way that I am going will I get where I want to be? If I refused to act from habit what new opportunities could come into my life?



In the Ash Wednesday Liturgy with which Lent begins we hear, *'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'* These words remind us of our mortality and encourage us to stop and consider what it is we will do with our one, precious life. I encourage you to observe this Lent by doing something to break your usual routine. Don't think of fasting as self flagellation or mortification. Think of it as a way to make space and to bring holy disruption into your life, and then use the space and disruption as an opportunity to reflect and evaluate and change some things around. Turn off the autopilot for six weeks and see what happens. Who knows where you'll wind up and what you'll see on the way?

The Vicar's Column



VESTRY



NOTES

ST. PAUL'S SEXTON

Rosa Blay, St. Paul's sexton for many years, has had to retire due to health issues. The Vestry is sending her a card and small gift on behalf of the parish. Jacque Marceau will be the new sexton and she plans to do the church cleaning on Monday mornings (weather permitting).

The Vicar's Column (CONT'D)

CHANGE IN FATHER JOHN'S POSITION

As of the beginning of 2015, my workweek and compensation have been reduced by about 10%. This came about at my suggestion, as a response to the current reality that our pledges have decreased. The congregation which has grown and contracted at various times over its history has recently gotten smaller again. When I was originally called in 2006, it was to a half time position. In a time of congregational expansion, my hours and compensation were increased to 6/10 time. So this current change is merely a return to what was originally envisioned, and was supported by your Vestry as a way to be responsible stewards of St. Paul's resources.

I will continue to protect Monday as my day of Sabbath, but still anticipate being as available to parish needs as I have tried to be in the past. Loretta Haeger has already volunteered to take on the scheduling of lay ministers as one way to lighten my load. As the year goes forward, I will be in conversation with the Vestry regarding specific responsibilities or tasks that can be transferred to others.

WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY CONVERSATION SERIES

In 2010, the United Nations officially established that henceforth the first week in February is designated as World Interfaith Harmony Week "to recognize the moral imperatives of all religions, convictions and beliefs call for peace, tolerance and mutual understanding... to encourage the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill....to recognize the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions in enhancing mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people."

Since 2010 each year hundreds and then thousands of events have been held worldwide to acknowledge that all people of goodwill share common values which provide a strong platform for harmony in our communities. Diversity within Judaism was held last Sunday, February 8, and two conversation sessions remain:

February 15 at 2 PM, First Church of Christ, Mansfield Center Rte. 195 & Rte. 89, **Diversity Within Christianity**, Rev. Dr. Lois K. Happe, former Regional Minister, Ct Conference of the United Church of Christ (CTUCC)

February 22 at 2 PM, Friends Meeting House, Hunting Lodge Road and North Eagleville Road, Storrs, **Diversity Within Islam**, Dr. Farah Choudhry and Mr. Mongi Dhaouadi, Muslim Coalition of CT

Questions/comments: Jemora@aol.com 860-228-9293

Interfaith Harmony Project: M.Beausoliel, Lebanon; C.Kraus, Mansfield; J. Morascini, Columbia

ECSU CONCERT SERIES

by Margaret Breen

ECSU spring concerts are on Wednesday, March 4 and Wednesday, April 29. Both concerts start at 7:30, free will donation if you feel like it. Parking is limited so arrive early! Mike and I hope to see you there!

March 2015 Newsletter

Submission Deadline:

17 March

ST. PAUL'S LENT 2015 CALENDAR

Wednesday, February 18	Ash Wednesday Liturgy	7:00 pm	Church
Saturday, February 21	Village Coffee	9-10:30 am	Parish Hall
EVERY TUESDAY	Bible Study	1-2:30 pm	Parish Hall
Friday, February 27	Lent Dinner Church	6-8:30 pm	Parish Hall
Tuesday, March 3	Contemplative Eucharist	12:15 pm	Parish Hall
Friday, March 6	Lent Dinner Church	6-8:30 pm	Parish Hall
Saturday, March 7	Village Coffee	9-10:30 am	Parish Hall
Friday, March 13	Lent Dinner Church	6-8:30 pm	Parish Hall
Friday, March 20	Lent Dinner Church	6-8:30 pm	Parish Hall
Saturday, March 21	Diocesan Spring Training Event	9-4:00	Meridan
Saturday, March 21	Village Coffee	9-10:30 am	Parish Hall
Friday, March 27	Lent Dinner Church (Make up)	6-8:30 pm	Parish Hall
Sunday, March 29	Palm Sunday Service	9:30 am	Church
Tuesday, March 31	NO Bible Study		
Thursday, April 2	Palestinian Dinner/Strip Altar	6:30 pm	Parish Hall
Friday, April 3	Good Friday Morning Prayer	7:00 am	Church
Friday, April 3	Good Friday Family Activity	TBA	Parish Hall
Friday, April 3	Good Friday Liturgy	7:00 pm	Church
Saturday, April 4	Village Coffee	9-10:30 am	Parish Hall
Saturday, April 4	Set up for Vigil	10-12:00	Parish Hall
Saturday, April 4	Easter Vigil	7:30 pm	Parish Hall
Sunday, April 5	Easter Sunday Service	9:30 am	Church
Sunday, April 12	Morning Prayer with Lay Preaching	9:30 am	Church