



St. John's Messenger

February, 2011

from Fr. John W. Morris, Rector

FEBRUARY – nothing special

There is nothing special going on at St. John's in February. This is hard for me to believe. Over the last five years that I have served at St. John's it seems like almost every Sunday has had something extra to celebrate – the commissioning of new lay ministers, the thanksgiving for a unique ministry in our midst, or the lifting up of a mission opportunity in need of support. Nor is there much happening in the liturgical calendar of the church. We do observe mid week two Major Feasts – the Feast of the Presentation, most remembered in St. Luke's account for the Song of Simeon; and the Feast of St. Mathias, the apostle chosen to replace Judas Iscariot – but these not the most popular commemorations. Even the secular calendar offers only small excitement with Hallmark holidays of Valentine's and Presidents Day.

Discussions of this anomaly with the Worship Committee and Liturgy Team have concluded that this is not a bad thing. This is better viewed as a gift. Following a very busy fall and active Advent/Christmas season a few fallow Sundays is a welcome reprieve. It might be nice each Sunday to simply focus on the Gospel message from St. Matthew as Jesus presents his teachings that inspire the common folk but bedevil the powerful elite. And with Lent and Easter not so very far away this brief hiatus of liturgical activity affords a chance to be better ready for the surge we know will come.

In this time we will be looking forward liturgically at the worship services to be offered for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. The challenge at St. John's is always how to take our rich yet complex liturgical tradition and make it more accessible especially for newcomers.

In Christian Formation our focus will be on readying for the Lenten Study. This year's leaders will be Barbara Landis and Deacon Priscilla Ginolfi. Our hope here is to have a program that deeply enriches us while at the same time widens the participation of our younger families.

The follow through from January's Vestry Retreat will receive major attention. We will need to define the Vestry Vision for 2011 with principle goals for our parish's mission and supporting goals in our ten areas of ministry in advance of March's Parish Meeting. That meeting will include the election of delegates to Diocesan Convention, meaning the Nominating Committee will need to be active in February.

The details of Pastor Jennifer's maternity leave should be attended to this month as well. The role of the Reverend Beth Mollard who will help fill in for Pastor Jenn will require fleshing out, and plans will be finalized for the Holy Week Triduum of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday when faculty members of Lancaster Theological Seminary will serve as our guest homilists.

There may be nothing special planned for February but there is plenty special being planned for. That's the nice thing about nothing – it offers us space to explore and the possibility to discovery God in a new way. I hope you will enjoy this winter window of peace and the lull in liturgical action to look for God in unseen ways.

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