



St. John's Prologue

"In the beginning was the Word..."

St. John's Episcopal Church
Williamstown, Massachusetts

February 2009

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LENT 2009

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

A Sunday-morning series
led by The Rev. Dr. Thomas Mikelson

11:30 a.m.- 12:30 p.m.

Five Lenten Sundays, starting March 1

Telling the stories of 20th-century Christians who paid the ultimate price for their proclamation of the crucified and risen Christ, his vision of justice, his Gospel of radical equality

The Rev. Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer
(session one)

Archbishop Oscar Romero and colleagues in Latin America
(sessions two and three)

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the rise of Black Liberation Theology
(sessions four and five)

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Mikelson, retired Unitarian Universalist pastor, is former Pastor of the First Parish Church in Cambridge, MA, where he taught at Harvard Divinity School.

A noted scholar of Liberation Theology and of the life and work of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Mikelson will be guest lecturer on these subjects in February at his alma mater, Cornell College in Iowa.

He is also an accomplished photographer, and his Lenten program at St. John's will include slides.

ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The Holy Eucharist with imposition of ashes will be offered at these times
on Ash Wednesday, all in the church:

7:15 a.m. (without music)

12:15 p.m. (with music)

7:15 p.m. (with music)

Make a right beginning of Lent—gather at the table of fresh starts.



TO KEEP A TRUE LENT

A poem by Robert Herrick:

Is this a fast, to keep
the larder lean ?
and clean
From fat of veals and sheep ?

Is it to quit the dish
of flesh, yet still
to fill
The platter high with fish ?

Is it to fast an hour,
or ragg'd to go,
or show
A downcast look and sour ?

No ; 'tis a fast to dole
thy sheaf of wheat,
and meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
from old debate
and hate ;
To circumsise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent ;
to starve thy sin,
not bin ;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

Source:
Herrick, Robert. Works of Robert Herrick. vol II.
Alfred Pollard, ed.
London, Lawrence & Bullen, 1891. 240.

INAUGURATION PRAYERS

People are buzzing about two prayers heard during Inauguration week. One is Bishop Robinson's opening prayer at the We Are One concert. The other is Pastor Lowery's benediction at the Inauguration. Here they are.

Bishop Robinson's Invocation

O God of our many understandings, we pray that you will...

Bless us with tears - for a world in which over a billion people exist on less than a dollar a day, where young women from many lands are beaten and raped for wanting an education, and thousands die daily from malnutrition, malaria, and AIDS.

Bless us with anger - at discrimination, at home and abroad, against refugees and immigrants, women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

Bless us with discomfort - at the easy, simplistic "answers" we've preferred to hear from our politicians, instead of the truth, about ourselves and the world, which we need to face if we are going to rise to the challenges of the future.

Bless us with patience - and the knowledge that none of what ails us will be "fixed" anytime soon, and the understanding that our new president is a human being, not a messiah.

Bless us with humility - open to understanding that our own needs must always be balanced with those of the world.

Bless us with freedom from mere tolerance - replacing it with a genuine respect and warm embrace of our differences, and an understanding that in our diversity, we are stronger.

Bless us with compassion and generosity - remembering that every religion's God judges us by the way we care for the most vulnerable in the human community, whether across town or across the world.

And God, we give you thanks for your child Barack, as he assumes the office of President of the United States .

Give him wisdom beyond his years, and inspire him with Lincoln 's reconciling leadership style, President Kennedy's ability to enlist our best efforts, and Dr. King's dream of a nation for ALL the people.

Give him a quiet heart, for our Ship of State needs a steady, calm captain in these times.

Give him stirring words, for we will need to be inspired and motivated to make the personal and common sacrifices necessary to facing the challenges ahead.

Make him color-blind, reminding him of his own words that under his leadership, there will be neither red nor blue states, but the United States .

Help him remember his own oppression as a minority, drawing on that experience of discrimination, that he might seek to change the lives of those who are still its victims.

Give him the strength to find family time and privacy, and help him remember that even though he is president, a father only gets one shot at his daughters' childhoods.

And please, God, keep him safe. We know we ask too much of our presidents, and we're asking FAR too much of this one. We know the risk he and his wife are taking for all of us, and we implore you, O good and great God, to keep him safe. Hold him in the palm of your hand - that he might do the work we have called him to do, that he might find joy in this impossible calling, and that in the end, he might lead us as a nation to a place of integrity, prosperity and peace.

AMEN."

Pastor Lowery's Benediction

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far along the way, thou who has by thy might led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray, lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee, lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee. Shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand -- true to thee, O God, and true to our native land.

We truly give thanks for the glorious experience we've shared this day. We pray now, O Lord, for your blessing upon thy servant, Barack Obama, the 44th president of these United States, his family and his administration. He has come to this high office at a low moment in the national and, indeed, the global fiscal climate. But because we know you got the whole world in your hand, we pray for not only our nation, but for the community of nations. Our faith does not shrink, though pressed by the flood of mortal ills.

For we know that, Lord, you're able and you're willing to work through faithful leadership to restore stability, mend our brokenness, heal our wounds and deliver us from the exploitation of the poor or the least of these and from favoritism toward the rich, the elite of these.

We thank you for the empowering of thy servant, our 44th president, to inspire our nation to believe that, yes, we can work together to achieve a more perfect union. And while we have sown the seeds of greed -- the wind of greed and corruption, and even as we reap the whirlwind of social and economic disruption, we seek forgiveness and we come in a spirit of unity and solidarity to commit our support to our president by our willingness to make sacrifices, to respect your creation, to turn to each other and not on each other.

And now, Lord, in the complex arena of human relations, help us to make choices on the side of love, not hate; on the side of inclusion, not exclusion; tolerance, not intolerance.

And as we leave this mountaintop, help us to hold on to the spirit of fellowship and the oneness of our family. Let us take that power back to our homes, our workplaces, our churches, our temples, our mosques, or wherever we seek your will.

Bless President Barack, First Lady Michelle. Look over our little, angelic Sasha and Malia.

We go now to walk together, children, pledging that we won't get weary in the difficult days ahead. We know you will not leave us alone, with your hands of power and your heart of love.

Help us then, now, Lord, to work for that day when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, when tanks will be beaten into tractors, when every man and every woman shall sit under his or her own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid; when justice will roll down like waters and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Lord, in the memory of all the saints who from their labors rest, and in the joy of a new beginning, we ask you to help us work for that day when black will not be asked to get back, when brown can stick around -- (laughter) -- when yellow will be mellow -- (laughter) -- when the red man can get ahead, man -- (laughter) -- and when white will embrace what is right.

Let all those who do justice and love mercy say amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen!

REV. LOWERY: Say amen --

AUDIENCE: Amen!

REV. LOWERY: -- and amen.

AUDIENCE: Amen! (Cheers, applause.)

(Transcript courtesy Federal News Service)

SCIENCE AND RELIGION SUNDAY

Each year at this time we join with hundreds of other congregations across the country in giving ourselves a Sunday for considering how science and religion speak to us, and to one another. On Sunday, February 15, Tamara Adkins will be our preacher. Tamara, a doctoral candidate specializing in plastics and their effects on living organisms, is a Fellow in the GreenFaith Program, the first comprehensive education and training program in the US to prepare lay and ordained leaders from diverse religious traditions for religiously based environmental leadership. In that capacity, she co-founded at St Peter's (Bennington) an eco-team that has focused on food, starting a community garden on the church lawn, composting, teaching youth about canning and food preservation, cooperating with the CSA and the local food bank to bring fresh local organic produce to hungry neighbors. We're looking forward to Tamara's return to our pulpit.

"THE SOUL OF MONEY"

We're delighted to host in March and April a weekly course within the Servant Leadership program, to be led by The Rev. Hannah Anderson, Rector of St. Stephen's, Pittsfield. Read on, and consider enrolling (do so by phoning Madeline in our parish office, 413-458-8144)...

Money: From Cultural Bondage to Spiritual Freedom

Time: Beginning Tuesday, March 3rd, running for 10 weeks; 7:00-9:00pm

Location: St. John's, Williamstown

Led By: The Rev. Dr. Hannah Anderson; Cost: \$75.00

“To be dependent on ourselves, our own wealth, our own skills, our own goodness, the approval of others, that is dependence on bondage. To be dependent on God, absolutely dependent, that is independence. Dependence on God is the only independence. Insecurity in God is the only security.” - *Richard Rohr, Ministry of Money Retreat*

For many of us money is a frustrating and stressful topic. In today's economy we worry about gas prices, food prices and how to manage it all. In this core servant leadership class, we will step back and examine our relationship with money in a friendly and safe environment. We will examine how our patterns of earning, spending and giving away money offer an intriguing insight into our minds, hearts and acts of service.

With the use of Lynn Twist's book *The Soul of Money: Reclaiming the Wealth of Our Inner Resources*, we will work with our cultural messages of scarcity and guilt around money. We will then examine what would happen in our lives if we shifted toward experiences of sufficiency, freedom, and purpose in relationship to our resources. Time will be given to reflect on biblical stories and our own stories around these themes. Finally, we will explore money in the context of our call and the dream God has for our lives.

What others have said about this class:

“The Soul of Money class helped me to see my deepest values are not only supported with the flow of my financial resources, but also with the flow of my energy, time, and personal qualities. I learned, more importantly, that it is not the size of that flow, but that there is a flow, There is great pleasure in being a part of that.”

“It gives one courage in gaining on authentic living to be in company with others seeking understanding of abundance rather than the worldview of scarcity. The text we used was very useful and the leadership could not have been better. Slowly and with joy, we shared our experiences and opened new avenues of what is possible and from what strengths we might lead.”

“My husband and I found that the Soul of Money class gave us many tools and ideas that helped us to re-examine our relationship with money and the ways we use it. The book was a great foundation, Hannah a wonderful facilitator, and the group interaction helped to make the class a freeing and truly enjoyable experience. With what is going on with the economy, the timing couldn't have been better.”

NEW GALLEY KITCHEN GOING IN!

The upper room will be a construction site from **Monday, February 16, to Friday, February 27**, as our new galley kitchen is installed along the south wall. We're excited about this project, seen as a real boost to our ministry of hospitality, and we're grateful to be taking an important step towards one of the goals in the Campaign for St. John's, enhancing physical spaces for fellowship. We also appreciate the cooperation of our Choir and our Organist-Choir Director, as they adjust to a new robing area in the lower hallway downstairs.

RECOGNIZING & ENRICHING MINISTRIES

The Rector has been gathering each circle of servers who support our life and worship through their volunteer roles. To date, healing team members, lectors and intercessors, and ushers have met, each of these meetings welcoming both "veterans" and people interested in learning these patterns of service. Next in this series will be these two gatherings:

Lay Eucharistic Visitors who bring the sacrament to people confined at home or in care facilities...

Sunday, February 8, 11:15 a.m. in church

Lay Eucharistic Ministers who administer the chalice at the altar rail.

Sunday, February 15, 8:50 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. in church

These gatherings give Peter an opportunity to express appreciation for the ministry of many whose hands and hearts make light work of liturgy—**and to welcome anyone interested in learning about these roles.**

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS, JANUARY 14

Following parish custom, new Vestry nominees were invited to this first meeting of the new year, so fresh at the table this night were Polly Macpherson, Wendy Martin, and Bethany Baker. (Jennifer Bayliss, our fourth nominee, was away on vacation.)

Charles Bonenti reported on progress in arranging an energy audit of parish buildings.

Finance Committee member Jim Gibbons was authorized to be an additional signer on the parish's Vanguard account.

Plans were discussed for the Vestry's Day Away (though this year not away, but here) on February 28th, to be facilitated by Archdeacon Bill Coyne.

Off-going members Laurie Glover, Adrienne Wootters, and Allison Perry were recipients of our gratitude for their years of service.

WE EXTEND OUR CONDOLENCE

Ralph Lesure, Sr., Kathleen James's brother, died on December 29. Our prayers are with Kathleen as she mourns.

The Rev. David R. Carter (retired) died on January 10, 2009 at Williamstown Commons, a nursing home where he had lived in recent years. Fr. Carter served congregations in New York and Pennsylvania and in WMA at St. Andrew's Church in Blackinton, where he was Vicar for fifteen years. His requiem eucharist was held there on Thursday, January 15th. Our prayers are with Joan and children Tim and Paige and son-in-law Peter Rogers.

John H. Winant died on January 13th at his home here. His requiem eucharist was celebrated at St. John's on January 17th. John and his wife Katey lived here from 1953 to 1971, and during that period were very active here, with their children Claudia and Peter (John served three terms on the Vestry). In Washington, D.C., he served as a Senior Warden of St. John's Church, Lafayette Square. Our prayers are with all the Winants.

Francis Barker completed his life's journey on January 12th, in the company of his family. We extend our condolence to his wife Anita and their children, Penny and Francis, and all their family.

Judith N. Hendrickson, 69, of Espyville, PA, died on Friday, October 3, 2008. She was the daughter of the late Robert L. and Ailean K. Nickerson, formerly of Williamstown. Judee was retired from her position as a reservation agent for Transworld Airlines. Our prayers are with her husband, Robert.

A NOTE FROM THE DENNETTS

Dear Friends at St. John's,

The Christmas plant arrived the day we moved to our daughter's home—it brightened up the room around so many boxes still unpacked. It is still blooming and so pretty. Thank you very much. Love and Happy New Year to all.

Roger and Phoebe Dennett

Phoebe served for 23 years as parish secretary here. The Dennetts now live with their daughter Susie at 27 Briarwood Place, Westfield, MA 01085.

THE ST. JOHN'S MEN'S BREAKFAST will meet on Saturday, February 7, 8:30 am in the Library. Coffee and light breakfast food will be provided. This time Charles Alberti will talk about his experience of becoming and being a judge, followed by general conversation. All men are welcome!!

FROM THE SUDAN RELIEF COMMITTEE

Sudan: Good and Bad News

Holiday soup and gift certificate sales and individual donations honoring task force members Jina Ford and Abbie Hatton helped us end the year confident that current funds plus anticipated Makepeace and St. John's Mission grants will insure another year's support for educational programs in the camp for internally displaced persons outside Khartoum. Telephone contact remains difficult in terms of updates but the IDPs are grateful that our support enables the school to continue to provide the students with care, education, and tea.

Several recent Eagle articles told of former "lost boys" in this country who are not only achieving college educations but establishing foundations to build schools in their Sudanese villages. Gabriel Bol Deng was profiled on January 9 after visiting Wahconah and Lenox schools.

An article in the International NY Times, (Dec. 26) said both north and southern governments in Sudan are dragging their feet in carrying out the peace plan, initially envisioned as a six-year transition and 2011 referendum on southern independence. An uncompleted census delays national elections. The article notes that the most significant oil resources in southern Sudan lie along the still unmarked border between north and south. Inability to agree on how to share that oil holds up the peace process. As it stands now, if the south votes for independence in 2011, it will have 80% of the oil but, being landlocked, would have to either rely on the north to move the oil or invest billions of dollars building a pipeline to the sea, likely through Kenya. John Holmes, emergency relief coordinator for the United Nations, was quoted: "If the north-south agreement fails, everything else will also fall apart."

The continuing catastrophe in Darfur both overshadows events in southern Sudan and commands less news attention; most of the region has only a tenuous humanitarian presence, and the Khartoum regime has imposed severe restrictions on journalists, according to Eric Reeves' January 1 update. Reeves fears increased violence and rebellion in Sudan which would also pose a risk to regional stability.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 17, 9 a.m. in the Congregational Church office, when we may also prepare fresh bags of lentil soup for sale during Lent. All are welcome!

Elizabeth Williams & Josie Eusden
Co-chairs, Sudan Relief Task Force

DARN THAT DOOR

We're giving notice that the front breezeway door (Park Street side) is to be avoided until later in the spring, when conditions will have dried it out. In spite of efforts to repair it, each winter renders it inoperable. So please use the ramp entrance, if you're heading towards the basement level of the church building.

WARMING THE VESTIBULE

Well-meaning parishioners keep shutting the inner wooden doors of the vestibule here, intending to shut out the cold. Here's the problem: the vestibule is unheated. The only heat it gets is by our leaving those doors open. While it may seem counter-intuitive to some, we've been advised to keep those doors open, because modest heating of the vestibule will reduce problems with moisture and freezing. So here's the rule we're trying to follow: During worship in the cold months, close those inner wooden doors; otherwise, leave them propped open. Thanks!

THE FEAST

Students - You're invited to The Feast, a weekly fellowship for students interested in exploring "progressive Christianity". We gather every Sunday in the Upper Room at St. John's at 5:30 for a home-cooked meal, warm fellowship and lively conversation, and then the peaceful, reflective centering of a brief time of worship in the tradition of the Iona Community in Scotland. There's always a place at the table for you - and newcomers are always welcome. For more information, contact Rick Spalding, Williams Chaplain, at 597.2483 or by e-mail: Richard.E.Spalding@williams.edu.



BUY FAIR TRADE ORGANIC COFFEE!



St. John's continues to offer for sale fair trade, organic coffee in a variety of roasts during the Sunday morning coffee hour in the upper room. You may also make a purchase Monday - Friday by stopping by the Youth Minister's office. Consider taking home a pound (or two) for yourself or as a gift. All proceeds benefit Youth Ministry. Thank you to all of you loyal, fair trade coffee drinkers.



ST. JOHN'S GREEN PAGE

Submitted by Tamara Adkins



Help Wanted: Green Page Writers

I have settled in to my new home in Conway, MA. I am delighted to continue to help with the production of the GreenPage, but I can't do it alone. If you have stories of sustainability you are longing to tell, now is the time to talk to Father Peter about this important ministry.

Faith without works is dead.

So, in the introspective season of winter, we've been talking about some of the changes we'd like to make individually and corporately to honor God's gift of creation. Here are a few ideas.

Children's education: The children in the church school could start an indoor compost bin, collect scraps from coffee hour, and turn it into soil to grow flowers for Mother's Day.

Last January, two friends of mine from Ithaca, NY who are master composters led a workshop at St Peter's, Bennington. That parish decided to compost (outdoors) all of their coffee hour and special event food waste, in their garden (more on that later). We attendees started about ten vermiculture bins, for our homes and one brave soul got her workplace composting with her. This is a great way to handle food scraps in winter when the ground is frozen -- feed them to red wigglers. I have plenty of worms to donate from my bin (they multiply very quickly!). I have a rather expensive (~\$100) fancy bin at home, but any box will do. Many grocery stores receive their fish and meat in styrofoam coolers that they are happy to give away. Poke some air holes in the top (no, the worms won't crawl out, they prefer darkness), put in moist strips of old newspaper for a bit of bedding, then add worms and coffee grounds (their favorite). They will eat anything except meats and oils (well, avocado pits and eggshells don't break down very well either).

Grounds: Alice Waters is hoping to persuade the Obama family to start a victory garden on the White House lawn. Nourishing each other and the community could be a powerful symbol of Christ's love in Williamstown. Consider growing some vegetables in a raised bed along one side of the church. This sort of project takes some very committed volunteers, and that shouldn't mean volunteering the warden or other staff. St Peter's first season resulted in a bountiful crop and many new relationships with the community. Ask Mother Anita and her husband Jordan the secret of their success. Or Church of the Nativity in LA. Churches growing food for their community is happening in Episcopal churches across the US.

Other ideas: Earth Ministries' "Greening Congregations Handbook" at \$30 is a great investment. It has step-by-step advice on projects that any parish can undertake. Connect with the Episcopal Ecological Network (Rev Martha Kirkpatrick, another GreenFaith fellow, is the new Missioner for the Environment for the Diocese of Maine. I don't think we have such a position yet in our diocese. Should we think about that?) Visit http://www.episcopalchurch.org/1829_ENG_HTM.htm.

There are many efforts here in Williamstown deserving of support. FCC UCC has an eco-justice team. Spy at one of their meetings and see what they are up to (maybe ask Tammy Fraser or Rev Carrie Bail first).

What are your ideas?

FROM THE PARISH CALENDAR

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Heather O'Brien
- 3 Matthew Wilson, Roberta Patten
- 4 Edward Fairfield, Tom Neely, Molly Kerns
- 6 Elizabeth Martin
- 7 Elizabeth (Ware) Fippinger, Benjamin Sanger
- 8 Tammy LaCosse, Jid Sprague, Babs Ellison,
Doris Jones
- 10 Lili (Peacock-Villada) Chambers, Stephen Budrow
- 13 Sam Tadros



- 14 Richard Daniels, Sr., Darlie Kerns
- 15 Janet Hammill, Pamela Lacroix, Diane Smith
- 16 Lacie Phillips, Hollie Fisher
- 17 Sophia Giordano, Nan Alberti, Kathryn Pritchard
Bennett Langman Zimmerman, Ingela Robinson
- 18 Sharon Manning, Charlie Toomajian, Edward Briggs
- 19 Adam Park, Nicole Herbert
- 20 Kimberley Kuster
- 21 Guilford Spencer, Ellen Beebe, Rachel Anderson
- 22 Robert Glick, Paula Consolini
- 23 Lucelle Pardoe, Alex White, Gerry Torres
- 25 Jonathan Secor
- 26 Miranda Park, Rosalie Noyes
- 27 Alexander Wolf, Matthew Strano
- 28 Tank Wilson

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- 10 Peter & Sandy Schryver



ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION:

- 4 Susan Crampton



FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH:

- 5 Margaret Elvin
- 8 Frederick Copeland



This month:

- Men's breakfast meeting, p. 6
- Ash Wednesday services, p. 2
- Lenten Series, p. 1
- Servant Leadership program, p. 5
- LEM & LEV meetings, p. 6
- VESTRY Day Away, p. 6

ONGOING:

Tuesdays

- 9:30 a.m., Holy Eucharist, upper room
- 9:30 a.m., Early Intervention Playgroup,
sunroom
- Noon, AA, upper room
- 2:30 p.m., Evening Prayer, Sweetbrook
(1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month only)
- 7:30 p.m., AA, lower room

Wednesdays

- 9:30 a.m. Early Intervention Playgroup,
sunroom

Thursdays

- 1:00 p.m., Affin-KNIT-ty Group, library
- 7:30 p.m. Choir rehearsal, upper room
- 7:30 p.m., AA, library

Fridays

- Noon, AA, upper room
- 12:15 p.m., Bible Study, room 3

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Monday, February 2,

Noon, Stewardship Ministry Team

Tuesday, February 3,

5:15 p.m., Steering Committee, library

Wednesday, February 4,

1:00 p.m., Staff meeting, library

Wednesday, February 11

10:30 a.m., Williamstown Commons

Holy Eucharist

7:00 p.m., VESTRY, library

Thursday, February 12

6:30 p.m., National Alliance for the
Mentally Ill (NAMI) support group, Room 3

Sunday, February 15

11:30 a.m., Home Delivered Meals

12:30 p.m., Friendship Knot Quilters,
lower room

Monday, February 23

4:00 p.m., Sweetwood Holy Eucharist

Thursday, February 26

2:30 p.m., Sweetbrook Holy Eucharist