

Unhidden

Rev. Nancy Erickson

We are getting ready to enter Lent. It is the time that leads up to Easter. Traditionally in the church it is a time of searching your soul in order to repent and of offering some sacrifice, doing something that reminds us of the sacrifice Jesus made on our behalf. Whenever I've tried it, I didn't do so well. I never was able to get through the entire time without cheating; without sneaking a Snickers bar, or skipping reading my Bible, or whatever thing I decided to make myself do in any given year.

In Mark 1 we read that Jesus goes from his baptism in the river to the desert and back out. This story of Jesus going into the wilderness is the traditional story as Lent begins. This event in Jesus' life occurred before beginning his ministry and so we think of it as a time when he discovered the truth of who he was, and what purpose he was to fulfill. Mark says, "And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness." In other words, Jesus didn't come up with the idea; it was God's spirit that compelled him to go. This is something with which I can relate. Whenever I've been in situations in which I discovered the truth about myself, found out more about what I was really made of, I did not usually go because I wanted to, but because I felt compelled or driven to go. And so I suspect it might be for you. If we want to move forward with our lives, we need the Spirit to drive us.

The desert is a place of vulnerability, a place where the forces of wind, of heat, of flash floods are very apparent

and cannot be resisted. It is a place which calls one to surrender to those forces because there is no way to control them. And so when Jesus went to the desert he surrendered himself to the driving force of the Spirit. In so doing he discovered the truth about himself, and readied himself for his calling.

We can do the same. We can use this season to ask God to help us find ways to surrender to God's Spirit. The word "surrender" is much more helpful to me when I think of Lent than the traditional word "sacrifice". I mean "surrender" as in giving up control in order to find the truth, just as

When the Spirit of truth comes,
it will guide you into all the truth. —John 16:13

Jesus did. The Greek word *aletheia* is translated "truth". The word literally means "unhidden". Truth, then, is not a thing. It is an event. It happens when what has been hidden from us is stripped away. What is underneath, what is real, comes to the surface. John 16:13 says it this way: "When the Spirit of truth comes, it will guide you into all the truth."

Rather than sacrifice as a metaphor for the season, consider the word "surrender" and ask God to help you surrender to the power of God's spirit in and around you. This Lenten season I invite you to take the journey with Jesus of surrendering any barriers to your truth so that the reality of God, of God's world, and your true self can be made known.

FYI 2009 Nebraska Legislature Bills Impacting the LGBTQ Community

LB 107

Ken Haar (LD 21 – Lincoln)
Would require employers to provide an employee with a reason for termination.

LB 147

Pete Pirsch (LD 4 – Omaha)
Require lists of all individuals requesting a name change to be sent to the center registry of child protection cases and the central registry of sex offenders.

LB 462

M.L. "Cap" Dierks (LD 40 – Ewing)
Eliminates requirement for a separate written consent document to be tested for HIV/AIDS.

LB 369 & 370

Daniel Nantkes (LD 26 – Lincoln)
Increase funding for reproductive and sexual health services.

LB 369: Through the Every Woman Matters program, increases for mammograms and pap smears.

LB 370: Allows Medicaid funding to be used for contraceptives and screenings/treatments for sexually transmitted infections.

LB 625

Pete Pirsch (LD 4 – Omaha)
Criminalizes intentional, knowing or reckless exposure to a life threatening, communicable disease (i.e. HIV/AIDS) through sexual intercourse, "sodomy," tissue sale or donation, or needle sharing.



CARING FOR YOUR SOUL: A RETREAT FOR THE GLBT AND ALLY COMMUNITY

Being part of a community that has not been granted equality and respect in the wider culture can be burdensome. Having to be concerned about being authentic at work, in a family, in any context can take a toll on the soul. This retreat, led by Rev. Nancy & Rev. Stephen Griffith from Saint Paul United Methodist Church, is designed as a time to strengthen connections to our soul, the souls of others, and to the soul of God.

Cost- \$15.00 | Saturday, March 28, 9:00-3:00 | Chapel at First-Plymouth Church

Registration forms available in the literature racks

The Louis Crompton Scholarship Fund is ONLINE!

Convenient and safe online giving is now available through the NU Foundation website. Be a part of history and give to this important endowment benefitting LGBTQ students at the University of NE.

www.nufoundation.org/crompton

Bishop Gene Robinson's prayer from the Inauguration



"O God of our many understandings, we pray that you will bless us with tears -- tears for a world in which over a billion people exist on less than a dollar a day, where young women in many lands are beaten and raped for wanting an education, and thousands die daily from malnutrition, malaria, and AIDS.

Bless this nation with anger -- anger at discrimination, at home and abroad, against refugees and immigrants, women, people of color, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Bless us with discomfort at the easy, simplistic answers we've preferred to hear from our politicians, instead of the truth about ourselves and our world, which we need to face if we are going to rise to the challenges of the future.

Bless us with patience and the knowledge that none of what ails us will be fixed anytime soon, and the understanding that our new president is a human being, not a messiah.

Bless us with humility, open to understanding that our own needs as a nation must always be balanced with those of the world.

Bless us with freedom from mere tolerance, replacing it with a genuine respect and warm embrace of our differences.

Bless us with compassion and generosity, remembering that every religion's God judges us by the way we care for the most vulnerable.

And God, we give you thanks for your child, Barack, as he assumes the office of President of the United States.

Give him wisdom beyond his years, inspire him with President Lincoln's reconciling leadership style, President Kennedy's ability to enlist our best efforts, and Dr. King's dream of a nation for all people.

Give him a quiet heart, for our ship of state needs a steady, calm captain.

Give him stirring words; We will need to be inspired and motivated to make the personal and common sacrifices necessary to facing the challenges ahead.

Make him color-blind, reminding him of his own words that under his leadership, there will be neither red nor blue states, but the United States.

Help him remember his own oppression as a minority, drawing on that experience of discrimination, that he might seek to change the lives of those who are still its victims.

Give him strength to find family time and privacy, and help him remember that even though he is president, a father only gets one shot at his daughters' childhoods.

And please, God, keep him safe. We know we ask too much of our presidents, and we're asking far too much of this one. We implore you, O good and great God, to keep him safe. Hold him in the palm of your hand, that he might do the work we have called him to do, that he might find joy in this impossible calling, and that in the end, he might lead us as a nation to a place of integrity, prosperity, and peace. Amen."

Programs & Events

Sunday, March 8

Plymouth Pride Fellowship will meet Sunday, March 8, at 5:30 p.m. for a potluck dinner and program in Pilgrim Hall. Dining supplies and light drinks will be provided. Domestic Violence will be the focus of the program with speakers from law enforcement, the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) group and others with very important perspectives. All fellowship members, friends and any interested persons are invited to attend. For more information, contact Rev. Nancy Erickson at the church office, 476-7565 or via e-mail at nancy@firstplymouth.org.

Sunday, March 29

Creating a Collective Vision for the LGBTQA Community

East Campus Union, UNL
12:30pm- registration and
Community Resource Fair
1:00pm- Welcome

You have hopes and dreams for a better tomorrow. How excited do you get when you talk about a better future?

On March 29, you have a chance to share your hopes and dreams in a conversation with so many others who dream of a better tomorrow in Lincoln.

LincolnRenaissance.org

Submit a Profile

We'd like to put a story of you or a loved one in the next Pride newsletter! Please submit a story, 400-600 words, along with any pictures you would like to include to Fred at Spin369@hotmail.com THANKS!