

Etc.....February, 2010

Ash Wednesday Services, February 17 at 9am and 7:30 pm

Adult Formations Opportunities in Lent

Sunday Morning Forum: Each Sunday Morning the Adult Forum meets in the library from 9:15-10:00. It's a great opportunity to join with others in spiritual conversation. Come join us! During Lent our main focus will be a study of the book, An Altar In the World: A Geography of Faith by the Rev. Barbara Brown Taylor. Here is an excerpt from the introduction to this book:

"I have no idea what you will see when you look at your life – but if you are tired of arguing about religion, tired of reading about spirituality, tired of talk-talk-talking about things that matter without doing a single thing that matters yourself, then the pages that follow are dedicated to you. My hope is that reading them will help you recognize... some of the altars in this world."

Copies of the first chapter of the book are available the week of the 15th through the office (stpauls@stpauls-nbpt.org). After the 21st, we will place a group book order at Jabberwocky Books, so please let us know if you would like to have a copy ordered for you.

February 21: Chapter 1: *"The Practice of Waking Up to God: Vision"*

February 28: We will take a break from our book study to hear from Priscilla Bellairs about the hymn which is being commissioned in honor of our parish's 300th anniversary in 2011 (see article below).

March 7: Chapter 2: *"The Practice of Paying Attention: Reverence"*

March 14: Chapter 3: *"The Practice of Wearing Skin: Incarnation"*

March 21: Chapter 4: *"The Practice of Walking the Earth: Groundedness"*

On Palm Sunday (March 28) and Easter Sunday (April 4) we will not hold Forum

We will continue with the remainder of the book and other topics in the Easter Season.

Wednesday Soup, Study & Prayer: During the 5 Wednesdays of Lent (Feb. 24, March 3, 10, 17 & 24) we will offer a Soup Supper (6:00 – 6:30 pm) followed by Bible Study and prayer (6:30-7:30 pm) in the Parish Hall. The Bible Study will focus on passages from the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. All are welcome to the supper and the Bible Study is appropriate for adults and older teens. If you are interested, but require child care for your children during the study part of the evening, please contact the office as soon as possible so that we can arrange for child care.

Lenten Night Prayer Booklets: If you are interested in joining others in the parish in a commitment of daily prayer during Lent, night prayer booklets are available in the Narthex of the church. These simple prayers come from the monastic service of Compline. They are simple and beautiful and a wonderful way to join with others in prayer even when separated by time and distance. It will be good to know that we are praying together through Lent.

OUR 300TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION--COMMISSIONING A HYMN (OUR FORUM TOPIC FOR SUN. FEB. 28)

At the 10:15 service on Feb. 7, we sang the beautiful hymn "As We Gather at Your Table," written by Carl Daw, a contemporary hymn-writer and professor based at Boston University and until last fall head of The Hymn Society of America, where our music director Mark Meyer also worked. "As We Gather..." was written on commission from a parish in Virginia celebrating its 300th anniversary. I discovered that fact last summer, and it inspired me to think about the many preparations going on for celebrating the 300th anniversary of St. Paul's founding in 1711. As far as I knew, none of the plans included music, which is a very important part of our worship.

Wouldn't it be fun to commission a hymn? YES! I've learned a lot since the first inspiration struck, and with the blessing of the 300th Committee and the Rector, I've proceeded with the project. Carl Daw has agreed to take on the commission. He will be writing words set to a tune that our congregation is already familiar with and likes, and he'll be choosing that tune in collaboration with Mark, who has become well acquainted with our likes and dislikes!

And here's the part where I hope EVERYONE will be involved: we need to answer Mr. Daw's questions about what St. Paul's means to us. "What significant themes and images are connected with people's experience of the parish? What are the hopes for the future of the parish?" Why are we celebrating our survival for 300 years and our hope to continue? On February 28, the Adult Forum from 9-10am will be devoted to collecting your thoughts and ideas and answering your questions about our hymn.

In giving ourselves the gift of a new hymn for our celebratory year, we will also be giving a gift to the whole church, for the hymn that results, like "As We Gather...", will not be specific only to our celebration, but to universal themes in the church. For example, the last words of "As We Gather..." are "repeat the sounding joy!" Those sound familiar to us from "Joy to the World," but the folks in one three-hundred year old Virginia parish know that those words were also the theme of their 300th anniversary celebration--now shared with and inspiring churches everywhere.

The cost of commissioning a hymn has already been almost two-thirds covered by donations. Fifteen more donations of \$25 a piece will complete the payment, but any donations of less or more will be gratefully received, and should there accidentally be any surplus, it will be put directly into our music budget. Checks can be made out to St. Paul's, with "300th Hymn" in the memo line, and left in Deb Hay's mailbox or given to me. Priscilla B. Bellairs

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Join us on Tuesday, February 16th in the Parish hall between 5pm and 7pm for a delicious pancake dinner. Adults \$5/Children \$3. See you there!

Exhibit of Antique Valentines

Beginning Friday the 12th of February, running through the 14th, a show of antique valentines from the collection of Patsy Brown will be open to the public for the benefit of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 166 High Street between Market and Summer Streets. The exhibit, in the library, will be open Friday 3-7 PM, Saturday 10AM-2PM, and Sunday 12 noon through 2 pm. Suggested donation: adults \$10, children \$5. Enter through the side door.

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