



Val's Voice

This Sunday coming we celebrate the feast day for the Presentation of our Lord Jesus. Joseph and Mary bring Jesus to the temple, where he is greeted by Simeon and Anna. Old and faithful people who

have been waiting for what God has promised. Simeon says he has finally seen God's salvation; Anna begins from that day to speak about the child to all who were seeking redemption in Jerusalem.

It is hard to imagine what they might have seen in Jesus, this child so new to the world. Perhaps it was more "having a feeling," something that's happened to all of us from time to time. Having a feeling and then reworking even the stories of our own lives, once we realize how God's love and promise has been woven into them from the beginning.

As I write, I look at a shelf of family heirlooms. Nothing fancy, but pieces that hold stories nonetheless. A shelf clock from my dad's family. An oil lamp and a pair of candlesticks from Paul's mom's family. A wicker rocker I purchased only because it looked like one my grandmother had at a little cottage at Oak Lake 50 years ago. The stories weave together with the pieces, and somehow they all speak of promise. Gentleness. Hope. A world that people believed would go well.

I don't know many family stories from the days when these pieces were first used, but I know even from looking at family trees that there was plenty of heartbreak. Children who died too soon by illness or accident. Farms that were just about lost and then were. Family members at odds with one another. There was, no doubt, lots of good too. Neighbours who visited on Sundays when the weather was good, and then parted in early winter... "See you in the springtime!" Sisters who danced and laughed together. Generations who all lived in one house making family history.

These days, we all know the stories of our times are shifting. Those I just described are long gone. New stories are being made. And it seems like the ones that come to be over the next while will be different.

I receive regular emails from Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, who writes a blog titled "Life is a Sacred Text," in which she shares insights from her faith (which is of course well connected to our own). Often those blogs share her reflections on what it means to be an ethical person of faith.

In this morning's post she shared briefly the stories of some well-known Americans who have begun speaking their concerns about where their country is headed at the moment. One was about Bishop Maryann Budde, who in her sermon at the recent inauguration spoke of her concerns about people's well-being and the need for mercy.

Rabbi Ruttenberg acknowledged that we don't all have the same opportunities to speak publicly, or even to make the same choices about the way we live our lives. But she also said that "this particular moment of (U.S.) crisis does offer us the opportunity to think big-picture about who we want to have been, so that we can start becoming that person, no?"

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She noted that this time offers us a moment to think about our own legacy, and what we want it to be, so that we can live our lives and do whatever our "work" is in this life with "all our heart, all our soul and all our mind."

As we begin this, Rabbi Ruttenberg suggests that we consider:

- What we already know about our communities and our country. Where are there histories or places of injustice?
- Who have led struggles before us, who have passed on? Who are elders now who have been engaged in the work that we/you believe is important? Are there people, perhaps like Bishop Budde, who model something we believe is important? What qualities do these people have that we admire, respect and give thanks for? List these qualities for yourself.

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- Are there sacred texts (Scripture) that inform who you want to be in this world?
- What do you want your legacy to be? How might you get there? What is one step you might take?

I think it is so important that we take time to reflect on these things now and start taking steps to leave a legacy of compassion and justice and mercy in this world. These are qualities that Jesus lived with all of his being, and as his followers God invites us to consider how we can sow seeds in our world which may move it in this hope and justice filled direction.

If you are interested in Rabbi Ruttenberg's blog, google "Life is a Sacred Text" and subscribe. You won't be sorry!

Blessings in your legacy work, I'll be doing it too!

Val



The Annual General Meeting is Sunday, February 9 right after service. Lunch will be provided. Please plan to attend - decisions made here are important to all of us!

Vestry Notes from January 21

Financial update: the year closed with a ledger balance of just over \$24,000. Note however that \$30,000 was withdrawn from parish investments, and two parishioners each kindly left the parish about \$5,000 in their wills. Without this income, we would have had a shortfall of about \$15,000.

If you would like to part of the ongoing **decision-making of the parish**, consider allowing your name to stand for Vestry 2025. If not Vestry, if you are interested in assisting the parish in other ways your help would be most welcome. Your interests can certainly be matched with our needs.

Amanda Wallin and Cathy Mondor will work to develop our **land acknowledgement** as a prayer to be used at the beginning of each service. Anyone interested in participating in this project can contact Cathy at cathylmondor@gmail.com

Little Saints Day Care has requested renting the lower hall for a school age summer program.

We were reminded recently that although our church building opened in 1926, the work in forming a parish began in 1925:

100 years ago! Stay tuned to hear what celebrations will take place.



Upcoming activities: Vestry is hoping our parish can host a presentation on MAID in February or March, a movie event in February, and a Lenten Book Study. Busy days! Watch for more details.

We have had an offer from Rob Knight and various of his friends to play a **fundraising concert** on Saturday April 26. Watch for more information. Sounds like it will be a great time!

The annual **Garage Sale** will be held May 1 & 2, 2025 with set up the week before. Look for more information in next month's newsletter and on our website.



Update on the November 11, 2024 break-in:

- Windows have been fixed, and work with Assiniboine Credit Union is ongoing. The parish will close its current bank account and open a new one to prevent fraud activity as a result of the break-in. This will NOT affect our direct deposits or e-transfers; only companies that direct bill will be affected and they will be notified.
- The insurance claim is ongoing, and a few people will be needed to document all items in the building. If you are interested in this work, please contact Val or the wardens.

Remember to ensure that the parish has your correct name and mailing address for **charitable donations**.

The Parish of St. Mary Magdalene is on Treaty 1 territory.

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St. Mary Magdalene Church Calendar

| February 2025 | | March 2025 | |
|---------------|---|---------------|---|
| 2 Sun | Fourth Sunday of Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am | 2 Sun | Last Sunday of Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am |
| 9 Sun | Fifth Sunday of Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am Annual General Meeting 12 pm | 5 Wed | Ash Wednesday |
| 13 Tue | Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm | 9 Sun | First Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am |
| 16 Sun | Sixth Sunday of Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am | 12 Tue | Vista Park Lodge 2:15 pm |
| 23 Sun | Seventh Sunday of Epiphany Eucharist 10:30 am ACF Service 7 pm | 16 Sun | Second Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am |
| 25 Tue | Vestry Meeting 7 pm | 23 Sun | Third Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am |
| | | 25 Tue | Vestry Meeting 7 pm |
| | | 30 Sun | Fourth Sunday in Lent Eucharist 10:30 am |
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ACF = Asian Christian Fellowship service in Urdu

Weekly Activities

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|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Christian Meditation | Thursdays 7:30 pm | Contact: Barbara B |
| Choir Practice | Sundays 9 am | Contact: Nancy |