

# Christian Education and Formation

*God is always revealing, showing, enlightening our lives.....*

March, 2011 - Vol 1, Issue 2

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### Youth Leader - Youth Worker Training

March 11-12, 2011

St. Francis Lodge, Atchison, KS

Guest speaker Eric Hamrick will be joining us for a 24 hour, community building opportunity. Eric brings a great deal of knowledge, passion and a variety of experiences to his work, speaking and training, becoming a sought after specialist in the area of Youth & Family Ministry. He has 20 years of experience developing a variety of effective ministry models in congregations and community settings. Eric makes it his goal to provide training and resources that can be used within the individual settings and context of each participant.

Through his interactive use of stories, illustrations and humor, Eric inspires and equips people for ministry, helping them find new and creative ways to reach out and serve the needs of the church and community. For more information or to sign up please contact [Kim Snodgrass](#).

## Quick Links and Lenten Resources.....

[St. John the Divine](#) offers a short, one page description of Lent and suggested practices.

[Spirithome.com](#) - another website with the description of the season and suggestions for observance. Good links at the bottom of the page for further exploration.

[The Presbryterian Church](#) has simple suggestions one can use that can be done any time - any where.

[ChurchYear.net](#) has suggestions for Lenten books to read. Great link at the bottom of the page "A Comprehensive Guide to Lent" with more info and links.

[textweek.com](#) is always a good source of miscellaneous info and suggested links.

## Observation of a Holy Lent.....

*The Celebrant or Minister appointed invites the people to the observance of a holy Lent, saying...*

"... I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word" (**BCP page 265**). Most of us, if we want to make an event special or successful, will take the time to plan and prepare. We spend lots of time and money making the union of two persons in Holy Matrimony an event to remember. We read up on healthy pregnancies and child rearing when we find out we are going to have a child. We review our class notes, do extra reading, and stay up late if necessary cramming for our final exam in an important class we need to graduate.

On Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> we begin the season of Lent with the observance of Ash Wednesday. Our hope is that each of us will take the time during the Epiphany season and explore what we might do during the 40 days of this season of preparation. Some of these "disciplines" are suggested in the invitation from the service for Ash Wednesday above. According to the Webster's Dictionary a discipline is a) training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency b) strict control to enforce obedience. Below are some websites that might be helpful in finding a discipline that fits where we find ourselves spiritually in 2011 and where we want to be as we celebrate the Paschal Feast on Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup> - Easter Sunday.

Some of us find it more rewarding to purge, to get rid of certain "pleasures" during Lent that we might make room for God to speak to us, work in and through us. Others choose to supplement our lives with certain disciplines which can help us grow more and more into the stature of Christ our Lord. Take some time reading, exploring, even experimenting with what might work for you this Lent and use it in observing a holy Lent.

Fr. Frank C. Sierra+  
Rector, St. Philip's, Joplin

## Understanding the symbolism adds to our appreciation!

Saturday, March 5, is an exciting day in the life of our diocese!

Whether you will be personally attending the consecration and installation of Bishop-Elect Marty or not, learning about the symbolism and tradition commonly seen during this occasion can add to our appreciation of the details!

**Bishop's MITRE** - The ceremonial hat worn by the bishop finds its root in ancient Judaism. The high priest wore a headdress called the Nitznefet (often translated into English as mitre) which wound around the head to form a broad, flat-topped turban. The shape of the mitre dates in the western church to roughly the year 1000. Some believe that the shape represents tongues of fire, such as appeared on the heads of the apostles at Pentecost. As bishops stand in the apostolic tradition, this particular symbolic interpretation makes some sense. In addition, some believe the lappets represent the Old and New

[Orthodox priest, Fr. Stephen Freeman's blog](#) has entries for Lent 2010 but great articles from various people and sources. Check it out.

Don't forget the Episcopal Church website, [www.episcopalchurch.org](http://www.episcopalchurch.org).

Check out [Young Adult and Campus Ministries](#) for a daily Lenten devotion you can get online as we get closer to Lent.

[Episcopal Relief and Development](#), has a good Lenten devotional (hard copy) you can order for your congregation (they come in bundles of 25).

[Diocese of West Missouri](#)

[WEMO Youth Link](#)

[National Episcopal Church](#)

[Holy Women, Holy Men blogspot](#)

[Lesson Plans for Small Congregations](#)

[House of Grace](#)

St. Mary Magdalene's  
Episcopal Retreat House and  
Spirituality Institute

Quick Link Back -

This is YOUR open invitation to let us hear from you!

The Christian Education and Formation commission wants to hear YOUR questions, understand YOUR concerns and listen to YOUR solutions.

When we listen and share, everyone benefits....and this

as close to Dear Abby as we can get! Send your thoughts to [Judy Kile](#), CEFC Chairman.

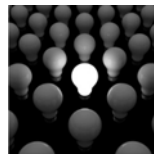
Testaments of Scripture. The Bishop wears the mitre in procession, in pronouncing absolution, and in bestowing the episcopal blessing.

**The CROSIER** - The crosier (sometimes spelled crozier) is the symbol of the governing office of the Bishop. In Western Christianity, the crosier is shaped like a shepherd's crook. A bishop bears this staff as shepherd of the flock of God. The crosier is conferred upon a bishop during ordination to the episcopacy. A bishop usually holds the crosier with his/her left hand, leaving the right hand free to bestow blessings. Traditionally, the bishop holds the crosier with the crook facing toward the people. In the Episcopal Church, bishops carry a crosier in procession, when pronouncing absolution after the General Confession, and when blessing the people at the end of a liturgy. The crosier is also present when bishops confirm or ordain.

**The RING** - One of the symbols of episcopal office is the ring. This apparently is an ancient tradition, dating back at least as far as Augustine of Hippo who speaks of sealing a letter with a ring. Throughout much of the church's history, it was regarded as a symbol of the mystical betrothal of the bishop to his church. In fact, in the Gregorian Sacramentary, the ring would be bestowed with these words, "Receive the ring, that is to say, the seal of faith, whereby thou, being thyself adorned with spotless faith, mayst keep unsullied the troth which thou hast pledged to the spouse of God, His Holy Church." The ring is worn on the ring finger of the right hand, and has been for centuries. It generally bears the seal of the bishop's diocese. When an official document requires the bishop's seal (often ordination certificates), the bishop's signet ring is used. They can be made of any precious metal. Some episcopal rings are set with an amethyst - a purple stone. Purple certainly is the color associated with bishops; but it also contains symbolic lore. Magical properties were traditionally attributed to the amethyst, including preservation from poison.

**The PECTORAL CROSS** - The custom of wearing a cross on the breast (pectoral cross) dates back to ancient times and is observed not only by bishops, but also by priests and lay people. The first mention made of the pectoral cross was when Innocent III made it a part of pontifical ornament, and its use as such only became customary toward the close of the Middle Ages. The widespread use of pectoral crosses was revived in the Anglican Communion and it is now normative for bishops throughout the Anglican Communion to wear a pectoral cross. It is common for bishops to tuck the pectoral cross in the pocket of their clergy shirt, especially if the chain is lengthy.

### Best Practices - good things going on in our diocese!



**There are SO MANY resources out there for us to use** - the commission asked itself how do we know what's appropriate to use and came up with a few basic questions we highlighted below to help determine if information provided by a resource fit with our theology and has something valuable to offer us in our Christian Formation.

For instance, when we "googled" children and Lent a [Kid's Guide to Lent](#) popped up as one of several link choices. It said "However, the ideas are big, and you may want to read with them, or simply use this page as a guide to talk to your child about Lent. ...", which sounded intriguing! The website took us to *A Guide to Lent and Easter for Young People* where we found a simple, one page guide that asked, and answered, basic questions like "What is Lent about?", "Why did Jesus have to die?", "What is Lent good for?", etc. **As we read through the site we ask ourselves, does this fit with my (or our) basic theology?** We decided it did fit in with our basic sense of who we are as Episcopalians, and in terms of how we live this out within our

different parishes. Definitely useable!

We also looked at what else the website had to offer and clicked on the Lenten Calendar which linked us to devotions with meditations and preparations for Easter. This page listed readings and practices that are appropriate for each week or for special days within Lent. **We are a scriptural church, so we wondered; does this site use scripture with integrity (without an agenda)?** Fr. Frank pointed out that scripture cited included an entire passage, not simply pulling out one verse, which in turn can give readers a fuller understanding of the context in which it was written. Another plus!

**And finally we asked how will this resource work with the children/youth I am responsible for?** We decided this particular resource would be very good for upper elementary school age children, and with minor adaptation, could also be useful for younger children as well as older youth. Along with perhaps a craft or activity for younger, or discussion questions for older, this could be a very handy tool!

In short, it's can take time to whittle your way through many links of resource material, so our hope is that being prepared with a few, basic questions will help you determine what will work best for you and yours!

What's been happening in your parish that has made a positive impact? Send in your Best Practices, along with any pictures, to [Judy Kile](#), CEFC Chairman.

## Book Club -



This section will contain titles and a little bit about the book to peak your interest. We hope that eventually this can develop into an online discussion forum, but for now, the purpose will be to simply suggest a book recently read by either members of the commission and/or something that one of our readers suggests.

**A Season for the Spirit: Readings for the Days of Lent** by Martin L. Smith 183pp

The deeply personal nature of these daily reflections and suggestions for the season of Lent lend themselves to study by either individuals or within trusting groups. The topics, scriptural passages and prayers are designed to bring the participant into more intimate self-understanding and, so, deeper into prayer and relationship with God.

**Choosing Joy for Lent** by Marilyn Norquist Gustin. 77pp

The stated purpose of this gentle book is to "[P]repare ourselves to experience joy..." Brief introductory explanations for each chapter lead into scriptural references, exercises and practices on topics such as Surrender, Contentment, Contemplation and Discipline. This book might be used by individuals or by groups, either in preparation for choosing Lenten practices, or to work through during Lent.