

St. Mark's Episcopal Church Newsletter

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Greetings!

I realized this morning that I had promised a continuation of my letter in the September newsletter; for those of us who are memory challenged I wrote how we are called to a transformed life by our baptism, called to a disciple's life. So what would a transformed life look like?

The Way of Jesus is radically different from the way of our culture; so a transformed life will be radically different. Our culture says success is measured in status, power and money. Jesus says success is measured in loving God and treating others as we wish to be treated. Our culture says travel the easy street; Jesus says walk the narrow way. Signs of a transformed life are love, compassion, kindness and a desire to do justice.

The transformation happens when we respond to God's love for us. The more we truly believe that we are God's beloved, the more we share that love with others. Injustice moves us first to righteous anger and then to action. We feel compassion and want to help those who are suffering rather than judging them. We share our wealth and goods with others out of gratitude for all God gives us.

The early Christian communities grew because they lived Jesus' radical message. They shared with others; food, clothing, love. They offered connections and hope. They said, "Come and join us." All were welcome, but the marginalized were especially welcome. Those whom "polite" society ostracized, the fledgling church offered a hand of friendship, a chance to belong.

The early Christians were not afraid to let others see how their life was transformed by an itinerant rabbi who preached love and acceptance, who was betrayed and crucified and whose followers said he lived. Do we have the courage to do the same?

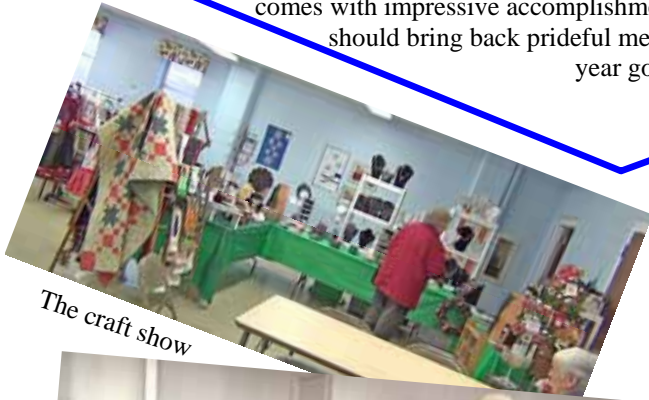


So, what will you be giving up? Here are the top ten things people give up, according to one survey. We can see the influence and bad habits the younger generation has brought to our list today. None of us grew up with Facebook or Twitter, yet for some they're as addictive as any drug.

THE TOP TEN "GIVE-UPS" FOR LENT

1. TWITTER
2. CHOCOLATE
3. SWEARING
4. ALCOHOL
5. SODA
6. FACEBOOK
7. FAST FOOD
8. SEX
9. SWEETS
10. MEAT

Someone once said we are the sum total of our experiences. The year 2012 provided us with many experiences that have enriched our lives and given us reason to feel the pride that comes with impressive accomplishments. Here's a photo montage that should bring back prideful memories of events from the year gone by.



The craft show



Halloween at our new church



Moving into the new church on Cedar street.



The cookie walk



Cutting the ribbon for the grand opening



The altar dressed for Christmas



Christmas caroling at Bronson-Lakeview nursing home



Bishop Gepert consecrates and dedicates the new church



MEN'S CLUB NOW FORMING

The ladies have their ECW and now it's the men's turn to have their own exclusive club. Phil Naylor and Jonsey Jerome have taken the lead in spearheading this new venture. While the mission of the club is still in the evolving stage, the first project has already been planned — a pancake supper.

The supper will be held on Tuesday, February 12th around suppertime. Exact time still to be determined.

As you know, this date will be Shrove Tuesday, the day before the start of Lent. Interestingly, in some countries, Shrove Tuesday is also known as "Pancake Day" or "Pancake Tuesday" due to the tradition of eating pancakes on that day. As with most traditions, there were very practical reasons for doing this. Pancakes allowed the people to use up rich ingredients like eggs, milk and sugar before the start of the Lenten fast.

So, plan on going out to dinner on Shrove Tuesday. Besides the pancakes, sausage and other appropriate trimmings will be served. All are welcome to attend. Bring a guest!

The Altar Guild wishes to extend their appreciation. Ginny Chamberlin says:



"The Altar Guild would like to thank Mother Rebecca, parish families for their donations, the fresh greens from Copeland's, all of which made our first Christmas on Cedar Street a service to celebrate and remember."

And while we're extending thanks...

Barb Johnson spoke for all of us when she publicly recognized the extraordinary contributions of Joann Copeland for her planning and managing Bishop Gupert's reception and the dinner after our annual meeting.



We'll start the new year with two new vestry members: Judy Peterson and Barb Farris will fill the slots vacated by Don Prediger

and Lise Black. Gerry Stackhouse remains as Senior Warden and Barb Farris takes over as Jr. Warden. The Vestry lineup for 2013 is:

Gerry Stackhouse	Sr. Warden
Barbara Farris	Jr. Warden
Larry Chase	Treasurer
Jean Kracker	
Judy Peterson	
Nancy Wheatley	

Dawn Brisbane will continue as Vestry Clerk. (Thanks Dawn ☺)

The congregation joins with the new Vestry in thanking Don Prediger and Lise Black for their service on the Vestry over the past years.

The Vestry reminds us that one of our souls who is unable to attend our services would appreciate hearing from us occasionally.

Michael Miller 213447 16770 S. Watertower Drive Kincheloe, MI 49788 Birthday: February 7th

LENT MADNESS

Here's a timely article submitted by Mother Rebecca. Could be fun to join in, and a learning experience as well. (Ed.)

What do you get when you combine a love of sports with holy saints? Lent Madness, of course. Based loosely on the wildly popular NCAA basketball tournament, Lent Madness pits 32 saints against one another in a single-elimination bracket as they compete for the coveted Golden Halo. But it is more than that: Lent Madness is really an online devotional tool designed to help people learn about saints. (cont. on next page)

Lent Madness began in 2010 as the brainchild of the Rev. Tim Schenck, an Episcopal priest and rector of [St. John's Church](#) in Hingham, Massachusetts. In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women comprising the church's calendar of saints, Schenck came up with this unique Lenten devotion. Combining his love of sports with his passion for the lives of the saints, Lent Madness was born on his blog "[Clergy Family Confidential](#)."

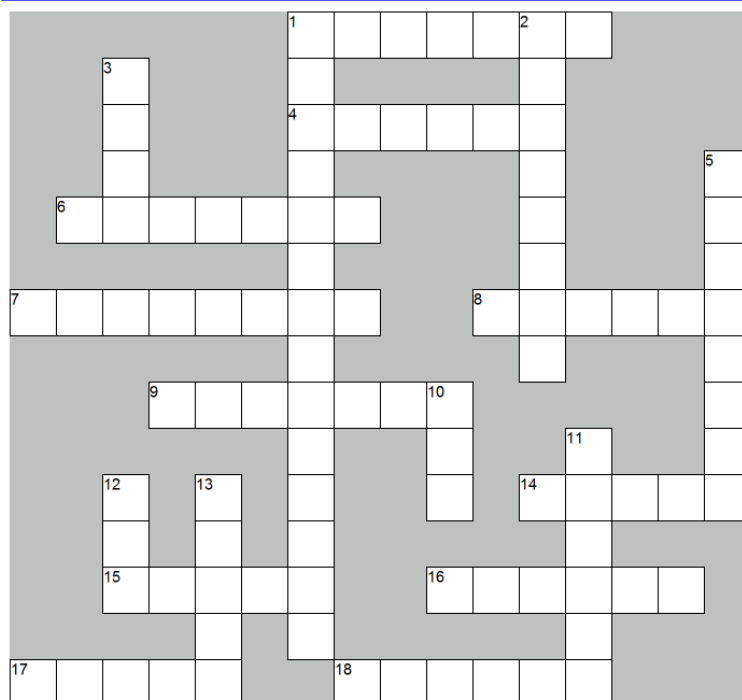
Starting last year, Schenck partnered with the Rev. Scott Gun, Executive Director of [Forward Movement](#) (the same folks that publish *Forward Day by Day*) and Lent Madness went viral, reaching over 50,000 people and getting mentioned in everything from the Washington Post to Sports Illustrated. (I'm not kidding It really was.).

Here's how it works: on the weekdays of Lent information is posted about two different saints on [www.lentmadness.org](#) and then participants vote to determine who goes on to the next round. Each pairing remains open for a set period of time – usually 24 hours – and people vote for their favorite saint. 16 saints make it to the Round of the Saintly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the Golden Halo. The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints.

Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, explore legends, and even move into the area of saintly kitsch. It's fun, it's informative, it's the saintly smack down! To win in 2013, will take grit, determination, holiness, and perhaps some good old-fashioned luck. This year Lent Madness features a slate of saints ancient and modern, Biblical and ecclesiastical including John the Baptist, Martin Luther King, Hilda of Whitby, Luke, Dorothy Day, Benedict of Nursia, Martin Luther, and Harriet Tubman as they vie to fill the shoes of 2012 winner Mary Magdalene.

This all kicks off on "Ash Thursday," February 14, and will continue throughout the 40-day season of Lent. To participate, log onto [www.lentmadness.org](#), where you can also print out a bracket and fill it out to see how you fare or "compete" against friends and family members. Like that other March tournament, there will be drama and intrigue, upsets and thrashings, last-minute victories and Cinderellas.

If you're looking for a Lenten discipline that is fun, educational, occasionally goofy, and always joyful, join the Lent Madness journey. Lent needn't be all doom and gloom. After all, what could be more joyful than a season specifically set aside to grow closer to God?



Here's a little fun distraction for you. I don't expect anyone to be seriously challenged by my first effort, but if I get enough positive feedback I'll spend a little more time developing this and make it a regular feature in future issues of the newsletter. Ed.

ACROSS

- 1 Our benefactor for the new organ (2 wds)
- 4 Rule stating how we should treat others
- 6 New Jr. warden, 1st name
- 7 One of the signs of a transformed life (from Mother Rebecca's message)
- 8 Our Bishop
- 9 Organist/Pianist
- 14 The route of all evil
- 15 Oldest member of the congregation
- 16 Special name for Tue 2/12
- 17 New senior warden, 1st name
- 18 New vestry member, last name

DOWN

- 1 Motto of the Men's Club
- 2 Men's club first project
- 3 Number 5 of twop 10 "give ups" for Lent
- 5 A capitol sin
- 10 Number of Vestry members
- 11 Word describing sounds made by the choir
- 12 Newsletter editor
- 13 The cable guy