

Adult Formation Sunday and Wednesday Forums

Sunday, February 19, 2023 - Sunday, March 26, 2023

Sundays: Canterbury Room, 9:30 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Wednesdays: Parish Hall, Soup/Bread, 6:00 p.m., Forums, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, February 19: "A Theology of Transition, Epiphany to Lent" with Fr. Christian Brocato

Join us as we look at the Season of Light and peer into the upcoming Season of Lent. We will discuss the opportunities which both Seasons of the Liturgical Year provide. We will especially look at Lent which provides ways to deepen our relationship with Christ and with one another through prayer, fasting and the giving of ourselves in intentional ways. All are welcome, adults and youth.

Sunday, February 26: " The Baptismal Covenant, The Early Church, Lent and Preparation for Easter through the Lens of the Book of Common Prayer a Journey with Two Steves" with Steve Bell and Rev. Steve Manskar

Join us for two Lenten Sunday forums at 9:30 a.m. examining aspects of Lent, the Baptismal Covenant and how Lent informs our response to it. The session will seek to deepen one's relationship with God through the renewal of the Baptismal Covenant as found in The Book of Common Prayer. All are welcome, adults and youth.

Wednesdays, March 1, 8, 25, 22, 29: 'Appreciating the Psalms in the 21st Century' with Dr. David Beach

The 21st century continues to challenge the faith of many and test our capacity to trust God. For thousands of years, the Psalms have nurtured the faith of believers in all kinds of life situations. They model the kind of dialogical faith manifested by Jesus, and they can help us listen and respond to God with wise confidence in God's loving care and faithfulness. Come and explore how the Psalms are God's provision for us in times of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. Dr. Dave Beach is a retired educator/counselor/author, most recently serving trauma survivors as the mental health director at a nonprofit agency in Michigan. He created and taught several undergraduate adult social sciences courses, authored the award-winning *Following the Man of Sorrows: A Theology of Suffering for Spiritual Formation* and co-authored *The Essential Bible Companion to the Psalms*. His perennial interests are in human suffering, spiritual formation, and running a new non-traditional publishing house. You may find him presenting at conferences and retreats or in Sweet Seasons coffee shop in Lowell. Dave lives in Lowell with Cynthia, his wife of nearly 30 years.

Sunday, March 5: " The Baptismal Covenant, The Early Church, Lent and Preparation for Easter through the Lens of the Book of Common Prayer a Journey with Two Steves" with Steve Bell and Rev. Steve Manskar (See above)

Wednesday, March 8: 'Appreciating the Psalms in the 21st Century' with Dr. David Beach (See above)

Sunday, March 12: "The image of God (*Imago Dei*) Idea in History, Culture and Politics" with Dr. Richard Hiskes

What does it mean to say, as in Genesis 1:26, that humans are created in “the image of God?” Do humans have some special ability, ingredient, or trait that makes us special and above all other creatures? If so, what?

This question has been asked by theologians since St. Augustine, and the number of different answers is both surprising and interesting. So is what those answers have meant historically, culturally and even politically in terms of difference and power.

Today the idea of human rights is often said to be based on our unique sharing of the “imago Dei.” Historically the number of those who share that image has needed to grow for it to include women, non-white men, and maybe, even children. It provides now an inclusive basis for why all adult humans are seen as having rights.

Whether children do is still in question. Do children have human rights, or do they bear the image of a “lesser” God?

What the image of God means, what the Bible seems to indicate, and how the concept has become part of human cultures—for good or ill—is what I would like to explore together. We will start with the Bible in a wide-ranging discussion of several passages; then I will suggest several different interpretations offered by theologians and philosophers. We can explore together what those interpretations mean for us as Christians, and as, simply, humans.

Wednesday, March 15: 'Appreciating the Psalms in the 21st Century' with Dr. David Beach (See above)

Sunday, March 19: "The image of God (*Imago Dei*) Idea in History, Culture and Politics" with Dr. Richard Hiskes (See above)

Wednesday, March 22: 'Appreciating the Psalms in the 21st Century' with Dr. David Beach (See above)

Sunday, March 26: "Within the context of Lent, what is the changing world of the Christian Reform Church (CRC) and how to respond to it" with Bill Harris

Recent developments and pronouncements in the CRC have been controversial for the denomination as well as other denominations grappling with challenges that many would claim are justice issues. This session will look at those issues through the lens of Lent and how the ‘Church of the Servant’ is grappling with what is believed to be at the core of the congregation’s commitment to justice, diversity and equality.

Wednesday, March 29: The Final Session on 'Appreciating the Psalms in the 21st Century' with Dr. David Beach (See above)

Holy Week and Easter,: April 2 through April 9, Services Offered Daily