



Trinity Topics

Lent / March 2020

Phone = (217) 245-5901

info@trinitychurchjax.org

Website = www.trinitychurchjax.org



“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” *Matthew 16:24-25*

Christmas and the New Year have been packed up for weeks. We can hardly remain in the holiday time forever. Perhaps we've settled back into ordinary, day to day life. Lent refuses to let us become distracted from our ultimate purpose as human beings. Day in and day out we occupy ourselves cooking, cleaning, caring for family, paying bills, worrying about health, getting angry about politics, stressing out about work, and finding some precious moments of rest and relaxation. By the time all that is done, there is barely time left to meditate in the darkness before nodding off to sleep. Sometimes sin is nothing more than the mediocrity of an unexamined life. Suddenly, Ash Wednesday interrupts it all with the rude and perhaps distressing reminder that we are mortals with precious little time to waste on such vanity. Our Lord God did not make us to simply be alive and to hold on from one day to the next. We are made for the miraculous. We are made faith, hope, and love. How far short we have fallen from this high calling.

Lent is therefore a time of self-reflection. It is a time to take a long, honest look at our failures and flaws. We have all fallen short of God's commandments in our own way and have our own path to walk in this world. Christian self-examination of conscience is by no means an easy task. As the prophet Jeremiah writes, “The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it?” (*Jeremiah 17:9*) Just like we ignore a toothache hoping it's nothing, we avoid uncomfortable realities about ourselves because amendment of life is hard. Christian self-reflection begins with open-hearted and prayerful examination of the sacred scripture, for in the Scriptures we see ourselves as God sees us. As Saint Paul writes, “if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.” (*Romans 7:7*) We find our own lives in the pages of the Bible, and the more we become aware of just how much God has loved us the more we become aware of how our lives have failed to reflect the story in how we have lived. Penitence, when it begins with scripture and prayer, is not a groveling feeling of unworthiness before God. It is the realization that, despite what we have done or left undone, God still loves us and holds out to us the possibility of new life. Penitence is about freedom.

Another central theme of Lent is self-denial. We give things up—we eat less, we devote less time to leisure, we abstain from habits like smoking or drinking. Self-denial, like penitence, is also a statement of our freedom. We do not give up things that give us pleasure simply to be austere or miserable. Even less is it wrong to find pleasure in food or leisure. Self-denial is practiced only for a short time to declare that our existence is not controlled or defined by our worldly appetites. Fasting and abstinence practice self-control and resistance to temptation. We should eat to live rather than live to eat. Furthermore, giving up food teaches us to hunger after “Every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (*Matthew 4:4*), because even if we live in a state of perpetual feasting, we are still starving for God's Commandments. No matter how much we drink, we still thirst after righteousness. Rather than living for leisure, let us hope for the Sabbath rest of the coming Kingdom of God.

Mortality, self-denial and sin are melancholy themes, but just as the Cross of Christ leads us to the glory of the Resurrection, the rigors of Lent lead us to the joy of Easter Day. The cycle of Lent and Easter draws us into this drama of dying to self in order to receive ourselves anew in the Kingdom of God. Lent clears the way for those things in life that truly give us happiness and meaning: faith, hope, and charity. May all of us be given a blessed Lent.

Father Zachary Brooks +

A note on Confession:

*“Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.
The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.” James 5:16*

Lent is an ideal time to consider undergoing the sacrament of Confession and Reconciliation. The ritual of confessing one’s sins to a priest dates back to the earliest days of the Church, and it remained a popular part of the pious life in Anglicanism long after the Reformation. It is difficult and uncomfortable to actually speak of one’s mistakes with another person—but that is precisely why it is such a spiritually fulfilling practice. You become more accountable for what you have done before the listening and loving heart of a fellow Christian, and, even more importantly, you become more accountable for what you will do after you hear the comforting words, “The Lord has put away all your sins, go in peace.” As difficult as this can be, one comes away from confession feeling the greatest sense of relief and a new sense of resolve in one’s mission to live a Christian life. What can be more refreshing than turning over a blank page where a whole new chapter of life can be written? The sacrament of Confession is available to all who ask for it in the Episcopal Church. Feel free to contact me to schedule a time to undergo this ritual, or simply drop by during office hours. It consists of reading the service on page 447 of the *Book of Common Prayer*, a short conversation about where you think you could have done better, and finally absolution of your sins. Of course, the seal of the confessional is absolute, and I am forbidden from speaking a word of anything confessed under any circumstances—priests have gone to prison refusing to break the seal of the confessional! It can help to fast the day before your confession, something about being hungry makes you more honest about yourself, or at least spend some quiet time in reflection. Finally, the spirit of this ritual is not only contrition—it is more importantly an act of joyful gratitude for God’s mercy. We confess not to earn God’s mercy—we confess because God is merciful.

A Course in Anglican History: Part XIX

The Edwardian Reformation of England was not to last. King Edward VI, who had always been sickly, took ill in 1553, and died at the age of 15. His Protestant regents, led by Duke of Northumberland John Dudley, realized that the pious, Catholic Princess Mary, whom Henry VIII had dictated should succeed Edward if he died without an heir, would be a disaster for the Protestant cause in general and for themselves in particular. They attempted to put Edward’s Protestant cousin once removed and Northumberland’s daughter-in-law Lady Jane Grey, on the throne, but this plan seriously overestimated England’s commitment to Protestantism. The English people also had the well-founded notion that the regents were personally enriching themselves through the confiscation of church property enacted earlier that year. There turned out to be no support for Queen Jane at all besides Edward’s regents themselves. The Privy Council declared Mary the queen, Northumberland was executed for treason, and poor Jane Grey (who never asked to be queen) was thrown into prison and executed a few months later. Queen Mary came to the throne to great acclamation, and England was Catholic again.

This column is the nineteenth in the monthly series on the history of Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church.

The Readings for the Sundays in March

| | <i>Old Testament</i> | <i>Psalms</i> | <i>New Testament</i> | <i>Gospel</i> |
|----------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| March 1 | Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 | 32 | Romans 5:12-19 | Matthew 4:1-11 |
| March 8 | Genesis 12:1-4a | 121 | Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 | John 3:1-17 |
| March 15 | Exodus 17:1-7 | 95 | Romans 5:1-11 | John 4:5-42 |
| March 22 | I Samuel 16:1-13 | 23 | Ephesians 5:8-14 | John 9:1-41 |
| March 29 | Ezekiel 37:1-14 | 130 | Romans 8:6-11 | John 11:1-45 |

News & Announcements

Jacksonville Area Conference of Churches

The Jacksonville Area Conference of Churches is still sponsoring its **Teacher Appreciation Supply Collection** during February and March. Most teachers spend their own money for classroom supplies. This time of year is when supplies start to run low. You can help show our area educators appreciation by donating: colored pens, sharpies, post-it notes, markers, jumbo glue sticks, Expo markers, Clorox wipes, and crayons.

Special Collections

We collected \$425 on **Blanket Sunday** for Church World Services. We collected \$157 for the **Bishop's Discretionary Fund**.

Outreach

Souper Bowl Sunday was a great success. We delivered 65 cans of soup. Don't forget to bring nonperishable food items so that we can continue to support the Jacksonville Food Center throughout the entire year.

Mothering Sunday – March 22

Mothering Sunday, sometimes known as Mother's Day, is held on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. Here at Trinity Church the men and boys of the parish will serve **breakfast** to the women and girls beginning at 9:00 am.

It has also been our tradition to gather the **Spring United Thank Offering** on this day.



Congratulations!

Gabriel James, son of Steven & Betsy Vogt and fourth grandson of Jeff & Hilda Radcliffe, was born on January 27. Welcome to the world, Gabe!

Claire Van Aken, daughter of Sarah & Ryan and granddaughter of Linda Van Aken and Bill & Gayle Clark, is a member of the State Championship J'ettes team. This is Claire's third year of state championships! All of your hard work and practice has paid off again. We are proud of you, Claire!

**If you have news you wish to share, please contact the Parish Office.*

Spring Forward!



Move your clocks forward
before going to bed
Saturday, March 7.

February 26 is Ash Wednesday



7:00 am = Liturgy of Ashes
10:00 am = Liturgy of Ashes & Holy Eucharist
6:00 pm = Liturgy of Ashes & Holy Eucharist

**Trinity Fellowship
Tuesday, March 3, 7 pm**

We will continue our study with *The Bible Project*.

ECW

Build your own salad. Bring a salad ingredient. Lettuce
and beverages are provided.

**Monday, March 9
5:30 – 7:00 pm**

Vestry Meeting

**Tuesday, March 17
7:00 pm**

Mothering Sunday

March 22

Breakfast for Women & Girls
will be served at 9:00 am.

Spring Ingathering of the United Thank Offering.

SERVICES IN MARCH 2020

Sunday, March 1:

1st SUNDAY in LENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = The Great Litany & Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

Wednesday, March 4:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 8:

2nd SUNDAY in LENT

8:00 am = Great Litany & Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Great Litany & Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

Wednesday, March 11:

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 15:

3rd SUNDAY in LENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

Wednesday, March 18:

10:30 am = Holy Eucharist

Thursday, March 19: St. Joseph

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 22:

4th SUNDAY in LENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

Wednesday, March 25:

The Annunciation

10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

Sunday, March 29:

5th SUNDAY in LENT

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

*Morning Prayer is said at 10 o'clock
on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.*