



# St. Paul's Church

422 Market St.

Box 1551, Camden, New  
Jersey 08101

“Give something, however small, to the one in need. For it is not small to one who has nothing. Neither is it small to God, if we have given what we could.” — St. Gregory Nazianzen

With the magnitude of what we read in the news these days, I find it easy to think that what we practice is of little consequence, that we are at the mercy of forces we do not understand and cannot control. Lent is an antidote to the idea that what we do does not matter to God, if only by acknowledging that we are creatures of God, wherever we find ourselves on our journeys. It is especially important to acknowledge that belovedness in a time when, for many of us, it feels as though we have been through almost two years of Lent.

Derived from a word meaning spring, Lent is a time to cultivate the parts of our lives which would be easy to neglect. It is desert time, a willingness to reduce the noise of our lives through intentional practice. For many, it is a removal

## Lent and Belovedness

of the things we would put in place of God, foods or habits that would fill the God-shaped hole in us that can only be filled by Godself. For others, it means offering something, however small to those around us; if we think these offerings are insignificant, Gregory Nazianzen reminds us that they are not too small for God. If we are in need of reminders about how important the work is, we only need to see our guests here on Sundays. What we offer is never small, because we are offering a part of ourselves.

One of the most hopeful qualities of Lent is that we are making the journey in the company of others. This year, we will offer Stations of the Cross and Evening Prayer in our

sanctuary on Friday evenings. Rev. Jeannie has a wonderful journal to share, for those who would like a copy. I hope to do a discussion of prayer practices or a book that will help clear our minds of some of the noise that always threatens to overwhelm us.

Whatever we decide to do, Lent is far more about being. It is, after all, preparation for Holy Week and all we will hear about those final days in Jerusalem. We will need to cultivate humility along with the intentional work of clearing our minds and our hearts. As we make whatever preparations we feel we need, we know that God is supporting us through this time. As St. Benedict says in his rule, there should be nothing harsh, nothing burdensome, only the commitment to look after our souls in the presence of a God who loves us in and through all our deserts.

- Fr. Mark

# Parish News

## Fundraiser Update

The Spring Fundraiser has been rescheduled for Saturday, April 30. It will be virtual, as it was last year, and will include trivia, basket raffles (including a basket of cheer), and lots of other fun. Tickets are \$35 , with another \$5.00 for the basket of cheer. The link will be mailed to attendees.

The committee would appreciate donations of baskets, gift cards, and/or liquor for the basket of cheer. Contact: [Stpauls422@gmail.com](mailto:Stpauls422@gmail.com) or [elizann57@gmail.com](mailto:elizann57@gmail.com).

## February Birthdays:

2/1 Samantha Stokes  
2/2 Sani Morgan  
2/7 Byron Sanders  
2/16 Wayne Bookman

February Anniversary: John and Grace Gagliardi  
February 4 (38 years)

Congratulations, all!!

## Books

I thought I would talk about two books, one more recent and another a classic, written with different perspectives on the central symbols of Lent/Easter.

Kenneth Leech's *We Preach Christ Crucified* is an extended meditation on the many reversals contained in western culture and the biblical narrative throughout Lent and especially in Holy Week. Leech also attempts to make sense of the "foolishness" of the cross, the transformative nature of our confrontation with pain, "a call to minister to the wounded Christ as he is found broken and bruised on all the highways of the world." It is a book that invites re-reading each year for those who want to make sense of the "craziness" of the cross.

Though not new, Rowan Williams's 2017 book *The Sign and the Sacrifice* is very readable. It is built on the idea of sacrifice that is central to Western understanding of the work of Christ, following it through its history and its meaning after Holy Week. Williams is a master theologian, yet the book is short (as is Leech's) and cogent in its approach to the thorniest issues of Western Christianity.

Both books can be ordered through Barnes and Noble or Amazon.

--Fr. Mark

## Deacon's Corner

One of two quince bushes in my garden sits at the bottom of a set of stone stairs. The stairs are part of the main navigation route from our back door walkway up to the driveway. Behind the quince is a large, masonry wall, adjacent to the stairs, that supports the elevation change from the driveway to back garden. The quince and the back of the wall are south-facing and the wall protects the quince from cold, northwesterly winds that are predominate in winter. Because of this protection, this quince has a head-start over its brethren located at the driveway elevation that is exposed to that hard wind.

The last warmer and sunny days have shed light on both of these plants, enough that I notice the difference in my comings and goings, that the quince protected by the wall and warmed by the radiant heat of that same wall and stone, has the promise of bloom; I can see just a blush of pink and nascent green.

In these next few weeks before Lent, I feel simultaneously like both of these quince; I acknowledge the sobriety of the season—and that it is still winter after all—and yet feel the promise of the Easter ahead as I see the almost-but-not-quite-ness of the quince buds ready to bloom.

Two years ago, a new deacon intern at St. Thomas in Glassboro, I created a journal for Lent called, “tablet of your heart.” There are verses from Scripture and a word on which to write and meditate. The idea is to pen your own

spirit-filled response to these words of Lent and a vehicle by which to spend more time reading Scripture on a daily basis. If you are interested in a copy of this journal, please write to me at [greenjeangardens@me.com](mailto:greenjeangardens@me.com) and I will be happy to forward to you PDF version.

As Brittany pointed out at our recent Annual Meeting, our Facebook page has some good activity going. If you are comfortable, please post some of your meditations on our St. Paul's page. I have a few books to read during Lent that I hope will inspire thoughts to share.

The Rev. Jeannie Marcucci, Deacon

## Vaccinations at the clinic

One of the many advantages of having a medical clinic on site is the access it grants us to many pandemic-related medical necessities. For those who have not had a booster shot, the clinic is offering all three versions at 8:30-10 am on Sunday, September 20. The re-opening task force has stated that it considers booster shots essential for continued gatherings in church sanctuaries. If you have not had a booster or know someone who needs one, please join us.

-Fr. Mark

# 238th Diocesan Convention

Diocesan Convention is a time when clergy and representatives from around our diocese gather to share in the polity of the Church, upholding the common mission and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. All are welcome to join us as we worship together, conduct business, and listen to presentations.

**Updated as of January 7, 2022: The 238th Diocesan Convention will be a one-day Virtual only meeting on March 5, 2022.**

All attendees will take part virtually. Attendees with vote and/or voice will attend via Zoom. All others may view the proceedings on the Diocesan YouTube channel.

All voting for candidates, resolutions and the Budgets will be performed electronically.

Note: Voting members refers to canonical clergy and elected lay deputies eligible to vote. Non-voting participants refers to licensed clergy, alternates, and guests.

*Please pray for our delegates, clergy and the diocese during this important day.*

*-Fr. Mark*