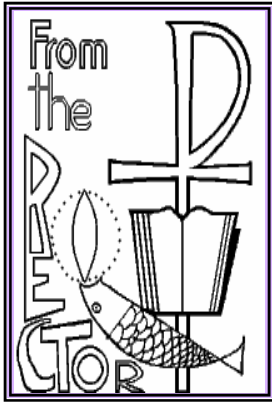


THE WAYFARER

Lent 2008 Issue

A monthly journal for Christians who worship at St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Berea, Ohio

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My dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

I invite you, therefore, in the name of the church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word. (BCP, p. 265)

On Ash Wednesday, I will speak these words at the services to help us to begin to think about how to make the Lenten season time set apart. The church gives us ways to think about and prepare for the repentance our hearts so deeply need. And let me say again, we need to repent. Because we are sinners and we need to change. How you understand that for yourself is up to you, and that is probably the best place to begin.

We are all sinners. We hurt people. We make bad choices. We don't think about the repercussions of our actions. We are not careful about God's creation. We set up other gods, idols, in our lives: money, pride, food, power, stubbornness, selfishness, material possessions. Our lives are disordered, chaotic, self centered. Lent is our opportunity to stop our sinning, our dysfunction, long enough to have a chance at being redeemed.

Will you take the chance? Will you try? Is your relationship with God precious enough? Will you sacrifice? Will you give a little more of yourself? Will you open your heart to all that God could be for you? Even one of those questions is big enough for a whole Lenten season!

Remember that God is standing by to forgive a sorrowful heart. That all it takes is a sincere apology and a desire to do better, and God will wipe your sins away. Imagine a clean slate. Imagine the freedom and the joy. Reach out for that in your life. Reach out for love and grace and mercy. God is handing it to you. All you have to do is hang on!

I encourage you to do something that sets this Lenten season apart. Some discipline, some sacrifice, some giving, some study. Something that relates to the sin you are trying to overcome. Our Lenten series on Wednesday nights is on healing. I invite you to start there—heal your hearts so that you can start fresh. There are other opportunities as well. It is there for you!

Let us pray for forgiven and converted hearts this Lenten season!

Love, Gayle +

Liturgical Opportunities

- ❖ A service of reconciliation and healing will be held Thursday, February 14, at 6:30 pm in the church.
- ❖ A Taize Eucharist will be held Sunday, March 9 at the 5:30 service.
- ❖ Private confession can be scheduled throughout the Lenten season.



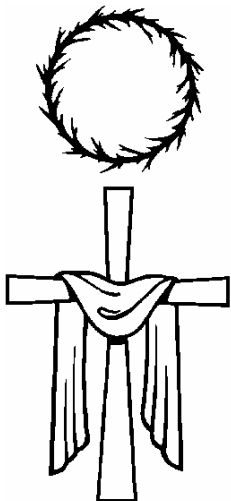
Wednesday Nights in Lent

Our community Lenten program this year will feature The Rev. Melanie Sunderland who will lead a discussion on Healing as a Lenten Discipline. There will be supper at 6, discussion at 7 and an opportunity to receive laying on of hands at the close of the evening. The schedule of host churches is as follows: February 13 - United Methodist Church; February 20 - Berea Children's Home; February 27 - St. Andrews; March 5 - St. Thomas; March 12 - St. Andrews (sponsored by the UCC). Everyone is welcome. Donations are taken to cover the soup.



Fridays in Lent

Every Friday at noon we will walk with Jesus to the Cross by praying the Stations of the Cross. Everyone is welcome and there will be a sign-up sheet if you would like to help officiate. On Friday, March 14, the service will be at 7:30 pm with a reflection following. This is a powerful spiritual experience! Please try to attend.



Learn to Meditate from a Buddhist Monk!

On Sunday, February 24 the Ven. Shih Ying-Fa will join us at noon for soup and a session on how to meditate. The class is free and everyone is invited. Please take advantage of this unique opportunity at St. Thomas!!!



BYOC

The Adult Forum group who discussed moral choices in the modern world spent some time reflecting on how St. Thomas impacts the environment. They decided that one thing we could do was to bring our own coffee mug to church on Sunday, and then take it home. That way we would save untold Styrofoam from landfills. There will still be cups available if you don't want to do this. BYOC (bring your own cup) if you would like to help the environment, or choose another way. Maybe for Lent, you might want to consider your impact on God's creation!



Unsung Heroes

Our Lenten Unsung Heroes are the ECW. When we host the Lenten program this year, they will organize the dinner that we put on for the community. They will make soup, bring bread and dessert, set the tables to look beautiful, and then clean the whole thing up. And they do this all the time: for funerals, clergy gatherings, youth group functions and whenever we need them. Hospitality is holy work. Thank you to the ladies of this church (and often their husbands) who give St. Thomas the reputation it has for a gracious and yummy welcome.



Los Amigos Episcopales – During Lent we will be preparing for our year's work. We need all new and old members to tackle this project. There will be two meetings - - February 15 and March 14 in Harkess Hall beginning with the usual potluck dinner at 6:30pm. Do join us for enjoyable, stimulating meetings. See you all there.

-- Ruth F. Ihde, President



Lenten Outreach

During Lent many people think about giving up something - one of their favorite things like chocolate, Pepsi, video games, whatever - something they would consider a sacrifice. You hear them say "Oh, I gave that up for Lent". Other people think about taking on something new, like a new ministry or a new way of reaching out to others, that would take some effort on their part and in that way be a sacrifice.

This year during Lent we have an opportunity to participate in alms-giving for the poor by offering all of our loose change every week. During the week at home, put all of your change in a mug, a bowl or even a baggie and don't spend it. Then on Sunday, bring that change to church and put it in the clay pots that will be provided. (Clay pots represent us - See Isaiah 64:8 where he states we are the clay, God is the potter.) By Easter we should have a quite sizeable sum to distribute locally and globally to those in need.

You will be surprised how quickly your change adds up. When you go shopping, use only your paper money and put the coins from the change in your pocket. Pretty soon you have a lot of change in your pocket that you can transfer to your bowl or baggie when you get home and bring to church every Sunday and put it in the clay pots.

This may turn out to be a rather fun thing to do during Lent that would also be a sacrifice.

In addition, you may want to volunteer at the monthly Berea Community Meal, or at the St. Luke's Wednesday dinner (weekly), or A Place at the Table (Trinity Cathedral). You might offer to help with Church Street Ministries working with the ever-increasing number of families who contact them for help; or you might offer to work at Brookside Center as we have done in the past. You may have an idea of your own to volunteer to help those in need. Whatever it may be, we encourage you to get involved during Lent and make a difference in someone's life.

-- Pat Wielinski, Outreach Coordinator

**Congratulations to the Vestry Members
Elected at the Annual Meeting:
Alice Amos, Tim Cooper,
Lynn Vincent & Peggy Zambounis**



A Prayer for Lent

Heavenly Father hear our prayer. We know that all our blessings come from you. We thank you for all that we have and especially we give thanks for Jesus our Savior. Help us to use our small sacrifices to grow

in love and to open our hearts to the needs of others. May we be caring and generous in our actions. In this Lenten season guide our St. Thomas community to renew our faith and prepare for the suffering and glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ. All this we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

by Gary & Marlene Carlsen



Lent begins

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