



Resolutions v. Discipline

Ever since I was a little girl I have confused New Year's resolutions with Lenten discipline. It may be because even though the word *lent* means *spring*, the season almost always starts in the dreariest part of the winter. Or it may be that my parents, raising three rather chubby children, would take Lent as a time to reinforce our resolutions to eat healthily.

Whatever it was, I remember when I began to think that resolutions and Lenten discipline were both just too burdensome. When I was ten years old, I gave up sweets of all kinds as my Lenten discipline. My birthday that year was in Lent. I had a lovely party—but I couldn't eat any of my birthday cake! Clearly something was wrong with the whole picture! It took me many more years to untangle resolutions and discipline.

The problem with using Lenten discipline to help you eat healthy is, of course, what happens at Easter? Do you celebrate our Lord's resurrection by taking on a diet high in fats and simple carbohydrates? Maybe that's why our nation spends so much money on Easter candy!

Since I have been an adult, I have noticed a trend toward taking on a new thing or trying to form a good habit as a Lenten discipline. And I have tried that through the years, with more or less success. There was the year that we decided as a family that we would turn off the TV during dinner—no *Nightly News*, no re-runs of *Law and Order*—just family conversation. That one seemed to work better than dietary restrictions—but we liked it so much that we kept it up after Easter. There was no sweetness of celebration in giving up the fast at Easter—we (the parents) were happy to keep the TV turned off! The next year we had to scramble a bit to come up with a new Lenten discipline.

Finally, after years of trying to be disciplined, years of trying to use Lent to become a better person, years of feeling happily successful or dismally failed, it occurred to me that New Year's Resolutions and Lenten Discipline might not be the same thing.

Resolutions are designed to make you a better person. That is, *you* decide what will make you better and *you* do whatever that is. And if you feel, or look, or act better—you are a success! And if you don't, you are a failure. Either way, the power is all yours.

Lenten discipline, on the other hand, is designed to bring you closer to God. God already loves you and desires you. No amount of discipline will make God love you any more you are you are already loved. Your Lenten discipline is a way of showing *your* love and desire. It's not that God doesn't want you to eat chocolate. It's that if you decide to give chocolate up for Lent—and every time you don't eat a brownie you thank God for being loved—you will spend more time with God. The choice is yours—but the power of love is God's. When we choose to give time and attention to God, it is that much easier to feel ourselves being drawn in to God's very heart.

Whether you choose to give something up or take something on this Lent, I encourage you to give your time and attention to the God of love.

Nancy Webb Stroud+

From the Senior Warden

At our January meeting your Vestry voted to adopt a budget for the 2012 calendar year. It was a long meeting—the last of several, in which we wrestled with difficult issues and were forced to come up with answers to difficult questions. But let me tell you something about your Vestry. Throughout the entire process the discussions were thoughtful and respectful, but most of all, centered on our mission to do God’s work in our corner of God’s world. The question always before us was, “How can we best use the gifts we have been given to accomplish the most good?”

In my Annual Report to the Parish, I have detailed the issues of finance, property, and program that we address at each meeting. We are not a business, although we are faced with many of the same fiscal decisions and obligations that businesses face.

If we hold on to our treasure for a “rainy day,” are we doing God’s work in the world, or are we being good stewards of God’s gifts? I am happy, and I must admit a bit nervous, to say that your Vestry has taken a leap of faith. We have committed to do the best we can with what we have, and to do our best to reach out in love, trusting that the time, talent, and treasure given by all of you will continue to grow.

If you were not able to be at the Annual Meeting on the last Sunday in January, please be sure to pick up a report—read our narrative budget, detailing our hopes for the year ahead.

I am grateful to our Vestry and to each of you for your willingness to work together for the good of God’s people.

Debbie Randzio



Inquirers’ Teas— Dates Changed!

Join the Rector for five Sunday afternoons exploring the faith. Our conversation topics will include Bible, prayer, church history, religion in popular culture, and defining our mission, all from the unique perspective of The Episcopal Church—and the parish of Atonement. Our discussions will be designed to prepare adults to be Confirmed (or Received into the Church) by the Bishop on May 12, 2012.

Those who have already been confirmed, but want to enter into deeper discussion and study than we are able to do on Sunday morning, are welcome to join us.

Due to busy schedules and popular demand, the original dates for these teas have been changed a bit. Please join us from 3 to 5 pm on Sundays April 1, 15, 22, 29 and May 6.



Feb/Mar 2012

From the Organ Console

What deep joy I experienced this morning as I worshipped once again in your midst. On this first Sunday as the new Director of Music at Atonement, I was drawn to the beauty of our church hymnody, old and new. I will highlight this rich source of faith expression in my monthly epistles over the next year.

Epiphany leaves us at mid-month as our choir sings “Transfiguration.” We announce our final “Alleluia’s” as we enter the holy season of Lent, awaiting their return at the Easter Vigil. Our “Alleluia” Recessional hymn for both services on “Transfiguration” Sunday is “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus” (#460), one of many fine 19th century Welsh tunes. Its composer, Rowland Hugh Prichard (1811-1887) was a gifted young mill worker who wrote this hymn-tune before his twentieth birthday. It was first published in his song collection: *Cyfaill y Cantorion (The Singer’s Friend)*.

Some of our greatest hymns were written for personal reflection and it may be helpful for church members to spend a few minutes during the organ prelude reading the day’s hymn texts. “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus”, written by William Chatterton Dix, was first entitled “Redemption by the Precious Blood”(1867...*Altar Songs*). Stanza 3 ascribes the name “Bread of Heaven” to Jesus, a reference to Psalm 78:25 and to John 6:32. Our Lord is also called “Intercessor,” “friend of sinners,” “earth’s Redeemer,” and “great high priest...both Priest and Victim in the Eucharistic feast.”

Composer William Cowper (1779) suggests that absorbing and applying the truths of great hymns will cause the singer to respond: “Sometimes a light surprises the Christian while he sings; It is the Lord who rises with healing in His wings.” You are invited to join our choir as we rehearse these treasures on Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. Come and sing! Male voices are especially needed!

Soli Deo Gloria.

Blessings and Peace,

Jan Duffé

Director of Music



Choir



Ode to the Groundhog

Hail to thee, my furry friend!
You hold the key to winter's end.
In the second month, on the second day
The eyes of the nation will be focused your way.
Newsmen with cameras and mikes and computers
Will arrive at your door by taxi or scooters.
All drowsy and dazed from your den you'll emerge.
Shall we sing a glad song or hum a sad dirge?
If the sun is shining, your shadow you'll see.
Then we'll have six weeks of cold misery.
But if you peek out on a grey, gloomy day,
The snow and the ice may soon melt away.
So come on, little rodent, I'm counting on you.
Instead of more snow, send a robin or two.
A crocus or tulip would also be sweet.
And I'd be so glad to see winter's retreat.



From Marcia Helland



Stewardship Update

Thank you for your generous response to the appeal we made in December. As of December 31, **37 individuals or families gave \$4771.36** in contributions over and above gifts they pledged for 2011.

As we went to press, 107 individuals or families have made a pledge of financial support in 2012, totaling \$151,000. We are very grateful for your generosity. It is never too late to make a pledge. Please speak with our Treasurer, Jim Barnes, or the Rector.

Tammy Joseph



Sunday
March 25 at 4 pm

Choral
Evensong



Community Table

Thank you to the volunteers for Thursday, January 5th: Sue & Gary Cole, Rita Hannigan, Bob & Di Legalos, Sabrina Gibree, Lois Coffey, Dotti Noe, Deb Gardner, and Ted Joseph. And the volunteers for Jan 22nd: Judy Beach, Kathy DeJean, Dianne & Bob Legalos, Shirley Page, Linda Martin, and Eleanor Bystrynski

We served the Community Table TWO times this month because Christmas was the fourth Sunday in December. On that day, the Jewish Community served for us. It was very nice of them to serve a special Christmas dinner with roast beef and all the fixings!

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Gus Brus
Joseph Dillon
Bill Parks
David Bannish Jr
Ginny Hebert
Donald Hannigan
Benjamin Murphy
Peter Jasinski



Mark Dushane
Jean Turgeon
Ruby Liberty
Matt Turgeon
Sally Angers
Steve Adams
Don Swanson
Heidi Spaulding
Linda Leahy
Richard Power
Christine Onofrey
Andrew Joseph
David Bucchiere

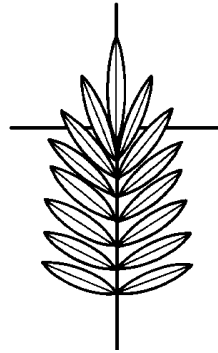
SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

FEB 21 AT 6 PM

Come at 5:30 pm to set up and cook. Dinner will be served at 6 pm

Cost will benefit
the *Deferred
Maintenance
Fund*

\$5 per person
\$20 maximum
per family



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

FEBRUARY 22, 2012

Noon

Imposition of ashes and Holy
Eucharist
No music

7 pm

Imposition of ashes and Holy
Eucharist
Music by the Choir of Atonement

FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BRING US FORWARD DAY BY DAY

LENT MADNESS

Just for fun—vote for your favorite saint!

Forward Movement is sponsoring an online competition to see which saint will win the Golden Halo. Based on college basketball's March Madness, Lent Madness pits saints against one another each day during Lent. Read about the saints, learn about their lives, be inspired, and laugh.



Starts Thursday Feb 23
www.lentmadness.org



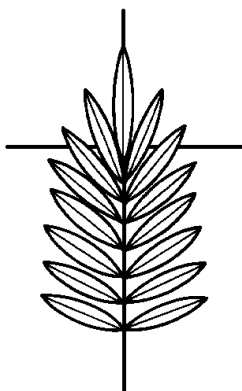
36 Court Street
Westfield, MA 01085

Sundays
8 am Holy Eucharist
10 am Holy Eucharist

Bible Study
Wednesday 9:30 am

Holy Eucharist & Healing
Wednesday 12 noon

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Permit No. 113
Westfield, Mass.



The Episcopal Church of the Atonement

ECOTAWestfield



Drawn in by grace
Reaching out in love

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of the Atonement**

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