

Welcome to Lent

During this holy season of Lent, we prepare for Easter's joy. It is a season of penitence - spring cleaning where we try to let go of all that may separate us from God or our acceptance of God's love. Our liturgy becomes simpler and perhaps more stark with several seasonal changes. We begin our service in silence and then with the Penitential Order, hearing God's commandments and confessing our sins. We also refrain from speaking "Alleluia" until Easter. We do not sing the Gloria in praise, but instead sing the Kyrie - our call for God's mercy. At our 8AM service we use the prayer of humble access, that speaks of God's great mercy. At 10AM we use Eucharistic Prayer C, which more than other prayer forms speaks of God's mercy and calls for our repentance.

We also use our eastward facing altar or "high" altar during the season of Lent. Altars traditionally face east as a reminder of our hope - just as the sun rises in the east we turn that direction to symbolically look to the coming Resurrection light and remember our hope. In Lent, facing east allows us to all face one direction together during our Eucharist, priest and people together. Since Lent is a time of spiritual pilgrimage, and a season that reflects Israel's 40 years of journey through the desert to reach the promised land, we face together on our journey, looking toward Easter's light and joy. Most readily visible is the more solemn Lenten color of purple for our altar and vestments, and the veiled crosses.

These changes in the liturgy are supported in our common life as we encourage one another to engage in practices that help to reorient us with additional time in prayer and study, fasting, and acts of mercy. There are many groups and ways to join with other parishioners in this season. A full listing of our Lenten groups is in an insert in this bulletin. Please take time to read it and consider joining one. During this season, the Sacrament of Reconciliation ("confession") is offered in the chapel each Saturday at 4pm without appointment. Please also consider taking advantage of our regular parish services, particularly Morning Prayer at 9AM and Evening Prayer at 5:15PM (Mon—Fri in the Oratory), our Wednesday Eucharist with prayers for healing (12:15 in the Chapel), and Contemplative Prayer each Friday (Oratory at 6:00pm).

In all the ways you observe this season, may God bless your intentions and self-offerings. A blessed and holy Lent to us all. Faithfully, Mo. Rita+



Lent is fast approaching. St John's is once again offering a variety of programs to consider making part of your observance of the Seasons.

The Way of Love: Practices for a Jesus Centered Life, **Sundays in the undercroft** following the 10 o'clock service, Feb 8 – Apr 5th. *The Way of Love* identifies seven steps in our individual and corporate strivings towards a trusting relationship with God: **Turn, Learn, Pray, Worship, Bless, Go, and Rest**. The final session on April 5th will be in the library, where we'll share a meal of soup and bread as we discuss **Putting it all together**: Living the Way of Love.

A Friendship Like No Other: Experiencing God's Amazing Embrace, by William Barry SJ. **Thursday Evening Soup & Bread, March 5th – April 2nd**, 6:00 – 7:30 pm in the Bangor Room. Fr. Barry, a renowned spiritual director, explores the premise that God wants to relate to us as a close friend. This will be an opportunity to explore a variety of prayer practices, most of which will be taken from Fr. Barry's book, but will also touch upon the works of other spiritual leaders, such as Ignatius, Francis de Sales, and Jean-Pierre de Caussade. This will be a great way to travel through Lent in community.

Forgiven and Forgiving, by L. William Countryman. **Sundays at 1 pm, March 1st – April 5th**, in the Back Lounge. We will explore together Countryman's affirming understanding of forgiveness as the natural response to the abundant love of God. While Countryman offers a thorough discussion of the benefits of forgiveness, he does not neglect the possible difficulties, complexities, and pain involved.

Lenten Quiet Time: **March 29th, 4:00 – 6:30 pm at St Patrick's** (Brewer). Led by **our own Fr Howard LaRue**, we'll begin with worship in the church, followed by a series of meditations interspersed with silence and time for personal reflection. We'll conclude by sharing a meal of soup and bread prepared by the clergy of St James (Old Town), St John's, and St Patrick's.