



St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church

Our Vision: Transforming lives through a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Mission: To share Christ's love and His Word with our community and the world through Christ-centered outreach, worship, prayer, and biblical study.

VOLUME 67 NUMBER 3

The Chatter

MARCH 2024

LENT - THE CHURCH'S WAKE-UP CALL!

Every year we have this season called "Lent" which begins on "Ash Wednesday." Why? The name, "Lent" comes from the Latin word meaning "fortieth." The early Church saw great significance in the forty days that Jesus endured in the Wilderness before He began His official ministry. The Gospels (**Matthew 4, Mark 1, and Luke 4**) tell us that the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be alone with His Father to pray, meditate on God's Word, and prepare Himself for the mission ahead. These forty days included fasting from food.

At the end of the forty days, Jesus was tempted by Satan. Knowing that Jesus was not just hungry but famished, the devil challenged Jesus to **"turn these stones into bread."** Have you ever fasted from something but had it right in front of you the whole time? Usually that's not a good idea! In fact, God's Word admonishes us to remove, if possible, the temptations in our lives. In this case, however, Jesus could not. He had the power to make food instantly! But how did He respond to the devil? He told Satan that **"man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."** In other words, life is more than food. It is not about primarily satisfying your cravings and desires. This temptation involved doing things in the flesh (our selfish human nature) rather than in the Spirit of God.

The second temptation involves the desire to have things that are not ours to have, either in the moment or ever. Satan tells Jesus that **"He can have all the kingdoms of the world"** if He would only bow down and worship the devil. Ultimately Jesus will have all the kingdoms of this world. But that won't happen until His return. Moreover, the Lord could not have the kingdoms of the world in righteousness until He took care of the sin problem on the cross. Jesus rebukes the devil's offer with the Scripture, **"You shall worship the Lord God and serve Him only."** In life we can either worship our Creator - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, or the creation. When we worship anything (person, place, thing, idea) other than God, we are committing idolatry. Every temptation really is a temptation to worship someone or something else rather than God!

The third and final temptation involves the essence of one's being. The devil tells Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, quoting God's Word, **'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'** Satan quotes Scripture (**Ps. 91:11-12**) because Satan knows it! He knows the truth but he chooses to rebel against it. In so doing, Satan is the master of twisting Scripture and taking it out of context. The temptation for Jesus was to take the short cut in revealing WHO He really is by making a grand entrance into the courtyard of the Temple. And the angels could provide His escort! Everyone would see who Jesus really is, the true and only Son of God, the long awaited Messiah of the Jewish people! The problem is that Jesus would be simply exalting Himself without accomplishing His Father's will. He would be challenging His Father. He would be forgoing His mission of going to the Cross to bring reconciliation between God and the world.

Continued on next page

St. Bart's Web Information

www.stbartston.org

Also see our [Facebook](#) page for more!



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Jesus responds to the devil's deception with God's Word in context, **"You shall not put the Lord God to the test!"** In other words, don't challenge the integrity of your Creator! This final temptation really goes to the heart of who a person is. It involves our *being*. Are we a child of the spirit or a child of the flesh? Jesus, as the Son of God, demonstrated that our being and identity are found in God and not in self. We cannot make decisions successfully without totally relying upon the Spirit of God. The devil sought to disrupt Jesus' purpose, mission, and relationship with His Father by tempting Him to take control and manipulate the things of this world for His benefit and in disregard to the Father's will and the love of others. Thus, all temptations ultimately reflect the issues of power and control. Jesus had the power to change course. He had power unlike any we will ever have on this earth. And yet, He limited His power and control for the sake of us! He choose to give up His ability to control things because of the great love He had for His Father and for mankind. He did all of the above to give us an example of how we can overcome the temptations in this world and make sure our doing, having, and being all lines up with His Father's will and plan (the Kingdom of God). But this involves each of us surrendering our wills to God's will. It means giving up self-power and control.

So, why Lent? On Ash Wednesday we hear the words, **"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return."** (Ps. 103:14). Those words remind us that we are not only mortal beings but that our end is death apart from the power and presence of the Lord. But why death? Lent also reminds us of the reason for our mortality -SIN! Sin is that aspect of human nature that seeks to put self first above God and others. As a result, our relationship with God, others, and creation itself ends up distorted, dysfunctional, and dead! But in Lent we also remember the solution to this age old problem, the Cross! Jesus came to show us true love and justice. Both are found on the Cross. But Jesus didn't just die on a cross, He rose again and gave us the Holy Spirit! Now we can proclaim like the Apostle John that **"Greater is He Who is in us than he who is in the world!"** (I Jn. 4:4)

And yet, while the spiritual victory over sin and death has been won, we still have to walk in that victory. We still have to **"work out our salvation"** (Php. 2:12) or in sports terms, *"play the game."* The only way to do that is to follow the example of Christ in the wilderness. Jesus overcame temptation in six ways and all six are emphasized in the season of Lent. They reflect **a life of repentance** (turning from self to God in Christ). **First**, He spent **time alone with His Father** seeking to be free from as many distractions of our world as possible. **Second**, He **prioritized the Kingdom of God above all else**, including eating, showing us the importance of making sure our priorities line up with God's. **Third**, He **practiced the spirit of self-denial** in fasting from food reminding us that self-denial of immediate pleasures and saying no to the easier way is necessary to experience more positive lasting results in all areas of life, especially in our relationship with God.

Fourth, all of the above would not be possible unless He **knew the Word of God**. While Jesus is the living Word, in the flesh He had the same limitations as we do as humans. Therefore, He still had to read, study, meditate on, and memorize the Holy Scriptures. So too, do we! Psychologists say that 80% of our thoughts are negative and that 90% of our thoughts are old thoughts. Both are part of being in a world that is still under the curse (Gen. 3). The only way to replace those negative and old thoughts with spiritually renewing ones is through daily time in God's Word. **Fifth**, all of the above must be done **consistently!** There is a reason why Lent is a set period of time seeking to do a set number of spiritual disciplines. The only way we will see true change and "good fruit" in our lives is if we are consistent in what we need to do. Consistency is one of the most important principles in life!

Finally, we can't do this alone! We are told that after facing the devil, the angels ministered to Jesus. They probably ministered to Him during those forty days, too. Regardless, we need each other in the Body of Christ if we are going to walk in victory. We were never created to be lone rangers. We must maintain fellowship with each other, and serve and grow in the Lord **together!** If you're not regularly attending a church and if possible a small group gathering or study, your walk with the Lord will be more difficult and you will be shortchanging yourself spiritually. Lent is that wake-up call to remind us to get back to the basics of what is most important in life - God and others!

**Yours in Christ,
Father Ward**

VESTRY



February 2024

Thank you to those who attended the annual church meeting. Presentations were given by Fr. Ward, Fr. Bush, Barbara Molison, J. Krull, Liz Burkett. Fr. Ward also gave presentations on behalf of Deacon Wisniewski (financial report) and Margaret Bukkosy (music ministry report), who were unable to attend. During that meeting Fr. Ward shared we most likely join the Diocese of Christ Our Hope after Bishop Atwood retires in June 2024. However, this will only happen after the vestry officially approves the joining. In the meantime, feel free to reach out to one of the clergy for details of the meeting if you were not able to attend.

The annual commissioning of the vestry members will take place on Sunday, February 25, 2024.

Please help keep our pews clean. While water bottles are welcome for those of you who need them during services, please refrain from bringing in other liquids and/or food. Also, please remember to take any other items you bring into church.

Volunteers are needed to help with the Discipleship Team! You will be given the tools and trained on how to feel comfortable with talking about Jesus. The goal will be to help you with your knowledge of the bible, not just bible verses. Please contact any of the team members: John Hillestad, Donna Daniele, Molly Sammarco, Jim Thompson or Fr. Molison if you are interested in helping out.

Thank you to all of you who have already turned in your 2024 pledge cards. However, if you have not, please take a moment to do so, even if you give through RebelGive. This helps the budget committee to do their due diligence in watching our finances, both income and expenses, as they pertain to the annual budget.

**DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL CHATTER is
Tuesday, March 19. Thank you.**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Please keep those from our Parish Family who are serving our country in the Military in your prayers. Please let the church office know if there is anyone that should be added to or removed from this prayer list.



Virginia Boy– Navy

James Kerins– Army

Sean MacLeay-Navy

Andrew Rebl– Army

Matthew Prohaska- Air Force

FOOD PANTRY: Remember that we collect for the Food Pantry the **first weekend of every month**. They are so appreciative of our donations. They can use personal care items, paper products and soap, etc. in addition to food items.

25 bags and boxes and some monetary donations were taken to the Food Pantry in February. Our giving is still down a little.

Please try to remember that the need never goes away, and be as generous as you can! Thank you.



A message from Lori Abramo: As the former president of what was known as the Bishop Scaife Guild, I would be remiss if I did not send out a special thank you to all of you who support the gift shop. Thanks to Danette Utz and the people who work in the shop, enough money was raised in 2023 from the sales in the shop to allow the Guild to donate the money earned to all of the *local* Christian-based charities that we've supported in the past. So, please continue to stop in and buy the things that you "must have", at a much lower price than you'll find anywhere else! In the meantime, feel free to donate gently used items so others can enjoy the things you loved in the past.

Prayer Night

Thursday, March 21 at 7pm

Please join us.



BIBLE STUDIES



Men's Discipleship Bible Study

meets every Tuesday evening at 6:30pm. We are currently using a video series hosted by Mark Correll, studying the book of Revelation. All men are welcome to join us.

IRON SHARPENS IRON

Saturday, March 16

Sign up in the Fr. Amend Hall if you'd like to attend. See John Krull for more information

TUESDAY NIGHT LADIES

BIBLE STUDY

We meet from 6:30-8:00pm every other Tuesday, in the large fellowship hall. We are currently studying the book of JOHN. We would love to welcome you to our meetings! Contact Louise Jones for more information.

**March meetings will be
The 5th and 19th.**





APPLAUSE

[This Photo](#) by Unknown Author is

Applause can be compared to a wet puppy. Once it is allowed into the house, it is difficult to control. The puppy shakes itself to get rid of the water and in the process the water spews everywhere. A messy experience!

St. Bart's has a growing number of children and youth who are participating in the choral program in groups and as soloists in worship, which is wonderful, but creates a dichotomy. The applause rendered to them dilutes the sanctity of our worship together and sometimes rears itself in awkward places, like communion.

Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish theologian, philosopher, poet, and religious author said this: "If there is an audience in worship, it is God." This translates in this manner: The congregation is not the audience for worship. God is the audience.

When we think of applause, entertainment immediately comes to mind. Worship has been defined, simply, as leading people to the presence of God. We are called to worship in spirit and in truth. The role of the liturgists, priests, the organist and choirs, is to enable the congregation to participate in worship, to proclaim and praise God, not to win approval.

So, the question becomes: "What is the purpose of this article?" Because of the increased number of children and youth involved in presenting music in our worship, there has been an increase in applause, which dilutes our primary purpose, which is to worship God.

Respectfully, I would ask that the members of our congregation find other means to show our children and youth support. Give them a positive compliment like "I loved the song you sang this morning." Most of our choral participants can be found in Amend Hall after the service. Our goal should be to find other ways to acknowledge the important contribution our young people are making in our worship together. Will this be discussed with them? Absolutely!

There is one other matter that deals with adults. I have never understood why applause is rendered in some cases, and then not in others. The question in some minds might be "What did we do wrong?" Some churches strive to entertain rather than provide a worship experience. St. Bartholomew's is a Bible centered church. Is there room for applause? The answer is "Yes," to acknowledge milestones. But we do not want our children and youth to equate worship and their music making with entertainment. So, please spread the word to others! Cultural changes are not easy.

PALM SUNDAY (March 24, 2024)

Services at 8:00am & 10:00am

With the addition of the Blessing of the Palms

***HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE (March 26-30)**

MONDAY AND TUESDAY

Stations of the Cross 7:00pm

Holy Eucharist 7:30pm

WEDNESDAY

Holy Eucharist 9:30am, 7pm

THURSDAY

Seder Dinner 5:30pm

Holy Eucharist 7:00pm

Tenebrae Rehearsal 7:30pm

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES

Liturgical 3 hours Noon to 3:00pm

SOLEMN TENEBRAE 8:00pm

SATURDAY—NO 4:30pm Holy Eucharist

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES (March 31, 2024)

Services at 8:00am & 10:00 am

FASTING – Jesus expected all of His followers to fast (Mark 2:18-20), and left general directions on our attitude while fasting (Matthew 6:16-18). Our Prayer Book gives the Church's discipline & days of fasting on pg. 7. ***Ash Wednesday and Good Friday*** are days when all are expected to fast – a minimum for any in good health is to omit at least one meal. Some omit food the entire day, drinking only water. Let the Holy Spirit be your guide, and follow Jesus' direction as given in Matthew's Gospel quoted above.

CARE OF THE PALMS – Blessed Palms are never to be carelessly discarded – but always reverently burned. They can be placed near any religious picture or memento in the home, and burned on the day before Ash Wednesday next year.

LENTEN OFFERING ENVELOPES can be found in the envelope packet you receive in the mail. Extra envelopes will be in the pews if needed. Funds will be given to those in need.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE NEXT FOOD PANTRY COLLECTION is the weekend of April 6 and 7. Personal care items such as bar soap, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes, paper products, as well as food items are appreciated. Thanks to all who have donated in the past. Your generosity is greatly appreciated by the NIACAP Food Pantry.

HOLY CONFIRMATION will be Sunday, May 5 at the 10 am service.



Next Steps

A Generation Next Newsletter

March 2024

Unexpected and Resurrected



A good plot twist in a story can change the way we think about the characters and events that preceded it. Sometimes we get inklings of a possible twist and are satisfied when our assumptions prove to be right. Other times, we can be completely blindsided, totally surprised, like when we found out that Prince Hans was the bad guy in the movie *Frozen*. A plot twist is simply a point in the story when what was hidden until then is revealed, and everything changes from that point forward.

Maybe you're wondering where the plot twist is in your story, the moment when things are revealed as they truly are, and you find the path to a "happily ever after." The path may still require sacrifice, but at least you can see it clearer and can face challenges with renewed courage, certain of what awaits you in the end. The good news is that a great plot twist has occurred in the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. In this new series, we'll look at six surprising stories from the events surrounding Jesus's final days on earth that give us hope and show us how this great plot twist in history can be the twist we need in our story.

Next Happenings

Wednesdays, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Join us for our regular meetings filled with engaging lessons and activities
Dinner provided

Friday, March 22nd

6:00 pm Urban Air Adventure
Park

No Meeting March 27th

due to Holy Week

Save the date: April 20th

9:00 am Wilson St. Urban Farm

*"Sanctify them by
Your truth. Your
word is truth."*

Psalm 17:17 NKJV

A Letter From our Director



Liz Burkett

Lent is a time for us to grow in faith and prepare for the celebration of Easter, and I can't believe we're already a few weeks into the Lenten season. One way we can grow in faith is to pray daily.

God wants us to pray and listen to Him. He also wants us to obey what He commands, to be active participants in His will. Too often we think of prayer as some routine activity that good Christians do, like reading the Bible, brushing our teeth, and making our bed. We get stuck praying the same exact "thank you, God, for everything" prayer, or we focus only on asking God for "stuff," and once our prayer time is over, we go about our day as planned. What about God's plan for your day? Do you ask God to help you make decisions? Do you wait for his answers? Prayer is communion with God, and the goal of this communion is for our wills to unite with His will, to be one as Jesus and the Father are one. This is what Jesus prayed for the night before He was crucified.

"that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me." (John 17:21-23)

To accomplish this, we need both prayer and listening, then God-directed action. In these weeks leading up to Easter, practice praying about possible decisions and actions. Be sure to pray, listen, and then take action. Want to dig deeper and learn more about prayer? Read 1 John 5:14-15, Ephesians 6:18, and James 5:13.

Also, I want to encourage you during this Lenten season to share about a situation that you've been praying for. With your family and friends, ask God about what you could do to be Christ's hands and feet in that situation, and see where God leads you. Be sure to go back later and tell everyone what happens!

*In Christ,
Liz*

Friday March 22nd - Urban Air Adventure Park Event. Come climb, jump and soar with us at this awesome trampoline park in the Walden Galleria Mall. We will meet at the event center at 6:00 pm and pickup will be at 8:00 pm. Cost is \$25 per person and is due by March 15th. Pizza will be provided. A waiver form must be signed in order to participate in this event. You can fill out a form online at urbanair.com. Just go to the my park tab and click on sign waiver.



Save the Dates: On April 20, 27, and May 4th (one being a rain date) we will be serving at the Wilson Street Urban Farm. We will meet at the farm at 9:00am to help with weeding, cleaning and prepping the farm for the planting season. Pickup will be at the farm at 3:00pm. You will need to pack a lunch. We encourage youth and their families to join us on one or both of the dates to experience what its like to work on a farm and hear from this wonderful Christian family about their mission in the Buffalo area. More detailed info to come as the event gets closer.

March Birthdays

- 1 Tina Gwizdowski
- 2 Morgan Simon
- 3 Linda Cadena, Lynn Farley
- 4 Richard Storey
- 5 Donna Daniele, Rosemary Taber,
Connie Weigen
- 7 Patsy Winkler
- 10 Isabelle Hillestad
- 11 Karen Decker
- 13 Robin Prohaska, Kelley Wojnowski
- 14 Thomas Brzeczowski, Matthew Welch
- 15 Thomas Crane, Jessica Kyser,
Christine Oliveri
- 17 Gerald Bella
- 18 Ashley Decker, Nathaniel Hillery,
Ryan Hillery, Alexandra Lakeman,
Albert Schreier, Jeanette Smalter
- 19 William Cosentino, Kristen Fish,
Kate Hillestad, Sharon Highes
- 20 Kim Condon, Richard Heer, James Hyzy
- 22 Janice Nolan
- 24 Jon Prohaska
- 25 Jon Arnold, Arianna Kyser

- 28 Linda Johnson
- 29 Nancy Militello, Morgan Tobin
- 30 James Scott



APRIL

- 1 Carolyn Everett, Pamela Morrison
- 2 Aidyn McAndrews
- 3 Jennifer Gradzewicz, Jaquelyn Luckoski
- 4 Joan Bella, Katie Grace Hillestad,
Edward Woepfel
- 5 Debra Birchenough, Makayla Johnson

If you notice a mistake in the birthday list please call (716) 831-1777 or email
the secretaries: secretaries@stbartston.org

March Calendar

PERSECUTED CHURCH CALENDAR

| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| <p>March</p> <p>“Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” —Hebrews 13:3</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>3 BRUNEI While oil wealth has ensured that few Bruneians lack material necessities, pray that they will seek Christ.</p> | <p>4 LIBYA Pray for a great move of the Holy Spirit among Muslims, resulting in a multitude of new believers.</p> | <p>5 PHILIPPINES Pray for the families of pastors, evangelists and missionaries who have been killed for their faith.</p> | <p>6 NEPAL Bible distribution is difficult in remote mountainous areas. Pray for creative, effective ways to deliver Bibles.</p> | <p>7 MOROCCO Pray that Moroccan Christians will have opportunities to fellowship by one another.</p> | <p>8 ISRAEL (INCLUDING WEST BANK & GAZA) Continue to pray for Pauline Ayyad, whose husband was martyred.</p> | <p>9 LEBANON Praise God for the fruit of church outreach efforts to Syrian refugees!</p> |
| <p>10 IRAN Pray that online ministries and broadcasts will reach Muslims with the gospel and help disciple new Christians.</p> | <p>11 AFGHANISTAN Pray for Afghan Christians in refugee camps who feel isolated.</p> | <p>12 CHINA Pray that Christians will lay a firm foundation for their children, as Bible education for children is prohibited.</p> | <p>13 CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC Pray that emergency relief supplies will reach Christians who have been forced from their homes.</p> | <p>14 MOZAMBIQUE Pray that Christians targeted in the Cabo Delgado insurgency will experience Christ's healing and peace.</p> | <p>15 BANGLADESH Pray for front-line workers like Omar and Rojina, who are taking the gospel to Muslims in remote regions.</p> | <p>16 TUNISIA Pray that Tunisian Muslims will be open to the gospel.</p> |
| <p>17 BURKINA FASO Pray for Christian women like Assatou who are persecuted by family members and pressured to marry animists.</p> | <p>18 KAZAKHSTAN Pray for the spread and growth of house churches throughout Kazakhstan.</p> | <p>19 EGYPT Pray for churches facing extreme hostility from the Islamic community.</p> | <p>20 MYANMAR (BURMA) Pray for 11 Christian families from the Palaung tribe who have been pressured by villagers to renounce their faith.</p> | <p>21 DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO Pray that Christians in eastern Congo will be able to operate their churches freely.</p> | <p>22 MAURITANIA Pray that Christian converts from Islam will be protected from arrest and imprisonment.</p> | <p>23 DJIBOUTI Pray that more churches will be allowed to operate.</p> |
| <p>24 AZERBAIJAN Praise God for Christians who faithfully proclaim the gospel despite legal pressure and possible fines.</p> | <p>25 KENYA Pray for the families of Kenyan Christians who have been killed by Muslim extremists.</p> | <p>26 BAHRAIN Pray that Christians will be bold in sharing the gospel.</p> | <p>27 MALDIVES Pray that Christians, who risk imprisonment or expulsion for following Christ, will be wise and bold witnesses.</p> | <p>28 UNITED ARAB EMIRATES Pray that churches will faithfully share the gospel with Muslims despite government prohibitions.</p> | <p>29 IRAQ Pray for Christian converts from Islam, who face opposition from family members, the government and extremist groups.</p> | <p>30 LAOS Pray for Christians like Phan and Yun who have been rejected or evicted for their faith.</p> |
| <p>31 SOMALIA Young people in Somalia are becoming disenchanted with Islam amid ongoing al-Shabab attacks. Pray for their salvation.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>NOTES:</p> | | | | | | |

Easter Blessings



HE IS RISEN!

May you feel Christ's
love in your heart &
be filled with

his peace & Joy this Easter Day..
And always!!



The *angel* said to
the women,
“Do not be afraid, for I know
that you are looking for
Jesus,
who was **CRUCIFIED.**
He is not here;
He has *Risen*
just as **He** said.
Matthew 28:5-6

