

OBSERVING LENT @ ST. JAMES'S

What does it mean to "practice a holy Lent?" At its simplest, the season of Lent is a season of preparation for the Feast of the Resurrection at Easter. The Ash Wednesday service which opens the Lenten season describes it this way: This season of Lent provided a time in which converts to the faith were prepared for Holy Baptism. It was also a time when those who, because of notorious sins, had been separated from the body of the faithful were reconciled by penitence and forgiveness, and restored to the fellowship of the Church. Thereby, the whole congregation was put in mind of the message of pardon and absolution set forth in the Gospel of our Savior, and of the need which all Christians continually have to renew their repentance and faith.

The traditional disciplines of Lent are self-examination and repentance; prayer, fasting and self-denial; reading and meditating on God's holy Word. As much as Lent is a season of turning away from sin, it is even more a season of turning toward God, renewing and deepening of one's relationship with God as we know God in Jesus Christ and renewing one's call to baptismal ministry. All the disciplines of Lent are directed toward this end: our worship services; Gatherings that continue our exploration of the dynamics of discrimination in search of healing for our society and Church; our Lenten classes exploring the Episcopal Christian faith and confirmation; and special opportunities we offer at St. James's for giving generously and for seeking to form one's life into "habits" of holiness. Read on to learn about all these rich opportunities!

Lent concludes with Palm Sunday and the great Feasts of Holy Week leading to Easter, during which we re-enact and literally re-member -- embody again -- the saving events of Christ's Passion, Death, and Resurrection and invite participation in the living reality of cross-bearing, discovering through myriad "deaths" to self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, and self-serving the power of a new, more merciful and loving life in Christ.

ASH WEDNESDAY OPENS THE SEASON OF LENT ON MARCH 9th

Wednesday March 9 is Ash Wednesday, the opening of the season of Lent, the season of preparation for the renewal of our baptismal ministry on the Feast of the Resurrection, Easter. In Lent, we remind ourselves of our frailty as human beings, our propensity for destructiveness toward ourselves and others. We also remind ourselves of God's mighty faithfulness and forgiveness and willingness to bring us through death to new life, new possibilities. On Ash Wednesday, we offer a powerful Litany of Penitence and submit to the imposition of ashes upon our foreheads, reminder of our mortality, our creaturely weakness, our limitations. Join us for this powerful liturgy, at 12 noon without music, and again at 7:30 PM with music and the St. James's Choir.

WORSHIP: WILDERNESS & SILENCE

In the season of Lent, our Eucharistic journey through the lectionary is a journey into the wilderness: the wilderness of Jesus' own formation for ministry and the wilderness of our own yearning for God amid the trials and tribulations -- not to mention the confusions -- of "this mortal life." We hope to evoke this journey by opening each service in silent meditation and confession, allowing a plentiful meditative silence to follow the preaching of the Word, using ancient chant forms throughout the service, and concluding the service with a solemn prayer in place of the blessing. We draw upon resources of hymnody, liturgy, and service music that have roots in the very earliest years of the Christian faith and practice of prayer.

YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASSES!

Interested in getting confirmed? Are you under the age of 18? Edwin will be teaching confirmation classes throughout the season of Lent and would love for you to come on down. If you have not spoken with him yet, please do so soon as he will be scheduling the classes and gathering materials over the next week.

PRACTICING EPISCOPALIANS? JOIN US IN LENT!

Thinking of becoming an Episcopalian? Or maybe you'd just like to explore the Episcopal faith? Many of us are baptized as infants, with our parents speaking for us and seeking to nurture us to grow in faith. Confirmation is the rite of commitment to practice one's faith for oneself, as a mature person. It's also the way in which you can express your intention to follow Christ through the worship and fellowship of the Episcopal Church. St. James's will join the other congregations in the Alewife Deanery for Confirmation at Christ Church in Cambridge on April 30th this year, the Saturday after Easter. Holly will offer a "Practicing Episcopalians" class, Sundays in Lent, March 13 & 20, and April 3, 10, and 17, meeting at 90 Sherman St. from 3:30 to 5 PM, with a dinner and Eucharist on Friday evening April 29th at 6 PM, the day before the Confirmation service. We'll be exploring the book *Jesus Was An Episcopalian*. If you would like to join the class, please email Holly at rector@stjames-cambridge.org or call her at 617.547.4070.

LENTEN SMALL GROUP: RULE OF LIFE

Are you interested in joining a small group at St. James's on a prayerful journey through Lent? Have you wondered what it would be like to have some structure to your prayer life? Interested in doing more self care? Throughout Lent, Edwin will be working with people interested in exploring rules of life and different styles of prayer during the season of lent. This will involve three or four meetings during the season of Lent and a great opportunity to burst into Easter with a renewed sense of life in prayer. Questions? Get in touch with Edwin at assistantrector@stjames-cambridge.org or 617-547-4070.

THE DYNAMICS OF DISCRIMINATION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY: A LENTEN EXPLORATION OF RACE, CLASS, & GENDER

For two Sundays in Lent, March 13th and March 20th, in a Gathering following the 10:30 service, Shauna Shames, PhD candidate in Sociology and Instructor at Harvard University (and spouse of St. James's member Johanna Ettin), will examine with us the experience of discrimination, especially that based on race, class, and gender, and its consequences for individuals and social systems.

Among the questions she will consider: Why did Barack Obama win the presidency, and what does his election reveal about racial, class, gender and ethnic politics in the United States? Are cross-racial political coalitions feasible and desirable? Do multiracial individuals exemplify the future of American racial and ethnic politics? Why is immigration such a politically contentious and complicated issue in the United States (which is, after all, a "settler society")? How will genomic science change the way that Americans understand and practice group identification and identity? Are young adults leading the way toward a new social order? What might block or distort desirable changes in the social order? What is the likely future for race, class, gender and ethnicity over the next few decades in the United States – and how can political action turn that future in the direction that you think best? For two Sundays in Lent, March 13th and March 20th, in a Gathering following the 10:30 service, Shauna Shames, PhD candidate in Sociology and Instructor at Harvard University (and spouse of St. James's member Johanna Ettin), will examine with us the experience of discrimination, especially that based on race, class, and gender, and its consequences for individuals and social systems.

SHAUNA SHAMES: LENTEN PRESENTER ON DISCRIMINATION

Shauna L. Shames is a Ph.D. Candidate in American Government at Harvard University. Her primary areas of academic interest are race, gender, feminism, and politics, and she has published articles, reports, and book chapters on women as candidates, black women in Congress, comparative child care policy, work/family conflict, abortion, feminism in the U.S. and internationally, gay and lesbian rights, and U.S. public opinion. She has designed and taught courses (both as a Teaching Fellow and as a visiting lecturer) on race, class, gender, women's studies, the history of feminism, and the futuristic fiction. She has lectured widely on gender, race, and politics. She has an activist feminist background, and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the National Organization for Women (NOW). She previously served as Assistant to the President of NOW, Research Director for The White House Project (a national nonprofit dedicated to advancing women's leadership in politics and business), and Coordinator of the Haven Coalition, a group dedicated to ensuring reproductive rights and access. She got her start in feminism early by founding a chapter of NOW at her high school

near San Francisco, CA, when she was 15. She went on to graduate with high honors from Harvard College, where her thesis on female political candidates won the Hoopes Prize in Social Science.

LENTEN CARBON FAST

Care about our environment? Interested in doing a carbon fast for lent? Join many around our Diocese and around the world who are taking the time of Lent to abstain or reduce their carbon footprint while supplementing that with prayer and meditation about and for our environment. If you would like to receive the daily emails throughout Lent you may go to

http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin/ea?v=001_i6akEUrzT4hM38DYNhGA%3D%3D

LENTEN INGATHERING FOR JUBILEE MINISTRY

As in past years, St. James's will gather a weekly offering from congregation members on their way to communion each Sunday during Lent for the support of those affected by the AIDS epidemic in east Africa – so many of them children who have lost their parents to AIDS. Our target for the offering is a dollar a day per parishioner for the 40 days of Lent – a way to express our communion with others in a tangible fashion. That will help us reach 0.7% of our church budget (approximately \$2,100), a percent recommended internationally as a minimum level of donation. Elisabeth Keller of our congregation, active for years in our Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Jubilee Ministry in Kenya and Uganda, will use the money we collect to buy books and other scholastic materials for AIDS orphans in a Ugandan diocese that she will visit after Easter. The need is, of course, so great that St. James could choose any of a thousand church-based organizations in east Africa. With the diocesan Jubilee Ministry, we have direct personal contact with those involved and can know these children through letters and photographs that Elisabeth will bring to us after her visit. Boxes will be placed in the church on the chancel steps and at the chapel kneelers throughout Lent. Please be generous.

RECONCILIATION OF A PENITENT

Lent is traditionally a season in which we make an opportunity to seek absolution for wrongdoing and amendment of life in the Rite of the Reconciliation of a Penitent. While most Episcopalians simply confess their sins directly to God in the regular Sunday service, occasionally we experience a more painful consciousness of wrong-doing that calls for a priestly witness, a more in-depth consideration of our sense of guilt, its causes, and its remedies, and the relief of a specific priestly absolution. If you would like to make a confession, please call Holly at 857-998-1777 or Edwin at 857-998-1461 and make an appointment for this brief but intensely meaningful Rite.

EASTER BAPTISMS

The Easter Vigil on Saturday night April 23rd and Easter Sunday April 24th are the greatest of the great baptismal feasts of the year. If you're thinking about baptism for yourself or a child, please be in touch with Edwin Johnson as soon as possible, so we can plan for baptism preparation in a timely fashion.