

SHROVE TUESDAY - CELEBRATING 103 YEARS! AND THE BEGINNING OF EMMANUEL CHURCH

Grass Valley had its beginning when a few immigrants crossed the plains in the fall of 1849. They built a cabin on Badger Hill near the town site and were engaged in placer mining. Following the discovery of gold quartz on Gold Hill in October of 1850 news traveled fast and men rushed to the area determined to strike it rich. Those who held fast to their faith and customs, who felt a need to keep the Sabbath, missed their homes. A few missionary preachers soon followed the surge of immigration and sought to preach the word of God, where so little heed was paid to it. Ministers who ventured into saloons and gambling houses seeking an audience were given great respect and attention. Church organizations were formed of a temporary footing in which the doctrinal difference was laid aside in the effort to stem the tide of immorality and indifference.

When the population of Grass Valley numbered around 3,000, hoping to establish the Episcopal Church in the gold rush country, Bishop William Ingraham Kip and his family arrived in Grass Valley on Sunday, April 24, 1854 and conducted the first morning service in Grass Valley Masonic Hall for about 50 people followed by evening services for approximately 100 at Temperance Hall on Church Street. Later, The Reverend William H. Hill, who was conducting services in Nevada City, was also the celebrant at Episcopal services in Grass Valley in the Masonic Hall. On March 27, 1855 a parish was organized under the title Emmanuel Church. The Masonic Hall was destroyed by fire in September and Emmanuel's subsequent services were then held in the Hall of the Sons of Temperance and the Congregational House of Worship on Church Street.

On December 11, 1856 the Gold Hill Quartz Mining Company presented to Emmanuel Parish a lot of land on the condition that the Corporation should erect thereon a Church structure within 18 months of the acceptance of the gift. The Vestry gratefully accepted the land the following month. In 1857, architect William Bettis, a native of New York State, designed Emmanuel Church in the carpenter-Gothic style. One of the few remaining examples of carpenter-Gothic architecture, it was built of native wood on a stone base in a cruciform design and features Gothic windows with a high vaulted ceiling supported by Gothic arches. It was built at the cost of \$6,000. Although the building was not quite finished, Emmanuel's doors opened for worship on August 1, 1858. Of the seven churches built within two blocks on Church Street, Neal Street, and Chapel Street during the 1850s, Emmanuel is the only original surviving building and thought to be one of the oldest Episcopal churches in California.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ST. CATHERINE'S GUILD

Guilds began to appear at Emmanuel in 1879. With time the guilds took on the names of saints. St. Catherine's Guild is one of the earliest guilds and is one of two remaining guilds at Emmanuel.

Since the 1880s the guild has supported Emmanuel and has assisted the parish in making improvements to the church property, as well as helping to pay off debt during its earliest lean

years. Along with other guilds at Emmanuel, St. Catherine's Guild began to give ten percent of its earnings to missionary work, and under the guidance of The Rev. Van Deerlin in the late 1890s, supported the Good Sheppard Episcopal Mission in Colfax.

Currently the guild faithfully supports Emmanuel's needs, and as it has been for many years, is committed to sustain the community's non-profit organizations with money raised at its annual Christmas fair and Shrove Tuesday waffle sale, now gifting more than the earlier ten percent.

THE HISTORY OF SHROVE TUESDAY AT EMMANUEL

One hundred and three years ago in the early spring of 1916, St. Catherine's Guild was holding its regular monthly meeting. President Miss Annie Curtis was presiding over the meeting. Since Lent was close at hand, Rector Dr. Bert Foster was telling the women about the pancake sales that were held in England on Shrove Tuesday and he proposed the guild at Emmanuel do something similar.

The old parish hall (which began on the site of the current rectory as the Parsonage and was later moved to the current site of Buck Hall) had no functioning kitchen and was ill equipped to handle a pancake sale. However, there was an old wood stove in the makeshift kitchen off the hall and one of the members of the guild mentioned that she had a waffle iron, which could be used over the wood stove. The old waffle irons were made of iron and sat on a stand that was placed over the open lid of a wood stove to heat. Two handles were attached to the iron, which could be turned over to allow both sides of the waffle to bake.

On Shrove Tuesday in 1916 eight ladies gathered together to enjoy a waffle supper followed by a game of cards before the beginning of the Lenten Season. Twenty-five cents per person was charged and a grand total of \$2.00 was earned. The ladies were pleased with their efforts. The following year the sale netted \$6.00 and the waffle sale became an annual fundraiser. Members of the parish were each asked to contribute an item to defray the cost of the event and an invitation to the community to attend was extended. With the coming of electric waffle irons, a new parish hall with a well-equipped kitchen, advertising, and hard work on the part of the members of the parish, this St. Catherine's Guild fundraiser has continued to be a popular community event that is well supported by long-time attendees and newcomers from the community.

WHAT IS SHROVE TUESDAY?

Shrove Tuesday is one of the moveable feasts in the church calendar and is directly related to the date on which Easter falls. Shrove Tuesday always falls 47 days before Easter Sunday. Shrove Tuesday is a reminder that Christians are entering a season of penance and was originally a solemn day. But over the centuries, in anticipation of the Lenten fast that would begin the next day on Ash Wednesday; Shrove Tuesday took on a festive nature.

Shrove is the past tense of the English verb shrive, which means to hear a confession, assign penance, and absolve sin. In England the day was widely known as "Shrove Tuesday" from the custom of going to confession on that day to be shriven of one's sins. During the Middle Ages, especially in northern Europe and England, it became the custom to make this confession on the day before Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, in order to enter the penitential season in the right spirit.

Lent, the penitential period before Easter has always been a time of fasting and abstinence. While the Lenten fast of today is confined to Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and other Fridays in Lent, in previous centuries the fast was quite severe. It is hard for modern people to picture how rigorous the Lenten fast was in years gone by. Church regulations forbade the use of meat, fish, eggs, fat, butter, and dairy products during Lent as a form of preparation for the feast of Easter. Housewives had to use up all foods that came from animals before the start of the penitential season. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on the shroving Tuesday to eat up all foods that wouldn't last the forty days of Lent without spoiling. Pancakes served the purpose of using up eggs, milk and butter before Lent. So Shrove Tuesday became the last chance to indulge one's self, and to use up the foods that weren't allowed in Lent.

The need to eat up fats on Shrove Tuesday gave rise to the French name Mardi Gras, the French term for Fat Tuesday. Over time, Mardi Gras extended from a single day to the entire period of Shrovetide, the three days including the last Sunday before Lent through Shrove Tuesday. People wanted to celebrate before the somber time of denial so the day before Ash Wednesday, the start of Lent, became Mardi Gras, "fat Tuesday," a time for feasting and games.

Including feasts to use up the foods that could not be eaten during the Lenten fast, Shrovetide was celebrated with games, sports, dancing and other revelries. Football was played in the streets, and Nickaman Night, as Shrove Monday evening was called in Cornwall, was a time for boys to run riot in the villages, hiding gates, taking off doorknockers, and making off with anything that householders had forgotten to lock away.

Pancake races are thought to have originated in Olney, 1445. A woman from Olney had lost track of the time on Shrove Tuesday and was busy cooking pancakes in her kitchen. Suddenly she heard the church bell ringing to call the faithful to church for confession. The woman raced out of her house and ran all the way to church still holding her frying pan and wearing her apron. On Pancake Day pancake races have been held in villages and towns across the United Kingdom. The contestants, traditionally women, carry a frying pan and race to the finish line tossing their pancakes as they go. As the pancakes are thin, skill is required to toss them successfully while running. The first to cross the line having tossed the pancake successfully is the winner.

We welcome you to participate in Shrove Tuesday by donating \$5.00 per family to defray the cost of the event and/or helping to clean the kitchen with Marnie Ratovsky (contact her to volunteer). We need help to set up Buck Hall following coffee hour on March 3rd and clean up

after 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, and to help work the event for the morning and evening shifts on Shrove Tuesday. Sign up with Millie following Sunday services or phone her at 265-3112 if you can help.

~Millie Beatie~