



# THE CANTERBURY CROSS

St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church, Morgantown, WV

March 2017

## Open Your Lenten 'Fasting' To Be 'Sharing' of Blessings

*(The following column is an excerpt from the sermon delivered on Ash Wednesday, March 1, by The Rev. Deacon Al Prichard.)*

Ash Wednesday, as we all know, is the first day of the Lenten season: the 40 days of preparation for Easter. We think of it as a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice, and good works. Even from the earliest times of Church history, there is evidence that Christians underwent special preparation for Easter and that penance, sacrifice, and fasting were a significant part of it.

Pope Gregory wrote St. Augustine of Canterbury that during this time “[w]e abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese, and eggs.” This developed into the practice of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and of the blessing of Easter eggs at the end of Lent.

Even though the practices have changed over the centuries, the primary purpose of Lent has remained—repent, get right with God, and get ready to celebrate the mystery of the resurrection that leads to our salvation. And, we obediently go through the required practices and various services, including receiving ashes on Ash Wednesday.

But we continue to be cautioned that doing what is required may not meet with God’s blessing and approval if we are doing them for the wrong reasons. In today’s gospel lesson (Matthew 6:1-6; 16-21), Jesus discusses three important actions of our piety—almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. But, Jesus was critical of anyone performing these actions when they lacked the inward conviction for doing so. These practices will only meet God’s favor if one has the inward piety and the spiritual conviction and understand of what is important to God.

Our reading today from Isaiah (58: 1-12) gets to heart of this problem. “Why do we fast, but you do not see? . . . Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day. . . .” Isaiah speaks of fasting as an attempted act of worship. Yet for many, it is an act of hypocrisy. A true fast, according to Isaiah, would result in a sharing of our food with the hungry, the sharing of our home with the homeless, the sharing of our clothing with the naked.

Isaiah tells us that those who fast in this way will receive God’s blessing and will benefit from it. It appears that for God the true purpose for fasting, for sacrifice, for any act of repentance is to repair one’s relationship with God. And by so doing, live one’s life in a manner that reflects what is important to God—to do justice and to love kindness.

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## Let’s Welcome the Stranger

*by Grace Ayscue*

Sometimes when you prepare for one thing, something altogether different happens.

Last January, Morgantowners began preparing to welcome families of refugees from the civil war in Syria, but Syrians without family connections were not allowed to resettle here.

Instead, in December, Morgantown became the new home of a delightful 22-year-old Ugandan refugee, Hydary Bossa.

Hydary had fled Uganda while still in college, after his family turned him in to authorities following the extremely harsh 2013 Anti-Homosexuality Act. He escaped to avoid life imprisonment – or worse.

But life in Kenya also proved quite difficult. LGBTQ Ugandan refugees still find discrimination and sometimes violence both in refugee camps and on the street and must keep a low profile to remain safe.

On arrival in Kenya, Hydary applied for refugee status. He became something of a leader among Ugandan refugees. In 2014, he chanced to meet a forestry researcher from Morgantown while both were volunteering at an orphanage.

Two years later, he was approved to resettle in Morgantown and the forester served as his initial sponsor. Hydary remains in daily contact with the Ugandan refugee community in Nairobi.

Last month local resident Susan Eason visited a WV Friends of Syrian Refugees meeting to ask for help with the resettlement of two additional Ugandan refugees that she is hoping to sponsor for resettlement. Susan is a member of First Presbyterian Church and one of several women that Hydary calls “the Moms.”

These volunteers have gotten to know Hydary personally and have worked together with his Charleston-based WV Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement caseworker to help him find and furnish an apartment, get a job, seek further training, and get immunizations and dental care.

If you might be interested in meeting Hydary, learning about Ugandan refugees, and joining others from St. Thomas à Becket Church to form a resettlement team for one of his friends, please contact Grace Ayscue at 304-599-8864, [grace.ayscue@gmail.com](mailto:grace.ayscue@gmail.com).

More information about sponsoring refugees for resettlement is here: <http://catholiccharitieswv.org/migration-and-refugee-services/>



## Open Your Lenten 'Fasting'

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Today it is not practical to expect to look out your door to find people with whom to share your food, your home, and your clothes. Yet we have readily at hand the means to continue to do these small acts of justice. We have just held the Empty Bowls luncheon, the purpose of which is to raise funds for the various feeding programs in the county. This need is ongoing, and we can and should do what we can, individually and as a community, to address this problem.

Additionally, we can take clothing to Christian Help. We can support organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the Bartlett House that—day in and day out—strive to provide homes for those without and to help them get their lives together so that they can keep their homes.

We can volunteer at and financially support Community Kitchen, or Meals on Wheels, or the Salvation Army, or Caritas House, or Scott's Run Settlement House, or Health Right, or any other organization that strives to help those with needs.

Look around. There are needs, and you can help. Advocate with our elected officials for just causes. Strive to improve our educational system, the availability of mental and physical health care, the various cultural and arts opportunities that not only improve the quality of life but enriches us individually and as a society. The benefits promised by God for living a righteous life include not only peace of mind but a community in which we all prosper and grow.

So, think of Ash Wednesday as a starting point of a repentant life, a giving life that advances God's wish for justice and love for all.

## Memories for Stewardship . . .

### Cherishing Our Very Early Days

*by Beth Royall, Stewardship Chair*

The second memory meeting hosted by the Stewardship Committee found Carol Beall, John Beall, Barbara Eller, and Susan Seitz gathered around the table in the parlor on February 19. The discussion flowed as one memory spurred another. Several themes emerged—children, a beloved rector, and community.

The original St. Thomas à Becket congregation (beginning in 1979) met in Drummond Chapel on Sunday afternoons. After the service, Susan Seitz recalls, the trio of Katherine Beall, Laura Conner, and Susan Frost, in their Sunday best, entertained themselves by twirling over the railing around the parking lot.

Eventually, St. Thomas progressed to having our own building—a former Girl Scout lodge, which is now the Sunday School room and offices.

At the time, Carol Beall was serving as the organist and choirmaster at Christ Episcopal Church in Fairmont; so John

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## Becket Arts Concert To Feature Bill Haller



Dr. William "Bill" Haller, our music director, will present an organ recital at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 26, as part of the Becket Arts series. He will perform compositions by Johann Sebastian Bach, Camille Saint-Saëns, and Joe Utterback. A second composition by Joe Utterback will be performed with pianist Carol Beall.

Dr. Haller is professor emeritus of organ and organ literature at West Virginia University. He received his doctor of musical arts degree from North Texas State University and both his master's and bachelor's degrees from the Eastman School of Music.

Before coming to St. Thomas à Becket Church last August, he served as director of music ministry at Edgwood Evangelical Lutheran Church in Wheeling. Until 2002, he was the organist at the Worthington United Methodist Church in Worthington, OH. He also was the organist for the Columbus Symphony.

Dr. Haller's honors include winning the National Organ Playing Competition in Fort Wayne, IN, in 1965, and tying for second place at the International Organ Playing Competition in Chartres, France, in 1974. Since 1982, Dr. Haller has been a fellow of the American Guild of Organists.

Dr. Haller has brought the organ at St. Thomas back to its original specifications from the early 1990s, especially with the restoration of the "32 foot Contra Bourdon" pedal stop.

Tickets, with proceeds benefiting the Capital Improvement Fund, will be available at the door. A reception will follow the concert.

## Prepare One Habitat Lunch For Visiting College Students

College students are coming to volunteer in our community! Be part of the community-wide effort to feed them. St. Thomas à Becket will prepare one lunch on Tuesday, March 14.

Our Outreach Committee invites you to be part of our annual prepare-pack-and-serve lunch project to help nourish the visiting volunteers. This year, a team of 30 college students are coming to Morgantown to spend their spring break working on Habitat for Humanity houses in the Decker's Creek Development (near Central Avenue and Jerome Street)

We will be preparing a simple lunch of soup, sandwiches, and cookies. Please consider volunteering to help with this fun project—the students are so appreciative! You can bake cookies, make sandwiches, and/or deliver and serve lunch. Our group will carpool to the Decker's Creek Development.

Volunteer via the sign-up sheets in the Narthex. If you have any questions about this event, please contact Kathy Fedan ([304-864-0105](tel:304-864-0105); [intothewoods@frontiernet.net](mailto:intothewoods@frontiernet.net)).

## Memories for Stewardship . . .

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and the kids were on their own at St. Thomas. Carolyn Nelson took a young Stephen Beall under her wing during the service (good practice for future grandsons?).

At that time, the Sunday School met just before the church service (with one meeting space, you make do). Susan Seitz taught the third and fourth graders. Stephen would frequently bring his friend Danny Skidmore. Each time, he politely introduced his friend, Danny, to “Mrs. Seitz.” At age 3 or 4, John Britton—Susan Seitz’s youngest son—was fixated on the wine. (Children did not receive communion until confirmation back then.) In a piping voice, John Britton would ask: “Can I have some of the blood?” and “What kind of wine was it?”

The small congregation was accustomed to rolling up their sleeves and tackling the chores. Barbara Eller produced the Sunday bulletins, working in the trailer that served as an office with her Rottweiler (“Boris”) for company. Jean Rodman could be found cleaning the toilets, and Byron and Carolyn Nelson mowing the hillsides. The first Altar Guild consisted not of four-member teams, but of *four members* total: Susan Seitz, June Downs, Mary Tomasky, and Winnie Constantine. The fledgling church was never taken for granted; everyone pitched in.

No memory meeting would be complete without reminiscences about Snork Roberts, St. Thomas à Becket’s founding rector. Barbara Eller and John Beall both recall being hugged by Snork at their first introductions. All agree—Snork was a hugger! The hugs were the outward and visible sign of Snork’s love and acceptance, which made all feel welcome. In addition to his warm and welcoming hugs, Snork is remembered for his purple socks and his favorite hymn, “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (H657).

Thanks for the memories to Carol Beall, John Beall, Barbara Eller, and Susan Seitz! And thank you to Cheryl Prichard for the great note-taking!

## Luscious Lenten Lunch Needs Cooks, Diners

Please join us after the 10:30 a.m. service on Sunday, March 19, in the Parish Hall for the first Parish Luncheon of the year, which will feature delicious fare such as chili, fresh green salad, homemade wheat rolls, fruit, and angel food cake with chocolate drizzle.

We are in need of a few other dishes, such as a vegetarian chili, a healthy sweet potato dish, and deviled (or, as they’re known during Lent, “saved”) eggs. Please contact Laura Christian ([laura.manno@gmail.com](mailto:laura.manno@gmail.com)), chair of the Special Events Committee, if you are interested in contributing your time and talent to some delicious food.

Luncheon tickets are \$10; children 12 years old and younger dine for free. Proceeds will benefit the church’s Capital Improvement Fund. We hope to see you there!



## ‘God Loves Uganda’ Spotlights Horrors

It’s fortuitous that a documentary about persecution in Uganda is being promoted in Morgantown just as local volunteers organize to assist their first refugee, Hydayr Bossa—a Ugandan refugee. He recently escaped to Morgantown. (See *Grace Ayscue’s article on page 1.*)

Others in Uganda remain at risk because of their sexual orientation. Learn about the laws and social rules that threaten the lives of Uganda’s LGBTQ community. See “God Loves Uganda” at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 4, in the Gluck Theatre, at WVU’s Mountainlair. The film is part of the West Virginia University Community Human Rights Film Festival.

Each Tuesday from March 14 through April 11, the festival will showcase one of five films. The series covers a range of themes: the aftermath of greed and guns; hidden details about the food industry; risks taken by the White Helmets (rescuers) in Syria; evangelical Americans’ negative impact on the LGBTQ community in Uganda; and the inequality of “homeless people living in the shadows” of empty luxury skyscrapers in New York.

The films will be shown on successive Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at the Gluck Theatre at the WVU Mountainlair. Panel discussions will follow each film. All showings are free and open to the public. A flyer about this event is located on the bulletin board in our hallway. For more information, go to <http://diversity.wvu.edu/di/human-rights-film> or contact Ed.Cole@mail.wvu.edu. or at 304-293-5600.

## Sunday School News... Lent and Easter



The Sunday School will be preparing for Lent and Easter over the next month and a half.

### Bring Basket Items

As part of our outreach to the community, we are

collecting small toys and personal items for four children’s Easter baskets (last year’s baskets shown in picture). The baskets will be distributed by Scott’s Run Settlement House.

Two baskets will be for younger kids, and two will be for older children. Items being requested include toothbrushes, tooth paste, small games, toys, and coloring books.

### Be Part of Sunday School

We have room for you! If you’re interested in being a helper at Sunday School, please contact Angela Carver at [mamacarver@gmail.com](mailto:mamacarver@gmail.com).

## *Our Worship Schedule*

The Rev. Dn. Al Prichard



### **Sunday**

8:00 a.m. (Rite I, spoken)

10:30 a.m. (Rite II, with music)

*Nursery care and Sunday School with children's worship are offered during the 10:30 a.m. service.*

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### **Please contact us at**

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St. Thomas à Becket Episcopal Church

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# March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b><u>Mark Conner Scholarship Sunday</u></b></p> <p>On Sunday, March 19, the loose offering as well as any checks designated for the Mark Conner Memorial Scholarship will go to the support of this effort.</p>			<p><b>1</b> Ash Wednesday</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p>
<p><b>5 1 Lent</b> Rev. John Bethell 8 a.m. Rite I 9:15 a.m. Becket Choir 10:30 a.m. Rite II Sunday Sch. / Youth Ch. <b>Finance Comm. Mtg.</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>8</b> Backpack Feeding Program at SRSB 12:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Vestry Mtg. 7 p.m.</p>	<p><b>10</b></p>	<p><b>11</b></p>
<p><b>12 2 Lent</b> Rev. John Bethell 8 a.m. Rite I 9:15 a.m. Becket Choir <b>Outreach Comm. Mtg.</b> 10:30 a.m. Rite II Sunday Sch. / Youth Ch.  Girl Scouts 5-8 p.m.</p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b> Prepare Lunch for Habitat Volunteers</p>	<p><b>15</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p>
<p><b>19 3 Lent</b> <b>Conner Scholarship Sunday</b> Rev. John Bethell 8 a.m. Rite I 9:15 a.m. Becket Choir 10:30 a.m. Rite II Sunday Sch. / Youth Ch.  <b>Parish Luncheon</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>	<p><b>22</b> Women's Grief Support Group 1 p.m.</p>	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b>  Girl Scouts Training 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.</p>
<p><b>26 4 Lent</b> Rev. John Bethell 8 a.m. Rite I 9:15 a.m. Becket Choir <b>Stewardship Comm. Mtg.</b> 10:30 a.m. Rite II Sunday Sch. / Youth Ch.  <b>Becket Arts! 3 p.m.</b></p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b> Newsletter Articles Deadline</p>	<p><b>29</b> Backpack Feeding Program at SRSB 12:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>30</b></p>	<p><b>31</b></p>	