



The Episcopal Church  
in Arlington  
[saintalbansarlington.org](http://saintalbansarlington.org)

open-minded joyful authentic



# ST. ALBAN'S TODAY

*The followers of Christ have been called to peace. ... And they must not only have peace but also make it. ... His disciples keep the peace by choosing to endure suffering themselves rather than inflict it on others. They maintain fellowship where others would break it off. They renounce hatred and wrong. In so doing they overcome evil with good, and establish the peace of God in the midst of a world of war and hate.*

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *The Cost of Discipleship*.

## Shrove Tuesday

Shrove Tuesday's Pancake Supper, Pancake flipping races, and more!!! happens on February 13th beginning at 6:00 p.m. Here is a way to joyfully and sinlessly enjoy some of the Men's Group famous "from scratch" pancakes, topped with butter, maple syrup along with bacon or sausage. There will be fruit, juice and decaf coffee.

You can also help create the flamboyant "**ALLELUIA**" banner which will be hidden away and brought forth on Easter. It's your last chance to use the "A" word for the forty days of Lent.

- To wear off the pancakes try your skill at a pancake flipping race, an old English tradition meant to use up rich food like oils and butter before Lent.
- See who gets the Christ Child from the King Cake

- Try your hand at Mardi Gras Bingo (there might even be the return of the karaoke machine). Winners (everyone really) will go home with some Mardi Gras Beads.
- Bring a friend!



## Lent 2018 Program

Based on the delightfully entertaining, Oscar nominated film *Chocolat* this Lenten Study explores the ideas of sacrifice, personal piety, and just what it is that God wants from us during Lent.

Step 1: Watch the film, *Chocolat*, either on your own or at a watch party on February 18th, 6 p.m. @ St. Lukes in the Meadow (4301 Meadowbrook Drive, Fort Worth).

Step 2: Pick up a copy of the book at the watch party or from the church office (the suggested donation for the book is \$10)

Step 3: Come to St. Lukes on Tuesdays, 7 - 8:30 pm, February 20, 27, March 3, 10, and 17 for a light supper and conversation using the Chocolate for Lent Book as our guide.



## Forever Lent?

So, I've been thinking about Lent and our current political landscape with all of its "he said, she said" unfortunate language and behaviors. I've also been thinking about John the Baptist's admonition to the Pharisees in chapter 3 of Matthew:

There at the Jordan River those who came to confess their sins were baptized into a changed life. When John realized that a lot of Pharisees and Sadducees were showing up for a baptismal experience because it was becoming the popular thing to do, he exploded: "Brood of snakes! What do you think you're doing slithering down here to the river? Do you think a little water on your snakeskins is going to make any difference? It's your life that must change, not your skin! (The Message, Matthew 3.7ff)

Specifically, I've been thinking about how John's rant and our humanity fits into my theology that the original Gospel foundation of the earliest Christian belief is that in the end all humanity will be rejoined with our Creator. That "at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and

every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:10-11). That "as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Cor. 15:22). That Christ shall "fill the whole universe" (Eph. 4:10). That in the end, God shall be "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). And that God, who "wants all people to be saved," (1 Tim. 2:4), will get what God wants eventually.

And yet, there is some pretty bad behavior being flung around our common life these days; really bad behavior that does real harm to children of God. Do these bad behavior slinging snakes slithering down to the river of life get a free wash? Really? Is the mercy of God such that there is no natural consequence for creating, participating in, or passively ignoring unjust systems that do harm to the dream of God and children of God? If there is no eternal "hell" (an English word that Christians often use but does not exist in the Greek or Aramaic scripture) then what is there?

In Matthew 25:46 Jesus uses the phrase *aionios kolasis*, which in the Greek of the time means "age-lasting correction." *Aionios* is the adjective form of the noun *aion*, "age" or "eon." The connotation in the Greek is a "period of time," but not "eternal." *Kolasis* was originally a gardening term used for pruning trees.

Clement of Alexandria, a 2nd c. Christian theologian, defined *kolasis* as pure discipline vs. the Greek word "*timoria*," which is retributive punishment. (Jesus does not use the word "*timoria*.") In Matthew 25:46, Jesus warns that people who do not show compassion to the poor and suffering in this life, will enter into an age (*aionios*) of corrective judgment (*kolasis*), while others are enjoying an age of divine life (*aionios zoe*).

It is important to note here that a period of corrective punishment does not preclude one from eventually entering into the Divine presence of the Creator; it does mean that some folks may have a pit stop waiting for them en-route to their return to God. Think of it as a deep-cleanse – hopefully not a Gwyneth Paltrow coffee type.

**Activities**

**Shrove Tuesday**

*February 13, 6 p.m. in the Lobby*

**Ash Wednesday**

*February 14, 7 a.m. in the Lobby (spoken) and 7 p.m. in the theater (with music)*

**Valentines Hearts for Crow Teachers**

*Due February 14*

Help us to celebrate the teachers of Crow Elementary this year by making Valentines hearts.

**Packing Food with Crow Elementary**

*February 16th*

See Priscilla Promise or the Church Office for information.

**Chocolate for Lent**

*February 18: View the movie Chocolat @ St. Luke's, 6 pm*

**Chocolate for Lent Gatherings**

*Tuesdays, 2/20-3/20, with light supper, 7 pm @ St. Luke's*

**Men's Breakfast**

*February 24th, 8:30 a.m., Southern Recipes on N. Collins St.*

**Ladies Lunch Bunch**

*March 8, location TBA*

## Cleansing Lent

Someone once told me that their anxiety is that when we get to heaven waiting at the pearly gates will be all those people whom they have harmed, both directly and indirectly. There, will be the child laborer whose life chained to a sewing machine enabled me to buy my shoes at a bargain price. There, will be the beggar I walked blindly by, pretending to not have any cash in my pocket. There, will be those who have paid the price of society's racist structures (e.g., FHA Redlining) against which I said nothing because I was afraid or just too comfortable or too racist myself. They will each look me in the eye one by one. In that moment all of their pain will become my pain, no longer will I be able to rationalize away my in-humanity. For some of us the line of people to look in the eye will be long, for some of us it might be wonderfully short. Either way, the truth of our life will be undeniable.

Here's the good news. Jesus said, "I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous." (Mat. 5:44-45). I suppose we like to think of ourselves as Jesus' righteous friends. However, the truth is that there are days in which I am the unrighteous enemy of Jesus' mission. I imagine we all are. On those days Jesus follows his own admonition and loves us and renews us with his cleansing rain.

This Lent I encourage each of us to embark upon the 4th step of Alcoholics Anonymous - Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. Then, embark upon steps 5, 6, and 7 - Admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs; Become entirely ready to have God remove these defects; and Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings. The Church has available to you the Rite of Reconciliation (see the BCP p446ff). Find a discrete, caring priest. The secrecy of confession is morally absolute. Visit with him or her and experience the cleansing joy of Lent.

## Known and Knowing

*Known and Knowing: A snippet taken from Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation, from the Center for Action and Contemplation, January 19, 2018*

Jesus' center point was not an idea or theory about anything but, in fact, a Person—a thoroughly reliable, universal Love that he called "Father." (You do not need to use the word "Father," but I encourage you to find some form of endearment that inspires your trust because you will never fall in love with a mere idea.) This new Realm is based on a relationship with a God who can be experienced personally, presently, and existentially. Jesus seems to be saying that God is not a philosophical system, a theory to be proven, or an energy to be discussed or controlled, although we have often reduced God to each of these.

In the biblical tradition, we only seem to know God by relating to God face to face, almost as if God refuses to be known apart from love. It is all about relationship. As Martin Buber (1878-1965), the Jewish philosopher mystic, put it, "All real living is meeting." [2] It is the "face to face" religion that began with Moses (see Exodus 33:11). The face of humanity is the same whether it belongs to a Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jew, or Christian, to a person who's gay or straight, who's a believer or an unbeliever. If we don't see this, it's because we haven't risked looking into the face of another.

In Jesus we see, but we did not see, that:

1. God is One and for all.
2. God is not subject to any group ownership or personal manipulation.
3. God is available as a free gift, not through any sacrificial system (which only strengthens the ego).
4. God needs no victims and creates no victims, but false religion always does.

Jesus suffers in solidarity with all humanity. He refuses to project his suffering elsewhere or blame others.

Jesus thus personifies the divine nature. He quotes the minor prophet Hosea in several contexts: "Go and learn the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not your sacrifices" (Matthew 9:13, 12:7). We offer our "sacrifices" to a distant and demanding God. We return love to a God who is intimate and merciful. Persons bestow grace and freedom; ideas, philosophies, and laws demand only compliance.



## Water

(adapted from a poem by Barbara Schmich)

The womb of all;  
grave for many

Sustainer of life;  
at times its demise.

Hewer of stone;  
morning's dew.

Cleanser par excellence;  
painter of stains.

Elixir of well-being;  
carrier of disease.

Ark of distinction;  
common as rain.

O water ambivalent,  
O water paradoxical,

into you we are plunged risking destruction,  
from you we are lifted en-livened.

O water terrible.

O water truthful,  
you are life's secret;

from which we shrink,  
of which we need.

O water mysterious,  
O water miraculous,

you make us a people  
descended of Jesus;

survivors of death, lovers of life -

the baptized.

## Words Matter

by Jennifer Toy

I've been struggling to find the right words to put into the newsletter in thinking about Shrove Tuesday or the last Tuesday before Lent.

Shrove Tuesday is also called Fat Tuesday or

Mardi Gras, but the origin of the names are different. Whereas Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the English word *shrive* meaning being absolved of sin before the period of Lent, Fat Tuesday and Mardi Gras get their names for the anticipated feasting (usually on pancakes) and celebrating before the more solemn period of Lent. One name points to absolution while the other names point to gorging and playing. The words you use to describe the day say a lot about your intent and attitudes.

In more recent times we've seen the rise of social media being used as a mechanism for debasing other human beings using words through name calling and shaming. The sad fact is that most people have somehow come to believe that using words to denigrate others is an acceptable behavior. But the truth is that this denigration is OUR sin and more specifically is the sin for which Shrove Tuesday was created. We need to be absolved of our sin, which is founded in the belief that there is somehow a hierarchy of humanity in God's eyes. We see these attitudes in media stories, in neighbors, and in ourselves, and yet we condone these attitudes by saying nothing or justify them by saying "that's just the way that person is". We have these attitudes and support others that do as well, and that's why we need salvation.

In God's eyes, humanity is simply humanity. There is no hierarchy of better than and less than. When Jesus hand picked his disciples he likely knew that they would ultimately disappoint him in vying for status in the hierarchy of disciples, in not understanding any of his teachings, in ignoring him in the Garden of Gethsemane and abandoning him on the cross. He understood that the meek, or lesser than, shall inherit the earth and that the powerful would do unsavory acts like have him killed, aided and abetted by one of his disciples. Humanity doesn't have a great track record in learning from its mistakes, and being Christian doesn't make you any less a part of humanity.

So on Shrove Tuesday take a moment to reflect on your own attitudes towards other people that are different from you and how you view your own status in relation to them, and take a moment to reflect on where you think God is at work in the lives of those people. Is God at work in the lives of people outside of the US or outside our socioeconomic status or outside our communities, or is God limited to only being involved in the lives of certain people? After you've reflected on your own attitude, take a moment to reflect on how you think God sees those people. What words would you describe those people in and what words do you think God would use to describe those people?

Remember this divergence the next time you are tempted to use words as a weapon against the very thing that God created. Us.

# Contentment During Lent

by Jennifer Toy

Lent can be a solemn time for reflection on your life as a human and Christian as we mimic the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. For forty days, we make a sacrifice like Jesus made and focus on our relationship with God. As Christians, we reflect on how much we need Jesus in our lives to help us in our fallen state. In addition to reflecting on our fallen state, Lent can be a time of reflecting on the level of contentment in our lives as well.

During his stay in the desert, Jesus was tempted by Satan with 3 challenges. He was challenged to obtain an endless supply of food, obtain immortality for himself and obtain power for himself. The three temptations themselves are not nearly as important as how Jesus responded to each of the temptations. In each of these challenges, Jesus responded to Satan by saying that God's provision was enough. Essentially, Jesus faced these challenges down by being content with God's provision for him.

I would argue that the practice of sacrifice during Lent is not just about reflecting on our fallen state, but is also about our trust in God's provision and our contentment with that

provision. As a consumerist society we receive a lot of messages that happiness comes from purchasing something new or by being hyper-organized or by foregoing the mundane day to day living of going to work at a company and going home to a family. We receive messages that we or our lives are not quite good enough, and that we need to add items or change our life to finally find the happiness that we so desperately seek. These messages are fundamentally flawed because they say nothing about the existing provision or the ongoing presence of God in our lives.

During this Lenten season, I would encourage you to take the tradition a little bit further and consider sacrificing something that would inspire reflection on the state of contentment that you have for God's provision. God's provision doesn't escape us from difficult circumstances or dark times in our lives, but it does empower us to handle the challenges and acknowledge how God might also be at work even in the dark times. We can learn a lot about contentment from Jesus who understood that God was enough in his life.

# *Come See Us*

*Services are held @ Theatre Arlington  
Sunday mornings 9:30am*

*305 W Main St, Arlington, TX 76010*



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
LIVE  
LENT**