



The St. Francis Bulletin

FROM THE RECTOR:

Since Easter is extremely early this year, Lent begins extremely early. Ash Wednesday is February 6. As usual we will have a Holy Communion service with the distribution of ashes at 12:00 pm. We will also have Stations of the Cross with the distribution of ashes at 7:00 pm. The gospel reading for Ash Wednesday points to three different activities that enhance our spiritual life that we should practice, not just in Lent but especially so during Lent. Fasting, prayer and alms giving are the three areas of concern in Matthew's Gospel. Each one of these is integral to our spiritual life. Jesus makes it clear that these things are not optional when he says "When you fast...When you give alms....When you pray." Not if, but when. The reason why these things are so important is that they take the focus away from us and place it either on God or on his people and bring to mind the great commandments of the law, the love of God with all your heart and mind and soul and the love of our neighbor as ourselves. These Lenten disciplines are essential to train us for the Christian life. They are not meant to be "penance" simply for Lent or during Lent, but spiritual training to last the year round. While Lent is a time of special focus for these disciplines, they are disciplines that we need to continue

after Lent is over. Perhaps not on as rigorous a schedule as we observe during Lent but certainly as part of our overall spiritual life. Prayer and fasting place our attention on God, and alms giving on our neighbor. By focusing less on ourselves we train ourselves to be less self-centered and more other-centered. This is the kingdom of God in its truest form where love abounds, love of God and love of our neighbor. Schedule these activities into your busy schedules. That's the only way it will happen. Good intentions are simply that. But they won't get the job done. For those of you who have never tried any of these things, it is never too late. Heroic effort is not required but some effort is. Don't put this off another Lent. Plan to make this Lent a productive one.

Annual Parish Meeting

Sunday, February 3, is the date for our annual parish meeting. Those who are in charge of ministries in the parish are preparing their reports for inclusion in a booklet that will be given to everyone. This will speed the meeting itself and allow for other business to take place. As usual we will need to elect new Vestry members. The terms of two of our Vestry members are expiring, Claire Ducker and our Treasurer, Don Watkins. Don has indicated a willingness to run for another term. Claire has

decided to step down for the time being. Mike Ready has indicated a willingness to serve on the Vestry, therefore the Vestry will be submitting the names of Don Watkins and Mike Ready for three year terms. Nominations will be accepted from the floor and a vote will be taken. I want to thank Claire personally for her two years of service on the Vestry. Everyone who serves on the Vestry or any other committee or office in the parish deserves our gratitude. These positions can sometimes be challenging and those who are willing to serve need our support and encouragement.

A Word About Tithing

It is rare that I say anything to you about giving other than my annual sermon to begin the Pledge Drive. I think there may be some misconception about tithing and I would like to address the practice in a little detail. First of all, tithing is a command of God, and a challenge. God invites us to test him in this. God says that He will pour out blessing on those who heed his challenge. It is not about what I think I can afford or what of my leftovers I can share with God or others. God says that He wants our best and He wants it first. He will take care of the rest. It is ultimately an act of faith. The question is whether or not I trust God to make good on his promises to me. I usually suggest that half of the tithe go to the church and half to other works of God. This is a suggestion not a rule. But how you divide your tithe should be a decision that you make with God's help. If you pray about how God wants you to divide your tithe the parish will be fine. This is really simple. Honor God with your tithes and He will prosper you. Believe and act.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Prayer Shawl Ministry Group will meet on Saturday, February 2, and the first Saturday of every month, at 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall. Anyone interested in joining this group is welcome.

The Prayer Shawl group knits and crochets shawls with prayer and love to be given to anyone who could benefit from the warmth and comfort they bring. If you know of anyone you would like to see receive one, please call Phoebe Hughes at 476-6216.



MOTHERS' PRAYER GROUP

All mothers and grandmothers of the church are invited to attend the mothers' prayer group, held in the Parish Hall. The group spends an hour on the second Monday of every month at 11 a.m. praying for their families.

God, help me in my times of trial to remember that You understand my situation and You care. Give me the strength to hang on. And, in times that are good, let me give thanks and remember those who are suffering, that I might pray for them to persevere in and through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Submitted by Fr. Mike Keppler, Sr.

Men!

St. Polycarp of Smyrna Men's Guild needs you!

Shrove Tuesday is quickly coming up, and we're on deck to host the event!!!

Please refer to the *St. Polycarp of Smyrna Men's Guild* Google page for more information.

PARISHIONERS OF ST. FRANCIS, BEWARE!!

Attend at your own risk the annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**, held at the **Parish Hall on February 5th** from 7:00 pm to whenever the men of St. Polycarp of Smyrna Men's Guild tire of cooking. Overeating and over socializing have been know to occur!

ALL ARE WELCOME AND BRING YOUR APPETITE!



Birthdays

2	Erin Darling
4	John Gaitan Jim Britt
5	Patricia Burnette
7	Burt Pigg
8	Tristan Jensen
9	Kyle Read
11	Elizabeth Elliott
12	Mike Ready
18	Liz Stewart
24	Callie Burnette

Anniversaries

14	John and Wanda Stults
17	Jay and Sheri Brummett
19	Tim and Elaine Williams
20	Warren and Liz Stewart



Rector: The Reverend Len Giacolone
Senior Warden: Mark Rambin
Junior Warden: Keith Harrell

Associate Rector: The Reverend John Stults
Organist: Paula Blaha
Server: Ray Merrill

Newsletter Submissions

Any parishioner that has news of any kind they would like to share with everyone is welcome to send it in writing to Tricia Denslow at 640 B Lakeside Dr., Wimberley, TX 78676 or to her e-mail address (triciadenslow@yahoo.com). If received **by the 20th**, it will appear in next month's newsletter.

St. Francis Episcopal Church

1408 West 9th Street
Austin, Texas 78703

February

2008

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| 1 | <i>Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm Church
Game Night, 6:30 pm</i> | 12 | <i>Adult Education, 7:00 pm Parish Hall</i> |
| 2 | <i>Prayer Shawl Ministry Group, 11:00 a.m</i> | 13 | <i>Stations of the Cross, 7:00 pm</i> |
| 3 | <i><u>Holy Communion, 9:30 am, Morning
Prayer and Holy Communion, 11:00 am,</u></i>
Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 99
(Philippians 3:7-14), Matthew 17:1-9
<i>Children's Sunday School, 9:30 am Parish
Hall</i> | 15 | <i>Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm Church</i> |
| 3 | <i>Annual Parish Meeting after the 11:00 am
service</i> | 17 | <i><u>Holy Communion, 9:30 am and 11:00 am,</u></i>
Genesis 12:1-18, Psalm 33:12-22
Romans 4:1-17, John 3:1-17
<i>Children's Sunday School, 9:30 am Parish
Hall</i> |
| 5 | <i>Pancake and Sausage Supper, 7pm</i> | 19 | <i>Adult Education, 7:00 pm Parish Hall</i> |
| 6 | <i><u>Ash Wednesday, Holy Communion 12:00pm</u>
Isaiah 58:1-12, Psalm 103
2 Cor. 5:20b-6:10, Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
<i>Stations of the Cross, 7:00 pm</i></i> | 20 | <i>Stations of the Cross, 7:00 pm</i> |
| 8 | <i>Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm Church</i> | 24 | <i><u>Holy Communion, 9:30 am and 11:00 am,</u>
Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95
Romans 5:1-11, John 4:
<i>Children's Sunday School, 9:30 am Parish
Hall</i></i> |
| 10 | <i><u>Holy Communion, 9:30 am and 11:00 am,</u>
Gen. 2:4b-9,15-17,25-3:7, Psalm 51
Romans 5:12-21, Matthew 4:1-11
<i>Children's Sunday School, 9:30 am Parish
Hall</i></i> | 22 | <i>Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm Church</i> |
| 11 | <i>Mothers' and Grandmothers' Prayer Group,
11:00 am</i> | 26 | <i>Adult Education, 7:00 pm Parish Hall</i> |
| | | 27 | <i>Stations of the Cross, 7:00 pm</i> |
| | | 29 | <i>Evening Prayer, 6:00 pm Church</i> |