

- A GRAIN OF MUSTARDSEED -

Dear Friends in Christ,

February 2023

We enter the month with the celebration of one of those oft-overlooked but terribly important feasts of the Christian Kalendar: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin or Candlemas on Thursday, February 2nd. Forty days after Christmas the Blessed Virgin fulfilled the requirements of the law by bringing herself to the Temple in Jerusalem (a short journey from Bethlehem) both for a service of thanksgiving and ritual purification (blood, even that associated with childbirth, made one ritually unclean) and to dedicate her firstborn son to the Lord. In earlier times the eve of Candlemas was the time to remove Christmas decorations, it being the last event relative to Christ's birth celebrated by the Church. The 17th century English poet and priest Robert Herrick wrote: *"Down with the rosemary and bays, Down with the mistletoe; Instead of the holly, now up-raise The greener box (for show). The holly hitherto did sway: Let box now domineer, Until the dancing Easter day, Or Easter's eve apper."* In the midst of Epiphany (Candlemas can never fall in Lent as Ash Wednesday can never be earlier than February 4th) the feast marked an end to Christmas joys and a turning toward the solemn tone of the pre-Lent "gesima" Sundays. And so just three afterward, on Septuagesima, we move from the manifestations of God's wisdom and power in Jesus to our preparing for the contemplation of the deepest consequences of these manifestations and the yet more profound display of God's wisdom and power in Christ's suffering and Passion. We move from the "signs" of teaching and miracle to an application of these in our lives in various spiritual exercises. I say "exercises" because the Church has traditionally recognized the "gesima" Sundays as 'training' period before Lent begins on the 22nd (Ash Wednesday). Saint Paul, in the Epistle readings from First and Second Corinthians on these Sundays, reminds us that we must train ourselves, soul and body, in the disciplines of cardinal and theological virtue, just like a runner prepares himself for a race. If athletes of Paul's day did all this hard work for the "corruptible crown" of laurel, how much more ought we to prepare ourselves for the "Crown of Glory that fadeth not away?"

Yours in Christ, Edward L. Rix

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM is the first Sunday of February (the 5th) and begins at 11:30 a.m. This is not only a good time to be informed of and reflect on our last year as a parish, it's also a good time for fellowship so please plan to be with us that day for worship, the meeting, and lunch. As last year, assorted sandwiches and chili, coffee, tea and lemonade will be provided. We ask everyone to make a cash contribution of \$5.00 per adult and \$2.00 per child (or simply as you are able) toward the cost of lunch and, if desired, to bring beverages of your choice.

VESTRY

The Vestry Nominating Committee, this year Charles Rhodes, Perrin Hamilton and Deborah Conley, never has an easy job, but this year it has proven especially difficult with all potential nominees, at the time of this writing, having declined to stand for election. The Wardens in considering the various reasons folks have given to decline nominations are moving to change our monthly Vestry meeting time from the third Monday evening of the month to noon on the third Sunday of the Month. We hope that this will remove some barriers such as night-time driving and allow people to reconsider service on the Vestry. We, like many institutions, are experiencing both the consequences of an aging membership and (particularly in the Church) the post-COVID hesitancy of many to return to active membership in the Body. Quite frankly, **WE NEED YOU!** We need you to take your place in the active life of worship and service in **YOUR PARISH**. And where possible and appropriate, we need the active members of our parish to take their place and turn in leadership.

SHROVE TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21st

On Shrove Tuesday we take time to examine our consciences before the beginning of Lent and, if desired, make our confessions ("shrove" means "to absolve sins confessed.") Fr. Rix is available if you wish to do so. Shrove Tuesday is also a traditional time to clear the larder of rich things like eggs, butter, and cream (pancakes anyone?!). We will have our traditional Pancake Supper at 6:00 p.m. that day.

ASH WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22nd

As in past years, we will have three services on Ash Wednesday. At 7:00 a.m. we will have the Penitential Rite, Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion in the Lady Chapel. At 10:00 a.m. (Lady Chapel) and 7:00 p.m. (Church) we repeat these services and add the Litany. Additionally the evening service will be sung. Note also the brochure of Lenten Activities included in this mailing

THE BARRS ARE MOVING ON

After almost four very happy and faithful years of service to our parish, James Barr our Sexton and Verger has accepted a position with one of our parish's excellent outreach partners, Harvest Ministries. Jim's expertise in writing and development makes him a natural fit for the job and we rejoice with him and Beth as they begin this new phase in their lives and ministry in March. We anticipate their last Sunday with us being February 26th. We hope that you will join us that day at Coffee Hour (11:30 am) as we bid them god-speed.

"The kingdom of God...is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it." *St. Luke 13:18-19*