



Saint Michael Herald

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church

March 2007

Dear friends,

“This is my Son, my Chosen – listen to him!”

On the wall of my office is a calendar of the church year, created by the Church Pension Fund. There is a cartoon for each month, and the cartoon for March shows some greeting cards for Lent that will probably never catch on. The cards read: “If you think your life’s a bust, just remember you are dust!” “Vino, sugar, coffee cup – now’s the time to give it up!” “Think Lent is a downer? It’s really just an acronym: Let’s End Negative Thinking.”

The first two cards may not sell, but the third one suggests a good Lenten discipline for strengthening the life of a community. Lent is a time for us to set aside some holy time in our lives. The Book of Common Prayer encourages us to observe Lent through “self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.” Commonly, we practice Lent by refraining from some certain foods that we wish we could control: for a few weeks we try to eliminate from our diets chocolate, coffee, alcohol, or fatty food. Occasionally, we practice Lent by refraining from certain activities that we wish we could control: as the calendar cartoon suggests, for a few weeks we might try to stop negative thinking or criticism. And sometimes we practice Lent by taking on a Christian discipline.

I encourage you for your Lenten discipline to take to heart the words of God to the disciples on the mountain of Transfiguration: “This is my Son, my Chosen – listen to him!”

For the weeks remaining in Lent, I encourage you to set aside time to listen to God in *prayer*. If you don’t already have a practice of daily prayer, or even if you already pray regularly, set aside a few moments each day for quiet listening. This is not a time to speak to God, but to sit quietly and listen for the still, small voice of God to speak to you. Take a walk or find a quiet corner, and wait for God’s voice. Be patient. Give God a chance to speak.

Secondly, I encourage you to listen to God through *reading the Bible*. You can start reading anywhere, but if you need prompting, start reading the gospel of Luke. Read slowly, stopping frequently to listen to God’s voice. Take a little time each day to read a few verses or a chapter. Be patient. Give God a chance to speak.

Thirdly, I encourage you to listen to God through *listening to one another*. One of the most challenging and important Christian disciplines is the practice of listening. Set aside time to listen to your husband or wife, to your child or your parent, to your friend or colleague, or to someone with whom you disagree. Listen with your full attention. Listen with an “undefended heart.” Set aside your own needs, ego, agendas, and opinions, in order to listen with care. Be patient. God will speak in the conversation.

St. Michael’s will offer opportunities this month for each of us to spend time in quiet prayer, to read and listen to the Bible, and to listen to one another. I encourage you to consider how you can take on a practice of listening this month, so that you may be renewed in faith, and the life of our community might be strengthened. May you have a blessed Lent.

Your brother in Christ,

Bill+



Sunday School Update

Following a turnout of 16 (!) children in December, we moved to the larger classroom at the sunny front corner of the Sunday School building.

Thank you to everyone who contributed supplies for the Godly Play Sunday School program. Our classroom is well supplied. We still want half a dozen trays for story sets, about cafeteria size. Small shallow wooden crates or large casserole baskets would work, and wooden picture frames of these approximate dimensions could be "recycled" into trays, if you have any of these to spare or can find them inexpensively at a rummage sale. We could also use transparent plastic storage bins of all sizes to help organize our Sunday School supply room.

Still wanted: 6 trays or tray-sized wooden picture frames, assorted clear bins

Volunteer "Doorkeepers"

Thank you to those of you who have already helped with Sunday School: Anne Blanton, Karen McDonell, Dave Turner, Sandy Liljeberg, Kathleen Johnson, Roy Falk, Mary Dabel, Elisa Osborne and Annie Dixon. For the Godly Play program, we like to have both a story teller and a "doorkeeper" each week. Sandi Smith and Margaret Drumm are our current "story tellers." Each week, we recruit different volunteers to take turns as the "doorkeeper." In fact, no one has turned us down yet. By asking someone different to help out in this role each week, you get a chance to support our church's children and see what we are doing without regularly missing worship services. Expect to be asked sometime during the year, or beat us to the punch and let us know which Sunday you'd like to volunteer.



Celebration Singers

Are meeting for practice on the 2nd and 4th Monday nights of each month at 6:30 pm at the home of Fr. Bill Osborne, 101 Dennison Lane. All singers and instrumentalists are welcome.

St. Veronica's GUILD

Sandy Savidge opened the February 14th meeting by thanking all the people who have helped her in so many ways this past year. Carol Ann Falk presented her with a crystal cross necklace in thanks to her for re-organizing the Guild and being its first "new" president. The officers for 2007 were introduced. Kathleen Johnson and Carol Ann Falk will be co-presidents. Georgia Frey will be secretary and Marcia Waters will be the treasurer. Judy Goodrich will be our Sunshine Chairman.

The Assistant Rector, Tansy Chapman, has been contacted about having a "Quiet Day" for the Guild members and friends during Lent. A date for this event will be set in the near future.

There was a discussion about when the regular Guild meetings should be held. It was agreed by consensus that the regular meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of each month at 12 PM. The next meeting will be March 14th.

Do you have a favorite recipe?

St. Veronica's Guild is putting together a cookbook to sell for a fund raiser. Please contribute your recipes. Bring them to the church office.

Mardi Gras Dinner a Success



The authentic New Orleans cuisine consisting of chicken-sausage-okra gumbo, crab cakes, red beans & rice, ending with a banana-ice cream flambé, was enjoyed by over eighty people. There were many raffle prizes and a magnificent door prize.

In next month's issue we'll tell you more about the many persons who helped make this fun event an outstanding success.



Rector's Forums in Lent

Our Bishop, Barry Beisner, has asked that every individual and congregation in the diocese undertake a time of prayer and discernment during the weeks of Lent. This will be the subject of the Rector's forums every Sunday at 9:00 AM in St. Veronica's Hall. If you are unable to join the conversation on Sunday morning, I encourage you to participate in the discernment process he outlines on your own, or in small groups.



From Bishop Barry:

Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you for taking time to engage in holy conversation and prayer with others throughout the diocese during this Lenten period. I am hoping it will be a time to "till the soil" of discernment in order to open ourselves to the vision God has for this diocese at this time in our history.

This Lenten inquiry can happen in a variety of ways:

- Small group discussion
- Individual reflection
- Dialogue with another

It is my hope that you might keep track of what emerges for you in these weekly reflections. Look for a word, phrase, metaphor, symbol that captures your interest and imagination each week. This may be something your group identifies, or it may emerge from your own musings. Note it; journal about it if that is helpful. Then send it to the Office of the Bishop, identifying it as part of the Diocesan Lenten Inquiry. This corporate Lenten discernment is the first part of a conversation, which in turn becomes the context for envisioning and enacting the future. We will gather up these gems of the Spirit and see where God is leading us, as together we co-construct a vision for the Diocese of Northern California.

Each week you will be given a passage from the Lessons of the Sunday. Whether you use the Revised Common Lectionary or the Book of Common Prayer Lectionary, I've made sure these selections are in both, so that we're all working with the same scriptures. Read through the passage a couple times, pausing between readings. If you're in a group, invite different voices. See what emerges and then engage the questions.

May this Lenten season be blessed for you from the abundant riches of God's grace.

Bishop Barry Beisner

Meditation for the first week of Lent

Psalm 91: 9-15 (BCP)

9 *Because you have made the LORD your refuge, *
and the Most High your habitation,*

10 *There shall no evil happen to you, *
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.*

11 *For he shall give his angels charge over you, *
to keep you in all your ways.*

12 *They shall bear you in their hands, *
lest you dash your foot against a stone.*

13 *You shall tread upon the lion and adder; *
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent
under your feet.*

14 *Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him; *
I will protect him, because he knows my Name.*

15 *He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; *
I am with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and bring him to honor.*

In today's Gospel we hear the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. This passage is here at the beginning of Lent to remind us that there is nothing we face that has not already been encountered by Our Lord. In the desert Jesus was challenged by a place where wild beasts, arid landscape, little nourishment and water threatened his mission before it even got off the ground. Confronted by Satan's distractions, Jesus must have been comforted by the memory of this psalm with its reminder of God's protection and assurance.

Given that He goes before us in all that we must cope with, think about a time when you were in trouble – spiritually, emotionally, even physically – and God's sustaining presence carried you. Perhaps you felt it in the moment, perhaps God's protection was not distinguishable until the trouble had passed.

- Ç Tell a story about a time of trouble in your life when the Lord was indeed your refuge.
 - What was happening? What were the circumstances? Who else was involved?
 - How did you perceive God's protection?
 - How were you protected?
 - Who or what angels bore you in their hands?
 - How were you rescued and brought to honor?

Meditation for the second week of Lent

Psalm 27: 10-11,18

*10 Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; *
have mercy on me and answer me.*

*11 You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." *
Your face, LORD, will I seek.*

*18 O tarry and await the LORD'S pleasure;
be strong, and he shall comfort your heart; *
wait patiently for the LORD*

God is present in times of trial and in times of great joy. Recall an occasion when you felt the nearness of God.

- Ç Tell a story about that time. When have you called upon God and felt that he answered you?
 - What effect did it have on you and your sense of yourself as a child of God?
 - How was God active in the Community of Faith in this experience?

- Ç What riches in your prayer life have affirmed that God hears your voice when you call?

- Ç What does it mean to you, to seek the Lord's face? How do you do that in your life?

- Ç What is waiting for God like for you?
 - Who waits with you?
 - What does the invitation to tarry feel like?
 - How well do you wait "patiently" for the Lord?

- Ç What instances of God "comforting your heart" have you known in the past week?

Meditation for the third week of Lent

I Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV)

No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.

- Ç How have you experienced God's faithfulness in the past month? In the past year?
- Ç What, in your experience, has linked your experience of God's testing with his provision of "a way out so that you may be able to endure it?"
 - What were the elements of commonality with others in your family or field of acquaintance? In your congregation?
 - Talk about the "way out."
 - § How did you become aware of it?
 - § What did it look like as it unfolded?
 - § When did you know you were through it?
 - What thoughts and feelings occupied you during this time of testing?

Meditation for the fourth week of Lent

II Corinthians 5:17-20

¹⁷So if anyone is in Christ, (he or she) is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Congregations and dioceses, like most organizations, succeed when they work from a common vision. Shared vision guides actions and decisions and provides a sense of how to proceed in times of change. Shared vision excites people and inspires them to contribute their best and to collaborate for the success of the whole. In the language of Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, "everything has become new!"

The point of this new creation is the ministry of reconciliation. Through the grace of our common life in Christ we are made new. As Christians we know how to engage this ministry of reconciliation because we have the model of God's activity in Christ "reconciling the world to himself."

- Ç Describe a time when you participated in the "ministry of reconciliation."
 - What was the situation?
 - Who else was involved?
 - What part did you play?
 - What part did others play?
- Ç What about the situation brought out the best in you? In other words, how did you act as an "ambassador for Christ?"
- Ç How can we as a diocese, and you in your congregation, engage this ministry of reconciliation?
 - What are particular needs, concerns and challenges that we face as members of the Diocese of Northern California in which we, acting as ambassadors of Christ, can further God's mission of reconciling the world to himself?

Meditation for the fifth week of Lent

Philippians 3: 10-14

¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

When people are aligned around a shared vision, they are clear about where the diocese is going, how it will enable its people to grow into the full stature of Christ, “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection...” Members of the diocese will understand how their ministries serve the bigger picture of the call of God’s mission as it is lived out in their congregations, communities, homes and work settings.

- Ç If you could be granted three wishes for the future health and vitality of the Diocese of Northern California, what would they be?

- Ç If you could transform the ministry of your congregation in any way, what would that look like?
 - What three things would *you* do?
 - What part could you play in making these wishes materialize?
 - What part can the your congregation’s leadership play in making these happen?

Meditation for the week of Palm Sunday

Philippians 2: 5-11

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹²Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

It is 20 years from today – just one generation from now. Your children or in some cases your grandchildren have grown to adulthood. The Episcopal Church in Northern California that your children and grandchildren have inherited is a great diocese, an even healthier diocese than the one you once knew.

1. How has God been at work in the Diocese of Northern California over the past generation? How has God been at work in you as a member of this diocese? In what specific and particular ways has God enabled you to will and to work for his good pleasure in the life of this diocese?
2. What does the diocese look like? What are its congregations like? What ministries are active? What populations are served? How is it carrying out its mission in stewardship, evangelism, education? How does it care for its hurting members? What does worship look like? How does it handle conflict? How are decisions made?
3. Imagine you are sitting with your youngest grandchild, or great-grandchild, telling her the story of how this Diocese came to be. What decisions and choices did you and others in the early 21st century make that paved the way for this new Diocese? What seeds did you and others plant? How were they nurtured? Harvested?

Via Media Continues

Join the conversation each Wednesday evening during Lent as we explore our faith and the Episcopal tradition. We will gather each week from 6 to 8 PM, to share a soup supper, to listen to theologians from across the spectrum of voices in the Episcopal Church discuss topics of faith, and to explore our responses and to add our voices to the conversation. We will close each week in prayer and worship. The topics for the remainder of Lent are:

- March 7: God and creation: The abundance of God's goodness
- March 14: God in Jesus: An incarnational faith
- March 21: God the Holy Spirit: The breath of new life
- March 28: The Word of God for the People of God

Bring your questions and bring a friend!

Lent Services and Programs

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Fridays, 5:30 PM
February 23 – March 18

QUIET PRAYER

Saturdays, 10:00 AM- NOON

Lent Program

Wednesdays, 6PM –8 PM
Feb. 28 – Mar. 28
Soup Supper Followed by
Via Media Video presentation
and
Discussion-Conversation
Closing with a short worship time



What's happening at St. Michaels

SUNDAY SERVICE SCHEDULE:

8 AM & 10 AM Holy Eucharist
9:50 AM Sunday School

Quiet Prayer	10:00 AM-12 NOON	March 3-March 31
Rector's Forum	9:00 AM	Sundays
Stations of the Cross	5:30 PM	MARCH 2-March 30
Lent Soup Supper & Study:	Wednesday, 6:00 PM	March 2 - March 28
St. Veronica's Guild noon		March 14 th

Daylight Savings Time Starts

March 10



March 2007

St. Michael and All Angels

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																			
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March Birthdays

1-Mar Nicole Wasson
2-Mar Finn Walter
5-Mar Paul Clark
5-Mar Laurel Wollman
6-Mar Charla Thorbecke
7-Mar Bill Keller
9-Mar James Pate
10-Mar Rosie Muto
11-Mar Kathleen Johnson
11-Mar Harlie Liljeberg
12-Mar Katie Turner
13-Mar Rhys Navarro
14-Mar Naomi Sallinen
16-Mar Darla Paoli
17-Mar Julia Conway
20-Mar Stephen Holmes
22-Mar Paula Canoles
31-Mar Max & Sam Russell

St. Michael's Directory

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9am-Noon

Parish Office (*stmike@estmichael.org*) 964-1900

Altar Flowers: Stella Martin 964-5242
Altar Guild: Teresa Magaña (*hectornteresa@aol.com*)... 964-0953
Bookkeeper: Sherri Cox (*burleycox@adelphia.net*)..... 964-5337
Bulletins: Marcia Waters (*mawaters@mendolink.com*).. 964-5027
Children's Christian Education:
Mary Dabel (*maredab@sbcglobal.net*)..... 964-2654
E.C.M.: Scott Dabel (*maredab@sbcglobal.net*)..... 964-2654
Facilities/Maint.:
Hall Rentals/Reservations: Church Office..... 964-1900
Lay Ministry: Sandi Smith (*sandave@mcn.org*)..... 964-1035
Music/Organist: Blake Leighton..... 964-7417
Newsletter: Chris Little (*genelittle@yahoo.com*)..... 962-9023
Pledges: Stella Martin 964-5242
Prayer Chain: Connie Mitchell..... 964-3702
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Treasurer: Madeleine Melo (*mmelo@mcn.org*)..... 964-0676

CLERGY

The Rev. Bill Osborne, Rector (*bill@estmichael.org*)
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VESTRY

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