



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Where all are welcome at the Lord's table

monthly

A monthly newsletter for the St. Luke's Community | March 2020

From Father Dante

There are some months where I find it easy to figure out what to write here, and there are others where I procrastinate my writing hoping for some divine inspiration. I must confess that this article represents the latter. For the last week and half I have found myself at a loss about what to write about. I have struggled to figure out what word about our community, the wider world, our faith I could offer to all of you. Sometimes there are just no words.

I sit here writing this letter on Super Tuesday. I find myself both exhausted and overwhelmed by all the coverage and information about the election. Recently as I sit down to read the paper each morning I find myself struggling to get through, or outright ignoring, yet another article about the presidential candidates. To be clear, I believe it is important to be civically engaged. I believe each and every person has the responsibility to be well informed when making choices about political candidates, policies, and platforms. But, and maybe you know what this is like, I find myself only being able to read so much.

Our political landscape is not the only thing weighing on me these days. I find myself facing increasing concerns about the realities of global health and safety. Concerns being raised and worries about the unknown as the War in Afghanistan comes to an end, and our troops coming home. Concerns about COVID-19 (commonly called the coronavirus) that seem to increase by the day as fear and anxiety and worry mix with genuine caution and preparedness. This does not even bring into account the non-emergent places of war and violence and illness. We should be concerned about all the places of violence and hatred and war throughout the world. Peoples facing horrible and brutal conditions, that no person should ever have to endure.

Beyond the world around us there are plenty of things to hold closer to home - all the personal/pastoral things of our common life together. I know I am not alone in grieving from recent deaths in our parish communion. I know that many of you are spending countless hours in prayer holding up members of our community as they face illness and struggle with futures both known and unknown. While it might seem trivial, I know the burden many of our parish leaders are feeling to care for the physical and fiscal health of St. Luke's. A great responsibility has been entrusted to our leadership and I am amazed at how seriously that responsibility is taken. I won't begin to go into the anxiety, worry, and plethora of other emotions that lay ahead as various parish transitions hang in the distance.

It is no wonder that on Sunday, several people asked me if we should be praying the Great Litany more often. After all that liturgy was created to be used in times of heightened community anxiety and fear. For whatever this is worth, part of my Lenten discipline this year is to pray that litany every Friday before I say Morning Prayer.

I do not know about you, but as I think through and write all of this down, part of my wants to close my computer, shut the curtains, and just curl up on my couch with a cup of coffee and get lost in the latest book of poetry I'm reading (the Everyman's Library Pocket Poets edition of Langston Hughes in case you were wondering). But, hiding and isolation is not a privilege our life of faith affords us.

Solitary times of prayer are good and to be encouraged, and they are different than hiding from the world around us. As people of God we are called to be in the world, but not of the world. We are called to be in the world as members of Christ's Body and Blood - witnesses to the ways of God to those around us. So what does that actually mean in the face of anxiety, fear, and worry?

As I have thought about my Lenten Disciples this year, I have tried to think about what practices I could take on that help me foster within myself the love, hope, and grace of God. What are the things that I can do to, in my own little corner of the world, participate in transforming anxiety, fear, and worry into love, hope and grace. I am still figuring this out, but here is what I've come up with so far.

First and foremost, is prayer. There are moments when I get a bit slack with my commitment to daily prayer. Times I will confess when if I have to choose between making coffee and saying Morning Prayer . . . well let's just say I am not opening my Prayer Book. This Lent, I am recommitting myself to a practice of daily prayer. I begin each morning by praying Morning Prayer and I end each night by praying Compline. As I mentioned earlier, I've added the Great Litany to Morning Prayer on Fridays. As part of these times of prayer, I am being sure to lift up the concerns that I hold in my heart. I am also being sure to offer prayers of gratitude and thanksgiving. Sometimes prayer can get a bit too heavy as I go through all the things that bring me anxiety, fear, and worry. So I try to end with words of gratitude. Words that help remind me of the grace and hope and love of God.

For those of you who know me, you know that I love to read and have a bit of an intellectual bent. This Lent I've decided to focus on reading more about and from communities oh which I am not apart - specifically communities of color. As I go about my days I see the fear that is the result of the unknown - fear of people who look, and think, and believe, and love differently than we do. I also see the realities of racism and white supremacy that continue to plague our country. So this Lent, I am focusing particularly on educating myself, that I might become a better advocate for reconciliation in our world. This was inspired by the decision of the Adult Faith Formation team to read *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* as a Wednesday Night Lenten Program this year. In addition to works that come out of the Harlem Renaissance, like the book of poetry I mentioned above, I have been making my way through Marcus Samuelsson's audiobook *Our Harlem: Seven*

Days of Cooking, Music, and Soul at the Red Rooster and I am about to start rereading Brian Bantum's book *The Death of Race: Building a New Christianity in a Racial World*. As I read these books, I seek to have my heart and mind and soul opened to biases, prejudices, and racist thoughts and behaviors I have and then listen and work to change those thoughts and behaviors that I might seek and serve Christ in all persons.

Finally, I am spending time thinking about self-care and trying on new practices to care for myself. I want to be clear that I am not trying to use Lent as a self-help, looking to lose some weight, trial period. One of the things that I have realized is that by allowing myself to get too exhausted and too stressed has created a barrier between myself and God. From this place I am less aware of God working around me, and I am more closed off stifling how God might be working in and through me. I find the more tired I am, the more anxious and stressed I am, the more likely I am to be a person embodying the grace, hope, and love of God. So I am working to be more disciplined in my sleeping habits, I am trying to spend more time outside walking and paying attention to the beauty of creation, I am trying to focus doing one thing at a time savoring and enjoying the activity and moment instead of trying to maximize my productivity, I am spending time every week fasting as a way to help me be mindful of my privilege and the needs of others, and a few other things here and there.

There is so much going on in the world around us that understandably causes fear and anxiety and worry. But the gift of our faith is that there is no reason for us to fear. The gift of our faith is that we have the privilege of being people of grace and hope and love. As we continue along our Lenten pilgrimage may our hearts and minds be opened to the ways of God, that we might be icons to the world that there is another way.

Lenten Blessings,
Dante

The Choirs Of St. Luke's

RHODE ISLAND DIOCESAN CHOIR FESTIVAL 2020



Saturday, March 7

Choral Evensong at 5 PM

Graeme McCullough, Guest Conductor

Grace Church in Providence

300 Westminster Street

Featuring the choristers from

St. Christopher's, Chatham, MA

St. Luke's, East Greenwich

St. John the Evangelist, Newport

Grace Church, Providence

From the Treasurer

As we kick off 2020, I'd like to take a few moments to give you a snapshot of the financial condition of our Parish. With all we had to cover at the annual meeting, my report was abbreviated in order to get to the exciting news on the kitchen.

As a non-profit with a Christian mission, our budgetary goal is not to maximize the bottom line, but we would like to at least balance the income with the expenses, which can provide a challenge at times.

So, a little look back on the last few years:

| Year | Income | Expenses | Gain/Loss |
|-------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2014 | \$537,334 | \$536,978 | \$356 |
| 2015 | \$572,816 | \$571,953 | \$863 |
| 2016 | \$590,148 | \$590,085 | \$63 |
| 2017 | \$665,062 | \$639,995 | \$25,067 |
| 2018 | \$697,662 | \$683,585 | \$14,077 |
| 2019 | \$676,477 | \$687,844 | - \$11,367 |
| 2020* | \$692,535 | \$724,319 | - \$31,784 |

*Projected

As you can see, we are a growing parish – income and expenses are increasing. Each year we welcome new faces into our pews and the Sunday school. We seem to gain and lose 10 – 15% of our congregation each year, with a small net gain.

So where does the money go? 93% goes to salaries, facilities and our apportionment. The balance is used for programs and outreach. Your leadership over the past few years has made a conscious effort to slowly increase our commitment to maintaining and improving the physical plant under the leadership of Dave Savage. And where does the money come from? Well, 90% is from you, the loyal parishioners of St. Luke's. Your pledge and other forms of support make it all possible.

In this year's pledge drive the pledges have come in the following ranges:

| Pledge Amt. | Number |
|-------------------|--------|
| \$1 - \$1,000 | 67 |
| \$1001 - \$2000 | 59 |
| \$2,001 - \$3,000 | 28 |
| \$3,001 - \$4,000 | 15 |
| \$4,001 - \$5,000 | 8 |
| \$5,001 - Up | 20 |
| ~\$444,000 | 197 |

This is informational only, and is strictly the pledge income – many of you give in addition to your pledging, and I think you are all wonderful in all you do here. As to the assets of the Church, our facilities appraised value is north of \$7 million. Our investment in the trust is over \$1.1 million. And we have raised over 2/3 of the goal on our new kitchen.

So the state of our finances is that they are healthy, but we do go into this year with a challenging operations budget shortfall that we are hoping to make up. We need to continue to support St. Luke's as we have in the past, and pass what we have on to the next generation, leaving it as good, if not better, shape than as we found it.

Peace, Michael Sullivan

Vestry Corner

The following is excerpted from Mike Grady's annual meeting remarks on January 26, 2019.

In Gratitude

One of the joys of the annual meeting is the opportunity we have to thank so many of you who play a role in enriching our parish life. As I wind down my two-year term as senior warden, I'd like to offer a general thanksgiving to my vestry colleagues. You are a very dedicated and gifted group of parish leaders. Over these two years we prayed together, grew together, debated together and learned together. You care deeply about the mission of the parish and are guided by a commitment to advance the mission of St. Luke's -- to reflect the light of Christ through our good works. Thank you for letting me join you on this two-year journey.

I want to offer thanks to Marcia Gladue who today embarks on her third year as vestry clerk. Marcia, know the entire vestry and parish is so grateful for your thoroughness, your accuracy, your judgment and all the good humor you show through it all.

I'd want to offer a special thank you to Gary Schweizer, our current junior warden (who's about to get a promotion). You've been a wise and thoughtful co-pilot this past year and will make a fantastic senior warden. And to Bill Warburton, who seems to have his hand on every lever of this place – thank you, Bill, for stepping up to assume junior warden responsibilities.

I am so grateful to our superb clergy and staff: To Father Tim, Father Dante, Deacon Christine, Rodney Ayers, Christina Imondi, our bookkeeper, Lisa Paolino, and our sexton, Tim Marnane. We are so grateful for all you do throughout the year but especially so during this busy December/January stretch.

Finally, I want to thank our retiring vestry members. To Lois McLaughlin: Lois, in your unassuming way I see you as one of our most influential member – because you know ALL of us and know exactly how best to mobilize the talent of this parish to get any job done. To Ali Poirier: You somehow managed your vestry duties with teaching in the youth faith formation program, planning and leading a trip to the DR, all while raising a young family and holding down a day job. I'm in awe of how you pulled this off! And to Bill McClintick Jr: I call Bill the conscience of our vestry. Among other roles, Bill reminded us of our fiduciary duty to the parish especially as it relates to fiscal matters. And I have confidence that he will continue to play that role in "retirement."

Mike Sullivan is everything we can hope for in a chief financial officer. He's a person of great integrity; he is open and transparent with our numbers; he does not shy away from shining a light on what he sees is a problem; and he's usually at least one step ahead of the rest of us in coming up with the solution. Michael, I am so grateful for his wise and faithful partnership.

If you haven't yet had a chance to read Father Tim's letter in the January Monthly, please do. He describes how in 2019, St. Luke's became one of the "coolest" place in town, thanks in large measure to Lisa Johnson's extraordinary gift of air conditioning made in memory of her father, the late Carl Hoyer, our cherished parish leader.

I know Mike Sullivan will have more to say about the Finance Committee in his report, but I wouldn't want this moment to pass without recognizing the talent and effort of this gifted group: Pam Dresselhouse (chair), Jeremy Stowe, Stacey Nakasian, Michael Sullivan, Jane Eaton, John Rannenber and Steve McLaughlin. This group has become an invaluable partner to the vestry concerning all matters of dollars and cents.

At last year's annual meeting we began the tradition of asking the property committee to report on the property improvement projects that were completed last year; what is budgeted for this year; and our future priorities. As I introduce Dave Savage to speak on behalf of the committee, I want to recognize property committee members and others who've played such an important role in maintaining the health and operations of our physical plant: Paul Brookes, Bob Brockway, Tom Dresselhouse (AC), Lorraine Leech, Bruce Stevens and Doug MacPherson. I will also want to thank Cindy and Ben Lovejoy and the Twilighters Group for their work on the labyrinth garden among other projects

Last year I reported to you that, following careful deliberation, the vestry decided to pursue a full-scale kitchen renovation as our number one capital improvement priority. In the year since our meeting, a dedicated committee of our peers -- Lois and Steve McLaughlin, Ali Poirier, Paul Brookes and Gary Schweizer (as chair), conceived a bold and creative design for the project. As Gary comes to the podium to present on behalf of the committee, please join me in thanking this group for their thoughtful and tireless effort.

Let me close by giving a shout out to our fundraising committee: Bill Warburton, Jon Jacaruso, Beth Vollucci and Dick Kelly, and to Deborah Collins for leading an outreach effort to local philanthropies. This group is planning a series of activities that, together with the Potter's remarkable gift, will help us identify the resources needed to achieve this vision of a new parish kitchen and dining room. Bill, Jon, Beth, Dick and Deborah, your creativity and leadership will help us identify new revenue streams to achieve not only our kitchen goal but to address future the capital needs of the parish.

A Note From Our Senior Warden

As I begin my two-year term as Senior Warden, I am excited about all that is in store for 2020. And I am grateful to be serving with such a wonderful vestry team. When we met for our first meeting last month, I was taken by the excitement and enthusiasm that our new members brought. Among them we have a strong and wise woman who brings healing and compassion to many through her work in the medical field; a genuine, caring mother of two young children who brings to our vestry all the energy and nurturing spirit of that role; a soft-spoken southern gentleman who brings integrity and wisdom; and a woman of quiet wisdom who has served our church and youth choir for many years, and who has blessed St. Luke's with two wonderful children that we have all had the privilege of watching grow into young adults.

They join our returning members who continue to lead our church with a dedication to make sound decisions grounded in Christ's command to love and serve one another. As I reflect upon how honored I am to be working with such a great group of people, it occurs to me that they really are a cross section of our wider St. Luke's family. Week after week, I see kindness and integrity in all of you. I experience a family bound to one another by a shared belief in Christ's love. But it does not end there. Time and again I encounter a full humanity that goes beyond our shared religion. A humanity that does not wear our faith as a shielding cloak. Rather it embraces and welcomes all. As we got to know each other better at last month's vestry meeting, Father Dante asked each of us what it was that kept us here at St. Luke's. The replies were diverse. But without exception, we each mentioned that one of the biggest things that draws us to St. Luke's is one another. I think that's pretty cool. And I think that is exactly how Christ wanted it to be.

We have a lot to look forward to in 2020. We've got a kitchen to upgrade, a mission trip to the Dominican Republic, corporate communion for our latest group of young adults, faith formation classes, feeding and clothing ministries, choir concerts, parish suppers, a yard sale, a golf tournament, property maintenance, animals to bless, Christmas carols to sing, friendships to nurture. The list goes on. It is exciting to be part of such a vibrant community, and there is something for everyone to get involved in. But what makes this all so special is our common commitment to Christ and his teachings. It is the foundation of all that we do. Each Sunday we are privileged to come together in such a beautiful space and draw near to God. God is present everywhere and at all times, but the place I feel him most is amongst all of you.

Gary Schweizer

MARCH

SAVE THE DATES

March 2, 2020

6:30 pm Fundraising Committee Meeting @ Blackburn Rm

March 4, 2020

6 pm Wednesday Night Contemplative Eucharist @ Church

7 pm Wednesday Night Lenten Program @ Dining Rm

March 10, 2020

7 pm Vestry Meeting @ Blackburn Rm

March 11, 2020

1 pm Pastoral Care Meeting @ Blackburn Rm

6 pm Wednesday Night Contemplative Eucharist @ Church

7 pm Wednesday Night Lenten Program @ Dining Rm

March 18, 2020

6 pm Wednesday Night Contemplative Eucharist @ Church

7 pm Wednesday Night Lenten Program @ Dining Rm

March 19, 2020

8 am Property Breakfast @ Dining Rm

March 21, 2020

8 am Democratic Committee Breakfast @ Dining Rm

March 25, 2020

6 pm Wednesday Night Contemplative Eucharist @ Church

7 pm Wednesday Night Lenten Program @ Dining Rm

March 28, 2020

10 am Loaves & Fishes Run @ Dining Rm

March 29, 2020

12 pm ZooMobile Event @ Auditorium and Dining Rm

March 30, 2020

5 pm CCK Dinner @ Dining Rm

Wednesday Night Contemplative Eucharist

All are welcome and invited to join us for a celebration of the Holy Eucharist each Wednesday night in Lent at 6pm from March 4 until April 1. This service will be a contemplative service consisting of Scripture readings, readings of spiritual writers, and opportunity for communal reflection. For more information please speak with Fr. Dante.

Adult Faith Formation Lenten Opportunities

As has been our custom over the last several years the Adult Faith Formation team has once again put together a variety of opportunities for study during the season of Lent. This year these offerings will include a Sunday morning study, a Wednesday night program, and an online opportunity.

Sunday Morning Class

Beginning on the First Sunday in Lent (March 1, 2020) the 9am Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation class will begin a five-week study using the 2020 Lenten program provided by the Society of St. John the Evangelist. This program, titled “Signs of Life: why church matters” looks at five key symbols of our life of faith: light, water, food, shelter, and community. In writing about this program SSJE offers, “Worship engages our deepest human needs and has the power to transform our lives. Join the Brothers of SSJE in exploring the signs and symbols at the heart of Christian worship. This free 5-week offering encourages individuals and groups to explore the riches of our worship traditions, liturgy and sacraments, and the art and architecture of our worship spaces, revealing the full meaning of these signs, deepening our experience of Christian vocation and guiding us toward ongoing conversion.” For more information about this program visit: www.signsoflife.org.

Wednesday Night Lenten Program

Once again this year, there will be a Wednesday night contemplative Eucharist through the season of Lent. This year, following that liturgy, we will have a Lenten program - a book study combined with a simple supper of soup and salad. For our study this year we will be reading James H. Cone’s book *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* and using a curriculum developed by the Center for Reconciliation. This award winning book is considered a landmark in the conversation about race and religion in America. Journalist Bill Moyers, says of this book, “One again James Cone demonstrates why he is indispensable as an interpreter of faith, race, and the American experience.” It is the hope of the Adult Faith Formation team that this study will build upon previous programs and opportunities from past years. This program will meet at 7pm every Wednesday beginning March 4 until April 29. Books will be available for purchase during coffee hour for \$23 beginning on Sunday February 16. We ask that parishioners sign up for this study to help us plan for food. Scholarships are available to cover the cost of the book. For more information please speak with Fr. Dante.

Reading Schedule for This Series:

- Session 1 - Wednesday March 4 - Introduction
- Session 2 - Wednesday March 11 - Chapter 1
- Session 3- Wednesday March 18 - Chapter 2
- Session 4 - Wednesday March 25 - Chapter 2 continued
- Session 5 - Wednesday April 1 - Chapter 3
- Session 6 - Wednesday April 15 - Chapter 4
- Session 7 - Wednesday April 22 - Chapter 5
- Session 8 - Wednesday April 29 - Closing Session

Online Study through SLACK

Our Lenten SLACK program will build off of the Sunday morning experience, though one does not need to participate in the Sunday morning offering to participate in SLACK. Instead of a daily meditation book we will be using the daily signs of life calendar created by the Brothers of SSJE. This calendar invites us to connect scripture, liturgy, and practice through the signs of light, water, food, shelter, and community to the Way of Love. As the Brothers write, “we hope our calendar of daily practices will help all those exploring *Signs of Life* to dig deep and experience the full meaning of these signs as they Worship, Pray, Learn, Turn, Bless, God, and Rest in Lent 2020.” Calendars will be available for pick up in the atrium in late February.

Commitment Campaign Update

As of March 1, here is the status of our 2020 Campaign:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Total Number of Pledges | 199 |
| Total Amount Pledged | \$450,873 |
| In addition, we have received \$2,220 in special gifts | |
| Total Budgeted Pledge Amount | \$465,000 |

For Comparison’s Sake, at this time last year:

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Total Number of Pledges | 200 |
| Total Amount Pledged | \$465,381 |

Our thanks to all of you who have pledged for the next year. If you have not yet pledged, we ask that you please do. The work and worship at St. Luke’s depends upon your generosity.

Blessings,
The St. Luke’s Stewardship Committee

The Rector's Sabbatical

The Rev. Timothy T. Rich is on sabbatical until April 1, 2020. In his absence, please contact the Associate rector, The Rev. Dante A. Tavolaro.

Feeding Families—Community Kitchen Golf Classic

Potowomut Golf Club—Monday, May 11, 2020

The Community Kitchen Golf Classic is ultimately about supporting those in need across the greater West Bay community. To ensure continued and, ideally, expanded community service, the 58-year old St. Luke's Community Kitchen requires a comprehensive, commercial caliber update. Support the Community Kitchen and its feeding ministries by registering to golf, being a sponsor, making a donation, or joining us for dinner and the after-tournament festivities! To learn more, contact Event Co-Chairs Bill Warburton or Jon Jacaruso at ckgolfclassic@gmail.com

Register online at

<https://communitykitchenclassic.eventbrite.com>

Or, scan this QR code to go directly to the Community Kitchen Golf Classic website!



Volunteers are needed on the day of the event to assist with a variety of activities. Anyone interested in volunteering can sign up using the following link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0944ADA923A13-golf>

**Hill & Harbor Community Yard Sale 5/23/20
(Save Your Items)**

JOURNEY WITH US TO EASTER AT ST. LUKE'S

WEDNESDAY NIGHT EUCHARIST

EVERY WEEK FROM
MARCH 4 TO APRIL 1 • 6PM

PALM SUNDAY

APRIL 5 • 7:45AM & 10:15AM

MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY OF HOLY WEEK

APRIL 6-8 • 7PM

SERVICE OF HOLY EUCHARIST

MAUNDY THURSDAY

APRIL 9 • 6PM

SEDER-LIKE SUPPER,
FOOT WASHING, &
HOLY EUCHARIST

GOOD FRIDAY

APRIL 10

TRADITIONAL
SERVICE

12NOON

TAIZÉ SERVICE

7PM

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

APRIL 11 • 7:30PM

EASTER DAY

APRIL 12 • 7:45AM & 10:15AM

ST. LUKE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME AT THE LORD'S TABLE

99 PEIRCE ST. • 401.884.4116 • WWW.STLUKESEG.ORG • @STLUKESEG



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