

THE GOOD NEWS
OF
ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL



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Continuing Education Issue

Rector's Thoughts

We have rounded the corner in Lent and are headed for the 3-part climax of the life of Christ. The events of Holy Thursday Night, Good Friday and Easter Sunday are not just things we commemorate in Holy Week; they are the story of each and every Eucharist. To begin with, every Sunday Eucharist is celebration of the Resurrection. But, even if the Eucharist is celebrated during the week, Salvation themes of Sacrifice, Forgiveness, Sacrament and Resurrection are reiterated in the Liturgy of the Word and the Sacramental Liturgy.

In the first part of the service, readings usually pick up on one or more aspects of Salvation Theology; repentance, mercy, the atonement and more are often a connective strand linking at least two of the three readings as well as the psalm. The Gospel reading usually contains the primary teaching of the theological strand, on which the sermon is often based. The Creeds remind us of the major markers in our Trinitarian faith including the birth, death, resurrection and Second Coming of our Lord. Confession surely reminds us of the need to be forgiven.

In the second part of the service, our Eucharistic prayers tell the ancient story of creation, sin, covenant, and redemption. It especially recalls the last Thursday of Christ's life. The prayer of consecration focuses on the institution of the Sacrament of Christ's own body. Christ, in effect, made himself the Passover lamb sacrificed for the celebration of a new era, and a new freedom—not from the slavery in a foreign land, but from the slavery of a crueler master – sin.

The Eucharistic prayers trace the words of Jesus during the Last Supper as he calls common fare his body and blood.

It also repeats "Do this in memory of me" which we regard as so much more than a mandate. It is for those who believe the call to bring the past to the present at every Eucharist. The prayer asks us to experience the Consecration, Crucifixion and Resurrection with faith and thanksgiving.

This is the sacred pageant of Our Lord's salvific work played out in our time and in our hearts, not just during Holy Week and Easter, but all the year round. The Holy Eucharist is the way we keep the Christ's life, death and resurrection forever the proper center of our worship. ja+

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

At its March 15 meeting, the All Saints Vestry:

1. Updated the greeter calling list.
2. Voted to upgrade the lighting in the kitchen, the furnace room and the west entrance. Northwest Electric was awarded the low bid—around \$600. Contributions will be solicited from the Evening Guild and through the bulletin.
3. Authorized the junior warden to solicit bids for repairing the deteriorating framing around the rose window.
4. Approved a memorial policy that calls for a) all memorials being recorded in a book kept for that purpose, b) the church writing a thank-you at the time the memorial is received and at the time it is sent, and 3) public thanks offered in the bulletin at the time the memorial is spent
- 5) Discussed funeral parking, to which there appears to be no easy solution.
- 6) Discussed the cracks appearing in some pews. A cabinet person has since looked at the pews and discovered that the 1/4 inch oak veneer on the pew backs is beginning to lift away from the inner core. Since the cracks do not go all the way through, the structure of the pew is still sound. Regluing the veneer is a complicated (and expensive) process in which glue is injected behind the veneer with hypodermic needles.)
- 7) Brainstormed ideas for getting people to come to church, especially families with young children. Ideas included: a) individual parishioners inviting people (Research shows that 80 percent of people who come to church do so because they were invited), b) "user-friendly" worship (e.g. announcing page numbers), c) public community events such as book discussions, d) sponsoring a "central event" once a year, e) knocking on doors, f) getting the results of a survey done some years ago on why people come or don't come to church, g) targeting inactive members, h) sending out mass mailings of postcards, i) checking into the welcome wagon service. gs+

History and Worship

Learning the relationship between History and Worship helps give us a better perspective on where we are today. It also helps us to understand the elements of Christian expression, as are found in our beautiful worship. Having several styles of Episcopal –Anglican worship that reflect Evangelical or Anglo Catholic views was actually a historical struggle. We have arrived in the 21st century having choices of Low Church or High Church and combinations thereof, only because history, in a sense, would not stand for just one rarified style.

The evolution of worship can be divided up into several periods. Ranging from the time of the New Testament writers, through the middle ages and reformation of the 1500s, through the Puritan influence to the Oxford Movement of the 19th century and on throughout the 20th the century... One could rightly imagine several movements and dozens of changes occurring, and be fairly accurate.

For this piece, we will look at selected developments up through the Oxford movement of the 19th century. And, I would like to dwell on mostly one element of Worship...the appeal to the senses. In early New Testament times, worship either out in the open or in homes, was a sensory experience of hearing, and sight and taste. The groups tended to be familiar and close knit. There was little separation from presider and congregation, as the people were meal guests in the presider's home. Sunday worship was always a reminder of the Resurrection and it was centered on communion.

The format was probably close to non sacramental Jewish worship involving psalms, hymns, scripture reading, some commentary and letter reading to stay connected with other cells of Christianity then called "the way". Of course, the Eucharist was in context of a meal. Folks probably shared food in potluck style, then had communion together. Now, Sunday was a workday in the Roman Empire, so worship was usually before or after work...before dawn or after sundown.

In those early days, Rome had not yet begun persecutions. But, of course, we know that between the 60s AD and through the 200s AD Roman persecutions punctuated Christian life. All that stopped with Constantine, who, in the early 300s, ended the illegal status of the young church. The church grew rapidly, but it was also a time of the Patristic fathers who fought heresy as they worked to develop a creedal faith.

Worship went into lavish churches for the first time, and quickly became the Roman State religion. Priests and bishops acquired wealth and political prestige. Liturgical texts became standardized, beautiful vestments and the use of precious metals became the norm. Music was written for large choirs; the visual and auditory experience of worship increased as the Church took on the "pomp and circumstance" common to the Empire. But, this "progress" had a downside as well.

Separation between clergy and congregation began to develop as clergy took on the status of secular leaders. People no longer chose to be Christian, but were simply born into the designation.

During the Medieval Period (up to 1500s) due to continued separation of clergy and people, corporate worship became a spectator sport. Curtains and illustrated wooden barriers were erected to separate the clergy from the laity. Regular folk were almost treated as pollution. As the Roman Empire dismantled, Latin was no longer used, so the Mass was no longer in a language of the people. Use of bells told people when the host was being consecrated. The sight of the elevated host started to replace the eating experience of the communion. Lay communions declined dramatically.

But, a good trend also developed, as the laity began to hold home devotions. Christian people stayed loyal to Sunday worship, as well as, weekday home services. The church itself also promoted more daily periodic prayer-- daily offices that nourished not only the laity, but also the growing monastic movement.

The Reformation in the 1500s brought a variety of Changes to the Eucharist. It is not fair to say that all reformers wanted the churches gutted and stripped of ornamentation. It is fair to say that the Anglican and Lutheran movements tried to hold to the centrality of the Eucharist. Still, over all, the protestant movement tended to limit or eliminate vestments, candles, statuary, and even communion. Preaching took on an important role, and in many respects replaced sacrament. The Roman Church, even after the Council of Trent, remained a high visual and auditory experience though it remained also mostly non-participatory. Still, private devotions such as the rosary and daily prayer continued to flourish and feed hungry Christians.

The English Prayer Book was a huge help in standardizing ceremony. Arch-bishop Cranmer based his first rendition in 1549, on old Roman rites. Yet, a victory was won for the people with even the earliest prayer book, because it was written in English. The Eucharist was administered in both kinds, but after a long medieval history of non- reception the laity no longer understood the importance of the sacrament, so a prayer service was far more common.

Many Prayer Books later (in the 1600s) England was again in a political and religious struggle. The Puritans began to press for the end of church ornamentation, wedding rings, the sign of the cross, and the surplice. A new Prayer Book was published in 1611 based on the King James Bible. Men like William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, headed resistance to the stark look and feel of worship. Civil war engulfed England followed by the Commonwealth period, which abolished the use of the Anglican Prayer Book. In 1660, under a Stuart monarchy, Anglican worship once again resumed.

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In the 1600s Anglican worship in England and the Colonies still centered around non communion worship. Communion was offered perhaps once a month or quarterly. Psalms were the only words that could be sung until late in the 1600s. In the 1700s the Methodism of Charles Wesley brought bright song to worship. Sadly the Methodist Movement eventually parted company with the Anglican Church of England. Yet, their gift of music led to the publication of Hymnals in the 1800s

The 1800s saw that Low Church worship prevailed in England and in America. The experience was still focused on scripture and the sermon. Sunday had become a Sabbath, not a remembrance of the Resurrection of Christ as it was in the early Church. And, as I said earlier, the practice of Communion had also lost the importance it once had to early Christians. The Christian community at large was not all happy with the non-sacramental non-resurrection focused worship. Change was around the corner.

John Keeble's sermon at Oxford in 1833 led to the reform moments within the Anglican Church known as the Oxford Movement, and later another called the Cambridge Movement. These movements did not require a new Prayer Book. It was more of a return to experiential and sacramental worship. Though these reforms were not universal, they were, for many, a breath of fresh air. The return of Eucharistic focus, vestments, hymnody, incense (and more) brought a certain beauty back into the Church, that many had missed sorely.

Once again, parishes felt free to offer weekly, even daily Eucharist. Many partook of the spiritual food in preparation for the rigors of life. There was again a real effort to create beautiful worship as a form of evangelism.

This movement to an Anglo-Catholic or High Church worship was welcomed by many in England and in the United States. It brought the styles of worship not into conflict, but into choice. Today, as a result of Low and High Church choices we feel perfectly free to celebrate both lay and ordained involvement. Our current Prayer Book is filled with Lay and Ordained led worship opportunities. Today, we feel free to style a worship service that celebrates the Word and preaching, and also reveals a love of music, sacrament and the rich ceremonies of our Anglican Episcopal tradition.

Information sources:

Book of Common Prayer

Story of Christianity by Gonzalaz

Worship Manual by Brown and Ferra

Ordination of a New Bishop

The Ordination of Michael Smith as the new Bishop of North Dakota will take place at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck, at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, May 8th.

If you are making plans to attend the Ordination, please let us know in the office, so that we can keep track of the numbers. Thank you.

Disciplines for a Rule of Life:

Below you will find a great article written by Tani Heiser regarding Meditation. Believe it or not-- mediation is one of the spiritual disciplines practiced in an effective Rule of Life. The inward disciplines include meditation, prayer and fasting.

Dealing with your life through the preface of prayer sometimes changes the view. If we pray to our father to forgive our sins as we forgive sins against us, it makes us think of the kind of compassion and mercy we require and are willing to give. Often decisions should be based on such thoughts.

Prayer is also the balance of immanence and transcendence. Transcendence is manifest when we acknowledge that we are praying to God, who is almighty and "other" than us. Yet, immanence closes the distance and tempers it by the acknowledgement that God wants to hear us, is accessible to us, and is with us.

Now, fasting has a bad reputation. The abusive extremes of the middle ages and of bizarre eastern practices have done much to present fasting as little more than self-torture. Yet, it was never intended that way. Fasting was not designed to hurt the body, but to feed the soul. It should never be practiced in a dangerous way. Fasting, properly done, relaxes the body as it puts aside the time used for meals as a private time for caring for the soul.

Fasts can be strict... with no food or drink or modified... with limited consumption of both, or either. It's not about starving. It is about receiving another kind of nourishment. ja+

Time Alone With God

By Tani Heiser

In our Wednesday night study group we have been looking at some of the Benedictine spiritual rule of life, including Silence, Obedience, and Humility. All of these rules overlap in practice, but we can separate them for the purpose of learning. Under the heading of Silence, we find Solitude and Meditation and Prayer. Henri M. Nouwen says in *Making All Things New: An Invitation to the Spiritual Life*, "Without solitude it is virtually impossible to live a spiritual life. Solitude begins with a time and a place for God, and [God] alone." In *Essentials of Mysticism*, Evelyn Underhill wrote, "Meditation comes before oration [or spoken prayer]."

In my experience, prayer is friendship with God and meditation is humble obedience to God. With prayer I am in control (to the extent that any of us can be in control of our relationship with God!). With meditation I give up even the pretense of control, disconnecting from the demands of the world and of my earthly body. In this way, Christian meditation is similar to

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eastern meditation practices. However, in eastern meditation this disconnection and freedom from the world is the goal, while in Christian meditation we "empty ourselves" so that we can be filled by God. Thomas Merton's writings such as *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* and the autobiographical *The Seven Storey Mountain* offer more about the similarities and differences between eastern and western spirituality.

"In the same vein, Merton also held a delicate balance between the inner and the outer life--contemplation and action." [*Devotional Classics, Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*] In my own experience, meditation has brought me as much practical knowledge, like a new lesson plan for a difficult class, as mystical knowledge, such as an overwhelming sense of God's love for me. Regardless of the nature of the revelations I receive from God during meditation, they are all meant to equip me to better serve God in this life.

"Solitude is one of deepest disciplines of the spiritual life because it crucifies our need for importance and prominence. Everyone-including ourselves at first-will see our solitude as a waste of good time. We are removed from 'where the action is.' That, of course, is exactly what we need. In silence and solitude God slowly but surely frees us from our egomania."

"In time we come to see that the really important action occurs in solitude. Once we have experienced God at work in the soul, all the blare and attention of the world seem like a distant and fragmentary echo. Only then are we able to enter the hustle and bustle of today's machine civilization with perspective and freedom." [Richard J. Foster *Devotional Classics*]

Some practical notes for meditation:

- Always bracket meditation with prayer. Before, turn over concerns to God, ask for grace and protection. After, give thanks, ask for courage and wisdom to use the revelation in service to God.
- Keep a journal.
- Start small, 5-10 minutes of actual meditation time.
- Make a personal commitment to private time with God and get commitment to respect that time from others in your life.
- Have a special place. A permanent place set aside is great, but using portable items significant to your relationship with God, like a crucifix, photo, or icon, can make any place special.
- Have a quiet place. Until your abilities to block out distractions strengthens, physical silence can be a significant help.

- Be comfortable. I like an ergonomically correct straight chair without arms. Use a rolled towel as lumbar support, if necessary. Sitting on the floor in yoga's Lotus or Tailor positions is great if you are limber. Upturned palms are a traditional posture for receiving God's blessings.
- Don't be too comfortable. You want to be alert for the "still small voice of God," not so relaxed that you fall asleep.
- Start by consciously turning over individual concerns to God. Try to empty mind.
- Focusing empty mind on a crucifix, picture, icon, nature, is easier than trying to focus on nothing.
- As distractions enter your mind (and they will!), calmly acknowledge them and turn them over to God.

The best advice I can give those who want to meditate is simply to start, to persevere and to trust in God's love to guide you. As the old mystic said, "By love God may be gotten and beheld; by thought, never."

Need for Continuing Education for Licensed Ministers

Last Saturday, George and I presented continuing education for licensed ministers. This was the second time since last fall that we have offered Saturday continuing education. This summer's General Convention made several Title III revisions. Among them was the stated requirement for continuing education for all licensed ministers. In the coming months, working with the new Bishop, Michael Smith, the COM and Standing Committee will be working on the details of this mandate for both lay and ordained licensees.

In the past, our diocese has asked for continuing education in our own guidelines for local lay and ordained ministries. Opportunities have been given both for local congregational participation, and for Diocese wide participation. My guess is that this tradition will increase. The continuing education requirement will help to keep us fresh and improving in our service to the Church, that is, the Local, Diocesan, and National Church. I think the requirement is a very good thing indeed.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>April 2004</h1>					AllSaints' Episcopal Church 301 South Main Minot, ND 58701 www.minot.com/~allsaint	
				1 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Ecumenical Bible Study at Vincent Methodist	2	3 4:30 p.m. Eucharist
4 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Eucharist Palm Sunday	5 Rector's Day Off	6 No Bible Study No Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m. Tenabrae Service	7 No Eucharist or Bible Study No Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	8 No Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 5:30 p.m. Agapé Meal 7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday	9 12:00 p.m. Good Friday Service Good Friday	10 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Reconciliation (confession) 8:00 p.m. Great Vigil of Easter
11 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Eucharist Easter	12 Rector's Day Off	13 No Bible Study No Evening Prayer Rector on Vacation	14 5:15 p.m. Eucharist/ Soup Supper/ Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	15 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Native American Talking Circle	16 6:00 p.m. Chowder & Marching Society Rector on Vacation	17 4:30 p.m. Eucharist
18 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Eucharist	19 6:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting Rector's Day Off	20 12:00 p.m. Lunch/ Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer	21 5:15 p.m. Eucharist/ Soup Supper/ Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Youth Group 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice 7:30 p.m. Evening Guild	22 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen Rector in Devils Lake in afternoon	23	24 4:30 p.m. Eucharist
25 9:00 a.m. Christian Education 10:00 a.m. Eucharist	26 Rector's Day Off	27 12:00 p.m. Lunch/ Bible Study 5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer	28 5:15 p.m. Eucharist/ Soup Supper/ Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice	29 8:00 a.m. Morning Prayer 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Soup Kitchen 6:00 p.m. Native American Talking Circle	30	