



## Parish of the Lower Laurentians Newsletter – February 2016 – Vol. 4

### A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MARY

We are well into a new year, with a new regional ministry arrangement, a new bishop, and a new prime minister! So much hope for real change can be pinned on new leaders. As we look around our country and our world (and perhaps the church?), we see the problems and long-time issues which have perplexed many in leadership. Whether it is the plight of refugees, the living conditions and need for healing of Canada's First Nations, the challenges of a downturn in the economy, the health care needs of the elderly, the changes we witness in climate and the environment, or the trafficking of humans...it is possible to feel hopeless and even angry. We hope someone can do SOMETHING even while we ourselves don't know what that might be. As the church, we are called to care about all these things and to find ways to get involved when possible. Beyond just doing something or hoping that someone else will, we can be very influential through our prayer life.



Choose a time in the day when you can have a 15 minute meeting with God. Choose a comfortable chair and invite God's Holy Spirit to join you. Once you have done so, bring your concerns to the Lord. Don't just recite the list. Put each situation to soak in God's presence. Leave it there. Practice trusting God to inspire and bring about the solution. While you let your list soak, have a soak yourself. Let your whole self rest, and relax there for awhile.

Several years ago I found a paraphrase/translation of the Bible by Eugene Peterson, called *The Message*. It challenged me to a larger vision and hearing of God's power and purposes. While some of the phrases were sometimes unsettling, I heard new things:

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30)

Every blessing to you all.

+Mary

**The Annual Meeting of the PLL** will be held on **Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>** in Louisa following the 11 am service- with a light lunch served. All reports are due at this meeting. Please try to attend.

### PLL Service Schedule:

**Feb. 10 - 7:30 pm St. Aidan's Louisa**

Ash Wednesday Service

**Feb. 14 - 11 am Christ Church, Mille Isles – HC**

**Feb. 21 – 11 am St. Aidan's. Louisa – HC**

**Feb. 28 – 11 am Holy Trinity, Lakefield – HC**

**Mar. 13 – 11 am Christ Church, Mille Isles – HC**

**Mar. 20 – 11 am - St. Aidan's, Louisa – Palm Sunday**

**Mar. 25 – 11 am – Holy Trinity, Lakefield**  
Stations of the Cross

**Mar. 26 – 7 pm - Holy Trinity, Lakefield – Easter Vigil**

**Mar. 27 – 4 pm - St. Paul's, Easter Sunday**



## Why Do Folks Participate in Bible Study Anyway?



There are as many reasons why as there are people who come to these sessions, but it is probably still a good question to ask oneself – more than once, beyond the simple replies, and by truly listening for an answer from within.

One answer might be that we are seekers of God, of a deepening relationship with our creator, seekers of a closer connection to Christ and to the Christ we can find in one another. We may enjoy feeling “among” others who share a strong faith, who have questions, who are looking for a deeper understanding of the Bible and its context, who wonder... We might simply feel a need for fellowship – and on a lighter note, let’s not forget the food☺. The list goes on... Every reason is as valid as the next. Regardless of why we are present, we are offering ourselves, in a corporate way, to the presence of God for a little while. He has plans for us, whether we are aware of it or not.

Bible Study sessions can be presented in many different formats, but it would seem that the ones where trust builds, where it becomes a safe place to voice a question, or a challenge, or share an experience, allow some of the real work of God to begin. When we can receive the offerings of others with respect and curiosity, honour the uniqueness of each spiritual journey and recognize each other as equal souls in the eyes of God, we create such a place.

One of the things we should probably try to avoid is debating the “real” meaning of any given passage – where we become so tuned into our own voices that God goes unheard. We can only know what a passage says to us personally in any given moment, trusting that we have indeed listened with our heart to The Word. Sharing what resonates with us and listening to what resonates with others on the other hand, surely serves to broaden understanding and to open the mind to more possibilities. There is only one expert in the room who knows each of us intimately enough to create such resonance. If we open and listen, He will make Himself known to us and heard by us. When we do this we are seeking the One who is seeking us.

In the end, we cannot know what God has planned for each one of us at these sessions. Come with an open mind and an open heart, expecting to be surprised by the power of the Holy Spirit. Just come.

### Lenten Bible Study:

A six week Bible study will begin on Tuesday February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 6:00 PM in conjunction with St. Simeon’s, Lachute. The first session will be held at St. Aidan’s Church Hall, (Louisa), Wentworth. Location and leaders will alternate between St. Simeon’s, Lachute and churches in the PLL. A light supper will be served at 6 pm and the session will begin at 7 pm. If you cannot make it for supper, feel free to join the group at 7 pm.

Using a series from the UK called 40ACTS, “The theme this year is ‘Jesus at our table’. Jesus ate with sinners and with church leaders; he ate with thousands and with a child. He invited everyone in and accepted all invitations. Table fellowship meant friendship, peace acceptance and unconditional love: community.”

Contact Rev’d Nick Pang (450-562-2917) or Wendy Crooks (450-562-6381) if you have any questions.