

COVID-19 IS STILL AROUND!

The obligation to attend Sunday Liturgy remains suspended in the Diocese of Manchester for all who are health compromised. No person who has been ill or exposed to someone who is ill should be attending Liturgy.

Anyone who has had recent symptoms of fever, any respiratory symptoms (runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, shortness of breath), chills, severe fatigue or changes in sense of smell or taste may have been exposed to COVID-19. Testing is encouraged. Please refrain from attending any liturgical service.

Liturgy online or on TV...

Boston Catholic Television catholicstv.org
 Sunday Mass from Notre Dame
catholicstv.org/masses/notre-dame-mass
 Salt & Light TV saltandlighttv.org
 Eternal Word Television ewtn.com

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$9700.00 each week in order to make ends meet. This amount represents an adjusted budget offertory of \$8500.00 per week plus the combination of budgeted Property and Fuel second collections (\$4800.00 per month divided into 4 weeks or \$1200.00 weekly). 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. Consider signing up for electronic giving (see below). Especially in these trying times, your Parish depends on your responsible stewardship and support!

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
 FEBRUARY 14, 2021
 WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN**

COVID VACCINE CONCERNS

Beware of fake news! There are reports that call into question the moral and ethical validity of Covid-19 vaccines. Do not be misled. **Right click** on the following tab and **open** the hyperlink to read what the Bishops of the United States are saying about the moral permissibility of the current Covid-19 vaccines:

[Click Here for the Memo](#)



Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish uses **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. 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 17	Aid to Churches-East. Europe
February 21	Fuel
February 28	Easter Flowers

From the Pastor's Desk



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSING

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2021. 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.



Out of respect for the Lord and in consideration of fellow parishioners, please remember to silence or turn off your cell phones during Mass. Thank you!

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contribution to the parish for 2020, please **call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**

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 ✠



The Sanctuary Candle in
Holy Angels Church
will burn this week in loving memory of
Jack Ronan
by Rachel Lanseigne

VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the
Blessed Mother Icon
at Mary Mother of the Church
will burn in loving memory of
Deceased Knights
by a fellow Knight



SANCTUARY CANDLES

The Sanctuary Candles in both Newton and Plaistow
may be offered in memory or honor of a loved one. The
suggested offering for each is \$10.00. Please call the
Parish Office at 382-8324.

VIGIL LIGHT

The Vigil Light in front of the Blessed Mother Icon in
Newton may be offered in memory or honor of a loved
one. The suggested offering for each is \$10.00.

LENTEN RICE BOWL PROGRAM

Each Lent, Catholic families across the country unite to
put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and
almsgiving. We are Called to join our faith community
and more that 12,000 Catholic communities across the
United States in a lifechanging Lenten journey with CRS
Rice Bowl. Pick up your family's CRS Rice Bowl at the
church entrance. During the 40 days of Lent, we reflect
on how hunger and malnutrition affect our human family,
and on the need to take action to end this global
injustice. Visit www.crsricebowl.org to learn more. Did
you know that 25% of Rice Bowl proceeds fund local
Catholic food pantries, shelters, and other organizations,
such as the St. Luke Food Pantry and the St. Vincent de
Paul Society, to help alleviate poverty in New
Hampshire?

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A Men's AA Step Meeting is being held on Sunday
mornings from 7:00 to 8:00 AM at the St. Luke the
Evangelist Parish Hall (Holy Angels). Masks are
required. Bring your own coffee. For more information,
call Joe at 617-921-9899.

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.**

TAI CHI RETURNS!

The Parish is once again offering Tai Chi classes on
Thursdays at 3:00 PM and at 7:00 PM. A minimum of
three (3) students per class will be needed to hold the
class. Social distancing and all COVID-19 protocols,
including masks, are required. Contact the Parish
Office to register. Tai Chi is the ancient Chinese martial
art that is used for meditation, exercise, balance, and
mind and body wellness. St. Luke the Evangelist
Parish is offering this form of graceful, slow movement
to help parishioners to gain strength, to improve their
balance, flexibility, and range-of-motion, and to relieve
stress. Classes are taught by members of the Oriental
Healing Arts Association – a Senior Friendly and Senior
Safe Tai Chi Program with the purpose of bringing Tai
Chi to all age groups.

FOR OUR RECORDS

We need your help to keep our records current.
If there are any births, deaths, marriages, moves, or
address changes in your family, please notify the
Parish Office at 603-382-8324 or by email at
jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net. If you are new
to our parish, registration forms are available at the
entrances of both churches. You can also find a
registration form on our website at <http://stlukenh.org>.

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.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, February 21

6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Newton*

Wednesday, February 24

Holy Angels Church Plaistow open for
private prayer all day

4:00 PM Disciples on the Journey *Plaistow*
 7:00 PM Disciples on the Journey *Plaistow*

Thursday, February 25

8:30 AM – 8:30 PM Eucharistic Adoration *Newton*
 1:30 PM Disciples on the Journey *Plaistow*

Friday, February 26

6:30 PM Stations of the Cross *Plaistow*

Saturday, February 27

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, February 28

12:00 PM Parish Pastoral Council Meeting *Plaistow*
 6:00 PM Vespers *Newton*
 6:30 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Newton*

Because of COVID restrictions, many Parish events and groups are currently cancelled. We will begin more Parish programs, with all precautions, as restrictions ease.

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, February 20 ~ Vigil / First Sunday of Lent

Gn 9:8-15; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Mark Hammond by his family
Plaistow

Sunday, February 21 ~ First Sunday of Lent

Gn 9:8-15; 1 Pt 3:18-22; Mk 1:12-15

8:00 AM The Intentions of Paul Fournier
by Edith Fournier
Newton

10:00 AM Carl Jesionowski by his family
Plaistow

Monday, February 22 ~ Chair of Peter the Apostle

1 Pt 5:1-4; Mt 16:13-19

8:00 AM Isabelle Krafon by her family
Newton

Tuesday, February 23 ~ Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr

Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15

8:00 AM Merrill Dow by Helen Baird
Plaistow

Wednesday, February 24 ~ Lenten Weekday

Jon 3:1-10; Lk 11:29-32

6:30 PM Walter Carter by his granddaughters
Plaistow

Thursday, February 25 ~ Lenten Weekday

Est C:12, 14-16, 23-25; Mt 7:7-12

8:00 AM Jack Ronan by Bob and Alice Litwinovich
Newton

Friday, February 26 ~ Lenten Weekday

Ez 18:21-28; Mt 5:20-26

No Mass

Saturday, February 27 ~ Lenten Weekday

Dt 26:16-19; Mt 5:43-48 (Day)

Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Rom 8:31b-34; Mk 9:2-10 (Vigil)

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

Sunday, February 28 ~ Second Sunday of Lent

Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Rom 8:31b-34; Mk 9:2-10

8:00 AM The Intentions of Paul Fournier
by Edith Fournier
Newton

10:00 AM Jack Ronan by the Knights of Columbus,
St. Jude Council #6617
Plaistow

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.



ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Thank you for your generosity
towards the hungry of our area!

**Non-perishable food or
personal care items are
always needed –
donations can be dropped
off at Church or are
welcome at the Parish
Office during regular
business hours.**

FEED THE
HUNGRY

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. **Call the Pantry at 819-4949 for more information.**



✠ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✠



We're looking for new members! Have you ever wondered what the St. Vincent de Paul Society is all about? Our meetings are held on the **3rd Wednesday at 7 PM** of each month. New members are always welcome. We look forward

any questions you may have. **Please contact SVdP Secretary, Jim Edwards, at (603) 642-5236 or jimmy69180@hotmail.com to find out if our meeting is live at the church hall or virtual on ZOOM.** If you seek assistance or need information about the Society, call (603) 382-8324, ext.315. Visit us on our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pg/SVDPSL>

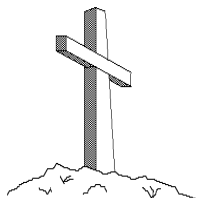


LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

Evening Prayer is sung at Newton at 6:00 PM on all Sundays of Lent. Join us for a quiet time of prayer and reflection. The **Sacrament of Reconciliation** is available immediately after Evening Prayer each Sunday of the Lenten Season.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross will take place each Friday evening during Lent at **6:30 PM in Plaistow**. There will be NO soup supper this year.



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.



The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. Be a good agent of welcome and evangelization! If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, contact Cathy Smith in the Parish Office.

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 call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at

csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

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	603-382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	603-382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	603-382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	603-819-4949
Preschool	603-382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	603-382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ **Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese** ✠

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST JUDE COUNCIL # 6617
GIVE YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY
1 HOUR A MONTH

The Knights of Columbus are a vital and vibrant part of the St Luke the Evangelist Parish. We welcome any practicing Catholic man 18 or older to join the Knights, whose main purpose is charitable works in support of our parish and community. Joining is simple – talk to a brother Knight or you can now join on-line. Go to www.kofc.org/joinus. Your Council is involved in many activities from collecting money for people with intellectual disabilities through the Tootsie Roll Drive to the annual St Jude Golf Open which raises money for parish families in need. The list is as long as you want it to be. Do you have a certain passion you would like to get involved in? Come join us and make it a reality! We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to. **Feel free to call Dan Sullivan at 603-770-4803, email him at dans49@comcast.net, or catch him at the 8:00 AM Sunday Mass in Newton. For more information about the Knights, visit:**

www.kofc.org/un/en/todays-knights/what-we-do.html

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NH OFFERS SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN SPITE OF THE PANDEMIC...

Here are some resources:

Catholic Charities continues to offer Adoption and Maternity Services (669-3030), Immigration Legal Services (889-9431), and Mental Health Counseling (some on-line - 669-3030). Our Healthcare Service facilities are located throughout the state (call 669-3030 or see our website for a facility close to you). *Our Place* continues parent education services from pregnancy through the first three years of a child's life (647-2244). *St Charles School* continues to provide academic, social, emotional and behavioral services to children in grades K-8 (332-4768). And *The Food Bank* continues to provide food supplies to most food pantries throughout the state.

You may not be aware that *Liberty House* supports vulnerable veterans with recovery, job placement and wellness programs (669-0761). *Monadnock at Home* supports seniors in the Monadnock area allowing them to stay independent and remain in their homes (371-0809). Our *Caregivers* program lends support to homebound seniors and the disabled in the greater Manchester and Nashua areas (622-4948).

CREIGHTON FERTILITYCARE SYSTEM

The Creighton FertilityCare System is a highly effective and morally acceptable natural method of family planning. It is healthy and strengthens marriage. It is used to achieve a pregnancy or avoid a pregnancy and can be useful in the diagnosis and treatment of reproductive disease. Online introductory classes will be held on the first Wednesday and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. For more information, contact Mary Menendez, CFCP, St. Gerard Majella FertilityCare Services, at 603-642-8050 or CreightonFertility@yahoo.com.

CREMATION & THE CHURCH

On October 25, 2016, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published a new instruction on the burial of the dead and on the conservation of the ashes in cases of cremation. The instruction reiterated the long held view that the Church is not opposed to the practice of cremation, though it continues to recommend that the bodies of the deceased be buried in cemeteries or other sacred places. **However, the new document insists that ashes should not be kept in private homes and that the scattering of ashes in the air, on land, or at sea is not permitted.** The instruction also insisted that cremains may not be divided among various family members, nor may they be preserved in mementos, pieces of jewelry, or other objects.

Please contact Father Albert in the Parish Office with any questions. Brochures about the Rite of Christian Funerals are available at the Church entrances.

**SAINT JOSEPH REGIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL
SALEM, NH**

St. Joseph Regional Catholic School is moving to an online registration system for the 2021-2022 school year. If you are seeking a traditional curriculum rooted in the Catholic faith, in a supportive environment with comfortable class sizes, contact us today for more information. Enjoy our virtual tour online by going to www.stjosepheagles.org. Contact Mrs. Latino at 603-893-6811, ext.19, or by email at clatino@sjrcs.com for more information.

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.

LENTEN REGULATIONS

FASTING

Fasting for anyone between 21 and 59 years of age means having only one full meal to maintain one's strength. Two smaller meatless and penitential meals are permitted according to one's needs, but should not equal the one full meal. One may, however, enter more into the spiritual element of fasting and not partake of any of the above-mentioned meals. Eating between meals is not permitted; but liquids, including milk and juices are allowed. Days of fasting are Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Wednesdays and Fridays are also traditional fast days; however, one may fast on any day of the week.

ABSTINENCE

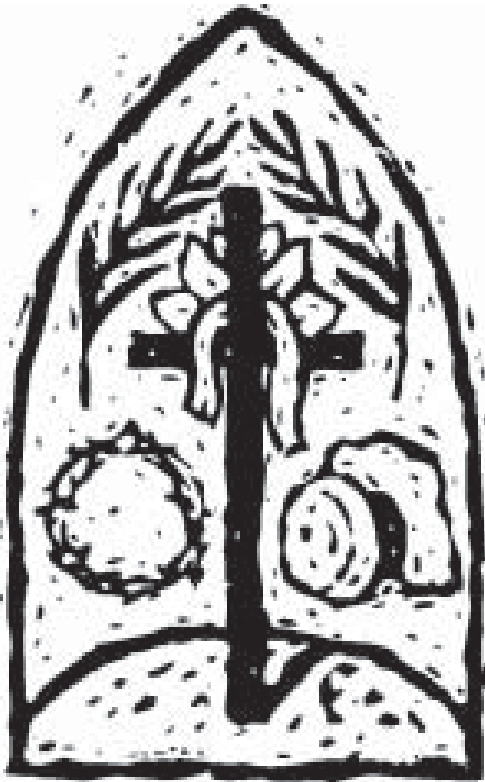
Abstinence is the observance for all those 14 years of age or older to forego the eating of meat on: Ash Wednesday; all Fridays in Lent and on Good Friday. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, this discipline does not apply.

EASTER PRECEPT

The Easter Precept – or Easter Duty is the decree for all the faithful to receive Holy Communion at least during the Easter Season (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2042). The faithful must celebrate the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year in preparation for the reception of Holy Eucharist. Traditionally, the Church has marked the time in which one may fulfill the Easter Duty between the First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday. A monthly celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is encouraged for all.

PRAYER AND ALMSGIVING

All of the faithful are encouraged to spend additional time in prayer during the Lenten season, and to participate in the devotional practices of the Parish. It is also praise worthy for the faithful to give generously to charities and to their Church during this Season of Sacrifice.



SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST
Lent - Easter Liturgical Schedule 2021

THE BEGINNING OF THE LENTEN FAST FEBRUARY 17
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
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 – Plaistow

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 1 – 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 2 - 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 3– Morning Prayer 8 am - Plaistow
Mid-day Prayer 12 noon - Plaistow

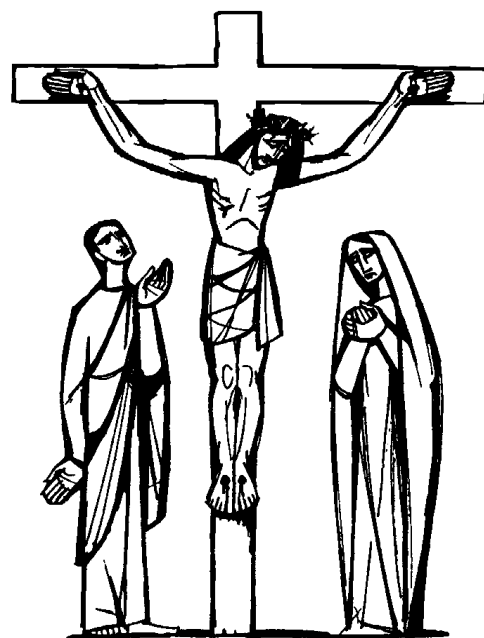
EASTER GREAT VIGIL AT 8 PM - Plaistow

EASTER SUNDAY LITURGIES APRIL 4

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**



Maybe

it's time

To re-connect with your Church

To re-new yourself and others through the unique power of the Holy Spirit who guides us in Love and Truth.

If you are a baptized Catholic, have received your First Communion, but decided against Confirmation as a teen, maybe **NOW IS THE TIME** for you to re-consider **Confirmation**.

- ✓ Maybe you weren't ready when you were sixteen years old.
- ✓ Maybe you didn't want to be pressured into it by your family and peers.
- ✓ Maybe you weren't sure that Catholic is who you wanted to be.
- ✓ Maybe you were just beginning to doubt that what you were taught as a child -- about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary, the Eucharist, the saints, eternal life -- was all too good to be true.
- ✓ Maybe you were overwhelmed with school commitments, personal disappointments, and feeling that God really didn't care if you were Catholic anyway.

Sessions begin
soon!

God *does* care about you. *For some reason*, God chose you to be born into a family that would bring you to the Catholic Church for Baptism.

So maybe -- just maybe -- now...it's time....to make your own choice.

Confirmation.

If you are 18 or over and were never Confirmed, contact the Parish Office. With little time and reflection, practicing Catholics can be prepared to celebrate the gift of the Spirit in their lives.

Maybe it's your time.

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish, Newton-Plaistow
603 382 8324. www.stlukenh.org

The Gospel at Home

This Sunday's Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

In the Sunday Gospel, the Holy Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness for forty days. The desert is a place of testing, but it is also a place to be close to God. Jesus' time in the desert calls us to make Lent a season of growth, a season for developing habits that will make us more loving toward God and one another.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Spend some quiet time talking with and listening to your child. Discuss what he or she learned in class this week. What was the best thing about class? Part of your talking and listening can be having your child share with the family the little Lenten booklet he or she made in class. Also practice saying the Hail Mary, the Our Father and the Sign of the Cross.

Promise (Grades K-1): As Lent begins, your child learned that he or she can do loving actions and can pray. Remember that, for the most part, young children will do these things in the context of the family. Talk about loving actions your family can do during Lent and set aside a time for family prayer. Ask your child to share the prayer box he or she made in class.

Good News (Grades 2-3): This week, your child learned about God's covenant with Noah. Ask your child to tell of God's promise. The class also learned that God is always near us. Take some time to make a family plan of special prayers and actions for the Lenten season. Ask your child to share the story of Saint Mark, "A Man of Faith and Courage."

Venture (Grades 4-6): One of the most important words in our religious vocabulary is covenant. This week, your child's class learned about the covenant with Noah and how, under the sign of a rainbow, God made a new relationship with his People. During this first week of Lent, make a family covenant—an agreement to spend the season doing good things for others, making personal and family sacrifices, and praying together as a family. It would be good to put your family covenant in writing.

Visions (Grades 7-9): In this week's lesson, the young people discussed whether they would get involved when they see injustice committed against a neighbor or friend. As Jesus faces a test in the desert, ask: How do we stand up when we are tested? Since young people are not required to fast, they have traditionally given up treats during Lent. You can ask your young person to share the questionnaire that shows how you might be recognized as a Christian.

Pray Together

An important part of the Lenten discipline is prayer. When you complete your conversation about Sunday's Gospel lesson, some evening during a family meal, share a special prayer that your forty days of Lent will help your family grow in the love of God and love of others too. Ask each family member to say a prayer in his or her own words.





Bringing Home the Word

First Sunday of Lent (B)
February 21, 2021

Navigating the Desert

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Like Noah being prepared to navigate the Flood, so the Spirit sent Jesus into the desert. Why was he sent there? Did he need to learn something he didn't know? Did he lack something he needed? Jesus as God didn't lack anything, of course, but he needed time to pray, reflect, and prepare for his mission. He also wanted to set an example to follow. Another Scripture says he went into the desert to be tempted by the devil. That time of spiritual combat was helpful for him.

We also need to go through trials and crises to grow both in our spiritual lives and human maturity. We each have had our desert where we are challenged to our core and stretched beyond our limits. Perhaps it was a crisis such as a health, employment, or relational issue. But it doesn't always have to be such a dramatic event. It can be as simple and constant as the prolonged embracing of daily challenges in a manner that leads to life. We probably look back and see these as some of our best times—if we truly encountered ourselves and our Lord.

The key is in peaceful acceptance, looking for what good can be learned from these inconveniences. In every cross there is a resurrection; in every storm a rainbow assures us of God's presence and victory. It tells us that clouds and storms will not lead to total death, but rather to a purified rebirth, growth, and newfound life and strength. He has promised us this. +

Sunday Readings

Genesis 9:8–15

[God said,] "I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

1 Peter 3:18–22

[Baptism] is not a removal of dirt from the body but an appeal to God for a clear conscience.

Mark 1:12–15

[Jesus said,] "This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

*In every cross there is a
resurrection; in every storm
a rainbow assures us of
God's presence and victory.*

A Word from Pope Francis

Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength... He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

—Extraordinary Moment of Prayer for the COVID-19 Pandemic, March 27, 2020



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What important lessons have I learned from a challenge in my life?
- Can I share that lesson with a friend or family member?

Becoming the Paschal Mystery

By Johan van Parys

Have you ever wondered where Lent comes from? The word *Lent* comes from the Middle English word *lente*, which means “spring.” Just as new life abounds in spring, during Lent we prepare to celebrate new life at Easter.

The origin of Lent can be traced back to a period of intense fasting and praying in preparation for adult baptism. In some Christian communities this period lasted anywhere from a few days or a few weeks to the symbolic forty days. Our current forty-day Lenten fast refers back to the forty days of Jesus and the forty years of Israel’s people spent in the desert.

It was determined that Easter Vigil would be the best time to celebrate baptism, and forty days of preparation before Easter became a custom. Currently the period of preparation for Easter known as Lent is recognized by the entire community; it used to be recognized only by catechumens planning to be baptized during the Easter Vigil.

Lent also became the time for great penance by those who belonged to the Order of Penitents as the precursor to the sacrament of reconciliation, which was created to allow people to repent for grave sins. The bishop admitted sinners to the Order of Penitents during a special rite that included the use of ashes. A remnant of this rite is found in our Ash Wednesday service.

Members of the Order of Penitents were excluded from the sacraments and



expected to dedicate their lives to prayer and penance. Once a year, on Holy Thursday, the bishop welcomed those who were ready to be readmitted to the Church and the sacraments. Penitents would intensify their prayer and penance during the days leading up to Easter.

Today, these two movements toward the sacraments of initiation and reconciliation characterize the season of Lent. Lent is indeed the time of final preparation for those who will join the Catholic Church during the Easter Vigil. Those who are already members are called to reconcile with God and the Church so they can celebrate Easter in a worthy manner.

In addition, Lent offers three disciplines as part of the preparation for initiation and reconciliation: fasting, praying, and giving of alms (charity or care for others). Prayer allows us to reconnect with God. Without this relationship, our Church membership is a mere exercise in following rules and regulations. Penance helps us reconnect with ourselves as an exercise in removing everything that clouds our vision. Giving alms enables us to reconnect with others as an exercise in sharing.

May the celebration of this great season of Lent be a time of sincere penance, prayer, and sharing so that, in a renewed spirit, we may become the paschal mystery we celebrate. +

***Lent was recognized
only by catechumens
planning to be baptized
during the Easter Vigil.***



***Lord, strengthen my resolve to be
faithful to your covenant of love
and be more compassionate and
generous toward all people.***

—From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day
of Lent and Easter*, Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

February 22–27

Monday, The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle:
1 Pt 5:1–4 / Mt 16:13–19

Tuesday, Lenten Weekday:
Is 55:10–11 / Mt 6:7–15

Wednesday, Lenten Weekday:
Jon 3:1–10 / Lk 11:29–32

Thursday, Lenten Weekday:
Est C:12, 14–16, 23–25 / Mt 7:7–12

Friday, Lenten Weekday:
Ez 18:21–28 / Mt 5:20–26

Saturday, Lenten Weekday:
Dt 26:16–19 / Mt 5:43–48