



"Where there is always a place at the table"

Church of the Ascension Herald - January 2012

Phone: (718) 442-4187 Fax: (718) 442-4187

Website: www.ascensionsi.org

e-mail: admin@ascensionsi.org

A Reflection from the Rector

"You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." - from Matthew 6:14.

The Season of Epiphany has a theme of light - a light revealing the Christ, who He is, and the beginning of His ministry in the world. In this time we remember and celebrate the baptism of Our Lord, with its dramatic and life-changing bestowal of the Holy Spirit, and watch and live once again the beginning as He attracts His followers of the Way. We continue in that following to this day.

Light is present in the liturgy to remind us of the light of Christ. We see this light so beautifully in the many candles lighted each Sunday and at other occasions of worship in the parish. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" in the Gospel according to St. John. To make our connection to Christ, that Light of the world, He exhorts us in the Matthean passage I quoted initially to be likewise - but with one catch that is very important.

Light has a common theme of positivity in our society. "Shed some light on this" is a common expression used to speak of clarifying or revealing, especially of those things that are sinister or harmful. Acts of crime and aggression are best carried out in darkness, so light can be a very effective deterrent. Gossip and backbiting is an act of darkness; it occurs in a whispered conversation or on the telephone, away from others and the person who is the subject of it. There are so many ways that our negative behaviors benefit from a lack of light. When light is shined upon those, one can feel embarrassed, or ashamed.

When Jesus teaches us to let our light shine, it is a reminder that each one of us must self-censor. I find it helpful to ask myself, "Is this an action of light or not?" as I go about my daily business. When we find that the answer is "no," then a change of behavior is warranted, and so may an apology or a confession be necessary. How often do we follow up on our acts of darkness with that reconciling action?

Jesus acknowledges in Matthew that our light must shine so that others may see our good works. This is important. It is OK for people to see our good works. In fact, I would say that He is teaching us that it is **necessary**. But why? This is the catch I alluded to earlier. Our good works must be visible to others "...so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." This is a constant theme for Jesus in His teachings. He is always, always pointing us to the Father, to God. In His time on earth, He was always trying to point people away from worshipping or glorifying Him, or themselves. Instead, they were to worship

and glorify God. Our good works, so easy to do and so rewarding to us individually too, are not actually for the purpose of self-glorification or being pleased with ourselves. Those good works are to *point others to God*. In this light, being a disciple of Christ is really quite easy, isn't it?

In 2012, it is my hope to work with the parish to identify additional ways for us to be lights in this world so much in need of a felt love of God. There is so much talent and ability amongst us! We have each been given gifts of talent and money in order to use them to God's greater glory. In Lent we will be looking at the spiritual gifts identified by St. Paul, using workshops to identify which of those gifts we have as individuals and corporately, and discern what we might well do and be with those many gifts.

Jesus teaches in Matthew 5:15, "No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house." Let us each take this quite seriously in this season of Epiphany, a season of light. Ask yourself, as you speak and act, "Is this speech or action about light or darkness?" Answer it honestly, and you will know what to do. When you choose the light, you are choosing the way of good works, those good works that point people to God, to whom we owe all that we are and have.

Fr. Richard

TUESDAY EVENING FORUMS FOR EPIPHANY take place beginning Tuesday, January 17th at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Deacon Novella and Fr. Richard are teaming up to facilitate a study of the **Gospel according to St. John**, as presented through the Visual Bible series we employed to study the Book of Acts during Advent. The weekly Forum will run for 5 weeks, concluding on February 14th (Shrove Tuesday will be celebrated the following Tuesday evening). The forum will conclude each week by 8:30 pm with Compline.

In this Epiphany series on the Gospel of John, we will break up the viewing of the visual presentation of the Gospel into smaller portions so that we can delve into deeper discussion of the more complex theology and developing doctrines presented in this Gospel. We will emphasize discussion and sharing over viewing the entire Gospel in the 5 weeks, so that whatever we do not cover, we can continue with during the season of Easter. We look forward to another good crowd attending this fascinating and dramatic presentation of the Gospel and sharing our insights and learnings with one another. The discussions are somewhat independent one from the other so we encourage you to attend even if you have to miss one of the Tuesdays in this series!

Two Dates to Remember:

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper (Feb. 21):
6:30 pm in the Undercroft

Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22): Imposition of Ashes and Holy Eucharist
7:30 am 12:15 pm 7:00 pm (Sanctuary)

What is a Mutual Ministry Review?

You may have noticed on our parish calendar that a Mutual Ministry Review is scheduled for Saturday, January 21st, and you may be curious as to what this is.

A Mutual Ministry Review is a process by which the Rector and Vestry take a look at the programs of the parish, discern what is working and what is not, and look forward together to making the future of the parish more vibrant. This Review is required by the Letter of Agreement signed by me and the Wardens just prior to my arrival to serve this parish in 2010.

An excellent consultant, Madeline Schroth, will be present on that day to guide us through the review and facilitate our making plans for the future. It is a time of mutual discernment, of mutual assessment, and of mutual planning. It is a process I have attended twice in the past and found very constructive and highly rewarding. We will all benefit from this.

I expect to share some initial results from the review in my report for the annual meeting, and look forward to this time with Madeline and the Vestry very much!

Fr. Richard

TUESDAYS IN LENT

On Tuesday, February 28th, we'll have the first of our "Tuesdays in Lent," which will consist of Stations of the Cross at 6:00 pm in the church, followed by a simple soup supper and program in the Undercroft. If you can't make it at 6:00, come for supper or the program – whatever fits your schedule.

This year's program will focus on identifying our gifts. Guided by the many spiritual gifts identified by St. Paul in his letters to the churches he founded, we will study those gifts and then follow a process I have used at different times in the past to identify the gifts that each participant possesses. It is a fun and interesting process, full of mystery (you don't really know how it's all going to come out until the end!!), and it gives each of us food for thought and future action. As the weeks progress, we will have identified our individual gifts, and work to discern ways to put them to good use, individually and as a parish. I have never done one of these workshops without someone being very, very surprised at one or more of the gifts they discover they have!

Please mark your calendars now for Tuesdays in Lent, which begins at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, February 28th.

Fr. Richard

SAY A PRAYER

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away.

"Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer." said his mother. "I don't need to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do" his mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house." Johnny explained. "But this is Grandma's house and she knows how to cook."

—



Keeping your New Year's Resolutions

It's a brand new year and you've made some resolutions. Want to keep the momentum going to ensure these positive changes are made? Not sure what to do next? Maybe you just need some support to take the next step. Please

join

Janine McHale

Certified Holistic Health Counselor

for a free lecture on:

Thursday, January 19

7-8:15 p.m.

Location:

Church of the Ascension

One Kingsley Avenue, Staten Island, NY 10314

For details, please call 917-932-4143.



Come and Celebrate The Year of the Dragon

Raffle Baskets Fifty-Fifty Door Prizes

**Where: The Church of the Ascension
1 Kingsley Ave, Staten Island 10314**

When: 5:00 pm, Saturday, January 28 (snow date: Feb. 4)

Cost: \$20 per person (\$25 at the door)

\$10 (children 12 and under), \$50 max. per family

***** buy your tickets now - space is limited !!! *****

Dinner to be prepared by Chefs Ed and Mercedes Chow!

Egg Drop Soup

Dim Sums

Chicken Lo Mein

Vegetable Chow Mein

Chicken and Cashews

Sweet and Sour Pork

Fortune Cookies

Almond Cookies

Pineapple and Jello

Oolong Tea

Soda for the kids

Fried Chips with Duck Sauce

Egg Foo Young

Pepper Steak and Onions

Young Chow Fried Rice

B.Y.O.B.



Tickets may be purchased at worship services or
by mailing your payment prior to **January 25**.
Tickets will be mailed to you. No will-call.
!!Drawing winners must be present to win!!

TWO UPCOMING STATEN ISLAND COUNCIL OF CHURCHES EVENTS

Service of Unity

The Staten Island Council of Churches annual ecumenical service celebrating the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity will be held on Wednesday, January 18th at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 505 Watchogue Road. The Rev. John O'Hara, Pastor at St. Teresa's, will preach, with Pastor Robert Vogl of Zion hosting. There will be several choirs from various churches participating as well. The service begins at 7:00 pm with hymn singing. Please join in this annual worship service in union with the many other churches on the Island!

Refreshments will be served afterwards to give us all a chance to meet and renew friendships. Please bring cookies or finger sandwiches to share if you can.

Annual Awards Dinner

The Annual Awards Dinner will take place at the Old Bermuda Inn, 2512 Arthur Kill Road, on February 2nd at 6:30 pm (snow date is February 9th). Once again, an honoree from Ascension will be recognized by the Council at this dinner event. Tickets are \$45 per person, and must be purchased in advance. Please send or bring your check, **made out to the Staten Island Council of Churches**, to Ascension **BY JANUARY 25TH** to reserve your spot at an Ascension table. After that date, make reservations directly with the Council by mailing your check to the Council at 2187 Victory Blvd, 10314.

FLOWER AND CANDLE FUNDS at Ascension are essential for the provision of flowers and candles that beautify our sanctuary and dignify our worship of God. Your ongoing contributions to these funds is needed and so very much appreciated. If you are able, the cost of altar flowers is \$40 for one vase or \$60 for two. If you feel that it is not affordable to contribute for 2 vases, 2 people can sign up for one day for \$40 each. It is more important to me that you commemorate those you love with flowers and candles than not participating because of cost, so either way, give what you are able. The candle fund tends to be quite down on funds so please try to contribute \$20 for the sanctuary candle if you are able to.

Many thanks - Fr. Richard

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

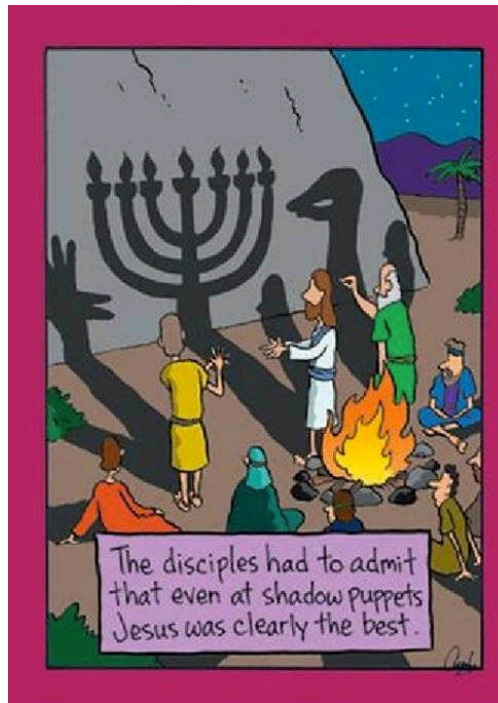
A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter.

Little Rick was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Ricky was so nervous.

When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Date	Event	Location
Tuesday, Jan 17	Tuesday Evening Forums & Compline Begin	Sanctuary
Thursday, Jan 19	“The Holidays are Over: Now What?” Workshop	Undercroft
Saturday, Jan 21	Mutual Ministry Review	Undercroft
Tuesday, Jan 24	Tuesday Evening Forum	Sanctuary
Saturday, Jan 28	Celebration of the Chinese New Year	Undercroft
Tuesday, January 31	Tuesday Evening Forum	Sanctuary
Sunday, Feb 5	Annual Meeting and Brunch	Undercroft
Tuesday, February 7	Tuesday Evening Forum	Sanctuary
Wednesday, Feb 8	St. Martha’s Guild Meeting	Undercroft
Tuesday, Feb 14	Tuesday Evening Forum	Sanctuary
Sunday, Feb 19	Vestry Appreciation Dinner Holy Eucharist	Rectory Lakeside Manor
Tuesday, February 21	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	Undercroft
Wednesday, Feb 22	Ash Wednesday	Sanctuary
Tuesday, Feb 28	Stations of the Cross Soup Supper & Forums Begin	Sanctuary Undercroft
Saturday, March 10	Consecration of The Rev. Canon Andrew Dietsche, XVI Bishop of New York	Cathedral of St. John the Divine



Church of the Ascension
One Kingsley Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10314-2420
Return Address Service Requested

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Staten Island, NY 10314
Permit No. 196

Affix Address
Label Over this Text