2018.01.28 ~ St. Gregory’s 2018 Vestry. Suzanne Dougherty, Trice Edwards (Junior Warden), Theresa Brantley, Fr. Alan Horton, Cheri Davis (Senior Warden), Kathy Walker & Tony Casamento.

Chili Cookoff Winners

Cheri Davis with Beans
Tim Cannon Hot
Fr. Horton No beans

Chili Judge Meredith Melton
Every Lent the question we all face is, what am I going to give up. There are the standards of sweets or chocolate, maybe Facebook or some addictive cell phone game, or perhaps something more drastic like meat or some other dietary staple. Now, you can always take on something as your Lenten discipline, maybe praying the Daily Office or reading Scripture. Of course taking on something necessarily means giving up something else, even if it is just giving up fifteen minutes of sleep or mindless television or just doing nothing (all three of these being among my personal favorite pastimes). So, what is the point of this kind of self denial? Why, every year, do we make a point of cutting out some non-sinful point of pleasure in our lives? I think it needs to be made clear that it isn’t because there is something inherently wrong with enjoying the good things of this life. There is nothing wrong with enjoying good food or fun activities. There is definitely a place for these things in a well-ordered life. We just have to be careful that these pleasures do not become the focus of our lives to the detriment of our spiritual growth and charity.

Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians states “I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.” There is something to be said for this kind of discipline. Paul is talking about it in the context of what it means in his work spreading the Gospel to deny himself. Being faithful followers of Jesus can be very demanding, and what hope do we have in maintaining our righteousness and keeping ourselves from sin if we don’t even have control over our own bodies. Denial in this way gives us the opportunity to show our fleshly nature who’s the boss. Saying to ourselves, “I don’t have to, but I will, just to show you that I can.” Because if we can’t, then we have a much bigger problem. Because, like I said, there isn’t anything wrong with enjoying the good things in life... that is until we find ourselves unable to do without them.

Lent is the perfect time to have that kind of checkup. We deny ourselves in order to make sure that we still can. We need to occasionally show our fleshly nature who is really in charge and thoughtful Lenten disciplines are an excellent way to do that. So, as you are preparing for this upcoming Lent, take some time and think about something that may have taken too prominent a place in your life, over and above your duty to God and your neighbor and decide how to limit it in or eliminate it from your life, if only for 40 days, just to be sure that you can.

Fr. Horton+

Sunday sermons are recorded, each Sunday, and archived at http://stgregorymansfield.org/sermons by 11:00 AM.

Harriet Motter presented a Christmas musical at the home of host Jenny Vo.

Students and guests performed piano duets and solos, a trumpet duet and oboe solo, and accompaniment for a sing-a-long of carols led by Karen and Ken Shugart.

Performers were Katie Nguyen Allene Nguyen, Kyra Ullman, Karen, Ken, Evan and Ben Shugart and Harriet Motter.

“All the participants and audience enjoyed and were engaged in a delightful evening of live music,” said Motter.
Preschool Happenings

2018 has gotten off to a busy start for the preschool. With 6 new students starting, that brings our total enrollment up to 55! We have very limited availability and we are already fielding requests regarding summer programs and next school year! Our waiting list is growing and our parents continue to refer their friends and family to us.

Our Book Fair was a success, thank you to the many church members who volunteered their time. With the profits from the book fair, the preschool will receive over 30 new books to add to our classroom libraries.

Our staff enjoyed our annual Christmas party hosted in the home of one of our teachers, thank you to Fr. Horton and Holly for stopping by. We enjoyed our break and the time off with our families. It is always a great time to recharge and the start the new year fresh.

The recent flu outbreaks have had very little impact on the preschool, thank you Lord for your protection. We have had only a few sporadic cases of little ones out sick. Although it is always a part of our daily routine to sanitize classrooms, we have taken extra precaution disinfect and deep clean.

February 5th we will begin in-house registration for summer camp and open registration for camp will begin February 12th. We will also begin enrollment for the 2018/2019 school year later in the month.

Jr. Warden’s Report

I’m looking forward to 2018. I’m ready for spring and working on the grounds at the Church and other projects. We have some ideas to add beauty to the landscape.

I would like to thank the outgoing Vestry members for all of their work over the last three years and especially the last year since I joined the Vestry. I’m looking forward to working with the two new members this year.

Trice

Daughters of the Holy Cross

Calendars have been taken to the Mansfield Nursing Home, Mansfield Lodge and Brookdale Senior Living. All of the Residents enjoyed receiving their calendars and being able to pick the one that they liked the best. Thank you to all who donated calendars. It meant a lot to the residents that we thought of them.

Our next meeting is Saturday, February 17th, at St. Gregory's.

Bernice Baldwin (new email = texasbaldwin51@gmail.com)
The Lord be with you

Humbled by the Wonder Who is God by the Revd. Casey Jones, a dearest friend of mine. This article, like all his writings, is well worth a moment to read.

The Word of God is so wonderful! I was just reading Psalm 147 today, and it so blessed me. First of all my mind was drawn to verses 3 and 4:

3 He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds.
4 He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

Incredible. The God of the Universe cares about us as individuals. He cares about our wounds and broken hearts. We spend most of our lives hiding our inner struggles from others. We are ashamed, and we fear others would judge us because of our struggles. But they are known to God. And He cares! We do not have to hide from Him. We cannot hide from Him.

And the God who cares intimately about each of the almost 7.5 billion people on this planet is the same God who has numbered what we cannot number—the stars! The Psalm says He calls each star by name. How many stars are there? A conservative estimate is that the number is 2 followed by 23 zeros! (two hundred quadrillion). According to Psalm 147, God knows the number, and God has named each star.

So then what is amazing is that the God who created and knows the infinite expanses of the universe, also cares about the hurts of each and every human being. Isaiah 53, in speaking of God’s servant who was to come, (whom the New Testament says is Jesus, God’s Son), says that “he took up our pain and bore our suffering” (verse 4), that “he was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities” and that “by his wounds we are healed.” (verse 5).

The One through whom each person was created has named each star! The One through whom black holes were made bore our sins and sicknesses on the cross. The One who sees past, present, and future in one glance has, on the cross, suffered wounds that heal the cosmos.

Verses 5 and 6 go on:

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.
6 The Lord sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.

God’s power is incalculable, and God’s knowledge and understanding are unlimited. This God is against wickedness and evil, and He will judge them.

What attitude does God appreciate? Humility. What attitude does God oppose? Pride. When we think of His greatness and when we think of His great mercy and love, how can our response be anything but awe and humility?

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.” – 1 Peter 5:6-7.

Winfield Casey Jones is a retired pastor. He can be reached at wrjones2002@gmail.com. This column appeared in the Pearland and Friendswood Reporter News, TX, USA.

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Ash Wednesday’s Imposition of Ashes is scheduled for February 14, 1pm at Watercrest and 6:30pm at St. Gregory’s.

St. Gregory’s Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper is February 13, 6-8pm. Cost is $6 per person or $15 per family.

During Lent, Stations of the Cross will be said every Friday evening at 6:30 pm and a Soup supper will follow Wednesday’s Holy Eucharist.
Our Clergy and Staff

“Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him”
John 13:16

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