

Invitation to a holy Lent

"I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent..."

So says part of our Ash Wednesday liturgy to mark the beginning of our Lent, the preparatory, and yes, penitential, season prior to Easter. I think two words are worth considering in that phrase: invite and holy.

Invite: There are numerous other words that the framers of our Prayer Book could have used. The phrase could say compel or require or insist or many other verbs that imply demand. Yet, our liturgy says invite. The choice is yours. The Church cannot force you into anything. However, the Church can encourage you to grow and to seek a deeper relationship with God. That is the purpose of Lent. Yes, the season involves penitential work. All of us are flawed. We have all been broken at times in life. We all need healing. We all need God. In Lent the Church calls us to reflection, repentance, and recreation. It is an invitation. It is yours to accept or to ignore.

What is the Church inviting you to? A holy Lent.

Holy: Biblically speaking holy does not mean morally superior or intrinsically pure. Its basic meaning is to set something apart. The chalice, the altar, the bread, the wine, are all holy because we have set them apart to speak to us spiritually. The chalice is more than a goblet because we use it to deliver the wine, which is more than wine, because we receive it as the Blood of Christ. These things are holy because we set them apart from their day-to-day nature and use and receive them to encounter God. Lent is a holy season because we set aside these forty days to consider our God, ourselves and others and how they intersect and reveal life to us.

You are invited, not compelled, to a holy Lent, a time to seek God anew, to receive grace afresh.

—Fr. Tom



**Imposition of ashes and
Holy Eucharist
Noon and 5 p.m.
Wednesday, March 6, 2019**

That smudge on your forehead isn't just to remind you that you are from dust and will return to dust. It also serves as a role eraser.

On this day you stand before your neighbor without pretensions, without smarts, good looks, accomplishments and worldly riches. You are, on Ash Wednesday at least, your primal self. The first Adam. The first Eve. No roles, no masks.

You recognize on this day that all your earthly endeavors, good, bad and indifferent, will decay, along with your mortal shell.

This is far from being an occasion for despair. Freed from the need to impress, we can turn our prayerful attention to the things that matter for ever. Instead of a glum, hangdog look while pondering a return to ashes, we are entering a time of preparation, assured of a favorable outcome because of our knowledge of God's love and mercy. Easter is coming.

Forty ways to keep a holy Lent

- Write a thank you note to your spouse or best friend.
- Say no to at least one request of your time each week for the right reason.
- Consider how you can declare a blessing each time you utter a curse.
- Eat from your freezer and/or pantry.
- Give the money you have saved to a hunger ministry.
- Make sure each Sunday is a celebration of something.
- Keep a dream journal.
- Consider very carefully any discipline you choose. Will it bring life or be a burden?
- Read Ron del Bene's book, *The Breath of Life*.
- Give up any news source that propagates anxiety, anger or negative feelings.
- Choose a single day to focus on how many times you say the word, "I."
- Plant some snapdragons, or pansies, some annuals.
- Try attending the other Sunday service.
- Pray for your neighbors, especially those you don't like.
- Pray daily for someone you need to forgive.
- Read that book you have been meaning to read.
- Reread your favorite book or the book that you first fell in love with.
- Walk.
- Change the place where you sit at the kitchen table.
- Visit a loved one's grave.
- Go to the gulf to enjoy the sunset.
- Pray for the person behind you in the line in the supermarket.
- Make a list of three things you do well and enjoy doing.
- Find a way to do those things at least once in a week.



Want to be inspired by some saintly souls this Lent and have fun along the way? Join with thousands of Christians across denominations who have discovered the joyful online learning community that is Lent Madness.

With its unique blend of competition, education, and humor, Lent Madness allows participants to be inspired by the ways in which God has worked through the lives of saints over the generations. Based loosely on the NCAA basketball tournament of a similar name, this online devotion pits 32 saints against one another in a single-elimination bracket as voters choose their favorites throughout Lent.

Check it out at <https://www.lentmadness.org>

- When something beautiful catches your eye, stop and enjoy it.
- Turn off the TV or internet or cell phone.
- Pray for an international area of conflict at least one a week.
- Read a novel or rent a video from another culture, e.g. Muslim, Eastern, Native American, African-American.
- Drive in silence.
- Sleep one day a week without an alarm clock.
- Try a fast from dinner to dinner (this way you only miss two meals).
- Try saying Morning Prayer or Evening Prayer each day.
- Read a Gospel in one sitting.
- Hand wash your dishes once a week, consider how this might be an exercise in prayer.
- Sit outside one evening a week while the day turns into evening or as the sun rises.
- Read Forward Day by Day. Take note of the Bible readings and prayer suggestions at the bottom of the page.
- Change one habit for the sake of the environment.
- Live so you are able to love. Love so you are able to live.
- Draw or create your own sacred image.
- Breathe deeply for thirty seconds, three times a day.
- Greet another with the same joy as your dog greets you.
- Collect your pocket change and give it to a good cause.
- Make dinner for a friend. If possible, do it anonymously.
- Eat more fruits and vegetables. Buy them from local farmers, a co-op, or farmer's market.
- Pray before each meal.
- Consider how an issue of temptation can become an opportunity for prayer.
- Try a quiet day, a day of retreat.
- Pray through the Parish Directory.



The 4th Annual Saint Paul's All-Parish
"Spring Ahead" Luncheon

Sunday, March 17, 2019

After the 10 AM Service in Trinity Hall



Featuring: **The Rev. Dr. Thomas Thoeni**, Rector, Saint Paul's Episcopal Church
and

Special Guest: **The Rev. Canon Chris Gray**, Diocesan Director of Development

This is a great opportunity for all members of the congregation to fellowship together and to learn how we may help plan for the future of Saint Paul's. The "Spring Ahead" theme is a time to look forward and also a chance to wish our snow birds a joyous and healthy summer until they return in a few months.

Please support your church by attending this **"POT-LUCK"** luncheon.

Sign up in Trinity Hall to bring a dish or call the church office.

Deadline is Tuesday March 12.

Sponsored by: The Society of Saint Paul's

Financial Report

We are off and running here in 2019. The 2019 budget has been completed and accepted by the vestry, and the work on the remodeled rectory is nearing completion. We will soon begin working on the 2019 diocese audit.

The bad news is that our 2019 budget shows that our expenses exceed our revenues. The good news is that our 2019 number of pledges has increased, as have the amounts pledged. The Finance Committee will be working diligently to identify ways to increase revenue and reduce costs. We are already in the process of moving some of our savings from one bank to another in an effort to receive higher interest rates.

Our Farmers' Market, pancake breakfasts, and concerts have been doing very well, so we have high hopes that we will be able to turn around our financial situation.

—Dave Abernethy

Front-page celebrity at St. Paul's

For sure many of you read the wonderful story about Evie Dickerson on the front page of *The Naples Daily News* January 8, but you may not know that she attends St. Paul's.

'Miss Evie', who is 94, says, "It was time." Time for her to retire from Wynn's Market this May where she has worked in the accounting office for more than 60 years!

It is not an easy decision for her to make. Right now, she gets up early to work three days a week in "the new place." (Wynn's moved to their present location on US 41 from 5th Avenue more than a decade ago). She works as bookkeeper but prefers to be called executive controller. She also answers numerous telephone calls. "Everyone loves Miss Evie," says Tina Pryor, a co-worker for 19 years.



Tim Wynn, who took over the store from his dad, says that Evie is like a second mom to him. Evie has travelled to Europe with the Wynn's and on her 50th anniversary of working there she was presented with a Mercedes sports car that she

still has today.

Like many of us, Evie was intimidated by her first computer and she learned how to use it during overtime. Finally, after a week, she was able to return to work "happy" again.

During World War II, Evie gave up college to help build airplanes and at that time was writing letters to her future husband. She began working at Wynn's in 1954 after she and her husband moved here from Fort Myers. Evie has been a widow for 25 years and has four children and 30 grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Look for Evie, her son, Gary, her daughter-in-law, Paulette and her granddaughter Hailey at either the 8 o'clock service or the 10 o'clock service at St. Paul's.

Have you met...?

Gale Bones joined us early in 2018 after discovering St. Paul's through visits to the Farmers' Market. "I liked shopping the market while staying with my son Rick, and the church seemed nice."

Without actually speaking to any members at the time; she did not know we were identifiable by the orange shirts, she chose to attend because of its relative proximity to where she was staying at the time and that it was Episcopal; her previous church of choice.

Gail was born and grew up (through high school) in Meridan, Conn. Following graduation she enlisted in the U.S. Navy where she served for three years as a corpswave.

Ms. Bones met and wed her husband while serving in the Navy;



he a corpsman, and they raised three children during his tenure in the service.

When Gail's second husband passed away while residing in Michigan, her son began to woo her to SW Florida and obviously convinced her to migrate south.

Gail attends the 8 a.m. service, but we "ten oclockers" will have ample time to get to know her as well because she is a year-round resident. Her first reaction to St Paul's was to its friendliness. Her attraction to the Episcopal faith is its liturgical format; especially its attention to Bible readings.

Many of us have already become familiar with this outgoing person and she has already begun to contribute her time by serving on this year's stewardship committee.

If you haven't yet met Gail Bones, please be sure to welcome her aboard (couldn't resist the Navy reference) when next you see her.

—Ken Eastlack

Ken will be writing introductions to our newest parishioners for **Pathway**

Our ministry of healing

The ministry of healing is as old as the Christian faith itself. Indeed, Jesus himself quite notably in scripture narrative originated the concept. Later, through the power of the Holy Spirit, some of the twelve are also credited with performing the same ministry.

I am by no means a biblical scholar, but I personally do not recall any biblical reference of the healing ministry being practiced by the laying on of hands and prayer of whole communities or even small groups; though there may well have been. Still, among today's faithful it is common practice.

Many of us attending the 10 a.m. service a while back were given the opportunity to partake in in this particular method of healing touch and prayer at the invitation of Fr. Tom as he called us to come together and do so with our brother in Christ, Anthony Cimaglia.

This was a first for me here; a relative newcomer, at St Paul's and even though I'd partaken in similar calls at other sites, this experience was particularly notable. I was moved by the overwhelming response of my fellow parishioners, the seeming sense of awe felt by the recipient, and an overall feeling of oneness by this particular body of Christ, at that particular moment. This personal reaction has been affirmed by others I've spoken to since.

Add to this the continued act of holding Anthony and his wife Judy up in our personal and Sunday corporate prayers over the ensuing weeks of Tony's surgery and recovery, there is little wonder that,



**Jesus
the
Healer**

as the lord had promised, "When two or more of you are gathered in my name. I am with you." ... healing did occur.

Two Sundays ago we joyfully celebrated mass with our brother Anthony once more among us. And, as Fr. Tom prayerfully gave thanks, as did Anthony and Judy, I again felt that very warm sense of oneness ... me, us, and the Holy Trinity. The

healing ministry can truly go well beyond its intended outcome.

Keep your spiritual hands, and healing prayer upon all who need healing in the world, in our nation, in our community, in our parish, in our relationships, and in our hearts. Anthony, Judy, our prayers remain with you.

Amen, amen!

— Ken Eastlack

Prayer Team

Every Sunday we pray for those on our parish prayer list, but the prayers don't stop there. The list is kept up to date by Deb Avery, our administrative assistant. A dozen or so on the informal prayer team pray daily for these folks.

Tell Deb if you would like to join this healing ministry.

Pop, Gospel, Country, Broadway, Jazz, Dance, Classical

Billy Dean and Dawn



CONCERT

Monday March 25, 7 p.m.

\$20 tickets at SaintPaulsNaples.org,
St. Paul Farmers' Market,
Between Sunday Worship Services and
St. Paul Office Mon-Fri a.m.
3901 Davis Blvd. (239)643-0197

