

# THE EPISTLE

RIDGEWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
MARCH, 2009

OF ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH



Dear people of God,

Ash Wednesday was just last night. Instead of the usual sermon, I offered a meditation to those present. It seems to have had a significant impact on those who heard it. I know that when I wrote it that it had a significant impact on me. Hence I thought it appropriate to use it as my message to you in this newsletter; it appears below.

Epiphany, the season of Light if you will, ends with Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. And, Lent is meant to be a season of reflection about our relationship with our Lord.

Lent officially starts with the service of ashes. Why ashes? How are ashes meant to symbolize our relationship with the Lord? How is being reminded that I am but dust supposed to bring me closer to God?

Well, in antiquity, ashes were associated with sackcloth. In times of mourning, people would put on sackcloth and sit in the ashes – in the dark – and they placed ashes on their heads. They would first take off all their finery and jewels; women would also remove their makeup; and, the men their rings. At this point they were reduced to the basics; sackcloth for clothing and ashes for finery. It was symbolic of returning to the dust from which they were made. And, there they mourned their loss.

So how does that translate to us? What, or who, are we to mourn? The Light of Epiphany, culminated in the Transfiguration, is gone and we begin Lent with the Imposition of Ashes. Our own death is indeed in view, but it is NOT our physical death that we mourn. In the terms of Holy Scripture, death is sin and sin is separation from God.

We are all imperfect. I know, I know, it's hard to believe; particularly in today's world. But, in the words of Paul, we all fall short of the glory of God. Yet, the Lord our God is the Holy One who made us in his image. The Lord our God is the Holy One who desires our return to him. The Lord our God is the Holy One who wishes us to realize how utterly dependent we are upon him.

That is why we kneel and have ashes imposed on our foreheads. We are meant to acknowledge our Creator. We are meant to consider and acknowledge before him our own sinfulness, our own separation from his holiness. We are meant to mourn our death. And, we are meant to spend the next forty days examining who we are before the Lord God our Creator; who we are before his holiness; where we need to attend our relationship with him.

But where is the hope? Where is the good news? Consider this question, are the ashes imposed on our foreheads as just some smudge? No! The ashes are imposed in the sign of the cross. Why? As a reminder that Jesus of Nazareth went to the cross that our sins might be forgiven and we might be reconciled to our Father in Heaven. We receive ashes as a sign of our finitude, and our separation from God. But, we receive ashes with the cross of Jesus the Christ in view and we look to the resurrection of Easter Sunday that promises our ultimate communion with the Lord our God. And that, dear people, is why we also celebrate the Eucharist on Ash Wednesday.

Start this very day, right now, examining your relationship with your savior. Consider the weight of the ashes upon your head.

God bless you and keep you,  
and hold you always  
in the palm of his hand,  
Fr. Tommy+



HERE'S TO ALL  
THE SAINTS  
CELEBRATING IN  
MARCH

Mike Swofford	03/04	Matthew Langdale	03/20
Ashley Lever	03/13	Marjorie Pratt	03/22
Sarah Arndt	03/16	Jim Milling	03/26

### GIFTS OF BREAD AND WATER

Since 1984, the people's gift of water has been the foundation for the transformation of Cange, Haiti into a vibrant community with a church, hospital, women's and children's clinics, schools, an artisan center and community agricultural projects. However, the population has increased from about 800 to over 8000, taxing the now aging water system. It is now in imminent danger of failure—a very real humanitarian crisis. It needs to be replaced with the addition of a water treatment system due to increasing contamination and a new sanitation system to avoid future contamination. The expected cost for this is \$800,000.

In 2003, another facet of our partnership in Cange began as a small garden plot to provide vegetables for the hospital and schools. Malnutrition has long been one of the primary health issues in all of Haiti, another very real crisis. A new facility is needed to better accommodate the vital nutritional production program. Included in this Bread project will be the development of a vocational school to provide education on sustainable agriculture and other skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century. The cost for this part of The Gifts of Bread and Water campaign is \$800,000. All campaign funds directly support our Diocesan work in Cange; labor is performed by Haitians and supplies are purchased in Haiti where possible. If you can help us in this critical work to sustain the foundation that has allowed our tremendous success in making a significant difference in the lives of our Haitian brothers and sisters, you may make a contribution by mailing checks or pledges to the Diocesan office, attention Julie Price, marked for: The Gifts of Bread and Water.

### YOUR MISSION COMMITTEE

Sr. Warden:	JoAnn Palmer	2011
Jr. Warden:	Tom Willingham	2009
Member:	Mike Autry	2010
Member:	Bob Moore	2010
Member:	Ben DeBerry	2011
Member:	MJ Lever (one year term)	2009
Treasurer:	Carolyn Babb	2009
Secretary:	Margaret Murtaugh	2009
Next Scheduled Meeting: Wednesday, 03/25/2009, 7:00PM		

### RESOLUTION

#### CALLING FOR THE ELECTION OF THE 8TH BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA

Whereas the Rt. Rev. Dorsey F. Henderson, Jr., has this 13th day of December, 2008, called for the election of a successor Diocesan Bishop;

Whereas it is with great regret that the Standing Committee accepts the wishes of our dearly beloved Bishop that an election of a successor be called;

Whereas the Standing Committee wishes to express its deep gratitude for the faithful and constant service of our dearly beloved Bishop;

Whereas the Standing Committee accepts the challenge before us to continue to work to fulfill the vision of bringing all parishes and missions of the diocese into full participation in the Healthy Church Initiative, so that a seamless transition from one bishop to another may be accomplished;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina calls for the election of a successor Diocesan Bishop to take place no later than December 31, 2009, and that a Nominating Committee of 12-15 members be established and charged with submitting to the Standing Committee the names of 4-6 qualified candidates.

Furthermore, be it resolved that a Transition Committee comprised of 12-15 members be established.

***This is a repetition of the resolution from last month. Since that time, the two committees have been elected and are beginning their individual tasks. Additional information is available on the Diocesan webpage.***

## EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

Look for coming information soon on a St. Stephen's "Women to Women Gala" being planned for all women in the church 18 and over! There will be food, fellowship, fun door prizes and a special guest speaker! You will receive more information as the plans are finalized, so keep looking and listening for updates! This will also hopefully fulfill a needed ministry at St. Stephen's!

### **GARDENING OPPORTUNITY**

If you've been dreaming about the chance to use your pruners on the shrubbery in the churchyard, or take up a garden fork to give a bit of breathing room to some of the planted areas, or rescue some of the shrubs and plantings with judicious applications of compost and fertilizer, you are being offered an opportunity to realize your dream.

With the Cemetery Committee's approval, members of the congregation with gardening skills are invited to form a special committee to care for the plantings in the churchyard. If you are interested, please contact JoAnn Palmer ([spalmer@truvista.net](mailto:spalmer@truvista.net) or 337-3394.)



### **LENTEN PROGRAM**

Our Lenten Soup Suppers and Study will begin Tuesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> and continue through Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>. Soup, bread and dessert will be served beginning at 6:15pm. The Study will start promptly at 7:00pm. We will be pursuing an appropriately meditative study entitled, "Windows into Light". Please consider joining us for supper, even if you will not be staying for the study. Of course, we do hope that you will also join in the study as a means of experiencing a truly Holy Lent.



### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

Can I Plant Flowers or Shrubs in the Cemetery? What Can I Put On A Gravesite?

Churchyards, especially old ones like ours, owe much of their beauty to the plantings and trees, like the venerable cedars with their magical resurrection fern, the stately magnolia and the sasanquas. The loss of any tree or shrub is keenly felt. That it's often due to age, construction or the threat of damage to buildings, grounds or gravesites doesn't make the loss easier to bear. Careful thought must be given to what can be planted and where. For this reason, the approval of the Cemetery Committee must be obtained before any planting can be done. The Cemetery Covenants also require the approval of the Cemetery Committee before trees, shrubs or plants can be trimmed or removed.

The placement of live cut flowers, plants or wreaths on gravesites, especially at times that are meaningful to a family, are welcome, comforting and add to the beauty of the churchyard. But, remember to remove them when they wilt or die. The Cemetery Committee has the authority to remove anything from the cemetery, including flowers, potted plants, wreaths, etc. when they become wilted, the greenery turns brown or they die. And finally, no artificial flowers or arrangements are to be placed within the cemetery. Artificial funeral arrangements and wreaths should be removed within a reasonable period of time following the burial. However, occasionally artificial flowers or arrangements are placed by individuals, or delivered by florists who are not familiar with the cemetery guidelines. In this case, they will be removed when they begin to fade or show other weather damage.

### **ERD SUNDAY, MARCH 1**

**A resolution adopted by the 86th Diocesan Convention in October 2008 calls upon the Diocese of Upper South Carolina to "dedicate the first Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday" and to encourage "congregations and individuals . . . to support Episcopal Relief and Development's life-saving work through prayer and a special offering that will help heal a hurting world." This is to be an annual event of the Diocese that does much to accomplish the Millennium Development Goals.**

# YOUNG-er PEOPLE'S PAGE

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING  
THE YOUNG-er PEOPLE OF  
ST. STEPHEN'S JUST MIGHT  
TAKE AN INTEREST IN . . .  
WELL, THIS COULD EASILY BE  
YOUR SPACE.

APPLY SIMPLY BY SUBMITTING  
AN ARTICLE, PHOTO, ETC. TO  
THE CHURCH OFFICE BY THE  
15TH OF THE MONTH.

THANK YOU,  
THE INTERESTED

## THE GREAT EGG HUNT

Newsbreak!! Our annual, grand, fantastic and Great Egg Hunt is scheduled for Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 10:00AM. Come one, come all, young and old alike (only children get to hunt the wiley eggs though). There will be prizes for the most eggs found in each age group.



Following the GREAT HUNT, we will serve lunch in the Parish Hall. The menu is hot dogs with all the fixins, chips, drinks and a veggie tray to help balance the meal. Yes, consumption of *some* rabbit food is required. Flyers and posters will go out closer to the big day.

## CAMP GRAVATT

Register for Camp Online. To register online for Camp Gravatt 2009, you must have an online registration account. Just follow the steps below and have your credit or debit card ready to make your initial deposit or your payment in full. Your reservation is NOT guaranteed without your deposit.





1. FOR 2008 CAMPERS, PLEASE DO NOT CREATE A NEW ACCOUNT.
  - a. If you registered online last year, use your username and password from last year.
  - b. If you registered by mail last year, we have created an online account for you. Use this formula:  
Username: [First Two Letters of Camper First Name][First Two Letters of Camper Last Name][Zip Code]gvt  
Password: [Camper Last Name]09  
For example, if your camper's name is Jane Smith and your zip code is 29805, your user name is jasm29805gvt, and your password is smith09. (You can change it once you log in.)
  - c. Much of your information will already be entered for you. You can just verify it is correct and then continue with registration.
  - d. To begin, click the first link on the webpage. Call our office at 803-648-1817 if you need assistance.
2. FOR NEW CAMPERS ONLY, to set up a new account, click on the second link of the webpage.
  - a. On the page that pops up, create a Username and Password. Keep these for future use.
  - b. Then fill out YOUR name and contact information (not your child's).
3. From there, you will see instructions on how to complete registration.
4. You will receive an email that confirms your child's successful registration. The email has important attachments, so if you do not receive it, please call our office.

February 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

April 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

# ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL

RIDGEWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA  
(803) 337-2905

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	2  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	3  6:15pm Lenten Program	4  6:30pm Healing Service	5	6	7  <b>Spring Forward</b>
8  9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	9  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	10  6:15pm Lenten Program	11	12	13	14
15  9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	16  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	17  6:15pm Lenten Program	18  6:30pm Healing Service	19	20  <i>First Day of Spring</i>	21
22  9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	23  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	24   6:15pm Lenten Program	25  7:00pm Miss. Comm. Mtg.	26	27	28 Mission Congregations Conference at All Saints Clintn
29  9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	30  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	31  6:15pm Lenten Program	1  6:30pm Healing Service	2	3	4
5  PROCESSION OF THE PALMS 9:30am Church School 10:30am Holy Eucharist	6  8:00pm AA / Parish Hall	7	8	9  6:30pm Holy Eucharist	10  12:00pm Meditation 3:30pm Meditation 6:30pm Reserve Eucharist	11  Easter Egg Hunt

# MARCH 2009

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ALTAR GUILD FOR MARCH: SARA FAUCETT, AND ELEANOR MILLING

DAY/DATE	CHALICER	LECTOR	CRUCIFER / ACOLYTE	GREETERS/ OBLATIONERS	CHILDREN'S CHAPEL	HOSPITALITY	ALTAR FLOWERS
March 1 1 Lent	Marjorie Pratt	JoAnn Palmer	Jenna Upchurch	Tom Willingham and Tom Harwood	Donna Guess	Kathleen and Tom Harwood	(Greens)
March 8 2 Lent	JoAnn Palmer	Carter Siegling	Kayla Branham	Jill and Mack Upchurch	Nancy and Dick Johnson	Carole Mullis	Bonnie and Doug Bryant (Greens)
March 15 3 Lent	Bitsy Milling	Bitsy Milling	Matthew Langdale	Frances and Ben DeBerry	Jo Milling	Sara Faucett and Karen Kuehner	Marjorie Pratt (Greens)
March 22 4 Lent	Tom Willingham	Tom Willingham	Ashley Lever	Carole Mullis and Sieglinde Thomas	Carolyn Babb	Karen and Carter Siegling	Carole Mullis (Children) (Greens)
March 29 5 Lent	Marjorie Pratt	Don Babb	Jacob Upchurch	Kayla and Jason Branham	Donna Guess	Sarah and Bob Arndt	JoAnn Palmer (Soux) (Greens)
April 5 Palm Sunday	Don Babb	Ann Ellison	Kayla Branham	Sharon and Mike Swofford	Nancy and Dick Johnson	Elsie and Bob Moore	Palms

ALTAR GUILD FOR APRIL: FRANCES DEBERRY (4/5, 12, 19, 26) AND JOANN PALMER (4/2, 3)

*Important Note: If you cannot serve when assigned, please: 1) Swap with someone or a find a substitute. 2) Inform the church office of any changes for inclusion in the service leaflet. Thank you.*

DAY/DATE	FIRST READING	THE PSALM	SECOND READING	THE GOSPEL
March 1 1 Lent	Genesis 9:8-17	25:1-9	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
March 8 2 Lent	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	22:22-30	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38
March 15 3 Lent	Exodus 20:1-17	19	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 2:13-22
March 22 4 Lent	Numbers 21:4-9	107:1-3, 17-22	Ephesians 2:1-10	John 3:14-21
March 29 5 Lent	Jeremiah 31:31-34	51:1-13	Hebrews 5:5-10	John 12:20-33
April 5 Palm Sunday	Isaiah 50:4-9a	31:9-16	Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 14:1—15:47

## ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

PO Box 26  
RIDGWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA 29130