

From the Rector

Warning, I am going to use the “S” word. We don’t like to talk much about sin. Perhaps, we think it comes off as judgmental. And we certainly have lots of examples in which Christians treat the subject of sin in self-righteous, exclusory, hypocritical, shaming ways. And it makes us a bit shy to mention sin. We want to differentiate ourselves from “those other kinds of Christians.” However, this seems to throw the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak. We can condemn such rhetoric, without denying the existence of sin.

Indeed, we don’t need to look far to see the effects of sin in the world. It has deep ramifications which manifest themselves at the individual, societal, and cosmic levels. We know this. We feel this deep in our bones, and it does nobody any good to try to ignore it. Think of the devastating damage that pornography addiction has on individuals, or the destructiveness of systemic racism, or the harm we have inflicted upon our world because of greed and injustice. We know something has gone wrong and whether we would like to hear it or not, we bear some responsibility. This is, moreover, a central theme of the season of Lent to which we are going into this month.

On this subject, there is much insight to be found in the poem *The Divine Comedy*, by Dante Alighieri, the first part of which is preoccupied by the subject of sin, offering profound perception into its reality—what is it?—and its effects on our hearts and intellects. The poem begins with Dante, the narrator, in a state of spiritual Crisis:

Midway this way of life we’re bound upon,
I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
Where the right road was wholly lost and gone.

As a spiritual ministration, Dante is led on a pilgrimage through hell (*The Inferno*), purgatory (*Purgatorio*), and Heaven (*Paradiso*). We will focus on the first of these.

More than any doctrine of Hell, one of the compelling aspects of *The Inferno* is its insights into the fundamental nature of specific sins and sin more generally. Each of the levels is separated and grouped by the specific sins of their inhabitants. It is not so much that they are externally punished as much as it is that they are enabled to perpetually live out their sins in extreme ways and forced to live with the consequences, as their natures become increasingly distorted by their actions.

In the Christian story, God created humanity with certain God-given natures (understood more broadly and diversely than some would identify them). However, the introduction of sin and its continued presence in the world has caused a distortion in the world, including our own natures.

Movement, and a lack thereof, is an important image in *The Inferno*. Surprisingly, as one travels deeper into Hell, it doesn’t get hotter, but colder. The deeper Dante gets, the more frozen things are, stuck, unable to move. Even when there is movement, it is usually a kind of repetitive, unproductive movement, unable to accomplish anything. At the very bottom is Lucifer, who is locked in ice. He sits there flapping his wings to no advantage. It is a useless flapping of his scaly bat wings. Those were the wings which were at one point glorious and majestic in the service of the Lord. But now their flapping causes the wind, which freezes the river in which Lucifer is stuck. Lucifer is caught forever in the clutches of his own nature, now distorted by his fruitless actions.

(Continued on page 4)

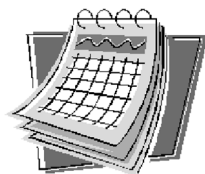
ST. COLUMBA’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Rev. Dr. Michael P. Anderson, Rector

Francina Anderson, Director of Family Ministries

Brett Hanley, Director of Music

Dates to Remember



- ✓ **Scouting for Food**, 7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., *Saturday, March 1*
- ✓ **Vestry Retreat (off-site)**, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., *Saturday, March 1*
- ✓ **Morning Prayer**, 9:00 a.m., *Mondays and Wednesdays (except March 5)*
- ✓ **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper**, 5:00 p.m., *Tuesday, March 4*
- ✓ **Ash Wednesday Three Congregations Worship (here)**, 12:00 Noon and 7:00 p.m., *Wednesday, March 5*
- ✓ **Thursday Eucharist**, 10:00 a.m., *Thursdays, March 6, 13, 20, 27*
- ✓ **Project Hope Food Pantry**, 5:00-6:00 p.m., *Thursday, March 6* / 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:00 p.m., *Thursdays, March 13 and 27*
- ✓ **Daylight Saving Time Begins**, 2:00 a.m., *Sunday, March 9*
- ✓ **Lent IC**, 9:30 a.m. *Worship, Sunday, March 9*
- ✓ **CROP Hunger Walk**, 12:30 p.m. *Registration, Sunday, March 9*
- ✓ **Pub Theology at Institution Ale**, 7:00 p.m., *Tuesday, March 11*
- ✓ **Lent Lectio Divina**, 7:00 p.m., *Wednesday, March 12, 19 and 26*
- ✓ **Three Congregations Taizé at Mount Cross**, 7:00 p.m., *Friday, March 14*
- ✓ **Vestry Meeting**, 11:45 a.m., *Sunday, March 16*
- ✓ **Youth Group Lunch & Bible Study**, 11:30 a.m., *Sunday, March 16 and 30*
- ✓ **Saint Patrick's Day**, *Monday, March 17*
- ✓ **Lenten Labyrinth Walk**, 10:00 a.m., *Saturday, March 22*
- ✓ **Poetry Reading**, 11:30 a.m., *Sunday, March 23*
- ✓ **Lunch Bunch**, 12:00 noon, *Wednesday, March 26*

March Birthdays

Joan Brown	3
Gail DeWolfe	13
Gwen Waite	28
Lea Anderson	31



Spring forward – Daylight Saving Time begins on Sunday, March 9, 2:00 a.m.

CROP Walk Sunday, March 9



Get your walking shoes ready for our 42nd annual Camarillo CROP Hunger Walk. Get donations and join us **Sunday, March 9, 2025**, at Pitts Ranch Park, registration at 12:30 p.m. See Bev Pearson for more details.

Donate or join the team online:
<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/st-columbas-camarillo>



The deadline for articles for the April *Celtic Courier* is March 15.

Rector: Our rector is the Rev. Dr. Michael Anderson. His email address is: michael.anderson@stcolumbaca.com.



“The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it.”
—Henri J.M. Nouwen
(from *Church.Art.com*)

THE CELTIC COURIER
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ST. COLUMBA'S EPISCOPAL
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ISSUE 3

From the Treasurer

You heard about the Budget for 2025 at the Annual Meeting: the bottom line is that our deficit is projected to be about \$19,500, which is much more manageable. And there is a good chance we will end up with enough income to cover that deficit in spite of increased costs. We've given small raises to all of our employees. And we are paying the Diocese the entire 12% Mission Share Fund required. Any deficits that do occur will come from Reserves created by having excess funds at the end of each fiscal year. We currently have over \$100,000 to cover any issues.

You are all amazingly generous. The amount pledged for 2025 is \$243,000. That is an increase of over \$30,000 from 2024's pledged amount! So many people increased their pledges and many of our new parishioners began pledging for the first time. We are truly blessed!

The Buildings & Grounds Committee is still busy. The roofing repair that was supposed to take place after the tenting got moved up due to a leak during the last storms. It should be complete by the time you receive this. The termite tenting was delayed due to the weather, and it has been scheduled for June to meet the Children's Learning Center's needs. The Committee is working on other projects that need to be done. All the funds for these projects are coming from Designated Funds, not the budget that we use to pay salaries and normal operating expenses.

Part of these Designated Funds are grants from the Endowment Fund that can be spent on ministries or Buildings & Grounds projects. We still have about \$40,000 from the 2023/2024 grant of \$59,000 to spend on repairs and improvements! The 2 projects mentioned above will spend about \$32,000 of that grant. And the Endowment can provide another grant of 3-5% per year (equating to \$30,000 - \$50,000) for further work. This is a good start to pay for what needs to be done. We are so blessed to have our Endowment Fund and give thanks for everyone who has donated to it.

We continue to bless each of you as we count your pledge on Sundays or receive it via PayPal. We're doing this together to maintain our church family, grow it to spread God's love and continue the work that God intends for us to do. Our new Vestry is meeting in March to help set direction for the next year.

If anyone would like to join us on the Budget & Finance Committee or see what we're doing in more detail, you are more than welcome. Diane Off just joined our group, and we thank her for her assistance! We can truly use more help, thoughts and ideas. We want to be transparent with expenses and income. If you would like to see the most recent Financial Report, please just ask. We don't take anyone and their contributions for granted. Thank you all!

Gail Hill, Treasurer

On behalf of the Budget & Finance Committee (Bev Pearson, Maria Fernandez, Diane Off, Sarah Monroe-Allen)



LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch Bunch will be **Wednesday, March 26**. Come and enjoy lunch and fellowship, hosted by Michele Hauser, Diane Off, Beanie MacLaurie, and Jarrel Fuller, at **Noon** in the parish hall. **Sign up** on the bulletin board in the narthex.

From the Rector (Continued from page 1)

In the character of Satan and many others of Hell's inhabitants, we see concretely the distorting, malformational, self-sabotaging effects of sin, which, short-term gains aside, is ultimately fruitless, a repetitive, aimless flickering, with no real benefit that truly matters or brings real joy that lasts.

The good news is that the Christian Story does not end at the introduction and continued presence of sin in the world. Through Jesus Christ, we are given new natures. Through the Spirit, these natures are taking root and growing within us. It is a process though. A process which we are all still undergoing. There are still parts of us that are in need of redemption and grace. Lent is a time to look inward and find those streams of thoughts, behaviors, and choices that are still in need of God's work, and bring them before the Lord.

Sometimes that will include others. Sometimes we need help, from a professional, a doctor, a mental health expert, or a friend. It is scary and vulnerable. It feels so much safer to stay in our echo-chamber of one. But when we take that risk with someone safe, the benefit can be enormous, both for ourselves and for those with whom we share.

Faithfully yours,
Fr. Michael

PUB THEOLOGY Beer, Conversation, and God



Fr. Michael Anderson is hosting a **Pub Theology** night at Institution Ale Co. (3841 Mission Oaks Blvd, Camarillo) on **Tuesday, March 11, at 7:00 p.m.**

All are welcome for a pint and discussion.

(Institution is family-friendly and alcohol-free drinks are also available.)



Youth Group News—Calling all Middle School and High School Students!

Sunday, March 16 and 30 are this month's Youth Group meetings. Meet in the parish hall at **11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.** for lunch, games, and Bible Study. Francina Anderson and Eleanor Tyas leading this group and are excited about supporting the young people of the congregation. Email Francina for more info: francina.anderson@stcolumbaca.com.

The youth group is looking for help with the lunch fellowship component. They are in need of a main dish, drinks (preferably non caffeinated), and dessert. If you are able to cook or donate any portion of the meal, they would be so thankful. They would not turn down take-out either! March is covered but please see the sign-up in the narthex for the months of April and May.

Poem of the Month:

Through the Gate, Malcolm Guite

Begin the song exactly where you are,
For where you are contains where you have been
And holds the vision of your final sphere.

And do not fear the memory of sin;
There is a light that heals, and, where it falls,
Transfigures and redeems the darkest stain

Into translucent colour. Loose the veils
And draw the curtains back, unbar the doors,
Of that dread threshold where your spirit fails,

The hopeless gate that holds in all the fears
That haunt your shadowed city, fling it wide
And open to the light that finds, and fares

Through the dark pathways where you run and hide,
Through all the alleys of your riddled heart,
As pierced and open as his wounded side.

Open the map to Him and make a start,
And down the dizzy spirals, through the dark,
His light will go before you. Let him chart

And name and heal. Expose the hidden ache
To him, the stinging fires and smoke that blind
Your judgement, carry you away, the mirk

And muted gloom in which you cannot find
The love that you once thought worth dying for.
Call him to all you cannot call to mind.

He comes to harrow Hell and now to your
Well-guarded fortress let his love descend.
The icy ego at your frozen core

Can hear his call at last. Will you respond?



It is time to look ahead to Spring!
March brings St. Patrick's Day
shenanigans and lots of
Leprechaun fun, as well as spring
renewal. Reading Across America also
takes place this month with lots of
special "visitors", stories and snacks. It
seems that there is never a dull
moment up at the CLC! Our amazing
staff and wonderful families make sure
that every day is special and rewarding
for the children.

Sarah Wigert for the CLC Board

The Lenten Desert

During the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday (March 5 this year), Christians figuratively follow Jesus into the desert. Just as our Savior spent 40 days fasting and facing temptation, we focus on self-reflection and contrition.

In an 1873 hymn, Claudia Hernaman wrote, "O Lord, throughout these forty days, you prayed and kept the fast. Inspire repentance for our sin, and free us from our past."

The desert experience of Lent serves a clear purpose, filling us up rather than depleting us. "This is what Lent is meant to be," writes theologian Ron Rolheiser. "Time in the desert to courageously face the chaos and the demons within us and to let God do battle with them through us. The result is that we are purified, made ready, so the intoxicating joy of Easter might then bind us more closely to God and each other."

(from ChurchArt.com)



Three Congregations Taizé

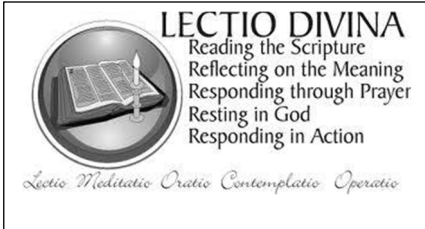
If you're interested in a contemplative, meditative type of worship, the Three Congregations (Camarillo United Methodist, Mount Cross Lutheran, and St. Columba's Episcopal Churches) are offering in-person Taizé-style prayer, held in the intimate setting of the Mount Cross sanctuary (102 Camino Esplendido, 93010) on the 2nd Friday of each month, at 7:00 p.m.—**Friday, March 14**, this month. Taizé is an international, ecumenical community in France, dedicated to peace and reconciliation, whose prayer includes meditative singing, scripture, silence, and spoken prayer.

March 4, 2025, at St. Columba's

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper – 5:00 p.m.

We'll provide the pancakes and sausage. You bring the toppings and sides.

Sign up in the narthex to help with this event.



Lenten Lectio Divina

All are welcome for *Lectio Divina* at **7:00 p.m.** on **Wednesdays in Lent**, March 12 through April 9. *Lectio Divina* is a contemplative practice of scripture reading, reflection, and prayer in the Chapel.

Lenten Labyrinth Walk

Join us for a Lenten Labyrinth Walk on **Saturday, March 22, at 10:00 a.m.**, led by facilitator Linda Drevensted. The labyrinth is a wonderful way to focus spiritually within a walking prayerful meditation. Seated labyrinth “walk” options are also available using finger labyrinths.



Light refreshments and a time for fellowship will be provided after the walk. St. Columba's Labyrinth is located behind the church and preschool playground.



Why Walk?

Walking can help delay various medical conditions as one gets older. Walking also improves your balance and coordination which reduces your risk of falling. Drink water before, during, and after your walk. This maintains your body temperature and cools your working muscles.

Put on your walking shoes, you may want walking poles, and have your phone with you. It is important to warm up before or stretch after your walk.

Walking improves your outlook. You can help others by walking during our CROP Walk fundraiser. John Pearson introduced CROP Walk in Camarillo 40 years ago. Many walkers from St. Columba's have helped raise money for food-challenged folks here in Ventura County. St. Columba's Church receives a portion of the money raised, which greatly helps our food ministry program.

This worthy program starts at 12:30 p.m., March 9, at the Pitts Ranch Park, 1400 Flynn Road, Camarillo. Contact Beverly Pearson for more information. Beverly will be taking reservations and donations before and after our 9:30 Sunday services.






The Parish Nurses

Re: *MayoClinic.org*, “Walk your way to fitness.”



MARCH 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>2 Last Epiphany Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30</p>	<p>3 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH</p>	<p>4 Staff Meeting 10:00 Shrove Tuesday Dinner 5:00 PH</p> 	<p>5 Ash Wednesday Three Congregations Liturgy (here) 12:00N Craft Group 2:00 PH Women's AA 5:45-6:45 PH Three Congregations Liturgy (here) 7:00 Women's AA 7:00 PH</p>	<p>6 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Project Hope: 5:00-6:00 PH Choir 6:00</p> 	<p>7 World Day of Prayer</p>	<p>7 DOK 10:00 (Off.) Scouting for Food 7:00-3:00 parking lot Vestry Retreat (off-site) 9:00-3:00</p>
<p>9 Lent 1C/DST begins/ CROP Walk Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30</p>	<p>10 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH</p>	<p>11 Staff Meeting 10:00 Pub Theology 7:00</p>	<p>12 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Craft Group 2:00 PH School Board 4:00 <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00 Chapel Women's AA 7:00 PH</p>	<p>13 Project Hope: 9:00-10:00, 5:00-6:00 PH Holy Eucharist 10:00 Choir 6:00</p> 	<p>14 Three Congregations Taizé at Mount Cross 7:00</p> 	<p>15 Courier Deadline</p>
<p>16 Lent 2C Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Youth Group 11:30 Vestry 11:45 PH</p>	<p>17 Saint Patrick's Day Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH</p>	<p>18 Staff Meeting 10:00</p>	<p>19 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Craft Group 2:00 PH <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00 Chapel Women's AA 7:00 PH</p>	<p>20 First Day of Spring Holy Eucharist 10:00 Choir 6:00</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22 Lenten Labyrinth Walk 10:00</p> 
<p>23 Lent 3C Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Poetry Reading 11:30 PH</p>	<p>24 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH</p>	<p>25 Staff Meeting 10:00</p>	<p>26 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Lunch Bunch 12:00N PH Craft Group 2:00 PH <i>Lectio Divina</i> 7:00 Chapel Women's AA 7:00 PH</p>	<p>27 Project Hope: 9:00-10:00, 5:00-6:00 PH Holy Eucharist 10:00 Choir 6:00</p> 	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30 Lent 4C Holy Eucharist 9:30 Coffee Hour 10:30 Youth Group 11:30 Boy Scouts 4:00 PH</p>	<p>31 Morning Prayer 9:00 Chapel Boy Scouts 6:00 PH</p>					

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Plan to participate in our **Three Congregations**
Ash Wednesday worship on **March 5**
(Noon and 7:00 p.m. here at St. Columba's)

Lenten *Lectio Divina*, Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

Lenten Labyrinth Walk on Saturday, March 22, 10:00 a.m.