

What's Happening at St. Mary of the Hills

February 2022



Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

From Fr. Andrew's January 23rd Sermon

*"Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? ...
It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets.
Usbers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews.
- Annie Dillard, 'Teaching a Stone to Talk'*

On Sunday, January 23rd, we read from the eighth chapter of the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, a recounting of the return of God's people to Jerusalem and their response to the destruction of the Temple, the hub of their religious life and their connection to the Divine. Building on the work of Presbyterian scholar, W. Lester Carter, I suggested that there are four principles for worship that we, followers of Jesus separated from this scene by two and half millennia, do well to remember and reaffirm -

First, worship remains and is principally an act that we do together, in community. In his book *Being Christian*, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams writes, "there is no way of being a Christian without being in the neighborhood of other Christians." We need one another. We need to be with one another.

Our communal acts of worship are offered in a sacred place yet take us on a journey, to the presence of the living God. Worship of the living God does not leave us where we began. Perhaps we orderly and reserved Episcopalians would do well to bow our heads with our faces to the ground in response to the holiness we encounter when we gather.

Our worship is oriented toward the living presence of the Word made Flesh, Jesus the Christ, who is made known to us, again and again, in the ancient words of sacred scripture and the tangible grace of the sacraments. Jesus the Christ is the beginning and the end of our adoration, he alone our hope and our salvation.

And, not least, worship transforms our lives as we participate. We see who we truly are; we see who God truly is. We see our brokenness, our finitude; we see God's mercy and love in infinite display. We see the brokenness and pain of the world we inhabit and are so changed by the beauty of God's holiness that we are so moved to go and cultivate such beauty in the world.

My friends, may we dare not take for granted the immense, transforming power of what we do together, disciples who worship the living God, day by day, here and now.



Discerning God in Community

A four-week series led by Fr. Sam Tallman, featuring reflections from Br. David Vyroff and Br. Curtis Almquist from the Society of St. John the Evangelist.

Each of the four sessions will be held via Zoom at 3:30PM on the Mondays in February (7-28). Contact Fr. Sam (sam@stmaryofthehills.org) for more information and to register.

Rector's Forum – Special Edition

Too often, the Church only talks about finances during the season in which we invite folks to make a pledge for the coming year. Would you like to learn more about how we fund our common mission and ministry?

On Sunday, February 20th, join Fr. Andrew and Parish Treasurer, Amanda White, for a conversation about St. Mary of the Hills annual budget.



Men's Breakfast Returns

Men's Breakfast returns on Thursday, February 24th – Holy Eucharist is offered at 7:30AM in the Church with a hearty breakfast and good conversation following at 8:00AM in the Parish Hall.

All are welcome!

Feast Days in February

The Feast of the Presentation (also known as 'Candlemas') will be observed on Wednesday, February 2nd at 12:00 PM.

The Feast of St. Matthias will be observed on Thursday, February 24th at 7:30 AM.

