

The Pebble

March 27, 2025

St Peter's By-the-Sea, Morro Bay

Last
A beautiful



Sunday
day in Paradise!

PEBBLE EXTRA following this edition you will find Lenny Erickson's Homily Why the Emphasis on Sin? Given at John XXIII Group on March 23rd.

From the Sr. Warden's corner:

Great news - our hard working Search/Transitions Committee has produced a beautifully written Parish Profile. Copies will be sent to the Vestry for review. Next Step: Vestry approved copy will be sent to Bishop Lucinda for her approval.

More great news: Dee Tullmann has been collecting volunteers to help Parish members who are homebound feel that they are still very connected with their St Peter's Family through visits, phone calls or notes. Please let her know if you would like to participate in this important ministry.

Plans are afoot for the events of Holy Week. One such opportunity is:



Maundy Thursday Night Vigil:

Christ's question to his disciples at Gethsemane "Could you not watch with me for an hour?" (Mt 26:40)

Come wait with Jesus: Come alone or with a friend/spouse to spend a quiet hour between dusk and dawn in our Sanctuary. You are safe inside the locked church and will hear the phone in the office ring when your replacement has arrived. Look for the sign up list in the Narthex.

People of St. Peter's



Pat Garman

Interview provided by Eldra Avery

We all know Pat Garman as our St. Peter's friend who celebrates birthdays more than anyone else. That's because she's blessed to have 4 children, 11 grandchildren, 22 great-grands, and 2 great-great grands.

Pat just turned 99 on March 17, 2025, and as she was telling me about her childhood, I wasn't surprised to hear her say, "I had a new best friend in every new school." When she was growing up, her dad worked on the Aqueduct and her family moved around for his work. She went to several schools and her friendliness helped her get acquainted. She was a yell leader at Bonita High School where she met her husband, Ward. He was on the head yell leader team with her.

After graduating high school in 1944, she went to Chaffey Jr. College and studied pre-nursing. She headed to Good Samaritan Hospital to become an RN, but her husband proposed and that ended her formal nursing training, although she worked for Dr. Greenberg in Pomona, California and said, "I learned *everything* at that job."

Pat moved to Morro Bay just after her husband died. He was only 70 when he died, and her kids had come to Morro Bay for the surf and for school. She came up to be near her kids and found a place at Morro Shores in Los Osos.

She had attended St. Paul's in Pomona "and my kids went all their lives there." She helped out as a teacher's aide, and at the Y. "At St. Paul's there was a group of us who got together and did crafts. We made hats, because *then* we wore hats to church. I can remember we were making hats when Kennedy was assassinated."

"After moving from Southern California, I came to St. Peter's because it's so beautiful. I just loved it." Pat said, "There are a lot of very nice people at our church. I joined the Altar Guild. I loved doing that."

Pat moved to Casa de Flores last April and said, "I've made so many friends." Her positive attitude rubs off on others. She remembered, "we weren't rich, we were just average people, and we had so much fun when we got married, we had four kids, and we just had a good time. We were happy."

Pat's tips for her happy life: "a glass of wine with dinner, a scoop of ice cream, and a little bridge and a little exercise."

This Sunday at St. Peter's – The Fourth Sunday in Lent

Readings:

Old Testament: Joshua 5: 9-12
New Testament: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21
Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Celebrant: The Reverend Caroline Hall

Music: Jan Swanson

Eucharistic Minister: Lynn Enns

Lector: Nancy Castle

Altar Guild: Troy Mellon and Dee Tullman

Usher: Bill Bowes

Coffee Hour: Jeanette and Gary Sutherlin

This Coming Week at St. Peter's:

Sunday March 30: 2:00 p.m. Voices of Spring Recital

presented by the voice Studio of Mary Sue Gee

and reception following

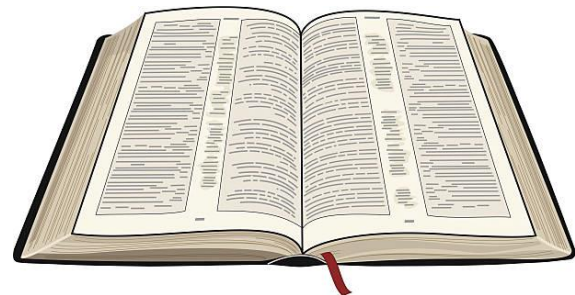
Tuesday April 1: 2:30 – 4:00 p.m A cup of tea, good company and an hour and a half to shut off the everyday world and indulge in the fascinating sport of KNITTING! Come join us!

Wednesday April 2: 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. Bible 101

Third in series of five sessions

Led by Lenny Erickson our Lenten study covers the structure of the Bible, its authorship, history, when written and when compiled, other literature not included, and the history of translations.

Less emphasis on lecture, more on discussion and questions. Bring your "brown bag" lunch and we'll supply the coffee and tea



Thursday April 3: Java Chat at Scout Coffee

Warm your hands around a nice cuppa and warm your mind with stimulating conversation! In the words of an old commercial: “Try it, You’ll like it!” (can you guess what was advertised? Hint: not coffee)

Sneak Preview:

Mark your calendars: Holy Week Schedule

Sunday April 13 10:00 - Palm Sunday – Bishop Lucinda celebrating and reception following

Thursday April 17 – 6:00 p.m. - We are invited to join our neighbors at St Benedict’s in Los Osos for Agape and at **7:00 p.m. Maundy Thursday** Eucharist and Foot Washing Ceremony

Thursday April 17 - 8:00p.m. through Friday 6:00 a.m. Vigil

Friday April 18 – 12:00 Noon – Good Friday – Holy Eucharist and Stations of the Cross

Sunday April 19 – Festival Eucharist and Flowering of the Cross

News in the Wider Community:

The Episcopal News Service: <https://episcopalnewsservice.org/>

Community of Divine Love, our local Episcopal monastery:

<https://mailchi.mp/e7248f3e49d3/this-week-at-the-monastery-13871226?e=31084f90f3>

Religion News Service: <https://mailchi.mp/7926ba50ca7c/9o357yk2eq-572232-awq5tk873k-15041051?e=fbcc7f213f>

SPRING FORWARD

Spring sets up her canvas
In the sun,
Tints her brush
Then paints a budding world!
Blends the greenest greens
Of anyone, of any painter,
Cloud of pearl
Winter is gone.
No sign of him is seen,
Forgotten now, as if a dream.
And Spring, oblivious,
To all that went before,
Colors earth in dripping rapture
Pod and spore.

Suesan Jason

WHY THE EMPHASIS ON SIN? By Lenny Erickson

Here we are in the middle of Lent, and we're doing silly things like giving up chocolate or limiting our intake of diet coke that we're addicted to. How did we get here from Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness? Let's go back to that story and unpack it somewhat.

The story is in both Matthew and Luke, in places almost word for word. In the story after Jesus had fasted for 40 days (and was, of course, then hungry) the Devil comes to him with a temptation to turn these rocks into bread, since he claims to be the Son of God. Though hungry, Jesus rejects the temptation by saying "Man does not live by bread alone." Failing in that attempt, the Devil takes him to Jerusalem and says, throw yourself from the pinnacle of the Temple, for God has promised to save you from all danger. The Devil quotes the Bible saying, "He will command his angels...(to) bear you up..." But Jesus refuses, trading Biblical quotes with him: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." (We must note that there was no Bible as such in Jesus time, but there were familiar Biblical texts that the narrator could give as lines to the Devil and to Jesus.) Nothing daunted, the Devil tries a 3rd temptation; he takes Jesus to a high mountain from which the whole land lies within his view. He offers the land and the domination of it to Jesus if Jesus will bow down to him and worship him. Jesus' response? "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

This is a powerful story. In the 1st temptation it's about the priority of the spiritual over the material--"One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." In the 2nd temptation it's about not buying one's fidelity by charming us with miracles, but by asking us to be faithful in heart and mind and will. In the 3rd temptation it's about the ultimate choice in Judaism and in Christianity—"Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One." It's about our relationship to the only God.

How did we trivialize a discipline for Lent to giving up a piece of chocolate cake for dessert, but taking a piece of white cake? I think it came about because we have lost the real meaning of seeing ourselves as sinners. The move to modernity, historically, and in terms of psychology, has been a move to the prominence of the individual. As this happened, it became important for us to learn to value ourselves as well as to value others. We need to be proud of who we are and to support others to esteem themselves. This has made us feel we must be assertive about our worth, our actions, our doings. I am basically a good person, not a sinner. I don't claim perfection, but my actions are not, on the whole, bad. I don't murder or steal; I care for others; I pay my taxes; I don't cut into line at the grocery store; I get along with my neighbors; I settle arguments sensibly. Why should I call myself a sinner? All this may be true, but we've lost the Biblical perspective on what it means to be human. I wouldn't overturn modern psychology and ask that we consider ourselves wholly depraved. Our sense of self is

realistic and freeing and a sign of maturity. But so is a sense of that we, as humans, are not perfect but have a calling to become more so. We need to look at ourselves and the notion of sin more subtly, We get along well in our families and communities; but in saying so we forget the petty hurts we have committed and let stand; we forget the societal injustices of which we are an active part. Have we done enough to change society? No, we cannot do everything; but have we done anything? Can we say we have always gone the extra mile? That there is no ethical problem left unaddressed?

Thinking this way can be overwhelming, and that's why it's easier to focus on chocolate. (Actually, to not sin, I should confess a special relationship to chocolate. I hate it. So it's no problem for me to give it up for Lent. I do it every year!) But try thinking about our own sinfulness being not gross and violent, but about the subtler sins of omission and commission that we daily engage in and that we daily need forgiveness for.

Psalms 51, always read at Ash Wednesday, seems to go overboard: "Behold I have been wicked from my birth, a sinner from my mother's womb." We could have two reactions to this. We could say with most of the world, "I'm offended by this. Babies don't sin. Sin has to be intentional, willed." We feel this strongly, and I think it's right to keep this in mind and uphold this in many contexts. But stop for a moment and try to look at sin in also another, more Biblical, way. Because we are selves, made individual and unique, in order to survive we need to be self-ish. This is what is meant by "original sin." "Original" because it is the human condition, it's what humans are born into; it's innate. It isn't sin in the sense of a willful disobedience. The baby needs to cry in hunger in the middle of the night without regard for her mother's sleep. The toddler can't help grabbing a cute teddy bear from a pre-school friend, just because he wants it. Slowly, slowly, with maturity and good parenting, we are, hopefully, socialized out of these behaviors. Hopefully there is a move from self-centeredness, a survival tactic, to God-centeredness, a desired condition of wholeness. What self-ishness do we continue into adulthood? "I am a sinner from my mother's womb" shocks us into looking with more sensitive scrutiny into our daily lives into what more we could have done or not done. I had a dear friend and long-time fellow parishioner of St. Peter's Episcopal Church who was dying. I sat with her until the wee hours of the morning and then called her daughter and husband, who sat with her until dawn, when she died. The daughter said that when she told her mother she could let go, the mother responded, "But have I done all the good I can do?" It's a phrase attributed to John Wesley, and has come to be well-used. She and Wesley were aware that there is always more to be done to become closer to the wholeness God has in mind for us.

And when we are shocked by the language of "a sinner from my mother's womb," hopefully it knocks us out of a comfortable complacency. All of us here are "good people." Have we not the right to be complacent? No! This is where Jesus' passion stands over against us. This is how Jesus is God. Jesus never gave up his search for

wholeness—which is what the word “perfection” means. “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Biblical language is set in another cultural context; it can be shocking; we don't use it much because people don't understand it well. Be patient for it in Lent; if we invest in its meanings, it will help us dig deeper into our own psyches, dig deeper in our daily search for a whole self, a wholesome self.