

New Beginnings

The First Reformed
Church of Nyack

Pre Lenten Edition
February 17, 2012

Food for Thought

In a moment of weakness during a sermon, I once said that the Sundays after Epiphany could be summarized by the exclamation, "Oh, wow!" We had looked at moments of the light and power of God breaking into our unsuspecting, tired world. The time from Epiphany through the Transfiguration takes us from the star that finds the cradle to a mountaintop that illumines the Jesus that invited us to see glory.

Fearlessly continuing, I said that the season of Lent could be summarized by the exclamation, "Oh, no!" So much of Lent dwells on crisis, suffering, and sorrow. Well, not exactly. It dwells more deeply on understanding where God is in the crises, sufferings, sorrows, courageous stands in our journeys. The Gospel in Lent is a healthy serving of grace to those lives that feel graceless in these hard, uncertain times. In Lent, we listen to the one who tells us to appreciate the darker sides of our lives as God's home away from home. For God's sake, listen to him!

Donald Buttrick once wrote, "Do you see now how the cross redefines our doctrines of God? God's attributes—omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, perfection—are all redefined by the broken body of the crucified Christ. . . . Here is God who all along has been willing to be impotent, to not know, to suffer with, to die for a people, a dearly loved people. Here is a God whose real name, long hidden from our minds, is Compassion (*com pati* = to suffer with)."

As we begin the bumpy road to Easter,

Pastor Bill

FRC Ladies' Events

FRC Ladies' Brunch

There will be a Ladies' Brunch on Saturday, March 31st at 10am. It will be held on the Nyack College Campus in Shuman Hall. There will be a devotional shared and time for prayer. All are welcome, feel free to bring a friend.

Please sign up to bring food and RSVP to Margie Jennings: 845-548-0593 or mrsjennings22@gmail.com.

FRC Ladies' Bible Study

The ladies of First Reformed Church are meeting every other Thursday night at 7:30pm at the Jennings' home. As Charles Clay sleeps, we share, laugh, talk, pray, read scripture and have a wonderful time together. We are starting our Bible Study learning about Spiritual Gifts. We read scripture and have discussion questions. We would love for all FRC ladies to join us. Even if you cannot make it to every Bible Study, please come when you can. We have already doubled in size in a few short weeks. Please call Margie Jennings or email her with any questions.

Dates of meetings:

February 23

March 8 & 22*

April 5 & 19

May 3, 17, 31

June 14 & 28

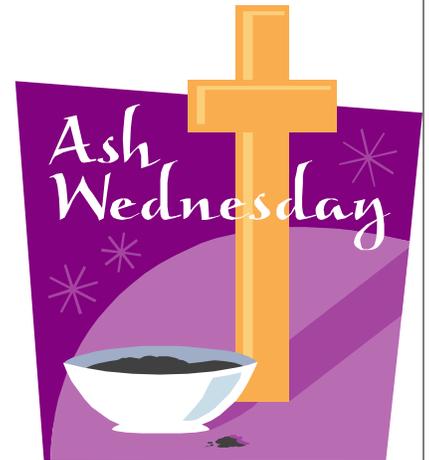
location different Mar. 22

**JESUS INVITES US
TO JOIN ONE ANOTHER
ON ASH WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22,**

**at 6:30 p.m.,
eating with the Soup Angels volunteers,**

**and from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m.,
gathering in the nursery room
to begin the season of Lent.**

**Dress is informal.
Children are welcome.**



Friends in Christ,

Every year at the time of the Christian Passover we celebrate our redemption through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lent is a time to prepare for this celebration and to renew our life in the paschal mystery. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance, and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We invite you, therefore, in the name of Christ, to observe a holy Lent, by self-examination and penitence, by prayer and fasting, by works of love, and by reading and meditating on the Word of God.

Soup Angels Adds Another Night of Serving Dinner

In advance of our 6th anniversary of our 6th year of existence, Soup Angels served our first Monday meal on February 6. There were 51 guests who enjoyed pea soup, ham and swiss sandwiches, salad and dessert. We found 8 new captains for the Monday teams and some of the members of First Reformed Church have agreed to be on teams. Approximately 120 new volunteers have joined Soup Angels recently for the Monday meal service.

Thank you to those who provided blankets through the church for one of the guests who needed them to sleep on. Soup Angels is grateful to the church for providing us the space to carry on this work.

—Kathie Rife



INTERFAITH SYMPOSIUM

THE ABRAHAMIC FAITHS

JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM

PLEASE JOIN US TO DISCOVER

ORIGIN, HISTORY, RELIGIOUS, MORAL AND ETHICAL BELIEFS

LEARN COMMONALITY OF REVEALED SCRIPTURES

ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING TO PROMOTE PEACE AND COOPERATION

SESSION I

ISLAMIC CENTER OF ROCKLAND

481 MOUNTAINVIEW AVENUE, VALLEY COTTAGE, NY

3-5 PM SUNDAY, MARCH 11, 2012

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED

ORGANIZED BY: CONGREGATION SONS OF ISRAEL, FIRST IMMANUEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, FIRST REFORMED CHURCH OF NYACK, GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ISLAMIC CENTER OF ROCKLAND, ST. ANN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, TEMPLE BETH TORAH



Sunday School Welcomes New Attendees!

Over the past few months our Sunday School has been blessed by the addition of three youngsters from the **First Haitian Church**. Destiny Bossa, Tyler Cruz and Marrissa Bastien have been joining us for Sunday School before attending their own worship service downstairs.

On February 12 the Sunday School and many members of our church family assembled for the **Valentine's Day Breakfast** featuring **Chef Al Cann's famous pancakes and kielbasa** and **Jean Rensink's beautiful table arrangements** of heart shaped lollipops planted in containers of Valentine's hearts. The young people dashed from site to site with the enthusiastic cheering of little Charlie Jennings yelling, "Go! Go!" on a treasure hunt which took them from the baptismal font, to the stained glass window of the Christmas Pageant, to a window facing the "kind of tree Zacchaeus limbed" in front of our church. They descended to the basement and thought about early Christians worshipping in the catacombs and climbed the stairs to an upper room and thought about Jesus' Last Supper. After visiting several other destinations they arrived at a locked cabinet containing a box labeled "treasure" which hid boxes of Valentine's Day hearts.

The young people and adults alike spent several Sundays enjoying the Children's Message from Skip Russell. One of these messages included Skip's call to wake up to God's love enlivened by bells rung by the young people, a shrill whistle from Al Cann in the back pew, and "Jingle Bell Rock" played by Jim Rensink!

—Bonnie Williams



New Sunday School for 6th-8th Grade Students Begins!

FRC is beginning a new Sunday School class for 6th-8th graders. It will be held during the worship service on Sundays (10:30-11:30am) up above the kitchen in the youth room.

We are growing the "youth program" and will be studying the Bible, learning about ourselves, and having fun!

Confirmation classes will begin in September.

If you know of any interested kids, contact Cindy Graham by email: cmg313@verizon.net or just show up on Sundays and worship with us!

—Cindy Graham



PLANS FOR LENT AND EASTER

All in our church family are invited to join together for the Ash Wednesday gathering described on page 2 of this newsletter. During Lent the students will be encouraged to do something each day in remembrance of Jesus' great gift to us. Maybe they will choose to say grace, say a prayer each day, do something kind for someone for someone, or make a personal sacrifice of some kind. Watch for the date of **Journey to Jerusalem**, our annual visit to the Upper Room to listen to what Jesus said to his disciples. There will be an **Easter Egg Hunt** following the Easter service and a week after Easter all are encouraged to participate in the very competitive **Egg Bopping Breakfast!**

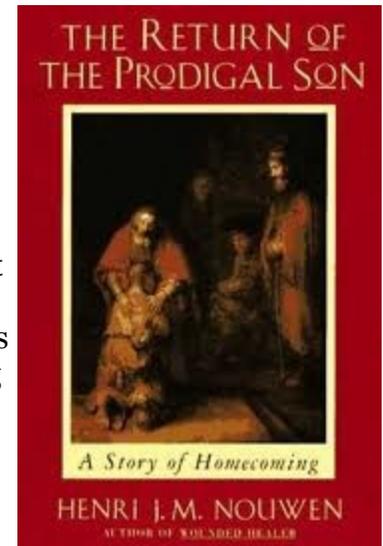
—Bonnie Williams

Return of the Prodigal Son—A Book Review by Brian Jennings

The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming

by Henri J. M. Nouwen
New York: Doubleday, 1992.

My brother told me many years ago that I should read the books of a Catholic priest named Henri Nouwen, but it was not until this year that I began to read his books. Now I can't put them down. One of my favorite Nouwen books is *The Return of the Prodigal Son* which examines Rembrandt's painting of the biblical parable of the prodigal son. Along the way he places himself in the role of the son who has run away and now come home, the son who stayed, and the compassionate father. Nouwen provides not only a personal examination of the parable and what it means to him, but he also delves into the life of Rembrandt and how he interpreted the parable in light of his personal experiences. It is remarkable how Nouwen expresses empathy for the perspective of each of the characters in the parable. In the conclusion he states: "What I am called to make true is that whether I am the younger or the elder son, I am the son of my compassionate Father. I am an heir. No one says it more clearly than Paul when he writes: 'The Spirit himself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God. And if we are children, then we are heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, provided that we share his sufferings, so as to share his glory.' Indeed, as son and heir I am to become successor. I am destined to step into my Father's place and offer to others the same compassion that he has offered me. The return to the Father is ultimately the challenge to become the Father."



An Update From the Wanamaker Family—Terri Wanamaker

Both girls came home mid-December for the Christmas break (hurray!): Erica, glad to be back after a tough semester of Anatomy & Physiology, Biology, and Nutrition, with as much ice skating as she could manage before and after classes and Jenna, also toughing it out with Biology, Oceanography, Math and Wind Symphony, weekends volunteering at the local aquarium, and oh yes, as many trips to the beach as SHE could manage between classes!

Thus began a nice break for them consisting of catching up with their friends, Christmas shopping at the mall, being Kings in our Christmas Pageant, more shopping, going to NYC to see the Christmas Tree at Rockefeller Center, some shopping, St. Patrick's Cathedral, shopping, sleeping late, and yes, after Christmas: more shopping!

All kidding aside, it was really nice having them home for awhile to relax, eat real macaroni and cheese, go to church, spend some time with each other, and be with their pets again. It may sound boring, but for Paul and myself, it was an absolutely great time and we can't wait until they come home again.

—Terri Wanamaker

**The First Reformed Church
of Nyack**



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Rev. Bill Doster, Interim Pastor
Pastor's study: 201-501-8951

We're on the web!
Check us out at
www.nyackreformed.org

FRC Website Update—Brian Jennings

As of February 10th, we've had 151 visits to our website in the calendar year 2012. This may not seem like much, but consider that over 80% of these visits were from new people and 1 in 10 were directed to our site by keyword searches for: "churches in Nyack." Other common searches which directed people to our search simply involved some variation of our church name. Other than the homepage, the calendar of events, the pastor's blog (which as been including bulletin cover material for the past month), the newsletter, and the contact us pages were the most popular.

Krista Bennion Feeney, the amazing world renowned violinist and concertmaster of the Orchestra of Saint Luke's joined our service on February 5. I describe her as amazing, since that seemed to be the consensus. I like to consider the participation of these famous artists as a testimony of God's presence in our service! Talent and music incapable of existing, without a power greater than our own! Stay tuned for more.

—*Jim Rensink, Music Director*

The 2012 Easter Cycle at a Glance

Lent

Ash Wednesday

February 22

Lent is a season of forty weekdays and six Sundays, beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating in Holy Week. During this season, the church, in joy and sorrow, proclaims, remembers, and responds to the atoning death of Christ. Two distinct periods at the end of Lent are: Holy Week (the week immediately preceding Easter, beginning with Passion/Palm Sunday) and the Three Days (the final three days comprising Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil).

Holy Week

Passion/Palm Sunday	April 1
Maundy Thursday	April 5
Good Friday	April 6

Eastertide

Easter is a fifty-day season of seven Sundays, beginning with the Resurrection of the Lord (Easter Day), the festival of Christ's resurrection. Ascension Day, forty days after Easter, is celebrated to affirm that Christ is Lord of all times and places. The Day of Pentecost marks the end of the Easter season.

Easter

Easter Vigil	
Resurrection of the Lord/Easter	April 8

Ascension of the Lord **April 17**

Day of Pentecost **April 27**