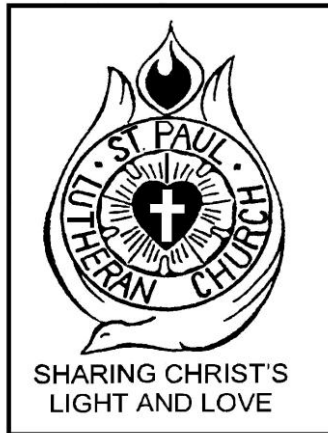


# THE EPISTLE



March  
2011

Volume VII

Issue II

## *From the Pastor's Desk....*

The Christian Church is about to enter the season of Lent, a time most commonly associated with the giving up of certain things we enjoy—a time of denying ourselves the enjoyment of a particular food or activity. The purpose of such fasting is to draw us into a spirit of repentance as we reflect upon Christ's death for the sake of the world.

However, current theological thinking is that the focus of Lent should also be about adopting practices that draw us into a deeper relationship with the One who created and redeemed us because that increases our connectedness with others for Jesus' sake. Therefore, adding a spiritual practice or discipline to our lives rather than subtracting or giving up something during Lent actually helps us to more lovingly and caringly "Share Christ's light and love" with our community and beyond as we live more fully into our mission statement. Please read Bishop Gafkjen's letter about Lenten practices that follows.

Living contemplatively is a practice that can be engaged in during Lent and is foremost in my mind since twelve people from the congregation just returned from a wonderful retreat on Feb. 25th-26th at Nazareth Center, a Sisters of Charity at Nazareth facility near Bardstown. Sister Emily Nabholz SCN, a sister in that community and a very loving, gentle spirit, shared her deep spiritual wisdom with us, enriching all present. The theme of the retreat was, "Nourishing Our Contemplative Spirits." I feel certain that most if not all of the participants left the retreat with a much broader and deeper understanding of and appreciation for the benefits of living contemplatively. And as one of the participants said at the conclusion of the event, "I always thought contemplation was just for those religious people, (I think she meant: sisters, monks, etc.) but now I have the tools to practice it in my daily life."

One of the very first comments that Sister Emily made at our first session on Friday night was: "Contemplation is about community—we're all in this together as we seek God's face." Later in the retreat she stated: "In order to live contemplatively we have to look at God, ourselves, and the world—our call is really to live in the world and reflect God's love to it."

There are six practices or disciplines involved in contemplation:

1. **Slowing down**—promotes a healthier heart; helps us to re-assess our priorities; reinforces a gentler pace to our lives; and stops us from “running away” from ourselves, our problems, and challenges.  
 We need to remember that “life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by what takes our breath away.”
2. **Sharing our stories**—gives us the gift of mourning and celebrating with others; it prevents us from forgetting our story because when we forget it, we die; stories give us hope; our story has the potential to nourish the faith.  
 We should all love our stories because they are about our journey with God.
3. **Stillness and silence**—silence is the absence of noise, whereas stillness is the inner quality that readies us for contemplation. Without stillness and silence we cannot hear the voice of God.  
*“Be still and know that I am God!”* (Psalm 46:10)  
 Be still and know that I am  
 Be still and know  
 Be still  
 Be
4. **Solitude**—nurtures our intimacy with God; it offers us precious and necessary time to integrate the many areas of our life.
5. **Surrender**—letting go and trusting God.
6. **Solidarity**—A communion of relationship with ourselves and others that engenders humility. Solidarity connects us to the people and events that we see on the news for example, or the happenings within our communities. It fosters compassion and joy.  
 A state of solidarity, being connected and engaged with the world, is the purpose of practicing contemplation. In other words we live contempla-tively for the sake of the world.

Whether you practice contemplation or another of the spiritual disciplines during Lent, may God bless your journey.

*Pastor Shirley*

*Bible verse...*



The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

(Mark 6:30-31a)



## Ash Wednesday/Lent

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, is March 9th. **The worship service that evening will be at 7 P.M. and will be marked by Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes.**

Ashes are an ancient symbol of repentance, cleansing, human mortality, and mourning. Early Christians adopted the use of ashes from the Jewish practice which served as an external mark of penitence. The imposition of ashes on the foreheads of Christians as part of the Ash Wednesday liturgy dates back to at least the tenth century.

*The word "Lent" is from the Anglo-Saxon and means "spring." The forty days of Lent recall Jesus' forty-day fast in the wilderness after his Baptism (Matt. 4:2; Luke 4:1-2), as well as Moses' forty-day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28).*

## Mid-week Lenten Services

As has been our tradition we will gather for a supper of *homemade soup and bread* at 6 P.M. in the Fellowship Hall beginning on **Wednesday evening, March 16<sup>th</sup> and continuing through, Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.**

Following supper we'll enjoy a two-person Lenten drama from the series, *Encounters Before the Dawn*, at 6:45 P.M. The series of five dramas (one each week) centers around encounters between two biblical characters that take place between the time of Christ's crucifixion and his Resurrection. Not all of the encounters, however, occur before the physical dawning of Easter, but rather all occur before the reality of Easter dawns on the characters.

Then at 7 P.M. we'll gather in the sanctuary for a **Taizé** service (see the article that follows on **Taizé**). This is a simple, informal, meditative worship time in which we'll hear scriptures read, offer up prayers, and sing the beautiful repetitive **Taizé** songs that are biblical texts set to music.

## Taizé

The Taizé community in France is an ecumenical monastic order with a strong devotion to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. The 100-strong community of Roman Catholic and Protestant monks is drawn from 30 countries across the world.

It was founded in 1940 by Roger Louis Schutz-Marsauche (known as 'Brother Roger'). The 90-year-old monk died in August 2005.

Brother Roger wrote: "Nothing is more conducive to a communion with the living God than a meditative common prayer with, as its high point, singing that never ends and that continues in the silence of one's heart when one is alone again....Prayer is a serene force at work within human beings, stirring them up, changing their hearts, never allowing them to close their eyes in the face of evil...All who walk in the footsteps of Christ, while holding themselves in the presence of God, remain alongside other people as well. They do not separate prayer and solidarity with others."

**\*\*SPECIAL Congregational Meeting\*\***

Congregational Meeting will be held on

**Sunday, March 27th**

**at 12 Noon.**

The purpose of the meeting is to extend  
a part-time call to Pastor Shirley Ross-Jones.

**Please put this date on your calendar  
and plan to be present**



**Indiana-Kentucky Lutheran Synod**

**From Bishop Bill Gafkjen**

**March 2011**

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

One of the most ancient seasons of the church year, Lent, peeks over the horizon as February passes into March, inspiring reflections and worries about what to “give up.” This commitment to give up something for Lent (also known as fasting) can certainly be an appropriate expression of one of the classic spiritual disciplines mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 6 (two others also mentioned in that chapter and often talked about during Lent are alms giving and prayer). By itself, however, giving up something for Lent feels a little too individualistic to me, especially within the context of our rabidly individualistic culture.

One counter-cultural move this Lent might be for us to engage in one or two communal Christian practices other than the ones that we usually assume (e.g. worship, Wednesday meals at church, Bible study). In the important and transformational book, “Practicing Our Faith,” Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra suggest that “Christian practices are things Christian people do together over time in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world in Christ Jesus.”

Together...over time...for the life of the world...

In an individualistic culture that demands instant results on its (each of our) own behalf, such an approach to Christian practices is both radically counter-cultural and profoundly necessary as a witness to the life-giving way of life made possible by the crucified and risen Jesus. Such practices remind us who we are, reshape us in the way of the cross, and reflect for the world who Jesus is.

Twelve distinctive practices are presented in Practicing Our Faith, found at [www.practicingourfaith.org/](http://www.practicingourfaith.org/). Look over this list and then consider adding one or two or some other communal practice inspired by this list to your Lenten journey...and invite others to join you on the way. Honoring the body; hospitality; household economics; saying yes and saying no; keeping Sabbath; testimony; discernment; shaping communities; forgiveness; healing; dying well; singing our lives.

These 40 days, may God’s Spirit draw you deep into the gifts and promises of the baptismal waters and empower and equip you to live each day in the way of the cross that marks your brow, in the power of the Spirit who seals your heart.

*Bishop Bill Gaffjen*

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## **A note....**

*Pastor Shirley,*

*I hope your time at Nazareth was life-giving for all.  
Your group was life-giving to all at Nazareth.*

*Blessings on your ministry!*

*Carol McKean, SCN  
Nazareth Retreat Center*

## *Thank You*

Dear Members of St. Paul Church,

Your continuing prayers are so welcomed and appreciated.  
Thank you!

I'm beginning my ninth series of chemotherapy (7days on, three weeks off), and I'm showing considerable improvement.  
Jean and I send our love to Vernon and Shirley.

Shalom,  
*Dave*

*Pastor Dave Shugert is the retired pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church in Pickerington, OH. Epiphany sent St. Paul \$1,300 after the flash flood in August 2009 to help with the congregation's flood expenses. Pastor Dave is battling a rare form of cancer of the blood.*

# Thank you

*Thank you* ....

A heartfelt thank-you to all those who contributed to the fund for the emergency repair of the furnace. Thanks to your generosity our \$1,800 goal was reached.

*St. Paul Church Council*



## *March Birthdays:*

- |                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 – Bandi Doyle            | 19 - Brandon White   |
| 5 – Laurelle Skillman      | 20 – Noelle Fain     |
| David Elmore Weissrock     | 21 – Carol Weissrock |
| 7 – Matt Alvey             | 26 – Alexandria Seng |
| 9 – Katie McDonald         | Wilma Waltrip        |
| 10 – Alice Alvey           | 29 – Alita White     |
| 17 – David Edgar Weissrock | 30 – Pete Bard       |
| 18 – Stephanie Alvey       | Scott McDonald       |
| Suzanne Weissrock          |                      |

# Shively Area Ministries



*"Sacrificial Love"*  
Community Lenten Services

Wednesdays  
March 16, 23 & 30  
12 Noon

Lunch will follow services  
The cost of lunch will be a donation to  
Shively Area Ministries Food Pantry

New this year . . .  
An Evening Service  
April 13  
7:00 p.m.

**Location:**

**CHAPEL HILL UCC**  
2307 Embassy Lane  
Louisville, KY 40216

*Come celebrate the  
Lenten Season of our  
Lord Jesus Christ*



## *Remember in your Prayers*

Adam  
Alice Alvey  
Jan & Chris Alvey  
Martha Alvey  
Matt & Stephanie Alvey & Family  
Avonelle  
Maggie, Jackie and  
Kameron Lee Basham  
Katie Blasi  
Karen Bradley  
Sharon Burkhart  
Marsha Cahill  
Dennis Christian  
LaVerne Collins  
Joan Crecelius  
Rayon Dawson - diabetic  
Vickie Gaddie  
Dennis Gahafer, Jr.  
Glen Gahafer, Sr.  
Bob & Maxine Good  
Joe Halterman  
Ruth Hawkins  
Robert Hoffman  
Rev. Marion Hopkins  
(Shindlebowers brother-in-law)  
Robert Inhoff  
Jim Jagers  
Randolph Jones  
Kelly L.  
Harry Koltz, Jr.  
Juanita Koltz  
Karen Lawrence  
Lola Leathers  
Morris Longacre  
Family of Dorothy Lush  
(with God)  
Anna Luttrell and Family  
Ed McGuire  
Tom McMahan  
(friend of Allie & Carl Steinrock)

Sterling Neal  
Nikki  
Kevin Ott  
Sue and Dave Outman  
Family of Dot Cain Pence  
(with God)  
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Rainwalter  
Michael Rausch  
Brenda Richardson  
Kim Russell  
April Samuels  
Pastor Dave Shugert  
James Skaggs,  
his wife Marie is with God  
Marshall Skillman, Sr.  
Wayne & Danielle Smith  
Sheree Sorensen  
Brian & Kathy Spangler  
(He's deployed to Afghanistan)  
Ann Stoltz  
Doug & Yvonne Sulzer  
Nellie Sweeney  
John Vaught, Sr.  
Johnny Ray Vaught  
(kidney tests)  
Samuel Vaught  
Carol Weissrock  
David Weissrock  
Darlene & Roy Wildt  
Family of Nanette Wiser  
(with God)  
Shannon & Tim Young

*Thanks be to God  
for all His blessings!*

### **Thought:**

*Everyone has their own  
spiritual walk*