

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Epistle

March 2025 Issue



While it's not my usual fair, I read a tragic love story the other day that I found touching and profound. A young woman falls in love with a recent immigrant, gets married, and starts their new life together, when her husband suddenly dies. While the woman has her friends and family to fall back on, her now deceased husband has left behind his mother who has nothing and nobody to rely on.

Rather than leave her mother-in-law destitute, the young widow instead decides to help her mother-in-law return home to her friends and family, where this widow finds another love of her life and gets married and starts a new family in her adopted home.

How often has this story played out in our country? Does this story sound familiar?

The story I'm talking about is the Book of Ruth in our Old Testament that was part of the Daily Office just before Lent started. In the midst of her grief, Ruth dedicates herself to helping her mother-in-law Naomi go back to her friends and family in Judea, but in the process leaves behind her own support network in Moab (not Utah!), and sister Orpah, that would have most likely kept her comfortable and safe.

There was no way to know if Naomi would be kindly received in Judea. In fact, the Book of Ruth seems to indicate that no one was willing to accept Naomi since she had to send Ruth out to the fields to glean for food, relying on the requirement proscribed in the Torah to feed the destitute.

It is while gleaning in the fields that Ruth first meets Boaz, a wealthy relative of Naomi. With Naomi's advice Ruth 'enhances' her beauty and is noticed by Boaz, and then makes a direct approach to him to help her and Naomi to find a new home.

I wonder if Naomi's advice was just that, or part of a scheme, but it certainly upended the lives of Naomi and Ruth. Did Ruth choose this path of helping Naomi as part of her devotion to her lost husband, or did Ruth act so selflessly out of instinct? We don't know; the Bible doesn't tell us.

I was struck by how the story of immigrants in the Book of Ruth--both Ruth's first husband, Elimelech, and Ruth herself were immigrants - mirrors the countless stories of immigrants in our own country over the centuries. How many immigrants have left their native lands for a better life somewhere else and arrived here? How often in the Scriptures are stories of immigrants featured, starting with the stories of Abraham and Moses?



Image portraying Ruth and Naomi - Published by Minister Koko

Somehow, in all of these stories, God works a new creative path for this biblical collection of immigrants. Abraham starts a new nation. Moses leads his people to the Promised Land. And Ruth and Boaz? They become the great grandparents of King David, and distant ancestors of Jesus himself.

For any culture throughout history outsiders (immigrants) become the scorn of their neighbors. They suffer through discrimination and blamed as scapegoats. Yet, through their perseverance and hard work they overcome this ostracizing to become leaders of their adopted communities. It is that pattern of perseverance and hard work that is instilled in their descendants that helps them build new lives in their adopted home. It is that pattern of perseverance and hard work that has built this great country we call home.

In reflecting on the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz I realize that in spite of humanities constant attempt at assigning others into outcast groups, God finds ways of love to tear down the walls of separation and build new foundations for God's own creation. What does that say to us today?

Following the Way of Jesus, I pray for all those who are outcast, not just in our country, but throughout the world. I'm unable to see how God will turn hopelessness into hope, but the Spirit always finds a way to work her breath (Ruach) into new life and new creation even when life seems most bleak, like in the tomb of the Crucified-on Friday evening.

May we pray for those this Lent who are outcast and ask for the Spirit to open our eyes to the new Creation that God will bring. Amen.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner: A Night of Food, Fun, and Fellowship

This year's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner was a fun evening filled with delicious pancakes and entertainment! Our heartfelt thanks go out to the Boy Scouts troop, who did an amazing job cooking and serving stacks of pancakes. Their hard work and hospitality made the night extra special.



Of course, no Shrove Tuesday dinner would be complete without the legendary (and groan-worthy) jokes from Chuck, keeping us all entertained between bites. Henry dazzled us with his incredible magic tricks, leaving everyone in awe and wondering, *how did he do that?!* The night also featured an array of wonderful talents from other members of our church community, showcasing the gifts God has given each of us.

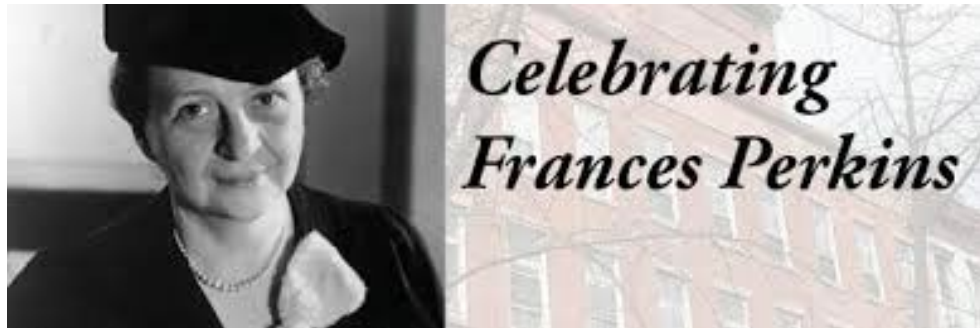


With festive Mardi Gras colors and decorations setting the scene, the evening was a joyful way to mark the beginning of Lent. Thank you to everyone who helped organize, perform, decorate, and, most importantly, joined in the fellowship. We can't wait to do it again next year!





Celebrating Women's History Month



In observance of Women's History Month, here is the story of Frances Perkins. She is honored in Holy Women, Holy Men as a *Public Servant and Prophetic Witness*. Her feast day is May 13th. Appropriately, this is usually about the time that Mother's Day is celebrated in the United States. I say this because it seems to me that if Franklin Roosevelt can be considered the Father of the New Deal, then surely Frances Perkins, who originated so many of its programs, can rightly be considered the Mother of the New Deal.

Frances Perkins personified the Beatitude,

“Happy are those who hunger and thirst for what is right:

They shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6)

LET'S START WITH SOME SMART QUOTES

“I came to Washington to work for God, FDR, and the millions of forgotten, plain common workingmen.”

“Being a woman has only bothered me in climbing trees”. [Spoken in reply to those who disliked seeing a woman in a high government post]

FUN FACT

Never someone who *sat* still, she was an activist, who converted to the Episcopal Church as a young woman during her post college years. At that time, she changed her first name from “Fannie” to “Frances”

Fannie Coralie Perkins was born April 10, 1880, in Boston, Massachusetts. Hers was a conventional, comfortable Republican family. Summers were spent at her

grandparent's 57-acre farm in a large house in Maine. Growing up, she was taught that poverty was caused by slothfulness and alcoholism.

Fannie was well educated. She attended a predominantly male high school, and an all-female college, Mount Holyoke, from which she graduated in 1902. Mount Holyoke, the oldest of the Seven Sisters colleges, was established in 1837. Attending Mount Holyoke was for Frances, a life changing experience. Its motto was, “Go forward, attempt great things, Accomplish great things”

Frances double majored in chemistry and physics, but yet still found time to become engrossed by her economics classes. Through them she found her calling. Frances visited factories, talked to workers, and learned about their wages, hours and working conditions. It was good training for a future Secretary of Labor. She learned that poverty has many, many causes and she became determined to do something about it. After graduation, Frances’ parents had wanted her to return home until such time as she might find herself a husband, but Francis had other ideas.

The years after Mt Holyoke were busy and productive;

- Frances lived in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and New York State. She taught school at an upper-class girl’s high school.
- In 1907 she became General Secretary of the Philadelphia Research & Protective Association. This was a new organization aimed at keeping immigrant women and African-American women out of prostitution
- In 1905 she joined the Episcopal Church and changed her name.
- In 1910 she earned a master's degree in sociology and economics from Columbia University.
- 1910, Frances was active in the suffragette movement.
- 1910, She took a job with the New York City Consumers League where she developed rules for protecting workers in bakeries and factories.
- On March 25th, 1911, Perkins witnessed the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. She became the executive secretary for the investigation that followed. Its report became the basis for national workplace safety standards.
- 1913 Frances Perkins married Paul Collins Wilson. They had one daughter. Sadly, Mr. Wilson developed a severe mental illness and was not able to

live with his family. He spent the rest of his days in various institutions, until his death in 1952.

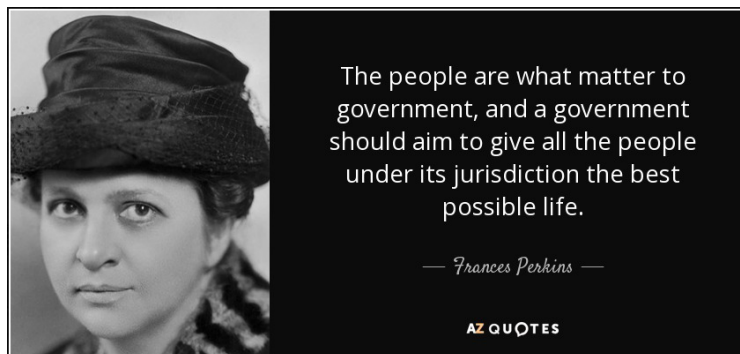
- 1919-1932, New York Governor Al Smith, and later his successor Governor Franklin Roosevelt appointed her to the New York State Industrial Commission. She had met FDR at a dance when she was a young woman, and in 1933 he appointed her the first woman Cabinet member, and the first Secretary of Labor. She held that position until 1945. Together with Harold Ickes she is the only Cabinet member who served during the entire length of Franklin Roosevelt's presidency. Before she accepted FDR's offer, Frances Perkins made some demands of her own. She told President Roosevelt that he had to support a standardized work week, a minimum wage, and ban child labor.

You might say that the Father of the New Deal and the Mother of the New Deal, had a prenuptial agreement!

Frances Perkins was a leading architect of many New Deal programs, including: The Civilian Conservation Program, the Federal Emergency Relief Organization, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance, and the right of workers to organize.

After serving as Secretary of Labor for 12 years, Frances Perkins could have taken a well-deserved rest. Instead, she accepted President Truman's appointment to the United States Civil Service Commission... She finally retired in 1952. Frances Coralie Perkins entered heaven on May 13, 1965. I am of the opinion that the first words she heard were these, "Well done, good and faithful servant.... Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23)

President Biden proclaimed her ancestral family home the Francis Perkins National Monument last December.



Lenten Studies 2025



Fr Brian will be offering two options for Lenten studies this year. One will be in person on Tuesdays following Noonday Prayer and the other on Zoom early Sunday evenings. Both will be focused on a newly published book called Turning Over Tables - A Lenten Call For Disrupting Power by Kathy Escobar.

We would like to put in a bulk order for the books so *if you intend to come to the studies and would like a copy please add your details to the sheet in the entrance of the church or contact the parish office.* The price will depend on how many we buy but should be approximately \$15.

Another Lenten book study opportunity will be on mornings from 11 AM-noon on 4 Thursdays after morning Eucharist. The dates will be March 13, 20, 27 and April 3. We will be discussing the book, Can You Drink the Cup? written by Henri Nouwen. Books will be available for \$3. The study will be led by Rex Adamson. All are welcome for one or all sessions. This is a short book of only 4 chapters and is easy reading on a profound topic related to the question Jesus asked the apostles, "Can you drink the cup I drink?" A sign-up sheet will be available in the Narthex.

Music Ministry Opportunities

The choir has started to rehearse music for worship services in the coming weeks and months. Join the group for Sunday morning rehearsals: 9 -9:40 am, in the choir area by the organ console.

Questions? Contact Chuck Sheaffer, 209-765-1214. *All are welcome to come help us make a joyful noise!*

Handbells:

Rehearsals have begun to include handbell music in our worship services, No prior experience or ability are necessary. If you can count to 4 and hold a bell, have the interest to learn and contribute to the music ministry, you are welcome.

Questions? Contact Judy Teter, 209-480-5383.

Salvation Army Shelter Dinners

The Salvation Army Dinner Team will be preparing dinner for the guests and staff at the downtown Modesto Shelter, **Sunday, March 16th**. The menu will include pulled pork sandwiches, cole slaw, steamed vegetables, peach dump cake, and milk. The Team is blessed to prepare and serve dinner six times a year and are always happy to have anyone help with various stages of the meal. Participation can include contributing ingredients, assisting with cooking prior to the day or at the church, serving at the shelter, and/or praying for this ministry.



Contact Linda Lowe, 209-496-3937 or lwlowe@outlook.com for more information and to participate with the Team.

Ash Wednesday



Lent began with three opportunities to receive ashes, renew our sense of dependence upon God, and prepare for Easter. Worship services included 7:15 am and 5:15 pm Eucharist with ashes and, new this year, distribution of ashes “on-the-go”. Fr. Brian served 7 attendees at the early time, 10 people between noon and 1 pm, and 29 attendees in the evening. The groups included church members, some people who saw our sign advertisement, and a dog that wasn’t Wicket.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame



Calling all baseball fans! The almond blossoms are done, daffodils are blooming, and the “boys of summer” are back! The Modesto Nuts will be part of spring and summer for one more year and we can cheer them on as a group. Attending the game includes a kid zone area, fun & silly games between innings, ballpark food (yum!), and

the chance to participate in a Modesto tradition that will be changing soon.

We will need to purchase at least 25 tickets to get them for \$8 for the grandstand area or \$11 for lower box seats. Opening day will be April 4th with plenty of opportunities to enjoy the fun through August 31st.

Contact Linda Lowe to sign up or for more information. Church office, 209-522-3267, stpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com.

Celebrating Birthdays in March

March 2025 Birthdays	
Christine Judd	March 1
Andy Su	March 1
Connor Verges	March 1
David West	March 2
Rex	March 3
Judy Thorkelson	March 8
Lynelle Hains	March 11
Chuck Sheaffer	March 17
Mary Beth West	March 19
Charles Harrison	March 22
Luis Martinez	March 25



Prayer and Praise
March 2025

Remember those who have asked for our prayers

Alexa	Pam	Deacon George	Susan	Robin
Priscella	Laurence	Louisa	Marlene	Mark
Mauro	Loretta	Kelly	Gabriel	Joy
Bonnie	Alfred	Clare	Michael	Alice
Dennis	Michael	Daniel	Ishmael	Lisa
Bob	Mary	Howard	Gayle	Marti
Tony	Joanne	Janet	JoAnne	Linda
Ginny	Keith	Brett	Sasha	JoHanna
Denise	Toni	Ken	Susan	Mary
Doug	David	Cherie	Michelle	

Those who have been called back to God

Christine Jayne
Carol DeMaria Donati Hertle
Elaine Paradis
Collene Arfman
Joyce Hosegood Ray Campbell
Jaden Justman

Those in the Military

1LT Sam Birch, Army
 LTC Nathaniel P. Wallace, Air Force
 CPT Jenavieve Campbell, Air Force
 CPT Fred Campbell, Air Force
 PO 1st Class Johnny Olmos, US Coast Guard

Special Prayers

The Clergy, Vestry, and Wardens

March Ministry Schedule

Dates	Mar 2nd	Mar 9th	Mar 16th	Mar 23rd	Mar 30th
Clergy	Fr. Brian	Fr. Brian	Fr. Brian	Fr. Brian	Fr. Brian
Acolytes	Judy T. Nancy S.	Nancy S. Judy T.	Nancy S. Jim P.	Nancy S. Judy T.	Nancy S. Judy T.
Eucharistic Minister	Stephanie G.	Nancy S.	Judy	Rex	Nancy S.
Lectors	Ann M. Theresa G.	Nancy S. Stephanie H-W.	Barbara V. Alex S.	Judy T. Rex	Joyce B. Ann M.
Intercessor	Sarah H.	Courtney S.	Lora B.	Luis	Nancy S.
Ushers	Phil M. Linda L.	Claudine R. David L.	Greg B. Carolyn L.	Phil M. Carolyn L.	David L. Claudine R.
Greeters	Phil M. Lynelle H.	David L. Claudine R.	Greg B. Carolyn L.	Phil M. Carolyn L.	David L. Claudine R.
Vestry Rep.	Sarah H.	Courtney S.	Lora B.	Luis	Nancy S.



THE DIOCESE OF
CALIFORNIA

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE BAY AREA

The Union of Black Episcopalians
of Northern California,
The Afro-Anglicans Commission of the
Episcopal Diocese of California
&
The Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin
invite you to

*Prophets of Hope
in a
Time of Hopelessness:
Women Leaders of Color in
The Episcopal Church*

Featuring:

The Rev. Canon Debbie Royals,
Diocese of Arizona



The Rev. Canon Carla Robinson,
Diocese of Olympia



Ms. Rachel Ambasing,
Diocese of San Diego



Canon Suzanne Edwards-Acton,
Diocese of Los Angeles



March 18, 2025
6:30pm-8pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81966048562?pwd=8e1Byb2PTby7xx6Hi94kAy8crlUp6n.1>

Meeting ID: 819 6604 8562
Passcode: 097794

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Pastoral Team

Fr. Brian Dawson.....209-897-1612.....FrBrianDawson@gmail.com

Archdeacon Emeritus George Cano

Deacon Greg Maszta.....deacongreg66@outlook.com

Parish Administrator

Linda Lowe: 209-522-3267stpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com

Other Important Contacts

Music Director, Chuck Sheaffercbshea@pacbell.net

Hand Bells, Judy Teterjlpt@sbcglobal.net

Prayer Chain.....stpaulsmodestoca@gmail.com

St. Paul's Epistle & Bulletin, Cherie Sheaffer.....cbshea@pacbell.net

Social Media, Deacon Greg Masztadeacongreg66@outlook.com

Finance Committee, Carolyn Listcarolynlist@sbcglobal.net

Stewardship Campaign, Courtney Smithcourtneyvsmith@gmail.com

Praesidium AcademyStephanie Gilmer

Vestry

Senior Warden: Joyce Bell (215) 275-6502bellj1@charter.net

Junior Warden: Peter Krewko (707) 853-3604pmkjfc@att.net

Joyce Bell, Lora Burnett, Sarah Hartmann, Ishmael Huggins, Peter Krewko, Luis Martinez, Ann Mootz, Chuck Sheaffer, Nancy Silva, and Courtney Smith.

Treasurer: Greg Burnett

Vestry Clerk: Carolyn List

