

The Parish Post

St. Thomas
Episcopal Church
April 2011

A WORD FROM THE WEISS

Supposing Him To Be The Gardener

This month, we head through Lent and Holy Week to the holiest of our days as Christians: Easter Sunday. It is no accident that the Church developed the observance of Lent and Holy Week; this time represents an essential Christian teaching: *there is no resurrection without death*. Another way to say this is that we may miss moments of joy and peace if we seek always to avoid suffering; it can be through difficult times that we see the face of God most clearly. In fact, the Church has been bold enough to say that it is *especially* in such times that our Creator reaches out to us.

I know a little about suffering lately. I say “a little” because I was unconscious throughout my surgery, sedated quite a bit immediately afterward, and slept a lot upon returning home. In other words, I didn’t experience much physical pain, other than some occasions in the hospital. My suffering had more to do with loss of dignity, loss of energy, loss of identity, loss of control. But, with God’s help, I sought to “be” with that suffering, to accept it, to experience it. In the process I was blessed with what I call *resurrection moments*: an overwhelming sense of gratitude—bringing me to tears—at the kindness of others. I was filled with joy at the care of nurses and aides; at the truckload of cards and letters I received; at “little things” upon returning home, like a cup of tea or a blanket. I was especially moved to receive cards from total strangers who had been through the same surgery, and a friend I hadn’t spoken with in over thirty years who somehow got the news.

I’ve always been struck by the resurrection story in John’s Gospel, in which Mary, “supposing him to be the gardener”, fails to recognize Jesus right in front of her. She simply couldn’t imagine him to be present. It has been the same for me: in the hardest times, when I have tried to deny and avoid my suffering, God has seemed far, far away; and in those same times, when I have been able to “just be” with my suffering, God has shown up in *resurrection moments*.

May you and yours have a Blessed Easter!

Fr. Chuck



I cannot say thank you enough to all who cared for me and for St. Thomas during my medical leave. I especially want to thank Pam Gardner, our Senior Warden, and all the Vestry; the Revs. Terry Hunt and John Thomas, who led worship and offered pastoral care; Vicar Becky Dittenhafer and our friends at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, who opened their home to us for Lenten study and worship; and all of you, for your prayers and cards, and for carrying on the important ministries of St. Thomas!

I am so excited to be back among you and take my place in the St. Thomas family. Again, thank you, thank you, thank you!



SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY



On Saturday, April 16, starting at 9:30 AM, we'll gather to spruce up St. Thomas. This will help to get the building and grounds in tip-top shape as we prepare to celebrate Easter!

Please bring rakes, gardening tools, work gloves, etc.
Bagels and coffee will be provided.

*We will also be making Palm Crosses this morning;
If you know the ancient secret for creating them,
we'd love your help!*

Holy Week and Easter

PALM SUNDAY

Weather permitting, we'll begin with The Liturgy of the Palms outside.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, 7 PM

We'll mark the Institution of the Lord's Supper with a special Eucharist.

GOOD FRIDAY, 7 PM

*We'll remember Jesus' final days
with a contemporary version of The Stations of the Cross.*

EASTER SUNDAY

We'll celebrate the Resurrection with festive decorations and music!

*Invite a
friend!*



Women's Lunch



On Saturday, April 2, at Noon, the Ladies of St. Thomas will meet for Lunch at Shorty's, 2301 Jefferson Avenue, Washington.

RSVP to Sue Rodgers, and bring your leftover April Fool's jokes.

Games Night

On Thursday, April 28, everyone is invited to join our Canon House friends for a raucous night of board games! Bring your favorite games. Snacks and drinks will be provided. The fun begins at 6:30 PM.



LENTEN GATHERINGS AT ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. Thomas folks are invited to St. Paul's on Wednesdays during Lent for Supper, Bible Study, and Worship, beginning at 6:00 PM.

**(NOTE: DIGGING DEEPER
IS NOT MEETING THIS MONTH)**



One way we may respond to the natural disasters faced by our brothers and sisters in Japan is through Episcopal Relief and Development (er-d.org).

Gifts may be designated to "Japan Earthquake Response Fund".

Please continue to hold the people of Japan in your prayers.

Diocesan News

Youth Group Overnight, April 1-2

Calvary Church, Shadyside.

Clergy Conference, April 6-8

A retreat for clergy from the dioceses of Pittsburgh and Northwestern PA.. Fr. Chuck will be attending.

A Visit from the Presiding Bishop, April 19

Trinity Cathedral, 7:00-9:00 PM

Joyful People: A Day of Celebration, May 7

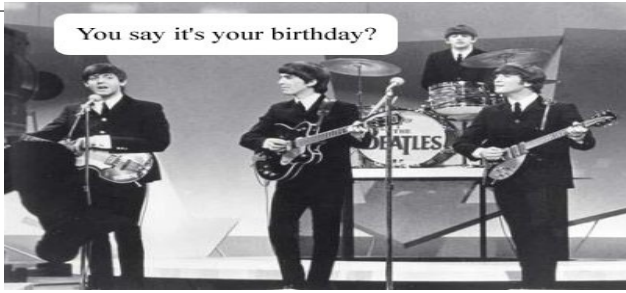
A day of fun, learning, and celebration for the whole diocese.

Contact Fr. Chuck or go to

episcopalpgh.org for more information.

VESTRY RETREAT

On Saturday, April 9, your Vestry will meet to discern God's direction for St. Thomas and make plans for the future. If you have thoughts on these matters, see any Vestry member.



JAKOB BRANNEN—APRIL 3
LORI TURNEY—APRIL 11
NICKOLAS VAYANSKY—APRIL 14
MATT YERKEY—APRIL 16
ANDREW BRANNEN—APRIL 25
DAN LOWDEN—APRIL 30

*Are we missing your birthday
or anniversary? Call the
church and let us know!*

COFFEE HOUR

April 3—O'Lear
April 10—Hunt/Stebler
April 17—Weiss
April 24—DeRiso

Notes From The Church Mouse!

Well, you all did it! You kept the place running until Fr. What's-His-Name came back! (Just kidding, Fr. Chuck. It's nice to see you again.)

It was neat to have so many folks step up and help out in so many ways!.....Hey, didn't the ladies have a good time at that Japanese steakhouse! (I can tell who went, because they say "Konnichiwa" during The Peace.).....It was so nice to see Bishop and Marianne Price again! They're always so happy to come to St. Thomas. (Could it be the Potluck after Worship? You do put on a good show.)Boy, it sure was nice of St. Paul's Lutheran Church to invite you to a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Ash Wednesday service, and Lenten Study. I think, as neighbors go, you picked some good ones.Now, as we get close to Easter, I have one important question: Will someone be hiding eggs in the pews again?

YUM!

HAPPY EASTER!

TOM



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