

The Peppercorn

St. Peter's Newsletter

April 2011

Dear Friends in Christ:

Imagine a week so important that it has a name different from any other week of the year. For us Christians, that week is Holy Week, and it is central to our identity, our faith, and our life together. The theme of Holy Week is the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Passion is a strange word for us – it suggests fervor, excitement, or even obsession. But the Passion of our Lord is a different matter – it comes from the Latin word *passus*, which refers to ‘suffering.’ So Holy Week focuses very specifically on Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross for our salvation.

Does that sound grim? In the Medieval Church, it was a time when the congregation’s attention was focused on the physical pain Jesus endured, the blood he shed, the emotional turmoil he bore, and the spiritual anguish he underwent. Holy Week in the Episcopal Church is a bit different.

Although the tone of the services is serious, even somber, it is not dreary or depressing. From Palm Sunday through Good Friday, the services offer an opportunity to contemplate experiences that are common to us all. We focus on the suffering and the death of the innocent and vulnerable. We consider the tragedy of betrayal, and the failure of friends to stand by one in need. We hear wrenching farewell conversations. We reflect on moments of injustice, cruelty, and arrogant ‘hardness of heart.’ These are experiences that we know all too well in our own world; sometimes they are experiences of our own lives. As we face these themes in the rites and services of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday, they may raise in our consciousness the same feelings of sorrow, anger, fear, sadness, loneliness, and remorse we knew at the time of those difficult feelings in our own lives.

The ritual washing of the feet at the Maundy Thursday service, the veneration of the cross on Good Friday, the altar area stripped of every bit of decoration and adornment – all these contribute to the unique emotional and psychological power of this week. Those who do not like to focus on such things might be tempted to skip Holy Week entirely, and go directly to Easter. And yet the Triduum (Latin for ‘three days’ Maundy Thursday-Good Friday- Holy Saturday) form the very heart of our Christian faith. For many, they are the most meaningful and life-changing services of the Church, as they provide a path to deeper self-understanding, spiritual growth, and healing.

The calendar of services for Holy Week is included in this copy of the Peppercorn. It may appear quite intimidating. After all, for many of us with our busy schedules, just getting to services on Sunday is quite a commitment. The prospect of going on Thursday and Friday before Easter services might seem downright overwhelming. And yet, like most things of value, there is no gain without some measure of sacrifice.

And so my beloved in Christ, I invite you, in the Name of the Church, to full participation in this life-changing, faith-changing week. In the end, it promises a more profoundly joyful celebration of our Lord’s resurrection on Easter.

Peace and Blessings,

Frank+

**I have seen flowers come in stony places
And kind things done by men with ugly faces,
And the gold cup won by the worst horse at the races,
So I trust, too.**

John Masefield, the *Faber Book of Epigrams and Epitaphs*

My daffodils are up again, letting me know that spring is here and warmer weather is on the way. They warm my heart, my daffodils. Not because they are harbingers of better things to come – although that is reason enough to welcome them. And not because they are dependable reminders of the perfection of God’s creation – although that is very comforting and reassuring.

No – my heart delights in seeing those daffodils every year because I *know* how hard they fought to get to a place where they can absorb the sun’s nourishing rays. You see, a few years ago, Phil and I – frustrated by our inability to keep up with the work associated with tending the landscaping around our house – filled in the plot where the daffodils grow with stone.

Our property is not very big by Monmouth County standards. But sometimes it’s too big for us. So to save ourselves from the relatively small but annoying tasks of weeding and raking this small space, we laid down a layer of plastic sheeting and then a layer of stones to prevent the weeds from taking over.

When we decided to do this, I made the conscious decision to let the daffodils go. I could have dug up the bulbs, but I knew I would probably forget them. I figured they’d just rot in my garage anyway. So I left them and grieved a little for what they had been and what they had meant to me.

Imagine my surprise the following spring when I saw those beautiful green blades emerging from their rocky bed! They had managed to push through the darkness and force their way through a layer of plastic AND a layer of rocks to fulfill their natural purpose. I was astounded when I saw them that first time. And I continue to welcome them with amazement and gratitude every year when they emerge.

I love those daffodils! I love them because they are a reminder to me of the power of God’s love for all of his creation. As they reach toward the light they help me remember that even in the darkest of times – when the odds are against us and our human nature causes us to become discouraged – it is in God’s nature to give us the strength we need to overcome the obstacles that would keep us from fulfilling God’s divine purpose for us.

Moving stones so that new life can emerge from the darkness is what our loving God is all about.

Deacon Catherine



Schedule of Holy Week and Easter Services

Maundy Thursday, April 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Holy Eucharist
Stripping and washing of the altar
Reservation of the sacrament
Prayers before the altar of repose

Good Friday, April 22, at 12 noon

Singing of the Passion Gospel
Veneration of the cross
Communion from the Reserved Sacrament

Easter Eve, April 23, at 7:30 p.m.

The service of Light
Lessons and music
The Sacrament of Holy Baptism
with renewal of Baptismal Vows
The First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Sunday, April 24, at 9:00 a.m.

A special service designed for children with young families

Easter Sunday, April 24, at 11:00 a.m.

A festive service featuring special music from St. Peter's Choir, The King's Peal, and guest musicians.

Stay Awake and Pray, is the request that Jesus extends to us. On Maundy Thursday (**April 21**) evening the chapel will be open all night until Good Friday morning. We are asking for volunteers who will watch with Jesus in the chapel where the reserved Sacrament will be placed. A schedule listing available times will be placed in the Narthex. Our goal is to have someone in the chapel at all times. Times are scheduled in 30 minute blocks and will begin after the Maundy Thursday Service which begins at 7:30 p.m. Families, individuals, groups are encouraged to participate in this watch. Questions can be directed to the clergy.

Women of St. Peter's

As always all the women in the parish are invited to join in the monthly meeting of the group. Come down to Classroom A by entering through the handicap ramp door and turning right to go down the stairs. We start at about 12 noon on the first Wednesday of each month.

We are in the midst of a fund raiser, already advertised but just getting off the ground, our "Bakeless Bake Sale" – perfect for Lent, all the fun of thinking about a recipe but none of the guilt! You should have received a mailing with the necessary information. Yes, we did this once before, perhaps 3 years ago and were able to purchase new carafes for coffee hour use.

We are processing the Diocesan ECW Student Service Awards for several of our high schoolers who have served the parish. The letters of recommendation that are submitted with their application make us realize just what a great group of youngsters we have here and just how vital they are to the parish and their communities.

It is on our agenda to have the parish hall and classroom A carpeting cleaned in early April. With all the traffic these rooms get and the harsh winter we have had with ice melt and grit for all the sidewalks, the poor things need attention.

Hope you can all support the fundraiser and that those of you who have an opportunity can join us for one meeting or several. If you want to speak with someone about the work of the group the officers are more than happy to oblige – Carolyn Wilson, president, Cathy Weick, vice-president, Kathryn Robinson, secretary and Jackie Jones, treasurer.

Member news

It's not always easy to keep up with what is going on with our beloved brothers and sisters in Christ. In an attempt to keep our membership informed, a new feature will appear on St. Peter's website. Within a few weeks, a new category on a separate webpage page will be added entitled "Member News." This will be a place where lifecycle events will be recorded for our members to share in the joys or concerns of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Information about births, baptisms, graduations, marriage, and deaths of our Church members and their families will be recorded 'blog style' on the website, which means that the information entered on the site will remain. To have your family news shared with St. Peter's Church family, you can call or email Robin Stewart at office@stpetersfreehold.org or 732-431-8383. Let's keep in touch.

The Daughters of the King (DoK) will be offering a women's fall retreat at the Convent of St. John the Baptist in Menden. The dates are 9/30 to 10/2 and the cost will be around \$150.00. We are planning to have a retreat conductor for the weekend. Susan Hebert or Kathy Whall can give more information.

Youth Communion Classes

Those who grew up in the Roman Catholic Church, or those whose children have close friends or neighbors who are members of a Roman Catholic parish know that every spring brings a significant and much-anticipated religious ritual: the First Holy Communion. In the Episcopal Church, our attitude towards children receiving communion is shaped by our beliefs about Baptism. In our Book of Common Prayer, the preface to the service states that "Holy Baptism is full initiation by water and the Holy Spirit into Christ's Body the Church." Those initiated into the church, then, are full members of the Church from the time of their baptism. As such, they are entitled to all the rights and privileges (as well as the responsibilities!) of the Church – including the privilege of receiving communion. This is the reason that it has become common practice in the Episcopal Church, including at St. Peter's, for all Christians, even toddlers and pre-schoolers to receive the sacramental bread and wine of communion.

Nevertheless, many parents understandably feel that their own children may not be ready to receive the sacrament without some additional instruction and preparation. This is particularly true for the members of our Saturday evening Spanish-speaking community. For this reason, we will be having a series of six Youth Communion classes on Saturday afternoons, at 4:30 in classroom A (large classroom) downstairs in the Parish Hall beginning on April 9. This will be an interage group, with material designed for children ages 7 -12. Mayra Caceres will ably lead these classes, along with Father Frank. One unique aspect of the class will be its bi-cultural and bi-lingual aspect. The children will learn the prayers and responses in both English and Spanish, so that they will be able to fully participate at any of the services at St. Peter's Church. Even if your child is already receiving communion, you may take advantage of this opportunity to enhance their understanding of the Eucharist. To enroll your child(ren) for these youth communion classes, simply send an email to St. Peter's Church office at office@stpetersfreehold.org with the words "Youth Communion Classes" in the subject header.

ALMOST CHRISTIAN

Welcome to the blogosphere, St. Peter's!

What is the faith of our teenagers telling us about the American Church?

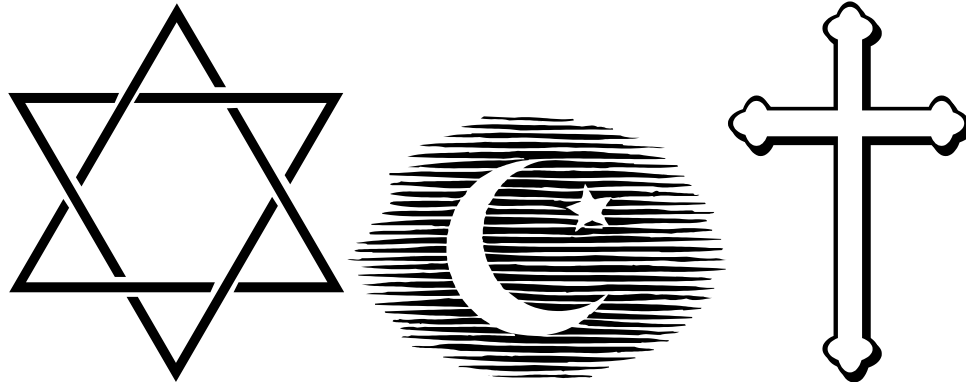
Based on the results of the National Study of Youth and Religion, Princeton Seminary Professor Kendra Creasey Dean investigates why teenagers are both positive about Christianity, yet at the same time apathetic about genuine religious practice. Dr. Dean offers some provocative observations, and includes some important challenges for us as we seek to recover our Christian identity and mission.

A provocative book like this one – over 30 members of St. Peter's are reading it—merits some discussion. However, many are too busy to come out for a weeknight study or discussion. So...we now have a blog. You can go to <http://www.stpetersbookdiscussion.blogspot.com> to post a comment, or to read what others are saying about this book. This is a great way for us to stay connected and share in this important learning experience. Many thanks to Esther Camm for setting up this blog!

The Rector's Advisory Commission on Worship and Liturgy

On Thursday evening, March 17, RACWL (pronounced "Rockwall") had its first meeting. Our beginning sessions will concentrate on developing a common understanding of our principle service of worship. This background will enable us to consider carefully each aspect of our ritual, and how St. Peter's can provide richer opportunities for our members to enter more deeply into the worship of God. At our first gathering, we looked at the overall shape and focus of the Holy Eucharist, with special emphasis on the Entrance Rite. Our discussion was informed by a consideration of the maxim that "Praying shapes believing."

RACWL will continue to meet monthly, and keep the congregation informed of our activities. Membership includes: Kathy Whall, Lori Cuffari, Lew DiLauro, Meg Tweten, Tina Crafton-Tempel, Michael Chin, Bruce Edmonds and Debbie Hettman. Staff liaison is Mark Hyczko.



Three Faiths Dialogue

Sponsored by the Freehold Clergy Association presents

“Understanding our Sacred Spaces”

Sunday, April 3, 2011

2:00 – 4:00PM

begins at Freehold Islamic Center

235 Georgia Road, Freehold Township

Tolerance and acceptance only happens when we know and understand one another. The Freehold Clergy Association has always been committed to bringing our communities together in worship, action, and learning. Please join us for this special educational opportunity to explore facets of Islam, Judaism, and Christianity in order to understand our differences as well as our commonalities. The purpose of this program is to build mutual understanding and acceptance.

Presenters: Fatima Jaffari, educator at the Imam-a-Zamana Foundation
Rabbi Kenneth Greene, Rabbi of Freehold Jewish Center
The Rev. Canon Francis Hebert, Rector of St. Peter’s Church

Dear Father,

I want to thank you for all you and the people that run the homeless shelter for men at the church did for me in my time of need. I had nowhere to turn until I was told of your program.

I want to thank all of the people who took time out of their lives to help me and all the other homeless in the community. Please let Ramona and John, Tim, Stan, Rob, Naeem and all of the others from the churches and synagogue know how much they have helped me.

I am currently living in Hunterdon County where social services is helping me with housing, food stamps and general assistance. I am going back to school with help from social services so I can get my life back on track. Let everyone know that I pray for them and their families every night and I hope God blesses you all.

Thank You
Joe Malgieri
615 US 22 East
Whitehouse Station, NJ 08889



If you would like to order memorials this Easter, please include this form with your check to St. Peter's Church. A minimum contribution of \$20.00 per memorial is suggested. **Deadline** April 17th.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Your name: _____

In Memory of :



Reminder: If you wish to schedule any building space for an event, it must go through the church office. Please call the church office at (732) 431-8383 before planning an event. Thank you.

Episcopal Relief & Development is sending support to the Nippon Sei Ko Kei (NSKK; the Anglican Communion in Japan) to help with its initial emergency relief efforts in response to the 9.0-magnitude earthquake and resulting tsunami that struck Japan on March 11. Donations to Episcopal Relief & Development's Japan Earthquake Response Fund <https://www.er-d.org/donate-select.php> will provide vital support to the NSKK for their immediate work in assessing and responding to the disaster. In Tohoku, the Church is planning to establish an emergency relief center at the diocesan building, and leadership at the Provincial level is developing a response structure to organize and support a network of volunteers to carry out the relief and restoration work.

Journey Through Holy Week

St. Peter's Journey Through Holy Week event will be held this year on **Saturday, April 16**, the day before Palm Sunday at 9:30 am in the Parish hall. There will be an interactive reenactment of the events of Holy Week and arts & crafts to celebrate the season. This event is open to church school students from age 3 yrs. to 6th grade. Confirmants are welcome to assist. Children under 1st grade need to be accompanied by a parent so the learning process will be meaningful for all present. Parents of all other children should feel free to attend if they so desire. Deadline for registration is April 10. Return registration form to Theresa De Furia or the church office. Please enclose \$7.00 per child (\$20. max per family), to help defray the cost of this program.

Any questions please contact Theresa De Furia at (732) 252-8995 or email gaapgirl@aol.com.

Age

Grade

Childs Name _____

Childs Name _____

Parents Name _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Any allergies or medical conditions? _____

Are you available to assist with a craft? Yes No