

**THE WEEKLY EPISTLE**  
**The First Sunday in Lent**  
**February 26, 2012**  
**GRACE CHURCH IN NEW YORK**



Dear Friends,

I have a love-hate relationship with Ash Wednesday that I struggle with every year. On the one hand, it is a deeply moving experience when people come forward to receive the mark of ashes on their foreheads. Something about all the foreheads gets to me every year. They are young and old, black and white, high and low, furrowed and botoxed. In the context of the liturgy, receiving the ashes between the Word and the Sacrament reminds us of our utter dependence on God. Indeed, it is only by God's gracious gift that our ultimate fate is anything more than returning to the dust of the earth.

On the other hand, Ash Wednesday brings out an impatient element of person who wants nothing to do with the liturgy, nothing to do with the sacred conversation, nothing to do with Grace Church, and only "ashes to go." Our longsuffering ushers in the narthex every year have tales to tell of people who are positively miffed that they would have to participate in a church service in order to receive the ashes. Imagine sending out invitations to a dinner party at your home. One RSVP comes back saying the following: *I haven't the time to spend with you, nor the desire to listen to anything you have to say, but I would love to eat your food. Might you leave my serving with the doorman of your building so that I can swing by and pick it up on the go?*

Call me a dinosaur, call me a curmudgeon if you like, but I think the sign of the ashes ripped out of its liturgical context cheapens the sign, and actually encourages people to believe that it's some sort of magical thing. I was sad to see a spread in the *New York Times* on Thursday about Episcopal priests offering "ashes to go" to people on the street. "They get their food on the go; why not ashes?" reasoned one priest. According to this line of thinking, what's next? Would you like an order of fries with your ashes?

Welcome to Lent, everyone. See you in church.

The Rev. J. Donald Waring  
Rector

**Schedule of Services**

**9:00 am**

**Holy Eucharist, Rite II**

Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring

Music: The Parish Choir

**11:00 am**

## Morning Prayer, Rite I and Sermon

Sermon: The Rev. J. Donald Waring

Music: The Choir of Men and Boys

6:00 pm

## Holy Eucharist, Rite II in the Chantry

Sermon: The Rev. Ted Pardoe

Music: Hymns with instrumentalists

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### 2012 Annual Campaign

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And let us also thank everyone so far who has made a financial pledge to the work of the Lord through Grace Church for the year 2012. In thanksgiving for all the blessings of this life, and to empower the ministries of the church for our own and future generations, please make your commitment to a financial gift for the coming year.

**UPDATE:** We are within sight of our goal! As of last week, 210 households have pledged for a total of \$943,699. At this time last year, 181 households had pledged for \$848,035. If you have not made your pledge, please do so today. We need your help to reach our \$1 million goal.

*To read the 2012 Annual Campaign brochure and/or make your pledge now, click the image of the brochure at left.*

*If you have any questions about pledging, please contact Brian Hagan, Director of Development, at 212-254-2000 x119 or [bhagan@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:bhagan@gracechurchnyc.org).*

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### Announcements

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## SUNDAY FEBRUARY 26

**THE SUNDAY FORUM 10 AM - T.S. ELIOT'S "ASH WEDNESDAY,"** the first major work he composed after his conversion to Christianity, is one of the great lyric sequences of the twentieth century. Nicholas Birns will lead a discussion on the striking imagery and innovative structure of this deeply personal poem that speaks of our distance from and our closeness to God, our spiritual thirst and the possibilities for its replenishment. Held in Tuttle Hall; coffee and refreshments are served.

**4TH SUNDAY 9-12 YEAR OLD SUNDAY SCHOOL** - Kids ages 9-12 are invited to join us on Sunday, February 26th during the 11am service for this class held in the McKittrick Room, located just off Tuttle Hall. Parents may pick their children up in Tuttle Hall during coffee hour.

**MAR 25 LENTEN LUNCHEON SERIES 12:30 PM** *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth* by Richard Foster will be the focus of this year's presentation and group discussion series. Each week we will focus on one of five disciplines: 2/26 Guidance (led by John Berringer and Mike Watson); 3/4 Confession (Abby Carr); 3/11 Service (Nicholas Birns); 3/18 Submission (Rebecca Myers) and 3/25 Worship (Richard Limato). A soup and bread lunch will be served. Sundays in Lent, February 26 to March 25, in the Reception Room from 12:30 - 1:45 pm. For more information, contact Rebecca Myers at [rmyers@gts.edu](mailto:rmyers@gts.edu) or Mike Watson at [mwatson@gts.edu](mailto:mwatson@gts.edu). *Join us this week as we explore Guidance, discussing how we hear God's voice and act upon it. Next week learn more about how confession works, what is involved on a practical basis, and why it's particularly appropriate in the season of Lent.*

**FEB 26 - 20s30s PRACTICING PRAYER WITH PURPOSE 7PM** - (See 20s30s LENTEN PROGRAMS below.)

## **COMING SOON**

**20s30s LENTEN PROGRAMS - FRIDAYS & SUNDAYS IN LENT** The 20s30s group is planning two programs to promote reflection and fellowship. Join us for a meal and fellowship at our SUSHI FRIDAY dinners every Friday during Lent. *On Friday March 2nd at 7pm we'll dine at Cho Cho San, 15 8th Street between 5th and 6th Ave. RSVP to Maura Hooper at [mhooper@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:mhooper@gracechurchnyc.org) by 12 noon on Friday.* WE ALL KNOW HOW TO PRAY in public, it's what we do here every week, but how do you pray in private? If you'd like a crash course, join Seminarian Kim Reinholz for PRACTICING PRAYER WITH PURPOSE in 20 to 30 minutes for 20 to 30 year olds. The group will meet in the Reception Room from 7-8 pm (following the 6pm service) every Sunday in Lent starting on February 26th. You may attend all sessions, or just drop in for one or two. This program will take the place of 4th Sunday Fellowship during Lent. Please contact Kim at [krowles@gts.edu](mailto:krowles@gts.edu) with any questions.

**FEB 29, MAR 7 BOOK DISCUSSION** - On Wednesday evenings at 7 pm (directly after 6 pm Holy Eucharist) in the Reception Room, The Rev. Sarah Anne Wood continues a discussion on Henri J. M. Nouwen's *The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming*. The four-week program (commencing Feb 8) begins with an introduction to the author, the book, and to one another. The second session will focus on Part One of the book. Then, the second and third parts of the book will be discussed in the following weeks, respectively. The time promises to include the divine gifts of theological reflection and gracious relationship. All are welcome!

**MAR 4, 11 THE SUNDAY FORUM 10 AM - THE SOCIOLOGY OF OUR FAITH: WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO US AS A COMMUNITY?** Led by the Rev. Stephen Arbogast, chair of the Department of Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics at Trinity School, this is an opportunity to learn more about what others consider to be important indicators of being faithful people in America today. March 4 - A look at Mark Chaves' book *American Religion: Contemporary Trends* gives an overview of religion in America. Chaves, a professor of sociology, religion, and divinity at Duke University, highlights features that define religious experience in our country and leaves us with questions about what elements we consider important to our own experience. March 11 - *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, by Robert Putnam (author of *Bowling Alone*) and David Campbell, presents findings from a massive amount of data collection about the relationship of religion and society today. We'll look at the specific findings related to the Episcopal Church, unpacking implications for those of us who are Episcopalians in New York City. Held in Tuttle Hall; coffee is served.

**MAR 11 - ALTAR GUILD MEETING - NEWCOMERS WELCOME** Please come to our annual spring meeting on Sunday, March 11 after the 11 am service (approximately 12:30-1:30). Among other topics, we will review plans for Lent and Easter. This is one of only two meetings per year and it is important and enjoyable to get together and meet each other and exchange ideas. Grab a coffee in Tuttle Hall and bring yourselves, your ideas, and any friends you think might be interested in serving. Questions? E-mail Co-chair Helen DuBois at [hwdubois@verizon.net](mailto:hwdubois@verizon.net).

**APR 1 - SPECIAL CHORAL MUSICAL OFFERINGS** for Palm Sunday at 11 am: The Liturgy of the Palms, Reading of the Passion and Choral Eucharist. Works by J.B. Faure and others will be offered by The Choir of Men and Boys. At 4 pm: Selections from Handel's MESSIAH Part II, Choral Evensong offered by the Adult Choir.

**APR 7 - THE NEXT DATE FOR BAPTISM** is Saturday evening, April 7th at the Easter Vigil. For information, please contact The Rev. Ted Pardoe at [tpardoe@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:tpardoe@gracechurchnyc.org).

**APRIL - YOUTH CONFIRMATION CLASSES** will begin the second week of April. Classes continue for six weeks and are led by the clergy in preparation of the bishop's visit on Sunday May 20th. If your child is in 7th-12th grade and is interested in being confirmed, email Maura Hooper at [mhooper@gracechurchnyc.org](mailto:mhooper@gracechurchnyc.org) to sign up.

## **DID YOU MISS A SERMON?**

Click below to read or listen to a sermon

<http://gracechurchnyc.org/online-sermons/>