

2017 FEBRUARY through MAY EDITION!
Of the
PRINTS OF PEACE NEWSLETTER

Of the
Episcopal Church of the Messiah
721 St. Louis Street (P.O. Box 139)
Gonzales, Texas 78629

OUR WHY STATEMENT:
To KNOW God and Make Him Known

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Church of the Messiah is to live for God, to serve Christ, and, by being moved by the Holy Spirit, to spread the Good News by our actions in serving the larger community.

Fr. Randy Melton is the Priest and Rector of the parish.
Contact him at one of the following numbers at any time
for an appointment or emergency:

Church (830-672-3407); Cell (830-481-8290); Home (830-437-2722)

Email: soulman4jc@gmail.com Church Website: www.messiahgonzales.org

If Rector cannot be reached, contact one of the wardens
Robert Collins (Sr. Warden) or Kasey Floyd (Jr. Warden)
Robert@713-205-6246 / Kasey@830-857-6995

Church office hours:

Tuesday: 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Wednesday: 9:30 to 11:45 AM

Thursday: Noon to 3 PM

Friday: 10 AM to 2 PM

If we are away for some reason, please leave a message on the church phone.

Sunday Worship:

9 AM Bible Study / 10 AM Morning Prayer

10:30 AM Holy Eucharist with Sermon

Wednesday Schedule:

Noon Rosary

12:30 PM Healing Eucharist

Bible Study from 1:15-2:30 PM

AA Meetings every Monday and Friday at 8 PM

From the Rector:

"Knowing God and Making God Known"

Discerning and defining our WHY was a primary topic of discussion at our annual Vestry orientation/retreat as well as a recent sermon theme. WHY? Why are you a Christian? Why do you attend Messiah? Why do you live your life as you do? What is your WHY? Do you know? More specifically WHY are we a church? The Church's WHY is very simple. The self-evident reason that the Church exists is to help its members KNOW GOD, so that we can make God known. That's it! Not know ABOUT God, but KNOW God, as in participating in an intimate relationship with the Lord. Anything less and we're just a religious club.

Our WHY is vital for us to know because it inspires and influences all the decisions, actions, thinking and behavior in our personal life, parish life and community life. It's the driving force behind everything, not an afterthought. If an afterthought, then we're likely engineering our own agenda based on personal preferences alone.

We come to KNOW God to the extent that we choose to participate in the full life of the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, of which we are members and Jesus is the head (1 Cor. 12:12-27). The physical presence of Jesus on earth, the Church, is much more than a building or religious institution. The Church is the organic gathering, or assembly, of God's people, where the Holy Spirit dwells, to teach, convict, inspire, forgive, heal, convert, strengthen, feed and empower us to become more like Jesus. None of us can do this alone. And no one here is expendable. God's plan is for each of our gifts to work in coordination with one another and the Holy Spirit, drawing us closer to Jesus, so that we grow into a more mature knowledge of God. We can then discern his guiding voice, and recognize God's love made known through God's people both now and from all times (2 Peter 3:18).

Jesus' first sermon is: "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:2). Christians are to spend our whole life repenting, like breathing. We start by asking God to heal, forgive and reorient us toward himself time and again. The Greek word for repent is "metanoia" meaning literally "to change one's mind." This is important because thoughts determine behavior. We repent, or change our mind, more and more until we attain the mind of Christ more fully by our thinking (Rom. 12:2).

That's another reason we need one another. The Church already has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16). But as individuals, we don't. The Bible, the sacraments, the liturgy, the prayers, the spiritual disciplines, and especially the Holy Eucharist, all express the mind of God in Jesus Christ. We belong to Jesus' Body in a very real way, but if we separate from the Body, our souls shrivel up.

The Church is the vine of life. By maintaining communion, everywhere we go we are the Church. We bring Christ's Body with us in every breath we take as we witness for Jesus and glorify the Father in union with the Church. Always surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, we never go or do anything alone, even when we go by ourselves. Christians always have the Church watching our back. "Lone Ranger" Christians are mere phantoms—they're not real. One cannot be a Christian outside of the Church because baptism grafts us into the Body of Jesus himself, which is made present to us most clearly in the visible Church (Rom 11:11-32), so that we can be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We become by grace what Jesus is by nature, from the nurture we receive through the Body of Christ.

In John's gospel, Jesus says that God so loved the world that he gave his only son—WHY?—so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life (Jn 3:16)! And what is eternal life? "This is eternal life, that you KNOW the only true God, and the one he has sent, Jesus Christ" (Jn 17:3). So as we come to KNOW God (not just know ABOUT God), we also come to personally know God's love. We're then inspired to love God back and to love all that God loves in the same way that Jesus loves. That includes people we don't like and those who are even our worst enemies.

St. Silouan, an early 20th century Russian monk, said we know we have a mature faith when we love our enemies. Until then, God's still got a lot of work to do with our formation. We begin to change our way of thinking when we allow God's light to shine on our deep and painful inner wounds and our repetitive sins that are caused by our spiritual sickness. The better we KNOW ourselves, the more aware we are of our need to repent. The result or repentance is receiving the grace to be transformed in our minds and hearts, so we will come to KNOW God even better, and become more like him.

KNOWING God leads to an enthusiastic (en-thus = in-God) desire to make God known to others because then we actually have the personal knowledge, experience and natural inclination to do just that. Acts of love are the fruit of faith. But the WHY that drives those acts begins with knowing God, then making him known. Do you know how your personal WHY fits into the Church's WHY? How are you being called to KNOW God and make God known? That's the gift of eternal life!

Fr. RANDY+

TIME CHANGE ALERT!!!!

REMEMBER TO *SPRING FORWARD* ONE HOUR ON THE SATURDAY NIGHT PRIOR TO SUNDAY, MARCH 12!!!

CHANGE IN FR. RANDY'S OFFICE HOURS

***MONDAY** is my day off.

***TUESDAY** office hours remain from 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

***WEDNESDAY** office hours are 9:30 AM to 11:45 AM as Rosary begins at noon, followed by Healing Eucharist at 12:30 PM and Bible study from 1:15PM to 2:30 PM.

***THURSDAY** office hours will be Noon - 3 p.m. as I meet with Fr. Mark Bigley, Rector of Annunciation in Luling, during the morning for mutual prayer and study.

***FRIDAY** office hours will be from 10:00 AM -2 PM as I am at GCAM from 8:45AM to 9:45 AM, praying with those who come for assistance.

****NOTE:** I am usually available outside of these designated hours. These times in no way reflect the only hours that I'm in the office. They simply reflect the times that I am typically in the office. You may find me there much earlier or much later. These are posted for convenience. Obviously, if you need to meet with me at a time not listed, please contact me so we can make arrangements. There are occasional pastoral reasons that I am not there during posted office hours. In that case, please leave a message at one of these numbers: Church (830-672-3407) or my Cell phone (830-481-8290). In an emergency, please always call my cell. Note that Dale and Esther are often in the office after 10 on Wednesday-Friday for a few hours.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

We had a wonderful Annual Parish Meeting celebrating the many ministries with which we participate or partner both within the parish and throughout the community. Observing both old and new ministry corroboration, from the Ugandan Orphan support to the new seminarian family we assist, we celebrated our ability to tithe our oil income to various ministry entities in the area that benefit the needs of folks in our community. We recalled the many ways that our parish is growing spiritually both corporately and as individual members of the Body of Christ. We thanked the multitude of lay leaders in our parish life, especially those who are retiring from vestry service, Dan Blakemore and Janna Christian. And we elected and welcomed our newest vestry members, Kerry Reese and Mary Jane Williamson. And we said goodbye our beloved Fran Jackson, who died in December.

VESTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Vestry minutes are generally posted within a week of our vestry meetings on the bulletin board to the right of the parish office. Vestry typically meets on 4th Thursdays at 6 PM unless a conflict causes us to move to the 3rd Thursday. Please pray for your vestry leadership. We have a great team of people overseeing the planning and policy of Messiah's present and future.

MEN'S & WOMEN'S GROUPS

Men's and Women's groups continue to meet for food and fellowship each month at 6 PM on the second Wednesday, at the Elk's Lodge. **Neither group will meet in Lent as both groups are encouraged to attend the Episcopal-Lutheran Wednesday evening Lenten Programs (see elsewhere in newsletter).**

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We continue to make our way through John's gospel at our Sunday morning Bible study from 9-9:45 AM. The Holy Spirit moves us in all sorts of unexpected ways at times, leading us into a deeper awareness of God's truth and a renewed wakefulness to the Lord's presence. We are joyfully surprised and encouraged by the ways Jesus makes himself known. Come join our very engaging discussions!

BIBLE STUDY GROUP, Wednesdays at 1:15 PM

Wednesday afternoon Bible study meets at 1:15-2:15 PM. After we finish our study on prayer, we'll soon start a new study on one of Paul's epistles. We occasionally use short videos to supplement our study, and lively discussions abound as new and interesting questions are always being raised. Every once in a while, we come up with some answers! The Holy Spirit is always present to us in powerful ways. Join us and be a part of this roundtable of personal renewal!

DIOCESAN COUNCIL to Meet in Corpus Christi

Diocesan Council will be held in Corpus Christi on February 23-25. The 2017 theme is "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). This year's delegates are Esther Bell, Dan and Lucianne Blakemore, Dale and Robert Collins and Kasey Floyd, all of whom will join Fr. Randy in representing Messiah. Council elects representatives for a variety of positions within the diocese and beyond. The diocesan budget is also approved, and several workshops, ministry moments and Bible reflections are made available on varying topics of interest for enhancing our parish ministry and personal devotions. Both Bishops will give addresses that promise to challenge and inspire our hearts and minds. The highlight of this year's Council will be the election of a new suffragan bishop, who will replace Bishop Reed once he assumes the role of the Ordinary (head bishop of the diocese) when Bishop Lillibridge retires this summer. Keep up with all the details, and daily updates by tuning in to the diocesan website at www.council-dwtx.org.

What is Lent?

Lent is a penitential season of holiness in the Church Year to prepare us spiritually for the upcoming celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Christians are expected to set aside time for increased personal devotion, Bible reading, prayer and meditative reflection, personal self-examination of our spiritual lives, confessing and repenting of our sins, and receiving absolution and forgiveness from the Lord. Focusing on Jesus' crucifixion helps make us aware of the gift of salvation that is too often taken for granted. This is a time when we fast on certain days to give more careful attention to our spiritual nature. We may also abstain from certain rich foods as a means of simplifying our diets, taking better care of our bodies which are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and identifying with those who don't have enough to eat. Fasting is primarily an act of worship acknowledging that God's throne rules our heart by giving priority to feeding our souls over indulging our appetites.

Lent is a time to slow our lives down and listen to what God is saying to us. Sundays are always feast days commemorating the Resurrection. Even in Lent, Sundays are not technically counted among the 40 days of self-denial between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, yet they do retain a penitential character to remind the Body of Christ gathered that repentance and grace are the keys to living in the Kingdom of God.

Lenten Rule of Life

Consider adding these things to your Rule of Life in Lent:

- ✠ *Attend worship more regularly*
- ✠ *Give up a bad habit and replace it with a good habit*
- ✠ *Read a chapter a day from one of the gospels*
- ✠ *Pray daily one of the family devotions from the Book of Common Prayer (p.137-140)*
- ✠ *Call friends that aren't present at church to see how they're doing*
- ✠ *Speak words of kindness and encouragement, not criticism and judgment*
- ✠ *Try on a new ministry with a heart to "give" and not just "receive"*
- ✠ *Focus on developing a heart of **GRATITUDE** rather than complaint*
- ✠ *Ask someone how you might pray for God to bless them...and/or consider asking about starting a new group reunion prayer group*
- ✠ *Be a prayer champion for a particular person and/or pray daily for our parish members and friends using a copy of the list on the shelf in the back of the church.*
- ✠ *Invite and offer to bring someone to worship or a church event*
- ✠ *Ask the Holy Spirit to let **grace & love** characterize your life....maybe consider signing up for an upcoming Cursillo weekend.*
- ✠ *In **ALL** things, give thanks to the Lord, and focus on the good!*

Is it Shrove Tuesday, Fat Tuesday or Mardi Gras?

....Whatever, it's a Pancake Supper!! ALL YOU CAN EAT!!

Holy Griddle Batter Batman! It's that time again!! All-you-can-eat-pancakes and sausage! Such a sweet deal! YUMMM!! Shrove Tuesday denotes the old custom of one's sins being "shriven" prior to the Lenten season of fasting and prayer. Therefore confessions may be heard by appointment on this day. A more familiar name for the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday is "Mardi Gras," a French phrase translated as "Fat Tuesday," which is traditionally a gala celebration. This is not so much a church celebration as an opportunity for one last indulgent party prior to the fast, the idea being to rid the kitchen of all sweets and fats (the good stuff!).

So our annual Mardi Gras party begins on Tuesday, February 28, from 5-7 PM, with a Pancake Supper. Tickets are \$5 per adult / \$3 per child (that's unbelievably cheap! Best deal anywhere!!). Come and eat, and/or come and serve. Church members are encouraged to get the word out to your friends and neighbors by either selling tickets or buying them and giving them away. All profits benefit our parish outreach. The Men's Group coordinates the kitchen efforts, but additional help is always welcome!

*** If you want to help, please contact Robert Collins (713-205-6246).**

Ash Wednesday, March 1, 12:30 PM and 6 PM

Ash Wednesday will always be a special day for me at Messiah because I began my ministry as Rector here 9 years ago on February 6, 2008 on Ash Wednesday, a unique starting date for a priest.

Ash Wednesday begins the 40 day season of Lent. The Book of Common Prayer describes it as one of only two days of strict fasting. Good Friday is the other, the exception being when prohibited for medical reasons. The Ash Wednesday observance of receiving the imposition of ashes is one of holy obligation (not to be missed except for grave reasons). The ashes smudged on our foreheads are reminders of mortality, humility before God, sorrow and repentance for sins, and deep prayerful reflection and self-examination of our conscience. Ash Wednesday is a powerful and necessary way to begin the spiritual rhythm of Lent that draws us closer to our Lord as we seek and receive God's grace through Jesus. This year there are two times during the day to observe Ash Wednesday at the 12:30 Eucharist or at 6 PM. The Church calls you to participate in a holy Lent through the Church's wisdom of feeding your soul with the food of life...and, as always, bring a friend!

Wednesday Lutheran/Episcopal Lenten Series

For the 6th straight year we join our Lutheran communion partners to share a weekly Lenten evening devotion and light supper. Church of the Messiah hosts the service and dinner on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays. The Lutherans will host the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays. That means that March 15 and 30 are the dates we're responsible for providing the meal and worship. We need folks to sign up to provide soups, salad, sandwiches, bread, ice and tea for a light supper on those days. In addition, we need some help with set up and take down. **If you would like to help coordinate these events, please let Fr. Randy know.**

THEME: Knowing God: Come and See

This profound Lenten Series will be bookended by two sermon topics:

Ash Wednesday: "Dying to Live"

Easter Morning: "Dying to Death"

Lenten Wednesday Schedule:

5:15 PM Soup & Salad Supper; 6:15 PM Worship, 7PM Dismiss

- March 8: At Lutheran Church (Fr. Randy preaches)
"Self-Examination and Repentance"
- March 15: At Messiah (Pastor Ildiko preaches)
"Prayer"
- March 22: At Lutheran Church (Fr. Randy preaches)
"Fasting"
- March 29: At Messiah (Pastor Ildiko preaches)
"Self-Denial"
- April 5: Lutheran Church (Fr. Randy preaches)
"Reading and Meditating on God's Word"

NEW!! Lenten Rosary Every Wednesday

Each Wednesday at noon (March 8 to April 12) the "Sorrowful" Mysteries of the Rosary will be prayed. This Lenten devotion allows us to follow the last steps of Jesus' journey to the cross (the agony in the garden, scourging at the pillar, crowning with thorns, carrying of the cross, crucifixion and death of our Lord). We gather with prayerful intentions for the Lord to fill us with the grace and will to better follow the way of Jesus as we strive to take up our own cross, deny ourselves and follow him. The devotion takes about 25 minutes, and is a worthwhile substitute for Wednesday lunch by feeding us spiritually rather than physically. Holy Eucharist with healing prayers will follow at 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday Noon Community Lenten Worship

The Ministerial Alliance is sponsoring the annual Community Lenten worship every Wednesday at noon during Lent with guest preachers from various churches. Worship is at the First Baptist Church and lasts only 30 minutes, followed by lunch in the Methodist Church fellowship hall. What a wonderful opportunity to share the Spirit of our Living God during this Holy time, and a perfect weekly lunch hour discipline to share with others in the community!

WHAT IS HOLY WEEK?

Holy Week is the Church's way to help us participate in the last week of Jesus' life, from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to the last supper with his disciples, his agony in the garden and ultimate betrayal, his unjust trial, and subsequent suffering, torture and crucifixion, all of which prepare us for the Day of the Empty Tomb. Following Jesus' footsteps throughout the week promises a profound impact on our Easter experience. The opportunity to be formed in the shape of Jesus' cross allows us to celebrate a deeper and more powerful resurrection.

THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION (April 9)

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. Since ancient times, it has been devoted to special events of our Lord's Passion (suffering). The principal focus of the liturgy on this day has been the Gospel lesson; this year the Passion of Our Lord according to St. Matthew. During the 4th century, however, the Church in Jerusalem instituted on this Sunday, a solemn procession from the Mount of Olives to the principal church of the city, in commemoration of Jesus' triumphal entry. The custom of such a procession of palms soon spread to other churches in Christendom, and became a regular preface to the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Day.

Liturgy of the Palms: We gather prior to the Eucharist in the parish hall, where palms are blessed and distributed. We then process around the outside of the church to our pews. Once inside the church, the altar party continues the procession as the congregation sings "All Glory, Laud, and Honor, to Thee Redeemer King!" This procession symbolizes the aforementioned Jerusalem procession in that it is a joyful one! THEN, the mood changes abruptly as we're quickly snatched from that ever so short-lived glory of Our Lord. We're now drawn to hear again in detail those events summarized in the middle of the Creeds, and the words, "crucified, suffered, buried," creating a cruel contrast with that exaltation so recently expressed. The congregation is asked to read the Gospel in parts with the priest.

Passion Gospel: The Gospel is read in parts at this service to allow the congregation to participate more fully in this drama of redemption. We are both the cheerers and the crucifiers of our Lord at different times, which reflects our inner nature that Jesus came to redeem.

MAUNDY THURSDAY, April 13, 6 PM

Foot Washing, (Part 1):

The name "maundy" comes from "mandate" or "commandment" Thursday due to its emphasis on Jesus' mandates to his disciples. Maundy Thursday is the day before Jesus' crucifixion. On the night before he was betrayed, he shared a last supper with his disciples, though to a the Passover meal. During this meal, Jesus **washed the disciples' feet**. We will do likewise. Right after the sermon we will re-enact the foot-washing, symbolic of the command of servanthood that Jesus demands of each disciple at the last supper. After he washes their feet, he says to them, "As I have done to you, so you are to do to one another."

Followed by Institution of Holy Communion (Part 2)

The Institution of the Holy Eucharist is then observed. It is "on the night in which he is betrayed," that Jesus identifies the bread and wine of the Passover meal with his body and blood signifying a reinterpretation of the Passover lamb and unleavened bread, as he commands his disciples to "Do this in remembrance of me." The Holy Eucharist is the most identifiably Christian form of sacramental worship from the time of the first apostolic Church through today. Since that first Maundy Thursday, there has never been a time that it was not the primary means of worship for Christians who follow the apostolic tradition. St. Paul refers to it in his first letter to the Corinthians 11:23-25.

The Stripping of the Altar (Part 3)

Following Communion, the Reserve Sacrament is removed to the sacristy. The priest returns and Psalm 22 is said with the congregation as the altar is stripped of all its appointments. Our joyful recollection of the institution of the Lord's Supper gives way to prayerful meditation on the events of the next day, Good Friday. The priest leaves the sanctuary and returns with the Sacramental Body of Christ and processes to the Garden of Repose from the main altar in silence. The persons who have signed up for the first time on the "watch" join the procession, and as soon as the Blessed Sacrament has been placed on the Garden (or altar) of Repose, take up their vigil. Everyone then leaves the church in silence---**PLEASE---**in silence.

Regarding the Vigil at the Garden of Repose (Part 4)

Before the Last Supper was over, Judas Iscariot left to betray Jesus. And from this last meal with his friends, Jesus goes to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray in anguish about what is to soon happen. He takes his disciples and asks them to pray. Jesus' sacramental presence, usually reserved in the sanctuary, is removed to the Garden (or altar) of Repose, symbolizing the Garden of Gethsemane. The garden is set up in the Urban building, where a vigil is kept until midnight. Each parishioner is asked to take an hour of the vigil, in response to Jesus' remark to his disciples, "Could you not stay awake with me for one hour?" Any number of people may sign up for any given time or times. Fr. Randy will be in his office until the end of the vigil. A schedule of hours will be posted at the entrance of the church on Palm Sunday.

Please do not leave the Sacrament unattended during the Vigil. Also, keep in mind during your time at the watch that you are spending this time with the Lord. **So please observe silence and do not visit!** At midnight, the Blessed Sacrament will be taken away as Jesus' betrayer is upon him. Jesus is arrested, taken to the religious and secular authorities, where he is given an illegal trial, scourged, mocked and beaten. We're left with a very empty and alone feeling, making us aware of how his disciples must have felt...in a sense, "the Real Absence." ...a time of confusion and fearfulness. Tomorrow, Good Friday, Jesus will carry his own cross to the site of his crucifixion. This promises to be a deeply emotional and moving experience. Please make every effort to be a part of it.

GOOD FRIDAY (God's Friday), April 14, 6 PM

This day is called "Good" in spite of the crime perpetrated and the suffering endured on the original day, because the redemption of all humankind was brought about as the Divine Life of Jesus is offered for all people forever. "Good" Friday is, in fact, a derivative of "God's" Friday, the Christian Day of Atonement, our Day of reconciliation with God. This is a day of strict fasting (page 17 of the BCP). In fact, all Fridays in Lent are traditionally fasting days in remembrance of Good Friday, the day Jesus was crucified for our sins.

The Noon Hour: (Traditionally, the hour Jesus was hung on the cross)...We will pray the "Stations of the Cross," following Jesus' walk to the cross from judgment by Pilate to his crucifixion on Golgotha.

Sacramental Absolution: This is an especially appropriate time to examine one's conscience and make one's confession in anticipation of Easter. Fr. Randy will be available in the church to hear confessions from 5-5:30 PM on Good Friday or at other times by appointment.

Good Friday Liturgy. April 13, 6 PM: We participate in that event that expresses both the ultimate powers of chaos and evil and the ultimate expression of God's love for us. The church is empty of all the usual symbolism as we begin our worship with a long period of silence. The cross is venerated as the means used for our salvation, and we're given an opportunity to lay our burdens with grateful hearts at the foot of the cross.

The Holy Eucharist is never celebrated on this day. Consecrated elements from the Maundy Thursday celebration are brought to the altar and consumed by the faithful. It's an odd and incomplete sort of communion because it's an odd and incomplete kind of day.

With the consumption of the Lord's sacramental body in the pre-sanctified bread, the church building is left without the sacramental presence of Christ. It seems strangely empty and hollow, and we're able to share some of the emptiness of the apostles who knew that Christ was dead and buried. Prior to the 33 bell tolls commemorating the years of Jesus' life, the priest announces, "Jesus is dead." After the bell tolls, we leave the church in absolute silence - **PLEASE - in silence.**

EASTER VIGIL AND BAPTISM, April 15 @ 8 PM

Possibly...depending on interest...Not in stone yet!

(The Queen of Feasts in Ancient Church Practice)

The Easter Vigil is the most appropriate feast of the Church year for Holy Baptism because Christian Baptism is directly linked to the Resurrection of Jesus and the spiritual rebirth of the individual at the font. In the ancient Church, this was the preferred feast when almost all baptisms were performed, normally after a 3 year preparation of instruction, exorcisms and prayers. A service of great antiquity in the Christian tradition, we often refer to it as the Queen of all Christian feasts.

In the early apostolic Church, it originally began at sundown on Saturday, when the Liturgy began with the lighting of lamps and proceeded to a long vigil service of scripture lessons, canticles and prayers lasting most of the night. Before dawn, the candidates, prepared during Lent, were baptized and confirmed, and at daybreak, worship concluded with the first Easter Eucharist. This is the first festival celebration of the Resurrection as Lent officially ends.

In like manner, we will begin in total darkness, shortly after sundown, so as to experience the full power of the darkness being overcome by the Light of Christ. Our worship consists of lighting the Paschal Candle, chanting the ancient Exultet, recalling our salvation history, renewing our baptismal covenant, celebrating a Baptism (the making of a new saint and child of God) and our first Easter Eucharist of the season. Traditionally, members of the congregations bring small bells (or keys) to ring after the Easter acclamation (Alleluia, Christ is Risen!) during the singing of the Gloria! Don't worry, we won't pray through the night, but it will last an hour and half or so. Don't miss this powerful and beautiful ancient, liturgical celebration. **MORE DETAILS FORTHCOMING AS THIS DATE NEARS!!**

RESURRECTION SUNDAY, April 16

The Easter Day Festival Eucharist is celebrated at 10:30 AM. This is the apex of all Christian feasts because without the resurrection, our faith is futile and our hope is in vain. Without the resurrection, we're still in our sins. The truth of the Resurrection is the foundation upon which the Christian faith stands or falls. God has overcome the last enemy, death, and won the final battle over Sin and evil. This is the day when the "Alleluias" reappear, which means "Praise to the Lord!" Christ is Risen...God's victory dance over sin, evil, death and Satan! As the powerful Burial Office anthem says, "Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and giving life to those in the tomb!"

Flowering of the Resurrection Cross: Everyone is invited to bring flowers on Easter Day to decorate the Resurrection Cross prior to the worship service.

"THY KINGDOM COME!"

An Initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury

Archbishop Justin Welby has initiated an exciting worldwide cross-denominational prayer time between Ascension Day and Pentecost to pray for people to come to know Jesus Christ. It's called "Thy Kingdom Come" and details can be found at www.thykingdomcome.global. The first link below is a short video of a meeting at Lambeth Palace in England attended by various denominational groups who are all enthusiastic about this. The second link includes a short video in which the Archbishop shares what his relationship with Jesus means to him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9oT69xnvp0#t=265.449969096>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4m9h3FoeXNA>

As we've discussed recently at Vestry, Bible Study, in worship, and in the lead article of this newsletter, the Church exists to help it's members come to KNOW God and make God known! You'll be hearing more as time goes on. But for now, mark those dates on your calendar: May 25-June 4 for a special time of focused prayer for all people to come to know Jesus, and all Christians to have the confidence and joy to share our faith so that more people may know the love of Jesus Christ.

Know God and make him known!

CALENDAR EVENT (Sunday ONLY)

9 AM Bible Study

10 AM Morning Prayer

10:30 Holy Eucharist

CALENDAR EVENTS (Weekdays and Holy Week):

February 28: 5-7 PM Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

March 1: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

March 1: 12:30 PM Ash Wednesday Liturgy

March 1: 1:15 PM Bible Study

March 1: 6 PM Ash Wednesday Liturgy

March 8: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

March 8: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

March 8: 1:15 PM Bible Study

March 8: 5:15 PM Lenten dinner and service at Lutheran Church

March 15: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

March 15: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

March 15: 1:15 PM Bible Study

March 15: 5:15 PM Lenten dinner and service at Messiah

March 22: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

March 22: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

March 22: 1:15 PM Bible Study

March 22: 5:15 PM Lenten dinner and service at Lutheran Church

March 29: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

March 29: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

March 29: 1:15 PM Bible Study

March 29: 5:15 PM Lenten dinner and service at Messiah

April 5: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries

April 5: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers

April 5: 1:15 PM Bible Study

CALENDAR EVENTS (continued)

- April 5: 5:15 PM Lenten dinner and service at Lutheran Church
- April 9: Palm Sunday**
- April 12: Noon Rosary Praying the Sorrowful Mysteries
- April 12: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- April 12: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- April 13: 6 PM Maundy Thursday and Vigil
- April 14: Noon Stations of the Cross
- April 14: 6 PM Good Friday
- April 15: 8 PM Saturday Easter Vigil
- April 16: Festival Resurrection Celebration (Easter Sunday)**
- April 19: Noon Rosary Praying the Glorious Mysteries
- April 19: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- April 19: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- April 26: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- April 26: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- April 26: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- May 3: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- May 3: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- May 3: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- May 9: Noon Holy Eucharist (Fr. Randy's priesthood anniversary)
- May 10: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- May 10: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- May 10: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- May 17: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- May 17: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- May 17: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- May 24: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- May 24: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- May 24: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- May 25: 6 PM Thursday, Ascension Day Holy Eucharist**
- May 25-June 4: Novena to the Holy Spirit for all to Know God**
- May 31: Noon Rosary Praying with the Glorious Mysteries
- May 31: 12:30 PM Holy Eucharist with Healing Prayers
- May 31: 1:15 PM Bible Study
- June 4: Pentecost Sunday Festival Eucharist!**