

The Rainbow



March, 2022

Reflections on the Season of Lent

by the Rev. Lou Hays

Lent gets a bad rap. I suspect many Episcopalians, particularly those who grew up in more Protestant denominations, dread the 40 days of Lent. Certainly, Lent is a time to reflect on our mortality, our relationship with God, and how we often separate ourselves from God (otherwise known as sin). And yes, we do begin Lent by having ashes rubbed on our foreheads with the words “remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return.” But, those ashes are not just a reminder of our mortality. Ashes can also be seen as a cleansing agent, reminding us that our sins have been washed clean in the water of baptism.

Furthermore, Lent is not just a season of penitence, of sackcloth and ashes. Here’s how no less of an authority on the matter than Leonel Mitchell, author of *Praying Shapes Believing: A Theological Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer*, explains it:

Penitence, however, is not the only lenten theme. As we have seen, the second lenten eucharistic preface speaks of Lent as a time to ‘prepare with joy for the Paschal feast.’ (BCP:379). Joy, love and renewal are as much lenten themes as are penitence, fasting and self-denial; and we need to remember that it is within the context of preparation for our participation in the Feast of feasts that the lenten penitence is expressed. Our penitence is not the penitence of those who have no hope of forgiveness, but of those who have been redeemed by the dying and rising of Jesus the Lord. (*Praying Shapes Believing*, p. 29.)

Some of us may wish to give up something for Lent, such as chocolates or desserts. Fasting during Lent and at other times is an ancient and worthy spiritual practice, of course. But will giving up chocolate actually bring us closer to God? I would suggest, either instead of or in addition to giving up something for Lent, to start up something for Lent. The choices are endless, but here are a few suggestions: give more to Christ Church and/or your favorite charity; attend church every Sunday during Lent; if you have been watching at home, come to church in person to reconnect with your community and receive the Body of Christ; attend *A Lenten Journey Through Our Faith*, our Wednesday evening program exploring five essential tenets of our faith.

You will notice a few liturgical changes during Lent. Our usual altar flowers will be replaced by stark and dramatic branches. Alleluias are put to bed until Easter Day. We will be using a version of the Kyrie (Lord have mercy) rather than the Gloria or Hymn of Praise. We will use Eucharistic Prayer A, a more penitential prayer than the one we have been using recently. We will use a pottery chalice and paten in place of our usual silver set. We will say rather than sing the Great Amen at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer. And there will be a special Lenten proclamation as part of the Blessing at the end of the service.

As I will be saying on Ash Wednesday, I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent. Come along for the ride. I think you will enjoy it. And yes, it’s okay to enjoy Lent!

A Lenten Journey Through Our Faith

Please join the Reverend Lou Hays and your fellow parishioners for our Wednesday evening Lenten program. Together we will explore five foundational issues of our faith from an Episcopal perspective. Ever have any questions or doubts? Not to worry –

that's why we call it faith, not certainty. As Episcopalians we are called to love the questions, and as a “journey” church rather than an “answer” church, we don't pretend to have an answer to every question, or that there is only one right answer to every question.

Each evening will include a presentation by Lou and time for sharing and questions. We hope you can come for all five evenings, but come when you can and as you are. We will gather from 7:00 to 8:15 pm to explore these essential questions of our faith:

Session 1 – Wednesday, March 9

What do we believe? Who is Jesus, and why did he have to live, die, and rise from the dead?

Session 2 – Wednesday, March 16

What is the Holy Spirit, and what does He (She?) do? Do we believe in one God, or two or three?

Session 3 – Wednesday, March 23

The Bible – is it truth or myth? Did God dictate the Bible? Is it still relevant? How do we read, understand, and use the Bible?

Session 4 – Wednesday, March 30

Where is God in the world? Why do bad things happen to good people? Where is God in the midst of tragedy?

Session 5 – Wednesday, April 6

How do I want to spend the rest of my life? What's the point? Where are you, God, and what do you want from me?



The Rector Search Process Needs You!

Did you know that you are the key to a successful Rector search? Yes, you are. Your personal participation will allow us to define who we are as a parish and who we want to serve as our next Rector. We are planning an event to be held in mid-May on a Sunday morning that will allow every parishioner to share their views, hopes and dreams for Christ Episcopal Church and its next Rector. You will also be able to hear how everyone else feels. This will be an exciting, uplifting, not-to-be-missed experience! More information will be available soon.



Rector Search Committee Begins Process *by Becky Beckett*

The Rector Search Committee met January 30 and began the task to replace Father Chad. Father Lou explained in detail the process. The initial task to create a prayer for use at every committee meeting as well as all services commenced.

On February 20 the committee again met and discussed a parish-wide event, “Celebrating Our Future,” as part of the requirements needed to create the parish profile. The date is May 15 as a part of the regular service and an extension thereafter. Please mark your calendars to participate in this vital and exciting service.

The committee is meeting as of now every other week to expedite the basic work needed to call a new rector. Continue to pray and provide any comments you have.

Committee members include: Susanne Pulse, David Hardin, Mary Catherine Williams, Bill Denney, Mimi Merritt, and Becky Beckett.



MONTHLY MINISTRY REPORT FOR FEBRUARY

FOOD PANTRY

February 17, 2022

63 bags distributed

59 kerosene vouchers handed out

Volunteers: Betty Nash, Patricia and Peter Taylor

UNION MISSION

A reminder from Art Mead:

On March 9 and March 23, the 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, Episcopalians will feed at the Union Mission. Scheduled starts should be at **4:00 PM on the 9th** and at **3:00 PM on the 23rd**.

Explanation: We are shifting the BBQ menu with beans, cole slaw and brownies from the 2nd Wednesday to the 4th Wednesday. Preparation of this menu is the more labor intensive, therefore needing an earlier start to meet the 5:00 PM serving target.

February 9, 2022

111 meals prepared (44 served on Wednesday; 67 served Thursday)

Menu - BBQ on a bun, cole slaw, baked beans, brownie and drink.

Volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Elizabeth Clement, Art Mead and Shirley Ofsa of Christ Episcopal Church, Bluefield, WV

Charlie Helmandollar, Christ Episcopal Church, Pocahontas, VA

Fredia Helmandollar, Cumberland Heights Baptist Church

Marjorie Justice and Betty Watson of Bluefield, VA

February 23, 2022

145 meals served

Menu: Italian Mac, green beans and brownie, drink

Volunteers: Sheila Brooks, Cameron Clement, Elizabeth Clement, Delia Kersey, Art Mead (all from Christ Episcopal Church); Marjorie Justice and Betty Watson (Bluefield, VA)



FELLOWSHIP HOME

Dinner was prepared and delivered to the men at the Fellowship Home on Thursday, February 24. Volunteers making this possible include Jim Pulse, Betty Nash, Elizabeth Clement, Patty Richardson and Linda Ammar.

A letter from the director of the Fellowship Home was received in late January. A portion of this letter read:

Women's Congregation Members,

On behalf of everyone here at the Fellowship Home, I wanted to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone for the Snack Baskets and for the Dinners that are brought to the Home throughout the year and at Thanksgiving.

We are always grateful for your support and it is always a morale booster to the Residents of the Fellowship Home. We fully appreciate everything you do for us.

If we can be of any assistance, feel free to call me at 304-327-9876.

Sincerely,
Jim McClanahan
Executive Director



Three Christ Church members were elected to the Vestry at the Annual Parish Meeting on Sunday, January 9.

Beginning their three-year terms are Susanne Pulse, Peter Richardson, and Mary Catherine Williams.



Susanne Pulse, who has always lived in southern West Virginia, graduated from Concord College. She has worked at the law firm of Brewster Morhous PLLC for 32 years as a legal assistant. She is married to Jim Pulse.

Susanne has attended Christ Episcopal Church for the past 10 years and has served previously on the Vestry, as a delegate to the annual convention for several years, and as a member of the Bishop Search Committee. She is editor of *The Rainbow*, the newsletter of Christ Church.

Peter Richardson is a lifelong resident of Bluefield and member of Christ Church. He attended Bluefield public schools and is a graduate of Virginia Tech and Washington & Lee University. He has practiced law in Virginia and West Virginia since graduation. He served on the Planning Commission for the City of Bluefield and served eight years as a member of the Board of Directors for the City of Bluefield.



Peter has served Christ Church as a Sunday School teacher, Vestry member, Junior Warden, Senior Warden, and Trustee.

Peter is married to Christ Church member Patty Richardson. They are the parents of Michael and Elizabeth. Michael is married, the father of two children, and lives near Atlanta. Elizabeth lives in Charlotte.

Mary Catherine Keffer Williams was born and raised in Giles County, Virginia. She attended public schools in Giles County and graduated in 1959. She met her husband Don in December 1962 and was married June 29, 1963. Mary Catherine was confirmed November 3, 1963, at Christ Church in Pearisburg. Of all the churches she and Don attended over the years (four), she considers Christ Church Bluefield "home." The other churches she attended besides Pearisburg were in Statesville, North Carolina, and Winchester, Virginia.



Since her arrival at Christ Church in 1976, Mary Catherine has served several times on the Vestry and as Junior Warden, as Sunday School teacher, Search Committee member, ECW president, DOK president, Parish Life chairman, usher, and co-founder of Canterbury Club socials. She is considered the church building expert, having thought to be knowledgeable about everything in our building. She is presently a Christ Church Trustee.

Mary Catherine is an avid reader and enjoys knitting.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL
VESTRY MINUTES FEBRUARY 16, 2022

Present:

Peter Richardson	Peter Taylor
Elizabeth Clement	Susanne Pulse
Mary Catherine Williams	Betty Nash
Vic Bowman	David Kersey
Linda Ammar	Also present were the Rev. Lou Hays and Don Kersey, treasurer.

Absent: None

Rev. Hays called the meeting to order and declared the presence of a quorum. Rev. Hays then opened the meeting with a devotion and prayer.

Rev. Hays then reviewed the Vestry Officers and Vestry Assignments, as determined at the Vestry retreat. Vic Bowman was assigned to finance support and the Vestry concurred with those assignments.

Rev. Hays then distributed a list of the Vestry norms, as decided at the Vestry retreat. After an opportunity for further discussion, upon motion of Peter Taylor and second of Betty Nash, those norms were approved, unanimously.

Rev. Hays then lead the Vestry in discussion of our goals for 2022, which included:

- Successful completion of the Rector Search Process
- Maintain an active worship life with a goal of increasing attendance
- Determine options for online and credit card giving
- Plan and implement post-pandemic life of the parish
- Decide on whether to continue online services post-pandemic
- Address any continuing problems with sound quality of online services

Rev. Hays reported that two members of the Search Committee had to resign and Mimi Merritt had volunteered to join the committee. Upon motion of Linda Ammar and second of Elizabeth Clement, the Vestry unanimously approved Mimi Merritt's addition to the Search Committee.

The minutes of the Vestry Meeting of January 19, 2022 were reviewed and upon motion of Betty Nash and second of Elizabeth Clement, were unanimously approved.

Don Kersey presented the treasurer's report, distributing a balance sheet and Income/Expense Statement. A Budget Variance Report had been sent out before the meeting, pointing out anomalies in the month-end numbers. The only question raised was the inclusion of the \$15,202.54 Sabbatical Fund as part of our General Fund Account Balance, without an acknowledgement that there is a corresponding liability of the same amount. Failure to note the corresponding liability results in our general fund account being overstated by that amount. It was agreed that the liability will be noted in the future.

Upon motion of Susanne Pulse and second of Mary Catherine Williams, the report was unanimously approved.

David Kersey gave the Senior Warden's Report. The request for forgiveness of the second PPP government loan in the amount of \$23,000 was submitted and the church has received the forgiveness acknowledgement. Like the initial application for the loan, it was all accomplished on-line, with the kind assistance of Anna Abbey at Summit Community Bank.

Peter Richardson gave the Junior Warden's Report. The obsolete natural gas space heater in the narthex hallway has been removed. Wallace electrical is scheduled to be at the church on Thursday, February 17 to install electrical outlets in the nave for the HEPA air filters.

Lead Vestry Member Reports

-Peter Taylor advised that Food Pantry will be held on Thursday February 17, at 9:00 a.m. Food bags and kerosene vouchers will be distributed.

-Linda Ammar reported that dinner will be provided to the Fellowship Home at the end of next week. Belinda's Flowers has already been contacted with the altar guild's order for flowers and palms for Easter.

-Susanne Pulse reported that the Rainbow is being sent to 163 recipients by email and 65 recipients by U.S. mail. It was agreed that those lists will be reviewed and compared to see if the mailings could be reduced.

Rev. Hays gave the Rector's Report. He has planned for Lenten worship. We will use a pottery chalice and plate. We will observe Eucharistic Prayer A, which is a more penitential service. The Ash Wednesday bulletin is already drafted. There will be a Wednesday evening program during Lent and Rev. Hays expressed his desire for all Vestry members to attend. The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will be approximately one hour 15 minutes long. The conflicting Vestry meeting will begin early and be shortened.

Rev. Hays asked the Vestry to begin thinking about loosening Covid protocols for the upcoming Easter season. He reviewed the falling Covid counts, as reported in the New York Times, including cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Assuming those trends continue, it is his hope that we can sing hymns and host coffee hour, by Palm Sunday. Rev. Hays did not ask for discussion or a decision, just that the members be considering those matters.

Rev. Hays reminded the Vestry that Matthew Cowden will be consecrated on March 12, 2022 at 11:00 a.m. David Kersey will carry the Christ Church Banner in the procession.

There was no old business or new business. Rev. Hays lead the Vestry in Compline and was then excused from the meeting. An Executive Session for a personnel matter was conducted. The Vestry returned to open session and David Kersey then adjourned the meeting.



March 1 Jon Brannon
March 2 Gladys Fortune
March 2 John Georgis
March 3 Catherine Beemer
March 7 Ted Lewis
March 8 Aaron Ingram

March 10 Diane Sudduth
March 12 Jessica Cole
March 13 Elizabeth Richardson
March 14 Peter Taylor
March 17 Paul Broyles, III
March 17 Frankie Wilkinson

March 18 Walt Sowers
March 22 Linda Gaines
March 25 Kipp Cortez
March 25 John Kersey
March 28 Liam Cole
March 29 Ann Czarnik Fernandez
March 29 Elizabeth Sudduth

March 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 ASH WEDNESDAY Noon Imposition of Ashes with Holy Eucharist – No Music 7:00 Imposition of Ashes with Holy Eucharist - Music	3	4	5
6 The First Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	7	8	9 4:00 Union Mission 7:00 Lenten Program	10	11	12 11:00 Consecration of Matthew Cowden – West Virginia Wesleyan College
13 The Second Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist Daylight Saving Time Begins	14	15	16 6:00 Vestry Meeting 7:00 Lenten Program	17 9:00 Food Pantry	18	19 Saint Joseph
20 The Third Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	21	22	23 3:00 Union Mission 7:00 Lenten Program	24	25 The Annunciation of Our Lord Jesus Christ to the Blessed Virgin Mary	26
27 The Fourth Sunday in Lent 10:00 Holy Eucharist	28	29	30 7:00 Lenten Program	31		

Altar Guild for March:

Patty Richardson and Becky Beckett

Lectors and Acolyte Schedule for March:

March 6 Katherine Lewis, Lector	Elizabeth Burton, Acolyte
March 13 Delia Kersey, Lector	Elizabeth Burton, Acolyte
March 20 David Kersey, Lector	Elizabeth Burton, Acolyte
March 27 Mike Lilly, Lector	Becky Beckett, Acolyte

Please Keep the Following in Your

Prayers: Dorene Dimes, Bonnie Taylor, Joe Sanders, Bea Paine, Bob and Peggy Walk, John Kersey, Martha Linkous, Jay Kephart, Buck and Louisa Sowers, Donna Fortune, Ed and Gladys Fortune, Ivy and the Gaines Family, Taylor Frazier, III, and Brian

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
200 DUHRING STREET
BLUEFIELD, WEST VIRGINIA 24701

To our friends and family:



March 2022

Editor: Susanne Pulse (susannepulse@gmail.com)
Copy Editor: Mimi Merritt
Contributors: Linda Ammar, Bea Paine, Mimi Merritt
Graphic Design: Susanne Pulse