

MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, February 23, 2020
Seventh Sunday
In Ordinary Time

4:00 PM
8:00 AM

Gathering: All Creatures Of Our God And King
BB 538

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 103)

*Loving and forgiving are you, O Lord;
slow to anger, rich in kindness, loving
and forgiving are you.*

Preparation Hosea BB 655

Mass Parts Mass of Creation

Communion Ubi Caritas BB 479
Song Of The Body Of Christ BB 331

Recessional: There's A Wideness In God's Mercy
BB 476

10:00 AM

Gathering: Sing A Joyful Song BB 539

Dismissal Rite: You Have Called Us BB 636

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 103)

The Lord is kind and merciful. (2x)

Preparation Where Love Is Found BB 656
Love Goes On BB 477

Mass Parts Mass of Creation

Communion Loving And Forgiving BB 654
I Am The Bread Of Life BB 327

Recessional: City Of God BB 385



Find us on:
facebook

St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
FEBRUARY 16, 2020
WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN**

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

February 23, 2020	No Second Collection
February 26, 2020	Aid to Churches Europe/Africa
March 1, 2020	Property Management
March 8, 2020	No Second Collection

Out of respect, please remember to
silence or turn off
your cell phones during Mass.
Thank you!



Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

PAINT THE TOWN!

THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign. Our next projects include exterior painting for the church and Parish house in Newton. We'd also like to paint the interior sanctuary of the church in Newton and complete some electrical upgrades to the church.

Other possible projects include work on our Plaistow and Newton parking lots, and ramp access to the church in Plaistow.

Can you help?

Any contribution is welcome. Make checks payable to
Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2019, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**



ASH WEDNESDAY

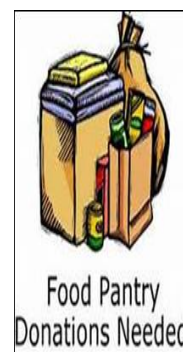
Ash Wednesday is this week on **February 26, 2020**. Mass and distribution of ashes will take place as follows:

8:00 AM in Newton
6:30 PM in Plaistow

ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. For questions, please call the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.

WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, February 23

10:00 AM	Religious Ed – PreK to 8	<i>Plaistow</i>
11:00 AM	Family Mardi Gras Celebration	<i>Plaistow</i>
11:00 AM	RCIA	<i>Plaistow</i>
12:00 PM	Parish Pastoral Council Meeting	<i>Plaistow</i>

Wednesday, February 26 **HOLY ANGELS CHURCH OPEN ALL DAY FOR PRAYER**

7:00 PM	Disciples on the Journey	<i>Plaistow</i>
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Thursday, February 27

8:30 AM	Adoration Begins	<i>Newton</i>
1:30 PM	Disciples on the Journey	
9:00 AM	Intercessory Prayer	<i>Plaistow</i>
8:30 PM	Adoration Ends	<i>Newton</i>

Friday, February 28

6:30 PM	Stations of the Cross	<i>Newton</i>
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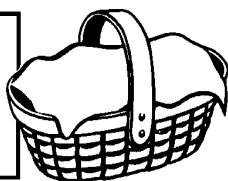
Saturday, February 29

3:00 PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation	<i>Plaistow</i>
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Sunday, March 1

10:00 AM	Religious Ed – PreK to 8	<i>Plaistow</i>
10:00 AM	Rite of Acceptance	<i>Plaistow</i>
11:00 AM	RCIA	<i>Plaistow</i>
11:00 AM	Baptism Catechesis	<i>Plaistow</i>
6:00 PM	Vespers	<i>Newton</i>
6:30 PM	Sacrament of Reconciliation	<i>Newton</i>

**St. Vincent
de Paul
Society**



Don't forget to "Drop Your Dollar" the next time you're at Mass. It may not seem like much to you, but to those we help, it makes a huge difference in their lives.

Keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we head into the colder months and food and fuel may become an issue with neighbors and friends.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, March 18 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, February 22 ~ Vigil / 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lv 19:1-2, 17-18; 1 Cor 3:16-23; Mt 5:38-48

4:00 PM	Michael A. Delcore by Joan Delcore
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Plaistow

Sunday, February 23 ~ 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lv 19:1-2, 17-18; 1 Cor 3:16-23; Mt 5:38-48

8:00 AM	Dolores Mealey by the Knights of Columbus
	<i>Newton</i>
10:00 AM	People of the Parish
	<i>Plaistow</i>

Monday, February 24 ~ Weekday

Jas 3:13-18; Mk 9:14-29

8:00 AM	Ralph Werner by Cathy Smith
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Newton

Tuesday, February 25 ~ Weekday

Jas 4:1-10; Mk 9:30-37

8:00 AM	People of the Parish
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Plaistow

Wednesday, February 26 ~ Ash Wednesday

Jl 2:12-18; 2 Cor 5:20—6:2; Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

8:00 AM	People of the Parish
	<i>Newton</i>
6:30 PM	Roland and Mary Guilmette by the Matson family
	<i>Plaistow</i>

Thursday, February 27 ~ Thursday after Ash Wednesday

Dt 30:15-20; Lk 9:22-25

8:00 AM	People of the Parish
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Newton

Friday February 28 ~ Friday after Ash Wednesday

Is 58:1-9a; Mt 9:14-15

No Mass

Saturday, February 29 ~ Saturday after Ash Wednesday

Is 58:9b-14; Lk 5:27-32 (Day)

Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11 (Vigil)

4:00 PM	Antonia and Stanley Zakiewicz by Pat Zakiewicz
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Plaistow

Sunday, March 1 ~ First Sunday of Lent

Gn 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19; Mt 4:1-11

8:00 AM	People of the Parish
	<i>Newton</i>
10:00 AM	Jesselyn Driscoll by her family
	<i>Plaistow</i>

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

❖ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ❖

ST. ANDREW DINNERS

Men who are considering a vocation to the priesthood or who would simply like some help hearing the Lord's call for their life, are invited to an evening of prayer, conversation with the Vocation Team, and Dinner. Please RSVP to Becky Vinson at rvinson@rcbm.org if you would like to attend.

February 28 – Men Ages 19-60

RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, March 1, 2020** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Bishop Peter A. Libasci invites all couples celebrating an anniversary in 2020 of 10, 15, 20, 30, 35, 40, 45 or 55+ years, to attend the Spring Wedding Anniversary Mass. This celebration will be held on **Sunday, April 19, 2020 at 2:00 PM** at St. Joseph Cathedral, Manchester.

To register, please contact your parish office **by March 20, 2020**. The parish office will gather and submit all necessary information.

Once registration has been completed by the parish office, all registrants will receive an invitation to this special celebration. We look forward to seeing you at this spring's Wedding Anniversary Mass!

Couples celebrating anniversaries of 5, 25, or 50 years will be asked to register later for a Fall celebration.

To all other married couples, congratulations!

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

**Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM**

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

❖ PARISH DIRECTORY ❖

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay
Cathy Smith
Joyce Szapa
Jackie Tremblay
Thomas Kondel
Val Barczak
Parish Council

fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net
mvmbarczak@comcast.net
parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese ✠

EPHPHATHA: BE OPENED!

All are invited to a Lenten mission presented by Father Marc Montminy on March 2, 3, and 4 at 6:30 PM each evening in the church at Saint Kathryn Parish, 4 Dracut Road, Hudson, NH. These talks are sure to help us prepare the way of the Lord in our hearts this Lent. For more information, call 603-882-7793.

Monday, March 2

Life is Messy - Things in the Way of Holiness

Tuesday, March 3

20/20 Vision – Blinded by the World

Wednesday, March 4

Is That All There Is? – Make Room for the Holy Spirit

EARN A MASTER'S IN SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

New at Merrimack College

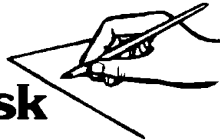
Earn a Master's Degree in Spiritual Direction Spirituality (M.A.) or Spiritual Direction (M.A.) or a CERTIFICATE in Spiritual Direction CERTIFICATE in Interfaith Spirituality

Acquire the knowledge and ministerial experience needed to enhance the spiritual journeys of others and meet the changing needs of the spiritual community. LEARN MORE at www.Merrimack.edu/pilot

CONTACT YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVES TO VOICE OPPOSITION TO ASSISTED SUICIDE

HB 1659 is a bill pending before the NH Legislature that would legalize assisted suicide. Following the February 12 public hearing on the bill, votes in committee and on the House floor will happen in the following weeks. Please contact your representatives ASAP to urge them to oppose this bill. The Church teaches that suicide is always a tragedy and that a caring community should respond with hospice and palliative care to better meet the needs of those facing the end of life. **For more information about this bill and how to contact your representatives in the Legislature, visit: www.catholicnh.org/action.**

**From the
Pastor's Desk**



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSED

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2020. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

**HAVE YOU LOST A LOVED ONE TO
DRUG ADDICTION?**

A new group is meeting at
St. John the Baptist, 110 Lincoln Ave, Haverhill, MA
in the Chapel Room on Fridays from 4:30 to 5:30 PM

Meeting dates: February 28, March 13, 20, 27, April 3

Come let us pray for each other
and the souls of those we have lost.
You are not alone. All are welcome.

Questions? Call Kelly at 978-373-0679.

Leave a voicemail message
with your name and contact number.

WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date. **Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.**

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
IRISH FESTIVAL**

The Knights' Irish Festival will be held this year on **Saturday, March 14 from 5:00 to 7:00 PM** in the Parish Center. All of the net proceeds will be donated by the Knights to St. Luke's Food Pantry.

The Knights will be preparing and serving a traditional Irish Boiled Dinner of corned beef, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, turnips, etc., and there will be plenty of desserts to finish off your meal. There will also be hot dogs available.

Entertainment will be provided by the Murray Irish School of Dance. They put on an excellent exhibition of Irish step dances.

There will be gift baskets to be raffled off, along with a 50/50 raffle.

Tickets will be on sale after Masses on the weekends of February 29-March 1 and March 7-8. Tickets will also be sold at the door. Take out meals will be available. Ticket prices are \$10 each and \$30 for a family.



FAMILY MARDI GRAS
Sunday, February 23
Following 10 am Liturgy

- Celebrate “Fat Tuesday” a few days early!
- Learn about the customs and ways we observe Lent!
- Prepare for the Church’s Lenten journey to Easter!

All are welcome

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Matthew 5:38–48

Jesus asks us to go beyond treating others in the same way we want to be treated ourselves. He asks us to care for each other as God does—to love other people without expecting love in return and to even love to our enemies. This is an invitation that takes a lifetime to grow into and fulfill. It is a challenge for the family to keep this message alive in a world that puts a premium on competition and on being “better.”

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): All parents want their children to live by the Golden Rule and so must be role models for this behavior. The Golden Rule lesson is best learned within the home. Ask your child to share the booklet the class made and talk about how the Golden Rule helps us all be good friends.

Promise (Grades K–1): Jesus taught us that we must love and forgive our enemies. Your child explored the call to turn the other cheek and walk the extra mile. Talk with your child about how members of the family need to forgive one another. Support that conversation by being quick to forgive your child when he or she needs to be forgiven.

Good News (Grades 2–3): Ask your child to share what Jesus said about forgiveness. Give examples of ways your family can show love to your “enemies.” Ask your child to share the story of “Mean Manny,” and how Olivia handled someone bullying them.

Venture (Grades 4–6): Children are most sensitive to bullying words. In class this week, your child talked about the effect that these

kinds of words have on young people. They also read and discussed different endings to a story about bullying. Invite your child to share this story with the family. Talk about what Jesus means when he asks that you love your enemies and to pray for those who do you harm. Discuss how important forgiveness is for the good of your family. Talk, too, about how praying the Our Father can help you learn how to forgive.

Visions (Grades 7–8): One of the most difficult of Jesus’ teaching is “turning the other cheek.” In class, your youngster was asked to wrestle with this statement. Encourage your young person to share with the family why this was so important to Jesus and how it can work in society. Ask your youngster to tell you about the camp Seeds of Peace and its mission to bring together teens from war-torn countries. Discuss the lasting importance of the friendships that develop between the Seeds. Review the four moral codes with your son or daughter, and discuss which ones are appropriate to live by. How does Jesus’ New Law affect how we treat, and are treated by, others?

Pray Together

Set aside some time for the whole family to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as we approach Lent. There may be a Penance Service at your parish church, or you can go together at one of the times when private confession is being offered. Even though your younger children have not yet received the sacrament, it would be good for them to see their parents and older siblings participating. When you get home together, thank God for the gift of forgiveness.

Attende, Domine

“Hear us, O Lord”

With Ash Wednesday upon us, it is a good time to think and pray about the Lenten Season - the “Springtime” of the Church. The word “Lent” means spring, and comes from the same root as the word “lengthen,” since the days do get longer as winter wanes. The whole northern hemisphere turns toward the sun, the source of life, and winter gives way to spring. In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, the word for “repentance” is “to turn.” As the earth turns to the sun, as the earth turns from winter cold to the new life of spring, so do we turn our lives towards our loving God and seek the Way of the Lord Jesus anew.



“Even now, return to me, says the Lord.” (Joel 2:12). The word “sin” means separation. We are called to turn from our separate selves, from our sins; and to come together in community. Self denial is another way we express our repentance. We turn away from sin and death and toward God as our source of life by disciplining our wills and desires.

Self-denial is three-fold, according to Matthew’s Gospel (chap. 6). We **PRAY**: “Go to your room, close your door and pray to your Father in private.” We **FAST**: “No one may see you are fasting but your Father in heaven.” We give **ALMS**: “Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father, who sees in secret will repay you.” Self-denial is an exercise, a work-out, getting our lives and spirits into shape. Through the Lenten exercise of **PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING**, we spring clean our lives, sharpen our senses, put tomorrow in its place and treasure the day at hand.

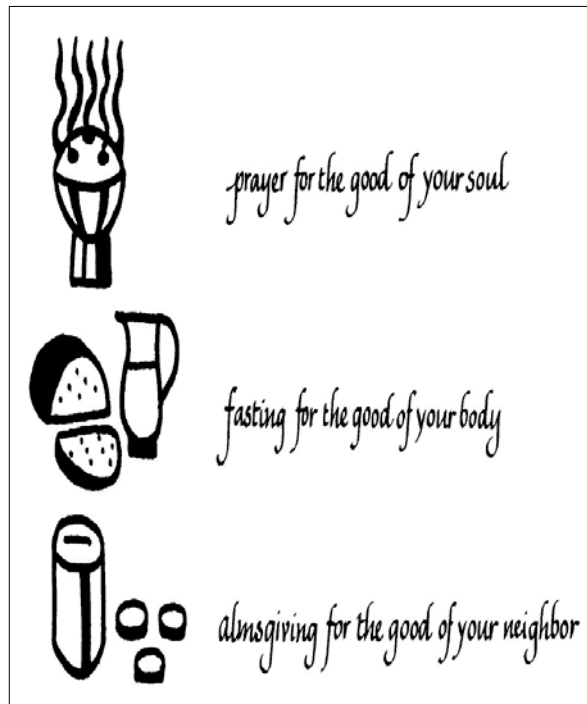
For Forty Days we are conscious of how we must sharpen our senses and focus mind and heart on the reign of God. We are, above all, aware of those waters in which we were baptized into Christ’s death. That is, death to sin and evil; it is life in Christ that we began in those waters of baptism. These waters wait at Lent’s end for the Catechumens of the Church. The entire Lenten season turns, it seems, on Baptism, renewal and reception into the Church.

We, too, wait for the opportunity to renew our own Baptismal Promises, and to feel the splash of Easter water on our faces after the dryness of our Lenten desert journey.

From Father Albert
Lent, 2020

The Church asks us to give ourselves to prayer and to the reading of Scripture, to fasting and to giving of alms during the Lenten season. The fasting that all do together on Fridays is but a sign of the daily Lenten discipline of individuals and households: fasting for certain periods of time, fasting from certain foods, but also fasting from other things and activities. Likewise, the giving of alms is some effort to share this world equally not only through the distribution of money, but through the sharing of our time and possessions and through work of many kinds for a just world.

FASTING means that anyone between the ages of 18 and 59 may eat only one full meal (with the other 2 meals being distinctly smaller). One may, however, enter more into the spiritual element of fasting and not partake of any meals at all. One fasts for a spiritual reason - (an end to sin, a reconciliation in one's life or family, an end to war or other disturbance, or for the spread of the Gospel or personal/corporate conversion) than for a personal dietary goal. **The Church requires all between the ages of 18 and 59 to observe the fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Fridays and Wednesdays are also traditional fast days, but are not mandatory.**



ABSTINENCE is the discipline for those age 14 or older to **forego the eating of any meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all Fridays of Lent.**

The **EASTER DUTY** is the **obligation to receive Holy Eucharist** between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.

The **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is an **obligation** for all those who are conscious of grave sin. A frequent celebration of Reconciliation is encouraged for all, especially during the Lenten Season.

Reconciliation is celebrated at Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish on Saturdays at 3:00 at Plaistow, and on the Sundays of Lent following 6:00 PM Evening Prayer at Newton.

A Lenten Penance Service is scheduled for Sunday, March 22 at 4 PM at Saint Michael Parish in Exeter. Many local clergy will be available. All are welcome.

Lent 2020

Daily Mass Readings and Reflections for the Sacred Season

Even now, says the
LORD, return to me
with your whole
heart, with fasting,
and weeping, and
mourning...

— JOEL 2:12

Wednesday

26 FEBRUARY The Father Sees

Let your fasting
be seen only
by the Father in
heaven.

Mt 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday

27 Take Up Your Cross

Deny yourself,
take up your
cross and follow
Jesus.

Luke 9:22-25

Friday

28 The Lord's Fast

Free the oppressed; share
your bread with
the hungry.

Isaiah 58:1-9a

Saturday

29 Called to Repent

Jesus said, "I
have come to
call sinners to
repentance."

Luke 5:27-32

Sunday

1 MARCH For Forty Days

Worship the Lord
your God and
serve only him.

Matthew 4:1-11

Monday

2 Love Your Neighbor

You shall love
your neighbor as
yourself. I am the
Lord.

Lv 19:1-2, 11-18

Tuesday

3 Pray Like This

Our Father in
heaven, hal-
lowed be your
name.

Matthew 6:7-15

8 Grace in Christ

Our Savior Jesus
Christ has abol-
ished death.

2 Timothy 1:8b-10

9 We Have Sinned

To the Lord our
God belong
mercy and for-
giveness.

Daniel 9:4b-10

10 Humble Yourself

The greatest
among you shall
be your servant.

Matthew 23:1-12

11 To Give His Life

The Son of Man
came to give his
life as a ransom.

Matthew 20:17-28

12 Trust in the Lord

Blessed is the
man who trusts
in the Lord.

Jeremiah 17:5-10

13 The Rejected Stone

The rejected
stone has
become the
cornerstone.

Mt 21:33-43, 45-46

14 God Pardons Sin

God will cast
our sins into the
depths of the
sea.

Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

15 Peace With God

While we were
still sinners,
Christ died for
us.

Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

16 Flesh Restored

His flesh was
restored like the
flesh of a little
child.

2 Kings 5:1-15b

17 A Debt Forgiven

Forgive others as
you have been
forgiven by God.

Matthew 18:21-35

18 The Law Fulfilled

Jesus came to
fulfill the Law
and the Proph-
ets.

Matthew 5:17-19

19 Abraham's Offspring

Abraham's faith
was counted to
him as righteous-
ness.

Rom 4:13, 16-18, 22

20 The Kingdom of God

The kingdom of
God has come
upon you.

Matthew 12:28-34

21 Return to the Lord

Come, let us
return to the
Lord that he may
heal us.

Hosea 6:1-6

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

Lent- Easter Liturgical Schedule

2020

THE BEGINNING OF THE LENTEN FAST FEBRUARY 26
ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY 8 am (N) & 6:30 pm (P)

LENTEN SEASON

DAILY LITURGIES: M 8 am Newton
T 8 am Plalstow
W 6:30 pm Plalstow
Th 8 am Newton

RECONCILIATION: Plalstow: Saturdays 3:00 pm
except Holy Saturday; Newton: Sundays of Lent 6:30 pm
Monday of Holy Week - Plalstow 11:00am - 1:00 PM
Newton 5:00-7:00 PM

Sunday March 22 Penance Service at Exeter 4:00 PM

LENTEN EVENING PRAYER: Sunday evenings of Lent
at Newton, 6 pm

STATIONS OF THE CROSS:

*Days of Lent - 6:30 pm - Newton
Lenten Soup Supper Friday March 27 following Stations

HOLY WEEK

Monday of Holy Week - Liturgy at 8 am - Newton
Tuesday of Holy Week - Liturgy at 8 am - Plalstow
Wednesday of Holy Week - Liturgy at 6:30 pm - Plalstow
Tenebrae at 7:30 PM

PASCHAL TRIDUUM

HOLY THURSDAY APRIL 9 - Morning prayer 8 am - Newton
Mid-day prayer 12 noon - Newton

GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 10 - Morning prayer 8 am - Plalstow
Mid-day prayer 12 noon - Plalstow
Stations of the Cross 3 pm - Newton

* SERVICE OF THE LORD'S PASSION
& HOLY COMMUNION 6:30 PM - Plalstow

HOLY SATURDAY APRIL 11- Morning Prayer 8 am - Plalstow
Mid-day Prayer 12 noon - Plalstow

* EASTER GREAT VIGIL AT 8 PM - Plalstow
(Reception in Hall to follow)

* APRIL 12 EASTER SUNDAY LITURGIES
8 AM - Newton
10 AM - Plalstow

Easter Solemn Vespers with Benediction at 6 pm - Newton

Holy Angels Church 8 Atkinson Depot Rd. Plalstow
Mary, Mother of the Church 12 Amesbury Rd. Newton
603 382-8324 www.stlukenh.org

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

22 Children of Light
You are light in the Lord; walk as children of light.

Ephesians 5:8-14

23 Be Glad and Rejoice
Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth.

Isaiah 65:17-21

24 Get Up and Walk
My Father is working until now, and I am working.

John 5:1-16

25 Call His Name
Jesus
You will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

Luke 1:26-38

26 John Bore Witness
The works that Jesus does bear witness to him.

John 5:31-47

27 Is This the Christ?
They sought to arrest him, but his hour had not come.

John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

28 This Is the Prophet
The Christ comes from the off-spring of David.

John 7:40-53

29 Life and Peace
He who raised Jesus from the dead will also raise you.

Romans 8:8-11

30 Go and Sin No More
Let him who is without sin cast the first stone.

John 8:1-11

31 The Bronze Serpent
Moses made a bronze serpent and lifted it on a pole.

Numbers 21:4-9

1 APRIL
You Will Be Free
If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

John 8:31-42

2 Abraham Rejoiced
If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.

John 8:51-59

3 The Lord Is With Me
The Lord has delivered the life of the needy.

Jeremiah 20:10-13

4 One Man Should Die
Jesus would die to gather into one the children of God.

John 11:45-56

5 Your King Is Coming
Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!

Matthew 21:1-11

6 Behold My Servant
I will give you as a covenant and a light for the nations.

Isaiah 42:1-7

7 Light for the Nations
My salvation will reach to the ends of the earth.

Isaiah 49:1-6

8 The Lord Helps Me
The Lord helps me; I shall not be put to shame.

Isaiah 50:4-9

The Paschal Triduum

from Holy Thursday evening through Easter Vigil Mass

HOLY THURSDAY
Serve One Another
Jesus, as a humble servant, washes his disciples' feet.

John 13:1-15

GOOD FRIDAY
Man of Sorrows
The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

EASTER VIGIL
Everlasting Love
The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer.

Isaiah 54:5-14

Traditional Lenten Disciplines

Fasting & Abstinence: Catholics aged 14 and older abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday and all the Fridays of Lent. In addition, on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, Catholics from age 18-59 fast, limiting themselves to one full meal and two smaller meals each day.

Prayer: Catholics are encouraged to pray more during Lent, especially with Scripture. Lent is also an ideal time to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in preparation for the celebration of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

Almsgiving: Moved by the sacrifice of Christ, many Christians combine almsgiving with fasting, giving to the poor the money they saved by eating, drinking or buying less as they rely more on God's abundant grace.



**Weekend of
February 22-23**

**Help Mike Mercier and his street
Ministry in outreach to homeless
communities of greater Boston
by donating a new winter hat,
gloves, mittens or sox.**

**Winter is a difficult
time to be homeless
You can help...**

**Collection boxes will
be in the entry way of
our churches through
March 1.**

**Thank you and
God bless you!**

Fat Tuesday

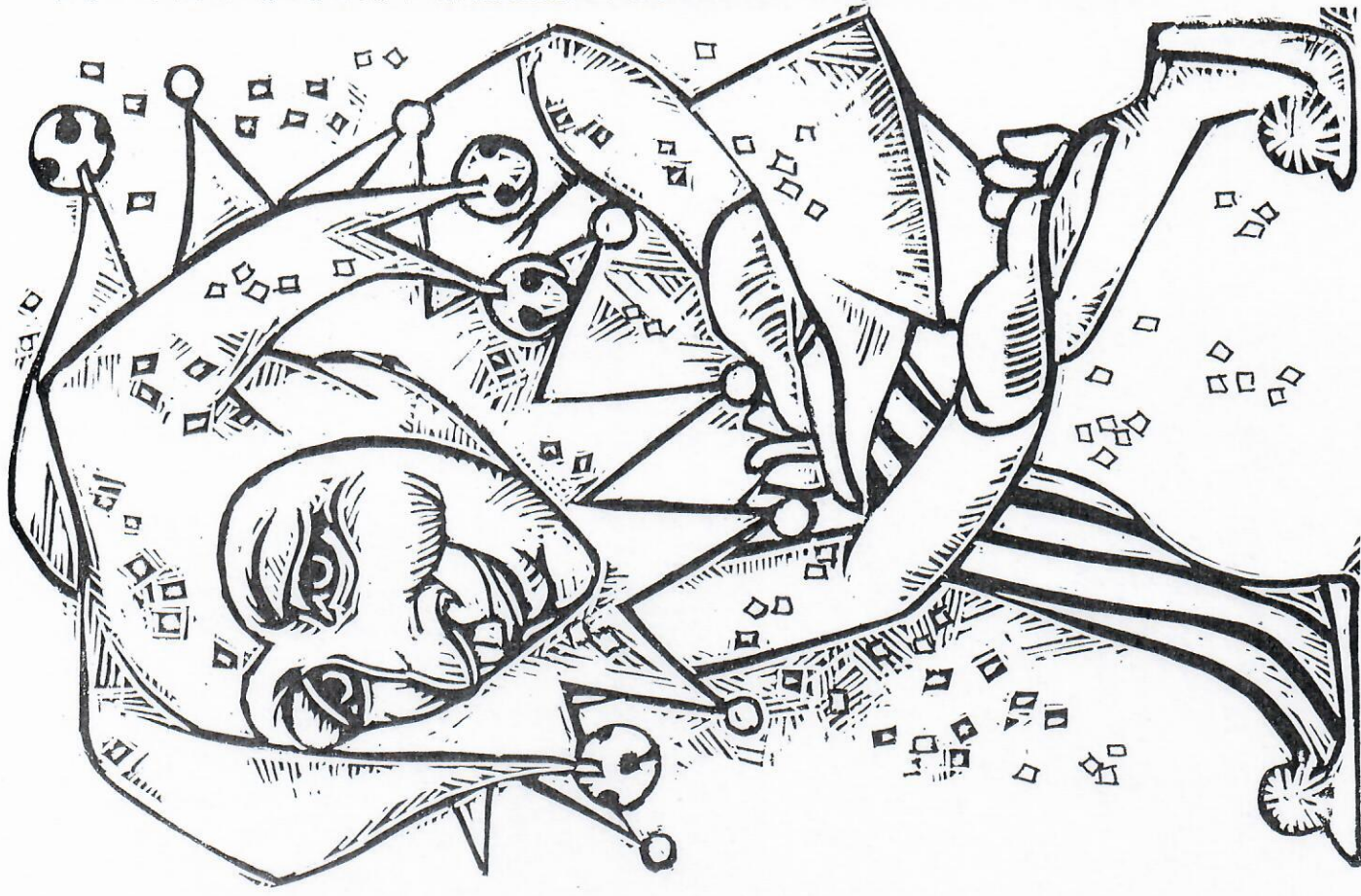
Mardi Gras (*mar-dee grab*) means "Fat Tuesday" in French. It's the day before Ash Wednesday, when Lent begins.

If we are serious about keeping Lent, the Mardi Gras party before it should be great fun. Plan all the things you will need: your favorite music, party hats and noisemakers, masks, confetti, streamers, your most favorite foods and, of course, guests.

Popular Mardi Gras foods are pancakes in Great Britain, crepes in France, stuffed grape leaves in the Middle East, sweet rice in Puerto Rico, cream rolls in Scandinavia, sausages and peppers in Italy, and doughnuts in Poland and Germany.

Pick the time and place, and invite the people. And remember—there's a point behind the party. It gets us ready to keep a good Lent. Mardi Gras is a little like emptying our drawers and closets into a pile before we straighten them out. We can wear costumes and masks to make fun of our bad habits: Draw TV screens around your eyes if you watch television too much. Draw the stopped hands of a clock on your face if you are always running late. Wear a general's medals if you are bossy.

At the end of the party, have paper and pencils ready. Write down how you want to improve during Lent. You can pass these around or talk about the help you will need to succeed. Then tear them up into tiny bits and bury them in the ground or put them in the trash. At the end, to begin Lent, join hands and say the Our Father. Then clean up in silence.



ASH WEDNESDAY



Cleanse Our Hearts

Merciful Lord,
your will is that all people know your
gracious love
in the depths of their being.
Look upon your people with patience
as they strive to live the love you have
shown us.
Keep us steadfast in prayer.
Help us to persevere in our fasting
and abstinence.

Inspire us to be generous in our almsgiving.
Cleanse our hearts during this
penitential season.
When we turn away from you frightened,
tired, or frustrated by our failures,
fill us with joy in the salvation you have
given us,
that we might renew our efforts
and praise your saving power.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Now Is the Time



Today's Readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18. “Rend your hearts.” Lent is a time to offer our hearts to God, who will tear vice and sin out of us. At times, the process is painful. We are so attached to our sins that they become a habit. It took a crisis to compel Joel and his people to look inward and discover how they had taken God for granted. Both the crisis and the confession of sin were painful.

St. Paul reminds us why we confess our sins: God has made us righteous in Christ. We are in a radically new relationship with God. The strength of this relationship overcomes every obstacle because God works within us and even through us, extending his gift of reconciliation to others.

If we do not live this gift of gracious love, however, we will lose it. The time to act is now.

By praying, fasting, and giving alms, we practice living out the reconciliation God offers. These and other acts of piety strengthen our relationship with God. We give alms to acknowledge that all we have is from God and we need nothing more. We pray to express our love for God and to know God’s love for us. We fast without gloomy looks because we hunger for God. We are overjoyed that God frees us from sin and death and draws us into life with him. The joy of knowing God’s love for us helps us persevere in our Lenten walk.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, February 24

Prayer

Jesus rebukes his disciples for not having enough faith to cast out a demon. Our prayer might also feel weak and ineffectual. Lent is a time to persist when we feel like failures at prayer. Lent may also be a time for us to learn new ways of praying and being with God. St. James urges us to be humble and patient. God wants to fill us with holy gifts. How will you enrich your prayer life this Lent? *Today's Readings: James 3:13–18; Psalm 19:8, 9, 10, 15; Mark 9:14–29.*

Tuesday, February 25

Almsgiving

St. James describes an alarming situation in which members of the community are so caught up in the things of this world that they neglect God and cause division. Jesus' disciples, in turn, betray their preoccupation with status. When we generously donate our money and time, we begin freeing ourselves from an attachment to worldly things. We also remind ourselves that such things are impermanent. All that we will have in the end is God—or nothing at all. What charity will you offer this Lent? *Today's Readings: James 4:1–10; Psalm 55:7–8, 9–10a, 10b–11a, 23; Mark 9:30–37.*

Wednesday, February 26

Fasting

In a culture that extols immediate gratification, the ancient practices of fasting and abstinence seem strange and pointless. When undertaken with prayer, however, they become deeply meaningful. When we fast and abstain from meat, we deepen our awareness of our mortality. We express our spiritual hunger for God. We distinguish wants from needs. We join our small sacrifices to Christ's great one. Fasting and abstaining also joins us with others the world over who ask God to cleanse their sinful hearts. *Today's Readings: Joel 2:12–18; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 12–13, 14 and 17; 2 Corinthians 5:20–6:2; Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18.*

Thursday, February 27

A Better Life

As the Israelites prepare to enter the Promised Land, Moses reminds them of all that God has done and all that God asks of them. If they obey God, God will bless them and they will thrive in their new homeland. Jesus calls us to follow him in self-giving love. It's hard for us to obey. We persevere in faith, hoping that our new way of living will lead to the future we truly want. Reflect on how your Lenten promises will bring you closer to God. *Today's Readings: Deuteronomy 30:15–20; Psalm 1:1–2, 3, 4 and 6; Luke 9:22–25.*

Friday, February 28

Beyond Fasting

God's people complain that despite their fasting and ritual practices God does not do their bidding. The prophet replies that they are concerned about themselves and not the well-being of others. When people ask Jesus why his disciples do not fast, he points out that God has come to his people, so they should celebrate. One group fasts for selfish reasons while the other fasts but fails to see God's coming. How can your practice of fasting and abstinence help you better see both God and the needs of others? *Today's Readings: Isaiah 58:1–9a; Psalm 51:3–4, 5–6ab, 18–19; Matthew 9:14–15.*

Saturday, February 29

Feasting with the Lord

It's not easy to turn from our interests to follow the Lord, yet Isaiah continues to urge us to act with justice and compassion. When Jesus calls Levi to embrace the demands of discipleship, Levi promptly obeys. The new disciple even throws a party. Levi understands that despite the challenge, discipleship brings us into the presence of our Lord. Choose a moment from your day and celebrate how God is with you. *Today's Readings: Isaiah 58:9b–14; Psalm 86:1–2, 3–4, 5–6; Luke 5:27–32.*



Do Something for Lent. Renew your faith.

What is the **Lenten Journey** all about? Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are called the “three pillars” of the Christian way of life. They help support a full and healthy life. During Lent we try to repair and strengthen these three pillars, which also are called the “three disciplines” because they help people become better disciples of the Lord. Our **Lenten Journey** program helps Discipleship!

Lenten Journey is about SMALL GROUPS... IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN-UP! We continue to welcome sign-ups for small groups. **On the back of this flyer is a REGISTRATION FORM. Return the form today, or call the office at 382-8324.**

Meetings begin this week! Groups meet six times during the Lenten season to discuss the Lenten Sunday Lectionary readings. You will learn more about Scripture through the resource book provided, participate in interesting discussions, meet some wonderful people and have the opportunity to build up the Body of Christ.



**All group members will pick up their resource booklets
at the first meeting.**

Groups begin meeting THIS WEEK!

**Wednesday, February 26, after the 6:30 p.m. Mass in Room 8; downstairs in the Church Hall.
Thursday, February 27, at 1:30 p.m. in Room 8; downstairs in the Church Hall.**

FAMILY AND TEEN DOWNLOADS: www.disciplesonthejourney.org

Ash Wednesday is This Wednesday, February 26!

DISCIPLES ON THE JOURNEY REGISTRATION FORM



Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail _____ Cell Phone _____

Please check the time and day you prefer

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m. ____
(February 26 – April 1)

Thursday Afternoons at 1:30 p.m. ____
(February 27 – April 2)

Check if you are willing to be a group leader _____

**GROUP MEETINGS BEGIN
THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 23**

**GROUPS WILL MEET IN ROOM 8 IN THE
CHURCH HALL**

(Please return this form in the collection basket or bring
to the parish office)

SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST

Lent - Easter Liturgical Schedule 2020

THE BEGINNING OF THE LENTEN FAST FEBRUARY 26
ASH WEDNESDAY LITURGY 8 am Newton
6:30 PM Plaistow

RECONCILIATION

Plaistow: Saturdays 3:00 PM (except Holy Saturday)
Newton: Sundays of Lent following 6 PM evening prayer

Sunday March 22: Penance Service at Exeter 4:00 PM

Monday of Holy Week: Plaistow 11:00am – 1:00 PM; Newton 5:00-7:00 PM

LENTEN EVENING PRAYER Sunday evenings of Lent at Newton, 6 pm

STATIONS OF THE CROSS Fridays of Lent - 6:30 pm – Newton Lenten Soup Supper Friday March 27

HOLY WEEK

Monday of Holy Week – Liturgy at 8 am - Newton
Tuesday of Holy Week – Liturgy at 8 am - Plaistow
Wednesday of Holy Week – Liturgy at 6:30 pm - Plaistow
Tenebrae at 7:30 PM

PASCHAL TRIDUUM

HOLY THURSDAY APRIL 9 – Morning prayer 8 am - Newton
Mid-day prayer 12 noon – Newton

LITURGY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER 6:30 PM - Newton
-Eucharistic Adoration follows-
Night Prayer 10:00 pm - Newton

GOOD FRIDAY APRIL 10 - Morning prayer 8 am - Plaistow
Mid-day prayer 12 noon - Plaistow
Stations of the Cross 3 pm - Newton

SERVICE OF THE LORD'S PASSION
& HOLY COMMUNION 6:30 PM - Plaistow

HOLY SATURDAY APRIL 11– Morning Prayer 8 am - Plaistow
Mid-day Prayer 12 noon - Plaistow

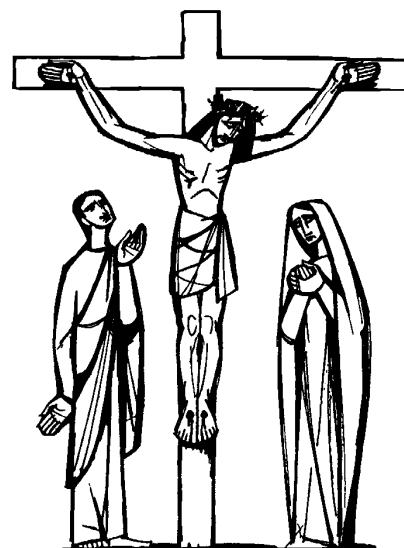
EASTER GREAT VIGIL AT 8 PM - Plaistow
(Reception in Hall to follow)

EASTER SUNDAY LITURGIES APRIL 12

8 AM – Newton
10 AM – Plaistow
Easter Solemn Vespers with Benediction at 6 pm – Newton

LENTEN SEASON DAILY LITURGIES:

M 8 am Newton
T 8 am Plaistow
W 6:30 PM Plaistow
Th 8 am Newton



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST PARISH

Newton: 12 Amesbury Road, Newton, NH 03858

Plaistow: 8 Atkinson Depot Road, Plaistow, NH 03865

www. <http://stlukenh.org>
(603) 382-8324

✠ AROUND THE DIOCESE ✠



MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH Did you know that ALL Catholics are required to be married in the Church as a condition of the validity of their marriage?

Any Catholic married in a civil ceremony (JP) or in any religious ceremony other than a Catholic one (unless specifically excepted by the Bishop) is not living out the Sacrament of Marriage in its fullness according to the teaching of the Church. Contact Father Albert at the parish office for more information.



STAY INFORMED WITH FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP NEWS

The Diocese of Manchester wants to inform Catholics about important public policy matters facing our elected officials. Faithful Citizenship News provides briefs on legislation as well as information about Catholic social teaching on some of today's pressing issues. To read the current issue of Faithful Citizenship News and to subscribe, visit www.catholicnh.org/fcnews.

CATHOLIC CHARITIES COUNSELING

New Hampshire Catholic Charities provides individual, marital, family, and couples' counseling, helping people with a variety of personal difficulties, including: Depression, Stress, Family Conflicts, Relationship Problems, Anxiety, Substance Abuse, Life Adjustment Issues, Grief and Loss. Counseling also helps individuals and families strengthen communication skills in order to build and sustain healthy relationships and live more satisfying lives. A sliding scale fee is offered. Contact Arlene Dody, LCMHC in Salem at 603-893-1971 for more information.

HOW TO MAKE A REPORT OF SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is a crime in the State of New Hampshire and the Church. New Hampshire law requires that anyone who has reason to suspect that a child is being or has been abused or neglected must make a report to the Division for Children, Youth & Families ("DCYF") of the State of New Hampshire, 1-800-894-5533. Any person who suspects or alleges child abuse on the part of a priest, deacon, employee, or volunteer of a parish, school, or institution of the diocese of Manchester is also encouraged to make a report to the Office for Ministerial Conduct, 603-669-3100. Church personnel – clergy, paid employees, and volunteers – have additional reporting requirements if they believe that Church personnel have sexually abused a child. You can learn more about these reporting requirements on the diocesan website at www.catholicnh.org or by speaking with our Parish Safe Environment Coordinator, Cathy Smith at 382-8324.

The Pregnancy Care Center

The Pregnancy Care Center is a non-profit organization that offers its confidential services at no cost to its clients. We are committed to promoting the culture of life by assisting expectant parents in the birth and subsequent development of their child during his or her first year of life. We are also committed to helping young people embrace the virtues of chastity and continence as a sign of their Christian dignity.

Main Center

496 Main St., Haverhill, MA (978-373-5700)

www.pccnortheast.org

Helpline: 866-254-4440



MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Don't you and your spouse deserve a beautiful, romantic weekend away together? Get away from all those worldly anxieties and take time to just focus on each other by making a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. Deepen your communication, strengthen your relationship, rekindle your romance, and renew your sacrament by attending the next Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend in New England. For more information, call Ralph & Jane Becker at 1-800-710-9963 or visit www.wwme.org.

NH COUPLE ENRICHMENT CIRCLE

Have you attended a Marriage Encounter Weekend? If your answer is yes, you are invited to participate in the NH Couple Enrichment Circle to continue to strengthen your marriage relationship. For more information, contact David and Karen Demers at 617-480-9989 or ddemers@aviconpartners.com.

RETRouvaille...A Lifeline

Rediscover a loving marriage with a Retrouvaille weekend. If your marriage is tearing the two of you apart, if there is little or no meaningful communication, if you are considering separation or divorce, we believe Retrouvaille can help you. For more information, call 1-800-470-2230 or visit www.HelpOurMarriage.com.



SUPPORT FOR DIVORCED AND SEPARATED

Divorce and separation can be painful experiences. Support groups are available to those who are seeking healing, comfort, and empowerment. Visit www.catholicnh.org/support for a listing of groups.





Bringing Home the Word

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

February 23, 2020

Accentuating the Positive: Easier Said than Done

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Hate is a passion that can take over a person's heart in a short amount of time. God knows this, and he challenges us to avoid hate and holding grudges. In the law that Jesus preached, we are not even allowed to hate our enemies or persecutors. That is radical!

It is easy to let injuries build up over time. Eventually we find ourselves far away from those we should be closest to or those we once loved. This separation starts in our thoughts and settles into our

hearts and behavior. Hate grows, and if it isn't controlled and redeemed, it can pull us down.

We don't have to hate, be angry, or carry grudges if we don't want to. Our hearts and minds can be filled with God's grace. We can work on three levels to overcome hate and anger: visual, verbal, and physical. When angry thoughts invade your mind, look up (visual), speak the truth to yourself (verbal), and change your posture (physical). This helps alter self-destructive thought patterns and helps us refocus our heart and mind. Add these natural means to the supernatural means of calling on God's grace, of receiving the sacrament of penance, and of taking moments of prayer to see and speak his truth over a situation.

We are God's temple. His spirit of peace, mercy, and serenity needs to reign inside us. That means getting rid of negative, hateful, and hurtful thoughts toward ourselves and others. Don't let them pull you down! +

Hate grows, and if it isn't controlled and redeemed, it can pull us down.

A Word from Pope Francis

One of the essential characteristics of this vocation to perfection is the love of our enemies, which protects us from the temptation to seek revenge and from the spiral of endless retaliation....Those who evangelize must therefore be first and foremost practitioners of forgiveness, specialists in reconciliation, experts in mercy.

—Homily in the Central African Republic, November 29, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Which passions weigh down my heart?
- How can I use human and spiritual means to point my heart and mind in a healthier, God-focused direction?

Sunday Readings

Leviticus 19:1–2, 17–18

You shall not hate any of your kindred in your heart....Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your own people.

1 Corinthians 3:16–23

Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Matthew 5:38–48

[Jesus said,] "Offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on [your] right cheek, turn the other one to him as well."

How Can We Love Our Enemies?

By Fr. William H. Shannon

Love your enemies,” Jesus says in Luke 6:27. *What in the world was he thinking about? Why, there are times when I have trouble loving some of my friends! How can I possibly be expected to love my enemies?*

If that's what you're thinking, you have lots of company. To reflect prayerfully about these strong words of Jesus, let me point out that this command is one of four different love commands in the Gospels.

First, there is the general Christian responsibility to “love God above all and your neighbor as yourself.” Then there is the general Christian responsibility to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Then there is the command that relates the disciples of Jesus to one another. Jesus says, “This is my commandment: love one another as I love you” (John 15:12). Finally there is the command that calls for a love that includes everybody. It's not enough to love friendly neighbors or other disciples. We must love without limits. For Jesus says: “I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

The first two commands make sense. Peace and harmony in family and society come from loving those we are close to. The disciples' loving of one another,

though demanding at times, also makes good sense. For Jesus' disciples are called to imitate him. But “Love your enemies”—a command—doesn't seem

to make any sense at all. It seems to go against fundamental principles of justice and the duty we have to love ourselves and not allow ourselves to be victimized by others.

Jesus Gives Us No Wiggle Room

The maddening thing is that this central teaching of Jesus is so all-inclusive.

It allows us no wiggle room. We cannot choose which enemies we will love and which we will not. Nor can our love be simply an attitude. We have to act. We must do good to them even if they hate us. We must ask God's blessings for them even if they curse us. We have to pray for them even if they mistreat us.

The love Jesus calls us to is unconditional. It brooks no ifs. It's a love that says, “I love you, no matter what you do or say, for you are the image of God.”

Finding All of Our Sisters and Brothers

There's a story about a rabbi who was discussing with his disciples the difference between day and night: “When,” he asks, “does the night end and the day begin?” One disciple replies,

“Is it the moment when you can tell the difference between a sheep and a dog?”

“No,” the rabbi answers, “it isn't that.” Then peering deeply into their eyes, he says, “It is the moment when you look into the face you have never seen before and recognize the stranger as a sister or brother. Until that time comes, no matter how bright the day, it is still night for you.”

That is a moving story, but we have to take it a bit further. We have to be able to look into the faces of neighbors we have seen and responded to with anger, impatience, ill will. To look into the face of such people and see a sister or brother: This is the kind of unconditional, nonviolent love to which Jesus calls each of us. +

*The love Jesus calls us to
brooks no ifs.
It's unconditional.*



*Lord, you command me to love
my neighbor. May your love
dispel the hatred and resentment
in my heart so that I may love
all people unconditionally.*

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and
Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 24–29

Monday, Weekday:
Jas 3:13–18 / Mk 9:14–29


Tuesday, Weekday:
Jas 4:1–10 / Mk 9:30–37

Wednesday, Ash Wednesday:
Jl 2:12–18 / 2 Cor 5:20–6:2

Thursday after Ash Wednesday:
Dt 30:15–20 / Lk 9:22–25

Friday after Ash Wednesday:
Is 58:1–9a / Mt 9:14–15

Saturday after Ash Wednesday:
Is 58:9b–14 / Lk 5:27–32

Bringing Home
the Word 
February 23, 2020

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