

February 13, 2008

SJWT



Dear Friends,

When we have Intentional Community in our lives, there is – at every turn – learning, celebration, support and challenge. The details are right here!

Worship with us this Sunday, February 17: Lent 2: 8:30 Early Eucharist; 10:30 Eucharist; Sermon: Gary van der Meer; Celebrant: Gary van der Meer; Musician: Dorothy DeVal and Susanna McCleary. Refreshments following.

What is Sacred?

Bob Shantz gave us a challenging sermon on rethinking what is holy in both space and time. As we prepare ourselves to explore our current and future needs for space St. John's, we hope you will agree that Bob's sermon is a great Conversation-Starter. The transcript is attached!

Announcements & Events

Lenten Program

St. John's will host a shared Lenten program with Redeemer Lutheran Church, Wednesday evenings, February 13, 20, 27, March 5, 12, 19, 7:30 – 8:45 pm. The program will be held at St. John's. Bob Shantz will present his new book, "Windows on our Souls" along with artist Sarah Hall and art historian Peter Larisey. Learn about art, the early Christian catacombs, stained glass, and theology (Bob's writings!). The evening will include reflections, concluding with Lutheran Evening Prayer, Musician: Barry Short.

Slide Show of England

As part of the Lent Program on Wednesday evenings, Gary will show slides of England: Cathedrals and Churches as Sacred Space, Weird and Wonderful, Wednesday, February 27, 7:30 p.m.

Every Member Visit

Our All Member Visit is underway! Your visitor will call and invite your participation. These visits emphasize friendship, and also include a presentation of the Commitment Card for Time and Talent and the Commitment Card for Treasure. Please submit these Cards on Commitment Sunday, February 24, 8:30 & 10:30.

Great Upcoming Music

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. sharp - February 17: Dorothy DeVal and Susanna McLeary; February 24: Jaroslav Czerwinec. March 2: Anne Lederman and Tom Layton.

Midweek Worship Services

Thursday February 14, 10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, with scripture discussion followed by home baked refreshments; Tuesday, February 19, 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer, with Anglican Rosary and silent meditation. During Lent, Tuesday Morning Prayer begins at 7:00 a.m.

Leadership Team Meetings

Sunday February 17 the Leadership Team meets between the two services at 9:15 a.m. in the basement – a room has been prepared for us to sit comfortably and meet from 9:15 to 10:15. This is an experiment to see if this is a good time for us to schedule Leadership Team. Bring your ideas and needs for support as we make parish plans.

Nursery Get Together

We're planning a get together of parents to talk about the nursery and make plans. If you would like to be part of this conversation, contact Jennifer Smerek, 416-537-4679, bjennifer@gmail.com.

Study!

A group of 10 people from St. John's attended a lecture last Sunday by Bishop John Shelby Spong: "Why Christianity must Change or Die!" It was a fascinating exploration that has been generating conversation all week. You may wish to check their website for the DVD as part of your reading for Lent: www.holycrosslutheran.ca. You might consider ordering a copy of Spong's book, Why Christianity must change or die, as your reading for Lent!

Writing Cheques to St. John's

Our bank has tightened its rules about cashing cheques written to St. John's. Our official name for banking purposes: "St. John's Church, West Toronto".

Annual Vestry Meeting

The Wardens propose that the Annual Vestry Meeting be held Sunday, March 9th following the 10:30 service. This is a change from the original announcement to allow time to prepare our plans incorporating your responses to the Every Member Visit.

Nominations for Vestry

The Wardens and Incumbent invite nominations for the role of Deputy People's Warden. A Warden serves 3 years (part of the time as deputy warden and part as a full warden). Wardens work as a team with the Incumbent in sharing the leadership of the parish. If you are interested or you would like to nominate someone, please get in touch with one of our current wardens (contact information below). Deadline: Friday, February 29. (The team is meeting Saturday, March 1 to plan for the Annual Meeting).

Church School Needs

We have need of pens, pie plates (aluminum), and plastic or paper tablecloths for upcoming projects. If you are doing a spring tidy up in your home and come across any of these items, we would be most happy to have them!

Thanks!

Pancake Supper Thanks

Our Pancake Supper at The Stop was a great success. We raised \$175 and gave all of it to The Stop for their programs. The Stop was so pleased with the supper, that they have asked us to consider hosting the supper next year for the whole Stop Community as an outreach initiative. This would be a great opportunity for us to get involved and do something really good... We want to thank Bill Dunford, Pat Smale Casby, Brenda Holmes, and Noelle Carbone for all their help in making the Supper a wonderful community gathering for us and for Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Church School Thanks

Thanks to all who supported the Valentine's Cookie Bake. We raised \$182.65 for the Sunday School Retreat. We will have further fundraising events and keep you up to date with our plans. The Sunday School Retreat is a great way for children to grow in faith while their parents grow in friendship.

Diaper Changing Table

We are grateful to Alison Smerek for providing St. John's with a Diaper Changing Table, located in the upstairs wheelchair accessible washroom. Thanks, Alison!

Skating Outing

The St. John's Outdoor Program is back on track! Come to the Skating Party, Sunday, February 24, after church, around 1PM, at Rennie Park (Runnymede south of Bloor). As there is a cantina on site, bring hot drinks, sandwiches and snacks so we can all chat and have fun!

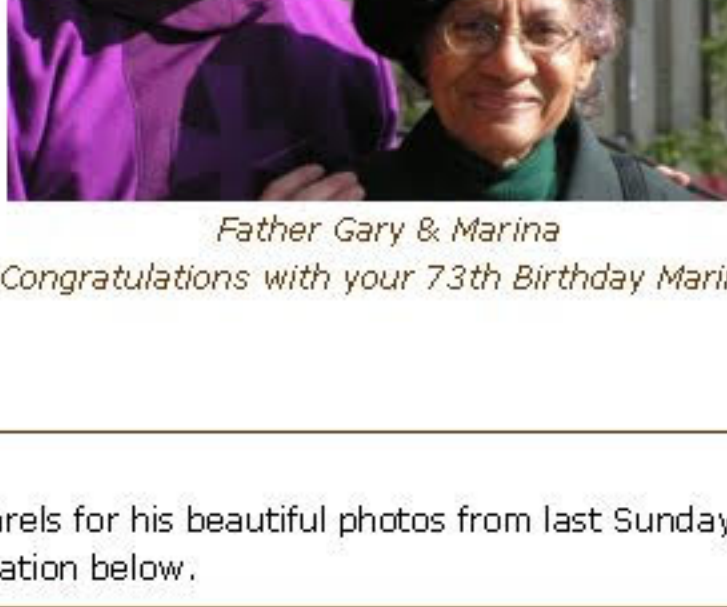
February 24 is also Commitment Sunday, so we are counting on a great turn-out! Dress warm, polish up your skates, and we'll see you there! For questions, please contact Tom Gehrels, 416-656-9111 or mariengehrels@yahoo.com.



Melanie, Sophie & Zoltan



George & Kathleen



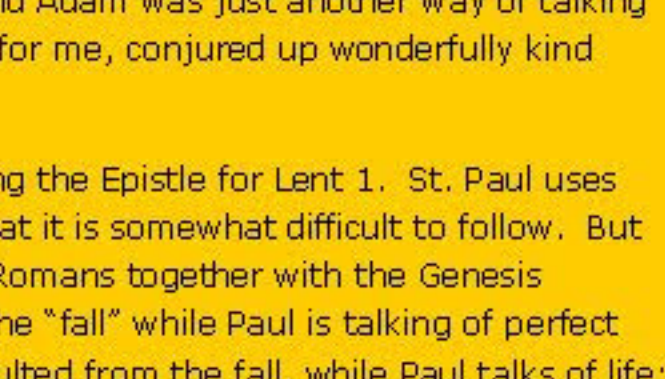
Father Gary & Marina
Congratulations with your 73th Birthday Marina!

Thanks:

Thanks to Tom Gehrels for his beautiful photos from last Sunday. Thanks to Barry Short for the meditation below.

The Two Adams

One of my favourite hymns is "Praise to the holiest in the height," sung to the tune Gerontius. When I was a child this hymn filled me with terror each time we sang it because it spoke of a second Adam coming to the fight. Now at that time I was being terrorised by an Adam at school. No matter how much my Mother would try and explain to me that the second Adam was just another way of talking about Jesus I just could not get it. Jesus, for me, conjured up wonderfully kind images but Adam? Oh no!



Pretty much still the way I feel after reading the Epistle for Lent 1. St. Paul uses such complicated language and analogy that it is somewhat difficult to follow. But somehow when I read Paul's letter to the Romans together with the Genesis reading I start to get it. Genesis talks of the "fall" while Paul is talking of perfect obedience; Genesis talks of death that resulted from the fall, while Paul talks of life; Genesis talks of a fallen humanity while Paul intimates of a redeemed humanity and soon... so the analogy becomes clearer to me.

However, it is a little easier to relate to Genesis 3 and the story of humanity "fall" than to this unmerited redemption through Christ. The consequences of the so-called "fall" are all around us – war, injustice, genocide, terrorism, racism, economic exploitation, environmental degradation, drugs, crime and so on and so on. That the coming of the second Adam has made much of a difference is quite often hard to see. Well, what about the church someone may ask? Yes, well what about it? Its history both recent and ancient bears witness to some incidents of injustice (the current dilly dallying over same-sex blessings) and collusion with oppressors (the church and the apartheid state). Yet someone else may say, "Surely the lives of the saints bears witness to the influence of Christianity on humankind." That is probably true, but like our own lives their lives are so hidden with Christ in God that it is often difficult to really pinpoint - only really being discernible through faith.

How do we then reach an explanation of the human condition? For me faith becomes the prerequisite to understanding both the dark side of human existence as manifested by the "fall" and simultaneously the brighter side of the effect of the coming of the second Adam. To return to the great hymn by John H. Newman:

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O wisest love! That flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe
Should strive and should prevail.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan: Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Barry Short

For meditation and reflection in the coming week, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, February 17: Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17.

P.S. I hope you find it helpful to get an update like this from St. John's Church, West Toronto. If you would like something listed in the announcements, or if you know someone who would appreciate receiving this, please contact me. If you would prefer not to receive news from St. John's in this way, please also let me know.

Best wishes, Gary+

Check our website. www.sjwt.ca

And remember this!

We are not a Building!

We are an accessible, accepting, diverse community. We are young and old, able-bodied, and disabled, employed and unemployed. We are married, single, divorced, straight and gay. We are from all over the world, yet we could live next door. You will find open minds and open hearts at St. John's.

The mission of St. John's Church is to build a community of caring believers committed to Christ, to work for justice and service to all in need. We gather to praise God, and to give and receive support to meet the challenge of our daily ministries. We call on all who will to come and join us.

