

# The Spire

Newsletter of the Church of the Resurrection  
*A Welcoming and Inclusive Faith Community*

## March 2010

2280 North Beauregard Street, Alexandria, VA 22311



**Rector:**

The Reverend Dr. Anne  
Gavin Ritchie

**Priest Associate:**

The Reverend H. Vance  
Johnson, Jr.

**Seminarian Assistant:**

Chase Danford

**Interim Church School**

**Coordinator:** Laila Ali

**Director of Music:**

Deena Jaworski

**Organist & Assistant Choir**

**Director:** Sanelma Sutton

**Parish Administrator:**

Jane McCabe

**Sexton:** Melba Moran

**Telephone:** 703-998-0888

**Fax:** 703-820-2912

**Online:**

[www.welcometoresurrection.org](http://www.welcometoresurrection.org)

**Office Hours:**

M-F: 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

### Message from the Rector

*A Spirituality for All Seasons*

Last evening we gathered for the first of three Sunday Lenten suppers. In addition to enjoying the delicious potluck offerings, we welcomed the Reverend Carole Crumley as our guide into Celtic Spirituality. This first evening Carole introduced us to the origins and practices of this religious life-view.

The Celtic tradition understands the *whole* of life as sacred. There are prayers for every moment of waking experience: arising, lighting the morning fire, preparing meals, going on a journey. In this way of looking at experience, there is no such thing as “ordinary” time. Every moment is holy when we remember, as Carole says so beautifully, “to listen to the heartbeat of God.”

The same holds true for place. Celtic mystics recognize all places as holy, though there are special, “thin places,” where the veil between earth and heaven seems especially sheer. One senses the presence of the angels – positive energy – all around.

Not only is there a tradition of pilgrimage to such thin places, (Carole is leading a pilgrimage to Iona this coming June), but, if we are attentive, we can find them anywhere. For one person, a thin place might be a chapel at the Washington National Cathedral, (the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul); for another, it might be a garden in the backyard. My special thin place will always be the water. Its ever-changing changelessness reminds me of the mystery of God.

Carole gave us a simple exercise to help us attend to the holy all around us. She suggested that we sit upright in a chair, then lean forward slightly. Then, as we lean back again, to imagine that we are leaning back into the arms of God, to be held and cherished. She suggested that this simple practice might help us hear and see the holiness in others as well.

Carole will return next Sunday, March 7 and again March 21. If you can, please join us for this continuing journey into the holiness of everyday experience. Meanwhile, here’s an example of Celtic prayer you might want to use from time to time. It’s part of the text of “St. Patrick’s Breastplate,” hymn 370:

*Christ be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
Christ to comfort and restore me.*

### Inside this Issue

Thoughts & Prayers	2
Outreach	2
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem	3
Forum Schedules	3
Calendar	4
Birthdays	5
Budget Summary	5
Sunday Services	5
Focus Inn	6
RCC	6
Server Schedules	6
Sermons	7-11
Easter Flowers Form	11
Easter Offerings	12



# Outreach Activities

*Please keep in your prayers:*

Liz Bradley Kimberly Brian  
Ryan & Veronica Byrnes  
Irene Cole Frank Evans  
Orian Falkenborg Amy Ford  
Lea Fowley Patrick LeBlanc  
Tracy Lenhardt & children  
Angela Samela  
Dan Swearingen  
Owen Taylor Roland Timity  
Barbara Weber  
Will Williams Nancy Willis  
the people of Haiti & Chile

*Names on the Prayer List are shown for one month, unless you let us know they should be retained for longer.*

*Pray for those currently serving in the armed services around the world:*

Gavin Amy Cody Bergen  
Jason Hull  
Robert Hull  
Mark Latham Darius Malveaux  
Thomas Moore  
Meera & Michael Noe  
Charles O'Brien Eric Wiese

*We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of those who have died:*

Ron Pulling  
Grace Riffer  
Roy West  
Victims of the Earthquake in Chile

*Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord; And let light perpetual shine upon them.*

**ALIVE!** (Alexandrians Involved Ecumenically) is a key partner for us in many of our Outreach Ministries. We focus on food, shelter, and families in each of our Outreach activities, and this has been the focus of ALIVE! for over 40 years.

**ALIVE! House** is a townhouse in Old Town Alexandria which is the oldest continuously operated shelter for women in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Established in 1972, they have been a special focus of our Outreach for the last several years. At the moment, there are four young single Moms living with their children at ALIVE! House. The children range in age from a newborn to 5 years old, including one Mom with two-year-old twins. Each Mom is working and / or going to school while taking care of their children, as they transition to living independently. We support them by giving Household Supplies such as paper towels, detergent, and trash bags. When we supply these products, the Moms can use their food stamps and other subsidies for other necessities for their families.

**ALIVE! Child Development Center** is a full-day pre-school program serving children of low income, working parents. This award-winning program is the only one of its kind in Alexandria with a sliding fee scale for tuition.

## How can you help?

- 1. Bring Household Supplies to church to support ALIVE! House. Find out what to bring from the Outreach Bulletin Board.**
- 2. Walk in the Annual ALIVE! Walk-a-Thon to support the Child Development Center. Take a lovely 5-mile walk through Old Town Alexandria on a sunny and beautiful Sunday afternoon, May 2. See Maureen Bryant for more details.**

Mary Johnson



**THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM**

We have all been tremendously impacted by the needs of Haiti following its devastating earthquake. Its need will continue for years, so keep giving to Episcopal Relief or other agencies on its behalf.

However, the enormous needs of the churches and people of Jesus' own land continue, so I encourage you not to forget to give continually for their support. The Episcopal Diocese works for peace and social justice in cooperation with other Christian churches, Muslims, and Jews.

Your donations are secure when given through the American Friends, of which I am a Missioner -- meaning I guarantee I will continue to bug you!

American Friends of the  
Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem  
25 Old King;s Highway North, Suite 13  
Darien, CT 06820

Barbara Bishop

**MARCH / APRIL FORUM SCHEDULE**

- March 7: Fran Becker, retiring Director of Carpenter's Shelter presents an overview of its mission and ministry.
- March 14: The Vestry Forum: Storytelling and Sharing.
- March 21: Liturgy 101: "The Pastoral Offices."
- March 28: Stations of the Cross, an intergenerational experience hosted by our Church School.
- April 4: Easter Day Celebrations and Egg Hunt.
- April 11: Liturgy 101: "Christian Burial and Resurrection."
- April 18: "A Still, Small Voice: Contemplative Prayer" with Chase Danford.
- April 25: "A Still, Small Voice: Contemplative Prayer" with Chase Danford.

**VESTRY FORUM SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 14**

Please join the vestry for a forum on March 14 after the 10:00 service. The vestry plans to hold these meetings with the congregation on a quarterly basis to report on its work and to hear your thoughts and ideas on congregational life. We will also be talking more about our 2010 story-telling initiative.



# March

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>28 2 Lent</p> <p>8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1, with healing</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1, with healing</p> <p>11:20 am – Forum</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p> <p>6:30 pm – Lenten Supper</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Library)</p>	<p>2</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>4</p> <p>5:30 pm – Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>6</p>
<p>7 3 Lent</p> <p>8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2</p> <p>11:20 am – Forum</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p> <p>6:30 pm – Lenten Supper</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Library)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>5:30 pm – Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>14 4 Lent</p> <p>8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1</p> <p>11:20 am – Forum</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p> <p>7:00 pm – Focus Inn (Parish Hall)</p> <p><i>Daylight Saving Time Begins</i></p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:30 pm – Vestry (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Rector's Office)</p>	<p>16</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>6:30 pm – RCC Auction (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>21 5 Lent</p> <p>8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1, with healing</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1, with healing</p> <p>11:20 am – Forum</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p> <p>6:30 pm – Lenten Supper</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Library)</p>	<p>23</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>24</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>5:30 pm – Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>27</p> <p>8:00 am – ALIVE! Food Distribution</p>
<p>28 PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>8:00 am – Liturgy of the Palms &amp; Holy Eucharist Rite 1</p> <p>10:00 am – Liturgy of the Palms &amp; Holy Eucharist Rite 2</p> <p>11:20 am – Stations of the Cross</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>29 HOLY MONDAY</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Library)</p>	<p>30 HOLY TUESDAY</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>31 HOLY WEDNESDAY</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>1 MAUNDY THURSDAY</p> <p>6:00 pm – Foot Washing, Supper &amp; Seder (Parish Hall)</p> <p>8:00 pm – Holy Eucharist &amp; Stripping of the Altar</p>	<p>2 GOOD FRIDAY</p> <p>12:00 pm – Good Friday Liturgy</p> <p>1:00 – 3:00 pm – Meditation: The Way of the Cross</p> <p>7:30 pm – Good Friday Liturgy</p>	<p>3 HOLY SATURDAY</p> <p>8:00 pm – The Great Vigil of Easter &amp; Holy Eucharist</p>
<p>4 EASTER SUNDAY</p> <p>8:00 am – Festival Eucharist</p> <p>10:00 am – Festival Choral Eucharist</p> <p>11:20 am – Easter Egg Hunt</p> <p>1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:30 pm – Circle of Prayer (Library)</p>	<p>6</p> <p>8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Evening Bible Study (Library)</p>	<p>7</p> <p>10:00 am – Holy Eucharist (Library)</p> <p>7:30 pm – Choir Rehearsal (Nave)</p> <p>8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>5:30 pm – Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)</p>	<p>10</p>

## March Birthdays

*If we have not listed your birthday, please contact the parish office, and we will add it to our records.*

3/01 Ella Garber  
 3/02 Larry Wright  
 3/02 Kara Gumbs  
 3/03 Eric Chang  
 3/08 Ruth Sugeno  
 3/11 Dan Swearingen  
 3/11 Lissa Reeves  
 3/11 Seth Ewing  
 3/13 Will Williams  
 3/14 Bea Taylor  
 3/16 Giuliani Hardy  
 3/16 Giordano Hardy  
 3/18 Eleanor Burelson  
 3/18 Margot West  
 3/18 Alexandra West  
 3/19 Winniefred Merife  
 3/21 Patrick Williamson  
 3/22 Isabelle Lacayo  
 3/25 Brenton Stevens  
 03/29 Emily Ewing  
 03/30 Cook, Rebecca

## 2010 Vital Statistics

2010 Budget \$274,512

### Income

Budget: (Jan.-Jan.) \$22,876  
 Actual: (Jan.-Jan.) \$22,178  
 Over/Under Budget: (698)

### Expenses

Expenses: (Jan.-Jan.) \$29,120  
 Collections (Jan.-Jan.) \$22,178  
 Difference: (6,942)

*“Thank you” to each of you for your generosity and continual support in helping to meet our budget for 2009.*

### Attendance

January 17 108  
 January 24 107  
 January 31 52  
 February 7 snow  
 February 14 106  
 February 17 49  
 February 21 91  
 February 28 108

## Church of the Resurrection

Kate Donnell, *Register*  
 Frances Williamson, *Treasurer*

### Vestry 2009

Kat Turner, *Senior Warden*  
 Michelle McBride, *Associate Senior Warden*  
 Terry Kester, *Junior Warden*  
 Larry Huskin, *Associate Junior Warden*

Laila Ali  
 Bob Barnett  
 Jacki Bracewell  
 Betsy Faga  
 Kenneth Gay  
 Kathy Graham  
 Marian Stevens  
 Bea Taylor



## Upcoming Sunday Services

March 7, 2010 3 Lent	March 14 4 Lent	March 21 5 Lent	March 28 Palm Sunday	April 4 Easter Sunday
8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1 10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2
<b>Readings:</b> Exodus 3:1-15 Psalm 63:1-8 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 Luke 13:1-9 <i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<b>Readings:</b> Joshua 5:9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11B-32 <i>Chase Danford preaching</i>	<b>Readings:</b> Isaiah 43:16-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3:4B-14 John 12:1-8 <i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<b>Readings:</b> The Passion Gospel Year C <i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<b>Readings:</b> Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 Luke 24:1-12 <i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>



Presenting and  
Supporting Folk  
and Acoustic  
Music in the  
Washington DC  
area

# The Kennedys

## with Dan Cohn

Performing live at Resurrection March  
14, 2009, 7:00 pm  
(Tickets: \$18, \$15 in advance at  
[FocusMusic.org](http://FocusMusic.org))

ALSO: "Better Dreams, a Songwriter's  
Workshop" with Pete and Maura before  
the show, 3-5 pm, \$40.  
Guitar Lessons Raffle (Up to 12  
Sessions, tickets \$10)



**RESURRECTION  
CHILDREN'S CENTER**  
RCC is celebrating March  
Madness with their annual  
funraiser at 6:30 pm on  
March 19, 2010 in the  
Parish Hall. Call the school  
office at 703-578-1314 if you  
would like to attend or  
offer financial support.



<p><b>March 7 3 Lent</b></p> <p><b>Readers</b> Terry Kester (8) Chase Danford Tom Bracewell Jacki Bracewell</p> <p><b>Chalice Bearers</b> Beth Wiggers Barb Eversman Jacki Bracewell Larry Dye</p> <p><b>Acolytes</b> Logan Grady Nichole McBride George Bangura</p> <p><b>Ushers</b> Bob &amp; Edna Noe Frances Williamson Carl Hull</p> <p><b>Altar Guild</b> Jacki Bracewell Marian Stevens</p> <p><b>Building Supervisor</b> David Ewing</p> <p><b>Tellers</b> Dennis Jones Susie Jones Sandra Jackson</p>	<p><b>March 14, 2010 4 Lent</b></p> <p><b>Readers</b> Mary Johnson (8) Gladys Moniba Chase Danford Larry Dye</p> <p><b>Chalice Bearers</b> Chase Danford Barb Eversman Larry Dye Susan Weber</p> <p><b>Acolytes</b> Stephen Merfie Noble Merife Anna-Blessing Merife</p> <p><b>Ushers</b> Judy Schramm Kat Tumer Jere Cummins Maureen Bryant</p> <p><b>Altar Guild</b> Lori Thurgood Orian Falkenborg Mary Johnson Judy Isaacs</p> <p><b>Building Supervisor</b> Jay Madden</p> <p><b>Tellers</b> Elizabeth White Bob Barnett Tom Etter</p>	<p><b>March 21, 2010 5 Lent</b></p> <p><b>Readers</b> Tom Bracewell (8) Larry Huskin Bea Taylor Lou Zarfaz</p> <p><b>Chalice Bearers</b> Bea Taylor Terry Kester Mary Johnson Larry Huskin</p> <p><b>Acolytes</b> Logan Grady Nichole McBride George Bangura</p> <p><b>Ushers</b> Lissa Reeves Jere Cummins Terry Kester Jan Kester</p> <p><b>Altar Guild</b> Mary Johnson Judy Isaacs Peggy Green</p> <p><b>Building Supervisor</b> Will/Cheryl McBeth</p> <p><b>Tellers</b> Barbara Langford Carl Hull</p>	<p><b>March 28, 2010 Palm Sunday</b></p> <p><b>Readers</b> Jacki Bracewell (8) Liturgy of the Palms Lea Fowlie</p> <p><b>Chalice Bearers</b> Marian Stevens Barb Eversman Larry Dye Susan Weber</p> <p><b>Acolytes</b> Stephen Merfie Noble Merife Anna-Blessing Merife</p> <p><b>Ushers</b> Milford &amp; Letitia John-Williams Bob Naismith Tom Etter</p> <p><b>Altar Guild</b> Lori Thurgood Bea Taylor Peggy Green Gail Collins</p> <p><b>Building Supervisor</b> Kevin Broderick</p> <p><b>Tellers</b> Richard Green Nan Pendergrass Betsy Raymond</p>	<p><b>April 4, 2010 Easter Sunday</b></p> <p><b>Readers</b> Larry Huskin (8) Terry Kester Mary Johnson Gail Collins</p> <p><b>Chalice Bearers</b> Karl Boughan Bea Taylor Terry Kester Chase Danford</p> <p><b>Acolytes</b> Logan Grady Nichole McBride George Bangura</p> <p><b>Altar Guild</b> Peggy Green Lori Thurgood</p> <p><b>Building Supervisor</b> Bob Barnett</p> <p><b>Tellers</b> Bob Noe Jan Kester Gay Colyer</p>
--	---	--	---	--

# SERMONS

Sermon for Transfiguration Sunday, February 14, 2010  
Readings (RCL, Year C): Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2  
Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-43

"Love and Transfiguration" by N. Chase Danford,  
Seminarian Assistant

Let us open our hearts and minds in prayer through this  
word of poetry by the Rev. Ann Fontaine:

*Tiny star of morning. Born in the smallest of stables  
spreading from manger to shepherd to magi  
to beloved to teacher.*

*Expanding out into the universe.  
Calling everyone and everything home to the heart of  
Love.*

*Transfiguration reveals what was always there:  
A supemova exploding into our hearts and minds.  
Now we feel the black hole tugging pulling dragging us  
into that heart in our journey through Lent to the fullness  
of Easter.*  
Amen.

That was "Transfiguration" by Ann Fontaine, an Epis-  
copal priest and a writer. Today is Transfiguration  
Sunday, and Fontaine says better than I could what the  
Transfiguration of Our Lord is about, but I will attempt  
to further give flesh to this event and give attention to the  
practical significance of living as Transfiguration people.

*"Now the lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the  
lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled  
faces, seeing the glory of the lord as though reflected in  
a mirror, are being transformed into the same image  
from one degree of glory to another"*

We have in our lessons two stories of individuals so  
filled with the Spirit of the Lord that they shine from the  
encounter. Moses goes up Mount Sinai and our lesson  
tells us that because he had been talking with God, the  
skin of his face shone. In the gospel reading, Luke tells  
us that the same thing happens to Jesus while he is  
praying on the mountain. The difference is that Moses  
chose to veil his face because his people were frightened  
by his appearance. Paul, in the lesson from 2  
Corinthians, expects that we too—ordinary people, not  
figures like Moses or Jesus—will shine from our  
encounter with the holy. Paul surely knows that we  
won't literally shine with the brightness of the sun, but he  
also knows that the light of God that lives within us will  
show forth in our lives, if we do not hide it with a  
veil. And how will this light shine forth from  
us? Primarily through love. As the 1st Letter of John  
says, "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is  
from God; everyone who loves is born of God and  
knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God,  
for God is love." When we love, we see the truth of  
what is always there, but that we do not always see—that  
God, who is love, dwells in each and every one of  
us. And Jesus, the Son of God, the Incarnate One, who  
was the revelation of God's love in this world, must have  
shone brilliantly with love on that day, up on the  
mountaintop. This is what Transfiguration is all about:  
the unveiling of Jesus' identity as Son of God, as divinity  
enfleshed, as love incarnate.

Love. In case you've forgotten, for after all, I'm sure  
the stores are already changing their displays to feature  
Easter bunnies and egg-shaped chocolates rather than  
hearts, today is Valentine's Day. Perhaps in some  
churches, preachers will be explaining the Christian  
origins of St. Valentine's Day, but I'm actually more  
interested in this sermon in exploring the secular  
appropriation of Valentine's Day. Today is the day,  
above all others, that our society celebrates the gift of  
love, especially in its romantic form. Which, of course,  
drives those of us who are single just a bit crazy. But, I  
for one, rejoice with those who rejoice, for amidst all the  
sentimentality and consumerism, many find Valentine's  
Day to be quite special. And it is, if it is about the love  
between two people, for love shows us that we are  
created in the image of God. Yet there are those, who  
while in a loving relationship, find that there is a veil  
over it, either of their own making or that of society's,  
that obscures the brilliance of their love. I am speaking  
about all those couples of the same gender who still  
struggle to find acceptance in this world.

I grew up in a small Texas town, in a conservative  
Baptist family. The concept that two people of the same  
sex could love each other as romantic partners was not  
something I could even conceive of until I was  
eighteen. "Gay" was bad. I had never even met an  
openly gay person until I got to college. Then I met out  
and proud gay students and professors at my university,  
and these were good people I respected. I learned a lot  
about the science and sociology of homosexuality, and I  
learned that many churches no longer viewed same-sex  
relationships as sinful. I experienced a change of heart  
as I realized that gay and lesbian relationships could be  
just as full of love as heterosexual ones. And yet, I still  
couldn't quite picture them as being like those of my  
grandparents, both sets of whom had strong, decades  
long marriages. Then I met Michael and Kevin,  
parishioners at my church in Houston, partners, and  
fathers to a little girl they'd adopted. In their mid to late  
thirties, they weren't as old as my grandparents and, of  
course, hadn't been partners for nearly as long, but they  
cared for each other deeply. Michael was diagnosed  
with cancer, and I had the privilege of serving as the lay  
Eucharistic visitor who brought communion to their  
home when he was too ill to come to church. It was  
there that I saw clearly what had been there all along: a  
family, two partners in love, one caring for the other as  
he was sick, both struggling to take care of their daughter  
amidst all the chaos that severe illness brings to a

household. I experienced a moment of transfiguration, that incarnational experience that, in the words of Rev. Fontaine, calls "everyone and everything home to the heart of Love."

What do we do after we have seen these moments of transfiguration? The gospel reading gives us a model. We can't just stay in the glow of epiphany forever. We have to come down from the holy mountain and get back to work in the world, just as Jesus is confronted by a crowd and heals a child immediately after his mountaintop experience. What do those of us who have seen the truth that was always there in the love between two people of the same sex do after we have been privileged to be a witness? Last year, my predecessor as seminarian assistant issued a challenge to you all. You had all witnessed her service in the church, grew to admire her leadership, and yet she would not be able to work in this church or any church in the Diocese of Virginia after her ordination because she is partnered to another woman. I am proud to say that this church rose to the challenge, writing a letter to the bishop and sponsoring resolutions at the diocesan annual council that promote full inclusion of lesbian and gay parishioners and clergy in the life of the Diocese of Virginia. You are witnessing to what you know is true to the rest of the diocese, and I am proud of you and implore you to continue this work.

But we can't stop at the doors of the church. Let us remember this Valentine's Day, originally a church observance of martyrs, that there are thousands of military personnel bravely putting their lives on the line for our country who cannot, at this moment, openly share their love with their partners. If they do, they face discharge. Fortunately, there is hope on the horizon as Congress, the Pentagon, and the White House discuss repealing the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" law. If you have not had a chance to read the congressional testimony of Admiral Mullen, the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I commend it to you. In it, he said, "No matter how I look at the issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens." In biblical terms, they must wear a veil. By wearing this veil, they are prevented from living their lives with integrity and their fellow servicemembers are kept from experiencing moments of transfiguration as they see the truth of what has always been there.

Should we allow gay clergy, should we bless same-sex unions, should we give gay and lesbian individuals the same rights and privileges as everyone else, in church and in society? These are questions many at home and abroad will say are of minor importance. After all, gay and lesbian people are not systematically persecuted in the United States. Anything more, it would seem to

these individuals, is icing on the cake that only a privileged society such as ours can afford to debate. I submit that this is not the way to look at these issues. Instead, we should act boldly to fully embrace our gay sisters and brothers because to do less is to create second-class Christians and citizens. If we equivocate, what message does that send? I agree that we are a privileged church and a privileged society. This is why we can have such conversations and why we must have them, for we must share what we have learned. While systematic persecution is not really an issue in America, it is elsewhere, including within the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Church of Uganda actually favors proposed laws in that country to jail people involved in same-sex relationships. Fortunately, they stepped back from the initial proposal that would have instituted capital punishment for gays and lesbians, but that is not enough. We must be witnesses to our sisters and brothers in Uganda and around the world.

Not everyone's fully on board with the path I am advocating, even in progressive parishes like this one. I realize that, and I honor that these can be difficult questions that well-meaning people are divided on, especially issues of military readiness and issues that threaten to divide the Body of Christ. But those of us who have been witnesses to the transfiguration, the brilliance, of the love of same-gender couples, must speak and act boldly because these are not questions of minor importance. They are questions of gospel imperative, for Jesus stretched out his arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that all might come within the reach of his saving embrace. We need to tell people who have been rejected by their churches and families that there is a place for them where they can know the love of God and neighbor.

Christians, especially Episcopalians, are fond of describing ourselves as Easter people, Resurrection people, and sometimes people of Incarnation. We are also people of Transfiguration. The heart of the Transfiguration is seeing Jesus in the fullness of his identity, human and divine. Likewise, our own moments of transfiguration are about living our lives, and sharing in others lives, with a renewed sense of understanding, truth, and love. As T.S. Eliot writes in "Little Gidding:"

*We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.*

As we behold by faith the light of Christ's countenance in all our sisters and brothers, we see them anew. We know them for the first time as they are changed into Christ's image, as though reflected in a mirror, as we all unveil our faces in the freedom of the Spirit and realize that, perhaps, ultimately, sin is about preventing the

Christ-light to shine within us. And as we open ourselves up to the all-embracing love of God, we find that we were always beloved, that the Spirit was always with us, "calling everyone and everything home to the heart of love." Amen.

### LOOKING INTO THE MIRROR

*An Ash Wednesday homily by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie, February 17, 2010*

There is a marvelous, luminous painting by Georges de la Tour. He painted during the same era as Rembrandt, and his use of light is strikingly similar. I put my personal reproduction of that painting on the table in the narthex. It is one of four renderings of Mary Magdalene. This version is called "The Repentant Magdalene". (By the way, please remember that *nowhere* do the Gospels indicate that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. That legend comes from confusing one part of Luke's text with another, probably for political purposes.) But that's not the point; let me describe the painting.

The scene is set at night. Mary is seated before a mirror. A single candle provides the only light, which illuminates Mary's face. She is not looking into the mirror, but gazing at the candle, which I suppose indicates her deepening spiritual enlightenment. Most tellingly, Mary rests her hand upon a skull, the traditional symbol of human mortality. The skull sits on a heavy book, presumably the Scriptures.

I love this painting because of its mysteriously calming quality. Candlelight plays with the shadows. Mary has a look of profound tranquility. She is at peace; Mary is reconciled with her personal history. She understands the *meaning* of life events, most particularly the presence of Jesus.

The skull is a critical part of the scene. It tells us that Mary is aware of her mortality. Even so, Mary is not afraid. Her love for and commitment to Jesus frees her from fear and enables her to look calmly into her own reflection.

Ash Wednesday is *our* time to acknowledge *our* mortality; *our* time to look into the mirror. Funeral services, like the service for our beloved Gia Adams, make the same point through remarkable liturgy. But when we attend a funeral, we're focusing primarily on our sense of loss. We're trying to come to terms with the reality that a person we care about is no longer physically present with us. We may forget that someday a funeral service will be held for *us*.

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." There is no ambiguity in these words. You – and I – are going to die. We do not know the time

or circumstances of our death. We only know that death will certainly come.

Death is frightening, particularly because no one living knows exactly what it is like. What we *do* know is that death cuts off everyday life as we've known it. We will be separated from our physical bodies. We will be separated from those we leave behind. What we're going *towards* is impossible to foresee.

Some people respond to the ambiguity simply *ignoring* the fact of death. They don't prepare wills; they make no provision for the people closest to them. They coast along, content in their fantasy that life will always be the way it is right now. Until it *isn't*. Then they scramble to catch up with the unwelcome reality of dying unprepared.

Others deal with death through a fatalistic approach. "I'm going to die anyway, so it doesn't matter what I do." This is the "eat, drink and be merry" choice. These folks don't deny the reality of death, but they take it as an excuse to make choices that can be destructive both to themselves and others. For them, life is a kind of cosmic joke. They see no reason to take responsibility for what they do or what they *fail* to do.

The Christian approach to death is that we accept it as real. We acknowledge that no one is getting out of here physically alive. But Christians know that physical death is not the end of the story. Our destiny is in God. In the meantime, *how* we live matters. It matters *tremendously*. That's what I hear in the Scriptures; that's what I see in that marvelous painting of Mary Magdalene.

In the powerful passage we heard as our first reading, the prophet Joel urges the people to "return to the LORD your God"; "rend your hearts and not your garments." The bridegroom should leave his chamber, and the bride her canopy. In other words, "STOP!" *Stop... think* about what you're doing; reflect on how you are spending the precious minutes of your precious days.

"Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." These words are not said as a threat. They are spoken to remind us of *reality*. When we listen to these words, *really* listen to them; when we take seriously the fact that we're not going to live forever, we realize that we have a choice. We can while away the precious moments of our days or... do the work required to find meaning in them.

It is worth looking at the expression of Mary Magdalene's face in Georges de la Tour's gorgeous painting. We see someone willing to accept her mortality, but not be defined by it. We see someone moving beyond surface images to the deeper reality, which is God.

We can look just as deeply, not only this Ash Wednesday, and not only this Lent. But *always*.

### **“TO HAVE OR TO BE”**

*A sermon preached by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie on February 27, 2010, the Second Sunday in Lent, based on Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18 and St. Luke 13:31-35.*

First I need to hold up in love and support the people of Chile; who, like the people of Haiti, have just experienced a devastating earthquake. Perhaps they will need less international aid than Haiti, but still they are trying to survive a horrible experience. They too will need our help.

These devastating earthquakes remind us how fragile our life, buttressed up with things, possessions... how fragile our life really is. Of course, the economic recession we're still suffering should have made the point already. If we stake ultimate security in things we have, there is an extremely good chance that we'll be disappointed. If we place ultimate security in God... that is, the best and truest force for good... we can withstand the worst the external world can inflict.

That's the message of Jesus' parable about building a home on sand, on a *wadi*, a dry river bed. You're fine for a while, before the rains come. But when the rains come, your house is going to be washed away. It's not a matter of if, but when.

There is a book by the great 20<sup>th</sup>-century sociologist Erich Fromm called *To Have or To Be*. His message is that humans tend to cling to what we know, what we're familiar with, and the possessions that reinforce our sense of security. The old tried and true – whether they really serve us or *not* – anesthetize us to the fragility of our existence. What I happen to own is not going to save my life or save my soul. If that is where I place my trust, my truest allegiance, when I or anyone I love gets sick, or hurt in any way, I will feel terribly betrayed. But the fact is that I will have betrayed *myself*.

The Genesis story we heard as our first reading may strike us as rather weird: cutting animals in half; flaming torches passes between the pieces. This story is a remnant of an ancient tradition signifying the sealing of a covenant, an absolutely binding agreement. The ritual that strikes us as so strange is a way of saying, “May I be myself be sacrificed if I break my covenant with you.”

This is an agreement between Abram, (soon to become Abraham), and God, meant to establish a permanent relationship. Abram is turning his life

upside-down because of God's promises that he is being led where he most needs to go.

Fast-forwarding to the time of Jesus, we see an amazing portrait of Someone putting his entire trust in God, his heavenly Father.

Luke has Jesus standing on the hills overlooking Jerusalem. He has been there at least once before, and he knows that Jerusalem is not friendly to anyone challenging the religious or political system. Here's what one biblical commentator has to say:

“Perhaps the citizens of Jerusalem were afraid of losing what they already ‘had.’ Their magnificent city had by endowed by Herod the Great with glorious murals, two palace-fortresses, and the new temple, with amazing gardens and a colossal amphitheater. Did the city simply have too much to lose? The seat of the Great Sanhedrin, the heart of the Jewish national unity, and the center for the ruling elite – could the city truly ‘repent’ and be converted to the ‘Abba experience’ Jesus offered?”

Apparently not. Jesus was crucified because people held onto the familiar, the external. They were not willing to consider a new way of thinking and acting. In Erich Fromm's terms, they chose “having” over “being.”

This passage from Luke is striking because Jesus uses a powerful feminine image to describe himself and his ministry. He laments that Jerusalem has never been friendly to prophets or anyone challenging the status quo, and then he says,

“How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”

One writer describes observing a hen and her chicks. Every night the mother hen's newly hatched chicks found their place under her wings. They gathered there for warmth, but she would stay awake to protect them. She was on guard, and if a threatening animal – like a fox, what Jesus calls Herod – attacks, she would bare her breast and allow the fox to attack her, giving chicks time to scatter to safety. One morning, he sadly noted that all that was left of the hen were clusters of feathers. The chicks were still there, running around on their own, but still alive.

What a marvelous image for God! A mother hen, opening warm wings for us to gather under, if only we will. Warmth and love ready for us whenever we are ready to accept them.



## Easter Decorations



Providing flowers for the season of Easter is a wonderful way to enhance our celebration of this holy season and to remember a loved one or give thanks for someone special.

You may provide these Easter decorations for a suggested donation of \$35. The names received by the parish office by March 28, 2010 will be printed in the orders of service for the Easter Day Festival Eucharists.

Please fill out this form and return or mail it to the parish office.

Your Name:

---

In Loving Memory of:

---

In Thanksgiving for:

---

What gets in the way of seeking the only real shelter we'll ever know? A desire for things, relationships, positions, titles, etc., that satisfy our sense of pride? Things we think we can control? *All* of them will fail us once reality kicks in, whether it comes in the form of an earthquake, a divorce, an illness or some other unwanted event.

In Erich Fromm's terms, we have a choice: to have or to be? Trying to live life on our own terms, or seeking security under God's loving care? How do we know the difference?

The difference lies between desperate, compulsive desire for recognition, to be admired, to be respected, even to be feared, shaping life in our own image, and... a simple letting go. Accepting reality as it befalls us; making responsible choices when we need to, while passing along God's love to our neighbors.

This kind of letting go may like defeat, at least at first. And it *is* a defeat of our arrogance and our pride. But it is the triumph of our better selves, our souls, grounded and upheld in God.

Just a few days ago I experienced this first hand. I was asked to visit Norvell Jones at Goodwin House. In December she celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday and decided that was enough. She was ready to go. So she has stopped eating. She is lying comfortably on a hospital bed with her daughter by her

side.

When I saw her face, it was serene. This is a person who is content. She has let go of the anxieties of daily living, any desire to achieve or impress. She has chosen simply to "be." This, by the way, is nothing new for Norvell, but a fitting conclusion to a life well lived.

She retains her sense of humor, too. When I blurted out, "I'll miss you!" she responded, "Well, I'm not sure I'm going to miss any of you all!" She had us in stitches.

The task for the rest of us is not to wait until we're on *our* deathbeds to choose simply to be, to rest in God's loving arms.

Jesus knew this. Jesus knew that no possession, no title, not even the Jerusalem temple could protect him or us from reality. Life deals its blows to everyone. Especially in Jerusalem.

But Jesus knew another truth, as well. Even if we feel we're losing everything, everything we most value; even if we feel we're slipping down and nothing is there underneath to catch and hold our feet, there *is* something to catch and hold our *souls*.

It's the Mother Hen! She will *not* let our souls be injured. She will *not* let us be lost. Her ferocious love embraces us, so we may love ferociously in her name.



**Church of the Resurrection**  
2280 North Beauregard Street  
Alexandria, VA 22311-2299

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Alexandria, VA  
Permit No. 225

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# HOLY WEEK & EASTER at RESURRECTION

**March 28-April 4, 2010**

## **Palm Sunday**

- 8:00 am Liturgy of the Palms & Holy Eucharist
- 10:00 am Liturgy & Procession of the Palms, Passion Gospel & Holy Eucharist

## **Maundy Thursday**

- 6:00 pm Foot Washing, Supper & Seder, *Parish Hall*
- 8:00 pm Holy Eucharist, Homily & Stripping of the Altar

## **Good Friday**

- 12:00 pm Good Friday Liturgy & Homily
- 1-3:00 pm Meditation: The Way of the Cross
- 7:30 pm Good Friday Liturgy & Homily

## **Easter Even**

- 8:00 pm The Great Vigil of Easter, Special Music & Holy Eucharist

## **Easter Day**

- 8:00 am Festival Eucharist with Brass & Organ
- 10:00 am Festival Eucharist with Choir, Brass & Organ
- 11:20 am Children's Easter Egg Hunt & Games