***Priestly Perusings***

*Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true, the only Light,*

*Sun of Righteousness, arise! Triumph o’er the shades of night:*

*Dayspring from on high, be near; Daystar, in my heart appear.*

 *- Charles Wesley (The Hymnal 1982, # 7)*

Congratulations to **Marion Bullis, Gary Byram,** and **Donna Lydem**, who were elected to the Vestry at the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 29. They join continuing Vestry members **Pam Lindvall, Marcia Lombardi, Peter Marcisz, Phil Mazur, Mary Pepides, and Bill Richard**. Officers elected are **Mary Pepides, Senior Warden, Phil Mazur, Junior Warden, Pam Lindvall, Clerk, and Michael DeNegris, Treasurer**. Many thanks to Donna and the Kitchen Angels, to all who helped set up and clean up, and to all who provided soups, sandwiches, and other goodies for the excellent lunch which accompanied the meeting. Installation of all Vestry members and Officers is scheduled to take place at the Eucharist on Sunday, February 12.

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The number of the Sundays after The Epiphany is driven by the date of Easter, which this year is April 16. Of 9 possible Sundays, this year there are eight Sundays between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday (March 1), and we are already halfway there. This “green season” between Christmas and Lent, known from our English heritage as *Epiphany-tide*, focuses on seeing ways in which the light of Christ which shines in the face of Jesus (and in the Baptized who are members of the living Body of Christ today) can brighten the dark times and corners of our world. You will notice that the hymns and prayers of the season almost always stress the Light of Christ. It’s no accident that this emphasis on the light which shines in the darkness occurs at the time of year when the days are growing longer as daylight lengthens. In much of Europe and the Americas, this is also the time of **Carnival**, a festive period of pleasure and parties which celebrates all of the goodness - and many of the ills - of the flesh. (For the derivation of the word, consider the dish *chili con carne*, a dish of beans *with meat* [flesh].) One of the more pleasurable (and less dangerous) remnants of Carnival is the custom of eating King Cake, which is served first on the Feast of the Epiphany to recall the Three Kings’ search for the baby Jesus. The season then continues with a gradually growing number of King Cakes, parties, costumes, masks, and parades until the festivities become almost non-stop; however, on Mardi Gras (French for Fat Tuesday, when all the “fats” in the house are to be consumed before the fast of Lent) the celebration comes to a halt at the stroke of Midnight and the revelers go home to observe Ash Wednesday and face the reality of their own mortality. Shrove Tuesday is the more Puritan form of Mardi Gras; fats are eaten up in pancakes, and sins are confessed and “shriven” (absolved). **Ash Wednesday** begins the season of **Lent** – an old Anglo-Saxon word for “Spring,” or the *lengthening* of the daylight hours. Lent, of course, is the sparse and seasonal fast of 40 days which leads to the glorious feast of Easter. The color of the season is purple, which symbolizes both royalty and penance; no flowers adorn the altar; the procession enters in silence, and there are no organ preludes or postludes. All of this is a sort of liturgical “fast” for the soul, which erupts into joyful abandon at Easter. In my experience, the peoples who celebrate Carnival tend to have a very deep appreciation for, and witness to the Christian spirituality of death and resurrection. Pray that all of us who bear the mark of Christ on our foreheads, may witness to the transforming power of his life, death and resurrection in our own daily lives, that the world may see in us the light of his love and the truth of his mercy and Grace.

Faithfully,

*Susan+*

**THE BURIAL OF THE ALLELUIAS WILL TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26**, the Last Sunday after the Epiphany. This ritual helps us to remember that the joyful word “alleluia” is “put away” for the season of Lent and resurrected on the Feast of Easter. We will sing as many alleluias as possible that day, and a “beefed-up” coffee hour will include Donna’s justly-famous hash.

**ASH WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1** The Holy Eucharist with Imposition of ashes will be offered at **11 AM and 7 PM**.

**A LENTEN KERYGMA BIBLE STUDY – HOSANNA: A Spiritual Journey Through Holy Week,** with five sessions, will take place during Lent. Afternoon and alternate evening groups will be scheduled, based on the convenience of those who wish to participate in the program. ***Please sign up on the bulletin board.***

**A LENTEN BOOK DISCUSSION of the classic C.S. Lewis novel, “The Great Divorce**,” will take place on Sundays after church, beginning March 12. This is not a book about marriage and divorce, but about the sin of self-centered pride, and a celestial bus trip between Hell and Heaven. ***Please sign up on the bulletin board.***

**LOOKING AHEAD TO HOLY WEEK AND BEYOND:**  The Liturgy Planning Team met on Feb. 5 and discussed the possibility of offering a **Prayer Vigil throughout the night between Maundy Thursday (April 13 and Good Friday (April 14)**. This is common practice in many Episcopal churches, but has not been a part of our Holy Week experience here at All Saints’, at least in the past seven years. Here’s how it works: In response to Jesus’ reported plea “Could you not watch with me one hour?” (Matt. 26:40) people sign up for one hour segments of the night (or longer, as they desire). At the close of the Maundy Thursday rite, the Sacrament is removed from the church to an Altar of Repose – probably in the Conference Room. Soft lighting, comfortable chairs, and a prayer desk are provided, as well as Prayer Books and other reading materials. Those who have signed up in advance (and others who choose to join them) come at their appointed time and spend an hour in silent prayer with Jesus. Security will be provided through the dark hours of the night. The Vigil ends with a simple recited Morning Prayer on Good Friday. A sign-up sheet will soon become available; please consider participating in this uniquely holy time.

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE(S) TO TAKE CHARGE OF SET-UP AND CLEAN-UP FOR THE 6 pm MAUNDY THURSDAY SIMPLE SOUP SUPPER.**  Please contact Mother Davidson or Donna Lydem.

**BISHOP LAURA AHRENS WILL MAKE HER VISITATION TO US ON SUNDAY, JUNE 18. CONFIRMATION AND RECEPTION will be offered as part of that Visitation.** Our current Youth Confirmation Class has been preparing for this throughout the Church School Year, and attendance at those classes is critical. If you or yours is desirous of being Confirmed or Received at the time of Bishop Ahrens’ Visitation, or of making a public Reaffirmation of Faith, please let Susan know very soon. An adult Inquirer’s Class will be offered during Eastertide, for those interested in preparing for these rites, as well as ongoing “continuing education@” for lifelong Episcopalians who just want to learn more about the Episcopal Church.

**BECOMING A MEMBER OF ALL SAINTS’** is really very simple. If you have been Baptized with water in the name of the Trinity in any Christian tradition, all that’s necessary is that you register your Baptism with us – this makes you a member of All Saints’ Parish, but Baptism makes one a Christian; it does *not* make you an Episcopalian! If you are already an Episcopalian, please just ask Mother Davidson to request your Letter of Transfer from your former parish. In order to become an Episcopalian, you must be Confirmed (for those who have been raised in most Protestant traditions, as well as other Episcopal churches) or Received by a bishop in the Episcopal Church (for those who have been raised and Confirmed in the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox Churches). Preparation for Confirmation/Reception of adults will be offered through Inquirers’ Class at a weekend mini-retreat during Eastertide. For more information on all of this, and to apply for Baptism for adults or children, please speak to Mother Davidson. Baptism is not administered during the season of Lent, which is, historically, a time to prepare for that Sacrament.

**MANY THANKS TO THE VESTRY AND PARISH** for the generous Christmas gift of a gift certificate to the Litchfield restaurant **@ The Corner.** Jerry and I are looking forward to enjoying it very soon! - Susan+

**DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS SUNDAY, MARCH 12!**