

February 20, 2008

SJWTS



Dear Friends,

This Sunday is Commitment Sunday, don't forget your commitment cards and polish up your skates for a St. John's Skating Outing after the service!

Worship with us this Sunday, February 24: Lent 3: 8:30 Early Eucharist; 10:30 Eucharist; Sermon: Gary van der Meer; Celebrant: Gary van der Meer; Musician: Jaroslav Czerwinec. Refreshments following.

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.

Announcements & Events

Lenten Program

St. John's will host a shared Lenten program with Redeemer Lutheran Church, Wednesday evenings, February 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

Don't forget to bring your Commitment Card for Time, Talent and Treasure on Commitment Sunday, February 24, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m. services.

Great Upcoming Music

Sundays at 10:30 a.m. sharp - February 24: Jaroslav Czerwinec. March 2: Anne Lederman and Tom Layton; March 9: Barry Short, organ.

Midweek Worship Services

Thursday February 21, 10:30 a.m. Morning Prayer, with scripture discussion followed by home baked refreshments; Tuesday, February 26, 7:00 a.m. Morning Prayer, with Anglican Rosary and silent meditation. During Lent, Tuesday Morning Prayer begins at 7:00 a.m.

Nursery Get Together

We're planning a get together of parents to talk about the nursery. Parents and children are invited to the Smerek/Tindall home on Saturday, March 1 at 3:30 p.m. Contact Jennifer Smerek, 416-537-4679, bjennifer@gmail.com.

Study!

A group of 10 people from St. John's attended a lecture 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!



May Webster

Thanks:

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

Faith Transforms

Heights absolutely terrify me. Yet on occasion I have taken the so called "leap of faith". In these situations two conditions have prevailed. One condition is that I have had some one I trusted to guide me through the situation. The other condition is that I would have missed out on something really important if I had not undertaken the challenge. For example, a few years ago with Father Gary's guidance I climbed up the bell tower before the bells were removed. He talked me through the climb and gave me assurance that I would not come to any harm. The reward was not seeing the bells in situ. The reward was also a feeling of accomplishment that I had overcome a fear of climbing the bell tower.



When Abraham and Sarah left family, lands, and all that was familiar they must have experienced fear of the unknown. Yet they stepped forward in faith, confident in God's protection and love and their lives were transformed. Perhaps some among us have felt called by God, as Abraham and Sara were, to leave family, home and all that is familiar to do work for God. Others among us have spoken out and taken action for the marginalized, people who are homeless, people with special needs, people who are discriminated against because of their skin colour, their gender, or their sexual orientation. Through these activities they have acted in faith and given witness to God's way of life. Although some of us might never be presented with similar opportunities we all have situations in our daily lives that challenge our faithfulness to God's call.

During this Lenten season it may be useful to examine our reactions and attitudes to life's daily events. Have we forgiven others even when they have caused us pain? How do we ensure that we respond with non-judgemental attitudes? What evils must we confront? To what extent are we prepared to give unconditional love? What do we need to reform in our lives: matters or situations that we could end or leave behind? What is holding us back from taking action?

Paul in the lesson today reminds us that we respond not because a particular action is the "correct" behaviour to get our rewards from God. We respond to live as God is calling us to live. I agree with author Renee Miller that we respond and take action because we seek wholeness in God. As we seek wholeness in God we are transformed and demonstrate our faith in God's love.

As we seek to realize our capacity for faith, we thank you God for your gift of Grace. Amen.

Evelyn C. Butler

For meditation and reflection in the coming week, consider the scriptures for next Sunday, February 24: Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42

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.

