



St. Paul's Epistle
The Newsletter of St. Paul's & Trinity
Parish
Tivoli, New York
April 2018

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From the Pastor

“Pilate asked Jesus, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’ Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’” John 18:38

So, what is truth? Here it is! Take it in, not only with your eyes, but with your mind and heart, as well.

This reproduction of an icon from the Eastern Orthodox Church tradition expresses the Christian proclamation of the truth: that God is persistent, determined, and undaunted in bringing forth new life - creating, restoring, blessing - no matter what. The resurrection of Jesus is about that truth, and is at the core of Christian belief. “We believe in the resurrection of the dead,” so we affirm in the Nicene Creed.



In this icon depicting Jesus rising from death he does not rise alone. He brings with him a man and a woman - Adam and Eve, representing all of humanity. They represent all of us. We, too, are being raised from death to new life. That is what Christian spirituality is about: human beings being transformed and transferred from poisonous, corrupt, death-dealing thoughts and actions, to healthy ways of thinking and acting. As Jesus ascends from the pit to be reunited with the Father, so it is that we ascend - level by level - from the regions of selfishness, greed, non-compassionate ways of relating to others and our environment, to life-giving attitudes and actions.

During Eastertide (The Great Fifty Days) - the period between the Great Vigil of Easter (which we so joyfully celebrated for the first time as a congregation this past Saturday evening) - until Pentecost Sunday, May 20th this year, we are given opportunity to remember and celebrate both the reality of Jesus' resurrection from death *and* that God is raising us from old death-dealing patterns of living to renewed lives that express God's life-giving nature. As one of the collects in the Great Vigil of Easter guides us to pray,

“ . . . let [us] see and know that things which were cast down are being raised up, and things which had grown old are being made new, and that all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” BCP p. 291

May each of us know and experience the truth of God's persistent life-giving Presence!
Fr. Masud+

St. Paul's to Participate in Sacred Sites Open House Weekend

The New York Landmarks Conservancy is conducting its 8th Annual Sacred Sites Open House weekend on May 5th and 6th, 2018. All congregations in our diocese are encouraged to participate. It's an excellent way of getting people to visit our lovely parish and get to know a little bit about us.

The Open House has three objectives:

- To encourage sacred sites to open their doors to the general public. Inviting visitors is a great way to build broad community support for the ongoing preservation of historic institutions.
- To inspire residents to be tourists in their own town, introducing non-members to the history, art and architecture embodied in sacred places. New Yorkers tour religious sites around the world but may overlook those in their own back yard. Developing cultural tourism is key to the future of sacred sites.
- To publicize the many programs and services religious institutions offer their neighbors. The important work these sites provide benefits the entire community—not just the congregations members—and help ensure the congregation's future.

Our Vestry has voted to open our church on Saturday, May 5 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. I am looking for a few individuals who would be willing to spend a couple of hours hosting this event. We will not participate in the Open House that Sunday, but as usual, we will have our regular worship service at 10:00 a.m., in which everyone is welcomed.

The responsibilities are simple: welcome visitors, hand out a brochure and a refrigerator magnet, answer questions, and offer them refreshments.

If you're interested in participating or have any questions, please let me know as soon as possible. A brief training meeting will be held after church on April 29 after church in which a sheet with "talking points" and answers to frequently asked questions will be provided.

Fernando Soto

An Unwelcome Visitor

During the heavy snowstorm of March 7th, one of the large pine trees on the north side of the Church came down and took down our electric and telephone service. The Church building itself was untouched. Service was restored early the following week. Our insurance policy covered all but \$1300 of the \$2974 expenses related to clearing some of the tree and restoring our electrical service. The remaining tree residue will be removed during our spring cleanup day on April 21st.





•Sunday, April 8- Basket Bingo at St. Christopher's & St. Sylvia's Parish. Save the date!

•Saturday, April 14, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. (tentative date) Spring Blood Drive at St. Christopher's & St. Sylvia's Parish.

•Saturday, April 21st., 9am Spring cleanup day at St.Paul's & Trinity. Lots of clean-up needed this year. "All hands on deck." Spring planting of flowers at a later date in May

- Vestry Meeting - Sunday April 29th after Church
- Saturday, May 5 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Sacred Sites Open House at St.Paul's & Trinity
- Saturday, May 12 - Apple Blossom Day in Red Hook. Clergy Walk-about.
- Children's Community Clothes Closet at Third Lutheran Church in Rhinebeck 1st & 3rd Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Summer 2018 - Young adult ecumenical 10 day journey to Taizé, France.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES AT ST. PAUL'S AND TRINITY PARISH

On each Sunday of Lent after the service, Fr. Masud gave teachings on the Holy Week liturgies. This prepared us to fully engage the week and to come to know about the Easter Vigil which we experienced for the first time in the life of this congregation. During Holy Week each service has its own special meaning and is intended as an opportunity for us to revisit the story and to reflect on what that story means to us personally.

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday was our entry into Holy Week. We processed into the church waving palms, singing "All Glory, Laud, and Honor". The procession was a reenactment of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. At the reading of the Gospel, our readers became characters from the Passion event and the congregation became the voice of the angry crowd screaming for Christ to be crucified in the place of the criminal Barabbas. The question became "Who am I in this narrative?" Answering that question opened us up to an examination of conscience.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Thursday was an intimate evening of fellowship, community, and worship beginning with dinner as we sat around the table (much like the disciples did at the Last Supper), sharing a meal of soup, salad, bread, crackers, and dessert while having animated conversation with our

church family. It was an opportunity to get to know each other better through working together, reminiscing, and sharing laughter. Fr. Masud then read the biblical story of the Passion and we were once again transported to that time period with Christ and his disciples. It was sobering to revisit that traumatic event which led us to a transition to the next part of the evening. We went upstairs to continue the service which included the age old practice of washing each other's feet as a sign of our servanthood to one another. Following the Eucharist, there was the stripping of the altar reenacting the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers came to take Jesus away for a trial and ultimately death. We then proceeded to the altar of repose where we prayed and sang together with periods of silence in between the Taizé chants. Throughout that whole experience a spirit of peace and love prevailed. My personal favorite Taizé chant was "Darkness is never darkness in your sight, the night is as clear as the day." I sang that simple prayer over and over as I drove home by myself that night reminding myself that God is always with me, even in my fear, apprehension, and darkness.

GOOD FRIDAY

On Good Friday, we commemorated the death of Christ on the cross. There was a Passion reading, prayers for the state of the world (the Solemn Collects) and worship and reflection on Jesus' act of atonement for our sins. Each of us were invited to pray at the foot of the Cross which was carried by Fr. Masud to the center aisle for us to bring our prayers, devotions, and intercessions to. We were invited to be present at the foot of the cross in whatever way was comfortable for us; kneeling at the cross, touching the cross, kissing the cross, or simply standing there silently in prayer. This was yet another experience of being in union with each other by witnessing the different ways each of us commune with God. Eucharist was served from the reserved sacrament. The service ended as we filed out in silence.

THE GREAT VIGIL OF EASTER

Saturday night we gathered together at seven o'clock around the fire from which the Christ candle was lit. We then processed into the church in darkness behind the Cross as the Deacon chanted "the light of Christ" and we chanted back "thanks be to God." We



listened to the story of our faith, starting with the Creation Story and ending with the story of the Valley of the Bones. The baptism of Payton and Skyler Marsh was joyful and inspiring. All present renewed our vows of baptism and joyfully greeted the resurrection of Christ with bells ringing, the organ blasting and lights springing out of the darkness. It was truly a glorious experience.

Many people were instrumental in making Holy Week such an amazing experience. It was a team effort of the Altar Guild, the Hospitality crew, the organist, the readers, the builders of the New Fire, and of course Fr. Masud, our Deacon, and the acolytes. We are blessed to have such a hard working church family, devoted to our church and devoted to each other. Sincere thanks to each and every one of you.

Submitted by Janice Syedullah



Many, Many Thanks

Thanks to all who in any way contributed to making our Holy Week, Easter Eve, and Easter Day celebrations such wonderful experiences. As it is said, "Many hands make light work," and I would add to that, "and an inspiring and joy-filled community."

Thanks to all! Fr. Masud+



WE WELCOME ARTICLES FOR OUR UPCOMING NEWSLETTERS:

If you have something that might be of interest to your fellow parishioners, please send them on to Barry Knickerbocker at bkknickerbocker2@hvc.rr.com. Hand delivered paper copy is welcome as well.