



GRACE NOTES

The Newsletter of Grace Church, Amherst

February 2008

Ash Wednesday Services of Holy Eucharist and the Imposition of Ashes

Wednesday, February 6

8:00 am

12:10 a.m.*

7:00 p.m. with Choir

**Sacrament of Healing suspended that day for the Imposition of Ashes*

Lent as Spiritual Housecleaning: Preparing for Easter and for Coventry

Many have asked for the return of Coventry Groups, those opportunities for fellow parishioners at Grace Church to share time together in our homes or at other convenient gathering places. Unlike "pastorates" (the prayerful gatherings that we tried to form in recent years), Coventry Groups are quite informal, and are usually centered around a meal. Coventry Groups began in England during WWII when the parish community of Coventry Cathedral met in their "foyers" and living rooms after their church was destroyed by the Luftwaffe. It's possible that given the right volunteers to coordinate the gatherings, we could bring back Coventry Groups to Grace Church sometime in Easter-tide.

If we do meet again in our homes, it seems fitting for me to address a pastoral concern that arises every now and then. Gossip is a perennial plight within the Christian community. St. Paul confronted it in several of his emerging churches. How often do we, myself included, engage in making tiny niggling comments, mostly negative, about persons who are not present? Probably more times than we are likely to confess. Sometimes I come out of a meeting or a social event and I feel a kind of fatigue or tension in my soul. Later, upon reflection, I remember how, I perhaps without even being aware of it, I engaged in something seemingly trivial, but actually kind of mean-spirited and demeaning. If that person had been present, courtesy would have prevented us from saying anything at all. That's gossip. Gossip is the result of giving into the temptation to put someone else down with the aim of elevating one's own status. In traditional moral theology, gossip is related to the sins of Pride (putting oneself in the place of God) and Wrath (an anger that ends up consuming the wrathful). It's one way that we violate our baptismal vow to "uphold the dignity of every human being."

So this is my modest proposal for this Lent. In preparation both for the possible return of the Coventry Groups, and to get ready for our celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death at Easter, let us strive to rid ourselves of the toxin of gossip. To gently remind ourselves, and our fellows, that we won't speak critically or uncharitably of someone who is not present—this will be a worthy fast and sacrifice that will please our God as it will further our obedience to the great commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Faithfully Yours in Christ,

Rob+

Wednesdays at Grace in Lent:

Walking between the Walls of Water:

Coming up with titles for these sessions is a bizarre exercise! Do you feel, as preachers, gospel readers, lectors, and others sometimes do, that when we read certain passages in scripture, we are treading on some pretty uncertain, if not downright frightening ground? One metaphor for that experience might be pulled from one of the passages of the Exodus, when the Israelites pass through the waters that surely could close in at any moment. We hold off until the Egyptian army passes through. If, according to the Prayer Book, the "mission of the

restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ," then how does our reading of problematic texts (e.g. the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt at the Exodus; the sacrifice of Isaac; John's descriptions of the Jews during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus) help in that mission when they often disturb us and disrupt our discussions and striving for peace, interfaith understanding and spiritual healing? In what ways can these texts, interpreted rightly by a community of faith, further our mission of restoration and redemption? As originally conceived, this series was to delve into our church's response to the violence and pain in the Middle-East. The planners wish to lay a foundation for those discussions by looking at the tensions fomented in our hearts and souls by our own Church's liturgical reading of scripture. This series is facilitated by Rob Hirschfeld, DeAnne Riddle, Robin Morris, Jim Wald, Jane Wald, and Greg Kline.

A Lenten Quiet Day Meditation, Contemplation and the Arts
Led by Robert A. Jonas, 9-Noon, February 16, 2008

Sometimes we find it meaningful to say that a poem, photograph, song or dance is an expression of Christian faith, a sign of the Holy Spirit, or a reminder of God's presence. At other times we don't use spiritual language, but simply say that a particular work of art is "just what it is," or that it inspires us, or helps us remember who we are, or brings us into our heart. How do we experience works of art in relation to our religious and spiritual lives? If we are artists, how does our spiritual path contribute to our work?

This retreat will include silence and prayer, a presentation by Dr. Jonas, and discussion. Dr. Jonas will highlight the work of Irish poet and mystic John O'Donohue, who died at age 49 on January 3, 2008.

Open to everyone, artists and lovers of art. Feel free to bring a work of art (your own or someone else's) to share.

Suggested donation: \$15 if you can.

Foundations Class

There have been several inquiries about when we will be offering a "Foundations Class" for those adults who are considering either being baptized or confirmed; being "received" into the Episcopal Church from another branch of Christ's Church; or having their own knowledge of the Church's teachings, traditions and sacraments renewed and refreshed.

Teaching this class is one of the most enjoyable and invigorating experiences I have as a parish priest, and I've missed being a part of this process of inquiry and getting to know folks whom God might be calling to join or fortify their membership at Grace Church.

This year I would like to offer three 2½ hour Saturday sessions, on February 23rd, March 15th, and April 12th. Topics include how we interpret the Scriptures, what "happens" during the sacraments; ethics; Church history; history and culture of Grace Church, Amherst, and the process of discernment of our individual callings to the ministry of the baptized. Those wishing to be confirmed, to be received, or to renew baptismal vows, will be able to join others in our deanery at a celebratory service at Christ Church Cathedral on Saturday, May 31, 2008.

Please Note: If you don't have a copy of the Annual Report you may pick one up in the office or at the back of the church. These copies include the Greening Grace article that was accidentally omitted from the Reports handed out at the Annual Meeting. Separate copies of the Greening Grace article are also available in the office and in the church.
Low Carbon Diet: A 30-Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds

What better time than Lent to go on a diet – a CO2 diet, that is! Actually, I don't believe in diets. But I do believe in the power of a group to support us to change our lives.

During Lent we're forming at least one small group that will meet four times for an hour and half. Using an easy, step-by-step action plan, participants will calculate their current carbon "footprint" and will then work by themselves or in a small group to track their progress.

You can expect to reduce your household's carbon footprint by at least 15% in just one month. One group will meet on Sundays, 4:00-5:30 p.m. on Feb. 10, 17, 24, (skip a week), and March 9. If you'd like to join this group or to form another one, please let me know by Feb. 3.

--The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas

February 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>February</i>					1 7:00am Men's Group (PR)	2 9 am Property Com. (PR) 10:am Burning palms for Ash Wednesday (Columb)
3 8am HE 9am Coffee hour 9:15 PBS (RO) 9:15 Sunday Sch 9:15 Confirm Class (PH) 10:30 HE 10:30 Liturgy in the Round 12:00 Coffee hour	4 3pm Setup for Pancake Supper (PH) 7pm AA (PH)	5 5:00pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (PH) 5:15 pm AA (Choir Loft)	6 8:00am HE & Ashes 11:00 Shawl Min. (PR) 12:10 HE & Ashes 5:30 Evening Prayer 7:00pm HE & Ashes.	7 5:30 Evening Prayer 7:30pm Choir Pract. (CL)	8 7:00am Men's Group (PR) 5:30 Evening Prayer	9 10:30 Not Bread Alone (1 st Church)
10 8am HE 9am Coffee hour 9:15 PBS (RO) 9:15 Sunday Sch 10:30am HE 12: Coffee hour 12:EPF (FR) 4:00 Low Carbon Diet (PH) 6:00pm Contemplative Eucharist	11 5:30 Evening Prayer 7pm AA (PH)	12 4:30 pm Silent Prayer AA (PH) 5:15pm AA (PH) 5:30 Evening Prayer 6:pm Liturgical Comm. (PR) 7:00pm Vestry Commission (PH)	13 11:00 Shawl Min.. (PR) 12:10 HE, Rt I & Healing 5:30 Evening Prayer 6pm Potluck 6:30pm Adult Ed.	14 5:30 Evening Prayer 7:30 Choir Pract. (CL)	15 7:00am Men's Group (PR) 5:30 Evening Prayer	16 9am Lenten Quiet Day [R.Jonas] (PH)
17 8am HE 9am Coffee hour 9:15 PBS (RO) 9:15 Sunday Sch 9:15 Confirm. Class (PH) 10:30am HE 12: Coffee hour 4:00 pm Low Carbon Diet (PH) 6:00pm Contemplative Eucharist	18 5:30 Evening Prayer 7pm AA (PH)	19 4:30 pm Silent Prayer AA (PH) 5:15pm AA (PH) 5:30 Evening Prayer	20 12:10 HE, Rt I & Healing 5:30 Evening Prayer 6pm Potluck 6:30pm Adult Ed.	21 5:30 Evening Prayer 7:30 Choir Pract. (CL)	22 7:00am Men's Group (PR) 5:30 Evening Prayer	23 9:00am Adult Foundations of Faith (PH)
24 8am HE 9am Coffee hour 9:15 PBS (RO) 9:15 Sunday Sch 10:30am HE 12: Coffee hour 4:00pm Low Carbon Diet (PH) 6:00pm Contemplative Eucharist	25 5:30 Evening Prayer 7pm AA (PH)	26 4:30 pm Silent Prayer AA (PH) 5:15pm AA (PH) 5:30 Evening Prayer	27 12:10 HE, Rt I & Healing 5:30 Evening Prayer 6pm Potluck 6:30pm Adult Ed.	28 5:30 Evening Prayer 7:30 Choir Pract. (CL)	29 7:00am Men's Group (PR) 5:30 Evening Prayer	



Grace Episcopal Church

NON-PROFIT.ORG
14 Boltwood Avenue
Amherst, MA 01002-2301

US POSTAGE
PAID
AMHERST, MA
PERMIT NO. 27

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Ash Wednesday, February 6, 2008
Holy Eucharist and Imposition of Ashes
8:00 am
12:10 am*
7:00 pm with Choir

** Sacrament of Healing suspended for the Imposition of Ashes*

THE LITURGICAL WEEK:

SUNDAY: 8:00 AM HOLY EUCHARIST

10:30 AM HOLY EUCHARIST (CHORAL)

CONTEMPLATIVE EUCHARIST: SUNDAYS FEB. 10-MARCH 9, 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY 12:10 PM HOLY EUCHARIST (RITE I) WITH HEALING

EVENING PRAYER: MONDAY - FRIDAY, 5:30 PM, BEGINNING FEB. 6, 2008