



St. Mary's Episcopal Church The Bell Ringer

Online at www.stmaryskinston.com

The Invitation of Lent.

Lent is a season of being invited by God in a deeply personal way. "Come back to me, with all of your heart," our Lord beckons. "We will," we respond, but we aren't quite ready yet, our hearts are not prepared. We want to squirm, evade, avoid. Our souls not yet perfect. We are not ready for God to love us.

Yes, of course we want to have a deeper relationship with God, we tell ourselves earnestly. And we will . . . Soon. God calls to us again: *Come back to me, with all of your heart.*

Ok, ok, I really will. Just a few more things to do at work. Let me spend a little more time in prayer first. Let me get to Reconciliation. Let me clean my oven, tidy my closets. Sell my yoke of oxen. Check a field I have purchased . . .

Come back to me, with all of your heart.



It is an extraordinary invitation to each one of us. To *me* in a personal, individual way. God invites me to drop the defenses that I hold up between myself and God. All God wants is for me to realize that *my* standards, my way of judging and loving are so very different from God's way, and so much smaller. God offers an entire Lent season, an entire lifetime, of loving me unconditionally, no matter what I have done or how much I think I have hidden from God. From the first day of Lent, the Ash Wednesday readings make God's call to us clear: "Return to me with your whole heart." "A clean heart create for me, O God,"

Psalm 51 offers. "Give me back the joy of your salvation." That is exactly what our loving God wants to give us, the joy of salvation.

In North America, Lent falls in winter and these days are cold and dark, perfect for hiding ourselves indoors, perfect for hiding from God - or so we imagine. But our God is insistent, loving, gently prodding. God is the parent of the Prodigal Child, waiting faithfully, eagerly on the road for our return, night after night. There are no folded arms and stern judging stares, only the straining eyes of a parent eager for our return, longing to embrace us and rejoice in us.

Yet we spend so much time trying to think of *how* to return and what to say, how to begin the conversation. It's only when we finally appear after so much time away, embarrassed and confused, that we understand we don't have to say anything. We only have to show up.

Look up there on the road ahead of us: our loving God is jumping up and down for joy. The invitation to us has been heard. We have returned home!

But, wait... What stops us from this great reunion? What keeps us from accepting this invitation to something deeper in our lives with God? We feel in our hearts that there are things we should say first: "wait . . . but . . . if only" and finally, "If God really knew about me . . ."



It doesn't matter. None of it matters. Only the joy that we have turned to God and that like a loving father or mother, God is smothering us with embraces and joyful cries. We have returned!

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The Episcopal Church

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In the Anglican Communion

A global community of 80 million Anglicans
in 38 member provinces/churches.

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In the United States

A community of 2 million members in 118
dioceses in the Americas and abroad.

Established in 1788.

Presiding Bishop

The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori

Episcopal Church Center

815 2nd Avenue

New York, N.Y. 10017 212-716-6000

www.dfms.org/

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In the Diocese of East Carolina

A community of more than 15,000
communicants in 71 churches.

Founded in 1883.

Bishop

The Rt. Rev. Robert S. Skirving

Diocesan Office, 705 Doctors Dr.

P.O. Box 1336, Kinston, NC 28503

Tel: 252-522-0885

Fax: 252-523-5272

Website: www.diocese-eastcarolina.org

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St. Mary's Episcopal Church

A church of 405 baptized members whose
mission is to worship and serve God joyfully,
to nurture each other in faith and wholeness,
to minister to others, and to manifest the
"good news" of Christ.

800 Rountree Street

Kinston, NC 28501-3655

Tel: 252-523-6146

Fax: 252-523-5134

Website: www.stmaryskinston.com

Rector The Rev'd A. Michael Singer

Assistant The Rev'd Thomas P.H. Warren

Director of Music Mr. Nick Voermans

Parish Administrator Mrs. Marilyn R. Wiggins

Parish Secretary Mrs. Linda M. Johnson

Director of Children's Ministries

Mrs. Shelly L. Yarbrough

Sr. Warden Mr. Scott Newton

Jr. Warden Mr. Mark Herring

News at St. Mary's

A Chili Cook-off

to raise funds for our Glory Ridge Mission Team!

\$10 per person or \$5 if you bring a chili

Prizes for Best In Show, People's Choice, &
Most Original...

Everyone gets a vote!!!!!!

Wednesday, February 4; 6:00 pm
Moseley Hall

From the Parish Register

Holy Baptism: Rowan Carroll Coley
January 11, 2015

Death: Ella Green Weyher
January 7, 2015

St. Mary's offers sympathy

St. Mary's offers sympathy to the family of Kevin Zoltek upon the death of his mother, Judy H. Zoltek. Judy died on January 11, 2015.

Sympathy is also offered to Mark Hollar on the death of his brother, Emery Hollar. Emory died on January 24, 2015.

Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more neither sighing, but life everlasting.

Vestry Leadership

The Vestry of St. Mary's gathered for an all-day planning meeting on Friday, January 23rd. The following individuals were elected into leadership positions:

Senior Warden - Scott Newton Junior Warden - Mark Herring
Clerk of Vestry - Cyndi Rafferty Treasurer - Stuart Lindley

Administrative - Stuart Lindley Pastoral Care - Cyndi Rafferty
Finance - Kevin Zoltek Outreach - Scott Newton
Stewardship - Joe Stark Worship - Ike Hines

Christian Formation - Children - Sandy Shimer
Adults - John John

Fellowship - Barbara LaRoque and Stephen Hill

From the Rector - Father Michael Singer

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Come back to me, with all of your heart.

Our acceptance of this call, this appeal to our hearts is simple if we can only get beyond the fear. All we have to do is say to our Lord, "I'm here. Where do I start? Yes, I want to be with you." Our hearts have been opened and we have taken the first step toward the rejoicing parent on the road. No explanations are necessary, only to pause and picture in our hearts the joyfully loving and unblinking gaze of God that falls on us.

What's the next step on our journey home? We could take the earliest moments of our day, before we have gotten out of bed to thank God for such a loving invitation and ask for help in opening our hearts to it. We could remember throughout the day the invitation that has moved our hearts: *Come back to me, with all of your heart.* And we can rejoice along with God.

That is the invitation of each day of Lent. Today is the day to accept it.

Psalm 95: 1-7

Come, let us sing joyfully to the LORD;
cry out to the rock of our salvation.

Let us greet him with a song of praise,
joyfully sing out our psalms.

For the LORD is the great God,
the great king over all gods,

Whose hand holds the depths of the earth;
who owns the tops of the mountains.

The sea and dry land belong to God,
who made them, formed them by hand.

Enter, let us bow down in worship;
let us kneel before the LORD who made us.

For this is our God, whose people we are,
God's well-tended flock.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice.

The New American Bible

With permission
www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/Lent

Gathering around the table

Two television shows that I, on occasion, have had opportunity to watch once and awhile are *Blue Bloods* and *Duck Dynasty*.

Blue Bloods is a drama about a multi-generational family of cops dedicated to New York City law enforcement. Frank Reagan is the New York Police Commissioner and heads both the police force and the Reagan family. He runs his department as diplomatically as he runs his family. His father, the retired, former New York City Police Commissioner, lives with him. All of Frank's children are either involved in law or law enforcement.

Duck Dynasty is an American reality television series on A&E that portrays the lives of the Robertson family, who became wealthy from their family-operated business, Duck Commander. The West Monroe, Louisiana business makes products for duck hunters, primarily a duck call called Duck Commander. The Robertson men—brothers Phil and Si, and Phil's sons Jase, Willie, and Jep—are known for their long beards and at times, nonsense.

These two shows couldn't be any different. One show takes place in a large northern city, the other in a small southern town. One family is Irish Catholic, the others worship as independent fundamental Christians. Both stand by their Christian beliefs. There are many differences in these two families. They are engaging to some and offensive to others. Millions watch these programs every week.

What is similar in these shows, and what I most like and admire, is that at least once each week they make time to come together, as family, and share a common meal. They are busy people, each have separate, busy lives. Sometimes there is feuding amongst family members, but they come together and pray at the table.

What we might learn from these two families is to make the time in our homes, on a regular basis, to come together as family to pray and share a meal together.

This Lent make it your practice each week to gather around the table at St. Mary's as well.

Worship



Ash Wednesday . . .

The imposition of ashes is often a central part of Ash Wednesday worship. Ashes have a long history in biblical and church traditions. In scripture, ashes or dust symbolize frailty or death (Gen. 18:27), sadness or mourning (Esther 4:3), judgment (Lam. 3:16), and repentance (Jon. 3:6). Some traditions also have considered ash a purifying or cleansing agent. All these images are caught up in the church's use of ashes as a symbol appropriate for Lent. In Christ's passion we see God's judgment on evil; in our penitence we express sorrow and repentance for our sins; in our rededication we show that we are purified and renewed.

Ashes are the burnt residue of the previous year's palms from Palm Sunday. Worshippers come forward and the priest makes a cross on each person's forehead (the "imposition"), saying words such as *"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return."*

It is the obligation for all Episcopalians, to make a proper beginning of Lent, to attend an Ash Wednesday liturgy. St. Mary's will offer the Imposition of Ashes and celebrate the Holy Eucharist on **Wednesday, February 18th** at:

7:00 a.m. - Chapel

12:00 noon - St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 707 E. Lenoir Ave., Kinston

7:00 p.m. - Church (with music)



The Way of the Cross

This year, as in years previous, St. Mary's will be offering the Way of the Cross on Friday evenings at 5:30 p.m., beginning February 20th. Sometimes called the Stations of the

Cross, this short devotional experience is both tactile and meditative. As we move to each of the fourteen markers throughout the church, a different event of Jesus' Passion is remembered.

The Way of the Cross is an especially poignant way "that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby [God] has given us life and immortality," to quote the Prayer Book's collect for Palm Sunday. Please consider making a commitment to walk the Way of the Cross at least once this Lent.

Journey in Faith and Youth Journey in Faith

Journey in Faith and **Youth Journey in Faith** are classes for anyone interested in learning about or re-visiting the basics of the Christian faith, the Anglican tradition, and living out the faith at St. Mary's. These classes will also serve as the preparatory classes for those discerning confirmation or reception into the Episcopal Church, baptism, or reaffirming their faith when Bishop Skirving makes his first official visit to St. Mary's in January 2016.

Informational meetings about the classes, including topics and class meeting schedule, will be held on the following days. Please plan to attend if you are interested in or have questions about the classes:

- **Adult Journey in Faith:** Sunday, January 25 @ 11:15 a.m. in the Bookstore
- **Youth Journey in Faith:** Sunday, February 1 @ 11:15 a.m. in the Parlor

Any questions? Call Fr. Tom!

Christian Formation

2015 Lenten Series

On behalf of the *RenewalWorks* Committee, we are excited to announce this year's series for Lent! Our committee will provide a brief overview of how the Episcopal Renewal Works program, the prescribed format our group went through and the results of the survey. What better time than Lent to examine our Spiritual Life- individually and collectively!

The format will be videos, entertaining & informative presentations, and an outside speaker on the last night, the Rev. Jay Sidebotham. Jay was involved from the beginning when *RenewalWorks* launched in Chicago. Jay now lives in Wilmington, NC!

- 1-Feb 25- **WHAT WE CAN INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY GAIN FROM RENEWAL WORKS** - Brief video from *RenewalWorks*, then facilitated discussion
- 2- March 4 - **PROCESS FOR INTERPRETING PARISH SURVEYS** -Purpose of the **first** two Workshops and what they taught us
- 3- March 11- **PROCESS FOR INTERPRETING PARISH SURVEYS** -Purpose of the **last** two Workshops and what they taught us
- 4- March 18- **ST. MARY'S DATA FROM FIRST SURVEY**
- 5- March 25 - **NEXT STEPS IN OUR GROWTH** - The Rev. Jay Sidebotham speaking

If you wish to learn more before March, please go to www.renewalworks.org

RenewalWorks is a catalyst for refocusing parishes (and the individuals in them) on spiritual vitality. It has been tailored to the Episcopal tradition, adapting 10 years of research that has uncovered key characteristics of flourishing congregations. It will inspire your congregation and leadership to rediscover who Jesus is, and what it means to follow him. Through a guided methodology of self-reflection, sharing and workshop discussion, RenewalWorks challenges parishes to refocus on spiritual growth and to identify ways that God is calling them to grow.

We have everything we need for Spiritual Growth: God, the Bible, the BCP and each other! Our community hungers for spiritual growth. We look forward to learning and sharing together how we can better do this. Mark your calendars for **you and your family** to join us! Program for children provided as well as simple meals at \$ 8/person, \$27./family. **Meals begin at 6:00 p.m., Program 6:25-7:15 p.m.**

-Amy Albritton, Andrew Duppstadt, Bill Ferguson, Carl Younger, Dacie Edwards, Diane Poole, Elizabeth Maxwell, Gary Hamm, Mark Herring, Mike Ling, Sarah Turner, Vicki Kennedy, and Steve Mazingo, Facilitator

ADULT CHRISTIAN FORMATION

This winter and spring we will be using lessons from "Whole Christianity", a book of instruction in the Teaching and Worship of the Episcopal Church, by The Rev. Hugh Edsall.

We will attempt to adhere to the following schedule but lessons may last longer than one week, based on discussion of the participants. If you would be willing to teach a session this spring, please speak to Father Michael

February 1st - "Living With Contradictions" - Can or how do we live with contradictions in religious teaching?

February 8th - "Theological Education Sunday" - James Rickenbaker, a son of the diocese and Middler at Virginia Theological Seminary, will be guest preacher and will lead this week's class. He will talk about his experience as a seminarian and theological education in the 21st century.

February 15th - "The Lord's Own Service": The Holy Eucharist, The Greatest Gift: Part I. Service of the Word: Preparation

February 22nd - "The Lord's Own Service": The Holy Eucharist, The Great Gift: Part II. The Four Great Actions

Adult Christian Formation Classes take place Sunday morning from 11:15 a.m. until 12:00 noon in Moseley Hall, unless directed elsewhere.

Youth Community News

Mark Your Calendars!!

Sunday, February 1

No EYC

Wed. February 5 @ 6pm

Glory Ridge Chili Cook Off

Sunday, February 8

Jr. & Sr. EYC @ Church

Jr. EYC 5:30-6:15pm

Sr. EYC 6:15-8:00pm

*Both groups eat together from
6:15-7:00pm*

Wed. February 11 6:45-8pm

EYC Jam Session! (in sanctuary)

Sunday, February 15

Jr. & Sr. EYC @ Church

Jr. EYC 5:30-6:15pm

Sr. EYC 6:15-8:00pm

*Both groups eat together from
6:15-7:00pm*

Sunday, February 22

Jr. & Sr. EYC @ Church

Jr. EYC 5:30-6:15pm

Sr. EYC 6:15-8:00pm

*Both groups eat together from
6:15-7:00pm*

*Please come and
bring a friend!!!!*

HAPPENING #65

Friday, February 27 through Sunday, March 1

A Christian Youth Event of the Diocese of East Carolina

Trinity Center — Salter Path, NC

Open to all high schoolers and interested adults of the Diocese

Contact Fr. Tom to register. Registration due Jan 30.

**Can't go now? Save October 16-18 for
Happening #66!**

WHERE DO YOU SEE GOD?

Going on Pilgrimage, away from the everyday places & activities that are familiar to us, is often helpful to see things more clearly and appreciate the beauty that God has places all around us. During our pilgrimage to Washington, DC over a long weekend in January, young people from our Diocese recognized God's presence in some of the following things:

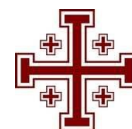
- ◆ In a homeless woman, chasing down the collection plate at Church of the Epiphany to give her offering
- ◆ In the consecrated bread at a service of Evensong and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Paul's K-Street
- ◆ In incredible stories of repentance and forgiveness, courage, and the "Peace that passes all understanding" told at the Holocaust Museum
- ◆ In breathtaking architecture and art, and a powerful homily preached at the National Cathedral
- ◆ In the ways two youth groups became one over the course of a weekend, reinforcing the truth that all are one in Christ Jesus!

Have you asked yourself today - "Where do you see God?"



THANK YOU!!!!

Thank you so much to Sandra & Frank Warren whose gifts of hospitality have allowed the EYC to enjoy food and fellowship together in January 2015!!!



Our church

“CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PAIR AT A TIME”

Soles4Souls facilitates the donations of shoes, which are used to aid the hurting worldwide. They have distributed products to people in need in over 120 countries on 5 continents and help provide people's feet with crucial protection against disease. Over 1.5 billion pairs of shoes lay idle in American closets. Over 300 million children around the world are without shoes.



It is so easy for anyone to help give hope, simply by giving a pair of new or gently used shoes! We are collecting all types of footwear, from sleek running shoes to stylish pumps, from rugged work boots to the coolest sandals on the beach.

February 22nd - March 29th, drop-off containers will be located in the office wing entrance way and in the Narthex. On Sunday, March 29th, volunteers are needed at 11:25 am to box the shoes and send them off to *Soles4Souls*. We'll need your help. If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Singer at 252-521-7997.

“I was naked and you clothed me... I was in prison and you came to me.” - Jesus

An average of 5 inmates are released from the maximum security prison in Maury each week. Many of these men have served very long prison terms and have no remaining contacts in the community. If there is no friend or family member to provide clothing, the state releases the inmates with only a set of "prison whites". This makes finding employment and housing very difficult and certainly doesn't help reintroduce them to society.

A member of the Maury Correctional Institution's Community Resource Council, is collecting lightly used men's clothes to stock a clothes closet for inmates being released. Staff at the prison will manage the closet so that each inmate can leave prison in appropriate street clothes. All sizes of men's clothing are needed. In particular, jeans, slacks, shirts, sweaters and sports jackets will help.

Would you consider making a donation towards this effort? Clothes can be delivered to the church office any time. Thank you and bless you!

2015 LENTEN MEDITATIONS



Daily meditations during Lent

This year's meditations, authored by a diverse group of Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion leaders, center on the five "I Believe" statements at the core of Episcopal Relief & Development's 75th Anniversary efforts:

- I believe that everyone should have access to clean water.
- I believe that no one should go hungry.
- I believe that all children and families deserve a healthy start in life.
- I believe that no one should live in poverty.
- I believe that together we can heal a hurting world.

"These five 'I Believe' statements encompass our commitment to those living in poverty and without the basics for life" said Sean McConnell, Director of Engagement. "For the past 75 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with partners to counter scarcity and imbalance, first through urgent relief to refugees and now through long-term development programs as well. Lent is a time to reflect on Jesus' call in Matthew 25 to care for those in need, and to redouble our efforts to live compassionately and uphold the dignity of every human being."



Copies are available in the Narthex and in the office. Pick up your free copy today.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
800 Rountree Street
Kinston, NC 28501-3655

SHROVE TUESDAY pancake supper



Join us on Tuesday, February 17th for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper in Moseley Hall from 5-7 pm.

The celebration will consist of more sausage and pancakes than you can handle.

The cost of the dinner is \$7 for adults and \$4 for children under the age of 10. Proceeds from the dinner will be used for youth scholarships.

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before the beginning of Lent. Though “shrove” derives from the word *shrive* (i.e. to repent), Shrove Tuesday is actually a day for great and gluttonous celebrations that traditionally use up cooking ingredients which many will forgo during Lent.

Cherished Member Luncheon

Remember to mark your calendar for **February 5th**, at 11:30 a.m., as that date marks February's Cherished Members and Friends Luncheon. Please feel free to invite a friend. A sign-up sheet may be found in the Narthex or simply call the secretary at 523-6146 to sign up. Hope to see you there! Please RSVP by February 3rd.

SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP SERVICES

Sundays 8:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite I

10:00 a.m. – Holy Eucharist, Rite II

11:15 a.m. – Sunday School

Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 a.m.—Morning Prayer

ST. MARY'S VESTRY

2015	2016	2017
W. Scott Newton, II	Stephen B. Hill	H. Earl Harper
Cyndi L. Rafferty	Isaac C. Hines	J. Mark Herring
Joseph V. Stark	Barbara A LaRoque	John John
Stuart L. Stroud	Kevin M. Zoltek	John “Sandy” Shimer, Jr.

Senior Warden – P. C. Barwick, Jr.

Junior Warden – William L. (Bill) Connolly, III

Clerk – Cyndi Rafferty

Treasurer – D. Stuart Lindley