

First Edition



First Evangelical Lutheran Church
Houston, Texas

March 2010
Volume 159, Number 3

MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

On Wednesdays during Lent a midweek service is being offered at First Evangelical Lutheran Church at 6:00 p.m. The services began on February 24 and will continue through March 24.

Each service is a traditional, spoken liturgy of Evening Prayer with selected music from Taizé. A brief homily on verses from Psalm 16 will be included.

It has been many years since midweek Lenten worship has occurred at First Church. The series of services will provide members and friends with an opportunity to observe the Season of Lent in a special way.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and continues until Easter. It is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, during which Christians turn their attention to the need for repentance and amendment of life in the context of our accountability to God and our need for the mercy and forgiveness provided through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Everyone is invited to participate in these services, in order to practice the Lenten discipline of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving and thus be better prepared to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ on Easter.





Lenten Musings.....McClanahan's Missive

Throughout March, the Church participates in the season of Lent. For the first time in many years, we are offering mid-week Vespers on Wednesday nights at 6:00. I hope that this will be a beneficial service for those in our community and our congregation. To help advertise it, you may have noticed the sign on the front lawn. Perhaps those who are on their way home from work or Houston Community College classes will be able to attend this service.

The service itself will be a traditional spoken Evening Prayer service with a few selections of music from the Taizé repertoire. The service is intended to sharpen our focus during Lent by observing the season apart from Sunday morning worship, which is actually considered a break from the forty days of Lenten fasting. Each service will include a reflection on a few verses of Psalm 16.

For our March Adult and Youth Education, we will look in detail at one of Bach's great masterworks, the *Saint John Passion*. He may have written a passion for every gospel, but only two remain, the *Saint John* and the *Saint Matthew*. Both, along with his *Mass in B Minor*, are his largest works and offer treasure troves of musical beauty, power, and depth. Initially, I was worried a month might be too long to cover this piece, but now I worry it is not long enough.

Finally, on a loosely related topic, I read a most enlightening article recently by former Lutheran pastor Richard John Neuhaus. In the article, he describes why he "left" the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod to "join" the Roman Catholic Church, saying that he really just fulfilled what he always understood about church, and that he had always been part of the holy catholic and apostolic church. It wasn't nearly as dramatic as we might like to make it.

I will certainly reflect on this more in future writings and sermons, but I could not help but think about our congregation, and how we see ourselves. Defiantly Lutheran? Evangelical Catholic? Gladly Protestant? The gift of Lutheranism is that it is the Christian faith, pared down to its most essential elements, elements that had been forgotten and abused in the 16th century. It is the Holy Christian Church, the true faith properly expressed. As we engage in complex questions about what it means to be Christian and even Lutheran, we do well to remember our roots, and constantly work to present the historic faith in our life together. We will be thinking together about how best to do that in the months to come.

YOUTH AND ADULT SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL

In March Pastor Evan McClanahan will present a course on the *Saint John Passion* by Johann Sebastian Bach. Although Bach may have written a passion for every Gospel, only two remain: the *Saint John Passion* and the *Saint Matthew Passion*. These, together with his *Mass in B Minor*, are his largest works and offer much in the area of beauty and theological depth.

The youth and adult class meets in the Parish Hall from 10:00 a.m. until 10:45 a.m. All youth and adults are welcome to attend.

SELAH: WHAT'S HAPPENING

Selah (pronounced SEE-lah or SEH-lah) is Hebrew for crescendo; to increase, to lift up; also the Young Adults at First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

THANK YOU to all of the wonderful *Selites* who helped with yet another successful Golden Agers Luncheon in January. We had a truly outstanding team of servants for the Golden Agers Luncheon 2010: Maridith Allen, Aubrey Arms, Stephanie Davis, Jackson Felder, Jeffrey Hokanson, Peter Hokanson, Dean and Meredith Huffman, Richard and Sarah Madrid, Pastor Evan and Amanda McClanahan, Greg and Andrea Ranft, Dawn Tiedemann, and Jessica Vickery. Special thanks also goes to Pastor McClanahan and Pastor Peterman for sharing their musical talents.

Upcoming events:

Saturday, March 20 *Selah* will be Breakfast Klubbing! Please join us for the most important meal of the day at 9:00 a.m. The Breakfast Klub is one of Midtown's most popular eateries and has been known to generate a line of hungry patrons outside its entrance. It is supposed to be that GOOD. Bring your favorite newspaper to share over java and eggs. The Breakfast Klub is located at 3711 Travis at Alabama. RSVP to Meredith by Friday, March 19 at 713-862-6561.

Sunday, April 18 Join *Selah* for sandwich making for SEARCH at 12:30 p.m. in the kitchen of the Parish Hall. SEARCH is a Midtown organization that offers many programs to help Houston's homeless population. We will be making 75-100 sack lunches as part of SEARCH's Sandwich Drive for their daily Mobile Outreach Program. Call Meredith to sign up for your contribution to the grocery list and RSVP for your spot on the assembly line at 713-862-6561.

Saturday, May 8 We will return to Miller Outdoor Theater for our 3rd Annual Picnic and Houston Ballet Performance. Watch the next issue of the *First Edition* for more details.

ALL CONGREGATION WORK DAY

A congregation-wide work day will be held on Saturday, March 13, with a rain date of March 20, starting at 9:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. Tasks will include cleaning and polishing the nave in preparation for Holy Week and Easter. There will also be some landscaping and weeding of the plant beds. Plant donations are welcome, since the freeze damaged many of our plants. We will also be brightening up the nursery for our new members by painting, making curtains, and doing other tasks. There will be additional work which is not yet determined at the time of this writing.

Mark your calendars now. A sign up sheet will be available, or you can contact Frances Allen, Property Committee Chair at TxKatz@me.com. or call the church office at 713.529.3589 with your availability or suggestions.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 28, Palm Sunday, 11:00 a.m. On this day marking Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, palm crosses are given to worshipers before the service and palm branches are carried in procession on the entrance hymn.

April 1, Maundy Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Preceded by a light soup supper in the Parish Hall, the service in the nave begins with individual absolution by the laying on of hands. After the sermon and communion, the service ends with the stripping of the chancel of all adornment and the veiling of the cross, as Psalm 22 is recited.

April 2, Good Friday Two services will be held.

12:15 p.m. A brief Service of the Word will include a reading of the Passion, sermon, and prayers.

7:30 p.m. A longer Service of the Word will include a reading of the Passion, sermon, hymns, and prayers.

April 3, Holy Saturday, 11:00 p.m. The Easter Vigil begins outside as a Paschal Candle is lit. Then follows a solemn procession into the nave. Lessons from the Old Testament are read, the Litany prayed, and baptismal vows renewed. At midnight the chancel is vested for Easter. Then the first communion of Easter occurs with festivity and singing.

April 4, Easter Sunday, 11:00 a.m. Preceded by an Easter breakfast at 10:00 a.m. in the Parish Hall, the service will include both sermon and communion, adorned by special music presented by the choir and organist.

EASTER LILIES

Again this year the Altar Guild will provide lilies for the church on Easter. A sign-up sheet will be posted near the church office. Watch for an announcement about the number of lilies needed and their cost.

A QUIZ ABOUT LENT

(Adapted, courtesy of the Rev. Stephen Springer, Pastor of Dove of Peace Lutheran Church, Tucson, Arizona)

1. Lent originally started for this reason:
 - a. Food was scarce at this time of year, so fasting was normal.
 - b. Fasting was believed to reduce your time in purgatory.
 - c. It was preparation time for those being baptized at Easter.
 - d. It was a forty days' journey from Paris to Rome.

2. In most languages, Lent is called "the forty days." England used the word "Lent" because:
 - a. For fasting reasons, most people ate "lentils."
 - b. In springtime, the days "lengthen."
 - c. Lent is the old Gaelic word for "suffering."
 - d. Each day of precarious, mortal life is "loaned" us by God.

3. There are forty days in Lent because:
 - a. Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days.
 - b. Elijah was in the wilderness for forty days.
 - c. The Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years.
 - d. All of the above.

4. The ashes used on Ash Wednesday are derived from:
 - a. cedar or olive branches, which were sacred to the Jews.
 - b. the palm fronds used the previous Palm Sunday.
 - c. sackcloth which has been ripped and then burned.
 - d. incense which has been burned in the sanctuary.

5. In some churches, the cross is draped with purple during Lent because:
 - a. It symbolizes the blood of Jesus dripping from his wounds.
 - b. The stole is a symbol of Jesus as our high priest.
 - c. Our sins are a weight upon the shoulders of Jesus.
 - d. Somebody thought it looked pretty.

(Answers on page 10)

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL

- April 1 7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday service
April 2 12:15 p.m. Good Friday service
7:30 p.m. Good Friday service
April 3 11:00 p.m. Easter Vigil
April 4 12:30 p.m. Property Committee meeting
Service and Care Committee meeting
April 5 7:30 p.m. Executive Committee meeting
April 11 12:30 p.m. Congregation Council meeting
April 12 6:00 p.m. Finance Committee meeting

CHANCEL FLOWERS

The Altar Guild has posted a sign-up chart for those who wish to provide floral arrangements in the chancel. Although no flowers are provided during the solemn season of Lent, many other Sundays remain during the coming year. Flowers may be designated in honor or in memory of someone or some special event.

The cost per Sunday is \$60. The Altar Guild will purchase and arrange the flowers on each occasion. The name of the donor and the designation will be included in the worship bulletin.

After the service, the flowers may be taken home by the donor or delivered to a member or friend who is ill or homebound.

Donors are asked to submit a check payable to First Evangelical Lutheran Church at least one week in advance. Write “flowers” in the memo space on the check.

BACH SOCIETY EVENTS

On Sunday, March 14, at 6:00 p.m., an Organ Vespers will be held at Christ the King Lutheran Church featuring music played by the organist Wolfgang Zerer from Hamburg, Germany.

The Abendmusik series of the Bach Society will present the *St. John Passion* (BWV 245) by Johann Sebastian Bach at three times:

Palm Sunday, March 28, at 6:00 p.m.

Holy Tuesday, March 30, at 7:30 p.m.

Good Friday, April 2, at 3:00 p.m.

The Bach Society offers its programs as a gift to the community without any admission charge. However, an offering is received at each event to support the work of the society. Christ the King Lutheran Church is located at Rice and Greenbriar in Rice Village.

CHURCH CHOIR SINGERS WELCOME

The Church Choir resumed on Sunday, September 13. It rehearses at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday and sings at the 11:00 a.m. service. The music of the Renaissance and the Early Baroque is emphasized, along with worthy church music from other eras. All singers are welcome to participate without audition.

Further information can be obtained from the choir director, Carroll Shaddock, at 713-524-8744 or css@shaddocktexas.com.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

Our church constitution provides for associate membership in First Evangelical Lutheran Church. An associate member is someone who is a member of another church, but wishes to be more formally associated with our church as well.

Theologically, all other Christians throughout the world are, by definition, associate members of our congregation. However, formally becoming an associate member is a way of adding one's name to the list of those who wish to see themselves as directly supporting the life and work of First Church.

Anyone interested in becoming an Associate Member should call Pastor McClanahan at 713-529-3589. Associate membership is open to adults and children alike.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

There are lots of volunteer work opportunities in the church office. Tasks include shredding paper, stuffing envelopes, and preparing newsletters. Anyone who is interested in helping or who wants more information should call the church secretary, Sabrina Smitherman, at 713-529-3589.

THANK YOU

A special thank-you goes to Kenneth and Edna Jungbecker Hurley and Jack and Elvera Huff for gracious donations in memory of Robert Jungbecker. We also wish to thank Victor and Jean Houston for a donation of kitchen supplies in memory of Jean's sister, Marjorie Ranft.

When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro.

BOOK CLUB FORMING

Beginning Tuesday, March 30, First Evangelical Lutheran Church will be hosting a monthly book club. Amanda McClanahan will be leading the group, and everyone in the congregation and community is welcome to participate. The group will meet once a month for food, fellowship, and book discussion.

The first book we are tackling is *Chocolat* by Joanne Harris. Set in the quiet and sleepy French village of Lansquenet-sou-Tannes, *Chocolat* tells the story of the orderly and subservient villagers and how their lives are transformed by the arrival of Vianne Rocher, a single mother who blows in with the warm carnival wind at the beginning of Lent and opens a chocolaterie, much to the horror of the local priest, Reynaud.

Join us at 6:30 p.m. on March 30 in the Parish Hall for a fondue party and discussion of *Chocolat*. For more information, contact Amanda McClanahan at 217-621-7937 or amanda@shrevesites.com.

MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS

	<u>January 18</u>	<u>February 18</u>	<u>One year ago</u>
Child members	15	15	13
Confirmed members	153	153	145
Total members	168	168	158
Associate members	41	39	43

BOOKS OF SERMONS AVAILABLE

Three volumes of sermons by Pastor Edwin D. Peterman, published under the title of *Practically Preaching*, are available for purchase from the church office. Each book contains a sermon for every Sunday and major festival in the church year.

The three volumes correspond to the three year cycle of readings for the church year, in which the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are predominant. Currently the church is in the year of Luke.

The cost of each book is \$15. A set of all three is \$40.

Answers to "A Quiz about Lent" on page 5

1. C 2. B 3. D 4. B 5. D

PRAYER LIST (January 18 – February 17)

Members and Associate Members

Bill Bammel	Robert Kuempel	Allison Silk
Julia Burchsted	Monika Mitby	Carl W. Sontag
James Cone	Lorine Nichols	Eric Speck
Minnie Lou Gaeckler	Emilie Ratcliffe	Deborah Speeg
Lois Good	Kenneth Rogers	Betty Wade
Minnie Johnson	Dolph Schlachter	

Friends and Relatives

Meg Flowers	Jerry Huffman	Ed Story
Doris Gorman	Lindsay Lum	Anna Taylor
Zach & Valerie Graves, Cody and Luke	Ron Springer	Mary Ruth White

Other Concerns

Those serving in the U. S. military, especially Robert Edgar Becker
 Dr. Jon Fielder and his family, medical missionaries in Malawi
 The victims of the earthquake in Haiti
 The birth of Alexander Steven and John Steven to Steven and Monika
 Mitby, February 7

FROM THE PARISH RECORD

Remove from the Associate Member Roll

Brad Fuerst
 Marie Berg

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY CHANGES

(changes or additions underlined)

Members

MITBY, STEVEN & MONIKA 281-458-0382
 8311 Ramblebrook Court
 Humble, TX 77396
(Alexander)
(John)

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.

First Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Historic First Evangelical Lutheran Church is a congregation of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Founded in 1851, it played a vital role in the history of Lutheranism in Texas. Located at Holman and Caroline, across from Houston Community College, three blocks east of the 3400 block of South Main, it is convenient to the Ensemble/HCC stop of MetroRail.

Telephone 713-529-3589

Fax 713-529-0816

Dorothy Shaddock, Organist

Carroll Shaddock, Director of Worship and Music

Sabrina Smitherman, Secretary

Janice McLennan, Nursery Attendant

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www.felchouston.org

The Rev. Evan S. McClanahan, STS, Pastor

The Rev. Edwin D. Peterman, STS, Consulting Pastor

Nelson Rendon, Custodian