

### ***On the mind of the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser...***

“Lenten lingerie.” That’s what Deacon Denise called the purple veil covering the cross on the high altar. It was her first Ash Wednesday at Incarnation – the day when we cover all the crosses with purple veils for the season of Lent. Normally these veils are opaque, or close to it. The veils obscure from our vision the beautiful and holy images that inform our worship life, and in so doing, remind us that our sinful nature has obscured our vision of God’s truth.

Except at Incarnation, that is, where our veils are as sheer as you can get. Lenten lingerie is an apt description. Not to mention a hilarious one. Thank you, Deacon Denise!

The fact that our Lenten lingerie is coming out on Valentine’s Day this year seems rather fitting. But seriously, jokes about intimate apparel aside, there’s something pretty special about the overlap of Ash Wednesday and Valentine’s Day.

When these two days overlapped in 2018 – remember that? – a parishioner brought her two-year-old son to the evening service, which includes the imposition of ashes as well as Holy Communion. He had been baptized as an infant, but she didn’t want him to receive Communion until he was old enough to understand it.

This is a practice common in the Catholic Church. You make your first Communion in the second grade, or at 7 years old, which is considered the age of reason. In the Episcopal Church, you can have Communion as soon as you’re baptized.

So, it’s Ash Wednesday 2018, and this parishioner is at the Communion rail with her son. Normally I would give him a blessing, but this time she says, “Hit him.” As in, “Hit him with a Communion wafer.”

I was surprised and delighted by this development. This cause for rejoicing. “Is she just caught up in the moment?” I thought. I knew Ash Wednesday was her favorite holiday. And since it was Valentine’s Day that year, maybe she was really feeling the love.

In fact, I think that’s precisely it. She WAS feeling the love – God’s love – and she wanted her son to receive the fullness of that love made manifest in the Eucharist. Her heart was exploding with love.

On one hand, this might seem a little odd because Ash Wednesday is about humility and penitence. The liturgy describes the whole lot of us as “wretched.” Yet, it’s only by embracing our finitude that we can take in God’s mercy and grace. For our sinfulness, our brokenness, and our mortality will always be met with the love of God. We need not ever think of our sin apart from God’s love and forgiveness. That is the essence of the Good News.

I hope you can join us in worship on Ash Wednesday. Or maybe you’ll get ashes at another church. Wherever you find yourself, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” (Book of Common Prayer, p. 265). And when you receive an ashen cross in that moment of tender and solemn ritual, know that you are also receiving God’s love, just as you do at the Communion rail.

God, hit us with your love. On Ash Wednesday, and always. Amen.

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### **TODAY AFTER CHURCH**

Visitors are invited to pick up a welcome bag at the back of the church following the service. All are welcome to Coffee Hour in the Parish House.

### **THE HEART OF CHRISTIANITY: ON FALLING IN LOVE WITH GOD**

**Wednesdays, January 24 through March 13, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.** What is the “heart” of Christianity? In this new series, we will explore the essential beliefs of the Christian faith, focusing on the one truth that unites all others: *God is love*. Over the course of eight weeks, we will think about how the picture of God as love grounds our understanding of the Trinity, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and various aspects of our life together as Christians. Classes will be held on eight consecutive Wednesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the Parish House. Participants also have the option to join by Zoom.

This series also serves as preparation for the Sacramental Rite of Confirmation. **Confirmation Sunday will be March 17, when we welcome the Rt. Rev. Matthew Heyd as our confirming Bishop.** Email the Rev. Dr. Nate Lee at [nlee@churchoftheincarnation.org](mailto:nlee@churchoftheincarnation.org) to learn more and register for remaining classes.

### SHROVE TUESDAY MARDI GRAS PARTY!

**Tuesday, February 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** We prepare for the quiet season of Lent by getting all our partying out on Shrove Tuesday (Mardi Gras)! This year we're trying something new to celebrate Shrove Tuesday. Instead of a Pancake Supper, we'll be having a Cajun Feast.

Come to the Assembly Hall (enter through the Parish House) anytime between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m. Feel free to bring friends and neighbors! Suggested contribution of \$20 for adults and \$10 for children. Payment can be made at the door by cash, check, or credit card. Look for the sign-up sheet at Coffee Hour so we can get an accurate headcount.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

**Wednesday, February 14, 8:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 6:15 p.m.** Begin your observance of a Holy Lent with the Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. The 12:15 p.m. Ash Wednesday service includes organ music and soloists from the Incarnation Choir and will be livestreamed.

### BINGO AT MORAVIAN OPEN DOOR

**Saturday, February 17, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** Parishioners are invited to Moravian Open Door (347 E. 18th St.) for a Valentine's bingo party with the residents. We are seeking donations of \$10 gift cards (CVS, Starbucks, Chipotle, Subway, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods) to serve as bingo prizes. Speak with Lenore Ritter to learn more, RSVP, and/or make a donation for this event.

### ECCLESIA MINISTRIES

**Sunday, February 18, 12:30 to 1:15 p.m.** Come to the Parish House Dining Room to help make sandwiches and pack lunches for Ecclesia Ministries of New York, which serves those who are food and housing insecure. The Rev. Deacon Denise LaVetty serves an Ecclesia congregation that currently worships at Church of the Transfiguration (29th Street, between 5th and Madison) every Sunday from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. Parishioners are also invited to attend this 2:00 p.m. service of Holy Eucharist and then distribute the lunches.

### MERTON AND ME: A LIVING TRINITY

**Thursday, February 22, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.** The one-act play *Merton and Me - A Living Trinity* is a spiritual journey which explores the complexities of faith, and the universal search for meaning and identity in an increasingly chaotic and divided world. The audience is challenged to reflect on two of the most humbling and elusive of all questions: "Who am I?" and "What am I supposed to do with my life?" These questions are asked in conversation with Thomas Merton who appears throughout the show to help us peer deeply into our soul.

The performance portion of the event will run from approximately 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and will move seamlessly into conversation with playwright and performer Doug Hertler. Suggested contribution of \$10.

### FAMILY FRIDAY – PAINTING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS

**Friday, February 23, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.** The Stations of the Cross, also known as the "Way of the Cross," depict 14 scenes from the last events of Christ's life. Children and parents are invited to the Assembly Hall "turned art studio" to create a new set of Stations to display in the church. A pizza dinner will be provided.

If your family cannot come on February 23, we are happy to provide art supplies for your child(ren) to create a Station in advance. Email the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser ([adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org](mailto:adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org)) to RSVP.