

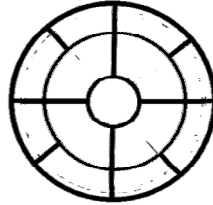
# FCEC NEWSLETTER

March  
2010

## Parish Staff

The Rev. Thomas H. Phillips, Rector  
 The Rev. Leander S. Harding, Ph.D.  
 Senior Priest

The Rev. Elizabeth H. Rodewald, Deacon  
 The Rev. Nancy Phillips, Deacon  
 Doug Cook, Youth Minister  
 Ashley North, Asst. Youth Minister  
 Clark Bedford,  
 Organist & Choirmaster  
 Sandra Shoucair, Office Manager  
 David Modaffari, Property Manager  
 Carol Hollister, Bookkeeper



The Mission of Fox Chapel Episcopal  
 Church is  
 to glorify God  
 by worshipping God in joyous Spirit,  
 by welcoming all into Christ's family,  
 by nurturing disciples for spirit-led  
 ministry  
 —in Church and beyond.

## Service Schedule

Saturday 5:30 pm  
 Holy Eucharist/Contemporary

Sunday 8:00 am  
 Holy Eucharist Rite I with music  
 10:00 am  
 Holy Eucharist Rite II with music

Tuesday 10:00 am  
 Holy Eucharist with anointing



Sunday, March 28	Palm Sunday Services at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, March 30	Holy Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.
Thursday, April 1	Maundy Thursday Service at 7:30 p.m. (Dinner first)
Friday, April 2	Good Friday, Three hour community service, Last Seven Words, Noon to 3 p.m.
Saturday, April 3	Easter Vigil at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 4	Easter Sunday Services at 8:00 and 10:15 a.m. Easter Egg Hunt 9:30 a.m. First Communion at the 10:15 service with reception following

## A Message From Father Tom

### CHARACTER COUNTS



The Season of Lent has arrived, and once again we are called to examine our lives from the inside out.

I don't think that is as easy as it once was. Other generations were schooled in what was called the examination of conscience. That is now considered oppressive and retrograde. To stress character over free expression, and the examination of conscience over impulse, is essentially absent in either public or private discourse. We have become captive to the cult of self esteem, and any stress on culpability and responsibility that threatens self esteem is simply not tolerated. Today, what really counts is not character in the face of obstacles, but competence and charisma in the face of a TV camera. In the process, what we observe is not a celebration of character but the assassination of it. We attack our opponents on lack of it, but say nothing about building it. The result is not the erosion of the necessity for leadership, but the diminishment of the qualifications for it. It's not that we don't have leaders; it's that they are so mediocre. We have succumbed to the cult of personality and celebrity and to confusion between the leader and the led. With the accent on polls, for example, leadership becomes codependent on followership and the leader of the people slumps into a popular panderer, dependent on what the latest polls say, (Os Guinness, Character Counts).

President Eisenhower said that the essential qualities of a great leader are 'vision, integrity, courage, understanding, the power of articulation and profundity of character.' Although some might want to add other qualities, like decisiveness and a sense of providence, the Christian would assert that character is an essential and necessary virtue for good leadership in every area of life.

The second thing that is revealed in any stress on the examination of conscience is the abhorrence of anything Christian that would make its appeal to a public consensus. The application and appreciation of Christian insights into anything that has to deal with the public sphere is discounted and resisted, especially in the area of character and value. Hospital chaplains, for example, are at liberty to speak of faith in Jesus only if a patient asks first. I have wrestled long with this, and the results have not always been happy. I am quite in agreement with the observation that a patient in a hospital bed constitutes a captive audience, and to insert something alien to that person when they have no other recourse but to listen is an abuse of authority and power. I accept that. My complaint is deeper...there is no consensus about what constitutes healing, the reality of the soul, confession and absolution, the forgiveness of sins and the reconciliation of relationships, and the need for God. The hospital may well not be the place to get to these things, but the problem is that our patients are not bringing with them any familiarity with these matters. The Christian consensus

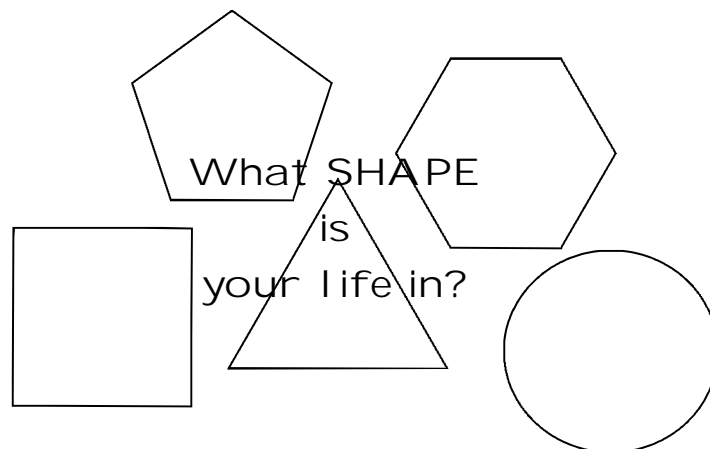
on what makes for the healthy life is just one option among many, and the Christian option is increasingly gagged (See *The Gagging of God* by Carlson).

All of this, and much more convinces me that it is tremendously important to see that the scriptural revelation is as relevant today as it was 2000 years ago. The Temptations of Jesus were very real for him but they are also very real for us. But, culturally speaking, we lack familiarity with the means of grace that were appropriated by Jesus: the Spirit, the scriptures, and a strong sense of vocation. Nor are we conversant about Evil. Evil is real, but perhaps the greatest weakness in people's thinking is that they have very little appreciation or aptitude for discussions about and insights into evil. There have been some important books, but, for a large part, they are unread and unknown. C. S. Lewis wrote the book, *Screwtape Letters*, about conversations with the devil; Scott Peck wrote *The People of the Lie*, about people who do really evil things, especially to their children and Carl Meninger wrote, *Whatever Happened to Sin*, but that was years ago. Instead, what we have is the celebration of vampires!!

What is missing, and what the local church must insert again into community conversation, is the stress that Jesus put on character. We must see again that the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness included a test of character. Jesus is not alone when the evil one tempts that we turn our appetites into gods, rest our ambitions on compromise and our reputations on publicity stunts. Yet he is quite alone when he stresses that character is an essential element to love.

To further this conversation, let me encourage you to take part in our Lenten study beginning this Wednesday. Life Shapes is a course on appropriating Christian disciplines into your daily life. If I told you it would be character building, you probably wouldn't come...but it will be, nonetheless.

Fr. Tom



## ECW Presents the Daffodil Dinner to benefit KAIROS Prison Ministries

Each year we hold the Daffodil Dinner to raise money for a local Christian Charity. It is part of our Mission giving. The purpose is not to create a social event but to focus on a particular need in our community and to help those who are giving their lives to meet that need. Please commit to being a part of this outreach. We would like each member of this church to be a part of this. If you can't attend the special evening to focus on this ministry, then plan to contribute financially. We will hold the dinner at the church on Friday, April 16th and the main focus will be enjoying each other. There will be dinner music and even a performance by some of our own young people.

The recipient this year will be KAIROS, a prison ministry which some of our own members are involved in. Stu Simpson is one of those and I will let him give you more details about what Kairos does. See article below.



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### Kairos Prison Ministry—Stu and Gail Simpson

Kairos is a ministry of Christ's love, delivered entirely by a group of volunteers. Inspired by Matthew 25: 31 – 46 (verse 36, "I was in prison and you came to me."), the volunteers present a continuing ministry in which prisoners who have attended a Kairos Weekend meet weekly in Prayer & Share Grouping. The purpose of Kairos is building Christian Community inside the prison. Independent studies confirm that individuals who attended a Kairos Weekend have a substantially lower recidivism rate (rate of re-incarceration).

Kairos Prison Ministry is a lay-led Christian ministry which conducts a highly structured program designed for use in male and female correctional institutions. The Kairos program starts with a weekend event which allows participants to witness Christ's love through the servitude of Christian Kairos volunteers. During this event participants are given the opportunity to experience a religious renewal, accepting God's call to a life of Christian witness and service to one another during their stay in the institution, and beyond. After the weekend, participants are encouraged to establish strong Christian communities within their institution.

The mission of Kairos Prison Ministry is to bring Christ's love and forgiveness to incarcerated individuals, their families, and those who work with them. It is also part of the mission to assist the incarcerated in the transition to become a productive citizen.

Continued on page 5

The Kairos program brings together positive and negative leaders incarcerated in the prison for a three-day weekend of carefully coordinated talks, discussions, chapel meditations and music led by the loving servant spirit of the volunteers. For many residents this experience creates the desire to become a Christian and for others it encourages the desire to continue his/her personal Christian growth. After the weekend, residents establish small groups within the institution. These small groups meet weekly to share their spiritual challenges and successes and to pray for one another, their families, fellow prisoners, and staff.



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## Missions Conference At FCEC

Fox Chapel Episcopal Church will be hosting a Missions Conference to coordinate efforts to reach the Beja people of Sudan, an unreached Muslim group, with the Gospel. This conference will bring together people from all over the world and across the United States for strategy and to increase awareness of the Beja people.

People will be traveling to our area, many with limited financial means. If you would like to help by hosting someone at your house, please contact David or Diane Condron at [dcondron@juno.com](mailto:dcondron@juno.com) or call (412) 828-0924. Conference attendees will take all meals at the conference, so they only need lodging space for the night. The conference is scheduled for April 29- May 1. Lodging would be needed on 29th & 30th of April.

We will also be providing meals during the conference with a special welcome dinner Thursday night April 29th. If you would like to help by preparing something for the dinner, this would be a big help. The conference provides you an opportunity to participate in World Missions without ever leaving Fox Chapel. If you can attend the conference on Saturday, some Beja living in the Washington, DC area will be coming and you will have a chance to meet them!

We hope you will consider joining us for this wonderful opportunity!

## News from the Altar Guild

A reminder: The lilies on the altar at Easter are offered as memorials and thanksgivings. The Altar Guild carries over a list from year to year, but you can always add to it. Do you or your family want to remember a loved one? Have you had an addition to the family that you'd like to give thanks for? You can contact Jim Titus at 412-963-1535 ([jamestitus@juno.com](mailto:jamestitus@juno.com)), or Debbie Howson, 412-487-6340 ([ahowson4@verizon.net](mailto:ahowson4@verizon.net)). The Altar Guild will send you a bill for \$30. Remember that you can call anytime you wish to remember a loved one or to give thanks (for your children, for instance) throughout the year, and they



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## Church Women: Save the date!

We will be hosting WOMEN'S BLESSING on May the 8<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 to 1:00 p.m. There will be a dynamic speaker, a catered luncheon, and a chance to share the Eucharist with the other women of the Diocese. We do want it to be a time of real blessing. Hope you'll consider joining us!



# Youth News

## SPRING RETREAT

When: **April 9-11**

Where: Camp Allegheny

Who: 6th-12th grade

Why: Because you want to!

More info soon!

*More details soon.*

## LIFE SHAPES + DINNER

*(in place of high school youth group)*

**Feb 24th–Mar 24—6 to 8:00 pm**

- In the parish hall
- Food, lessons, discussion and music

## A NOTE FROM DOUG + ASHLEY

*If you haven't heard...FCEC has new youth ministers! Doug Cook has taken over as Youth minister and Ashley North as Asst. Youth Minister. We are both very excited to be here; discovering Christ along side this very special bunch of students.*

*Please find us after the service and introduce yourself. We want to get to know you!*

## COMING EVENTS SCHEDULE:

Life Shapes + Dinner  
Wednesdays in Lent  
Feb 24-Mar 24 6:00-8:00

Spring Retreat  
April 9-11

Youth Group Times  
High School  
Wednesdays 6-8:00  
(only during lent)

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Middle School  
Saturdays 7-8:30

## MINISTRY NEEDS

• Snacks for Wednesday and Saturday youth group (much thanks to those who have been providing)

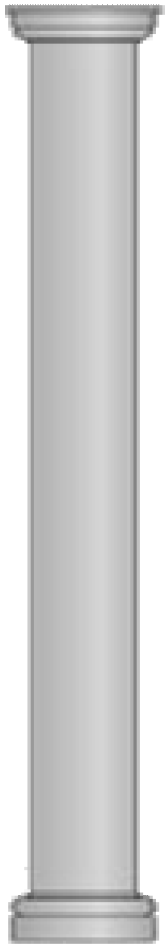
• Volunteers for Shepherd's Heart

• All questions to:  
dougcook@gmail.com

## SHEPHERD'S HEART

Cancelled: March 7  
Rescheduled: May 30

We will need volunteers to help cook and serve dinner to the homeless. For info e-mail Doug Cook at: dougcook@gmail.com



## Fox Chapel Episcopal Church

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### The Backfence is Back!

Congratulations to Don & Nancy Middleton. They welcomed their fifth grandchild on February 3, 2010. Nico Middleton, daughter of Evan & Angela Middleton. She joins big sister Dhoni and brother Lucian.

### The following have a birthday in the month of March!

Nick Beckwith	March 6	Peg McGowan	March 12
Allison Borgan	March 22	Richard Voelker	March 7
Heidi Fay	March 16	Karen West	March 31
Carl Herrmann	March 12	Kevin Wiley	March 18
Steven Kann	March 9		

If you would like to submit an article or announcement for the Newsletter, please email Debbie Scully at [debscully@comcast.net](mailto:debscully@comcast.net). The deadline for the Newsletter is the 15th of every month.