



Lent is a time to take the time

To let the power of our faith story take hold of us,
A time to let the events
Get up and walk around in us
A time to intensify
Our living into Christ

Anne Weems
Kneeling in Jerusalem

Dear People of St John's,

I invite you to keep a Holy Lent! This season of study, prayer, service and self-examination – yes, even self-denial, is set aside as essential to preparing our hearts for the joy of the Risen Christ on Easter. On page five of this issue, you'll find some of the history of Lent and suggestions for spiritual disciplines (giving things up or taking new things on!) Whatever spiritual practices you choose, let constancy in worship be among them. Beginning with Ash Wednesday service on February 25th, then each Sunday in Lent up to Palm Sunday, April 5th, we gather to keep the prayers, read scripture, sing the great hymns of our faith tradition and share the bread and wine. Observance of worship is not elective – it's essential to the transformative unfolding of faith in our hearts and to being a true community of faith.

Our parish, like many others, makes seasonal changes in the way we do our liturgy during Lent in order to open ourselves up to the promptings of the Spirit. This season, we'll learn a sung Lord's Prayer, experience a Celtic version of the Eucharistic Prayer and hear the psalms differently through the language of the poet James Cotter, who writes on the Welsh coast in a pilgrim's church. The scripture of each service of worship builds on the previous week. For example, the Old Testament lessons take us from

Noah's ark and the rainbow to the First Covenant, then to Sabbath Law and the Ten Commandments, through to Abraham leading the people and the promise of the New Covenant. To miss services would leave you with fragments of our history, rather than deepen the meaning of God's presence to us from Genesis to Revelations and open our hearts to God's presence in our time!

Finally, in Lent we gather during the week to study, discuss and learn. You'll find a list of topics and dates for our Lenten dinner discussion groups. Choose the topic and dates that fit your interest and availability. Know that you'll be in good company and welcome whichever evenings you come! Just be sure to let us know you're coming so we prepare enough food.

May this Lent strengthen us as the body of Christ in the world. May we know the grace of a prepared heart as we come to an Easter of joy and freedom.

In faith,

Rev. Barbara W. Abbott

Look Inside...

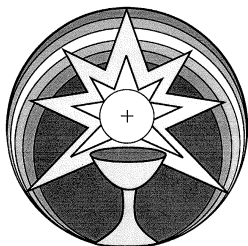
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Vision Statement

The congregation of St John's produced and formally adopted the following vision statement on 29th February 2004.

We, the people of St John's Church, believe God calls us to:

- Grow and be nurtured by reason, scripture and tradition.
- Comfort all God's children, rejoicing in the diversity of the whole human family.
- Fearlessly proclaim a radical tradition of God's inclusive love for all
- Demonstrate God's love by finding Christ in service to others



A Season of Lent and Holy Week at St. John's

Lent

Ash Wednesday Service
February 25, 7 pm

Lenten Study Series

"Thursdays in Lent" Sessions are scheduled below. Includes a light supper.

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 5, 9:30 am
Morning Worship and Procession of Palms

Maundy Thursday, April 9, 6:30 pm
Passover Seder followed by Family Eucharist

Good Friday, April 10, Noon—1 pm
Community Service with the Jenkintown Ministerium at Grace Presbyterian, Jenkintown

Holy Saturday, April 11, 7:30 pm
The Great Easter Vigil, St. John's Chapel, followed by Champagne Reception

Easter Sunday, April 12, 9:30 am
Festive Eucharist followed by Celebratory Coffee Hour and the Great Easter Egg Hunt

Thursdays in Lent and Holy Week

Each evening begins with a light supper at 6:30 pm. Our study will end at 8:30 pm. Please sign up for the Lenten Thursdays on the Adult Education Board outside the Parish Hall, or by calling or emailing the Parish Office.

- March 19** *Lenten Disciplines and Spiritual Journey.* Bring an object that is part of your Lenten path for this visual exploration of a season of preparation.
- March 26** *Forgiveness.* William Young's *The Shack* offers an intriguing view of this Christian topic. Read the runaway bestseller and come prepared to discuss!
- April 2** *Sacrifice:* how do progressive Christians understand Jesus' death? No reading required!
- April 9** (Maundy Thursday) Passover Seder followed by a family Eucharist. As our Jewish friends observe Passover this night, let's join them in telling the great story of deliverance, dignity, then experience the Eucharist, our celebration of deliverance, dignity, and hope.

St. John's Episcopal Church

1333 Old Welsh Rd
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006
(215) 947-3212
Website: www.stjohnshv.org
The Rev. Dr. Barbara W. Abbott,
Interim Priest
Ruth Gordon, *Parish Administrator*

Vestry

Tamara Zurakowski, *Rector's Warden*
Gray Safford, *Accounting Warden*

George Crump
Ben Dettinger
Tom Kenny
Elizabeth Nettleton
Roy Ortman

Webmaster, Tony Volpe
volpea@comcast.net

Newsletter Editors

Ben Dettinger
Rev. Barbara Abbott
Newsletter Formatter
Ruth Gordon

Outreach

**Chili and Soup Cookoff !!!!!!!!
February 22, 2009 11:00am**

Pass on the Spirit
The spirit of helping children affected by
AIDS and poverty
who want and need an education

St John's Episcopal Church
1333 Old Welsh Road
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006
215-947-3212
www.stjohnshv.org

to benefit
The FACE-to-FACE AIDS PROJECT
Malawi, East Africa and Cambodia
Check it out at www.facetofaceaids.org

**Ken Wong, Director, will hold a forum
about
The Face-to-Face AIDS Project
And then, we EAT!!**

YOU CAN
Enter a homemade soup or chili to be
judged by all
Call 215-947-3212
Win a prize and unimaginable accolades !
Or
Buy a ticket and eat as much soup, chili,
crackers and dessert as you want.
Have a great time !

Tickets \$10.00, Children Free

You will also be able to donate and make a
world of difference.
RSVP 215-947-3212

Parish Notices

Parish Library With our youngest church school children now in the Parish Library on Sunday mornings, we've been refreshing the space, letting go of books that are out-of-date or weren't attracting readers. The partly cleared shelves invite some of our own recent reading! If you have titles on a spiritual theme that you wish to share, please do. Let's offer 'Parish Readers' and "Rector Suggests" shelves. Simply sign out your choice of books and remember to return them when you are finished. Happy reading!



From the Parish Office

Many thanks to the Vestry and Dr. Tamara Zurakowski for getting a new computer for the Parish Office. Our older computer was slowly dying, and according to our computer technician, it was not worth repairing, but only replacing. Also, St. John's email is working again, and we are happy to report, business is back to normal. Again, thanks to all involved in this process.

Ruth Gordon
Parish Administrator

Coffee Hour Rota

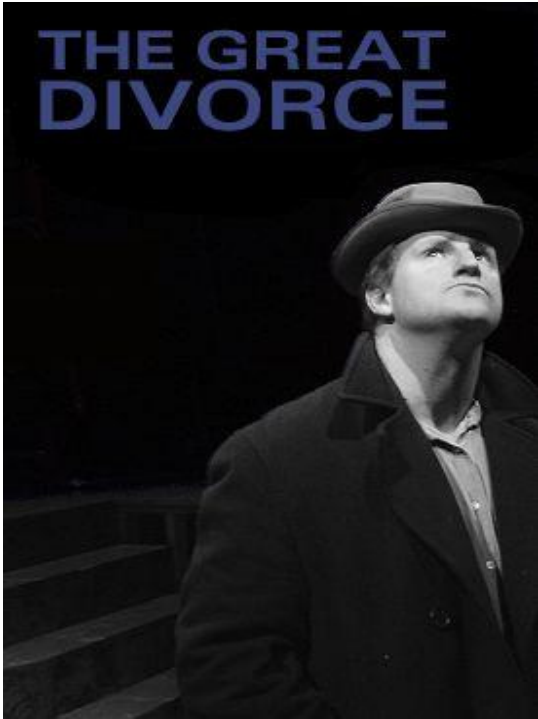
February 15- The Sykes Family
22 - Gloria Wood

March 1 - Walt & Ellen Fulmer
8 - Janet Smith
15 - Georgiana & Tony Messina
22 - Elaine Padgett & Linda Barbera
29 - Ben & Ruth Dettinger

Ushers Rota

February 15 - Ben & Ruth Dettinger
22 - Bill & Chris Ockenlaender

March 1- Sharon Thomas
8 - Bill Serrani & Roy Ortman
15 - Gray Safford & Hillary Lee
22 - Gloria Wood
29 - Michele & Jason Slowik



Saturday, April 4, 7:00 pm

Saint Anne's Church
2119 Old Welsh Road
Abington, PA, 215-659-1674

Tickets: \$10.00 in advance; \$15.00 at door

Reception following

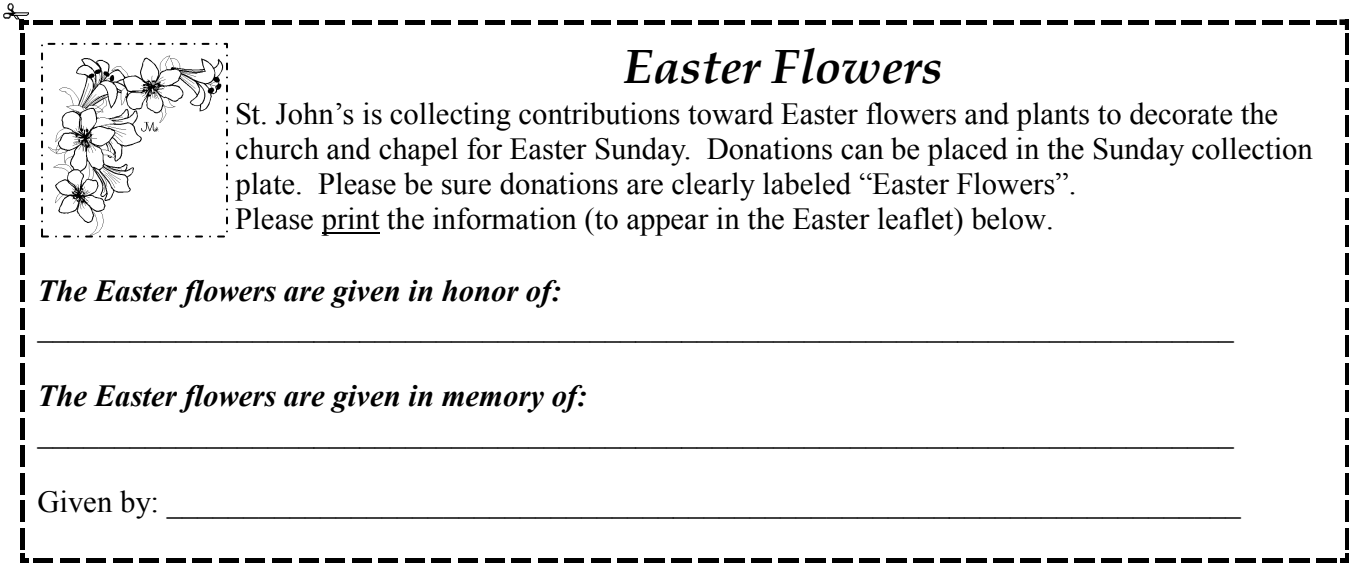
Make check payable to Saint Anne's:Lawton

St. John's is invited to attend this diocesan-wide presentation. Following the reception, we will return to St. John's Parish Hall for an informal discussion of the play. Contact St. John's Parish Office if you will attend the discussion so we can plan on numbers for refreshments.

The Great Divorce

Tony Lawton has adapted C.S. Lewis' novella, The Great Divorce, into an 80-minute, solo performance.

The play is the story of Clive, who, along with a motley crew of malcontents, takes a bus ride from hell to heaven. They are offered a chance to stay in heaven forever if they like, but the choice between joy and miserable loneliness proves to be much harder than they would have guessed. The piece is a feast of rich language, profound psychological insight, and humor.



Easter Flowers

St. John's is collecting contributions toward Easter flowers and plants to decorate the church and chapel for Easter Sunday. Donations can be placed in the Sunday collection plate. Please be sure donations are clearly labeled "Easter Flowers".
Please print the information (to appear in the Easter leaflet) below.

The Easter flowers are given in honor of:

The Easter flowers are given in memory of:

Given by: _____

A Visit to Beth Sholom Synagogue

Sunday, March 15, 11:30 am—12:30 pm

Attention: Young and old! Our Lenten Old Testament readings feature the Covenant, Sabbath laws, and the Ten Commandments. Here's an opportunity to learn about the God of Abraham in this beautiful Frank Lloyd Wright temple. Sign up sheet: Parish Hall, Adult Education Board. Cost: \$7.50 for a group of 10 or more.



Beth Sholom Synagogue, 8231 Old York Rd, Elkins Park

Lent: A User's Guide

The word 'lenten' comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning 'to lengthen' (as in days.) Spring is the lengthening of days – and this is a long season! Six weeks! If you subtract Sundays (feast days) you'll get 40 days – a reminder of Jesus' 40 days of temptation, Moses' forty years of wandering in the wilderness...so many biblical forties!

The length of this season portends the importance of what is to come and how much preparation matters. I'd like to say "we need to get ready for Holy Week," but my experience of the sweeping drama of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Day is that my preparation, however earnest, always seems terribly modest.

This season moves from our awareness of our own mortality (Ash Wednesday,) through the forty days of preparation (Lent) a time of cleansing, growth in grace and awareness, to new life (Easter!)

You may already observe a Lenten practice – or observe one without knowing it! Some Lenten practices are deep in our culture from previous generations.

- If you garden, you might be planning to prepare the beds, turn over the earth, study your seed catalogue. Care of the earth, on however small a scale, is a spiritual practice.
- This may be the season during which you change your diet, reducing fat, sweets, alcohol, caffeine, etc. You may increase your exercise regimen, perhaps walking rather than driving. This makes for increased awareness of our body's relationship to the spirit.
- Spring house cleaning? De-cluttering, cleaning closets, pantries, garage or basement, washing windows, painting rooms? All practical activities which create order, reflecting spiritual needs. We make room for the spirit!
- Quick on the heels of those New Year resolutions, you may be trying a new spiritual practice - reading on spirituality, journaling, setting aside time for quiet and prayer, or attending the Lenten Study Group!

What about fasting, abstinence or mortification of the flesh, you say? True sacrifice of something pleasurable or endurance of a hardship is relatively rare in our culture. Can we deny ourselves anything? Are we slaves to certain pleasures? I remember Jesus' words "Why do you eat bread that doesn't satisfy?"

One friend, a mother and wife, decided with her family to give up any non-essential purchases! She was amazed at what she learned about the lure of luxuries in her life. Of course, the fasts of those with means were meant, historically, to create feasts for the poor. That is to say, you were to put aside the monies saved on luxuries (even meat, sugar, butter, scotch) and give it to the poor. There is a huge difference between "I have enough, I'll give the excess after all my desires are satisfied" and "I will do without and give what I myself might have taken."

Finally, our tendency is to focus attention on giving something up for Lent, but what matters is keeping a discipline. Such a practice can lead to profound learning about ourselves and deeper awareness of our spirit. The fifth collect of Lent reminds us "to fix our hearts where true joys are found." May we all practice a holy Lent!

Rev. Barbara W. Abbott