

# Fourth Notes

March 2011

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## LENT 2011

### *There and Back Again*

“Journey” is one of those terms that is probably a tad overused in spiritual discourse. But it really is an apt way of articulating our lives of faith. And it’s an especially helpful image for the season of Lent. This year, the worship committee just can’t help ourselves; we want to get everybody thinking about their spiritual journey, and we’ve taken as our theme the subtitle of J.R. Tolkien’s The Hobbit: “There and Back Again.”

If you’ve never read this classic book (which is currently being made into a movie), you might want to do so as an especially fun Lenten discipline, for it is loaded with Christian images. You might also want to read it in connection with attending the Wednesday Soup N Study, where we will be thinking about and writing our own “Spiritual Adventures.”

Whether you read Tolkien or not, however, we invite ALL of you to step with great intentionality into this season of .... Journeys -- the journey of Jesus across the wilderness, into Jerusalem, and up to the cross; the journey of the Israelites across the sea and into freedom; the journey of Christians toward Easter; and *your journey* from where you’ve been to where you are going.

Many of us have “done” Lent before; but this is one of those things that truly bears repeating. The worship committee invites you to step into this time and ‘go there and back *again*’ precisely because in re-visiting this season of discipline and reflection we are best able to re-tune our lives to the heartbeat of God.

#### **Ash Wednesday service- March 9, 7pm**

We begin Lent with an Ash Wednesday communion service at 7pm. Ashes available for those who chose to have them.

#### **nightly prayer service**

Starting Thursday, March 10 and continuing through Saturday, April 23, we will have a simple prayer service every night (except Sundays). Doors open by 6pm for a time of music and meditation. Liturgy begins at 6:10 and we will be done around 6:25. A reflection each night will be presented by different members of the Fourth Church community. Communion on Wednesdays

#### **lent wednesdays: soup, study & communion**

Think of making Wednesdays in Lent a time for gathering and study. Supper is available at 5:30. We’ll have a celebration of the communion at 6pm. All welcome.

Our study time will be on “**Spiritual Adventures.**” Taking our cues from the story of *The Hobbit*, and drawing on Bible passages, we’ll reflect on adventures in general, and our own spiritual journeys, in particular.

There will be some simple writing exercises, and those who choose to dive deeply can work on writing their own spiritual autobiography. Others may choose to write of the journey in adventure language a la Tolkien!

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 9; and we move through the 40 days and nights of the season all the way up to Easter on April 24.

Traditionally, there are some rich ways to practice this faith: by study, by prayer, by service, by worship... by any of a number of disciplines. Consider observing a discipline this season, some sort of daily or weekly practice that – in time -- creates a window for God to move in your life. Fourth Church is offering several opportunities to help folks practice a discipline during this time of wilderness traveling. You might want to commit to private prayer every day (our homemade devotion book is available March 6, thanks to Sarah Manouchehri). Or you might want to commit to attending prayer service one night a week, or even several nights (always at 6pm). You might want to try choir for Lent, or volunteer with the youth group, or help with tutoring. You might want to take part in the Wednesday Soup & Study Class) or a Sunday morning class, where Katie Cole will lead us in the creation and use of a labyrinth.. (We might also have a class on fasting... stay tuned.)

One of the great things about Lent is that it is long enough to let you get into a particular discipline; but it still has an end point, making it easier for most of us to begin the discipline in the first place.

Have a blessed season. Use these opportunities as they are helpful. Go there and back again, and let it change you.

#### **Healing service, Apr 10**

As we go “there and back again” during the Sundays of Lent, we will open our hearts to healing in a special worship service on April 10, 10:30am. Feel free to invite friends who might benefit from intentional prayers for wholeness and healing.

#### **Sunday Class: The Labyrinth Society!**

Katie Cole takes our Sunday School class for adults into a new direction for the season of Lent. Drawing on an ancient prayer practice, Katie will lead us in the creation and use of a labyrinth. We will be painting a maze of sorts on a 20 ft. by 20 ft. canvas. Once it is finished, we will all have the chance to pray while

slowly walking the labyrinth, perhaps with candlelight, music and/or readings. It is an aide to prayer, and one especially appropriate given this year's Lenten prayer.

The creation will begin Sunday March 6, after service, and we hope to have it ready for use by March 27. See Katie Cole for more details!

## **Parade hospitality- March 20**

Sunday, March 20, the St. Patrick's Day parade comes by Fourth Church late in the afternoon. This always makes for an interesting Sunday, but we have learned to EMBRACE the Ripple in our Routine and do some fund-raising while we practice hospitality.

People will want to use our restrooms. We let them, and we give them a chance to support our ministry along the way.

We sell hot dogs, baked goods, soda, etc.... AND we will sell raffle tickets for TWO Celtics tickets on March 25.

We would appreciate helpers and baked goods! Barbara Faith is not able to lead us this year, so we are especially eager to find those key volunteers to help Kathy Burger, Dave McKenzie and Jonathan Pierce make this a great day.

(And PS- it's a fun day to hang out at church. Food, interesting visitors, and Katie Cole leading the painting of the labyrinth.)

## **March 27- Appreciation Day & Cameroonian Dinner**

Every year, the deacons lead us in a special Sunday of appreciation. It's a chance to duly note the remarkable ministry of the people in our pews. In the weeks leading up to that day, we'll have a chance to name particular people in writing and thank them for:

singing, cleaning, repairing, caring, praying... whatever their particular contribution to ministry might be.

Typically, we do this in April; but Easter is quite late this year, so we are doing some Appreciating as part of our Lenten journey – March 27, to be exact.. That will be a day to practice the spiritual discipline of GRATITUDE.

Being a Sunday on the way to Easter, it will also be a day to have a feast! This year, Franco Akum is organizing a Cameroonian Meal. (Incredible, eh?) He asks that we take the money that we might have spent on a dish of food for the potluck, and put it in a special basket that Sunday. Those funds will support the church.

Thank you, Franco. Thank you deacons. Thanks, everybody, for your many contributions.

## **Passion play- April 17**

The Passion Play will be presented Sunday, April 17, and will primarily be selections from "Jesus Christ Superstar." Interested musicians should come to Wednesday choir rehearsals (7:15-8:30). There will also be a role for readers. Contact Burns if interested.

## **Jungle Book, Sound of Music and Willy Wonka....**

SIX BIG DAYS OF THEATER are coming, SEVEN if you count the Passion Play rendition of Jesus Christ Superstar!

The details:

"Jungle Book" is presented Thursday, March 3, at 7pm, and Friday morning, March 4 at 10am. This is a piece of our new partnership with the nearby Perkins elementary school. These children are all brand new to theater!

"Sound of Music" goes up on April 1 and 2 (Friday and Saturday) at 7pm. This is our "workshop"

production for some of our older kids in theater. They are terrific!

"Willy Wonka" then storms into the space with a couple dozen Oompah Loompahs on April 8 and 9 and 7pm. Kids as young as 5 bring the chocolate factory to life. Awesome.

Music and dance recitals on April 10, in the afternoon!

And then there is Jesus Christ Superstar in church on April 17. Lots of great shows. Come on down!

## **Looking ahead... Fourth Fest May 6**

On the other side of Easter (April 24), be sure to save Friday, May 6 for our Fourth Fest Fund-raiser at the Carpenter's Center (750 Dorchester Avenue). We are celebrating our 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary and raising funds to renovate the sanctuary. Tickets will be \$50 and there will again be a silent and live auction! Please help us get auction items!

**prayers...** We pray for :

Dave Courage, who injured his back at work.

The Van Vellers and the McDonoughs, both expecting their first child.

Phyllis Curtis, who has had a hard time leaving her home this winter.

Dot Tully, who has been ill but is recovering,

Tatum Bezan, who had some time in the hospital, but is doing well now and has gained 3 lbs.!

Dave McKenzie, who also is recuperating from hospital time.

Kelly Schomburg, who celebrates some wonderful options for college next year!

The Stanfields, who are traveling with Lift Up Africa (Amanda Rose's organization) to do work in Kenya.

Cori Williams-visiting on Mar 20

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