

THE MOSAIC

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Pastoral Ponderings



In another church in another state, a new family joined us. They transferred their membership from another local church. After they had worshipped with us for a while, one of them said to me, “It is such a relief not to hear sports metaphors every week.” Apparently my pastoral colleague across town relied on stories about athletes or sports teams for sermon illustrations.

You may have noticed that you don’t hear many such stories from me. It’s not that I have anything against them. St. Paul certainly used the sports metaphor well. It’s just that, in order to use a metaphor, you generally have to understand it. And I tend not to understand many sports.

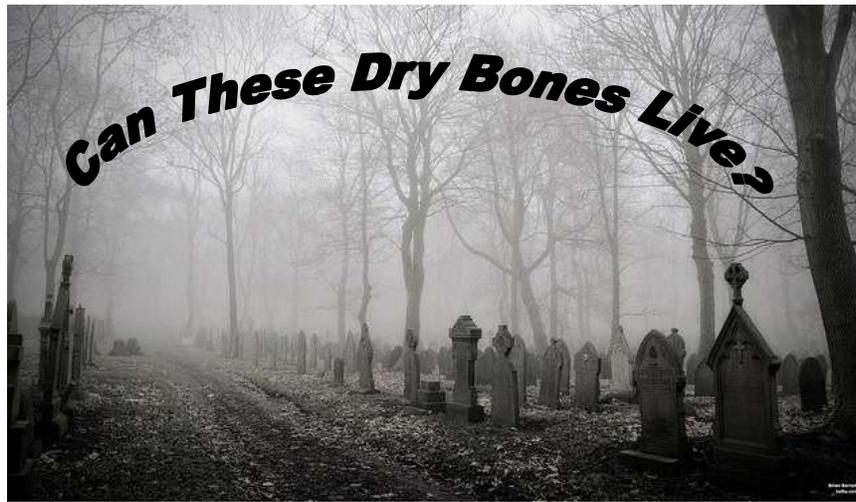
However, at the Ash Wednesday service, I ventured into the unknown territory of baseball to talk about spring training. The children present seemed to appreciate the mention of baseball. I don’t know whether or not they understood my point.

I said that Lent has been compared to spring training for Christians. In baseball, spring training means exercising muscles that went unused in the off season and getting back into the game. All year long, we seek to follow Jesus, but in Lent, we may focus a bit more, with the intent of getting ourselves back into the game of being disciples. Exercising unused muscles, in Lent terms, might mean practicing a spiritual discipline that we have let slide – prayer, reading the Bible, music, keeping Sabbath. The Lenten devotional published by FOCUS is a tool that might help cultivate a daily time with God. Pick up your free copy at church.

During Lent, we might experiment with new discipleship tasks. Consider making worship a priority. Set a goal to be in worship at every opportunity this season. Consider inviting a friend to come with you. If you do not usually attend Sunday School, your new discipleship task might be to join the adult class studying Sabbath Economics this month. Or perhaps your call lies outside the church walls, by cultivating patience within yourself or service to a neighbor or advocacy at the Capitol on Moral Mondays.

However you observe Lent, my prayer is that it will strengthen your faith and your resolve to follow Jesus. I hope that you will continue to share the journey, with all its struggles and triumphs, with your faith community at Emmanuel.

Blessings,
Kathy



For many of us, Lent is the season when we are most aware of the cross. It is the season that leads to Easter and resurrection, but we remember that death comes before resurrection. And so, this liturgical season is perhaps the time when we, as a church, are most focused on matters of life and death. This year's theme "Can These Dry Bones Live?" will engage two Biblical stories across the season. On the first Sunday of Lent in February, we began with the image of the valley of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37 and the question God asked of Ezekiel, "Can these dry bones live?"

That question will surface again as we explore John 11, the story of Jesus' raising Lazarus from death. It is a long story and we will examine it deeply, considering the theological issues of life and death, hope and despair, suffering and providence. In this story, we see Jesus' humanity in his grief at Lazarus' death, and in his relationships with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, as well as with the disciples who accompany him to Bethany despite the danger. We see his divinity in his affirmation "I AM the Resurrection and the Life" and in the power that calls Lazarus from the tomb. Join us for worship that seeks to engage us on many levels that we may love God with heart, soul, mind and strength.

Maundy Thursday April 2

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. It gets its name from the Latin for commandment because Jesus told his disciples, "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another."

We will observe Maundy Thursday together with a meal in fellowship hall at 5:30. Then we will move into the sanctuary for a Tenebrae worship service. Tenebrae means "shadows" or "darkness". Our worship will include extinguishing of candles and deepening darkness as we remember the final events of Holy Week leading to the crucifixion. The choir will perform *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Theodore Dubois. Look for a sign-up sheet in fellowship hall soon.



Good Friday Worship

Noon

(location to be announced)

sponsored by the Capital Area Council of Churches

All are welcome.



Easter Morning

April 5

6:30 a.m. FOCUS Sunrise Service

Rev. Jerrod Huguenot preaching

(West Capitol Park steps;

Swan St. opposite the Alfred E. Smith Bldg.)

7:00 a.m. Breakfast at Emmanuel

10:00 a.m. Celebration of the Resurrection
with Holy Communion

11:00 a.m. Reception

Sabbath is a day of rest, remembering, rest, celebration and renewal. It is historically connected to the Creation Story - when God created the world and all forms of life in six days, and then rested on the Seventh. The meaning of Sabbath was enriched when the Hebrew slaves were liberated from bondage in Egypt and camped in the wilderness for 40 years. God provided Manna for food, and instructed the Israelites to gather enough food on the sixth day to provide for the seventh - but not to gather extra on the other days of the week. If they gathered more than they needed, the food would spoil and smell vile. The Sabbath day was expanded to the Sabbath year, when the land and animals were to rest - debts forgiven, slaves released, etc. So Sabbath includes release from bondage, debt and sin leading to healing, second chances, fresh beginnings. Sabbath is more than a day, or a year - it is a way of being that can inform and permeate everything we do. It invites us to release our need to control, to let go, letting God be God.

Sabbath Economics, a phrase coined by Ched Myers, applies the concepts of Sabbath to our personal and corporate economic systems. This Lent, we are sharing a video series produced by Ched Myers, theologian, and Andy Loving, financial planner and investment advisor. The sessions take us through the Biblical foundations for Sabbath economics, looking at what the Torah, the prophets, Jesus and Paul have to say, and then move into applying those principles into our own household economies as well as larger systems. Join us for challenging conversation in the parlor during the Adult Sunday School hour every Sunday in March, except March 8.

From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing



*Daylight Saving Time Begins
March 8 ~ Spring Forward!*



From Service to Others...



America for Christ Offering to be Received

As we journey through our community, we see countless people in need of Jesus' love and healing touch. You may be pondering what difference one can make in addressing so many needs. Together, we make a difference by supporting the America for Christ Offering.

The theme this year – “Discipleship: A Journey of Grace”, based on Titus 2:11-13 – is a wonderful reminder that Jesus' public ministry was all about connecting and caring for people in need. On each day of his journey, the compassion of Jesus was felt by someone somewhere.

We learned that we should live to love because true freedom in Christ enables us to do so by the power of the Spirit in our life. The outworking of God's grace will be seen most often during difficult times. God's grace is being manifested in our lives as we gladly seek to help others carry their burdens.

The AFC Offering reminds us that when grace happens, we receive not a nice compliment from God, but a new heart. We receive a transformed life that becomes the hands, the feet and the prophetic voice of Jesus Christ in our communities and as we connect with people every day.

How do we see the grace of Jesus Christ at work in our community? We are encouraged by this year's theme to come alongside people as they journey through life. We ask you to join in giving generously to this year's America for Christ Offering, which will be received at Emmanuel on March 1 and 8. Envelopes will be provided for your convenience.



“Love Kits”... Still Time to Contribute

Service to Others Commission has decided to extend the time line on our collection of love kits through the month of March. Through this appeal, personal care items are provided for guests of the Interfaith Shelter.

A box containing empty bags for the “love kits” is available in Fellowship Hall. You are asked to take one and fill it with items such as toothpaste/brushes, deodorant, shampoo, razors, etc. A special treat such as a candy bar or granola bar is always welcome too! The Commission will see that they are delivered to the Shelter. Thank you!

We're Invited...

African Spring Dinner

at

Westminster Presbyterian Church

March 21, 5 to 8:30 pm

Free Pot-Luck Dinner; bring a dish to share

5:00: Immigration Issues

6:00: Dinner

7:00: Moments in Women's History, Nell Stokes-Holmes

Benefit for Hope Mission School & Ebola Orphans and Sierra Leone projects

Reply by March 19: 436-8544 or info@wpcalbany.org



Moral Mondays

*Join members of the Labor-Religion Coalition of New York State at the Capitol
Advocate that leaders pass a budget that serves all New Yorkers...*

Fair Taxation – Corporate Accountability – Fully Funded Public Schools – NYS Dream Act
Racial Justice – Affordable Housing – Health Care Access – Union Rights – Living Wages
Criminal Justice Reform – Climate Justice

March 2, 5:00 pm

“Forward Together, Not One Step Back”

LIVING WAGES • STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS • CARE FOR THE POOR • JUSTICE IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

FORWARD TOGETHER

An Interfaith Call to Justice

As poverty and inequality
in our city and state grow,
faith leaders and people of
conscience come together
to **call for justice.**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8
3:30 to 5 P.M.**

**Church of St. Vincent de Paul
900 Madison Ave, Albany, NY**

Featuring Bishop Howard Hubbard, Bishop Emeritus, Roman Catholic
Diocese of Albany • Rev. McKinley Johnson, Albany African American
Clergy United for Empowerment • Imam Arsalan Haque, Al-Hidaya Center
Rev. Sam Trumbore, First Unitarian Universalist Society of Albany
Rev. Paula Gravelle, New York State Council of Churches
and other speakers and musical performances



SAVE THE DATE...

Sunday, April 12, 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Introduction to US/ Mexican Immigration Issues

featuring Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry Students



Please join us to learn more on this very troubling issue. There will be a lots of time for discussion.

- * 6:30 pm - Dessert & Fellowship
- * 6:45 pm - Introduction to PCUSA response to immigration issues and possible Hamilton Union involvement by Rev. MJ Pattison
- * 7:15 pm - First person impressions from the Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry's Jan.'15 Mission trip to the US/Mexican border by students

Please RSVP to Charlotte Hasselbarth (chasselbarth@hotmail.com) at Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church.

Please Note:

March 3 ~ Coordinating Council, 5:30 at Donley/Wilkerson house

March 8 ~ Diaconate

March 24 ~ Teacher's Meeting, 5:30 at Beth Malone's house

Happy Birthday

March



Betty Jordan
Sally Cole
Jonathan Malone
Lucy Wong
Olivia LaBarge

1st
2nd
10th
22nd
30th

If your birthday is not published in our monthly listing, please notify Dorothy at 465-5161.



Nursing Home Visits Continue

The Choir will share their gift of song at the Atria Delmar Place on Saturday, March 7. The group will gather for rehearsal at 9:30, and the program will begin at 10:00. If you have questions about this special music ministry, you may contact Michael Clement or Pat Hunziker.

Work Day

March 14

9 a.m. to Noon; light lunch provided

There are tasks for all skill levels.

We hope to see you there!

Many hands make light work.

Deadline for the April issue of the MOSAIC is March 18.



Spring Begins March 20!!!

Remember the Food Pantry toilet paper

Emmanuel Baptist Church
275 State St.
Albany, NY 12210

