



THE CANTERBURY TALES

FEBRUARY 2016



FR. MARK'S MUSINGS

It's Lent!! Try not to get so excited that you lose track of everything else going on in your lives. Really? Excited, about Lent? Probably not! Who gets excited about self examination, giving up something, or going to extra services or classes? Nobody I know!

Contrast that with Christmas. Wow, with Christmas there is a three month build up on TV and radio, personal and community decorating, parties, and cards to write. By the time we get to Christmas Eve our children are worked up into a frenzy wondering when Santa Clause is coming and what will he bring. When we invest so much effort into Christmas we will quite naturally have great expectations about its' arrival and perhaps that is the difference between Christmas and Easter. Without the build up there is not the great expectation on Easter Eve or morning. And yet, Easter is the one holiday that is uniquely Christian, and fundamental to the faith of billions of people. Of course we certainly can't have Easter without Christmas or the crucifixion, but it is the resurrection that demonstrates God's power of life and love over death. It is that moment when God intervenes in this sinful, violent, and crazy world to say in a very dramatic and powerful way, I love you, and will give up of myself to save you.

The problem is that for Easter we are on our own to create the build-up. Since our society doesn't participate in lent we are left to ourselves to prepare for Easter. There are no hourly

reminders, TV commercials, or banners on the streets. And what you will see at the mall is mostly about eggs and bunnies. So what will you do to make Easter special? What will create some anticipation for you? Those who were at the Ash Wednesday service will know that I recommend we do something, anything that reminds us of the season, who we are, and where we want our hearts to become Easter morning. The final statement of Jesus in the Ash Wednesday Gospel story is “wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also”. So I ask all of us, where do you want your heart to be on Easter morning? If we want it to be with God, we will have to invest some of our time or treasure to get there. We have to take action to get wherever we want to be. It will not happen by accident, but only by intention. Unlike the build up to Christmas, we will not have the entire social structure of the country reminding us. We are to a large extent on our own.

But we do have each other. As we come together each Sunday, Wednesday, or (during Lent) Friday, to worship, learn, and share a meal together, we can continue our growth in faith and life. And finally to grow into the full stature of Christ that is part of our baptismal covenant. We grow by intentionally preparing and making ourselves available to God so that God might change us, love us, nurture us, into something heavenly. We are not alone, we are loved, and we have thousands of examples in the lives of Jesus, the apostles, and all the saints. We just have to make a conscious and intentional decision to do something every day that prepares us for the most wonderful event of the Christian year, the resurrection. I pray that the resurrection will take place in each one of us and we will know God a little better, every day.

Peace always,

Fr. Mark





DEACON'S NEWS AND NOTES

"February is merely as long as is needed to pass the time until March."

- Dr. J. R. Stockton

I continue with my regular "Fridays at Nicholson House," the diocesan office, (804 East Juneau) and again invite you to stop in for coffee/tea and a tour.

On February 6th I joined the STOC altar guild for their planning meeting. Lent/Easter are just foot steps away.

On the second Sunday of February and March, I will be doing My Promise, My Faith with the children at St. Thomas of Canterbury.

The first Executive Council meeting is February 13th. As executive secretary, I prepared a tentative agenda and sent it off to the Bishop and the vice-president of the EC for tweaking and the development of a narrative meeting agenda. It is the first meeting of the EC with the newly elected members and will be a longer, vision building and goal setting time. Please keep us in your prayers!

Again, as the new director of the Deacon Formation School, I will be away from St. Thomas of Canterbury one weekend a month. This month I will be at the De Koven center Saturday/Sunday, February 20th and 21st. Basically, my role is being present to the candidates and staff as well as facilitating the separate parts of the program. I already got word that the scripture instructor needs to reschedule her class for May. FYI: One of our own STOC members, Dr. Scott Celsor is teaching a class in the DFS – Christology.

We, on the Lifelong Christian Formation Committee, will meet again with the Bishop on February 23rd to see if there are gaps in communication with the diocesan office and if there is a need to continue this committee in its current format. Those of us on adult formation are

planning a "Book Talk" day (May at Sun Prairie) with our own The Rev'd Charles Henery author of Yankee Bishops, Apostles in the New Republic 1783-1873 (Studies in Episcopal and Anglican Theology.)

On March 2nd we will have our first convention planning meeting in Madison for this year's convention – October 7th and 8th at the Madison Marriott West Hotel & Convention Center, Middleton, WI. More information to follow as plans are finalized. Congratulations to all elected as delegates and alternates; it is an amazing experience, especially the Eucharist.

On March 5th, some of us on the Commission on Ministry will meet with the individual Parish Ministry Discernment Committees (PMDC) of the three individuals discerning a call to ordination. We will review with them the process and procedures of their responsibilities. Please pray for them and the three aspirants: Henry, Jennifer and Michael.

"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."

- John Boswell

Peace and prayers,

Deacon Marge





NOTES FROM PAUL STOVING, SENIOR WARDEN

In previous articles, I've mentioned the three words that strike terror in the hearts of Episcopalians. You may recall the first two, "**change**" and "**stewardship**" from earlier articles. The third is "**evangelism**."

When we talk about evangelism, we frequently get a vision in our minds of being dressed up, walking around our neighborhoods, and attempting to convert everyone to our specific beliefs, as is common with some other Christian denominations.

On the other hand, if we are called to be "fishers of men," then the Episcopal method of fishing is to sit in the boat, and wait for the fish to jump into it. It doesn't have to be either of these.

Whether we know it or not, we are all good at evangelism. Evangelism is, at its core, telling others about something, usually to encourage them to try it. We all do that every day. "Did you watch that show last night?" "Have you tried that restaurant?" "I read the best book last night."

Why are we willing to tell our friends about the book that we read last night, or the restaurant that we tried last week, yet we're afraid to tell others about something so important in our lives as our church?

This year, try to tell a few people about St. Thomas of Canterbury. I'm not asking you to go door-to-door. That's not who we are. But, if the time is right, or if someone asks you, tell them about us. Tell them about our music. Tell them about Fr. Mark's sermons. Tell them about our pastoral care, and our outreach. Tell them about our renewal and vision. Tell them about what we have to offer.

As always, I appreciate your thoughts.

Paul Stoving



VESTRY CLERK NOTES FROM ANGIE BIER

About 55 parishioners attended the Annual Meeting on January 31, and it proved to be productive and enlightening. A full summary can be found in the minutes, but here are a few highlights.

Many were excited to learn that the columbarium has been officially approved, and niches are available for sale immediately. They cost \$975 each and can house up to two sets of cremains. Once five niches have been sold, construction and installation of the columbarium will begin.

Our Senior Warden shared an overall positive report including ongoing growth and development of the Vestry and its processes and, of course, information on finances. Despite beginning 2015 with a \$26,000 deficit budget, all bills were paid as of December 31 thanks to the generosity of our parishioners. Even better, pledges for 2016 are up \$10,000! The approved 2016 budget remains a deficit budget by \$16,900, but this value continues to shrink over the past several years. Finally, we will have completely repaid our diocesan loan by the fall, and we will begin scheduled repayments on our line of credit later this year following its conversion to a term loan. We thank the Finance and Stewardship Committees for their key roles in this GOOD NEWS!

Outgoing vestry members were recognized for their terms of service: Linda Cram, Jeanne Langenberg, and Gayle Radavich. We also thank our new vestry members who were elected at Annual Meeting: Lisa Chmielewski, Gary Heaney, Dave Mecikalski and Ross Worzalla. Finally, for your information, we elected delegates and alternates for Convention. These are Angie Bier, Linda Cram, Veronica Heaney, and Kris Reed (Delegates); and Gary Heaney, Kathie Hein, Meghan Kluessendorf, and Fred Pedersen (Alternates).

A final exciting note was that St. Thomas has been a recipient of a generous \$27,000 bequest from the estate of parishioner Anne Yokers. The Vestry will be prayerfully considering how best to honor her memory with this gift.

Angie Bier





Ash Wednesday is February 10th. St. Thomas of Canterbury's Ash Wednesday service will begin at 7:00 P.M.

If you have not viewed the invitation to Ash Wednesday services on the STOC website, I encourage you to take a few moments to view the short video produced by the Episcopal Church.

LENTEN MEAL AND EVENING PRAYER



Starting on **Friday, February 12th**, we will be holding our Lenten program on Friday evenings again this year. We will share a meal and fellowship starting at 6PM, with Evening Prayer including a brief Bible Study to follow at 7PM. This program will run through March 18th, when we will end with Stations of the Cross. Last year, it seemed to work well to rotate and spread out the food responsibilities, so we've posted a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for those who would like to take a turn. Further plans and ideas towards that will be made the first week we gather. Please come and join us in this relaxed and warm form of Lenten Discipline!

~ Kathie Hein

COLUMBARIUM NEWS

At long last we are moving ahead with the columbarium. Niches are now available for \$975.00 and as soon as we have 5 of them sold we will begin construction. It will be located in what was the side altar area and will be a permanent part of the church. The design is a combination of Cherry wood and brown marble with the engraving on the marble facing of each niche. I think it will be a beautiful and respectful place to remember the best of those whom we love.

For further information including contract and rules please contact Fr. Mark

FATHER MARK ANNOUNCES HIS ENGAGEMENT



Fr. Mark and Sandra Archer are engaged. Ms. Archer is an active member of St. Michael's parish in Racine, singing in the choir and serving on their vestry. An afternoon wedding is being planned for Saturday, September 17, 2016, at St. Michael's with a reception following the ceremony. Additional information and details will be announced closer to the date.

FEBRUARY CELEBRATIONS

BIRTHDAYS



Lee Monk	February 2
Michael Radavich	February 2
Renee Brunelli	February 3
Gayle Radavich	February 3
Paul Stoving	February 4
Clem Wagner	February 4
Thomas Beinlich	February 9
Christine Wigand	February 9
Jerry Heinz	February 10
Amber Wilke	February 10
George Brandenburg	February 11
Mark Friedenfels	February 11
Michael Jahnz	February 11
James Tatnall	February 11
Scott Brunelli	February 13
Jon Shilling	February 14
Barbara Tatnall	February 14
Meghan Kluessendorf	February 16
Howie Mieritz	February 16
Bob Stewart	February 16

ANNIVERSARIES



Tom & Pam Kasper February 10

Kim Anderson	February 19
Ethan Fisher	February 20
Sandi Smith-Knotek	February 20
Julie Ann Becker	February 21
Heather Boehlke	February 24
Jacob Neustedter	February 24
Kay Wielgosh	February 24
Darrell Becker	February 28
Jerry Lent	February 28
Ellie Erd	February 29
Susan McNight	February 29



We are still in need of the following volunteers ...

Coffee Hour Hosts: This is a one year commitment. Signup sheet is posted in the Narthex.

Singing Rooster Coffee Representative: We've been asked to become a distributor of Singing Rooster Coffee which was served at our Annual Meeting.

Easter Bunny Assistant: Christian Education needs one person (or a group) to assist with the Easter Egg hunt on Easter morning.

Please contact Donna Celsor for more information on each item listed above.

BOOK CORNER



With a nod to Sunday's Super Bowl, I would like to offer the book *Guts, Grace & Glory: A Football Devotional* by Jim Grassi.

This book offers 65 devotions that center on the stories of some of football's most famous players and coaches including, Bart Starr, Johnny Unitas, Robert Griffin III, Bear Bryant and many others. I was introduced to this book when it was featured in *Devotionals Daily*, an online daily devotional that I receive. Now I'm not a big football fan, but I was intrigued as I read the devotional written by Danny Wuerffel, winner of the Heisman Trophy in 1996 and Quarterback for the Saints, Packers, Bears, and Redskins. The devotional shared a story from his life along with bible verses to ponder. I checked for further information and a review stated it "is the ultimate football devotional for men and women who enjoy football and value character and faith." I also thought what a wonderful gift for that teen or young adult!

Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and as I began my search for Lenten readings I came across the new book, *40 Days of Decrease*, by Alicia Britt Chole and chose it as my resource for Lent 2016. I hope this devotional will be a powerful experience that moves away from the traditional giving up of sweet treats, etc. and moves me toward walking the road with Jesus and learning from his teachings. Each day offers the reader an opportunity to experience Jesus and his journey through readings and reflection. But what I found different was the daily challenge of fasting from injustice, resentment, apathy, avoidance, etc. After sharing this book with the Monday evening ladies' bible study, we have decided to make this our new bible study for Lent.

