

E-News for the Week of Sunday, January 17

2nd Sunday After Epiphany

Readings

Isaiah 62:1-15

Psalm 36:5-10

1 Corinthians 12:1-11

John 2:1-11

Participants

Celebrant: Rev. Nancy Wright

Altar Guild: Cheryl Couillard

Communion Assistant: TBA

Lector: Red Martin

Liturgical Assistant: TBA

Organist: Ann Gnagey

Greeters: Karen & Red Martin

Ushers: Richard Butz, Bonnie & Paul Lombardi

Upcoming Week

Wednesday, 1/13

4:30 p.m. Tai Chi (rental)

6:15 p.m. Choir

7:15 p.m. Bells

Thursday, 1/14

7:00 p.m. Care for Creation

Saturday, 1/16

8:30 a.m. Men's Breakfast

Sunday, 1/17

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship Service

Monday, 1/18

7:00 p.m. Council

Wednesday, 1/19

4:30 p.m. Tai Chi (rental)

6:15 p.m. Choir

7:15 p.m. Contemporary

Click [HERE](#) for a long-range calendar.

Upcoming Birthdays

1/14 Molly Burke

1/14 Elizabeth Dreibelbis

1/14 Doug Dreibelbis

1/16 Sally Farrar

1/16 Heidi Heppner

1/17 Tom Bruno Jr.

Pastor's Message

Dear Ascension friends,

The news from Steve (see below in announcements) and Denise about their leaving the regular participation in Ascension for a time reminds us that change is part of our human life and our life with God. The Holy Spirit blows where it (or she--as the Hebrew word for Spirit, ruah is feminine) wills. How do we remain stable in the midst of change and loss? We trust in Christ, pray regularly, and talk about and confirm in one another the ministries God gives to us. I will see you at worship this Sunday, when we will praise God and bless our varied expressions of ministries, especially those of Denise and Steve.

Faithfully, Pr. Nancy

PS While at this third Doctoral course in Boston, focused on Contextual Theology (more about what we are learning will be in next week's e-news), our email system through Outlook has been down; that is the reason I haven't responded to any emails you have sent. My apologies, and I am sure that all will be up and running soon.

Sunday School News

Children

Pictures from the Children's program are up! [CLICK HERE FOR PHOTOS](#)

Adults

The class is reading Pope Francis I Encyclical Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home as the Bishop has suggested. Anyone can join at any time; you can purchase a book from Pr. Nancy or read the Encyclical on line for free. No class preparation is needed, as we read aloud and discuss each paragraph. **Adult Sunday School resumes this Sunday, the 17th.**

HARK! IMPORTANT UPCOMING NEWS AND EVENTS

Temple Talk

Amila Merdzanovic, Director of the Vermont Field Office of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program, will be at Ascension on Sunday, January 17, to give a temple talk about Syrian refugees coming to Vermont and what churches can do to help. She will also stay for the coffee hour afterwards to talk with people informally and answer questions.

Announcement from Steve Snook and Family

Those who have been reading the international section of the newspapers thoroughly have seen that Haiti is moving through a protracted electoral process, with the last round of voting still to be held. Come sometime in February, barring unforeseen catastrophes that are always possible in Haiti, there will be a new President, a new Parliament, and for the first time in the country's long and troubled history there will be elected mayors and municipal councils. In this context, my company's project to help the Haitian government enact both a framework law and enabling legislation creating a functional local tier of government is seen by the US government as essential, even critical to America's support for the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Thus, when late last year the manager of our project submitted his resignation, the US government let my company know they wanted a steady hand in place, and my company looked immediately to me.

In December I discussed the request with Rosine and our daughters. Given that Gabriella is in high school and we don't want to move her to anything less than a very good school, there was no question of the family moving to Haiti. Rosine and the girls talked it through with me. They saw

perhaps I was being called. I put the decision in their hands, and all three of them, trusting in God to guide what happens, agreed I should give my assent to have my name submitted for US government approval.

The US government has now approved my appointment. Suddenly I am in the process of mobilizing for Haiti. I depart on January 20. This is a two-year assignment, but happily Haiti is not very far away, and it is in the Caribbean where there are lots of lovely places where we can meet for family visits. Professionally this will be a challenge. The overall objective of the project is to help Haiti's city governments better serve the people who live in them by helping create a legal framework for a local system of representative government and establish it on a sustainable basis, so that the municipalities run essential services such as repairing streets, picking up the garbage, issuing building permits, etc. etc.

This is a very sudden development. It's not an assignment I sought, but as the saying goes, man (and woman) proposes and God disposes. The professional challenge is certainly going to be very interesting for me, but it comes at personal cost, and not just to me, but to my family. It means that we will be separated, although a separation nowhere near as dire as what other families have gone, and are going through. Think of the families who send husbands and fathers and brothers (and wives and mothers and sisters) to war zones.

I'll look forward to seeing folks in church this Sunday, and I have one last council meeting I'll attend, and then I'm off. I will hold Ascension in my prayers, and I ask that Ascension say a prayer for me, from time to time, and while they're at it, say a prayer for the people of Haiti, who live in a country that it seems can never catch a break.

Peace,

Steve Snook

Pr. Nancy's Study Leave

The third course in the Doctorate of Ministry Program at Boston University School of Theology, is titled "Contextual Leadership." It is taught by Dr. Walter E. Fluker, author of Ethical Leadership: The Quest for Character, Civility, and Community. He is the Martin Luther King, Jr. Professor of Ethical Leadership, the editor of the Howard Thurman Papers Project and the Director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Initiative for the Development of Ethical Leadership. This course (1/7/16-1/16/16) ends the day before we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. holiday at the Worship service on January 17, which is especially meaningful, especially as Dr. King received his Ph.D. from the BU School of Theology. As always I appreciate your prayers, as this course is intensive and will conclude with a paper later in winter, which will involve Ascension's ministries.

Kelli Tylanda, Council President, will be in charge at Ascension, with pastoral back by Pr. Nancy and by the Rev. Ken White, Minister at College Street Congregational Church, Burlington. Should an emergency arise, please contact Kelli at any time on her cell phone, 802-310-8776 and she will reach out to Rev. White directly.

Men's Breakfast

Hey guys! It's back! The Men's Fellowship Breakfast! Join us at **8:30 a.m. on January 16th** at Ascension for some good food and fellowship. See you there!

Coffee Hour

The 2016 coffee hour list has been posted. Please sign up!

Quilt top kits available

If you would like to help make mission quilts for Lutheran World Relief but cannot join us on the first and/or third Thursday or the month at church, you can assemble quilt tops at home. There are kits that consist of cut fabric squares (11" x 11") along with directions. Let Karen Martin know if you are interested.

The next Quilter's meeting is this **Thursday, 1/21**.

Coming Soon: Beat the Winter Blahs

Mark the evening of January 30, 2016 on your calendars! It's a little bit of Scandinavian tradition right here in Vermont and your opportunity to enjoy some of your favorite dishes or try some foods that you've only heard about. Join us and bring your friends for an evening of great fun and delicious food. You'll be able to dine on Swedish Meatballs, Swedish Potato Sausage, Lutefisk, Pickled Herring, Red Cabbage, Potatoes, Jell-O Salad, fine cheeses, lefse and so much more. There will be a social hour from 5 to 6 pm with seating and dinner served promptly at 6:00 p.m.

There is no charge for the meal but you will be given an opportunity to make a donation to Lutheran World Relief. The dinner is also being generously supported Thrivent. Feel free to bring a bottle of your favorite wine. It has been said that most any wine pairs nicely with lutefisk.

If you are willing to help with preparing specific assigned dishes, setting up/decorating, serving or clean up please indicate so on the signup sheet located in the fellowship room. If interested, or if you have question, contact one of the following:

Kris Peterson-Ishaq and Mousa Ishaq at mkishaq@comcast.net

France Leblanc at france316@hotmail.com

Jake Hansen at organic343@hotmail.com

Additional News and Opportunities

Trinity Institute's 45th National Theological Conference

"Listen for a Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice"

On **January 22-23, 2016**, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral and College Street Congregational Church will be partner sites when a leading group of activists, scholars, authors, artists and experts on racial inequality come together to hold life-giving conversations on the racial issues of our time, including structural racism, mass incarceration, and policy change at Trinity Institute's 45th National Theological Conference, "[Listen for a Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice.](#)" Conference participation is open to anyone interested in a practical, theological perspective on racial equality and is ideal for seminarians, students, and church leaders looking for thought-leadership from experts and activists.

The event is free of charge, but registration is recommended. Registration is at the following

URL: <http://conta.cc/1OvvqID>

For more information, contact: Karen Mikkelsen @ kmikkel@icloud.com or Rev. Ken White

@ kwhite@collegestreetchurch.org

A Panel of local experts on racism in Chittenden County and in Vermont will speak Friday evening, January 22, at St. Paul's Cathedral, and a film for youth, I'm Not Racist, Am I? will be screened on the same evening at College Street Congregational Church. Both events will begin at 7:00 and end at 8:30. Panel members include: Hal Colston, Director of Neighborkeepers and 2014 Burlington Free Press Vermonter of the Year; Dr. Sylvia Perry, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychological Science at

UVM, and author of many papers on issues related to racism and bias awareness; Wanda Hines, Executive Director of the Joint Urban Ministry Project (JUMP), and community leader. The panel will be moderated by Sally May, Interim Associate Pastor at First Congregational Church, Burlington. There will be time at the end of the panel for audience questions, comments and feedback.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL PRESS RELEASE FOR MORE INFORMATION.](#)

Tai Chi at Ascension!

Tai Chi for All Generations, Wednesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m. with Elizabeth Wirls

Tai Chi has resumed! It's a new year, time to get into a new groove! Please join us!

Classes are ongoing and everyone is welcome to come as you are, whenever you wish. All generations are welcome! Please note that we have decided to offer these classes on a "pay as you can" basis. That way everyone who is interested will be able to join us! For more information, see the attached brochure and feel free to contact Elizabeth in the church office, 862-8866

[CLICK HERE](#) for full brochure.