

# The Carillon



Volume 126, Issue 131, March, 2015

Email articles to:  
office@carolinechurch.net

My Dear Friends in Christ,

As we continue to experience the bitter cold of winter, it seems implausible that on March 20 we will enter the first day of Springtime. My guess is that the change of seasons cannot come too soon for most of us.

With the seasons of the church year, it was just several weeks ago beginning with Ash Wednesday, that we considered our Lenten discipline - what we would do to empty ourselves of self and fill ourselves with God. In the midst of Lent, perhaps we should review our personal rule and see how we are doing.

Someone recently wished me a happy Lent, and as he said that I thought about how many people would probably question the happiness of a penitential season. For a Christian, though, Lent is a happy season of sorts, for we are always looking to the future, looking to where everything will lead us. We know that we must prepare for anything of value. To really appreciate anything, we must prepare. So often people state that when they hand something to their child, he or she really doesn't appreciate it. It is only after they have given of him or herself that the child appreciates the value of the gift.

So it is with Lent. We can never appreciate the fasting of Jesus unless we fast. We can never appreciate His passion unless we participate with Him in the Lenten discipline. Richard Foster in Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth says that "superficiality is the curse of our age." Caught between our desire for instant gratification and the tyranny of time and possessions, we live on the surface, frantically running just to keep up with everything. So we miss the deeper things of life. Our spiritual life is shallower than it might be.

Christians have known through the ages that the spiritual disciplines - study, meditation, fasting, prayer, simplicity, service, confession, worship - are paths to spiritual growth. These are not just for spiritual giants and beyond our reach. God meant them for ordinary people who have jobs and care for children, who sweep the floor and shovel the snow. They are for beginners as well as for the seasoned. They are not drudgery; God means them for our joy.

The Psalmist reminds us, "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." Are we going to be satisfied with some supermarket brand instead of the finest wine that God is offering? The Bible assumes that we will fast and pray and worship and serve but gives almost no instruction about how to do it. That's because the disciplines were so common, such a part of the general culture. Jesus didn't say "If you fast" or "If you pray." He said "When ..."

A clear understanding of the purpose of discipline is important. Spiritual discipline is training for one thing only - for our spirits to be open to God and his work. In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul reminds us that it is one thing to sow to the flesh and quite another to sow to the Spirit. "*For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*" (Gal 6:8). Spiritual discipline is quite a bit like sowing seeds; only God can bring growth and fruit. The goal is not to be "good" or "righteous" but to open the door to God. We are kidding ourselves if we believe that by willpower we can become perfect. We are deceived if our discipline is driven by a need to be superior in any way, or to control the outcome. Then we are "sowing to the flesh." For example, fasting is a spiritual discipline. The goal is not dieting. Nor is it a hunger strike to manipulate God to give us what we seek. As Foster points out, "To use good things to our own ends is always the sign of false religion."

Inner righteousness is a gift from God to be graciously received. Our goal is always to know the giver of the gift, to

## ***Our Caroline Church Vision Statement:***

*To help people encounter the living God together  
and live transformed lives for Christ.*



## ***Our Mission Statement***

\* *We, the parishioners of Caroline Church of Brookhaven, are committed to Jesus Christ, to His teaching, His life, death and resurrection, in our call to serve and worship Him, in the tradition of the Anglican Communion.*

\* *We strive to share our faith and blessings for the furtherance of His kingdom in an environment of love, understanding, and support, through prayer, worship, Christian education, and fellowship.*

draw closer to the God incarnate Jesus Christ. An equal danger is allowing the spiritual disciplines to degenerate into law. Law-bound disciplines breathe death and not life. They become tools to manipulate and imprison others. Pride follows as we begin to believe we are the right kind of people.

God is not interested in “I must!” but in “I want to” and “I choose to.” He is interested in a freely chosen relationship with each of us. If we are to mature, we also need to set aside the burden of needing to manage others. That more than any other thing will turn the spiritual disciplines into laws. Give up the notion that to be holy everyone must go to confession or fast on Good Friday or speak in tongues or pray a certain way. The most eloquent prayer I ever heard was a short stumbling sentence from the heart.

In her wisdom the Church has set aside several seasons - Lent and Advent - that remind us of the grace of spiritual disciplines. But we can practice them any time. For example, you will search in vain to find biblical laws that command regular fasting so we are free to fast on any day. Over the centuries Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent) and Good Friday (the day of the Crucifixion) have been popular times to fast. Our Book of Common Prayer commends it on those days (BCP p. 17). The penitential seasons of Lent and Advent remind us of the value of self-examination and confession but we are able to seek the sacrament of reconciliation at any time. Freedom in the gospel means opportunity.

And so we grow in spiritual disciplines. We learn to walk before we run. The disciplines of the spiritual life are the means that place us where God can bless us. They place us on the path of grace. The path itself does not change us; God does.

Here are some suggestions for adults this Lent:

- Be at Caroline church each Sunday for worship.
- Pick a day to fast. (This can be a fast of one meal or all day but do include liquids).
- Choose a discipline of study by attending the Lenten Soup Supper series we are offering on March 4, 11, and 18. Or by participating in the Interfaith Educational Series on Faith taking place on Sundays at 3:00 pm on March 1, 8 and 15 within the Three Villages.
- Pickup, read and meditate with the help of the Lenten Booklets available at the entrance way of our Church.
- Simplify your activities or your possessions and use the freedom provided for God.

- Adopt a discipline of service: for example, a service of guarding reputations by avoiding gossip or thoughtless words, a service of hospitality by inviting another to a meal or a walk, a service of listening, perhaps to a spouse instead of a sports event or perhaps to someone lonely.

Here are some suggestions for Children to learn about the disciplines, too:

- With help they can choose their own discipline, perhaps to give up grumbling about a chore, to give some of their toys to a children’s home.
- They can be faithful in attending Sunday morning Christian Ed classes and Children’s Chapel at Caroline.
- Using markers, have children draw a target with six circles. Then have them use pencils to fill in people and places to pray for. In the outer circle, they can write a country. In the next circle, they can write a family in their neighborhood. The rest of the circles can represent a friend, teacher, or family member. In the center, have children write something they’d like to pray for themselves. After a week, erase those requests and fill in new ones.

All of this is headed somewhere, though. It is heading to Resurrection; it is heading toward a oneness with God. In order to appreciate Easter, we must understand Good Friday. Please plan on participating in the whole action of Christ this Holy Season: the triumphant entry on Palm Sunday; the last supper on Holy Thursday; the anguish of death on Good Friday; and the joy of new life on Easter. To miss one of these liturgies is to miss the true drama of Easter. “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the Feast.”

Growing the presence of Christ,  
Cn. Richard+

*Don't Forget.....*

**Buy Gift Cards for  
Stop & Shop / King Kullen /  
Wild by Nature**

At coffee hour on Sunday or  
at the church office during the week!

Parishioners buy a \$ 50 gift card,  
spend \$50 @ store of choice  
Store gives CAROLINE \$\$\$\$

## Fr. Farrell Graves

### Reconsidering Original Sin

Though original sin is never mentioned by Christ, many Christians treat it as if it were the gospel truth. Despite being based on an interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures, the concept of inherited sin is rare in Judaism (and non-existent in Islam). Christ and all the apostles, being Jews, could not have considered Genesis in the light of original sin. In fact, the concept originated in the second century with Irenaeus Bishop of Lyons and was developed further by later thinkers. Over the centuries in Christianity, a great breadth of understanding of the import of original sin has developed that range from a tendency to turn away from God all the way to the reformed church's understanding of the total depravity of human beings. Whether foreseen or unintended, the temptation of Adam and Eve clarifies the origin of sin. It stems from our desire to be like God, to know what God knows, and it separates us from God and the full joy of relationship with God. The question is, did God not foresee this?

In other words, the question I would like to propose about the implications of the theology of original sin is, are we to understand that God was caught off guard? There are two accounts of creation, the Yahwist account (c. 850 BC, starting at Genesis 2:4b) in which we find the temptation, and the later, priestly account (c. 500 BC; Gen 1:31), in which God pronounces pleasure with everything about creation ("God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."). Did God create the world, pronounce it all good and in proper order, and then discover that human beings were not as God had intended, after all? In other words, is the temptation, which we find in the older, Yahwist account of creation, an explanation of a foreseen and necessary consequence of how we were created, or is it an unforeseen defect in creation that is transmitted from person to person? The writers of the priestly account 350 years later who describe the creation as "very good" clearly saw no reason to read any sense of unforeseen consequences into the Yahwist account, unless we understand that their intention was to correct an error in the Yahwist account by saying that "it was very good."

If we propose that God did not intend to create us as we are, then we must accept that we are a disappointment to God, not just on occasion, but in our very nature. Our unsatisfactory incompleteness, our human frailty, our difference from God must therefore be cured or overlooked (wrapped in grace). Knowing that we are such a disappointment inclines us toward suppression, toward hiding our imperfection. What I have observed is that, despite the doctrine of grace and Christ's atonement, those Christians who feel that they suffer from an unintended defect indeed

attempt to hide it and have difficulty opening their hearts to relate as Christ taught us. This leads to a life of insincerity. It prevents us from being honest with one another and with God, thus inhibiting relationship and the joy that derives from it. The church becomes a museum in which everyone struggles to be admired by projecting the illusion of perfection.

If we instead assume that God did not make a mistake, that God, recognizing that perfect things are closed, like noble gases, and unable to relate, created us incomplete so that we could compliment one another, so that we could relate, then the church becomes a different place. A church without original sin is a place in which people can be honest about their inadequacies so that those who have complementary gifts can use those gifts to supplement that which is lacking in their brother or sister.

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## Our Anglican Heritage

### Chad of Lichfield

Saint Chad, Bishop of Lichfield in the seventh century, lived during a troubled period of controversy and change in the English Church. One of four brothers educated at the monastery at Lindesfarne, Chad succeeded his brother St. Cedd, as Abbot of Lastingham. The Celtic tradition in which Chad was raised and educated had developed independently of the Roman Church of the continent. At the Synod of Whitby in 664, Chad had defended the liturgical and administrative practices of the Celtic Church; yet when the Synod ruled in favor of the Roman customs, Chad gracefully accepted and supported the Church's decision.

Subsequently, Chad was appointed Bishop of York by King Oswy during the long absence of the previous appointee, who had gone to the continent to receive consecration. Shortly thereafter Theodore of Tarsus became Archbishop of Canterbury, the first to be acknowledged throughout England as head of the English Church. In the course of his program to reorganize and unify the Church, Theodore denied the legitimacy of Chad's appointment and questioned his consecration. Chad willingly and graciously resigned. Greatly impressed with Chad's humility and devotion, Theodore reconsecrated him and sent him to be Bishop of Lichfield.

As Bishop, Chad was a dedicated and tireless pastor and missionary. One innovation which he eventually adopted was the use of a horse. The Celtic bishops, in accordance with the example of the apostles and the strict rule of poverty they embraced, had made all of

their journeys on foot. Archbishop Theodore realized that in order to administer so large a diocese effectively, Chad would need more efficient means of transportation. According to the Venerable Bede, a historian of that time, "Theodore himself did lift him on horseback with his own hands." In this way Chad was able to travel widely, visiting, preaching the Gospel, and administering the sacraments. He journeyed as far as North Lincolnshire, where he is credited with founding the great monastery at Barrow.

Chad remained at Lichfield, living in great simplicity and sanctity, constantly studying, praying and caring for his people, until his death of the plague in 672. It is said that he greeted with joy the choirs of angels who appeared to escort him to his Lord. His life and ministry is celebrated throughout the Episcopal Church every year on March 2.



## Interfaith Three Village Education Program:

“What’s Faith Got to Do With It?”  
Sunday afternoons at 3:00 p.m.

### Session 1/March 1st:

Faith and Personal Struggle at Temple Isaiah, 1404 Stony Brook Rd., Stony Brook.

### Session 2/March 8th:

Faith and Family/Communal Life at All Souls’ Church, 61 Main St., Stony Brook.

### Session 3/March 15th:

Faith and the Public Realm at the Selden Mosque, 10 Park Hill Dr., Selden.

Come to hear how we live out our faith in the public arena from an Interreligious prospective.



## Lent: A Journey of Reflection

Join us three Wednesdays at Caroline for a prayerful and reflective Lent. Each gathering begins in the Marco Smith Building at 6:30pm and ends at 8:00pm. Babysitting will be provided, and a special program for children will be offered.

**March 4**, we will have a soup supper followed by a quiz and presentation about the history and meaning of Lent.

**March 11**, we will meet for a soup supper followed by a brief reflection and chanted compline to provide some time to be quiet with God, free of excessive information.

**March 18**, we will again have a soup supper, short reflection, and chanted compline.

Come prepare your hearts for the Resurrection.

## Lent Madness 2015

*Who will Win the Golden Halo?*

Join in this fun Lenten activity for the whole parish family as the clergy of Caroline challenge you all to take part in Lent Madness, a playoff of saints competing for the Golden Halo award? Lent Madness got underway on Ash Thursday, and it has been sweeping the nations! More than 10,000 people from around the globe have voted each day, and you, too, can join the madness by voting daily (Monday — Friday) for your favorite saint of the day.

Simply log on each day to: <http://www.lentmadness.org/> to be enlightened about the two saints competing that day, and then cast your net ...er ...vote for your favorite. It’s that simple, and it’s great fun to see who wins when the polls close! Who will be in the Saintly Sixteen, Elate Eight, and Final Four? Who will win the Golden Halo?

## Eastertide Decorations

We are now accepting contributions for Easter decorations in the Church. If you would like to make a gift of flowers for the altar on Easter Sunday, please fill out and return the form below to the Parish Office, 1 Dyke Rd., Setauket, NY 11733, by no later than Sunday, **March 29th**. Any gifts received after March 29th, will be placed in the following weeks bulletin. Please make checks out to the 'Caroline Church', with "Easter flowers" noted on the memo portion of the check.

### My Offering for Easter Flowers

In loving memory of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print names clearly)

In Thanksgiving for \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print names clearly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Envelope No. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to 'Caroline Church' and mail to the Parish Office, or place in the collection plate.

## Vestry Retreat for 2015

On February 7 members of the Vestry participated in their annual retreat at Little Portion Friary. New member and returning Vestrypersons filled out the roster. The day began at 9:30 a.m. with Cn. Richard leading the Vestry in Morning Prayer, followed by a reflection on things Jesus never said. It was a busy morning, as members reviewed the mission of Christ's church, Caroline Church's Vision, Mission, Goal and Objective Statements, examined the vestry's calling to be leaders, and reflected on how we are to relate to each other as understood in our Vestry Covenant.

The Vestry attended a noonday Holy Eucharist with the Brothers, and shared a meal with that community. After lunch, the vestry did a mutual ministry review with Cn. Richard. We reflected on our desire for us to reach out to the community, inviting the unchurched to join our parish family. We also sought ways to have more parishioners involved and committed to the ministry and worship of our parish. We evaluated last year's goals, and set new ones for 2015. Various Vestry Committee assignments were made and counting teams, bible study sign-ups, and Diocesan expectations were reviewed.

These goals were developed for 2015:

- Develop ways to help increase membership, promote new parishioner church involvement in the life of the parish and develop and implement an assimilation program for new members. The Publicity and Welcoming Ministry Team will advance this goal.
- Encourage greater community use of our facilities, especially with programs that would generate significant income. The Community Service Committee will move this forward.
- To stabilize the Christian Education program and leadership currently in place for the spiritual education of our children, strengthen our Youth Ministry program and Sunday Nursery Care. The Clergy and the Christian Education Committee will coordinate this effort.
- Take steps that would increase the likelihood of closing the Financial and Budgetary Gap. The Finance and Investment Committees will take the lead in this effort.

The Vestry believes, with God's blessing and the commitment of all parishioners, that we will move forward on the goals established for 2015.

## Caroline Book Club

The Book Club will not be meeting in March. Next meeting will be in April - date and book to be decided at our February meeting.

## CYC Youth Group

CYC and Church School will be co-hosting the Lenten Soup Supper on Wednesday, March 11. Please let Lindsay know if you can contribute a pot of soup, bread, drinks or cookies and if you can help set up or clean up.

The CYC will meet in the Cave after the Maundy Thursday service on April 2nd to stuff eggs and watch a movie. We will also have an opportunity to take half-hour shifts in the Nightwatch, lasting until 11:00pm.

## Youth Mission Trip Fundraiser

Help us support the youth mission trip by attending  
The new live-action film of

### Cinderella

Saturday, March 21, 2015, 9:30am

(Doors open at 9:00am)

PJ Cinemas, Port Jefferson Station

Tickets are \$10/person

Ticket price includes the movie, small popcorn and soda

Come enjoy the movie with family and friends

Proceeds go toward the Youth Mission Trip  
to Washington DC

For Tickets, see Lynn Campbell [lynnc319@optonline.net](mailto:lynnc319@optonline.net)

Buy your tickets by Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup>!



## Tenebrae Service

Wednesday, April 1st

7:00 p.m.

In the tradition of the Church, we are offering a service of Tenebrae on Wednesday evening of Holy Week, April 16th, at 7:00 p.m.

The word "tenebrae" is Latin for "darkness" or "shadows," and this liturgy has been offered in monasteries and churches since ancient times.

We will read from the Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet, and from the Psalms, and we will pray as the candle light diminishes, and as hope is restored.

Come, bring a friend, and experience darkness and light in a new way as part of your Holy Week journey.

## HOLY WEEK DATES:

**March 29th - Palm Sunday**

**April 1st - Tenebrae Service**

**April 2nd - Maundy Thursday**

**April 3rd - Good Friday**



## Sonshine Ministries

The Sonshine Ministry is here for **YOU!** Let us make your life easier as you or a loved one recuperates. Many fellow parishioners are on hand to bring a hot meal to your home. All that's required is to **ASK!** If you, or someone you know is in need of this ministry, please contact Dianne Johnson, 473-7913; Claire Mis 689-1210 or [cmis@hotmail.com](mailto:cmis@hotmail.com); or Barbara Delfyett at 751-3658.

## The Watch

**The Watch** will take place starting at 9:00pm on Maundy Thursday, April 2nd through 10:00am Good Friday Morning. **Please see the sign up sheet in the back of the church.** This is a good time to spend alone with God in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

### Gethsemane

*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. "He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." 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." Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.' Matthew 26:36-45 (NIV)*



# HOLY WEEK

## Parish Family News

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Anthony & Allison Coleman on the birth of their son, Alexander Robert into this world on January 29th. He was 8 lb 4 oz and 22.5" long. Mom & son are doing fine - dad's holding up well too!

**CONGRATULATIONS:** Katie Griesel was accepted into the 2015 School of Orchestral Studies of the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) summer program in Saratoga Springs at Skidmore College. Only 90 students are selected into the program - and just 3 of them are oboists. With auditions taking place at 12 locations statewide, we were very nervous about her chances but are so thankful for the happy outcome! She will attend the school for 4 weeks in the summer.

*Parishioner News Events: Please send items of interest (weddings, accomplishments etc.) to Maritza Groth at [mgroth@aol.com](mailto:mgroth@aol.com) or Irene Ruddock at [peace2429@optonline.net](mailto:peace2429@optonline.net)*

## SAVE THE DATE

March 21- 6:00pm

"Songs for the Soul"

*An Evening with the Sweet Carolines*

ALL SOUL'S SATURDAYS AT SIX CONCERT

All Souls' Church

61 Main St.

Stony Brook, NY

## Looking for Readers

We are looking for some people who would like to be a part of the "Passion's", which take place during Holy Week. You do *not* have to be a 'regular' reader to participate in this ministry.

Please call Janet in the parish office if you would like to read a part. You only have to read for 1 service.

### **Palm Sunday:**

#### **8:00am:**

Narrator, Pilate, Soldier/Centurion, Passer-by/  
Bystander, Chief Priest, Scribe.

#### **9:30am:**

Narrator, High Priest, Bystander / Witness, Disciple,  
Peter, Judas , Servant Girl, Pilate, Soldier / Centurion.

#### **11:15am:**

Narrator, High Priest, Bystander / Witness, Disciple,  
Peter, Judas , Servant Girl, Pilate, Soldier / Centurion.

### **Good Friday 7:00pm:**

Narrator, Soldier / Slave, Witness / Guard, Peter, Po-  
lice / Elder 1, Pilate, Priest / Elder 2 .

### **Holy Saturday 7:00pm:**

Creation - Genesis 1:1-2:4

Flood - Genesis 7:1-5, 11-18; 8:6-18, 9:8-13

Deliverance - Exodus 14:10-15:20-21

Cleansing - Ezekiel 36:24-28

Salvation - Isaiah 55:1-11

# CELEBRATING HOLY WEEK 2015

The rites of Holy Week (March 29th-April 5th) are ancient and by nature different from the liturgical celebrations of the rest of the Church Year. This difference is meant to focus our attention on the mysteries being celebrated in this sacred time. If the time between Palm Sunday and Easter Day seems endless, it is with a purpose. Time is suspended as we reflect on and celebrate the great mysteries of our salvation.

## Passion/Palm Sunday

8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am Holy Eucharist and Blessing of The Palms

Palm or Passion Sunday, celebrated this year on March 29th, begins with the outdoor blessing of the palms and a symbolic procession into the Church, with our children at half past nine o'clock. This service also includes a dramatic Gospel reading of our Lord's passion. Our liturgy recalls Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, but also demonstrates that our Lord's mission was to go to the cross.

## Maundy Thursday

7:00pm Choral Holy Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar, & Nightwatch

Maundy Thursday, observed this year on April 2nd, will begin with a representation of Our Lord's Institution of the Holy Eucharist. The service also recalls the law of love, in Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet. At the conclusion of the service after the sacred vessels are reserved at an altar of repose, the altar and chancel area are stripped of all furnishings to symbolize the complete emptying of Jesus, even to death on a cross. Most of us then depart in silence; some will remain to begin the Gethsemane Watch at the Altar of Repose. These hours of prayer and watch will last until ten o'clock Friday morning.

## Good Friday

10:00am Stations of the Cross

12 noon Three Village Ecumenical Service

5:00pm Children's Good Friday Service

7:00pm Good Friday Liturgy

On this day we remember Jesus' death on the Cross. For the Stations of the Cross, we will gather to pause for prayer, versicle and response, and the reading of Scripture as we ponder a series of depictions of events in the narrative of Christ's passion. The Good Friday liturgy in the evening includes John's passion account, the Solemn Collects, a sermon, Veneration of the Cross, and music. Good Friday is a day of fasting, abstinence, and penance.

## Holy Saturday

8:00am Liturgy of the Word

8:30 – 9:30am Sacrament of Penance

There is no Eucharist this morning. A brief Liturgy of the Word will be offered focusing on the time Christ lay in His tomb before the Easter resurrection. The opportunity for you to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation is extended.

## Easter Eve

7:00pm The Great Vigil of Easter, April 4th

With the ancient Jewish custom of worshipping from sunset to sunset in mind, on this exciting day we celebrate the Feast of Christ's resurrection from the dead. This lengthy but beautiful liturgical experience is the central and most important rite of the entire Christian year. Since the third century, this rich service begins in darkness with the lighting of the new fire, from which the Paschal candle is lighted. The Easter Vigil continues with lessons, which trace the history of God's people in the Old Testament, the renewal of our Baptismal vows, and the first Eucharist of Easter. Exquisite flowers, 'Alleluias', bell ringing and glorious hymns mark Easter. Come and give God joyful praise as we enjoy fellowship and the hope of eternal life.

## Easter Day

The Sunday of the Resurrection: Easter Day April 5th

6:30am Sunrise Service (Setauket Beach)

8:00am Choral Festal Holy Eucharist

9:30am Family Holy Eucharist

11:15am Choral Festal Holy Eucharist

The Celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter Sunday will take place with joyful music, glorious flowers and striking vestments. The Fifty Days of Easter feasting begins as we remember what Our Lord has accomplished for us!

# What the Bible Says About Church Membership

The church is not a country club

1 Corinthians 12:27–28

It was a big deal for this young boy living in a small Southern town. I didn't know what a country club was, but I knew one was coming. And it included a swimming pool, a dining area, and meeting rooms. The owners also promised to build a small golf course, a promise they would fulfill a couple years later.

Now don't get the wrong impression. This country club was not the typical upscale club we often envision. It was really a small private enterprise trying to make a few bucks in a small town by offering a few amenities.

But I was overwhelmed. My parents were middle-class in income, so they could afford the small monthly fee. From my perspective, though, I had it made. I could now go to a swimming pool. I didn't know of anyone who had their own pool in town, so this was exciting. I could order a burger from the dining area. And we could have birthday parties in the pool or the meeting rooms.

I began to learn a lesson. Membership means perks. Membership means privileges. Membership means others will serve me. Just pay the going rate, and you can have others taking care of you while you enjoy a life of leisure. And, tragically, this understanding of membership is what many church members hold.

- “This is my church, so you have to play the music just the way I want it.”
- “Look pastor, you need to remember who pays your salary.”
- “If you don't do this program, I'll withhold my check to the church.”
- “I've been a member of this church for over 30 years, so I have a right to get what I want.”
- “I don't pay good money to this church to listen to sermons that long.”

Okay, you get the picture. Those unfortunately typical comments come from members of churches who have an unbiblical view of membership. Their view of membership is more aligned with country club membership. For them, membership is about receiving instead of giving, being served instead of serving, rights instead of responsibilities, and entitlements instead of sacrifices. This wrongful view of membership sees the tithes and offerings as membership dues that entitle members to a never-ending list of privileges and expectations, instead of an unconditional cheerful gift to God.

So, what does the Bible say about church membership?  
I'm glad you asked.

## Membership Means We Are All Necessary Parts of the Whole

There are a number of places in the New Testament where we can see a clear picture of church membership. One of the more voluminous sections is 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explains the metaphor of the church being a body with many members. In 1 Corinthians 13, he establishes love as the central attitude and action all members should have. And in 1 Corinthians 14, he returns to the messed-up church at Corinth that has the concept of membership all wrong.

Some church leaders and members view membership as a modern business or organizational concept, so they reject the label as unbiblical. Membership, to the contrary, is very biblical. The Bible explains “members” differently than secular culture. For example, look at the term in 1 Corinthians 12:27–28: “Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it. And God has placed these in the church.”

Do you get the difference? Members of a church comprise the whole and are essential parts of it. The apostle Paul would carry the body metaphor further and explain that members are individual parts of the body. Some are eyes; others are ears. Some are feet; still others are hands. That is why he concludes: “For as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many are one body—so also is Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12).

## Membership Means We Are Different but We Still Work Together

With a country club membership you pay others to do the work for you. With church membership, everyone has a role or function. That is why some are hands, feet, ears, or eyes. We are all different, but we are necessary parts of the whole.