

Music at St. John's



THANK YOU!!!

The generous hearts and willing hands of two dozen St. John's parishioners made it possible for us to host this year's annual RSCM Regional Treble Choir Festival the weekend of March 6-8. Several very brave parish families hosted boys and girls in their homes for the event as well. 85 boys and girls and their directors and sponsors from six churches in North and South Carolina enjoyed a fun-filled, well-fed, well-supervised weekend. The body of Christ at St. John's functioned like a well-oiled machine. I don't get to award stars in your heavenly crowns, but if I did, these saints would have at least a couple of extra ones now!

Psalms that Speak the Heart

By Linnea Good

Okay, okay - I'll be honest. I didn't like the psalms for a long time. They made no sense to me; they seemed written in an alien script by people living lives utterly removed from mine. They seemed to embody what was difficult about "holy scripture" - the distance of the Word from the real life of the reader. "Vouchsafe O Lord, this thy servant..." Huh? The scholarly, unpoetic forms of psalm translations in many standard Bibles don't offer much to edify. It was when I found some good paraphrases of the psalms that I began to understand what they were and what they could be. A psalm is a cry from the heart. It is a hymn, but goes even beyond where the hymns of our church dare to go today. The anger, the despair, the joy, the wish for revenge - most of the psalms would not make it past any hymnal planning committee.

Words, phrasing, cadences, and poetry are a feast for my soul, and I savor every bite. However, this I know: these psalms began as hymns. And the only reason that hymns get saved is because they were the hits of their time, expressing in music and word the inexpressible which is held within the believer. When psalms or songs become artifacts to be feared and revered they risk losing the very power that caused them to be preserved in the first place.

Out of respect for the very meaning and purpose of the psalms, I encourage you - yea, I exhort ye - to take them, flex them, draw them out, find their core, sing, say, play, and shout them! Bring them to life, for that is what they will do for you, if you let them.

PSALM 139 (paraphrased excerpts)

LORD, you have examined me and you know me. You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.

Where could I go to escape from you? Where could I get away from your presence? If I went up to heaven, you would be there; if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there. If I flew away beyond the east or lived in the farthest place in the west, you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me. I could ask the darkness to hide me or the light around me to turn into night, but even darkness is not dark for you, and the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are the same to you...

O God, how difficult I find your thoughts; how many of them there are! If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand...

O God, how I wish you would kill the wicked! How I wish violent people would leave me alone! They say wicked things about you; they speak evil things against your name. O LORD, how I hate those who hate you! How I despise those who rebel against you! I hate them with a total hatred; I regard them as my enemies. Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.



*Lord, you have
examined me,
and know me.*

Psalm 139:1, GNB

adult christian formation

Adult Christian Education

Sundays 10:15-11:00 a.m.

Classes will not meet Easter Sunday-April 12

The Essential Bible Guide: 100 Readings Through the World's Most

Important Book

This is a bible study based on the book by Whitney T. Kuniholm. This class will continue its quest to take us through the Old and New Testaments in 100 readings. Multipurpose Room-lower level, Heyward Hall.

Superheroes of the Bible Class led by Michael Burkett. Parlor-first floor, Heyward Hall.

Living Faith This DVD series by N. T. Wright focuses on: history of the Church, comparing Christianity to other religions, providing answers to common challenges to Christianity, and summarizing Christian doctrines and beliefs. Wright is the Bishop of Durham and a leading New Testament scholar. Barr Center Dining Room.

Walking the Bible by Bruce Feiler: will meet on the third Sunday this month, April 19, immediately following the 7:45 am service. Come enjoy a wonderful breakfast and study the Old Testament while learning about the places where the Old Testament stories took place. This class meets in the Multipurpose Room-lower level, Heyward Hall.

Adult Bible Study

Rector's Bible Study Mondays at noon in Room 9-lower level, Heyward Hall. Study led by the Rev. Fletcher Montgomery. Contact: The Rev. Fletcher Montgomery (799-4767) *Study will not meet April 6 & 13.*

Tuesday Morning Men's Bible Study Tuesdays 6:45 a.m. the Barr Center dining room. We are studying Amos. The reading schedule is posted on the web site. Contact: Ned Badgett (787-8189).

MOMS (Ministering Our Mother's Spirit) Bible Study Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor-first floor, Heyward Hall. We are reading *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World* by Joanna Weaver. Childcare provided. Contact: Cope Fralick (256-7749).

worship

"Won't you watch one hour with me?"

A sign-up sheet for the all-night prayer watch is now available in the church narthex. One or more people are needed for all hours between 7:45 pm Maundy Thursday (4/9) until noon Good Friday. Men of St. John's will provide security during the late hours.

Matthew 26:36-40 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37 He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38 Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." 40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.

The Altar of Repose

It is our custom to receive communion on Good Friday, that dark day during which we are at the foot of the cross. It is a day on which we do nothing celebratory; therefore, we do not celebrate the Holy Eucharist, but rather receive the Body and Blood of Christ from the reserved Sacrament. The elements of bread and wine have been consecrated at the Maundy Thursday liturgy and are taken from the sanctuary for at least two purposes. The Book of Occasional Services tells us that the reserved Sacrament "... should be kept in a separate chapel or other place apart from the main sanctuary of the church, in order that on Good Friday the attention of the congregation may be on the bare main Altar." Second, that the Sacrament is to be carried "to a place where people may keep watch before it, following the example of the apostles whom Jesus asked to watch and pray with him after the Last Supper (Matthew 26:40-41). This all-night vigil apparently began, like so many other Holy Week ceremonies, in fourth-century Jerusalem." (Quoted from Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the Great Fifty Days by Leonel L. Mitchell, p 57. This place "where people may keep watch before it" will be the altar of repose in the bell tower room. The altar will be decorated with flowers in memory of that garden in Jerusalem, and candles will burn throughout the night, reminding us of our Lord's Real Presence in the Sacrament. There will be two prayer desks at which you may keep watch. On Good Friday, when the priests go to the altar of repose to bear the Sacrament into the sanctuary, they will extinguish the candles. Immediately after the service, the flowers will be taken away to be used again on Easter.