

St. Michael's Episcopal Church

Faith, Community and Hope ~ 50 Years and Growing

NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2018

from the Rector

Dear Friends,

Recently, I attended a pre-Lenten clergy retreat for the Dioceses of Massachusetts and western Massachusetts. The retreat leader was the Rt. Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton, Bishop of Maryland. In one of his addresses to the clergy, he told us about why he became an Episcopalian. He spoke about being raised as a Baptist but was attracted to the Episcopal Church for its optimistic attitude toward human nature. He noted that in stark contrast to some Protestant denominations that start off with the premise of humanity's fallen-ness, guilt and the need for personal salvation, the Episcopal Church starts off from a very different place. He cited the evidence of our catechism, or the Outline of Faith, that starts on page 845 in the Book of Common Prayer with these words:

Human Nature

- Q. What are we by nature?
- A. We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God.
- Q. What does it mean to be created in the image of God?
- A. It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.

He noted that the catechism does not even begin to address sin and redemption until the bottom of page 848.

Bishop Sutton noted that the significance with this ordering of our belief indicates that what is the most important thing that we can know about being a Christian is that we are made in the image of God. That means that we are free to make choices that help bring healing, love and reconciliation to the world.

Bishop Sutton told us to take heart, that the effort of reconciliation is slow work, but it is still progress. He reminded us that the end of slavery took time, and the continuing work around civil rights and the combatting of racism is slow, but we are still called to do the work.

And there are so many more examples that we hold in our hearts each and every day that are far too many to name. The work of love and justice is long but is close to the heart of God.

(cont'd on the next page)

Friday, March 2

World Day of Prayer Service
at 10 AM

Sunday, March 4

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM

Sunday, March 11

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM

Sunday, March 18

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM

Sunday, March 25

Palm Sunday
Liturgy of the Palms and
Eucharist at 8 & 10

Maundy Thursday, March 29

Agape Supper at 6:30 PM
Footwashing, Holy Eucharist,
and Stripping of the Altar
at 7:30 PM

Good Friday, March 30

Solemn Liturgy at Noon
Solemn Liturgy with Choir
at 7:30 PM

Holy Saturday, March 31

Easter Vigil for Children and
Families at 6 PM

Easter Day, April 1

Eucharist at 8 & 10 AM
Parish Breakfast at 9
Easter Egg Hunt at 11:15 AM

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A few new acronyms — (*pass them forward*)

L isten O bserve V alidate E mphathize

G od O pens O ur D oors

G od O ffers O pportunities D aily

A GUIDE TO HOLY WEEK AT ST. MICHAEL'S

PALM SUNDAY – MARCH 25

8 AM Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist

10 AM Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist (with choir)

*Children will leave Church School classes to join
in the procession of the palms and then return to classes.*

MAUNDY THURSDAY – MARCH 29

6:30 PM Agape Supper

You are invited to begin the evening with a simple supper in Eva's Room.

7:30 PM Holy Eucharist

*Our service, in its entirety, will start at 7:30 in the church
and will include the traditional liturgy of Footwashing,
Holy Eucharist, and Stripping of the Altar.*

GOOD FRIDAY – MARCH 30

12 Noon Solemn Liturgy

The traditional Good Friday liturgy.

7:30 PM Solemn Liturgy (with choir)

The traditional Good Friday liturgy.

HOLY SATURDAY – MARCH 31

6:00 PM Easter Vigil

*This ancient service leads us from death to life through fire, light,
word, water, bread and wine. Please bring bells and noisemakers.*

EASTER DAY – APRIL 1

8 AM Festival Eucharist

9 AM Parish Breakfast

10 AM Festival Eucharist (with choir)

There will be no Church School Classes.

Child care will be available.

*Worshipers are encouraged to bring any sort of
hand-held bell they would like to ring during
the singing of the entrance hymn and closing hymn.
Following the service there will be an Easter egg hunt.*



Auction News!

Save the date for **Saturday April 28 from 7 to 10 PM**. Our annual outreach auction – help us help those in need, and take a walk down memory lane as we go back to the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's!



Our donation letters have been sent to businesses, but if you have a favorite retail shop or restaurant that you frequent, perhaps they would like to donate, too? If you would prefer us to do the asking, just send me the contact info, and we will send them a formal solicitation letter from St. Michael's. Bob and Kim Murphy are, once again, heading up the business donations and can use some help in following up with businesses and picking up items. If you can help with this, please let them know bobkimmurphy@gmail.com

What truly makes our auction so special are all of the parishioner donations. They are always so clever and thoughtful. Over the years we have had; mystery baskets, breakfast baskets, planters, bird houses, dinners, quarterly desserts, a pot of herbs, a car wash basket, a wine and cheese basket, a tool box, the list goes on and on! If you need help with donation ideas, see Cathy Harper at coffee hour or send her an email and she can help you brainstorm.



Please help us spread the word for our big fundraising event that is always lots of fun to attend. Where else can you enjoy drinks, appetizers, desserts and mingle with great people for \$10 a person?



Over the next several weeks we will be letting you know of various ways you can help us make this year's auction a huge success, so stay tuned!

For more information, or if you would like to help, please contact Cathy Harper at cathy@hahpah.com.





A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND

Annette Hamlet, Linda Ouellette

On November 24, 2017, we embarked on a 13-day journey to the Holy Land. The trip was organized by Bishop Gayle Harris and included 16 other “pilgrims” from other local Episcopal parishes. We were led by our guide Iyad Qumri, his assistant Ranya, and Omar, our bus driver, who made sure we got safely from place to place.

We started and ended our journey in Jerusalem (a divided city populated largely by Jews, Muslims, Armenians and Christians) where we stayed at the Guest House at St. George’s Cathedral. We met with Bishop Dawani, who spoke of the service work being done by the Diocese of Jerusalem (which includes not only Israel, but also the Palestinian territories, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon). We prayed at the Western Wall (a/k/a the “Wailing Wall”) outside the “Old City” and visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock – a holy place for the Muslim people where it is believed that the Prophet Muhammed took his Night Journey into Heaven. It was special to hear church bells and the Muslim call to prayer happening at the same time – a reminder that, regardless of our religion, we are all united by a common belief in a loving God. The next day took us to see the sunrise in the Judean Desert (Linda rode a camel, which was very scary!) where we had Eucharist with Bishop Gayle. Then off to Jericho, visiting the Mount of Temptation, where Jesus was tempted by the devil.

After two nights in Jerusalem, we were on our way north to Nazareth (in the region of Galilee) where we spent three nights with the Sisters of Nazareth. While there, we visited the well where some believe the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and the Church of the Annunciation (a huge Catholic church built where it is believed that Mary lived). The Church displays artwork donated by artists from many countries, depicting images of Mary in paintings, mosaics, icons and sculptures. It was amazing to see how differently people envision the Blessed Mother. The American contribution was a very harsh metallic sculpture which we nicknamed “Scary Mary” because she honestly did not look very happy to be there. We visited a tomb dating back many centuries underneath the convent – a good example of how churches (and other buildings in the Holy Land) are frequently built in multiple layers on top of the ruins of other structures so that when you want to see history in the Holy Land, you have to “go down”.

While in Nazareth, we took a day trip to Sepphoris (the ruins of an ancient city where it is believed that Joseph may have found work as a laborer) and to Caesarea Philippi, where Jesus travelled with his disciples and where the Jordan River begins. After renewing our Baptismal vows, we travelled to Capernaum (where Jesus lived with the disciples), to the Mount of Beatitudes where we read and meditated on the Sermon on the Mount, and to Tabgha (where Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes). We took a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee where it is believed that Jesus walked on water. It is a breathtakingly beautiful and serene area, and it was very special to be at the place where Jesus conducted his ministry.

After our stay in Nazareth, we returned to Jerusalem where we spent the remainder of our trip. We journeyed to Burqin (where Jesus cured the lepers), to Nabulus (where Jesus met with the Samaritan woman) where we drank water from Jacob’s well, and to Taybeh (which is the only 100% Christian community in the Palestinian Authority where we visited a brewery run by a local Palestinian family. We spent a day in Bethlehem, visiting Shepherd’s Field (where the angels appeared to the shepherds) and the Church of the Nativity (built at the place where it is believed that Jesus was born). We later had Eucharist at St. Andrew’s Church (an Episcopal church in Ramallah, the capital of what may be the future Palestine) where Bishop Gayle was invited to give an impromptu sermon. We were warmly welcomed by the parishioners at St. Andrew’s with a special coffee hour in our honor, a group photo and many questions about life as an Episcopalian in the United States.

Our final days in Jerusalem were spent retracing Jesus’ steps in the last days before his crucifixion. We visited a church in Beth-Phage (where Jesus began his journey on Palm Sunday) and walked the path where he travelled into Jerusalem - which had lots of hills (it’s hard to imagine how he did that on a donkey!). We visited the Garden of Gethsemane, Caiaphas’ Palace (where Jesus was tortured and imprisoned) and the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu, which means “crowing rooster,” and where it is believed that Peter denied knowing

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A PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND (*cont'd from front page*)

Christ three times. We walked the Via Dolorosa (the Way of Sorrows) in the Old City and prayed the Stations of the Cross in the very early hours of the morning. We also visited the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (an enormous church with three distinct sections controlled by the Armenians, the Catholics, and the Greek Orthodox). Although a Muslim family keeps the key to the front door, they do not always get along. The Church was built at the place where it is believed that Jesus was crucified. Our journey ended with a trip to the Dead Sea (where we “floated”) and to Emmaus where Jesus appeared after the resurrection, and where we celebrated Eucharist together for the last time.

During our trip, we experienced many things that were very different from what we had learned growing up. Many parts of Israel are very arid and rocky, and there aren't many trees that produce wood that is suitable for building. Mostly, all of the buildings there are made of stone. So, in all likelihood Joseph was a mason (not a carpenter), and the manger was probably a cave where people in Jesus' time lived, with their animals in one room and the family in another. The Sea of Galilee is really a lake and almost everything that happened from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday took place in a very small area in Jerusalem. In fact, from the top of Mt. Scopus, you can see almost every major place that we hear about during Holy Week.

Although our journey was primarily a religious pilgrimage, we did learn a lot about the politics of the area. Our trip took us in and out of the West Bank which is controlled by the Palestinians. There are checkpoints (manned by armed Israeli soldiers) along the border of the West Bank and Palestinians can only travel to other parts of Israel (for work and even for medical care) with permission from the Israeli government. The “separation wall” runs for many miles along the border and displays lots of political graffiti, especially, outside of Bethlehem (not all of it is sympathetic to the United States). There are many Israeli settlements encroaching on the West Bank which are a source of great tension and conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We were fortunate to hear from speakers who offered perspectives from the Palestinian Muslims and the Israeli Jews. And we learned of the plight of the Palestinian Christians, who comprise only a very small percentage of the population. Their numbers are dwindling. It helped us gain a better understanding of the conflicts in the Holy Land which have gone on for centuries with no easy answers for creating a lasting peace.

All in all, it was a fantastic (but exhausting) adventure. We ate more olives in two weeks than we had eaten in our entire lifetimes, and we learned how much you can pack into a day when you have Iyad as your guide. It was thrilling to have seen so many places that we hear about in Scriptures come alive before us. Reading the Bible will never be the same!

SUNDAY READINGS

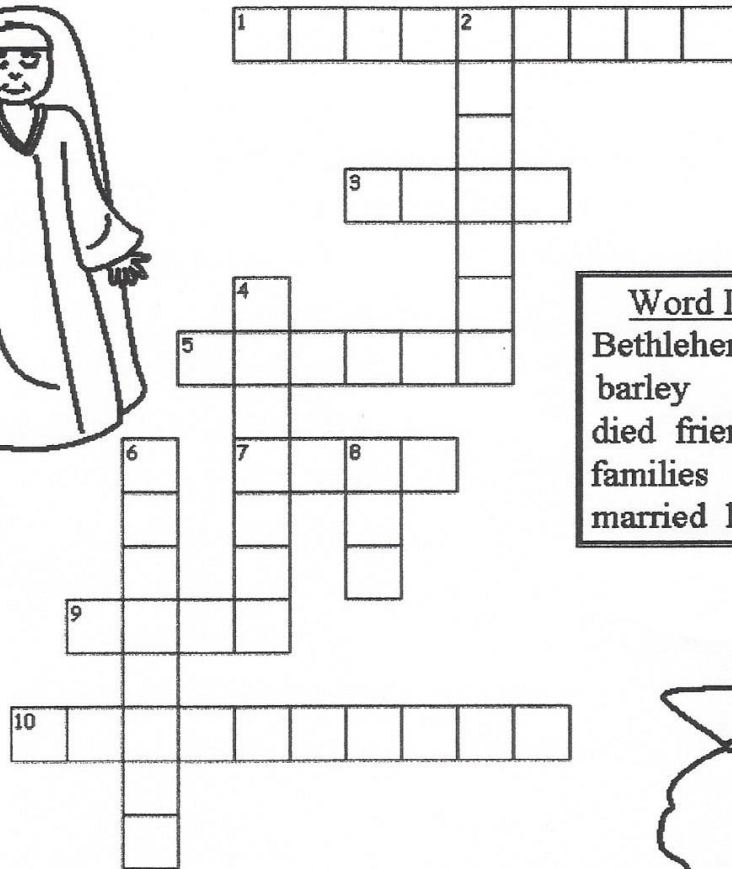
Do you ever wonder why we have the readings we do each Sunday? Sometimes they appear very timely and other times we are left scratching our heads wondering why on earth would “that” reading be included. The truth is the readings (or lections as they are called) were chosen and compiled in 1983, into what is called the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). They arranged in a three year cycle (we are currently in the year of the Gospel of Mark). The readings are selected to reflect the season (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, etc.) as well as to make a forward progression through the gospel. The other readings, including the Old Testament, New Testament and Psalms, generally match the theme of the gospel reading. The Episcopal Church is one of many denominations that uses the RCL including Roman Catholics, Lutherans and the United Church of Christ.

TIMELESS PRAYERS

We have received many positive comments and inquiries about the new form of prayers we have been using in our liturgy for the past year. *Prayers of Intercession for Common Worship* was written by Susan Sayers in 1999 to reflect the readings and themes for each Sunday of the Revised Common Lectionary. Susan Sayers wrote these prayers with “the aim of those leading intercessions in public worship to provide a suitable climate for prayer”. In the Forward, she wrote, “Our God is in a much better position to know the needs of each muddle of people who arrive on any particular Sunday”, and it is interesting to note that these prayers are as relevant today as almost twenty years ago when they were originally composed.

St. Michael's Kids Page

Ruth and Naomi Crossword



Word List:
Bethlehem two
barley Boaz
died friendship
families Ruth
married loyalty



Across

1. This is the place that Naomi wanted to move back to.
3. The name of the kind man that owned the field where Ruth worked.
5. The type of grain that Ruth would pick up after the harvesters.
7. This was the name of Naomi's daughter-in-law who stayed with her.
9. All of Ruth's immediate family ____ so she decided to move back to her hometown.
10. Ruth and Naomi's story is a story about ____.

Down

2. This is the act of putting someone's interests before your own.
4. Boaz and Ruth later fell in love and were ____.
6. Naomi encouraged Ruth and Orpah to move back to their own ____.
8. The number of sons Naomi had.



Easter Flowers and Music

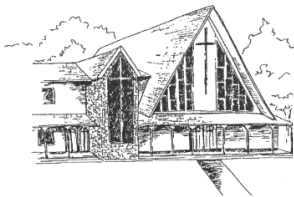


If you would like to make a donation to the cost of Easter flower decorations and music “in memory of” or “in thanksgiving for” a loved one or loved ones, please fill out this form and return it to Amy Plante in the parish office or place it in the offering plate. All memorials and thanksgivings received by March 26 will be listed in the Easter bulletins.

Name _____

In Memory of _____

In Thanksgiving for _____



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