

The NewSpirit

Being a Light to the World: Worship • Youth • Discipleship
St. Thomas Episcopal Church Battle Creek, Michigan
March 2019

Blockbuster Faith

Join us for engaging films and discussion

by Father Brian Coleman

This year, our Lent program will be a film series offered on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. in the parish hall. The films will be accompanied by popcorn, snacks and drinks. After each film will be a short discussion exploring the topics addressed and how they relate to our faith. Here's a list of the films and a brief synopsis of each:

Mass Appeal March 10th

This film stars Jack Lemmon as a popular Los Angeles parish priest. Enter young seminarian Zeljko Ivanek, whose rebellious reputation threatens to earn him an expulsion. Lemmon is expected to bring Ivanek around to the Church's "party line," but the younger man resists the older man's advice.



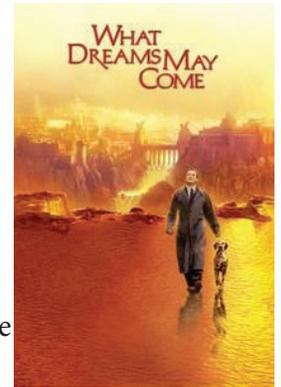
Of Gods and Men March 17th

Eight French Christian monks live in harmony with their Muslim brothers in a monastery perched in the mountains of North Africa in the 1990s. When a crew of foreign workers is massacred by an Islamic fundamentalist group, fear sweeps through the region. The army offers them protection, but the monks refuse. Should they leave? Despite the growing menace in their midst, they slowly realize that they have no choice but to stay... come what may. This film is loosely based on the life of the Cistercian monks of Tibhirine in Algeria, from 1993 until their kidnapping in 1996.



What Dreams May Come March 24th

Despite everything we have experienced and all we have seen, nothing can prepare us for the wonders of what lies beyond. Academy Award Winner Robin Williams is about to take you on an amazing journey...through heaven and hell. To rediscover the meaning of life...and the wonders of love.



The Mission March 31st

In director Roland Joffe's historical epic *The Mission*, Jeremy Irons stars as Gabriel, an 18th-century Jesuit priest sent to the jungles of Brazil to build a Guarani Indian mission. Upon his arrival, Gabriel meets the slave



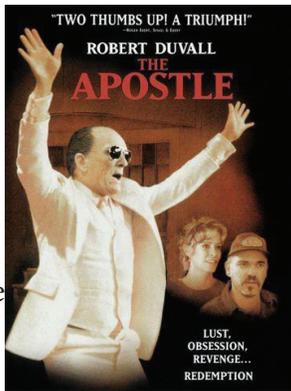
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trader Mendoza (Robert De Niro), a cruel, bloodless man who kills as many of the Guaranis as he enslaves. His brother Felipe (Aidan Quinn) is another of his victims, killed in a duel over a woman. Because of Mendoza's aristocratic background, he cannot be tried for his crimes; however, the weight of his conscience inspires him to ask Gabriel for the opportunity to do penance at the mission. When Spain sells Brazil to Portugal, the two very different men must join together to defend the mission against aggressors.

The Apostle

April 7th

Robert Duvall gives a tour de force performance as a zealous Pentecostal preacher

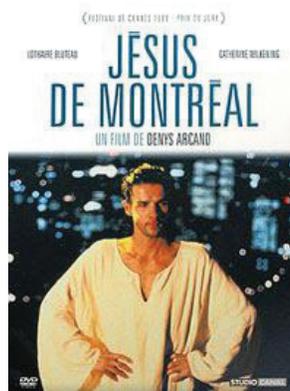


hiding from his past while resurrecting the spirit of his adopted Louisiana bayou town. It's an all-Duvall show; he wrote it, directed it, produced it and even paid for it.

Jesus of Montreal

April 14th

A modern-day Passion Play becomes a reenactment of the life and death of Jesus Christ in more ways than one with this critically acclaimed drama from Quebec filmmaker Denys Arcand. Lothaire Bluteau stars as Daniel Coloumbe, an intense young actor in Montreal who is hired by church fathers to restage and update the city's annual



Passion Play, which over the course of the past 40 years has begun to seem hidebound. Daniel hires a group of struggling young actors that become devoted to him and his creative vision as he devises an extremely avant-garde production that takes Christ's rebellious teachings literally. Revolving around set pieces reflecting passages from Christ's life rather than a traditional re-creation of events, Daniel's revisionist work also incorporates blasphemous ideas about his subject, questioning his true nature. Daniel's play is a critical smash and wows mesmerized audiences, but greatly disturbed church officials order the labor of love dismantled. Real life begins imitating biblical events as the actors become cast-outs.

Come and join us for these engaging films and the lively discussion that will ensue.

Fifth Sundays – 2019

Our theme this year for the 5th Sundays alternative worship will be "St. Thomas: Behind the Scenes."

So much happens each week in order for us to have the kind of enriching and fulfilling worship experience that we do. From preparing the sanctuary to rehearsing the choirs, to practicing the readings and prayers. In this series those who work behind the scenes will attempt to draw back the curtain and reveal to you the practices and procedures that undergird our weekly round of worship.

Worship on the 5th Sundays occurs when there are five Sundays in a month and offers an alternative worship experience to the parish. It's kind of like having adult Sunday school lessons during church, only a lot more fun.

Fifth Sundays Behind the Scenes

March 31st

Altar Chapter: Handling Holy Things

June 30th

Acolytes/Vergers/Subdeacons:
Serving at the Altar

September 29th

Lectors/Intercessors/Preaching Circle:
Preparing to Proclaim

December 29th

Ushers/Greeters:
Welcome, Safety and Security

Try Tithing for Lent

from the Stewardship and Fundraising Commission

Not many Episcopalians tithe their income these days.

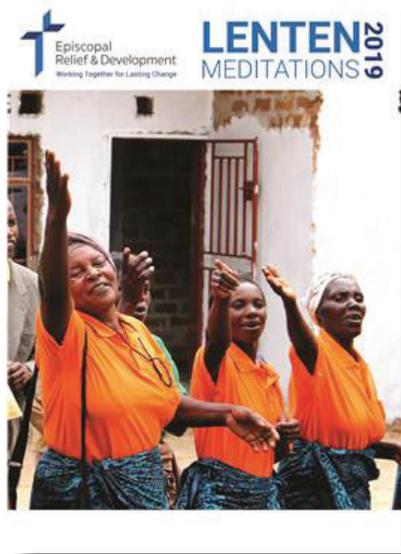
According to official statistics the average member gives between two and three percent of their income to the Church. The tithe is an ancient method of returning to God a portion of the gifts bestowed upon us. In the modern age this would be to take ten percent (10%) of your income and give it to the Church, or to some other religious charity or organization. It can seem like a daunting endeavor if you've never given proportionally (designating a percentage of your income to give back to the Church). Try tithing for Lent, and see how it goes. Figure out what

your income will be from March 6 through April 14 (or to make things even simpler just for the month of March) then multiply that amount by 0.10, that is the amount of your Lenten Tithe. Obviously, if you are already giving regularly then you would only give the difference. For example, If your income during Lent is \$3000, the tithe would be \$300. If you already give \$150 during that period, the difference would be an additional \$150 to make it up to a tithe.



Tithing is transformational: it changes our relationship with our church and our possessions. It will also enable St. Thomas to do even more through its mission and ministry of Being a Light to the World.

Lenten Meditations



Pick up a Meditation Booklet
Episcopal Relief & Development's 2019 Lenten Meditations bring together the wisdom from the Lenten Meditations from the last decade. These Lenten meditations

can help deepen your faith in the risen Christ and strengthen your connection to our neighbors and partners around the world. The Lenten Meditations reflect Episcopal Relief & Development's commitment to leveraging the resources of Anglican and ecumenical partners to deliver measurable and sustainable change in three signature program priorities: Women, Children and Climate. Booklets are available for free at church.

Subscribe to Daily Lenten Emails
ERD invite you to share in the 2019 Lenten email series from Episcopal Relief & Development. Each day during Lent you will receive a daily reflection, co-authored by a group of faith leaders from across

the church. During this season of reflection on our Christian faith, their writings will enhance your spiritual journey as they both inspire and challenge you. Each daily meditation is presented in both English and Spanish. Look for the link to sign up in the St. Thomas e-news!

Make a Lenten Offering
Invest in Episcopal Relief & Development's vital mission and give meaningfully to strengthen communities around the globe. Their mission is to serve Christ in all persons and strive to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Go to episcopalrelief.org to donate.

Icon Class

by Liz Neumeyer

From November to January, Father Brian and 10 students gathered on Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings in the not-very-warm room downstairs to write icons: Kathy Dingwall, Sue Holcomb, Barb Hibiske, Bob Hibbard and his daughter Chris, Karen Keese, Val Miller, Julie McDonald, myself and Jodi Nickerson. Several of the students were in the earlier icon class and were working on another image. Kathy Dingwall is the most experienced including having gone to the same Prosopon workshop Father Brian attended. Prosopon is a Greek word from the Bible meaning the face of God and the founders aim to teach anyone to do an icon. Their school is not intended to produce professional iconographers but to transmit the skills to those who want to learn.

We learned the rules of doing an icon. I thought of it much like a liturgy. There is a form you follow. You don't go off on some creative tack of your own. The rules of icon writing are set down from the early Church. As many of the participants will tell you, it is a very meditative process although telling us that we should "work with care on every detail of your icon as if you were working in front of the Lord" is a bit daunting. The sessions started with traditional prayers and Fr. Brian had various Greek Orthodox and Anglican chants playing during work.

Father told the congregation once when he shared one of his icons that you don't have to be artistic.



This is true in that the icon is traced from an outline or "cartoon." You don't draw it free hand. I do think a steady hand with a brush and an eye for light and color helps. I don't have either and managed, so there is hope for any of you. It does take a long time and a lot of sitting and remembering to BREATHE as you are making some particular move. Julie said the final drawing of the omega line is a particularly "breath-holding moment."

We learned a lot of things. Karen went up to Fr. Brian with a "mistake." She was beating herself up for making a mess of the beautiful icon and Fr. Brian said "Are you perfect?" We all got this question a lot from him as we went along. We learned how to correct mistakes and how these are a metaphor for our life. For example there is a part of the icon writing called a "float" which is color, egg

tempura and distilled water which allows you to cover up mistakes. Jodi called this "redemptive." Fr. Brian told us a float is like forgiveness. It covers a multitude of sins. It tones down the harshness of the light on the icon and is a calming light that reflects devotion. Bob Hibbard said this had a mystical quality to it as he worked. Barb Hibiske put it another way: "I learned a lot about the art of prayer, contemplation, and meditation along with some frustration!"

Val became fascinated with iconography when she inherited a 17th Century icon. She took Fr. Brian's first class and was hooked! Val has done the Arch Angel Michael and in this class, she did Gabriel. So did Julie. She is on her second icon too and finds the experience "uplifting." Everyone starts with Michael as he is the angel closest to humans.

The second image students do is the Arch Angel Gabriel. Kathy Dingwall was on her third and doing an icon of Anna with the Theotokos. Kathy said she particularly liked this word. Theotokos in Greek means god-bearer and refers to the Virgin Mary. Anna was the mother of Mary or Jesus's grandmother if you want to see it that way. Kathy is doing this one for her sister-in-law, a fitting gift to her as her name is Anna Mary. Father Brian helped her find the image. Kathy said that this particular image is quite simple in form and color and "it's the sheer simplicity of this icon that draws the viewer deeper along the path to God."

Sue Holcomb who is a skilled artist said she has done many things in oil, acrylic, and pen and ink but with an icon, "I had to think totally out of the box." Sue has done several icons herself and wants to do St. Patrick next. Her prayer: "The Lord be with me."

Everyone in the class commented on the camaraderie and support we gave to each other. The more practiced ones helped the beginners. When Karen came down with a cold, Sue kept up her icon for her. I wanted to spend



Icons will be displayed on the altar until Ash Wednesday, March 6th.

more time with my family after Christmas and Val kept up the steps of my icon. It was a close group sharing in the reverence of icon writing. One of the rules of icon writing is to maintain silence. We weren't always very good at that but managed most of the time.

When he wasn't teaching a particular aspect of writing icons or helping correct our mistakes, Fr. Brian was working on an icon of Mother Julian of Norwich. He said this was his twelfth icon. Karen and I liked it so much we commissioned one from him.

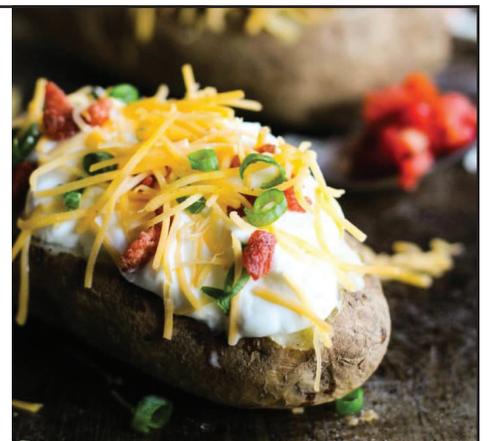
Icon writing is a discipline of hand, mind and heart and the principles can be applied to all aspects of our lives. We were not just doing an icon but a theological process working on ourselves as God is working with us and through us. We let God work on us, reflective of the divine.

If Fr. Brian rests from his last class of ten, he may try another. I urge you to sign up and learn about writing an icon.

The Return of Pub Night

Pub Night will make its return on Friday, March 15 from 6-8 p.m. in the parish hall. Dinner will be a St. Patrick's themed meal of corned beef and cabbage, as well as a baked potato bar. The cost is \$10, which includes your meal, drinks and participation in trivia.

A cash raffle and additional prizes will also be available. Proceeds from this effort will benefit our outreach ministries.



march calendar of events



Sat/2nd	Irma Howard Funeral , 11 a.m.	Sun/17th	Blockbuster Faith Lent Series , 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall, "Of Gods and Men" Parish Evensong , 5 p.m.
Sun/3rd	Welcome back Stephen White from Sabbatical , after 10 a.m. service Organ Recital, 4:30 p.m. Choral Evensong, 5 p.m.	Mon/18th	Ladies Night Out
Tue/5th	Pancake Supper , 5:30 p.m.	Wed/20th	Feast of St. Joseph (tr.), 6 p.m.
Wed/6th	Ash Wednesday 7 a.m. in the chapel, 6 p.m. in the church iBelieve Class , 7 p.m. in the Lounge "The Three-legged Stool: Scripture, Tradition and Reason"	Thu/21st	St. Margaret's Circle , 1 p.m. Vestry , 6 p.m.
Sun/10th	Blockbuster Faith Lent Series , 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall, "Mass Appeal"	Sun/24th	Blockbuster Faith Lent Series , 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall, "What Dreams May Come"
Fri/15th	St. Patrick's Pub Night , 6 p.m., Corned beef and cabbage plus a baked potato bar.	Tue/26th	St. Mary's Circle , 12 p.m.
Sat/16th	St. Thomas volunteers for the Saturday Breakfast Program	Wed/27th	Feast of the Annunciation (tr.), 6 p.m.
		Sun/31st	Fifth Sunday Worship Series : "Behind the Scenes with the Altar Chapter" Blockbuster Faith Lent Series , 2 p.m. in the Parish Hall, "The Mission"

Diocesan Office Address Change



The Diocese of Western Michigan announced that on March 1, communicants should transition to using their new diocesan address and phone number:

The Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan
5347 Clyde Park Ave. SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

Their new phone number will be (616) 319-2006. Their new fax number will be 616-371-5195.

Any staff member can be reached at the new phone number. Additionally, please forward all mail, regardless of the staff member's location, to the Wyoming address.

Heirloom Wheat for Lent

During Lent we will be using home-baked bread for communion in church on Sundays. The flour used to make the loaves comes from Plainsong Farm in Rockford, Michigan and is stone ground from heirloom wheat.

What is heirloom wheat?

Heirloom wheat is an ancient, open-source seed. Continuing to plant, tend and harvest heirloom wheat preserves biodiversity, an essential quality for a living planet. Open-sourced seed also preserves seed sovereignty. 80-90% of all wheat seed, organic or not, is patented, which means it is not legal for farmers to replant the seed from their harvest. Rather, farmers must purchase new seed each season. Heirloom wheat cannot be patented.

Heirloom wheat always has a story. Our heirloom wheat is a

descendant of wheat that was first grown in Turkey, then in Russia, then brought to the United States by Mennonites fleeing religious oppression.

Heirloom wheat tastes better. Modern cultivars are bred for consistency and yield, not depth or complexity of taste. Stone-milled heirloom wheat preserves all the nutrition of the wheat grain and has a “nutty” flavor. It is also easier to tolerate for those with sensitivity to gluten.

Heirloom wheat has a longer, stronger root structure. Through photosynthesis, plants draw down carbon dioxide (a greenhouse gas) from the atmosphere and shuttle it into its roots, deep underground – where it belongs. Because of the longer, stronger root structure of heirloom wheat, more carbon dioxide is sequestered through

our wheat than through modern cultivars, thus aiding in the alleviation of climate change.

In using this wheat, we will be part of a larger, national collaboration of churches who care for Creation by reducing greenhouse gases, reducing the amount of petroleum based chemicals used, and reducing the amount of water needed to raise crops.

Finally, heirloom wheat is closer to the wheat Jesus knew. So many of the stories of Holy Scripture include references to wheat and the sowing of seed by hand. Heirloom wheat is hand-planted and hand-harvested. We grow in our capacity to understand the meaning of the Bible because we can experience – just for a moment – something similar to the lives of those who walked with Jesus.



The heirloom wheat for our lenten communion bread is grown at Plainsong Farm in Rockford. The farm uses sustainable growing practices; there are zero inputs of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Compost, cover crops (aka green manures), and rotation are elements used to keep the soil healthy and thriving. The farm is not certified organic but plans to pursue the organic certification in the future.

ST. THOMAS
Episcopal
CHURCH



16 E. Van Buren Street
Battle Creek, MI
49017-3916

Phone (269) 965-2244
Fax (269) 965-1059
www.StThomasBC.org

The Rev. Brian Coleman

Rector

Dr. Stephen White

Director of Music

Denise Genise

Bookkeeper

Karmel Addis

Communications

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Battle Creek, MI
Permit No. 734

Return Service Requested

Parish Schedule

Sundays

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

*Childcare available for infants and toddlers
from 9:30 a.m., upstairs in the nursery.*

Coffee reception following both services.

5:00 p.m. Choral Evensong (First Sunday)

Parish Evensong (Third Sunday)

Weekdays in the Chapel

Monday – Saturday

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

5:00 p.m. Evening Prayer

Wednesdays

6:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Fridays

11:00 a.m. Bible Study in the Lounge

12:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Office Hours

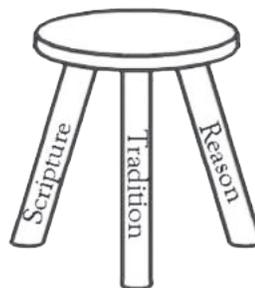
Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

March Class

iBelieve

Ash Wednesday • March 6th • 7 p.m.

This Month's iBelieve Class looks at the way that we as Episcopalians and Anglicans approach the notion of the truth, and the exercise of our faith.



Traditionally there have always been three places to which we look for understanding and confirmation of our beliefs, they are: Scripture, Tradition, and Reason.

One of the greatest Anglican theologians Richard Hooker (1554-1600), argued that authority was commanded by the Bible and by the traditions of the early church, but authority was something that had to be based on piety and reason. This has become known as the Three-Legged Stool of Anglicanism.