

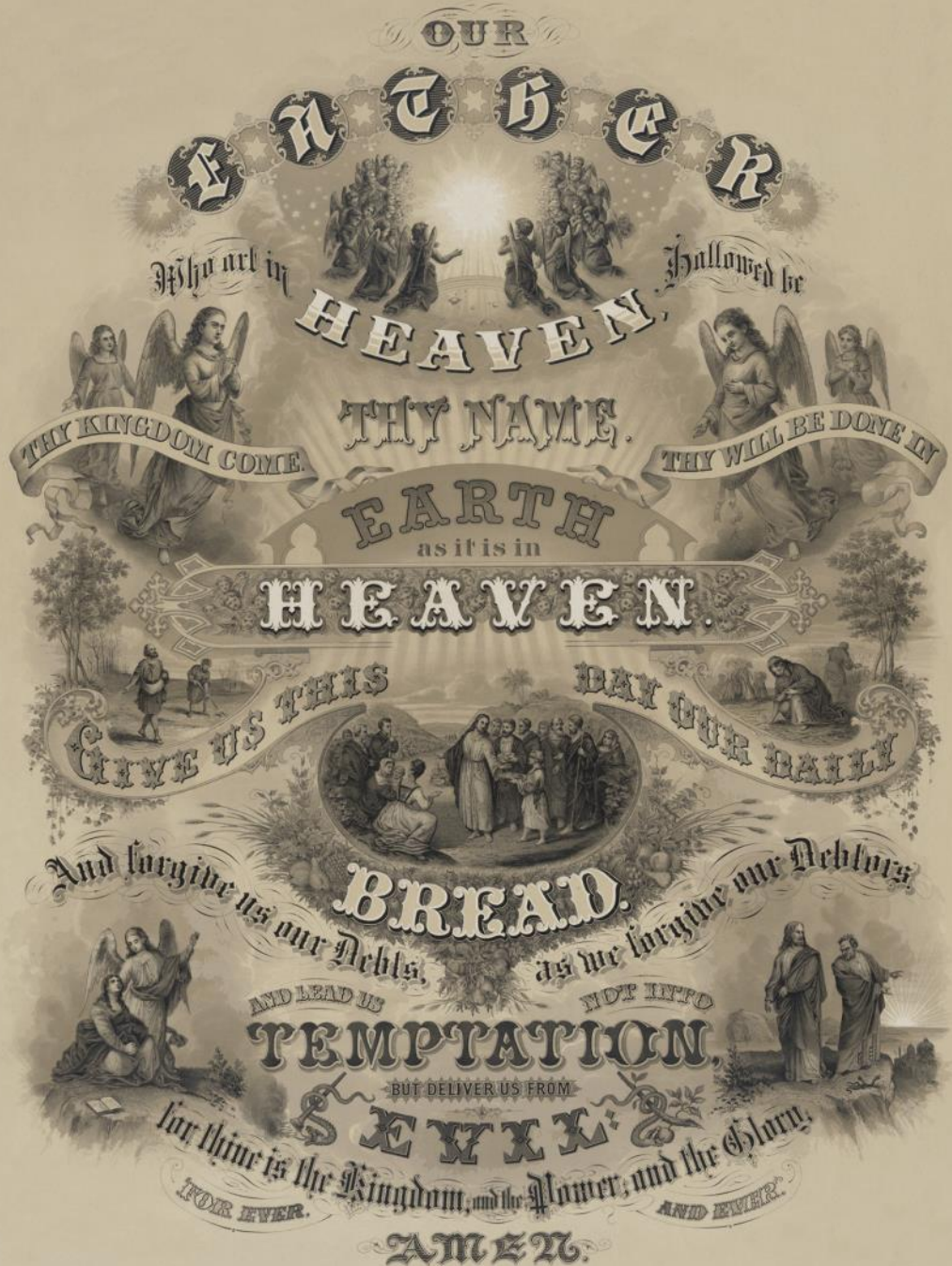
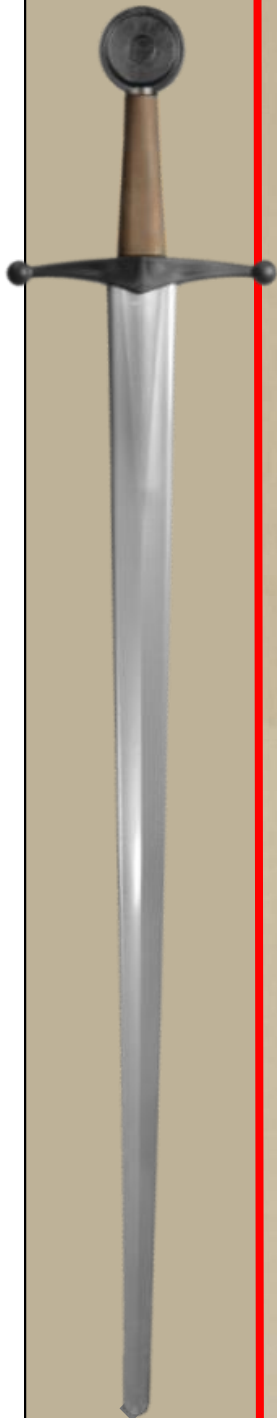
*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

July 24, 2025

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587



† Persistence with a Capital “P”

Persistence is certainly one theme for this week’s group of readings. The most astonishing example, maybe, is in Abraham’s diplomatic, if bold, questioning of God about God’s plans for the wicked in Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham knew his nephew Lot, a decent man, had settled in Sodom and with all the concern of a loving uncle, he begins asking if God’s intentions are to sweep away the righteous with the wicked? In a deliberate but respectful tone he asks first if there are fifty righteous, then 45, 30, until he gets God to agree not to destroy the city if 10 righteous are found. Makes one wonder what the rest of Abraham’s day was like.

Paul chimes in with the reminder that we who have received Christ must continue being rooted in him and established in the faith. We are particularly instructed, in his persistent way, not to be taken captive through philosophy and empty deceit according to human tradition...not according to Christ. As Paul says, we were made alive together when God forgave us our trespasses, erasing our tarnished records.

Luke begins with the disciples asking Jesus to teach them how to pray and he gives them a framework to follow that we use to this day, including the reminder to ask for forgiveness as we forgive others, a point we often mumble through with our rote recitation.

Jesus, as he often does, follows with a story. This parable of persistence may make many of us in western culture a bit squirmy and even silently (or worse) judgmental. A friend who would knock at midnight and be told to go away only to continue until the door is opened and the request fulfilled is at the very least, we might say, annoying or even rude. But the

code of hospitality and community is so strong in other cultures that despite the inconvenience, one asks and the other aids. Some of our own discomfort with this story is far less about ourselves being awakened late by a friend in need but rather because asking for help for ourselves seems quite antithetical to the “pull ourselves up by our bootstraps” mindset. For some, asking for help connotes weakness and fear of being perceived as inadequate by others. Yet knowing when and how to ask for help is actually a mark of personal strength, even spiritual maturity. Think of it as an act of a “ministry of receiving.”

Jesus explains and reinforces the expectation of God that we are to continually Ask of, Search for, and Knock on God’s eternal door to be given, to find, and to have opened to us all that God offers. It isn’t difficult once you get started. The Psalmist knows the answer will come and our strength is increased by calling on God. Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us, “That which we persist in doing becomes easier for us to do; not that the nature of the thing itself is changed but that our power to do is increased.” So, we have learned from Abraham how to ask, and from Paul that we already have the forgiveness we seek. Jesus has opened us to persistence in prayer with the faith that God is always just there, standing by and waiting to open the door.



Cover Artwork:

“Our Father...”

This presentation of the Lord's Prayer was produced by Hoen & Company of Baltimore during the centennial year of 1876. They had won the grand prize for artistic lithography at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia that same year.

It was an era when Americans thought pictures hung on their walls should not only treat the eye, but minister to the soul as well.

this SUNDAY

† Next Generation Worship

At both 8 and 10:30 am services



This Sunday's service will be special - a joyful, Spirit-filled celebration led entirely by our young people, from greeters and readers to the preacher in the pulpit.

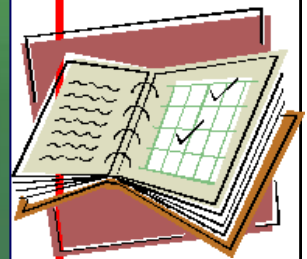
Inspired by *Growing Young*, a research-based guide from the Fuller Youth Institute, we're embracing two key strategies: giving youth real leadership and making them and their families a priority—not as the “future,” but as vital, gifted, beloved members of the Body of Christ today.

Come be encouraged, stretched, and inspired. Bring your kids, grandkids, neighbors—anyone who needs a reminder that God is still speaking, calling, and moving.

† This Week at St. Paul's

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|---|
| Thu, Jul 24 | - 9:30 am | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| | 6:00 pm | - Young Women's Night Out, Maggie McFlys |
| | 7:00 pm | - Finance Committee, Guild Room |
| Fri, Jul 25 | | St. James, the Apostle |
| Sat, Aug 2 | | The Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| Sat, Jul 26 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Bridgewater Village Store, Bridgewater |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Jul 27 | | The 7th Sunday after Pentecost |
| | - 8:00 am | - Youth Led Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:30 am | - Adult Class, Guild Room |
| | 10:30 am | - Youth Led Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| Mon, Jul 28 | - 7:00 pm | - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (YouTube Live) |
| Tues, Jul 29 | - 9:30 am | - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room |
| Wed, Jul 30 | - 10:00 am | - Holy Communion & Healing (YouTube Live) |
| | 11:30 am | - Summer Reading Group, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Ladies Evening Zoom Bible Study (Zoom) |
| Thu, Jul 31 | - 9:30 am | - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| Sat, Aug 2 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| | 10:00 am | - St. Paul's Quilters, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Aug 3 | | The 8th Sunday after Pentecost |
| | - 8:00 am | - Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:30 am | - Adult Class, Guild Room |
| | 10:30 am | - Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 3:00 pm | - Linda Pendergast Burial Rite (YouTube Live) |

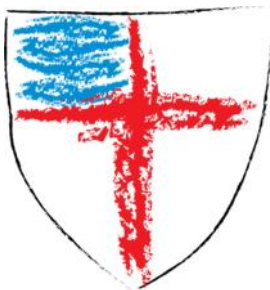
Check our website daily for schedule updates.





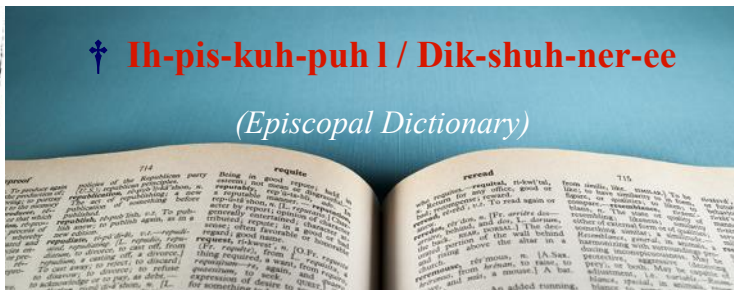
The Priest-in-Charge WEEKLY

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com and let him know.



† **Ih-pis-kuh-puh l / Dik-shuh-ner-ee**

(Episcopal Dictionary)

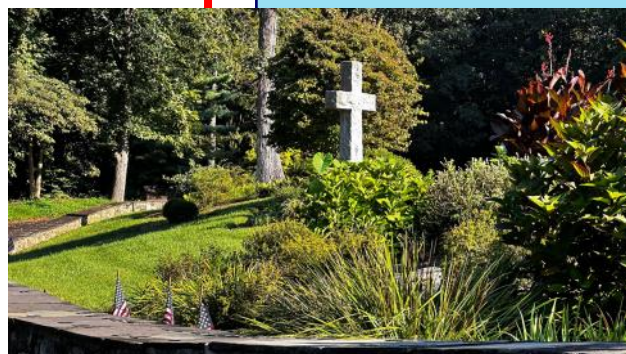


† **Burial of the Dead**

/ ber-ee-uhl / ov / thuh / ded /

Burial of the Dead - Funeral rite for burial of a baptized Christian, including anthems, psalms, scripture readings, and prayers appropriate to a funeral. The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) provides both traditional and contemporary liturgies (pp. 469-507). This rite may serve as the liturgy of the word at a Requiem Eucharist. When there is communion at the Burial of the Dead, the commendation and the committal follow the communion of the people and the postcommunion prayer (BCP, pp. 482, 498). The burial rites also include the Apostles' Creed, a special form of the prayers of the people, forms for the consecration of the grave, and additional prayers that may be added after the Lord's Prayer. The BCP also provides an Order for Burial which permits the composition of a rite to suit particular circumstances "when, for pastoral considerations, neither of the burial rites in this Book is deemed appropriate" (pp. 506-507). The Book of Occasional Services (BOS) provides

(Continued on page 5)



✠ This Date on the Church Calendar

Friday, July 25th

Saint James, the Apostle

James the son of Zebedee and his brother John were among the twelve disciples of Our Lord. They, together with Peter, were privileged to behold the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, Luke 9:28), to witness the healing of Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29) and the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37, Luke 8:51), and to be called aside to watch and pray with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane on the night before His death (Matthew 26:37, Mark 14:33).

James and John were apparently from a higher social level than the average fisherman. Their father could afford hired servants (Mark 1:20), and John (assuming him to be identical with the "beloved disciple") had connections with the high priest (John 18:15). Jesus nicknamed the two brothers "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), perhaps meaning that they were headstrong, hot-tempered, and impulsive; and so they seem to be in two incidents reported in the Gospels. On one occasion (Luke 9:54), Jesus and the disciples were refused the hospitality of a Samaritan village, and James and John proposed to call down fire from heaven on the offenders. On another occasion (Matthew 20:20-23, Mark 10:35-41), they asked Jesus for a special place of honor in the Kingdom, and were told that the place of honor is the place of suffering.

Finally, about AD 42, shortly before Passover (Acts 12), James was beheaded by order of King Herod Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great (who tried to kill the infant Jesus--Matthew 2), nephew of Herod Antipas (who killed John the Baptist--Mark 6--and examined Jesus on Good Friday--Luke 23), and father of Herod Agrippa II (who heard the defense of Paul before Festus--Acts 25). James was the first of the Twelve to suffer martyrdom, and the only one of the Twelve whose death is recorded in the New Testament.

James is often called James Major (= greater or elder) to distinguish him from other New Testament persons called James. Tradition has it that he made a missionary journey to Spain, and that after his death his body was taken to Spain and buried there at Santiago de Compostela (a town the name of which is commonly thought to be derived from the word "apostle", although some Spanish-speaking reports claim it derived from "field of stars", which in Latin would be *campus stellarum*). His supposed burial place there was a major site of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, and the Spaniards fighting to drive their Moorish conquerors out of Spain took "Santiago de Compostela!" as one of their chief war-cries. (The Spanish form of "James" is "Diego" or "Iago." In most languages, "James" and "Jacob" are identical. Where an English Bible has "James," a Greek Bible has IAKWBOS.)

written by James Kiefer



(Continued from page 4)

Burial of the Dead

appropriate texts for the burial of a person who was not a baptized Christian or who rejected the Christian faith. The burial office is an Easter liturgy. The liturgical color is appropriately white, and the Paschal candle should be lighted as a visible reminder of Jesus' resurrection and our hope of life everlasting in Christ. At the Burial of the Dead those who mourn may express grief and sorrow as they share in the community's expression of faith, hope, and mutual support in Jesus Christ.

† Christian Prayer

[Gen. 18:20-32](#) - [Ps. 138](#) - [Col. 2:6-19](#) - [Luke 11:1-13](#)

St. Luke's direct and concise account of the disciples' request reveals their desire to do what was important to Jesus. The question was itself a prayer. By including John's disciples in the question, the practice of corporate prayer is raised. In fact, the petition brings up the elements of accessibility, respect, dependence, and community that are important in Christian prayer.

Jesus begins by directing the disciples to address God as "Father." In the families of the time, the father was the figure of authority, as well as the one responsible for the welfare of the family members. He provided for the needs of the family, and his word was final in all matters pertaining to the family. The kind of relationship each member would have with the father was dictated by the father, but above all, the father was accessible to the family members.

However, this Father is due greater respect than our earthly fathers because he is holy. This respect is not dictated by what he does, but by who he is. In our day of easy familiarity and everyone relating on a first-name basis, we risk the danger of falling into the trap of "familiarity breeds contempt." As Father, God is accessible, but as the holy God he is not to be treated as our buddy or our equal. He is the eternal King, and our prayer should be that his sovereign reign be the ruling influence in our lives. Behind every petition to God should be our desire to know his will and align our thoughts and actions with it.

As a reflection of our unequal relationship with God, we acknowledge our dependence on him for meeting our most basic and continuous human needs. This is giving thanks to God for every meal - even before it is placed before us as we sit down at the table. It is the grateful acknowledgment of God's love and provision in every aspect of our lives. It is the way that we are constantly reminded of God's loving presence with us. And with that assurance we can successfully navigate the shoals of broken relationships and siren voices of temptation. We cannot forgive others on our own, nor can we keep ourselves away from temptation. Only God's presence in our lives can save us.

We are to approach God as individuals, but also as members of a family. As a result, when we offer this prayer, we are to offer it as members of the body of Christ -

the family of God. We share this prayer with all believers, so when we pray it individually, we are praying with and for the whole community.

Our boldness in prayer reflects our trust in God as our Father. The persistence with which we make our petition is also directly proportional to how strongly we desire that it be fulfilled. If we knock at God's door in pursuit of those things that we need to live our lives according to his will, then the door will be opened - according to God's knowledge of the best timing. The subject of such successful petitions, however, is our needs rather than our wants. Specifically, and most importantly, we should seek what we need to promote God's kingdom in the world - to do what is right.

Our greatest need is the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth through whom we are taught all things and reminded of Jesus' teachings. Only through the Spirit can we know who Jesus is and what is the will of God.

God will answer our prayers as is best for us - whether we recognize that fact or not. As our boldness in asking is a matter of faith, our recognition of his good and perfect will and his precise timing is also a manifestation of our faith. God is perfectly good, so he will only give us what is good.

Look It Up: Psalm 138:8

Think About It: Our motivation in prayer is that God's will for us be accomplished.

- by The Rev. Dr. Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2025



*Prayer | Via Tsuji/
Flickr*

† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

L'embellie (The Improvement),

by René Magritte (1898-1967),

Oil on canvas, painted circa 1962,

© Christie's London, June 25, 2002, lot 34, sold £831,650

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus offers advice on how to pray. When his disciples ask, "Lord, teach us to pray," he responds not only with the words of the Our Father, but also with images that speak to the heart. Jesus speaks to us constantly in images. Art and imagery are indeed very powerful ways to convey the message of the Gospel. In the Gospel Jesus shares the image of a door: "Knock, and the door will be opened to you." In just a few words, Jesus reveals something essential about God: that he is waiting on the other side of the door, and waiting for us to open it; he never forces his way in as he respects our freedom.

A door, by nature, is a threshold: it marks a passage from the familiar into the unknown, from one space into another. Jesus uses this image to suggest that prayer is an act of courage and trust: when we open that door ever so slightly, we may not know exactly what lies beyond, but we trust that God will lead us. And unlike earthly doors, God's door carries no lock. We knock and he opens. Even the smallest opening of the door is enough for his light to shine through. Christ is not only the one behind the door, waiting to receive us - he *IS* the door!

In this painting by René Magritte we see an open door standing in a dimly lit, greyish foreground. The space in front of the door feels flat and colorless and even subdued. But through the doorway, a completely different world is revealed: a glowing, golden light pours in from beyond, illuminating the threshold with warmth and life. The contrast is striking, from shadow to light, from dullness to brilliance. This image beautifully mirrors the invitation of Sunday's Gospel reading: "Knock, and the door will be opened to you." The painting suggests that while the world we inhabit may at times feel heavy or uninspired, just beyond the threshold lies something radiant, something better. Our faith will make us see 'this something better'. Christ standing behind that door will truly transform our ordinary existence into something deeply meaningful.



Take note

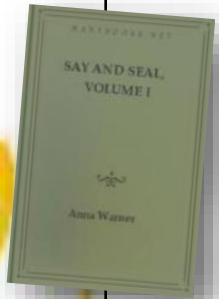
by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

Greetings!



Susan Warner

In 1860, Susan Bogert Warner (1819-1885) published a novel called *Say and Seal*, which follows the story of Faith, a young woman who is trying her best to live a virtuous life according to her Christian faith and with the help of a young teacher named Mr. Linden. While this novel is not as famous as other American novels from the 1850s-1860s (such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Little Women*, or *Moby Dick*), its primary importance today lies in one specific passage. In the story, we are introduced to Johnny Fax, a dying child. When Johnny asks Mr. Linden to comfort him with a song, these are the words we read:



*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Jesus loves me—loves me still,
Though I'm very weak and ill;
From his shining throne on high
Comes to watch me where I lie.*

*Jesus loves me,—he who died
Heaven's gates to open wide;
He will wash away my sin,
Let his little child come in.*

*Jesus loves me,—he will stay
Close beside me all the way.
Then his little child will take
Up to heaven for his dear sake.*

The familiar words were not penned by Susan, however, but by her younger sister Anna Bartlett Warner (1827-1915), at Susan's request. Both sisters were writers, and while Anna was not as prolific, her words have become much better known. In 1862, a Baptist church musician named William Bradbury (1816-1868) took Anna's words, composed a simple tune to accompany them, and added the familiar refrain "Yes, Jesus loves me!" The new song was then published in a collection he edited called *Golden Showers of Sunday School Melodies*. Without this action, it is believed that the words of this now-popular hymn would have remained tucked away in the pages of Susan's novel forever.



Anna Bartlett Warner

Over the years, the original verses of "Jesus Loves Me" have been revised, added to, and substituted with other verses. While the original text makes sense in the context of the story, it seems that others have felt the need to adapt them to support a wider usage. On Sunday, we'll be singing the following :

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
For the Bible tells me so;
Little ones to Him belong;
They are weak, but He is strong.*

*Refrain:
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me!
The Bible tells me so.*

(Continued on page 9)

Choir Notes

(Continued from page 8)

*Jesus loves me! This I know,
As He loved so long ago,
Taking children on His knee,
Saying, "Let them come to Me."
Refrain*

*Jesus loves me still today,
Walking with me on my way,
Wanting as a friend to give
Light and love to all who live. Refrain*

*Jesus loves me! He will stay
Close beside me all the way;*

*Thou hast bled and died for me,
I will henceforth live for Thee. Refrain
I love Jesus! Does he know?
Have I ever told him so?
He would like to hear me say,
That I love him every day.*

*Yes, I love Jesus!
Yes, I love Jesus!
Yes, I love Jesus!
Each day I'll tell Him so!*

The Canadian Anglican priest David Rutherford McGuire (1929–1971) wrote verses two and three. I'm still searching for the author of the fourth and fifth verses! Over the years, I have acquired a number of different verses for this song, and I'm not entirely sure where they all came from.

The Warner sisters are remembered for more than just their literary accomplishments. They resided in their family home, which was located on Constitution Island near West Point's Military Academy. For many years, they taught Sunday school classes to the cadets, and on Anna's passing, the home was given to West Point where it serves as a shrine to the two sisters. Both Susan and Anna were buried at West Point with full military honors.

I am reminded of story about the great theologian Karl Barth: when the aging scholar was asked by a roomful of scholars if he could summarize all of his years of thought into one key idea, he thought for a long time and then said, "Jesus loves me! This I know, for the Bible tells me so."

There are no shortage of performances on Youtube encompassing a myriad of styles and genres, but here are two that I really liked. Enjoy!

Peace and blessings, Kirsten



Jesus Loves Me in Different Languages

SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

DONATE TODAY!

DUE THIS
SUNDAY

This summer we are joining with **Jericho Partnership** for a **School Supply Drive**. There are supply lists in the back in the church with specific items that Jericho has requested. You don't need to get the whole list, but anything you are able to contribute will help! Donations need to be dropped off in the basket in the back of the church **by July 27**.

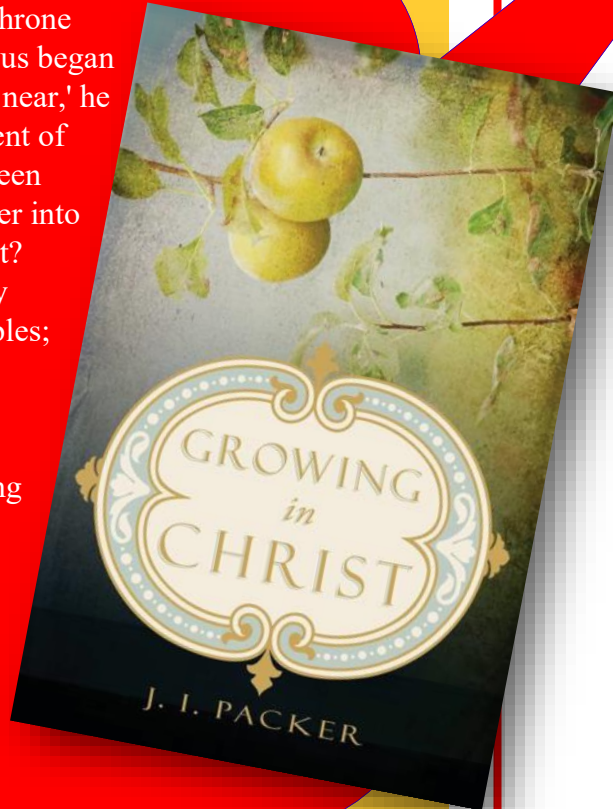
Any questions, please reach out to Kagan at **(203) 856-2230**.



† Thought for Reflection

- from Fr. John Morrison

"God's kingdom is not a place, but rather a relationship. It exists wherever people enthrone Jesus as Lord of their lives. When Jesus began preaching that 'the kingdom of God is near,' he meant that the long-promised enjoyment of God's salvation for which Israel had been waiting was now there for them to enter into (Mark 1:15). How were they to enter it? The Gospels answer that question very fully. Why, by becoming Jesus' disciples; by giving him their hearts' loyalty and letting him reshape their lives; by receiving forgiveness from him; by identifying with his concerns; by loving him without reserve and giving his claims precedence over all others. None of us can enter the Kingdom without the Spirit's help, and we must not be too proud to ask for it, nor refused to be changed in whatever ways God sees necessary."



J. I. Packer, *Growing in Christ*, p. 176

Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them! Please do not respond to any message from Fr. Nate or St. Paul's by email or any other method of communication that asks you to purchase something (often a gift card) or asks for a "favor." **Delete these messages, do not reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as Spam or Junk.** If there is any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, contact Fr. Nate by e-mail at (priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com) or the office (dszen@yahoo.com).





† Ancient Christian Writers

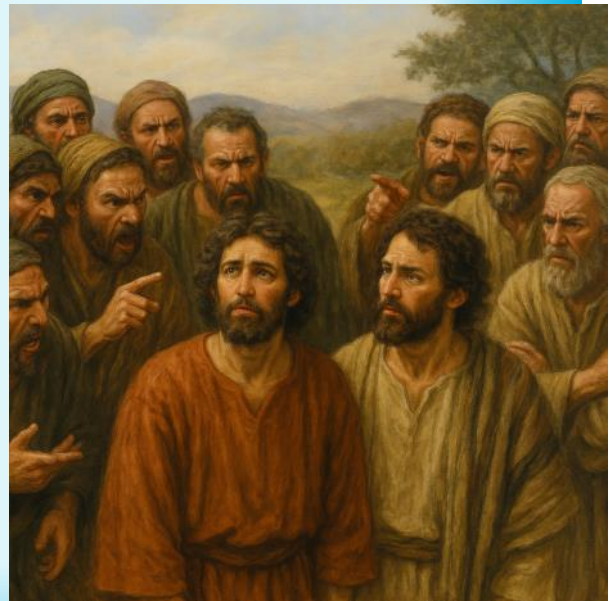
A reading from a homily of John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople [407]

The sons of Zebedee press Christ: "Promise that one may sit at your right side and the other at your left." What does he do? He wants to show them that it is not a spiritual gift for which they are asking, and that if they knew what their request involved, they would never dare make it. So he says: "You do not know what you are asking," that is, what a great and splendid thing it is and how much beyond the reach even of the heavenly powers. Then he continues: "Can you drink the cup which I must drink and be baptized with the baptism which I must undergo?" He is saying: "You talk of sharing honors and rewards with me, but I must talk of struggle and toil. Now is not the time for rewards or the time for my glory to be revealed. Earthly life is the time for bloodshed, war and danger."

Consider how by his manner of questioning he exhorts and draws them. He does not say: "Can you face being slaughtered? Can you shed your blood?" How does he put his question? "Can you drink the cup?" Then he makes it attractive by adding: "which I must drink," so that the prospect of sharing it with him may make them more eager. He also calls his suffering a baptism, to show that it will effect a great cleansing of the entire world. The disciples answer him: "We can!" Fervor makes them answer promptly, though they really do not know what they are saying but still think they will receive what they ask for.

How does Christ reply? "You will indeed drink my cup and be baptized with my baptism." He is really prophesying a great blessing for them, since he is telling them: "You will be found worthy of martyrdom; you will suffer what I suffer and end your life with a violent death, thus sharing all with me. But seats at my right and left side are not mine to give; they belong to those for whom the Father has prepared them." Thus, after lifting their minds to higher goals and preparing them to meet and overcome all that will make them desolate, he sets them straight on their request.

"Then the other ten became angry at the two brothers." See how imperfect they all are: the two who tried to get ahead of the other ten, and the ten who were jealous of the two! But, as I said before, show them to me at a later date in their lives, and you will see that all these impulses and feelings have disappeared. Read how John, the very one who here asks for the first place, will always yield to



Peter when it comes to preaching and performing miracles in the Acts of the Apostles. James, for his part, was not to live very much longer; for from the beginning he was inspired by great fervor and, setting aside all purely human goals, rose to such splendid heights that he straightway suffered martyrdom.

Homily 65 on Matthew 2-4: PG 58, 619-622

† Wednesday Morning Healing Service

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer, now has about 50 worshippers weekly.. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.

Greeters Needed

Greeting people in a warm way makes them feel good about their presence in church.

At St. Paul's, we are always looking for people who feel called to serve in this important ministry.

If you are interested in becoming a greeter, please contact Pam Szen (prszen@gmail.com) or David Szen.



PLUNGE

Into faithful stewardship.

GIVE to your
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE Episcopal CHURCH

||| A THIRD OF US

† Praying for the 1/3 of our world that are still unreached with the Gospel.

Ramoshi

Country: India | Population: 362,000 | Language: Marathi | Main Religion: Hinduism | Evangelical: 0.00%

The Ramoshi have a difficult history. Considered a low caste, near untouchables, they served as security in the Maratha kingdom and fought under freedom fighter Umaji Naik Khomane against British rule in the early 1800s. For their role in the rebellion, they were categorized as a criminal, or “denotified” tribe. The Ramoshi were finally recognized after successfully protesting the Indian government in 2017. The economy of the present-day Ramoshi is based on agriculture, including tending cows, buffalo, and sheep. They are Hindu and belong to the Lingayat sect. They worship a family deity as well as a village deity. There are no known Ramoshi believers. Pray that God would open doors and that the Ramoshi would see their worth as part of God’s Kingdom.





Israel - Walking in Jesus' Footsteps



Map of Dead Sea area.



✠ Sodom & Gomorrah ✠ Example of Judgment

Sodom and Gomorrah were two legendary biblical cities destroyed by God for their wickedness. Their story which we read this Sunday parallels the Genesis flood narrative in its theme of God's anger provoked by man's sin. They are mentioned frequently in the prophets and the New Testament as symbols of human wickedness and divine retribution, and the Quran also contains a version of the story about the two cities. Their exact location is not known, but tradition places Sodom and Gomorrah around the western side of the Dead Sea. Gomorrah is located at the base of Masada, and Sodom is about 13 miles south of Gomorrah. Though the actual locations of the cities are somewhat disputed, the growing evidence reveals that the locations are quite certain.

Historical Background

Josephus, a historian writer during the time of Christ, said the ruins could still be clearly seen in his day. Archeologists have discovered around 1.5 million bodies in graves in these areas around Sodom and Gomorrah.

And, there are a lot of brimstone (old name for sulfur) balls in these cities. This sulfur is unique and different from all other sulfur found in the world. It is around 90-95% pure. It is white, unlike any other place in the world. And, it is so pure you can light it on fire, and it burns a hot blue flame. Further, these sulfur balls are not found between the cities. There is a lot of ash in these areas that fits the biblical narrative.

The material of



Dead Sea salt ponds seen from Mount Sodom

Holy Land Trip Update

Many of you have thoughtfully asked about our pilgrimage to the Holy Land that was supposed to leave on July 1st.

We have moved our dates to September by which times the situation is expected to significantly have calmed down.

(Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Sodom & Gomorrah

these city formations is calcium sulfate, which is what limestone and sulfur become when heated. The choice building material in Israel is limestone, so these cities fit the scientific evidence as well. There is a lot of charcoal layers found in the strata of these cities and the amount of ash, charcoal, and calcium sulfate reveal overwhelming evidence of extreme heat in these cities.

There is also no geothermal activity in these areas to explain the ash, charcoal, and calcium sulfate. In addition, there are many unexplained



Lot's Wife? (overlooking the Dead Sea), was turned into a pillar of salt some 4000 years ago.



Biblical Sodom?

shapes in these areas that look like buildings, Sphinxes, pyramids, and palaces.

These cities existed around 4,000 years ago, so their remains would be difficult to distinguish. Plus, God destroyed and reduced them to ashes as well.

These cities fit the location as described in the Bible (Genesis 13:10: Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere -this was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah - like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar [Zoar has been identified as being south of Sodom and Gomorrah]).

Because the Dead Sea basin used to be like the Garden of Eden, it was an extremely desirable climate that was great for agriculture and life in general. It was, therefore, a very populated area. The thought of God raining down fire and brimstone upon the cities and people in this area is staggering. This fire and brimstone were so hot and intense they destroyed everything in its wake.

✠ Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study-Summer Edition!

The Tuesday morning Ladies Bible Study continues to meet during the summer in a relaxed format. We read and discuss the daily inspiration from *Our Utmost for His Highest* (Oswald Chambers).

Zoom is available and all are invited (ladies only please!). Contact Mary Beth Durkin durkin.mb@gmail.com for the Zoom link and further information.



✝ Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

Drive Thru Food Collection - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 138 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time we delivered food to the F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry of Sandy Hook & Newtown and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Wednesday, August 6th and will support the Victory Christian Center in Danbury & their Food Pantry, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the vehicles and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection Wednesday August 6th



*Help us,
Help others!*

11 am to Noon

If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the flower chart or envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.



† What's the Good of Prayer?

by Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*
"Lord, teach us to pray" - LUKE 11:1

Prayer is not a normal part of the life of the natural man. We hear it said that a person's life will suffer if he doesn't pray, but I question that. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God in him, which is nourished not by food, but by prayer. When a person is born again from above, the life of the Son of God is born in him, and he can either starve or nourish that life. Prayer is the way that the life of God in us is nourished. Our common ideas regarding prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer simply as a means of getting things for ourselves, but the biblical purpose of prayer is that we may get to know God himself.

"Ask, and you will receive" (John 16:24). We complain before God, and sometimes we are apologetic or indifferent to him, but we actually ask him for very few things. Yet a child exhibits a magnificent boldness to ask! Our Lord said, "... unless you ... become as little children" (Matthew 18:3). Ask and God will do. Give Jesus Christ the opportunity and the room to work. The problem is that no one will ever do this until he is at his wits' end. When a person is at his wits' end, it no longer seems to be a cowardly thing to pray, in fact, it is the only way he can get in touch with the truth and the reality of God himself. Be yourself before God and present him with your problems - the very things that have brought you to your wits' end. But as long as you think you are self-sufficient, you do not need to ask God for anything.

To say that "prayer changes things" is not as close to the truth as saying "Prayer changes me and then I change things." God has established things so that prayer, on the basis of redemption, changes the way a person looks at things. Prayer is not a matter of changing things externally, but one of working miracles in a person's inner nature.



† Transforming Stewardship

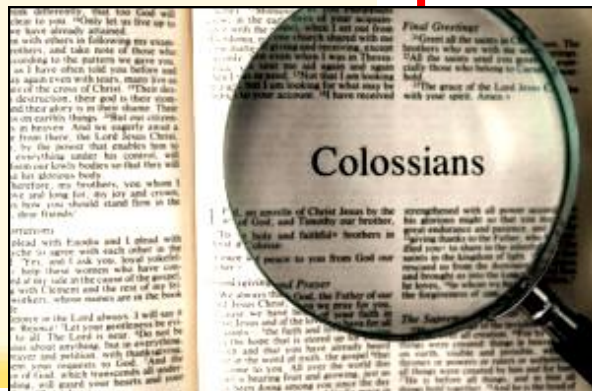
"Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."
Luke 11:9

Jesus assures us that if we ask Him, God will take care of what we need. The problem is that in our culture we often confuse what we really **need** with what we simply **want**. Many people need very little. However, we usually want so much more. A good steward only asks God for what he needs.



† Adult Education - 9:30 a.m. Guild Room

On Sunday we will be discussing the last chapter of Colossians. We have had some interesting discussions and personal sharing. In this closing chapter, Paul offers a wonderful description of what it looks like when the Holy Spirit is in control of our lives: how the Holy Spirit transforms our worship, our testimony to the world, and the words that we speak to others. All are welcome either to just sit in and listen or actively participate. Lately, the Epistle readings have been on Colossians so it is a great time to dig deeper what Paul wanted those in Colossae to experience just as he did.



mission in a minute

† Underground North England

Every month we highlight one of the missions St. Paul's supports. This month the Underground New England is the focus. The UGNE is a non-profit, Christian ministry that supports adult victims of Human Trafficking. Human Trafficking is the crime of compelling a person to provide labor or services, or to engage in commercial sex acts. There is no single profile of a human trafficker; their only commonality is that they are driven by profit at the expense of others. Traffickers are men and women of all ages. They can be relatives, romantic partners, or close family friends. Or they can be the people behind an employment ad or a new friend on social media or online gaming. Traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to compel labor or services or other acts.

We invite you to Save the Date for a Human Trafficking Awareness Event on September 27 (*See Below*). Presented by The Underground NE, this event will bring together churches from across the region to learn, connect, and take action in the fight against human trafficking. According to the United Nations' International Labor Organization, human traffickers victimize an estimated 27.6 million people worldwide.

If you are interested in attending, let Pam Szen know and perhaps we can organize a car pool from church.

The Underground NE gathers for Prayer on the second Friday of every month at New Life Christian Fellowship in Wethersfield, CT. We are seeking a Prayer Warrior from St. Paul's to pray or lead prayer on the same day and time each month as the group in Wethersfield. Kindly contact Jeff Chowanec if your heart calls you to this ministry.



SAVE THE DATE

27

September
2025

9 AM- 12 PM

Location:

South Church

📍 277 Main St., Hartford

RSVP

✉️ lori@theundergroundne.org

For more information: www.theundergroundne.org

Loving Father, we pray

- For the immediate release of those trafficked and for their safe escape from captivity.
- For healing for the physical, emotional, and psychological wounds inflicted by traffickers, and for the restoration of their dignity, hope, and joy.
- That victims feel God's love and presence, and that they receive the support and care they need to reintegrate into society.
- For all who work to combat trafficking to have wisdom and discernment in their work.
- For those on the front lines to remain steadfast in their efforts, even when faced with challenges and discouragement.
- For increased awareness of human trafficking and for the effective prevention strategies.
- For the complete eradication of human trafficking and for a world where everyone is free from exploitation.



ANDY GULLAHORN & JILL PHILLIPS

Fri., Sept. 12, 2025 | 7:30 P.M.

Tickets \$30

www.communitycoffeehouse.org



Community Coffeehouse | 7 Madison Ave. | Danbury, CT 06810 | (203) 748-4972

† Saints of God

Thursday, July 24th

Thomas à Kempis,

Priest & Mystic, 1471

Thomas à Kempis is one of the best known and most beloved medieval Christian spiritual writers. Millions of Christians have found his work *The Imitation of Christ* to be a treasured and constant source of edification, and it has been translated into an astonishingly wide range of languages.



Thomas Hammerken was born at Kempen in the Duchy of Cleves about 1380. He was educated at Deventer by the Brethren of the Common Life, and joined their order in 1399 at their house of Mount St. Agnes in Zwolle (in the Low Countries).

The Order of the Brethren of the Common Life was founded by Gerard Groote (1340-1384) at Deventer. It included both clergy and lay members who cultivated a biblical piety of a practical rather than speculative nature, with stress upon the inner life and the practice of virtues. They supported themselves by copying manuscripts and teaching. Many have seen in them harbingers of the Reformation; but the Brethren had little interest in the problems of the institutional church. Their spirituality, known as the "New Devotion" (*Devotio moderna*), has influenced both Catholic and Protestant traditions of prayer and meditation.

In *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas wrote: "A humble knowledge of oneself is a surer road to God than a deep searching of the sciences. Yet learning itself is not to be blamed, nor is the simple knowledge of anything whatsoever to be despised, for true learning is good in itself and ordained by God; but a good conscience and a holy life are always to be preferred. But because many are more eager to acquire much learning than to live well, they often go astray, and bear little or no fruit. If only such people were as diligent in the uprooting of vices and the planting of virtues as they are in the debating of problems, there would not be so many evils and scandals among the people, nor such laxity in communities. At the Day of Judgement, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how eloquently we have spoken, but how holily we have lived. Tell me, where are now all those Masters and Doctors whom you knew so well in their lifetime in the full flower of their learning? Other men now sit in their seats, and they are hardly ever called to mind. In their lifetime they seemed of great account, but now no one speaks of them."

Thomas died on July 25, 1471.



Name Tags - Remember how awkward you felt when you first came to St. Paul's because you didn't know anyone or when you visit a different church? Name tags help. So, please be courteous to your fellow parishioners, to newcomers, and guests by extending a warm welcome to them and by wearing your name tag. And remember to wear them to coffee hour as well.

“Ask and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.” The problem with most of us is that our faith is not strong enough to trust wholly in God's promises. Pray for the grace to confidently expect God's abundance to be part of your daily life. Be thankful for it...and pass on the good news of your blessings to others!



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



July 27, 2025 – Pentecost 7 (C)
The Feast of William Wilberforce

On July 30, the Episcopal Church remembers William Wilberforce (1759 – 1833), along with Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801-1885), prophetic witnesses of the Gospel of Christ. Wilberforce was a British statesman and evangelical Anglican who used his position as a Member of Parliament from the Yorkshire area to advocate for the abolition of the slave trade throughout the British Empire.

Noted for personal charm and great eloquence as a public speaker, Wilberforce was elected to Parliament from his home town and district of Hull at the age of 21. After a conversion experience in 1784, he joined the evangelical wing of the Anglican church and became interested in social reform movements.

Lady Margaret Middleton, the wife of another Member of Parliament, approached Wilberforce as a likely person to work within the government for the abolition of the slave trade. The enormity of the task was daunting to Wilberforce, who wrote, “I feel the great importance of the subject and I think myself unequal to the task allotted to me.”

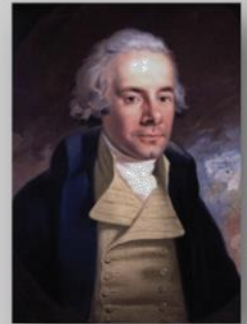
But Wilberforce accepted the mission. “God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners,” he wrote in his journal in 1787. His health, however, had never been good, and illness prevented him from immediately taking on the challenge. It was May 1789 before he made his first speech in the House of Commons on the subject of the slave trade.

When Wilberforce formally proposed abolition of the trade in 1791, his fellow members voted against his motion by nearly two to one. Wilberforce continued to press the matter, making similar proposals some nine times by 1805. During that time, due to the efforts of many reformers, the British people learned about the horrific conditions endured by enslaved Africans, and public opinion gradually turned against the slave trade.

It took longer to convince Parliament, but the Abolition of the Slave Trade bill was eventually passed in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords by large majorities and took effect in March 1807. Although the successful bill was introduced by another Member of Parliament, Wilberforce received full credit — and a rare standing ovation from the House of Commons — for his untiring efforts. Unfortunately, the 1807 bill did not immediately stop the slave trade. Seafaring traders flouted the law, sometimes covering this illegal commerce by throwing their captives overboard to drown when ships of the British navy approached. Many people became convinced that only the abolition of slavery would stop the trade.

Wilberforce at first resisted calls for outright abolition, writing in 1807, “It would be wrong to emancipate [the slaves]. To grant freedom to them immediately would be to insure not only their masters’ ruin, but their own. They must [first] be trained and educated for freedom.” But he eventually came to support full emancipation and worked to bring public opinion and political will together to that end. He continued to serve in Parliament, supporting a variety of causes, including overseas Christian mission, increased education, and greater freedom for Roman Catholics. He retired in 1825 due to ill health but continued to campaign for an end to slavery.

Wilberforce saw his efforts rewarded when Parliament passed a law in July 1833 outlawing slavery throughout the British Empire. He died three days later at age 73. In honor of his service to the nation, he was buried in the north transept of Westminster Abbey.



† Saints of God

Saturday, July 26th

Joachim and Anne

Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Gospels tell us little about the home of our Lord's mother. She is thought to have been of Davidic descent and to have been brought up in a devout Jewish family that cherished the hope of Israel for the coming kingdom of God, in remembrance of the promise to Abraham and the forefathers.



In the second century, a devout Christian sought to supply a fuller account of Mary's birth and family, to satisfy the interest and curiosity of believers. An apocryphal gospel, known as the Protevangelium of James or The Nativity of Mary, appeared. It included legendary stories of Mary's parents Joachim and Anne. These stories were built out of Old Testament narratives of the births of Isaac and of Samuel (whose mother's name, Hannah, is the original form of Anne), and from traditions of the birth of John the Baptist. In these stories, Joachim and Anne - the childless, elderly couple who grieved that they would have

no posterity - were rewarded with the birth of a girl whom they dedicated in infancy to the service of God under the tutelage of the temple priests.

In 550 the Emperor Justinian I erected in Constantinople the first church to Saint Anne. The Eastern Churches observe her festival on July 25. Not until the twelfth century did her feast become known in the West. Pope Urban VI fixed her day, in 1378, to follow the feast of Saint James. Joachim has had several dates assigned to his memory; but the new Roman Calendar of 1969 joins his festival to that of Anne on this day.

† Sunday School Info!

ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

During the summer: NURSERY SERVICE will be provided during the 10:30 service each Sunday for children through age 4. Parents, please fetch your child from the nursery during announcement time so they and the nursery caregiver can return to the worship service for Communion.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Jul 27th 8 am - Tim Huber
Aug 3rd 8 am - Bennett's
Aug 10th 8 am - Roginski's

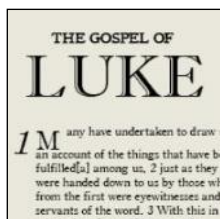
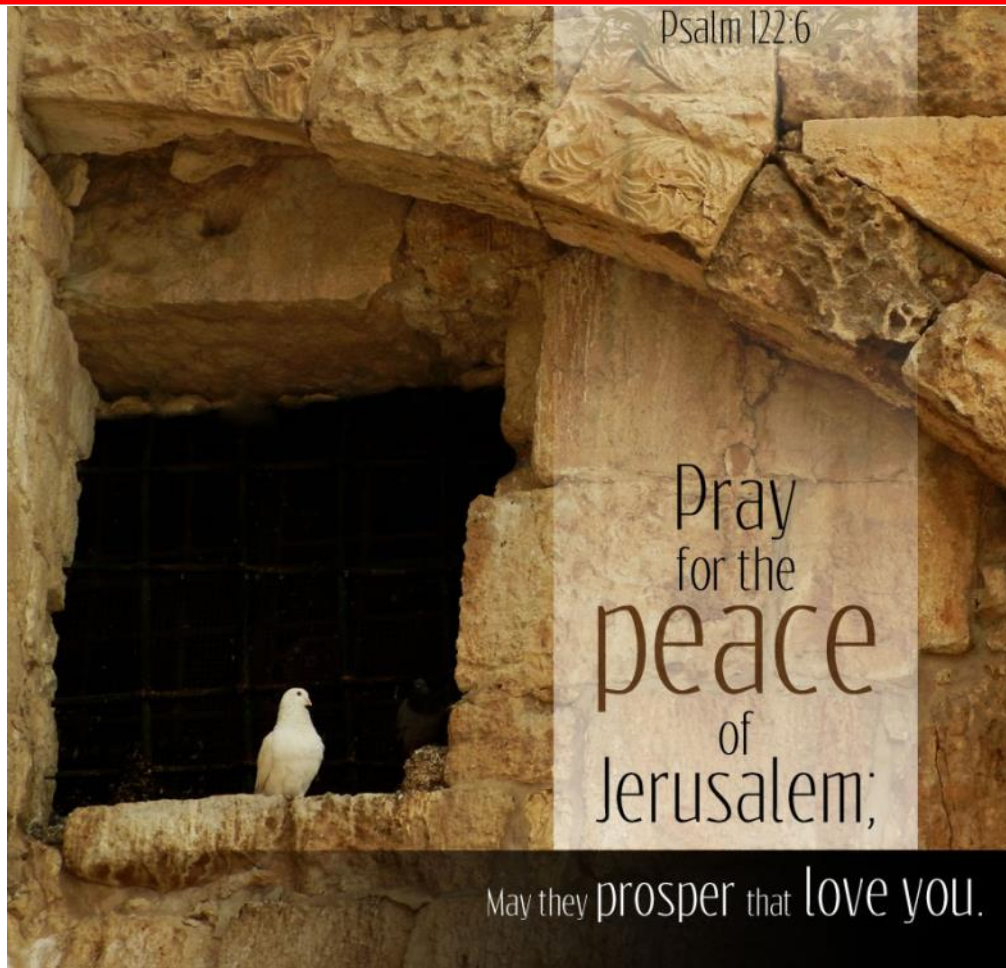
10:30 am - Youth Parents
10:30 am - Monique Gordon
10:30 am - Simon's



**COFFEE HOUR
HOSTS NEEDED**

Contact Mary Allen at
203-775-6633 or
chamla@charter.net





Our Men meet weekly study on Monday nights. They are currently dissecting the Gospel of Luke. Join them each Monday night at 7 pm in Crocker Hall. All the studies are available live on YouTube.

† **Ladies Wed Evening Bible Study**

All women are invited to join the Ladies Wednesday Evening Bible Study for our new study of the book of Ephesians. Every Wednesday evening, 7-8 pm by Zoom.

This letter includes many praises and prayers to God for his saving love and gifts to the church. We look forward to studying and sharing our questions and experiences together. Please join us as we receive God's Word (3:17) "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love."





Bob Greeley celebrates tomorrow. Michelle O'Hara Abate blows out candles on Wednesday. Have a blessed day everyone!



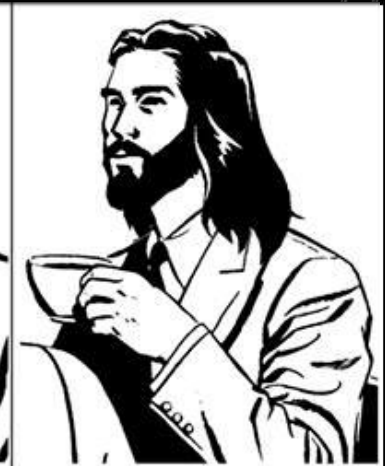
Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

The Lord's Prayer



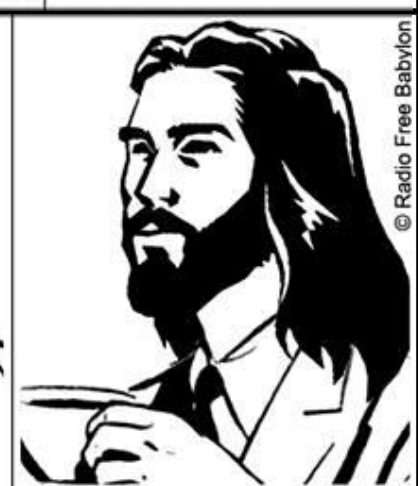
Our father who art in heaven halo wed bethy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses...



What are you doing, Carl?



Reciting the Lord's Prayer, Jesus.



I can hear that, Carl.
How about you try praying it instead?

© Radio Free Babylon

† Hearts to Hands Reminder

At the adult education class, we talked about how much we are all like family, caring for one another, reflecting the image of Christ and many of you who "behind the scenes" are doing this organically as you become aware of a need.

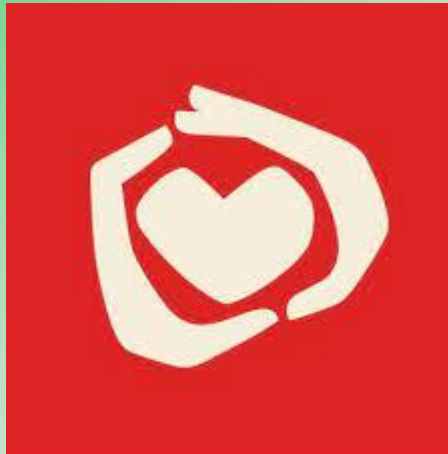
I wanted to remind others who are uncomfortable, shy or don't normally seek out help that we are here for you as well. The Hearts to Hands ministry can help with arranging transportation to appointments, doing a specific task around your home, providing meals after surgical procedures for you or loved ones during difficult times, and the list continues. This assistance is provided by fellow parishioners and some who we seek to help that may be skilled with your particular need.

Please be comfortable to reach out to any one of us in this ministry: Bill & Lin Bennett or Dot Crocker. Your information / request will be kept as confidential as possible, yet sharing just enough to get you the help you need. The best way to reach out is via email:

Dot Crocker: Dotsy12@charter.net

Linda Bennett: toocoolforgrandma@gmail.com

Bill Bennett: ourhousephotos@yahoo.com



† Underestimating God's Mercy

Genesis 18:20-33

Abraham does not dispute the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah or the punishment God has planned for the twin sin cities. Abraham's concern is for the collateral damage caused by God's righteous wrath which must in his mind include his nephew Lot and Lot's family. Each proposal preceded by "Far be it from you" asks God to reconsider the just sentence on the wicked for the sake of a diminishing population of righteous. He stops at ten because he either senses he's gone as far as God will go or he can't imagine there would be less than ten righteous in the cities on the plain. Unfortunately for the wicked there are only four who are counted righteous, although the character of Lot's turning back wife turned to salt is questionable. And Lot's daughters prove to be as sinful as Sodom (Genesis 19:30-36) while Lot drunk in a cave is no saint. So what if no one is righteous? What then? What Abraham didn't know and we can hardly imagine is that God's desire was that mercy would triumph over judgment for it is God's will to be both just and the one who justifies. So since none were found, God in Christ became the One through whom we are counted righteous and who knows, might also be the ones for whose sake the city is spared.



Sodom and Gomorrah by Henry Tanner 1920

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

The Prayer of Jesus

[Genesis 18:20-32](#)

In our first reading the patriarch Abraham bargains with the Lord over the fate of Sodom. He learns how ready the Lord is to turn away divine anger for the sake of the few who are good. Abraham dares just a little further each time in testing the Lord's patience. In this period the presence of a few wicked persons was thought to make an entire community liable to judgment. This story, which applies the principle in reverse, represents a significant advance in Israel's understanding of God: mercy directs God's actions.

[Psalm 138](#)

A hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord on high, who has saved God's servant and cares for the lowly.

[Colossians 2:6-19](#)

In this lesson the new disciples at Colossae are urged to remain rooted in Christ, letting nothing detract from his uniqueness and preeminence. The Colossians were apparently tempted to worship the pagan star-gods along with Jesus, and also to accept basic Jewish practices such as circumcision as necessary to salvation. But God has revealed the fullness of divinity in Christ, who has triumphed over all such gods. The record of our sin and debt to law have been nailed to the cross. Ours is a far better spiritual circumcision found through dying to our sinful self and being made alive with Christ.

[Luke 11:1-13](#)

In the gospel lesson Jesus teaches his disciples about prayer and the character of God as Father. This shorter version of the Lord's Prayer is the earliest known to us. Its concern is both with present life and with readiness for the coming reign of God. Jesus' two little stories encourage his followers continually to ask in prayer and to expect the good gifts of God, especially the Holy Spirit.

[Luke 11:1-13](#)

Up till this point who has said anything about asking for the Holy Spirit? Up till now, it's all been about bread and forgiveness and not being tested and asking and seeking and knocking. But now all of a sudden it's about the Holy Spirit. What are we to make of this?



† Sermon Shorts

“The Christ Hymn (Pt. 2): Sustainer of the World, Head of the Church, Savior of the World.” To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#) Check out our [Sermon Archives](#) as well.



† Your Prayers Are Requested For...

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. With the Lord's encouraging words still sounding in our ears, let us frame again the prayers which linger in all human hearts, saying Hear us, O Lord, as we pray for...

.....Ed Licence, Gail Winkley, and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.

.....St. John's, Salisbury; Trinity, Seymour; Christ Church, Sharon.

.....Revival at St. Paul's and the greater Danbury area.

.....Parish office volunteers, curates, seminary interns, parish assistants & associates. For missional curacies.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalm 122:6*

.....Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Roger, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Ruth, Blake, Nick Marcalus, Cliff, Evelyn Kirner, Jane Sedor, Jim Beck, Larry Wanzer, George, Bob Finn, Paul Kovacs, Barbara Stowell, Susan Morrison, Diane Meskill, Jeff Chowanec, Elana and Veronika continued healing.

.....the people of [Ukraine](#); the people of the [State of Qatar](#); the people of the [Cuba](#); the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Western Newfoundland - The Anglican Church of Canada; and our sister and brother members of the [Old-Catholic Church in the Netherlands](#).

.....For the Church: that, like Abraham, we may grow in our friendship with God and honestly present our needs to God each day

.....[F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry](#), Sandy Hook & Newtown, the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of July.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....For persistence in prayer: that the Spirit will teach us how to authentically express our deepest needs to God in prayer and give us strength never to grow tired of calling upon God for assistance.

.....[French Speaking Baptist Chapel](#), Danbury, a church partner of the Jericho Partnership.

.....[Our Country](#).

.....That we may learn to see the difference between the things we need and the things we want.

.....For the one third of humanity that does not have access to the gospel, for zealous preachers of the word, that by the Holy Spirit, they that they would become strong in their faith, grow in numbers and be a light to those around them.

.....For all who are burdened with guilt: that God's love will free them and bring them to the confidence that they are loved and all their sins are forgiven.

.....For the Church's role in human trafficking, that they would be a haven of healing and that they would be equipped to see, pray, and engage faithfully until everyone is free.

.....[Peace Among the Nations](#).



The Lord's Prayer

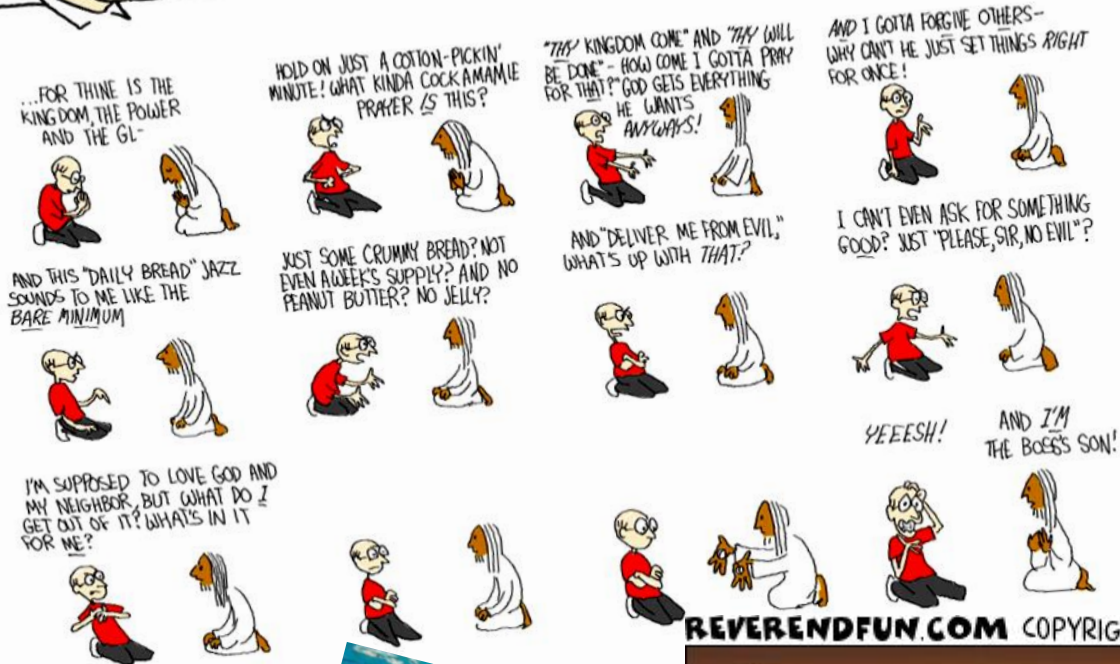
From the hearts of children comes the Lord's Prayer. We hope you're as blessed by this video as we are.



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)

MAN OVERBOARD man martin



REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY

Did You Know
that babies will instinctively hold their breath underwater (pictured) until the age of six months?



Find us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Find Us On Instagram

Watch us on YouTube



THE INEVITABLE BATTLE OF "FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS" VS. "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES"

Ecclesiasticus 43:27 - We could say more but could never say enough; let the final word be: 'He is the all.' - 30 -