



THE BELLRINGER

SAINT LUKE'S CHURCH

FOREST HILLS, NEW YORK

LENT 2016

新年快樂！

Dear Friends,

Xin nian kuai le! Happy New Year! This year, the beginning of Lent and the celebration of Chinese New Year converge; and I am reminded of a Taiwanese cultural activity during the New Year celebration that, I think, helps to show an important aspect about Lent.

I say this because, all too often, Lent is regarded by many as an onerous season which occasions guilt and worry over the suspect things we humans do and the noble acts we leave undone. However, the heart of Lent, which means springtime, is about our embracing God's invitation for making a new beginning.

A few years ago, I had the great experience of being in Taiwan during Lunar New Year. There are a variety of New Year's traditions but one that stands out for me is The Sky Lantern Festival which takes place in a northern hill town named Pingxi. People come from all over Taiwan (as well as tourists from the world over) to take part in the release of uniquely decorated hot air lanterns into the sky. Originally the lanterns were released to let refugees hiding in the hills know that their town was safe and they could return home again. In modern times, people come to the town to purchase a lantern and decorate it using a calligraphy brush and paint. The idea is to take some time in reflection and to draw or write down your hopes, desires and ambitions, followed by releasing the lanterns into the sky.

Big crowds of people clog the streets, shop alleys, and even the rail beds used by the

trains that most people rode to Pingxi. Everyone is intent upon expressing their hopes for the new year and new beginnings in their lives and, then, feeling the amazing "uplift" like a visual prayer as they release their lanterns and watch them as they go higher and higher into the sky, eventually away and out of sight.

So I ask you to think of Lent as this time of new beginning. Rather than as a time to dwell on how far we might have strayed away, on Ash Wednesday we hear scripture's good news of "all clear" from God who, in Jesus Christ, is telling us it is safe to come back. No longer need we seek refuge from our failings and shortcomings. Rather, we can make a new beginning

Come! Consider Lent as a Festival of prayer and the renewing of commitments.

Come on Ash Wednesday! Decorate your prayers with your heart-felt concerns and God will employ the divine brush of grace.

Come, intent upon participating with others in corporate worship, when we are all reminded that Jesus Christ is not away and out of sight but present in our very midst.

Faithfully yours,

Annual Meeting Digest

Print copies of the full proceedings of the January 31st Annual Parish Meeting and Rector's Report to the Parish are available at the church. In the Rector's Report, Father Tom presented the year in review as a series of "thank-yous" designed to have everyone recall how much we do and are as Saint Luke's Church and that the many ministries which express our mission are all programs and experiences we want to continue and strengthen together.

As the meeting continued, it became all the more clear that people are committed to participating in our parish life through contributions of time and talent—offerings we need more of from all members in order to carry out our ministries faithfully. To this end, people are reminded to reply to the "Help Wanted Ads."

The new meeting format which included having lunch right after the 10:30am liturgy was appreciated by all. The ordering of the Agenda to allow much open conversation from the floor was also a highlight of the afternoon, giving people an opportunity to speak from the heart about the place of Saint Luke's Church in their lives.

Just as the 2016 Pledge Campaign was attempting to do by asking people to prayerfully consider growing in giving, the Annual Meeting reports from the Stewardship and Finance Committees underlined a challenge for us all. At the time of the meeting, 77 pledges for \$196,288 were reported in hand. Given the fact that it would take \$250,000 in pledges to balance the budget, all in attendance agreed that a top priority needs to be our focusing on reducing the gap. While gratefully acknowledging the generous and committed stewardship of the parish, and recognizing that our congregation represents a wide spectrum of economic brackets and abilities to give, the Annual Meeting was unified in the wisdom of asking all the

members of Saint Luke's to reconsider their giving for 2016 as a first and crucial step in eliminating the budget deficit. A letter will be mailed to all.

This year's Vestry elections included Brian Percival, whose 2016-17 term as Warden will be his final. For three-year terms, Michael Papamihalis and Suzanne Schick were reelected; Debbie Smith and Diane Santana were also elected (Diane will continue as Treasurer for 2016 also). Sincere thanks were expressed to Louise Foisy and Karen Van Westering who leave the Vestry at this time.

The Saint Luke's Shield, annually awarded to a parishioner whose dedication and service often goes quietly unnoticed but is so important to our parish, was given to Ann Espenschied. Ann's leadership with the Altar Guild, as well as her tireless contributions with everything from Gingerbread Players ticket sales and Imaginauction bid recording to securing the church on Sundays after services are only some of the reasons we owe and give her a big thank you.

As always, the potluck meal coordination by the Hospitality Committee was greatly appreciated.

The joyful fellowship and sense of unity during the meeting—hallmarks of Saint Luke's in our life together—gave all the sense that our challenges can and will be addressed creatively and to great benefit for the church and all whose lives we endeavor to touch.



Shrove Tuesday
February 9



**PANCAKE SUPPER
AND
MARDI GRAS PARTY**

6:30 -- 8:30pm

to benefit St. Luke's Outreach Grant

Hour Children

Pancakes, sausage and bacon,
fried chicken, beverages

\$8 per person, \$5 for children under 12

FUN FOR ALL!

Games *Prizes *Mask-making

Souvenir Mardi Gras Beads

*Saint Luke's Annual
LENTEN SERIES*

We pray: God's Kingdom Come

Wednesday Evenings

7:00pm Holy Eucharist

7:30pm Simple Supper

8:10pm Program

Feb. 17 *God's Kingdom Come*

Feb. 24 *God's Kingdom Come*
in the Gospels (1)

Mar. 2 *God's Kingdom Come*
in the Gospels (2)

Mar. 9 *God's Kingdom Come*
in the Prayer Book

Mar. 10 *God's Kingdom Come*
in the Hymnal

NO SPECIAL BOOK TO ORDER

We will use the Bible, the Book of Common
Prayer and the Hymnal 1982

**ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 10**



**Holy Eucharist
with
Imposition of Ashes**



7:30am, 10:00am and 8:00pm

February Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 2 Lydia Arlt
- 2 Audrey Lamadieu
- 3 Charlotte Dippel
- 4 Aino Jonah
- 5 Moira Egan
- 9 Lauren Foisy
- 10 Guennadi Boiko
- 13 Logan Bermingham
- 15 Alodia Carldon
- 18 Mark Adams
- 20 Henry Tyrell
- 22 Stephen Banci
- 25 Linda Martinez