

On the mind of Vestry Member Lenore Ritter...

Early last month, Adrian gave a wonderful sermon that was a nod to both history and fine art. In Roman times a door for a home was opened from the inside so that the owner could decide who to admit and who to turn away. Security devices were in their infancy, and many “locks” were simply a bar across the door. For the well to do, a porter (or slave sitting vigil) was assigned the tiresome duty of deflecting unwanted visitors. There is a famous painting of Jesus in the dark of night with light in hand knocking at a door patiently waiting for admittance. It’s apparent that that door has not been opened often or even recently. Jesus shows no sign of being impatient. He is there and always will be. He will not turn and go, and his light will not falter.

The opportunity is offered, but we must choose to accept it. Redemption, forgiveness, a clean slate is always waiting to have the door opened and yet we, at best, hesitate and, at worst, turn away. Is it because we fear our Lord and Savior? Fear that we are still not quite good enough to be in his presence? Are we still found wanting, still walking around as in ancient times declaring “unclean, unclean”?

When I was much younger, I read, as did many of my fellow students, Hermann Hesse’s novel *Steppenwolf*. It’s about a man who wants to become and be perceived as a righteous man but is constantly at odds with the wolf in his nature. I couldn’t help but identify. Every time I think I’ve evolved, something or someone pushes my buttons and it’s back to start, do not pass go, do not collect pay. I’ve become “unclean”. These are the times, and there are plenty, when I need to go to that door and open it.

It is time to accept that no one is beyond redemption and forgiveness and that while we do our best to make a place for Christ in our hearts, we must accept that we, already, have a place in his.

Lenore

TODAY AFTER CHURCH

12:30 to 1:15 p.m. Last Sunday’s Annual Meeting included a presentation on Incarnation’s Mission and Outreach efforts. The conversation continues with a discussion about expanding these efforts to further meet the needs of vulnerable New Yorkers. Come to the Parish Dining Room to share your ideas and interests around advancing God’s kingdom through service to those in need. Led by Vestry members Eleanor Flach and Lenore Ritter.

SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY

Sunday, February 1, 10:00 to 10:40 a.m. The Rev. Adrian Dannhauser offers the first in a three-part Bible Study series on “Forgiveness, Accountability and Reconciliation.” We will explore the relationship between justice and mercy, forgiving others as well as ourselves, and the components of heartfelt contrition.

HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE LUNCHEON

Sunday, February 1, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. The Rev. Adrian Dannhauser will host a luncheon for members of the Hospitality Committee, who ensure that Coffee Hour is a source of invitation and fellowship for our parish each Sunday. Prospective members are also welcome! Email Adrian at adannhauser@churchoftheincarnation.org if you are interested in joining Incarnation’s ministry of hospitality.

CONFIRMATION AND INQUIRERS’ CLASS

Starting Thursday, February 5, 7:15 to 8:15 p.m. Our annual Confirmation/Inquirers’ Class is coming up! Join us for all five sessions or drop in for a class based on a topic of interest:

- February 5: The Sacraments and Sacramental Rites

- February 12: The Book of Common Prayer
- February 19: The History and Identity of the Episcopal Church
- February 26: An Introduction to the Bible
- March 5: Christian Belief and Practice

Led by the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser, this course is for all interested in the Episcopal Church's understanding of the Christian faith. It is the normal preparation for receiving the Sacramental Rite of Confirmation. It also serves as a refresher for those who are already members of the Episcopal Church and a place for everyone to explore questions about faith and life.

Classes will be held from 7:15 to 8:15 p.m. each Thursday in the Parish Dining room and on Zoom. The final class will be followed by a brief reception. Confirmation Sunday is March 8, when we will be joined in worship by the Rt. Rev. Allen K. Shin, Suffragan Bishop of New York.

COCOA TASTING AT MORAVIAN OPEN DOOR

Saturday, February 7, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Our friends and residents at Moravian Open Door (MOD), a transitional housing facility for homeless adults, invite us to join them for a night of fun and laughter. We'll start with a tasting of various flavors of hot cocoa and end with a disco party! Please be prepared to wear black slacks and a white shirt to support the tasting part of the evening. It's all part of the silliness of a "cocoa tasting" with baristas!

MOD is located at 347 E. 18th Street. Speak to Vestry member Lenore Ritter or the Rev. Adrian Dannhauser to RSVP.

DISCERNING GOD'S CALL

Sunday, February 8, 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. By the virtue of baptism, we are all called to serve, and each person has a unique calling. Join Seminarian Romy John Abraham for a forum on discerning God's call in our lives. Romy will share from his own experience of listening for God and reflect on his personal call to ministry.

Whether ordained or lay, all are ministers, and God has a purpose for each of us. "We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." (Romans 12:6)

SANDWICH SUNDAY

Sunday, February 15, 12:30 to 1:15 p.m. Come to the Parish Dining Room to make sandwiches for delivery to a nearby homeless drop-in center.

JOIN A SMALL GROUP THIS LENT!

We're reading *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster as a parish this Lent. Sign up for a small group book study and join in the joy of shared reading! The study runs from **Sunday, February 22, through Thursday, April 9**, and there are three groups to choose from:

- Sundays, 12:30-1:45 p.m., in the Parish House | Facilitators: Anne Tong & Sondra Carter
- Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m., on Zoom | Facilitator: Susan Ridgeway
- Thursdays, 7:15-8:30 p.m., in the Parish House | Facilitators: Harris Healy & Romy John Abraham

Email parishioner Anne Tong at aytonglius@gmail.com to sign up. Or use the sign-up sheets found on the refreshment tables at Coffee Hour. Please sign up by the **deadline of February 12**. Books are available for purchase at Coffee Hour.

Celebration of Discipline demonstrates how spiritual disciplines can become part of our daily activities, help us shed our superficial habits, and "bring the abundance of God into our lives." It is guaranteed to take you on a journey of prayer and spiritual growth. Grab a flyer from the narthex to learn more.