

The Chart

Letter from the Rector

April 1, 2006

Dear Friends,

As I write to you spring is bursting out and Lent is winding down. With the movement of Daylight Savings Time to the first Sunday morning in April, we are getting to feel the "lengthening of days," which is to original meaning of Lent. And, last but certainly not least, Easter looms before us.

Much of this edition of the *Chart* is devoted to Holy Week and Easter. We will consider the weighty topics of theology, history and liturgics—and the not-so weighty issues of Easter eggs, chocolate eggs (which I prefer) and Easter egg hunts.

A note about schedules for Pascal-time: for a number of years we have celebrated the Eucharist at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on Easter Day. In consultation with the Vestry, I have decided to have our Easter services conform to our regular Sunday service schedule. At 8:00 a.m. we will have the Easter Eucharist with hymns. We will incorporate elements of the Easter Vigil into this service.

The 10:00 a.m. service will be the parish Festival Easter Eucharist with choirs, trumpet and a grand Easter procession. We hope that service will attract most of the parish family. Following the service we will have the Easter Egg Hunt and a reception for those of us who no longer do Easter egg hunts. Easter Day will finish with a said Eucharist at 6:00 p.m.

Looking back a week to Palm Sunday, we are trying to put together a little reenactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to be done by our Sunday School as part of the 10:00 a.m. liturgy. It should be a good way in which to involve our children in Holy Week.

In Holy Week, the *triduum sacrum* (three sacred days) are of greatest importance. These begin with Maundy Thursday, continue with Good Friday and conclude with Holy Saturday. On Maundy Thursday we commemorate the institution of the Holy Eucharist with services at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd and at 7:30 p.m. in the church. The church will remain open until 10:00 p.m. for prayer and meditation.

On Good Friday the church will be opened at 9:00 a.m. and will remain open until 3:00 p.m. At 12 noon the Liturgy of Good Friday will take place, including the reception of Holy Communion from the reserved sacrament at the altar of repose. Good Friday will conclude with a service of meditations on the Way of the Cross at 7:30 p.m.

Enclosed is an envelope for your use at Easter. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

I wish to each of you a most holy Holy Week and a blessed Easter.

Sincerely,

On Holy Week and Easter

The week from Palm Sunday to Easter is the most holy week in the life of the Church. The liturgies used in that week are the most elaborate, ancient and theologically rich. Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday, when the Church commemorates the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-10; Luke 19:29-40 and John 12:12-19). Since it was the week prior to the Passover, Jerusalem was filled with religious pilgrims. When Jesus came up to Jerusalem, he was greeted by followers, well-wishers and those who were curious about "the phenomenon from Galilee." When Jesus began his journey into the Holy City, spontaneous celebrations broke out to herald his entry with palms strewn along the way. To this day we mark that entry while also keeping in mind very different events during the remainder of the week, which would lead to Jesus death.

After Palm Sunday there are three quiet days. The quietness ends on Wednesday evening, which is, from the church's perspective, already Maundy Thursday. (Note that "church days" start after Evening Prayer on the previous day and run until the following Evening Prayer). The liturgy of Maundy Thursday commemorates the last full day of Jesus' life from the perspective of the Synoptic Gospels (the institution of the Last Supper) and from John's Gospel (the washing of the disciples feet and the giving of the new commandment" [*mandatum novum*, from which we get the English word "Maundy"]), which is that the disciples should love one another as Jesus loves them. The service concludes with the removal of the reserved sacrament (the consecrated bread; the consecrated wine is consumed, not reserved at the service) to the altar of repose, which is in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

On Good Friday the ancient liturgy is traditionally celebrated at noon. It has Solemn Collects, Lessons, the reading of the Passion from the Gospel of John, the Veneration of the Cross and the distribution of the Holy Eucharist from the reserved sacrament which is returned to the church from the altar of repose as part of the liturgy. The liturgy concludes around 1:00 p.m., but the church remains open until 3:00 p.m. when prayers commemorate the death of our Lord. In addition to that liturgy, we will have meditations on the Way of the Cross, a medieval tradition more connected with Fridays in Lent than with Good Friday. Although the *Stabat Mater* is often associated with the Way of the Cross, its inclusion is rather modern. The Way of the Cross should not supplant the Liturgy of Good Friday.

The early church had a tradition of beginning their Easter celebration after sundown on Holy Saturday. Most often the Easter celebration began late at night and continued until after sun-up. That became the origin of the tradition mostly found in Protestant and Evangelical churches today to have Easter sunrise services. The Easter Eve service, more properly known as the Vigil and first Mass of Easter is an elaborate service which begins the lighting of a new fire, followed by history stories and prophecies from the Hebrew and scriptures, baptisms and the renewal of baptismal vows and culminates with a festival Eucharist. We will incorporate some of the Vigil into our 'early' service of Easter morning.

The Word of the Month

This month's word is actually two words (hyphenated, if you like) and comes compliments of Bob Carpenter. The words are "the whole Megillah" or in the slang, the "whole megillah." The origins of the phrase come from the story in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Esther who became the favorite consort of the Persian King Ahasuerus.

Esther was a Jew who lived in Persia, along with other Jews at the time when the Jews were in exile. Esther's uncle, Mordecai, failed to honor the king and the king's officials, led by Haman, sought not only to kill Mordicai, but also all the Jews living in Persia. Esther persuaded King Ahasuerus to grant her one wish. She told the king she wanted her uncle and her people to be protected from Haman and to live in freedom within Persia. Ahasuerus granted her wish, Haman was executed, her uncle was honored and the Jews were saved. A great celebration followed, which was known as *Purim*. That day is still celebrated by Jewish people around the world.

Megillah is the name of the scripture scroll on which the book of Esther was written. At Purim the story of Esther was read. Although the book of Esther is not long (by Biblical standards), there have always been people who wished for the reading of the story to be fore-shortened so the party could begin. Sticklers for propriety demanded that the 'whole Megillah be read.' Over time the term megillah has come to represent anything that is long and tedious.

A Book Review

More than 30 years ago, when I was first at Christ Church, there was great excitement about Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book *On Death and Dying*. In it Dr. Kubler-Ross set out a way to understand the human emotions that surround grief, especially as it applies to the death process. For clergy and health care professionals, it set out new ways in which to deal with patients and their loved-ones.

Sixteen years ago I set off on a hiatus from pastoral care. From 1990 to 2004 I performed only one funeral. Coming back into the ministry of a parish church, I have again dealt with families at the time of the death of loved-ones and the liturgical acts the surround a death. Like Rip Van Winkle, awakened from a long-slumber, I have been struck by how funerals have changed over the last 15 years. Most notable are the 'remembrances' that have come into the church as an important if not central part of the liturgy.

I do not complain in any way about remembrances. In many ways they add greatly to the personal nature of the funeral services; however, they are a major change in liturgy as a reflection of current perceptions of death and grieving.

A new book by Sandra Gilbert addresses these issues in a compassionate and comprehensive way. *Death's Door: Modern Dying and the Ways We Grieve* is a meticulously researched and well written study of how we perceive and deal with death. It is more scholarly than the Kubler-Ross' book and is less prone to the tired clichés of the self-help world, but it remains accessible and stimulating. I highly recommend it.

Outreach to New Orleans and the Gulf Coast

Because of Father Lowry's connections to New Orleans and the general desire to help a city and region that has suffered so greatly, there has been a special interest at Christ Church to have an outreach project for New Orleans and the surrounding area. Right after Hurricane Katrina hit, a plan was put forward to resettle a family to Manhasset. However, events in New Orleans and the way in which the government was proceeding with aiding individuals and groups in that region made direct aid at that time difficult. In many ways, seven months after the hurricane, there is still a high level of chaos surrounding relief and redevelopment which makes meaningful and helpful actions by 'outsider' difficult. Although people regularly say that 'outsiders can't appreciate the

devastation that Katrina wrought' with seeing it firsthand, our seeing the damage firsthand does not help those who have lost so much. Hence, I have been reluctant to move forward until it is clear that we can do something that is of help to others and not just address our need to help.

It appears that by this summer we can be of greater direct help—that is beyond just giving funds to Episcopal Relief and Development—to New Orleans and the Gulf region. Soon, FEMA should have their revised flood maps which will be used to determine where houses can be insured against flooding. Uncertainty about the FEMA maps has stopped most building programs. When it is determined which areas can be insured for housing, a number of housing programs will commence, one of which will be built behind Christ Church Cathedral, where Father Lowry served as Dean.

We will need willing hands and some skills to be of help in New Orleans. We will also need the contributions of other parishioners to make "From Christ Church to Christ Church" work. To start planning for this program, Father Lowry would like to meet with interested people in the parish (and the community) on Sunday, April 23 at 11:30 a.m. We will need to see whether there are sufficient workers willing to go to New Orleans in the summer (when it is very hot) to work as laborers for most of a week to help build affordable housing for those who have lost their houses.

View from the Loft

Goings on

On March 12, the second Sunday of Lent, our Adult Choir joined with the Garden City Community Choir in singing Part II of Händel's *Messiah* with orchestra. This was not only a fun musical experience, but also begins a relationship with a denomination slightly different from our familiar Episcopal home. The Garden City Community Choir has been invited to Christ Church for a 4PM Evensong service when we will sing Herbert Howells' *Magnificat & Nunc Dimittis [Collegium Regale]* and C. H. Hubert Parry's *Hear My Words, Ye People* – a cantata which features the anthem, *He Delivered the Poor in Their Affliction* and ends with the hymn, *O Praise Ye the Lord*. We had anticipated May 21 as the date for that, but will have to postpone until October.

Meanwhile, back at Christ Church on March 12, our Children's Choir was "in the driver's seat", leading the Christ Church congregation in its worship - and what a fine job they did! Those members present were commissioned as choristers. On April 2, the children joined with the adults to sing Mendelssohn's beautiful cantata *Hear My Prayer* - a cantata for solo soprano and choir, the text of which is a paraphrase of portions of Psalm 55. A job superbly done – thanks to all!

Music for Holy Week & Easter

On Palm Sunday, the anthem at the offertory will again be from Händel's *Messiah*; the text expresses one of the central tenets of our faith: "With His stripes we are healed" as well as describing one of our most human attributes: "All we like sheep have gone astray, everyone to his own way." On Maundy Thursday – the celebration of the first Eucharist - we will sing "Hail, True Body" of William Byrd, one of the brilliant English composers of sacred music during the Tudor period when, depending upon who was on the throne, composers were required to set Latin texts one day and English the next. During Communion that evening, we will sing David Hurd's tune to "O Sacred Head, Sore-Wounded; Dr. Hurd is the Organist and Professor of Music at General Theological Seminary in New York City. His music blends stunningly beautiful melodies with the rich

African-American harmonizations of his culture. The Good Friday liturgy in the evening will combine literary and musical meditations on the Way of the Cross. Music of Thomas Morley, a lesser-known Tudor composer; William Billings, the pride of 18th century American composition; Giovanni Pergolesi, the 18th century Italian art-song composer; and 19th century England's Samuel Sebastian Wesley, whose music reflects his great admiration for the composers of the Viennese classical period – Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven. On Easter Sunday, we will celebrate the Resurrection with the Hallelujah Chorus from *Messiah* and the Communion motet *Exsultate Deo* of Alessandro Scarlatti, the 17th century Italian opera composer.

There will be no choir rehearsals Easter week.

And the end note:

Because we are winding down towards the end of the choir year, I would like to invite and encourage prospective members of the Children's and Adult Choirs to visit with us. This is a wonderful time for those who are considering making a commitment to one of the choirs to sit in on a rehearsal or two – test the waters, so to speak. The pressure will be considerably off the children, especially after Easter and I encourage parents and children to join with us. We accomplish a great deal of work, but we do have fun learning more in depth something that is within our being waiting to be nurtured.

Because of circumstances beyond our control, we have postponed the anticipated Adult Choir performance of Purcell's *Come, Ye Sons of Art*. We will, however, sing Haydn's mass, *St. John of God*, as part of the liturgy on Sunday, April 30.

As always, many thanks for your words of support and we sincerely hope to see more of you **in** the choirs soon!

**SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST ARE HELD AT
8 AM, RITE I; 10 AM AND 6 PM RITE II**

BIBLE STUDY IS AT 9 AM

CHURCH SCHOOL IS AT 9:30 AM

THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR REHEARSES ON TUESDAY EVENING AT 5:30 PM

THE LENTEN PROGRAM WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY EVENING AT 7 PM

THE THURSDAY CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS AT 10 AM

THE ADULT CHOIR REHEARSES ON THURSDAY EVENING AT 7:30 PM

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THE LAST SUNDAY OF LENT – APRIL 2, 2006 AT 8AM, 10AM AND 6PM

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-2, 11-16; Hebrews 5:1-4, 5-10, John 12:20-33

THE SUNDAY OF THE PASSION: PALM SUNDAY – APRIL 9, 2006

Isaiah 45:21-25; Psalm 22:1-11; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:32-72, 15:1-39, 40-47

8am Blessing of the Palms & Holy Eucharist

10am Blessing of the Palms, Sunday School reenactment of the Palm Gospel
& Holy Eucharist

MAUNDY THURSDAY – APRIL 13, 2006—10AM & 7:30PM

Exodus, 12:1-4, 5-10, 11-14; Psalm 116:1, 20-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, John 13:1-15

7:30pm Commemoration of the Last Supper, the Foot Washing,
Procession to the Altar of Repose and Stripping of the Altar
(The church remains open until 10pm for prayer)

GOOD FRIDAY – APRIL 14, 2006—12NOON & 7:30PM

Isaiah 52-13-53:12, Psalm 40:1-14; Hebrews 10:1-25; John 19:1-37

(The church opens at **9am** for prayer and meditation)

12noon Good Friday Liturgy with Sermon

(The church remains open until **3pm** for prayer and meditation)

7:30pm Meditations on the way of the cross

EASTER DAY – APRIL 16, 2006

Isaiah 51:9-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 28:1-10

8am Lighting of the New Fire and Holy Eucharist

10am Festival Eucharist

EASTER 2 – APRIL 23, 2006

Isaiah 26:2-9, 19; Psalm 111; Acts 3:12, 13-15, 17-26; John 20:19-31

EASTER 3 – APRIL 30, 2006

Micah 4:1-15; Psalm 98; Acts 4:5-12; Luke 24:36-48

*Special Easter Offering envelopes have been enclosed for your convenience,
or you may pick one up in the rear of the church.*

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