



Parish Guide

Newsletter of The Church of the Epiphany
Washington, DC

March 2007
Vol. CCVII, No. 23

Arlington Neighborhood Cluster Group Meeting

By Caroline Klam, member

The Arlington Cluster Group met during the evening in early February and enjoyed good food and excellent conversation. The group included both newcomers and long term parishioners from Northern Virginia neighborhoods. We talked about the kinds of things which had drawn us to Epiphany — diversity, music, outreach, and a sense of mission. We also discussed the concept of Epiphany being a “destination parish” – that is, a church building situated outside members’ own geographic neighborhoods. We decided that the cluster group was an opportunity to support each other as geographic neighbors, as well as fellow parishioners in downtown Washington.

As neighborhood cluster group members, we might be available to each other in times of emergencies, or help out in a pinch by running an errand or babysitting, or get together in a small group to talk about God’s actions in our lives. Our group will continue to explore the role of the cluster group in our own parish lives at our next meeting on April 13 at Pat Pickering’s home in Arlington.

Contact either Pat or Caroline Klam if you would like to join us.

Note on another Virginia neighbor cluster group. Epiphany members living in Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax County will meet for dessert and coffee at 7:30 pm on Saturday, March 10 at the home of Freeman and Heather Jelks. All who live in this cluster area are welcome to attend. Please let the Jelks know you will be present.

Note: The deadline for submitting articles to the April Parish Guide Newsletter is Wednesday, March 21

Light at the End of the Tunnel

By Tripp Jones, Leader, Renovation Ministry Team

RMT Members: Jill Bezek, Randolph Charles, Christian Clough, Mary Dail, David Downes, David Hamill, Tripp Jones, and Pat Pickering

In looking back over recent Parish Guide articles I’ve written about the work of the Renovation Ministry Team, I noticed in last June’s issue I stated that Phase I (the planning phase) of this process should take about five to six months to complete. Well, here we are nine months later and I’m just now promising to see “light at the end of the tunnel.” No one said the work of discernment and compromise would come easy or fast.

Our architects had submitted to us three options (A, B, and C) for the renovation of our buildings. After much discussion, we seemed to be getting bogged down with diverse opinions and an unclear vision. We responded to the architect with suggestions, questions and concerns. In response, lead architect Peter Krajnak joined us at our February meeting and shared with us “Option D.” Suddenly, our blurry vision became clear and many of the things we were trying to achieve fell into place.

This is not to say our work is done. In March, we will meet to make our final decisions on Option D. With that in place as a master plan, we must then, with the help of the architect, determine what aspects we think we can accomplish with the funds we think we can raise. It’s a very inexact science. Once we have the master plan, a proposed first phase and a price tag, we will take all of this to the vestry. We are hoping this could be at their March meeting. Once the vestry has approved these plans, we are greatly looking forward to sharing the renovation plan with the congregation. This could occur shortly after Easter.

Please continue to keep the Renovation Ministry Team in your prayers and please know of our strong commitment to making Epiphany’s buildings safe, efficient, accessible, and functional for the many and varied ministries our parish offers.

Parishioner News

We celebrate these new beginnings and accomplishments:

“Let us give thanks to God for all God’s gifts so freely bestowed upon us.”

Abigail and Carl Nichols won the London Metropolitan Bridge Association Pairs Championship. They will return to England in June and represent London in the All-Counties National Pairs Championship. All the best to Abigail and Carl in their next competition!

We welcome these persons into the life of our parish:

“All praise and thanks to you, most merciful Father, for adopting us as your children, for incorporating us into your holy Church, and for making us worthy to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Gloria Minor and Andrea Dorf

We remember these persons in our prayers

The members and family members of Epiphany who serve in troubled areas of the world, especially Robert Curris, Keith Scoon, and Floyd Tappin;

All who seek healing, especially: Ed Adams, Margaret Barge, Renee Brathwaite, Phil Converse, Theresa Davies, Floyd Godfrey, Bertha Harrison, Cornell Jackson, William Person, Norwyn Rowe, Sara Ellen Swatt, and Jerry White

Aaron, Jim Argodale, Beverly Bachemin, Franklin Backus, Adam Beattie, Winston Blackman, Robert Blaine, Oswald Bowen, Wanda Brewer, Helen Burg, James Capen, Marian Cover, Elena Curris, Brian Dillard, Genevieve Duvall, Mary Eager, Ken Ferber, Andrew Ferrill, Alan Greene, Fred Gustafson, Kathryn Hardie, Elizabeth Henderson, Mike Henderson, Ed Henderson, Millicent and Bill Hutt, Jacqueline Jenson, Rick Knettel, Joy Kraus, George Kurtz, Marilyn LeSeur, David Lyman, Annie Maly, Frank Marlowe, Claudia McClannahan, MeShaun, Adilia Moran, Denise Mosier, Bonnie Murphy, Hubert Nedd, Israel Rafalovich, Jesus Ramirez, Allene Robinson, Wanda Rucker, Leslie Smith, Jr., Walter Stumpf, Magdolna Szuprics, Crystal Taylor, Kate Thaxton, Ofelia Vitek, Maureen Waters, Dee Wertlein, Bobby Wilkerson, Regina Williams, Emma Wojcuilewicz, Tina Wu, Thelma, Evie, Erica, Chris, Ainsley, Brianna, and those on the Narthex Prayer List;

We celebrate these March Birthdays

Leif Eskesen, March ; Jasmine Hermonstine, March 2; Christopher Connelly and Anna Walker, March 6; Marcia Doerr and Frank R. Taylor, March 7; Hope Childs, March 10; Irvin Dallas, March 12; Peter Raia, March 13; Tony Bautista and George Sisk, March 14; Pat Pickering, March 1; Michael Walker, March 20; Kesha Brennom, March 22; Carly Riisager, March 25; Mary Briscoe, March 28; Lawanda Hermonstine, March 29; Christian Clough, March 31.

The monthly “Parishioner News” acknowledges the transitions in life, accomplishments of our members, and the times of celebration. Please tell us of your news by phoning the parish office or emailing us at info@epiphanydc.org.

The Annual Visit of the Lent Lizard

By Christian M. Clough, Director of Music Ministries

I've been thinking over the past several weeks that Lent needs a spokesperson, à la the Great Pumpkin, the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus – someone to get the kids excited about the sackcloth and ashes, the self-flagellation and self-denial. A lizard might be just the beast we need – something cold and bumpy to the touch and erratic in its movements and feeding habits.

Ironically, Lent really doesn't need a spokescreature, because it, more than any other season in the Church Year, gets big publicity and attention. Christmas and Easter garner lots of interest, of course, but once each feast day has passed, the rest of those seasons (the remaining 11 days of Christmas- and 49 days of Eastertide) are mostly ignored during worship. Lent, on the other hand, is under the lights for its full forty-day run (or, 46 days, including Sundays). One would think that we would want to downplay the guilt of sin and the depression of crucifixion in our religious life, but I guess that there's enough remnant guilt from our Puritan or medieval Roman Catholic heritage (take your pick!) to keep us coming back for more.

All of this attention paid to Lent piqued my curiosity about the origins of our favorite time of penitence. What are the historical origins of Lent? Did it always have the same meaning that it does today? Why does it have such staying power?

Lent and its traditions and disciplines derive from several practices intended for three distinct groups of people in the early Church. Those populations were: 1) the catechumens, i.e., candidates for baptism at the Great Vigil of Easter; 2) baptized members of the Church whose faith and commitment would be strengthened by an annual period of self-examination and reflection on the redemptive act of Christ; and 3) the excommunicated, who sought reconciliation and restoration to the Church. The practices of Lent were, in brief, 1) fasting, 2) the culminating preparations for baptism, and 3) acts of penitence. Perhaps the most ancient is fasting. The historical record suggests that the original (strict) fast was only three days, to observe and participate in the period from the Last Supper until the resurrection. The duration of the fast was extended (and its intensity reduced) to imitate Jesus' forty-day fast in the desert following his baptism (as recounted in the three synoptic gospels). In some places, the fast was observed immediately after the commemoration of Jesus' baptism early in the calendar year. In other places, the fast was affixed to Easter, again to prepare for the coming of the risen Christ. Eventually, the connection to Easter, and the role of the fast in

catechumenal preparation, won out, and the post-baptismal fast disappeared.

The second facet of Lent to develop was the intense, final period of instruction in the preparation of candidates for baptism at the great liturgy for the Feast of the Resurrection. In the early Church, the catechumenate was a months-, or even years-long process, culminating in several weeks of daily exorcisms by the bishop, and intensive teaching (for hours everyday). The gospel readings for the Sundays in Lent (now most closely approximated in Year A of the three-year lectionary) presented a sort of "best of Jesus", introducing the candidates to (and reminding baptized members of) his world-changing life: Jesus and Nicodemus (Jn. 3.1-17), Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (Jn. 4.5-42), Jesus and the Blind Man (Jn. 9.1-38), and Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (Jn. 11.1-44).

Third, Lent became a season of penitence. Amendment of life, both in preparation for Easter and for one's entire life, is a process to which every Christian needs to be called back time and again. Penitence was a natural extension of the self-examination that the Church practiced in conjunction with preparation for baptism and renewal of baptismal commitments. As the catechumenate declined with the Christianization of the Roman Empire and the shift to infant baptism, the teaching aspects of Lent were largely neglected.

When we think of Lent today, we tend, I believe, to emphasize the penitential aspect of the season, to the detriment of its other elements – getting stuck at "Ash Wednesday" rather than moving toward the miracle of Jesus' redemption and transformation of the world, for which our participation in Lent prepares us. As is so often the case in Christianity, there are many layers of meaning, many facets to each feast, fast and season. As we move together toward the resurrection this Lent, I hope that we can recapture the hopeful expectation and faithful preparation that this season offers us.

Post-script – If you find yourself in Alexandria at noon on Thursday 22 March, I invite you to come hear my 30-minute organ recital at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 228 South Pitt Street. The recital is part of St Paul's Crescendo Concert Series of organ recitals during Lent, and will feature Baroque and 20th-century North German organ music, including Buxtehude, who died 300 years ago this spring, and who was the subject of my February 2007 column in this newsletter. For more information, consult the St. Paul's website: <http://www.stpaulsepis.com/>, or telephone the church at 703.549.3312.

Experiencing the Gospel in Your Life – An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality

By Susan Walker, Program Associate

Epiphany's Lenten retreat will be held at Cathedral College, on the grounds of the National Cathedral, 3510 Woodley Rd, NW, Washington. The dates are **Friday, March 23, 5:00pm through Saturday, March 24, 4:00pm**. The title of the retreat is *Experiencing the Gospel in your Life – An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*. This will be a time to learn about praying with the stories of the gospel, as well as the stories of our own lives.

Our retreat leader is Edward McCormack, Ph.D. Ed holds the doctorate in Systematic Theology from Catholic University of America. He taught theology at Georgetown University and has been involved in retreat work with families and students for twenty years. Currently, he is Chair of Pastoral Studies and Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality at Washington Theological Union where his courses include *An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, *Discernment and Decision-Making in the Ignatian Tradition*, and *Jesus and the Challenge of Christian Discipleship*.

During our time together, we will practice praying with silence and then reflect on that experience through discussion with our retreat director. The retreat will conclude with a contemplative Eucharist in the chapel.

You may attend as either an overnight or commuter participant. Commuters should arrive Friday evening after dinner, by 7:15 pm, and Saturday morning by 8:45 am. Please use the form below to register, as soon as possible. **Space is limited and registration closes March 11.** Questions? Contact Eleanor Engh at 703-370-3906 or e_engh@comcast.net or, contact the church by phoning 202-347-2635 or emailing swalker@epiphanydc.org.

Name: _____

Home Address: _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

[] Reserve one single room \$150

[] Reserve a shared room [roommate _____] \$125

[] Commuter [includes Saturday lunch only] \$60

[] Any special dietary or mobility needs? _____

[] Do you need a ride?

[] Can you provide a ride?

Return this form with your check payable to:

The Church of the Epiphany

Note: Lenten Retreat

1317 G ST, NW

Washington, DC 20005

Increasing the Circle of Thankful People through the Blue Box Habit

By Abigail Nichols

Have you tried the Blue Box habit? Keep the pretty paper boxes around the house as a way to remember the blessings in your life. Deposit a coin in the box as you say a prayer of thanks. You are blessed as you become more focused on the positive; others are blessed as your small coins join others. The coins do add up! In 2006, there were 112 UTO grants awarded to projects at home and abroad, totaling nearly \$2.5 million. In our area, St. George's Parish received a \$10,000 grant to replace a dangerous stove and which enabled it to continue its Kwanzaa Kitchen Breakfast Program.

The United Thank Offering was founded in 1889 when Ida Soule and Julia Chester Emery decided that women could accomplish more than the \$87 offering they gave at the Triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church. The great accomplishments that followed earned Julia Emery a place on the Church calendar – we honor her on January 9.

Most people probably focus on the good UTO does for others. As the representative of her Midwest province on the national UTO board, my mother, along with my father, traveled from her small mid-western farm town to projects in Haiti and Mexico, as well as in the US, and came back much moved by the work of the Church and the people doing the work.

I confess that I like UTO because of the good it does me. I respond to its mission “to expand the circle of thankful people.” I like that a lot. As we reach adulthood and grow in our spiritual understandings, Lent becomes less about giving up things, and more about adding things. And we see that giving up things can be a path to adding better things. Gratitude can replace our ongoing hunger for more and more of everything, when we slow down to notice God's creation. I love the blue box for helping me slow down and be thankful.

Blue boxes are available for you to pick up in the church office all year round, but they are especially appropriate for our use during the season of Lent. This year's ingathering of our coins will take place the first Sunday after Ascension, May 20. Of course, gifts of coins, folding money, or checks are accepted at any time.

Keep Up with Events at Epiphany through our Web Site

By Nancy Augustine, Vestry Member and Webmaster

You read the Parish Guide. You look at the insert in the Sunday bulletin every week, and you're there in time to hear the announcements before the 11:00 am service. You get Program Associate Susan Walker's weekly email about worship, meetings, and events coming up on Sunday. You also get Music Director Christian Clough's weekly email about the Tuesday concerts. And STILL you don't feel like you know what's going on at Epiphany.

Here's another source for you: <http://www.epiphanydc.org>. Worship, ministries, music, events, all accessible through a few key strokes and/or mouse clicks.

The first stop is the main page, at <http://www.epiphanydc.org>. There are 2 useful spots here. First, scroll down for a listing of the day's events. In some browsers, details pop up when you use the mouse to position the cursor over the name of the event. Click on any event for more information about it. Notice that you can set up an email reminder for yourself or a friend.

Second is a link to go to another page. Click on the word “Happenings” (over the fifth picture) to go to <http://www.epiphanydc.org/happenings/>. The first column includes a copy of Susan Walker's weekly email announcements about upcoming worship and events; the third column tells you how to get in touch with Susan if you would like to be added to the email list. The large middle column is an 8-day listing of events at Epiphany. As with the listing on the front page, every event is “clickable.”

Back to the first column on this page. There are two more useful links you should know about. “*** Click here to view the Monthly Calendar of Events ***” takes you to – you guessed it – a monthly calendar of events that looks a lot like the calendar. The calendar is not on our site, it's more or less a “rented” space on somebody else's server. No worries. When you're done perusing the calendar, you can either use your “back” button to get back to the “Happenings” page you just left OR you can click on the small tab above the calendar marked “Home,” to get back to the main Epiphany web page.

The other useful link in the leftmost column of the Happenings page is “***Click here to view the Tuesday concert schedule***.” This link takes you to http://www.epiphanydc.org/music/tuesday_series.htm, where you will find more information about the Tuesday concert series and a listing of concerts scheduled for the next 2 months. You can also get to this page very easily from the main page by clicking on “Music” and then clicking on “Tuesday Concert Series.”

New material is being added to the web site every week, and we're always looking for ways of making it easier to get around and get right to the information you want. If you have any suggestions for navigation or content, contact Anne-Marie Jeffery or webmaster Nancy Augustine .

Urban Missioner's Log

By the Rev. Anne-Marie Jeffery



I generally think of myself as a fairly web savvy person. However, after the article came out about Epiphany's Street Church in the New York Times, a friend asked me if I had checked the blogs, and I kind of went "huh". Now I know about blogs (web logs), but it hadn't occurred to me that people would blog about the article. I checked the blogs and what I found was interesting. Some were very positive and some, not so much. Some went off on other tangents that didn't seem related to Street Church, but on one blog, I found a very poignant and insightful reflection. The blog was called "Father Jake Stops the World ...the musings of an eclectic and sometime eccentric Episcopal priest." Fr. Jake had been homeless at one time in his life, and in this blog he relates how that experience still affects him. He has also worked with the homeless, and he had great insights on how being homeless takes its toll over time and the complexities of recovery. I wanted to share his words with you so I got Fr. Jake's permission (also known as Fr. Terry Martin). Below is an excerpt from that day's blog. You can read the whole thing at <http://frjakestopstheworld.blogspot.com/2007/02/street-church.html>.

From Fr. Jake ... "But the reality is that you never quite "get over" an experience that is that traumatic. It lingers around the edges of your life. It will revisit you in the early mornings when you are between dreams and reality and try to remember where your bed is that day. It flashes before you when walking back from the auto shop in the bitter cold and wondering if you will ever be warm again. The pangs of hunger from skipping a meal greet you like old friends returning from a time when they were your constant companions. It probably is for the best that I don't talk about it much, even though I'm reminded of those years almost daily. It is unrealistic to expect most of those I meet to understand the powerful mix of emotions such memories bring with them. And I'm not sure it is that important that they understand. I don't think compassion necessarily requires sharing the experience. There are some good efforts being made to address the roots of poverty and homelessness. When I left the ministry for a couple of years, I worked on staff at a couple of shelters. The best one, a transitional living center for families and women, was quite demanding. As Program Director, I probably evicted as many families as I enrolled. But it worked. Those who completed the 6 month program rarely ever returned.

We creamed the crop, however. Our residents had to be employable, which means those who had mental illnesses or substance abuse issues were referred to other programs. A conservative estimate is that half the homeless have mental health or substance abuse issues. I'd say that percentage is much higher. But that is really a chicken or the egg question. If a person goes long enough without proper nutrition, eventually this can cause very strange chemical imbalances in the brain. I experienced this a couple of times. The corrective was a few months of healthy meals on a regular basis.

Regarding the substance abuse, if a person is homeless for long enough, a certain feeling of hopelessness sets in. Nothing matters. Life is ugly, brutal and pointless. For a dollar, you can buy a bottle of wine and for a few hours feel alive again. It's self medication for a kind of depression that began as a response to real life circumstances. Then there are those who have intentionally taken to the streets because they are repulsed by society. These few have much in common with the desert fathers, who walked out into the desert rather than participate in a church they found to have become decadent. Like Melville's *Bartleby*, they look at what this age has to offer, and respond with "I would rather not." The temptation is to lump all of the homeless together as a group that needs to prove their worthiness before we'll offer them a hand up. What this does is to allow those who will always need our help, that may never overcome their limitations, to become expendable. We respond to those who are in need, not because they deserve it, not because they are worthy, but because they are human; because they too are children of God. This is what Street Church attempts to do; to respect the dignity of every human being, and to bring the Church to them, without any qualifications required. What a powerful witness to God's grace moving in the world today.

New Acolytes We need you!

There will be a training session for new acolytes (refresher for current acolytes) on Sunday, March 11 at 12:45 in the church.

Please speak to Sandi Ingram, acolyte coordinator, or Randolph Charles, if you would like to join this ministry of liturgical leadership.

Samaritan Ministry

Each month the Outreach Committee intends to put a face on one of the ministries that the Church of the Epiphany supports. It is our hope that you will begin to see individuals and become more aware that the support we make in a collective way at Epiphany has tremendous impact on lives.



This month we feature a glimpse of the work of **Samaritan Ministry** through Terry Morton - The Story of a Mad Homeless Woman.

We're all living the story of our life. Some of us actually take time to write the story down. Samaritan Ministry participant Terry Morton has started writing her story.

She starts, ***“Grateful for a roof over my head and food to eat and the people who help me and have been an integral part of my life these past four years, I began to keep a journal of my life as a mad homeless woman.”***

Today, Terry is anything but angry, but she says in the midst of homelessness, ***“I was outraged. Everything was out of my control.”*** It was then that Terry learned of Samaritan Ministry.

She writes in her journal, ***“Everything I knew about homelessness was based on images seen on TV.”*** With the loss of her job, she was now living the life she had seen on TV. Terry says that she is no longer bitter and angry thanks to the work and concern of Samaritan Ministry's staff. Today she is living in transitional housing and working as a financial secretary.

One could say this has been a successful completion of one chapter in Terry's story. It hasn't been easy. Looking back she says, ***“It was the little steps of encouragement and help along the way that mean the most to me today. It was the general support services, transportation, a fax, a phone, and constant support that made things stable.”*** Terry speaks and thinks with the strength of someone who

has boldly navigated difficult times. Her dreams are less about career and more about life. Her plans include starting a nonprofit, writing and acting. These are not the dreams of an angry person. Rather, they are the dreams of a strong woman who has embraced this difficult time rather than merely 'sticking it out' and letting the rolling inertia of life move her along, she is busy pursuing the future and a way to make an impact.

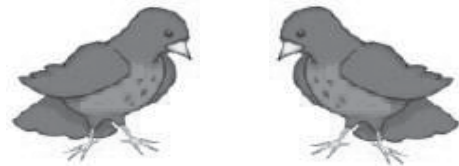
Terry plans to use Samaritan **Ministry's** model to help others. Like many Samaritan Ministry participants, she puts the power of the Next Step Program to work. Terry is the protagonist of a story, no longer defined by circumstances or anger, and exploding with talent - quite a story to live and write about.

For a greater understanding of Samaritan Ministry, check out the web site at Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington www.samaritanministry.org.

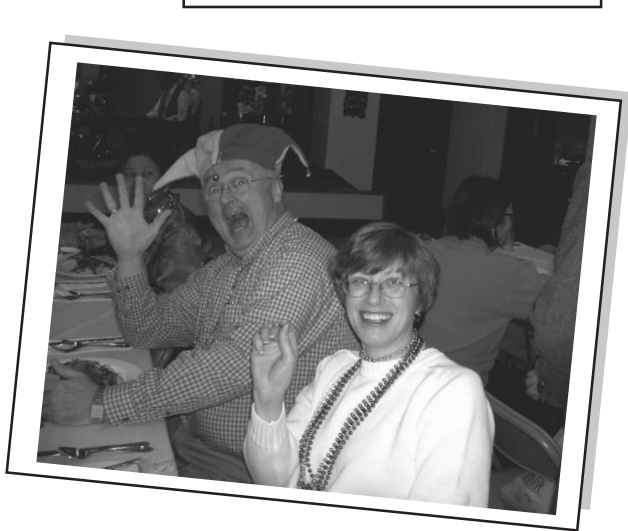
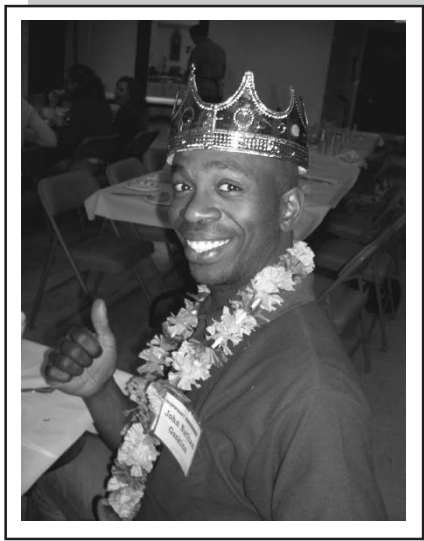
Eco-tip of the month from Epiphany's Environmental Stewardship Ministry Team:

In the U.S., we throw away 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour. Recycled plastic can be used to make many products, such as plastic lumber, sleeping bag insulation, carpet, polyester clothing.

So, please recycle plastic soda bottles, plastic wrap, water bottles, coffee can lids, six-pack neck rings, and clean milk bottles. When you are at church, look for the blue recycle bins for your plastic, cans and paper.



The Church of the Epiphany Mardi Gras February 2007



OUR LENTEN JOURNEY GUIDED BY AN *INNER COMPASS*

When Wednesday Evenings, 6:30 -8:00pm, Preceded by a simple soup and bread supper at 6:00pm
Dates February 28 – March 28
Where The Willard Room in Parish House

You are invited to join Epiphany's Wednesday evening Lenten study of Margaret Silf's book, *Inner Compass, An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*. This is a down-to-earth guide to prayer practices from the tradition of Ignatian spirituality. Ignatius taught an active spirituality that can be practiced by busy people. It encourages us to "find God in all things." It helps us understand life by directing us to our feelings, desires, and imagination as sources of prayer.

Margaret Silf repeatedly makes the connections between prayer and our ordinary, daily routines by using her own life experiences as examples of ways Ignatian prayer practices can draw us closer to God and to God's will for our lives.

You do not need to purchase the book to attend. Each week there will be a handout to guide our discussion. Each evening we will study a chapter on some practice of Ignatian prayer, and then follow the suggestions for trying it out, and reflect on our experiences. In this way we can grow in our understanding of what prayer is.

MID-DAY AT EPIPHANY - AN ABBREVIATED STUDY OF *INNER COMPASS*

When Thursdays, 12:30-1:15 pm, immediately following the 12:10pm liturgy
Dates March 8, 15, 21, and 29
Where In the Church

These 45-minute presentations and discussions will be based on the Wednesday evening Lenten program described above. Participants do not have to read the book since there will be handouts each week.

Guest speaker on March 29. At this last session, Edward McCormack, Ph.D. will be with us. Ed is Chair of Pastoral Studies and Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality at Washington Theological Union where his courses include *An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality*, *Discernment and Decision-Making in the Ignatian Tradition*, and *Jesus and the Challenge of Christian Discipleship*. Ed is a gifted and popular teacher, and he will also be leading our Lenten retreat March 23-24 at Cathedral College. For more information on that retreat, go to our website, www.epiphanydc.org and click on the link to "Lenten Retreat."

The Rev. Randolph Charles, Rector

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THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY

