

The Celtic Courier

February 2012



A Gregorian Rant

"A Purple Lady and Little Green Men"

"A Purple Lady and Little Green Men," that's our theme as we begin February with the Bishop's Visit and **Scout Sunday, on February 5th**. On that day we will welcome Bishop Diane Jardine Bruce (Bishop Suffragan) as Celebrant and Preacher at the 10:15 service. That day will also be Scout Sunday and the Scouts from our troop will participate in the service. They will also be serving a Pancake Breakfast to raise funds to help them buy the equipment they need for their camping trips. If you enjoy circus acts, plan to be on hand and watch me juggle "a purple lady and little green men." Seriously, this is a wonderful opportunity to support our Scouts and to welcome their families. It is also a wonderful opportunity to welcome one of our Bishops, to hear from her the important events in the church today. Please do plan to join us.

A Lenten Experiment

"What, you're moving the Lenten Class – is that allowed?" As I announced at the Annual Meeting, we are going to try an experiment this year of moving the Lenten Class, usually held on Wednesdays, to Tuesdays. Tuesday (after the food program) is the one night no other groups use the parish hall on a regular basis, so we're going to give it a try, and thus avoid conflicts with the Woman's AA Group that meets on Wednesdays. We'll use the same pattern as in the past: 5:30 Eucharist, 6:00 Soup Supper, 6:45-8:00 class.

This Lent we will be reflecting on "*24 Hours that changed the World*" by Adam Hamilton. Through his book and a DVD, Adam Hamilton will guide us, step by step, through the last day of Jesus life – beginning at the Last Supper and on to the Crucifixion and eventually his Resurrection. Join us TUESDAY evenings, **beginning February 28**, for this powerful experience.

Nets4Life

As announced following the Diocesan Convention, Bishop Bruno is inviting all the congregations in the Diocese to participate in the "Nets4Life" campaign during Lent. His theme is "Forty Days – Forty Thousand Nets." This program, organized by the Episcopal Relief and Development Fund, is being conducted throughout the Church to raise funds to provide mosquito nets to families in malaria-prone areas of Africa.

Each net is \$12.00 and can save two or three lives when used to repel malaria-bearing mosquitoes. So one method would be to ask each of you to give \$12.00 and send it on its way. But where is the growth and challenge in that? It also deprives us of the opportunity to invite others to join us in this worthwhile project. A Task Group is meeting now to plan ideas and events during Lent so that we may participate in this live-saving project and invite our friends and neighbors to join us as well. Watch the bulletin and the next Courier for upcoming details.

Faithfully yours,

ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rev. Canon Gregory B. Larkin, Rector

The Rev. George F. Luthringer, Assisting

Wendie Roberts, Director of Family Ministry
Berezkina, Courier Editor

Brett Hanley, Director of Music

Janna



How Can You Help?

February is a National Heart Month. Help your heart by knowing the following points.

Ten Commandments for a Healthy Heart

1. Know your risk factors for heart disease.
2. Talk to your doctor about reducing your risk of heart disease.
3. Have your blood pressure checked regularly.
4. Know your cholesterol numbers. (These include total cholesterol, HDL or "good" cholesterol, LDL or 'Bad' cholesterol and triglycerides.)
5. Have your blood sugar level checked for diabetes.
6. Do not smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products.
7. Eat for your heart health.
8. Get regular physical activity. (At least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most or all days of the week.)
9. Aim for a healthy weight.
10. Know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and importance of seeking medical help immediately.

From the Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association newsletter. February 2012

Now that you know about risks, how many of them are you willing to incorporate into your life? You can start by getting your blood pressure checked the first Sunday of the month right here at St. Columba's church.

NEWS! COMING IN 2012

The Parish Nurses will be on hand to take Blood Pressures the first Sunday of every month.

Look for the Parish Nurses sign.

February Birthdays

Phil Carlson	5	Ron O'Haver	17
Joanne Davidson	17		

RELIEVE EDITORIAL STRESS:

**TURN IN
YOUR ARTICLES
EARLY!**

RE M I N D E R :

**DEADLINE FOR
NEWSLETTER
ARTICLES IS
FEBRUARY 15**



The Daughters of the King will meet **February 4** in the Parish Hall at 10 A. M.

Scout Sunday – February 5th

Once again our Scout Troop will take part in the 10:15 service as we work to support the noble qualities of scouting. A special treat this year will be a **Pancake Breakfast** with all the trimmings after each service to support our troop in equipping the boys for their camping trips. Join us for this special day.



Sermons Available On-line

"That was a really good sermon, I'd like to look at it again," and now you can. Each week the previous Sunday's sermon is posted on our website www.stcolumbaca.com So if you would like to revisit a sermon or if you happen to miss on you can find them there. The sermons stay up for a couple of weeks and then rotate through, so look quick or you might miss it.

**THE CELTIC COURIER
PUBLISHED MONTHLY
ST. COLUMBA'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH
1251 Las Posas Rd.,
Camarillo, CA 93010
ISSUE 2**

Annual Meeting Update

The Parish Gathered for the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 29th following a 9:00 service. During the meeting the members of the Board were recognized and thanked: Marilyn Hindle and Diane Off. Also recognized were the new members elected to the Board this past June: Nancy Hey and Melinda Taweel; and Diane Off who is completing a one year term. There is also a representative from the parents who serves a one year term.

Retiring Vestry Members, Paulina Miller, Martin LeVan, Ron O'Haver and Lynn Varon were thanked for their service. Lynn was thanked for her service as Jr. Warden and Bill Philipson was also thanked for his service as Senior Warden. During the meeting Chuck Andrews, Kerry Berquist, Julian Hoyle, and Athol Wong were elected to the Vestry. Fr. Greg named Bill Philipson as Senior Warden. The Vestry met following the Annual Meeting and named Nancy Miller Clerk and Jim Cecil Treasurer, the Jr Warden will be named at the February meeting. The Vestry also elected Marilyn Van Renterghem to fill an unexpired two year term.

The Parish elected Gail and Maurice Hill, and Beverly Pearson to serve as Alternates to Diocesan Convention, Teri Helton, Bob and Gwen Waite will serve as Delegates. The Alternates will become the Delegates at the following year's Convention.

The parish was also informed that we ended 2011 with a slight surplus that was rolled into the 2012 budget. An overview of the budget was presented, and assistance asked for in trying to bring it into balance. Cliff Aggen also reported on the upgrades to our physical plant and the huge success of the Campus Renovation Campaign: Grease trap relocation, Parking lot refurbishing, and the replacement walkway cover for the school.

Maurice Hill made a presentation on the Iona Society and spoke about the benefits of increasing our Endowment Fund would have for the parish.

Reports of our various ministries were received and people thanked for their service to St. Columba's. Fr Larkin recognized Bob Gebhardt for his many years of faithful service as the Parish "Brewista" – making the coffee each Sunday morning. He also recognized Margaret Sommers, naming her an Altar Guild Member Emeritus, after 50 years of service. At the Conclusion of the meeting the new Vestry was commissioned and the meeting adjourned with prayer.

*Bishop Glasspool recently shared in her
that she carries with her all the time, so she
it when I am feeling "off center."*

*Clergy e-mail this poem
can take it out and read*

I belong to God

I belong to God, not to anyone else;
and what I do is not a show,
not imagined, not thought up, but *seen*.
Set free from effort and searching,
I have tied my sleeve to the hem of God -
if I am flying, I see where I fly,
if I am circling, I know the axis on which I turn,
if I am dragging a burden, I know to where.
I am the moon and the sun is before me.
I cannot tell the people more than this
can the river contain the Sea?

THEOLOGY CORNER by Tim Helton

In the current series, we are considering the state that Victor Turner called liminality. It is a state accompanied simultaneously by enormous potential for personal and societal transformation and the uncomfortable feeling of being trapped 'betwixt and between.' Do you have comments? Would you like copies of previous articles? Contact tim@timhelton.com.

I was listening to an *acharya* – a leader of a monastic community. He droned on and on and I wanted to scream at him, “you’re getting it all wrong!” I’d done similar things in the past, or nearly so. I’d argued my point assertively, some would say aggressively, for hours on end. Such arguing has never been productive, so I sat quietly and fumed. The problems I was having were twofold. When the *acharya* told us that, at the core, Christianity and Jainism were the same, he was dead wrong. His understanding of Christianity was shallow to the point of being sophomoric, and, rather than letting the Christians in the audience represent their own faith, he was committing the unforgivable sin of telling us what we believe. The second problem arose from his emphasis on the ‘self.’ Jains believe that if we can channel our true natures (he used the word ‘self’) in meditation, we can save ourselves. In Christianity, selves are radically corrupted and in desperate need of divine aid. In Jainism, selves are pure, infinitely perfect, and since Jains acknowledge no creator, they work out their own salvation. Christians look to Christ for aid in overcoming their ‘self-ish-ness’ while Jains seek to get in touch with their ‘selves’ in order to eliminate the *karmas* that obscure the self’s innate purity. Though significant, the doctrinal difference was, of course, not really what had me fuming. Had the *acharya* admitted that we might understand our own faiths better than he did, I would have been happy to set him straight and we could have listened to each other and learned from each other. Reading the last sentence, you may suspect what I can confirm: the real problem was that the *acharya*’s assumption of unwarranted authority tweaked my ego. I was the authority on Christianity, and I should not have to endure a novice instructing me on something about which I was expert. I ... I ... I! The corrupted nature of my own ‘self’ was fully evident – to me if not to everyone else. Hours later, he ended his talk and we broke for dinner during which I quieted my raging ego and annoyed other retreat participants by showcasing my expertise in table conversations.

After dinner, we regrouped for a *bhajan* session. For Hindus, *bhajan* is the worship of deities through song. For Jains, because they do not worship gods, *bhajan* is the worship of those who have attained liberation. A nun began the session by quietly and hauntingly chanting a song *a cappella*. She sang in Hindi, and so, for me, the song was empty of intellectual content. However, she had a beautiful voice and her face radiated a tranquility at odds with what I had felt earlier. Additionally, although we were indoors, we knew by the changing light that the day was drawing to an end. It was one of those liminal moments between daylight and dark, and like the song, it too was empty. Because it was not midday, it was not the time for work, nor, since it was not night, was it the time for rest. It was a moment of transition, a moment for settling, for reflecting rather than remembering. For anticipating, waiting and watching, not so much for what would come, but for what was there ... in the emptiness.

I was moved. When she finished, the *acharya* asked the students for a song, and a young lady began to sing “Oh sisters, let’s go down, down in the river to pray.” When she concluded the spiritual, the *acharya* asked what the song meant, and she briefly explained. I still wonder whether the student’s short explanation was able to carry the song’s significance across the gulf between our worldviews. At any rate, after the student’s explanation, the nun began another song in Hindi. My ego forgotten, I began to recognize that this was one of those magical moments that you can neither buy nor engineer. When the nun finished, someone began a verse or two of “Amazing Grace” and then there were more songs both by Jains and Western students. I lay on my sleeping pad that night thinking about how much more powerful it is when people meet heart to heart than when they meet head to head. There was still a vast gulf that separated us, but now it was an empty gulf across which hearts watched for a glimpse of other hearts on the distant shore.

The next day was much like the first. Again, I let the *acharya* tweak my ego, but the frustration was less intense, and I found myself anticipating the *bhajan* session and worrying that it might not be part of the day’s program. When dusk arrived, the nun again began with a Hindi chant, and as before, the *acharya* asked us for a song. Earlier, one of our hosts had mentioned that Indian children, remembering the song’s role in the American Civil Rights movement, begin each school day by singing “We Shall Overcome.” Hoping to honor our hosts, some of the students had downloaded a transliterated version, which they

attempted to sing. I imagine that they mangled the pronunciation pretty badly, but our hosts immediately recognized the tune and began to sing along. And that brings me to an important point.

In the liminal space, when our tongues falter, when our minds abandon their analytical capacities, and when our egos forget their pretensions to status, our hearts can hear what is surely one of Spirit's favorite tunes. I say this, because I firmly believe that Spirit loves, one might even say lives, to transgress boundaries, and this song, which we sometimes hear in liminal spaces, is the song of a shared humanity. More, it is the anthem of those who transgress boundaries in order to occupy such empty spaces temporarily, and in so doing, commune for a moment with another whole human being. Victor Turner coined a word for this empty space. He called it 'communitas' and I know of no one who has described communitas as eloquently as he has, and so, I want to end this article with an edited quotation of his words. I have edited them in hopes of eliminating some of the more technical aspects of his thought, but I hope that in doing so, I have managed to retain at least some of his eloquence.

Referencing Martin Buber, Turner insisted that communitas, perhaps "because it transgresses or dissolves the [social] norms that govern ... relationships" "is almost everywhere held to be sacred, or 'holy.'" It is "the 'emptiness at the center,' which is nevertheless indispensable to the functioning ... of the wheel" and it is "the 'quick' of human interrelatedness" that characterizes "relations between total beings." It is the spiritual/psychological/emotional space without which "no society can function adequately." To this, I would add simply, that no social institution (and certainly no church) functions well without communitas.

I'll have more to say about communitas in future articles, but in the next, we will turn our attention to Turner's fieldwork in order to get a glimpse of liminality and communitas on the ground. Let me end this article, though, with one final remark. One of the things I appreciate most about Saint Columba's is its capacity for communitas. This is because I believe that, in direct contradiction to the stereotype of class-conscious Episcopalians, and with the possible exception of new churches, more often than not our willingness to forget our own statuses brings us closer to the sacred land of communitas than most churches come most of the time.

FEBRUARY 21

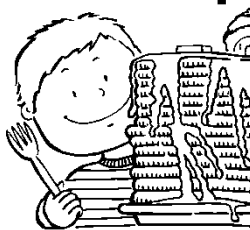
5:00—7:00 pm

**PANCAKE
SUPPER**

Tickets available now:

Adults: \$5

Children under 8—\$3



SHROVE TUE

Pancake Supper

Shrove Tuesday is almost upon us! It's a day of penitence, a day to clean the soul, and a day of celebration as the last chance to feast before Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday gets its name from the ritual of *shriving* that Christians used to undergo in the past. In shriving, a person confesses their sins and receives absolution. When a person receives absolution for their sins, they are forgiven and released from the guilt and pain that they have caused. In the Protestant or Orthodox context, the absolution is pronounced by a priest. This tradition is backed up with written evidence over 1000 years old.

Lent is a time of abstinence, of giving things up. So Shrove Tuesday is the last chance to indulge yourself, and to use up the foods that aren't allowed in Lent. In the old days there were many foods that observant Christians would not eat during Lent: foods such as meat and fish, fats, eggs, and milky foods. So that no food was wasted, families would have a feast on the shriving Tuesday, and eat up all the foods that wouldn't last the forty days of Lent without turning bad. The need to eat up the fats gave rise to the French name *Mardi Gras*; meaning *Fat Tuesday*. Pancakes became associated with Shrove Tuesday, as they were a dish that could use up all the eggs fats and milk in the house, with just the addition of flour.

So, in keeping with tradition, we invite you to the St. Columba's Parish Hall to indulge in pancakes and sausage on Shrove Tuesday, February 21, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Tickets will be available in advance – you may purchase them on Sunday's after each service – or, at the supper. To help out on the night of the supper, **please sign up** on the sheets provided in the Narthex – we do need *your* help! See you there!

ASH
WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 22

7:00 am St. Columba's Chapel
12 Noon St. Columba's Chapel
7:30 pm Joint service with Mt. Cross:
Hosted by Mt. Cross

Iona Worship – Friday, February 10

Our next service to be held on Friday, February 10 at 7:00 in the Chapel. The format of this service follows a Celtic Liturgy from the Iona Worship Book and features prayer, scripture, quiet music, and repetitive chants. As these simple chants are sung repetitiously, they become prayers of the heart. There are also be brief periods of silence that we might listen more closely for God.

2012 Wine



Attention Wine Fans!

Mark your calendars now for the Annual Wine Fest, coming your way on **Saturday, April 14.**

Walk the Labyrinth for Lent

Our Labyrinth was first created for the Season of Lent as a way to assist people in their preparation for Easter. So many people found this helpful, that it was decided to keep it and continue to use it year round. Thanks to the work of Ted Daniel, Cliff Aggen and others, the Labyrinth continues to be available for those who would like to use it. If you have not experienced the Labyrinth, take some time this Lent and give it a try.

The labyrinth is an ancient form of walking prayer; it takes an average of about twenty minutes, although individuals set their own pace and may take a longer or shorter time to complete the path. One walks the winding path of the Labyrinth to its center and then back out again. Unlike a maze, the Labyrinth does not contain false starts and stops: there are no choices to make along the pathway. Although the pathway may be intricate, one cannot get lost on the twists and turns: there is only one entrance. The pathway leads to the center, where one may stop to rest and reflect, then retrace the pathway back out to where one began.



One Great Hour
of Sharing



The
Church
Office



Will Be
Closed:

Sharing Our Stories will take place on **Wednesday, February 8 at 12N.** As always a delicious repast is provided by Madame Gillespie for a low, low price. Come and share your story.

February 20



Join us for lunch on **Wednesday, February 29th** at 12N. Sign up in the Narthex and come to enjoy the company of your fellow parishioners.

We are on the web!
www.stcolumbaca.com

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