

SP&SA UPDATE

March 2009

The Joy of Lent

By K Karpen

I always like Lent. But this year I feel the need for Lent more than ever.

Look at where we are: worry waits for us around every corner. Anxiety lurks beneath every newspaper headline. Why wouldn't we be yearning for a season that calls us back to things that really matter?



I've been looking forward to being able to spend more time reading, meditating & praying without thinking, "Shouldn't I get back to some **real** work?"

I've been looking forward to the chance to sort through my priorities, and occasionally to neglect the urgent tasks in favor of the actually important ones.

I've been looking forward to reorienting my life a little, to see whether my fleeting theological thoughts about justice and reconciliation really match up with concrete ways of working for justice and concrete actions that yield moments of reconciliation.

I've been looking forward to fasting every week, without feeling apologetic about it.

I've been looking forward to trying to witness to my faith in what I say and do.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a little practical advice to those of us who want to practice a Lenten spiritual discipline. Do it in private! Don't be like the hypocrites!

In New York in 2009, no one expects you to go to church or to pray a lot or to fast, or even to be nice to people on the street.

When we do those things, we probably don't even want people at work or school to know what we're up to!

Still, the advice is good: Practice your piety un-publicly. Practice your piety for

you, and no one else.

Follow your spiritual practice, but be real about it. Don't do it for other people. Don't even do it for God. God will love it, but don't do it for God. Do it for you.

In Matthew, Jesus says do these things: fasting, almsgiving, praying, but don't do them like the hypocrites do. The Greek word for hypocrite is hypocrite. What's hypocrite really mean? In Greek it means actor. And it's neither good nor bad. It's just not real. It's just not you. Jesus says, be real. Be you.

What is it about Lenten spiritual practices that leave us feeling like inadequate, spiritual failures? Don't give yourself such a hard time. Don't be hypocritical. But don't be hyper-critical either.

Someone once said to me, "Hey, my spiritual discipline is perfect for Lent. I take on a lot, do very little, and half the time I don't even remember I forgot, and when I do remember I feel guilty, and isn't that what Lent's all about?" I replied, "...No."

If what you can swing spiritually is to glance over the Lenten devotion book quickly, when you wake up, or before you turn in at night, great. Maybe that puts you ahead of what you usually give yourself in Lent. What ever it is you can do, do it.

I invite you into some serious Lenten practice. But don't give yourself a hard time at every turn. Give yourself a break. Give yourself a break with God.

Remember, it's for you. Who did you think it was for? Whatever you get to do, it's for you. It's for your life. It's for your spirit. It's for your soul.

So, this Lent, give yourself a break. Take a break with God.



YOUNG ADULTS: In the Journey Together

By Rev. Manny Santiago

“Let’s walk together for a while, and ask where we begin...” Such begins one of the songs we have been singing at The Gathering. This song reminds us how we are all welcome to join in the journey of faith.

This season of Lent, make sure that you are not alone in the journey. The Young Adult Ministry at SPSA provides for a place of sharing, fellowship, and support. As our mission statement reads, we are a community “...committed to being inclusive and supportive. We are actively engaged in fellowship, open dialogue, spiritual growth, social action and working with our community.”

Although there are times in our lives when it seems like we are the only ones going through a difficult situation, the truth is that there are others out there looking for the support that our community provides. This month, as we embark in another season of Lent, let us join our hands together in this journey.

The Young Adults Ministry at SPSA starts this journey of Lent by taking a

closer look at who we are and what our purpose is. On March 1st, we will gather for a mini-visioning session to explore these and other questions. You are all invited

as young people of faith to come and share your ideas and expectations. Later on during the month, we will gather for more fellowship, and spiritual support, and we will continue working together to create a loving, supportive, and inclusive community.



Young Adults Events for March:

Sunday, March 1st, 1 p.m.:
“*Mini-Visioning Session*”

Brunch in the parlor. Rachel Harvey will lead us into an in-depth look at who we are and what we want to accomplish as a ministry.

Sunday, March 8th, 10 a.m.: **New Parents Breakfast** in the parlor

Saturday, March 14th, 2 p.m.:
Bowling Trip to Harlem Lanes at 126th and 7th Ave.

Tuesday, March 24th, 7 p.m.: **Young Adults and Campus Ministries Committee** meeting

Mondays, March, 2, 9, 23, and 30 at 7 p.m.: **The Gathering** at Columbia

Wednesdays in March, 7:15 p.m.: **Lenten Vespers** in the sanctuary

Thursdays in March, 7 p.m.: **Methodist Theology** study in the Youth Room

Looking forward to a full and exciting month!



UNITED METHODIST WOMEN: **Theology of Enough**

By Ressie Mae Bass, President

On Sunday, February 8 United Methodist Women of St. Paul and St. Andrew celebrated the annual United Methodist Women Sunday with a worship service of music, word, image and action related to food security. The service was based on a program from UMW's Program Book, "Who's at the Table?" – a resource used across the United States. The service urged all to consider the abundance we have in our world today and to follow Jesus' example of sharing with those who go without.



Members of the unit shared in the interpretative Scripture reading of Jesus feeding the multitude and other elements of the service, celebrating United Methodist Women's focus on mission with women, children and youth in the United States and around the world.

Scripture reminded us that God's vision of abundant living is a world where we live out a theology of "enough," a theology based in the knowledge that we are grounded in Christ, that our sense of personal value and esteem grows from our Christ-centered lives. Scripture calls us to be just and compassionate stewards of our wealth and warns us of the sin of greed and its devastating effects.

During the service we honored Miranda Sackeyfio and David Wildman with a Special Mission Recognition. We were honored to have the presence of

Harriet Jane Olsen, Deputy General Secretary of the Women's Division, with us for this celebration. The coffee hour was a continuation of the worship service emphasis on a theology of "enough." Using baskets, a variety of breads, bagels and spreads were served with tea, coffee and juice.

During coffee hour, we had two letter writing tables. One was a food letter to Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Charles Schumer, asking for their support in maintaining funding for the WIC Program. Ninety-one letters were signed. The other

letter was to President Barack Obama, and Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, concerning a grave and dangerous situation facing children. They were asked to consider co-sponsoring the Cluster Munitions Civilian Protection Act (Senate Bill #594) and to urge their colleagues to do the same. A total of 30 letters were signed to each of these leaders.

The planning team (Peggy Griffin-Jackman, Julie Tulloch, Barbara Wheeler and Sarah Brockus) is to be congratulated for a job well done. We are still receiving comments about how much the worship service was enjoyed.

The next Unit meeting of United Methodist Women will be March 8. The program will be "Lent: This is the Fast I Choose." Christie House and Betty Ann Driver will be the leaders. We are glad to have you join with us.

EVERY MEMBER COMMITMENT **Paying It Forward**

By Linda Bloom

One of the benefits of a steady paycheck – knowing you will receive a certain amount of income every week or two weeks – is that it allows you to establish a household budget for the year. You know you have to allot a certain amount of that paycheck for rent, groceries and the phone bill.

SPSA builds its budget the same way – through income expected to come in over the calendar year. Forty percent of the annual income is from pledges made by individual members through the Every Member Commitment Campaign. Those pledges help us know what we can expect to receive to keep the lights on, pay salaries and run programs.

For 2009, SPSA members have committed \$245,000 so far towards a goal of \$300,000. If you haven't pledged yet, it would be very helpful to have an indication by March 15 of what you can contribute this year. Your finance committee thanks you.

P.S. Ask about the new direct deposit option for pledges!

CONGREGATIONAL CARE:

Holding Fast During Lent

By Rev. Julia Kristeller

As I listen to the radio, and talk of stores collapsing, job loss, money loss, I ponder the question, "So what is a church for at times like these?" Here is my poetic reflection for Lent:

Fortunoff's is failing,
Circuit City's closing down,
Starbucks isn't soaring,
and the banks are leaving town.
Bailouts by the billions,
layoffs by the loads,
savings are all shrinking
as our economy implodes.

But WSCAH has more business,
so now is time to serve
those whose loss is heaviest,
who life has thrown a curve.

Now is time for looking
to those we can help feed,
those who suffer hardest,
those in greatest need.

Though times they are uncertain,
we still can feel the hope,
reaching out to one another,
and seeking help to cope.
Community calms a crisis,
and love can conquer fear,
Prayer's a powerful pundit,
and we always have God's ear.

Friendships can grow firmer,
faith can pass the test.
Families pull together,
a simpler life seems best.
Somehow in our struggles
our blessings are more clear,
letting go of excess,
holding fast to what is dear.

This month during Lent look
at what you can let go of to help your
self and others. Hold "fast" with one
another, SPSA, and God's presence
and love. Isn't that what a church is
for?

Tea and Talk for Women: New time
5:15-6:15 Thursdays in Julia's Office
Watch for our "**Banner Bee**": Like an
old fashioned quilting bee, we will
gather to chat and create a banner for
the church during Lent.

**Living through Job Loss and
Transition:** A Roundtable Discussion,
March 22, 1-2:30 p.m. Share
your insights and challenges
with experts and counselors,
and with one another.



Above: New Parents Breakfast. Council Chair Barbara Wheeler accepts Crop Walk plaque. Kids from PS 75 bring food to WSCAH.

Below: Youth hanging in the youth room.

Team from SPSA heads to Yonkers for Reconciling Ministries training.



Children & Families: Giving Up Homework

By Rev. Julia Kristeller

When we talked about what to give up for Lent, a couple of the children suggested—homework. Don't worry. I am not going to lobby their teachers for 40 days of no homework, like they asked. But as I thought about it, giving up homework might not be a bad idea—for all of us. How much of our time at home is spent working?

Sure there is some work we have to do at home. But isn't home for other things too-- for our children and for ourselves? We give up things for Lent, not just so we can learn to live without chocolate or kick start a diet, or watch a bit less television. Lent is a time to make space. It is time to prepare ourselves for Easter, for the miracle of forgiveness and new life. It mirrors Christ's 40 days in the desert.

Fasting at Lent, in whatever form, is a choice. It is an intention and a commitment to clear some space, to be less distracted by excess food or stuff (or homework), to sacrifice, to become more conscious, to face temptation, and to grow in strength and clarity. Children, in my experience, are willing and able to do their part.

So what can you let go of as a family? What is in the way for you, of clearing time to be together, to pray together, to laugh together, to cry together, to fast together? Many families are learning to let go of things these days—some by choice to conserve—

others by necessity in lean times. Lent may be a time to fast, to let go. But Lent is also a time to hold fast to, and make space for, what is most important—our children, our families, our love for one another, our joy at just being together, all of which transcends adversity. And to make more space for our life in God's spirit, which ultimately transcends everything—even death, as we will be reminded of at Easter.



So maybe children don't stop doing homework for 40 days. But maybe we can all fast a bit from work taking over our lives at home, and hold fast to a bit more time to play together and pray together this month.

I realized in writing this Update that I hadn't planned a lot of special activities for March. Maybe that is just as well. I leave it to you to make each day special—to hold fast to your

families. Even if March comes in like a lion, full of trouble or threat, may you and your family grow in peace each day, so that it can go out more like a lamb.

A few March Dates to Note:

March 1: First Sunday in Lent: Julia Preaching on "Our Covenant with Children" Children stay in worship for a special presentation, Baptism, and Communion.

March 8: New Parents Breakfast: 10 a.m. in the Parlor: All expectant and new parents welcome-invite friends!

March 8: Family Skating Party re-scheduled. Lasker Rink 2-4

Lenten Vespers: Every Wednesday Evening: 7:15 p.m.

March 29: Parent's Meeting/ Brunch 1:00 Parlor, Movie for kids.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- March 1
Timmy Bosco
- March 3
Chris Bergerson
Connie Coddington
Karen Lull
- March 4
Jim Melchiorre
- March 5
June Niklus
- March 10
A.J. Bosco
Paul Della Rocca
Anna Horrell
- March 12
Clarita Bouhairie
- March 11
Esi Nunoo
Ernest Searle
Jane Steele
- March 16
Bud Carroll
- March 15
Bess S. Hilliard
- March 17
bj Karpen
- March 18
Louise Firestone
Tania Hedlund
- March 20
Merle Joy Thomason
- March 22
Anne Russell
- March 23
Abi Shepherd-Finch
- March 26
Jessie Christie Floyd
Bob Maclay
M.C. Waldrep
- March 28
Karen Donovan
Margaret Tracey
- March 29
Christie House
- March 30
Robert Armin
Lance Gee
Yvonne Hall
Hilary Horrell
Jennie Stoneburner
Thomas Vail
- March 31
Charlene Floyd
Tracy Perry
Isabel Seetahal

When is YOUR birthday?

It is our great pleasure to announce the birth of Sarah Stephens on Sunday, February 22. Mother and baby are both well. Sonny is very proud & happy!

YOUTH: **One Being, Being One!**

By Rev. Manny Santiago

Every day, thousands of pounds of potatoes are rejected in farms around the United States because they “don’t look good enough” for potato chips or French fries. These potatoes are not rejected because they are bad or because they are poisoned. The only reason is that they do not pass the “quality standards” that corporate farmers set for their product. Now, where do these potatoes go? You would think that, with so many people going hungry in the country and around the world, these potatoes would go to their dining tables. But no; these potatoes go to the trash.



However, there is a ministry called the Society of St. Andrew Potato Project that collects tons of potatoes from farms around the United States and redistributes them to agencies that feed the hungry. This is real ministry!

This ministry is but one of many organizations that B1, a fasting campaign for Lent within youth ministries in the United Methodist Church, will help. Our Youth Ministry is already involved in B1. We have collectively created a “fasting calendar” which is available for every member of the church who wants to contribute. Through this fasting campaign our group will “B1” with those who hunger around the world and in this country. We will also be of “one being” with each other as we join together to pray for help, and remember those in need.

If you haven’t done so, pick up your fasting calendar and start collecting money today in order to donate it to the B1 campaign. Together we can B1!

If you want more information on this fasting campaign, log in to www.fasttodaychangetomorrow.org where you will also find resources to help you in this journey. (Oh! You will also see our own Leah DeLeón and Georgia Boonshoft among some of the faces of this campaign!)

Youth Ministry Activities for March:

Wednesday, February 25th: B1 Campaign starts!

Sunday, March 8th, 1 p.m.: Youth will research countries where B1 contributions will help

Sunday, March 15th, 2:30 pm.: CYM: All welcome!

Saturday, March 21, 6 p.m.: Stockholders Appreciation Dinner in the Social Hall (Youth should be at the church by 4 p.m. to help set up!)

Saturday, March 21, 9 p.m.: Lock-in and baking party! Bring a friend...

Sunday, March 22, 12:15 p.m.: Bake sale, Coffee Hour

Friday, March 27th, 6:30 p.m.: Join the youth group of Community Church, United Methodist of Jackson Heights, Queens

Sunday, March 29th, 1 p.m.: Film. Youth group watching a documentary during youth group

Youth Group meets on March 8th, 15th, & 29th at 1pm.

Ignite ‘09

“Love, Laugh, Live”

By Hannah Reasoner

“Ignite” is a three day event for all youth in the New York Conference area. It was planned by the members of CCYM and is an event that will happen every year.

Youth arrived at the Crown Plaza in White Plains on the evening of Friday the 23rd and left on Sunday morning, the 25th. The theme of the event was “Love, Laugh, Live” and each day revolved around one of these three topics.

Participants started and ended the day with a worship service

(“Ignition”). The HYPE praise band played throughout the services and really got the crowd excited and moving. Other church youth groups got the chance to show off their talents, including a step team, steel pans, and singing groups. An open mic night was also held on Saturday night, giving us a chance to see all the unique talents of the youth in our conference.

Saturday (Laugh day) Christian comedian Bone Hampton was our guest speaker and entertainer. Sunday morning, four members of CCYM preached about life and living it to the fullest.

When we weren’t in worship, the participants enjoyed workshops on Saturday and some free time for swimming, crafts, open mic, or relaxing in their rooms. Youth were also randomly split up into about 30 groups (“Spark Groups”) to meet a few new people and discuss how they felt throughout the weekend.



In my opinion, this year’s Ignite was very successful. CCYM’s goal was to spread the light of God to youth in our area and hope that they would return home feeling closer to God and with new friends.

March 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion and Baptism 11 Worship Julia Preaching 1 Young Adult Brunch 1 Theatre Advisory Comm.	2 11 Staff Meeting 7 Gathering	3 6:30 Pilates 7:30 Knitting 7:30 Children's Ed	4 6:00 Homework Help 7:15 Lenten Vespers 8:00 Darfur Meeting 8:00 Yoga	5 5:15 Tea & Talk 6 WSCAH Board 7 Methodism Study	6	7
8 10 New Parents Breakfast 10 Choir; 11 Worship K preaching 1 United Methodist Women 1 Youth Group	9 11 Staff Meeting 7 Gathering 7:30 Trustees	10 6:30 Pilates 7:30 Knitting	11 6:00 Homework Help 7:15 Lenten Vespers 8:00 Yoga	12 5:15 Tea & Talk 7 Methodism Study	13	14 2 YA Bowling
15 10 Choir 11 Worship: K preaching 1 Youth Group; 2:30 CYM	16 11 Staff Meeting 7 Church Council	17 6:30 Pilates 7 Finance 7:30 Knitting	18 7:15 Finance 7:15 Lenten Vespers 8:00 Yoga	19 5:15 Tea & Talk 7 Methodism Study	20	21 4 Choir Rehearsal 6 Stockholders Din. 9 Youth Lock-in
22 Guest Choir Grosse Point, MI 11 Worship Sara preaching 1 Job Loss & Transition Round table Discussion	23 11 Staff Meeting 7 Gathering	24 6:30 Pilates 7:00 YA & Campus 7:30 Knitting	25 6:00 Homework Help 7:15 Lenten Vespers 8:00 Yoga	26 5:15 Tea & Talk 7 Methodism Study	27 6 Youth Trip 7 Shelter Volunteers	28 4 Choir Rehearsal
29 10 Choir 11 Worship K preaching 1 Parent Brunch 1 Youth Group	30 11 Staff Meeting 7 Gathering	31 6:30 Pilates 7:30 Knitting	APRIL 1 6:00 Homework Help 7:15 Lenten Vespers 8:00 Yoga	2 5:15 Tea & Talk 7 Methodism Study	3	4 4 Choir Rehearsal

SPSA-BJ Shelter for Homeless Women, Sundays, Wednesdays and Thursdays at 7. Volunteers needed!



SAVE DARFUR

Wednesday, March 4, 8pm SPSA

HOLY WEEK at SPSA
Palm Sunday, April 5, 11 am
Maundy Thursday, 6 pm
Good Friday: Crosswalk 6 pm
Stations of the Cross, 8:30
Easter Dawn, 6:30 am
Easter Service, 11:00

Songs of struggle and celebration

Olympia's Daughters

Sunday, March 9th at 1:30pm

Come to the Tillman Chapel of the UN to hear this wonderful a cappella women's choir use story and music to build bridges of justice. The Chapel is located at 777 United Nations Plaza and a reception will follow the singing. Please join us in raising our voices and listening to those around us!

What is Methodism?

Join us Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm
 To explore the roots and reality
 of Methodist tradition and theology.

Lenten Vespers
Wednesdays, 7:15 pm
 (Followed by Yoga)

Lent 2009



Inside:
Page 1: Pastor's Column: The Joy of Lent
Page 2: Young Adults;
Page 3: UMW: Every Member Commitment
Page 4: Congregational Care; Photos
Page 5: Children and Families' March Birthdays
Page 6: Youth Group; Ignite
Page 7: Calendar; Activities
Page 8: Shrove Tuesday

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Shrove Tuesday Pancakes at the Parsonage: More than 75 SPSAers did their part!