



March 2008

**St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Venice, Florida**

THE MESSENGER

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes we hear those wonderful and beautifully poetic words about seasons and changes that occur within them—"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to break down and a time to build up; a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together." So it is with our Lenten Season.

As you read these words, we are nearly through our Lenten Season. I suspect that each of us have been touched by God in a unique way as we have journeyed down those "roads less traveled" and this season of revelation we call Lent. I also expect that God has planted "seeds from heaven" within all of us during this most holy of times—seeds that are waiting to be harvested into the mysteries of a new creation and a new life within God.

So how has your Lenten journey been? What seeds are germinating within you right now? What has been planted and what has been plucked up for each of us? What has died and what has been given new birth? What has been broken down and what has been built up? What has been gathered up and what has been tossed away?

Those really are questions not only to be asked but answered by each of us as well. They are not just for our Lenten season but all seasons regarding "every matter under heaven." So to that end, I wish to share with you some of the seeds that have been planted at St. Mark's that involves not only the life of each of us in our church but also Jesus' gospel message for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God in our world today.

There are seeds that have been planted recently at St. Mark's that are in the process of growing "new life" and hopefully will be harvested by all of us to make our church one that does truly live out the "gospel message of mission." The vestry, staff, and clergy have committed themselves to a renewed desire of mission instead of the maintenance mode we have found ourselves in over the last couple of years. How this will be manifested will be seen through changes that are being cultivated currently.

Over the course of the next few months you will see new nuances' occurring at St. Mark's that are different like bio-degradable dishes and drinking cups at all our church functions and more recyclable containers that will help to keep God's creation a little "greener" and longer lasting. There will also be classes and seminars regarding "caring for our earth" that will be part of this new emphasis. You will see a renewed emphasis on helping the less fortunate and those in need by increased involvement in the needs of our community, our nation, and the world through the creation of a Social Concerns Committee to spearhead our further call into mission. You will see a continued commitment by clergy, staff and the vestry to see and understand "the ways of God" as never before so that necessary changes can be brought about for the furtherance of God's Kingdom in the world. You will see the leaders of St. Mark's truly attempting to answer the question posed to Jesus by the disciples, "And when did we see you naked, homeless, hungry or in need?" and Jesus answered, "When you saw and did it for the least of them...you saw and did it for me."

The seeds have been planted in this season of Lent. May God help us to bring about the harvest in each one of us and our world. "For in everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven," and to me, this looks like a perfect season for growing.

In Christ's love,



**Holy Week
Worship Services**