

# ST. MARK'S NEWS

April 2009

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Father Dennis O'Neill

## A Word or Two From Our Rector

Once again, as we follow the liturgical cycle in our Church's calendar, we approach Holy Week, and are called to see and live this very special time as a time "set apart" for an intentional and prayerful journey into the heart of Christianity. Jews refer to the Passover as one of their High Holy Days celebrations, and the Christian Church also celebrates Holy Week and Easter in the same sense of heightened reverence for and awe of our God.

It is one thing for us to quote John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." It is quite another to live into the reality of the unfathomable Grace of our God who so gives of Himself. The gift of eternal life that we celebrate on Easter morning as we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, comes to us as a gift only by God's grace having given Him up for crucifixion, and only by Jesus having obediently surrendered to that horribly torturous death on the cross. If we take all of this for granted we trivialize both the depth and breadth of Christianity – both the depth and breadth of God's Love.

I sometimes wonder at just how much our culture trivializes God in this and so many ways. The loss of a general respect and recognition of Sundays as our Sabbath is one example. The issues of prayer in schools and display of crosses on public governmental property go even further, seemingly challenging our very "rights" to our political protections of freedom of religion. "Rights" though are human concepts, whereas "grace" is gift from God. "And what does the Lord require of you?" asks the prophet Micah, "But to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."

The resurrection of Jesus on Easter is a revelation to us that drives this prophetic utterance home. In the face of injustice we are

yet to seek and do justice. Despite that we may not be treated with mercy yet we are called to love mercy and be merciful in our dealings with others. And as Jesus humbled Himself even unto death, so too we are called to humbleness in walking with our God, quieting all of the worldly stuff that distracts us from God. God is God and we are not. God as God raises Jesus from the dead, and God as God wants to raise us from death also, both the death we live in this life and the death that comes at the end of our mortal lives as well.

One way of trying to understand all of this is that God constantly and continually gives Himself to us – God always and in all ways graces us, gifts us, with His Presence in us. And this Grace, this Divine Gifting, is ours simply to accept and respond to. The "Gift" of God's Son has accomplished all.

How can we not accept the Gift freely given? How can we not respond in kind? The word "Holy" means set apart for God. If we think of Sabbath time as time made Holy – time set apart for God – we come close to what Micah is telling us. To set time apart for God, to be intentional in living into holiness, will bring justice into reality, mercy into action, humility into being, because it will bring us into God's Presence, and God into our lives.

It is without question that God's Grace is free. But as one theologian puts it, God's grace is free but it's not cheap! We cheapen the free gift of God's grace when we fail to respond to God graciously, when we fail to accept the gift as the Divine Presence to be lived into. Keeping Holy Week holy is our call, and living holy lives – lives set apart for God – is the journey we're called into.

*God's Easter Blessings,  
Fa. Dennis*

## HOLY WEEK



## The Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard Bishop of Florida

St. Mark's was honored to have Bishop Howard as our guest speaker for our Lenten program on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. Bishop Howard spoke on reconciliation and forgiveness. It is up to each one of us to seek out those we feel we need to forgive and reach out to them, even, as Bishop Howard put it, if we forgive them four hundred and ninety times. (You had to be there). It is also up to us to reach out to those who may need to forgive us.



Grace Church, Orange Park  
is honored to announce that noted author and Episcopalian  
**Phyllis Tickle**

will preach at the opening Eucharist of the Institute of Worship Studies (hosted by Grace Church) on Sunday, June 14 at 6:00 pm and she will also lead a two-day seminary entitled **"21st Century Christianity: What it is, How it got here, and where it is going."** Much of this comes from her new book, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*, where her thesis is that every five hundred years or so, the "church" cleans out its attic and has a giant rummage sale. That's what is happening all around us now. This book has been critically acclaimed by our Presiding Bishop. Grace Church is located at 245 Kingsley Ave., Orange Park.  
For more information and to register call Grace Church at 904-264-9981.



## SYMBOLS OF EASTER



### THE PALM LEAF

Anciently, a palm leaf was given to winners in contests of strength and skill. With Christians, it signifies the heavenly reward.



### THE PEACOCK

An Early symbol of the Resurrection. When the peacock sheds his feathers, he grows more brilliant ones than those he lost.



### THE LILY

A symbol of Easter and immortality. The bulb decays in the ground, yet from it new life appears.



### THE BURSTING POMEGRANATE

A symbol of the Resurrection and the Power of the Lord, who was able to burst the tomb and come forth.



### THE PHOENIX

A mythical bird which at death bursts into flame but rises from its own ashes. A symbol of the Resurrection and immortal life

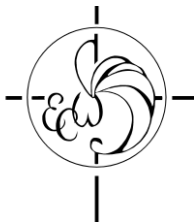


## ST. MARK'S NEWS



The Mary Magdalene Chapter of Daughters of the King now meets every third Monday night at 6:00 for Eucharist. **PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE!!!** Every lady is invited to attend.

Training classes will begin April 22, 2009 at 6:30 PM. Classes will be held at Judy Perkin's home located at 1590 NE 154<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Starke. If you need directions, please contact Judy at 904-966-0066, or Faye at 904-533-2617.



## Episcopal Church Women - ECW

ECW Winter Retreat was held at Camp Weed on February 28, 2009. President Linda Baker introduced her new Board for those who had not been to the last meeting.

The Guest Speaker was Reverend Carrie English. She presently serves as Deacon at Resurrection Episcopal Church and is also one of the four clergy members at Nativity in

Partnership with Prisoners of Christ. She was ordained Vocational Deacon in June 2005. She is a board member of Kairos outside and coordinates camp St. Elizabeth; both are programs for families of the incarcerated. She is in the process of discernment for Priesthood and will be leaving for seminary in the summer of 2009.

She spoke about the program for the families of the incarcerated.

When the inmates come home, they really need a support group to prevent them from returning to their previous way of life. This program is relatively new but the success rate is very high and needs all our support.

The weather was beautiful and the food was wonderful. Thanks to Linda Baker for hosting a very successful ECW Winter Retreat.

## **FOOD PANTRY**



Jordan Zoltowski's (Beth Bobo's granddaughter) birthday is April 5<sup>th</sup>. She is inviting everyone to join her in the Parish Hall for a celebration and to share her birthday cake. She is asking everyone to bring a can of food as a gift for the Food Pantry as her way of sharing. Let's make this a wonderful birthday for Jordan and fill up the basket on Sunday morning.



# LIBRARY NOTES



## EASTER READING

The Day Christ Died by Jim Bishop

Palestine of that period comes to life as one reads. The mores of the people, the intricate organization of the various levels of government, secular and religions, take on a new meaning; the personalities that surround Jesus, the influences brought to bear on the man and the events, the mood and tempo of the time--all this is accurately portrayed.

And the Angels were Silent by Max Lucado

It is the final week of Jesus' life. All of heaven watches. It is that long-awaited week when no angel dared sing. A hush fell over heaven as Jesus faced his final days. The author will help one see the heart of

Christ and remember what really matters.

The Messiah by Marjorie Holmes

Jesus, his family and friends seem like real people with real-life emotional struggles, a vivid recreation of Biblical people. Using a framework of "common sense, God-given imagination and respect for Scripture", and writing with reverence and convictions, the author deals with the culminating events of Jesus' life.

The Empty Cross of Jesus by Michael Green

If it is true that God redeemed the world through Christ on Calvary, then we need to understand what

that cross can mean for ordinary individuals and communities. The author examines why Jesus had to die - from the points of view of Jesus, his disciples and other Christians throughout history, bringing together the Bible's teaching on the resurrection and the cross.

## BECAUSE HE LIVES!

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life....."

John 11:25

"Expect \_\_\_\_\_ a  
\_\_\_\_\_"

# SCHEDULE OF MINISTRIES

OFFICE	5	9	10	12	19	26
Chalice Bearer	Jean Isaac	Marianne O'Neill		Mike Goldwire	Elzie Sanders	Marianne O'Neill
Lector 1	Susan Worthington	Judy Perkin	Linda Hopkins	Randy Johns	Barbara Noegel	Susan Worthington
Lector 2	Jean Isaac	Marianne O'Neill	Barbara Noegel	Mike Goldwire	Elzie Sanders	Marianne O'Neill
Usher	Tommy Blackshear Arthur Winkler	George Winkler	George Winkler	George Winkler	Tom Jones Ilse Griffis	Joe Lukas Frank Palmer
Oblationer	Brenda Farnsworth Ilse Griffis			Paul and Ann Andrus	Sharon Dewitt Jewell Brown	Tom and Veazie Jones
Acolyte	Alan Hopkins			Emily Luke	Jacob Slayton	Annie Luke
Library	Marianne O'Neill			George Winkler	Burney Winkler	Ilse Griffis

**IF YOU CAN NOT SERVE ON YOUR SUNDAY . PLEASE CALL  
ANOTHER FOR YOUR REPLACEMENT**



## SUNDAY SCHOOL



For the past three weeks, we've been studying the last week of Jesus' life, beginning with his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, his announcement that he would be betrayed by one of his disciples, and then finding the disciples sleeping while he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. We

hope by studying this ahead of time, the events of Holy Week will be more meaningful to the students.

**Beginning on Palm Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, and the first Sunday of each month thereafter, everyone will be in church for Fr. Dennis' children's sermon.**

## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL EASTER EGG HUNT

will be held on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 11:00. The children only need to bring a basket to collect the eggs in.

Anyone willing to help with refreshments please see Virginia Johns or Elise NesSmith.

## UF CHAPEL



Sunday night Marianne, Emily, and Virginia took supper to the students at the chapel and, as usual, we were welcomed with open arms.

During the service following the meal, Mother Nancee had the three of us come down to the front of the church (amid much applause) and presented us with red flowering plants to bring back to those who help with the meals. She told us how much they appreciated all St. Mark's does for

them and said she was sure more people came on the Sundays we brought the food.

One of the students sent the following note to the office:

"Greetings!

"We would like to thank you again for the amazing food! For Mary Agnes who brought the herb-infused lasagna that made us smile, Marianne with the signature

salad, Gene for the delightful strawberry cake and adorable Emily who helped in whatever way she could. In all honesty, we cannot stress enough how grateful we are for your generosity! You've definitely built a reputation around here!

"With much love,

"Ken Lyttle & Members of the Chapel of the Incarnation"

## SPECIAL OCCASIONS



### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Jackson Jennings
- 5 Jordan Zoltowski
- 10 Jody Dayan
- 13 Lucille Noegel
- 16 Richard Hackbarth
- 19 Randy Smith (Simmons)
- 22 William Carter
- 25 Keith Gillingham
- 30 David Hopkins



### APRIL ANNIVERSARIES

- 1 Frank and Cindy Palmer
- 17 Bruce and Elise NesSmith
- 25 Elzie and Sandi Sanders
- 26 Tom and Veazie Jones



### IN REMEMBRANCE

As we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, let us remember those who are no longer with us:

Jim Holly  
Louise Sutton  
Minou Wainwright



**FOOTNOTES**



**THANK YOU NOTES**

The following letter was received from Joe Lukas on his return from Cursillo to the congregation:

I met Charles Dell-Ross 4 years ago. I didn't know then how he was going to change my life. He kept asking me to go to church. I kept saying, no. Then last year, he asked if I would like to go to Mississippi. I said, yes. While there, I saw the destruction of Katrina. I also saw the love. When I got back I came to St. Mark's to repay a debt. What I found was a new family. Each Sunday I get more from the mass and camaraderie that I ever got from any other church family. When you ask if I would like to do something, I can't say no. I especially thought that once you heard me sing, you would ask me not to. I was very surprised that I was asked to join the choir. The weekend I spent at Camp Weed let me grow closer to God and also to St. Mark's. I will be forever grateful to you all. Thank you for your prayers. Also thank you for sending me. I was totally speechless. I have never been that moved by anything in my life.

With much love, Joe

Father Dennis -

As the newest member of the "Miller Clan," I am truly honored to make a donation in honor of Go-Go and in memory of George. I've been very impressed with how often Go-Go's church family visit and keep her company. You have a very special faith community and Scott and I are very excited to share in this special service and dedication of the Miller window.

Love in Christ,

Roxanne and Scott (Miller)

(From Maggie Miller's family)

**Cursillo**

Anyone interested in learning more about Cursillo please see Fr. Dennis. Cursillo is a renewal weekend sponsored by the Episcopal Church.

**Ultreya** is a monthly gathering for Eucharist and fellow-ship after Cursillo. One does not have to have attended a Cursillo to go to an Ultreya. The next Ultreya is scheduled for **May 1<sup>st</sup>** at St. Luke's in Live Oak at 7 pm. A covered dish supper precedes the Eucharist. No Ultreya for April due to the ECW Retreat.

**Altar Guild for April:**

Burney Winkler  
.....

**Vestry Member:**

Mike Goldwire  
.....

**Bilingual Services:**

April 25th at 6:00 PM

**FLOWER CHART:**

The 2009 Flower Chart is now in the Narthex to sign up for altar flowers for the coming year. The cost is \$45.00.



**TREASURER'S REPORT**

22 pledges have been received so far for a total amount of \$64,408.00

January Receipts 7,231.00  
Expenditures: 8,612.00  
Total -3,660.00

**SANCTUARY CANDLE:**

Sign up for the sanctuary candle by calling Barbara. The cost is \$4.00.

*Again, I would like to quote from Jan Karon's Mitford Years Novels, specifically from Patches of Godlight – Father Tim's Favorite Quotes. Bernie told me that we have the complete series in our Parish library. We are blessed!*

"We are fools for Christ's sake," Paul says in the first letter to the Corinthians. God is foolish, too, Paul says. God is foolish to choose for his holy work in the world the kind of lamebrains and misfits and nit-pickers and odd ducks and stuffed shirts and egomaniacs and milquetoasts and closet sensualists as are vividly represented by us all.

God is foolish to send us out to speak hope to a world that slogs along heart-deep in the conviction that things can only get worse. . . He is foolish to have us speak of loving our enemies when we have a hard enough time loving our friends . . . God is foolish to have us proclaim eternal life to a world that is half in love with death . . . God is foolish to send us out on a journey for which there are no maps, and to aim us in the direction of a goal we can never know until we get there. Such is the foolishness of God. And yet, and yet, Paul says, "the foolishness of God is wiser than man."

--Frederick Buechner

You are loved,

Mike Goldwire  
Sr. Warden

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