

A look at Lent during Jesus' last week in Jerusalem

By **BETTY WUND**

Special to the Star and Wave

ERMA — Lent is a time when Christians reflect, pray and read Bible passages concerning the last days of Jesus' life before his crucifixion.

For many it is a time to go to church services every Sunday morning and Wednesday evening during the 40 days of Lent. Some give up one thing special to them for Lent, symbolizing a sacrifice. Others believe that adding something, like a Bible study or a daily devotional reading, is more in keeping with their beliefs.

Jen Bolton, a licensed minister candidate in the United Methodist Church, has initiated a Lenten series at Tabernacle United Methodist Church that takes another look at the days of

Lent through Bible stories. In seven lessons entitled "The Last Week in Jerusalem," she tells the story of Jesus' teachings and final persecution with symbolism and the knowledge that she has been able to acquire through Bible study and research.

Her lessons have brought members of her congregation and visitors to the church Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. for the last three weeks. She said she relies on the Holy Spirit to support her and prays that the word of God will shine through her in this innovative way. Her mission, she says, is to tell all that God is her boss.

"I suddenly thought one day about the last week of Jesus. I just was interested in getting into the depth of it. I thought 'I am going to start studying it,' and then

I thought 'this would make a great series, especially for Lent. It would mean getting in touch with that last week, and seeing it (the last week) through the eyes of the people and Jesus and what it would be like to be there,'" Bolton said.

In her most recent message, delivered like an adult Sunday school lesson, she talked about the symbolism of the fig tree in the Bible and what the story of Jesus condemning the fig tree means. The fig tree is a symbol, like the top hat of Abraham Lincoln or the M for McDonald's, in the Bible that should mean something to us if we only are aware of its meaning, Bolton said.

In the Bible, the fig tree is a symbol of the nation of Israel, she said. Jesus is damning it as God has damned Israel for not obey-

ing him. The fig tree never quite loses its blooming quality, flowering four times a year, because the climate in Israel is temperate, according to Bolton. Unlike other trees, the buds develop as the leaves develop. When it blooms, it all happens at once, she said.

According to Bolton, because the fig tree blooms four times a year, it is the perfect tree to represent the nation of Israel. When Jesus damned the tree, it withered down to the ground. But the roots were still able to grow a new plant. Its blooming is a symbol that Israel can bloom and bear fruit again after being damned, she said.

Like the fig tree, we are damned when we don't obey God, she said, but we can bloom again as the fig tree and the nation of Israel had done by obeying God.

She said that is the message in both the Old Testament and New Testament. Bolton ended her lesson by handing out large refrigerator magnets with the symbolism of the sun and a message she said she sees in the story of the fig tree. It says, "the Son helps me produce fruit."

Bolton was raised in New Jersey and Maryland and returned to this area to raise her family. She attended Christian schools and was an art and art history major at the University of Maryland. She said she has a strong interest in history and archeology and a strong faith that is the basis of her ministry. From the age of 14, she has volunteered in religious schools and taught in a Christian school after college.

Well known for her crochet classes at the Cape May

County library, Bolton started the Crochet for Christ small group at Tabernacle United Methodist Church in Erma. She lives in Lower Township with her husband, Steve, and three teenage daughters: Sofe, Angelina and Maggie.

"The Last Week in Jerusalem" series continues at 7 p.m. Wednesdays at Tabernacle United Methodist Church, 702 Seashore Road. The lessons for the next three weeks are entitled Mount of Olives, The Plot to Kill Jesus and How the Passover Seder Points to Jesus.

A potluck fellowship dinner is being held prior to the services at 6 p.m. The series will end March 24 with the celebration of a Passover Seder. Reservations may be made for the Seder by calling the church office at (609) 884-3574.

West Cape May sends its new fire truck back

By **JACK FICHTER**

Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — It was red, shiny and new, but not quite up to standards, so the West Cape May Volunteer Fire Company's new fire truck was sent back to the manufacturer for correction of a few problems.

The fire truck was purchased through a state contract for \$532,604 from Kovatch Mobile Equipment. At a Feb. 24 Borough Commission meeting, Commissioner Carol Sabo said the truck had paint issues and

was making some unexplainable noises. She said when the truck arrived, Chief Chuck McPherson, Assistant Chief David Peck and Deputy Chief Steve Nelson thoroughly inspected the vehicle.

"There were paint issues and there is a noise in a door and a motor sound that was not correct," Sabo said.

She said the truck was delivered the week of Feb. 16 and sent back to the manufacturer two days later. Sabo said Nelson assured her the truck would



Paint issues and mysterious noises prompted the borough to return its new fire truck to the manufacturer for repairs.

be perfect when it returns to the fire company. The fire company will reinspect the truck when it returns to the borough, she said.

The fire company will reimburse about \$52,000 of the cost of the truck to the borough, according to Sabo.

Borough offering restaurant liquor license

By **JACK FICHTER**

Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough is offering a restaurant liquor license for sale with a minimum bid of \$525,000. Known as a plenary retail consumption license, bids will be opened April 20.

According to Borough Clerk Elaine Wallace, interested parties need to submit a bid packet by April 7. The borough will then verify the applicant is qualified to bid on such a liquor license, she said. The packet will contain qualification documentation for the applicant and another envelope for the actual bid for the license, Wallace said.

At a Feb. 24 meeting, commissioners said they have spoken to local business owners about the upcoming bids for the license. Commissioner Carol Sabo said the license would be available to someone open-

ing a new restaurant as well as established businesses.

Mayor Pam Kaithern said a party buying the liquor license could wait as long as two years to begin using it.

The last time this type of liquor license was put out for bid, the borough received no bids.

The borough sold a liquor license to Sunset Liquors in 2011 for \$615,000, resulting in a tax savings for property owners of about \$45,000 per year beginning in the 2013 tax year.

In other business, a project to construct a roundabout for what locals refer to as the "CVS intersection" where West Perry Street meets Park Boulevard and Myrtle Avenue in six legs is still alive. A roundabout is much smaller than a circle and would feature a landscaped area in the center, so pedestrians would not have to cross all traffic lanes at once.

Kaithern said county engineer Dale Foster told her an assessment company has been contracted to evaluate seven parcels of land. The project is dependent on property owners' willingness to sell slivers of land to the county for the project, Foster said in August 2015. He said the project was in the appraisal stage at the time.

"The state is after the county, they want it done," Kaithern said. "The state wants a roundabout project in every county and we're one that is further than anybody else."

She said the borough owns some of the slivers of land and more than one is owned by the same party.

"Roundabout is not off the table," Kaithern said.

The county initially predicted construction of the roundabout would begin in the offseason between 2013 and 2014 and use a small piece of the CVS property and a small corner of a den-

tal office property across the street. Wilbraham Park will remain untouched for the roundabout.

Additional proposed improvements are the replacement of deteriorated or missing curbs around Wilbraham Park, the reconstruction of Myrtle Avenue between Broadway and Park Boulevard and geometric and pedestrian improvement to the intersection of Broadway, Sunset Boulevard and West Perry Street.

West Cape May calls for 1.9-cent tax hike

By **JACK FICHTER**

Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission introduced its 2016 municipal budget Feb. 24, calling for a tax-rate increase of 1.9 cents. The local purpose tax rate would increase from 33.1 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 34.9 cents, an increase of 5 percent.

The \$2.3 million budget features the borough's first tax increase in five years, according to Deputy Mayor Peter Burke.

The budget uses less surplus for 2015, down \$18,000 to \$354,000. Remaining surplus is \$354,000 less than 2015, totaling \$190,164. Salary and wages show an increase of \$36,200, increasing from \$437,600 to \$473,800.

The amount of the budget to be collected by local purpose tax totals \$1.6 million. The borough has a 97.29 percent tax collection rate. Ratables total \$457 million, up \$1.9 million from the previous year.

Tax relief of \$45,000 is included from a fund established when the borough sold a liquor license in 2011.

Borough Chief Financial Officer Frank Donato said the tax increase was due in part to less surplus being used in the budget than the past few years.

"The appropriation side of the budget is fairly stable. The revenue side was a little bit less than it has been in past couple of years," he said.

Revenue includes \$38,198 from the city of Cape May for renting a police substation in Borough Hall. West Cape May is paying Cape May \$467,389 for police services.

The budget appropriates \$125,000 for legal expenses, up from \$100,000 last year.

The borough's capital budget appropriates \$115,000 for improvements to the municipal building and \$450,000 for water and sewer improvements.

A public hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. March 23.

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