

**Hi-Lights for Children's Sunday School** submitted by Barbara Pitts, DRE for Children and Youth

**9:30 Level I: 3-yrs-Kinder *Preparing for Easter:*** As we move through the final weeks of Lent, our youngest children learn how the chalice is prepared for Communion. First the wine, representing Jesus, and a few drops of water, representing the people, are added to the Cup. Then the children are invited to meditate (only they wouldn't call it that!) about what happens to the "water." Think about that yourself, as a meditation.... The riches of heaven will not be denied even the littlest children. Before Easter itself arrives, the class will also work in hands-on ways with the Last Supper, moving toward death and resurrection. And after Easter arrives? The children take great delight in creating and celebrating a liturgy of the Light of Christ – the Light that can nevermore be extinguished.

**Level II: 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grades *Preparing Ourselves for Easter:*** Building on the work of the past weeks, reconciliation between self and God, these children enter a Bible study focused on the revelation of reconciliation in scripture, and conclude the month with Baptism, in which we are invited into the very life of the Risen Light.

**Level III: 4-5<sup>th</sup> grades *God's Reconciling Action in the World:*** Our older children explore how God is the instigator of reconciliation through the gift of his Son. This class also will be encouraging all St. Matthew's children to participate in filling Ark banks with money for the Heifer Project. *Faith Mirrored in Movies* will fill out the curriculum for the month of April.

**10:30** Follows the Sunday lectionary, walking with Jesus through Lent and celebrating His risen life.

**Stations of the Cross** can be appropriate for children! Bring your family ages 3-years – 5<sup>th</sup> grade, to B-18, on Good Friday, April 14, 5:30-6:45, for age-appropriate activities. This is a special time to bring young friends or cousins visiting from out of town.

**Easter Sunday**, April 16, will follow a special schedule printed on page 5 of this issue. Please join us!

**New in April at Sundays4YOUTH**

Anne Province to be guest speaker/performer 6-12<sup>th</sup> grades' *Faith-in-Action: A Meditation on the Journey through Lent 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday*, Youth Bldg.

Go to [www.stmattsaustin.org](http://www.stmattsaustin.org) > Sundays4YOUTH for weekly details

**Wednesday, April 5**

**SOUP AND SALAD SUPPER AND MUSICAL PROGRAM**

6:00 p.m. Family Meal in Huffman Hall

*Prepared and Served by the Newcomers Commission and ECW*

7:00 p.m. Musical program in Sanctuary presented by **Letha Crouch, musician extraordinaire**

To offset expenses, there will be a nominal, breakeven charge for the Lenten Meals.

Normally, this will be \$3 for adults, \$1 for children under 12

*During the meal and during the speaker/program, childcare is available for infants through age 4.*

*Children age 5 and older are encouraged to participate with their families at the meal.*

*Child-friendly food will be available.*

*After supper there will be activities for children during the speaker hour.*

*From 7:00 until 8:00 p.m., when the adults are in the Sanctuary, children ages Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to join Lenten activities, "Jesus and Friends" in the Education Building*

*Youth Exploration (Grades 6 – 12) will meet each evening from 7:00 – 8:00 in Huffman Hall/Youth Building.*

### **St. Matthew's Lenten Outreach: The Heifer Project**

Founded in 1944, Heifer International is a humanitarian assistance organization that works to end world hunger and protect the earth. Through livestock, training and "passing on the gift," Heifer has helped seven million families in more than 125 countries improve their quality of life and move toward greater self-reliance. Heifer helps build strong communities because each project participant agrees to pass on the gift of animal offspring, training, or skills to

another family in need.

## Conversations on Prayer by Fr. Jim Williams

*O God of peace, You have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be made whole, in quietness and trust shall be our strength: may we open to your Spirit so that we may become present to You, the one who is always present, and may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord, AMEN*

*BCP 832 #59 (adapted)*

I sat quietly for several minutes. What was I feeling? Why the hesitation? It was with a little ruefulness, almost embarrassment, that I was about to reconnect with my practice of Centering Prayer. It is Lent and I am on retreat. I had already recognized that somehow my daily practice had gradually become quite sporadic, and that I was missing something vital that was slowly draining out of my life. I wanted very much to return.

So why the reluctance, almost a subtle resistance? Had I let something down (God? Me?). Should I be apologetic, contrite? Would I feel awkward and clumsy? Do I just plunge in as though nothing had happened, just like at the beginning? Would it be the same? Would I remember how? Can I really return?

Of course, it couldn't be that I was having a little twinge in my pride. (Could it ?) As in, how does this look? I am a fairly recent practitioner, who has become a vocal and visible advocate of Centering Prayer, yet here am I, stumbling and in danger of falling away, of "messing up."

Well, I did it, finally, after a significant pause. In this experience of "returning and rest," I had two simultaneous responses: (1) I did just plunge right in and it was like I had never drifted away; the simple practice of Centering Prayer was right there where I left it, and (2) the experience of being gently welcomed and embraced again made it all the sweeter.

I find myself looking for images to try to express "returning to the Presence that is always present." Perhaps it's like returning to a cherished place of exquisite beauty and peace, after having been away, and finding it the same for you as it was before, and you recognize that it has been present here, being what it is, day after day, even when you are not present. It's always like it is, whether you are here or not.

Or, is the experience like coming into resonance with a huge musical chord of great heights and depths, feeling the vibrations as you tune your small instrument to resonate in the vast harmony? (Is this a bit much?)

Or perhaps it's somewhat like reconnecting with an old friend, after being absent for a while (no matter why). It's that kind of friendship that you can pickup where you left off, regardless of time lapsed, because the relationship doesn't decay with age. The benefits, the gifts are not present when you are not present to one another, but when once you are again present, the flow goes on anew, and as before.

By now, I can almost see the eyes rolling among some of you who have been at it for a much longer time than I, and have experienced these familiar and even necessary ups and downs of any intentional spiritual discipline. I almost hear you asking me what I was expecting, anyway and telling me to just get on with it. Plunge in. Experience the gentle welcome, the familiar embrace.

"Returning and rest." "Quietness and trust." Let me be still and know that you are God: through Jesus Christ my Lord. AMEN



### ***April 30 is St. Matthew's next Parish Get Acquainted Lunch!***

The Newcomers Council hosts the Parish Get Acquainted Lunch every six months so that we might all come together to welcome and honor the newest members of our church family. This delicious, catered meal is provided free of charge (although love offering baskets will be available if you should want to contribute)! You will also receive the latest New Member Profile Book with a photo and short bio sketch of our new members to help you get to know them.

If you joined St. Matthew's within the last year and have not been honored at a luncheon yet, we would like to introduce and welcome you to the rest of the parish family at the luncheon. Please contact Jeri Muhich (452-1210 or [jerim@austin.rr.com](mailto:jerim@austin.rr.com)) to arrange a time to have your photo taken for the Profile Booklet.

Newcomers Council Co-Chairs Glenda Monroe and Thilde Smith hope you will sign up to come to the luncheon soon. Because the luncheon is catered, it is necessary that we obtain a close count. RSVP sheets will be found in the Commons after church very soon. Please be sure that we know you and your family will be there!

## Holy Week Schedule

### Palm Sunday, April 9,

#### The Sunday of the Passion

\*8:00am Holy Eucharist

9:15 am Adult and Youth Classes

9:30 am Children's Classes

\*10:30 am The Liturgy of the Palms

5:15 pm Youth Celebration Evening Eucharist

*\*At the 8:00 am service, the Infant Nursery will be available in the Education Building.*

*\*At the 10:30 am service, childcare is available for children through age 4 with infants in Huffman Hall and toddlers through age 4 in the Education Building.*

*Children 3 yrs—3rd grade are welcome in the 10:30 Children's Sunday School in Room B-21 and in the church service.*

### Monday, April 10

7:00 am Holy Eucharist with music and sermon

11:30 am Ecumenical Service at NW Hills United Methodist Church

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

### Tuesday, April 11

7:00 am Holy Eucharist with music and sermon

11:30 am Ecumenical Service at NW Hills United Methodist Church

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

### Wednesday, April 12

7:00 am Holy Eucharist with music and sermon

11:30 am Ecumenical Service at NW Hills United Methodist Church

12 noon Holy Eucharist with Healing

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

### Maundy Thursday, April 13

7:00 am Holy Eucharist

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

\*7:00 pm Holy Eucharist, the Washing of Feet, and Stripping of the Altar

*At the conclusion of this service, the all-night Maundy Thursday Prayer Watch begins in the Bell Tower*

*\*Childcare available infants through age 4*

### Good Friday, April 14

*The All Night Prayers conclude at the beginning of the Good Friday Liturgy*

\*12:00 noon Good Friday Liturgy and Veneration of the Cross

\*Childcare available infants through age 4

5:30 — 6:45 pm Stations of the Cross for Children in the Basement, Room B-18

\*6:00 pm Stations of the Cross

*Gather at the Sanctuary door from Steck Drive lot*

\*Childcare available infants through age 4

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

### Holy Saturday, April 15

10:00 am Holy Saturday Liturgy

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

\*7:00 pm The Great Vigil of Easter with Holy Baptism

\*Childcare available infants through age 4

### Easter Sunday, April 16

#### The Sunday of the Resurrection

*(Note Change in Service Times for Easter Day Only)*

7:00 am Holy Eucharist in Kinney Outdoor Memorial Chapel, weather permitting

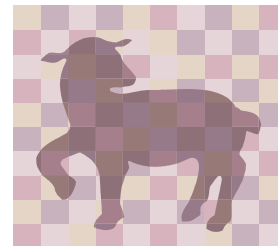
\*9:00 am Festival Eucharist including Flowering of the Cross for Children and Adults and a special liturgy for children 3 yrs—3rd grade in B-18

\*11:00 am Festival Eucharist including Flowering of the Cross for Children and Adults and a special liturgy for children 3 yrs-3rd grade, B-18

5:15 pm Contemplative Eucharist in Sanctuary

6:00 pm Evening Prayer in the Bell Tower

\*Childcare available infants through age 4



### A Gathering of the Diocese — Transformation

We will gather as one body to explore new horizons, broaden our perspectives and witness the power of our faith community focused in our mission of transformation.

June 1—3, 2006 Episcopal High School, Houston, Texas

*A note from the Rev. Merrill Wade: I would love to have between 50 – 75 members of St. Matthew's present for the **Gathering of the Diocese**, in Houston, June 1 – 3. Our diocesan leadership has created programming for children of all ages. Therefore, you could travel as a family and participate in the workshops, keynote speeches and still find some fun things to do as a family. Please make every effort to attend. You will be hearing more from me on this subject in the coming weeks. If you choose to attend, please make your own hotel arrangements as stated on the diocesan website: [www.epicenter.org](http://www.epicenter.org)*

#### Preacher

The Rt. Rev. Don A. Wimberly, eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Texas, believes that giving people the support and the tools to be effective disciples are the most important things the Gathering can provide. “As Christians, we are on a lifelong journey and we are called to be beacons of light to those around us. Each one of us has the capacity and the mandate to make a difference in the world, to be the embodiment of a living Gospel,” Bishop Wimberly says.

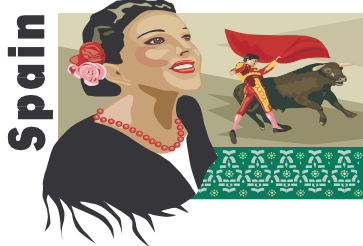
#### Workshops

More than 150 workshop sessions will provide resources for personal, congregational and cultural transformation. Among church leaders to be featured are Brian D. McLaren and Horace Clarence Boyer.

Special Activities are planned for Children, Junior High Youth and Senior High Youth. There is no charge for these activities but registrations must be received before April 30.

#### Registration

Registration fee is \$125 per person before April 30; \$150 per person after April 30. Registration fee includes two continental breakfasts, two box lunches, an opening reception, the program and workshops, all snacks and drinks. Partial scholarships are available. Registration and more information are online at [www.Epicenter.org](http://www.Epicenter.org)



#### *Travel to Spain in November!*

Father Joe and Betty Di Paola will be leading a trip to Spain, Portugal & Morocco, visiting Madrid, Salamanca, Lisbon, Seville, Tangier, Gibraltar, Costa del Sol, Granada, & Toledo.... The dates are November 2 – 16, 2006. The cost per person sharing a double is \$2,779 round-trip Austin. Please call for a brochure. 512-244-2946. The space on this journey will be very limited, so if you're interested, please call Betty or Joe with any questions, or to get on the list.

#### *Journey of Faith — a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*

The Rector is leading a pilgrimage entitled a Journey of Faith to Israel in November, 2006. The dates are November 9—20. This will be the fourth spiritual pilgrimage the Rector and his friend, The Rev. David Johnson, have taken to Israel. We will stay in excellent accommodations in Tiberias (on the sea of Galilee) for four nights and in Jerusalem for five nights. Please call Merrill Wade directly, at 345-8314 x 214, for a brochure and further information.

