

The Cambridge Episcopalian



JESUS HEALS
COME MEET HIM
HERE... NOW

June, 2019

St. Luke's Episcopal Church • Cambridge, New York • (518) 677-2632 • www.stlukescambridge.org

A message from Father Matt

The Choice to Live *or* Live Abundantly

I was privileged to be part of five funerals this past month. Each was filled with the sorrow of loss and at the same time, the joy of celebrating the life of a loved one. Each was filled with the sadness that comes because we love and at the same time, the peace we know because God loves us. And each was filled with memories of days gone by and at the same time, the sure and certain hope of eternal life our Lord promised. So I suppose it's to be expected that life and death have been on my mind lately.

A couple weeks ago, I watched one of my favorite westerns, *The Outlaw Josey Wales* starring Clint Eastwood. After the Civil War, Josey is making his way southwest pursued by Union Soldiers. Seeking to establish a home within Cherokee borders, he comes face to face with Chief Ten Bears. As the two men size each other up, the Chief is deciding aloud whether they will die together or live together. Josey replies, "Dying isn't hard for men like us. It's living that hard." Ten Bears

looks down briefly from his horse, then lifts his head high and replies, "It shall be life."

Our Lord said much about death and life. The amazing part, the part that makes life worth living and gives meaning to death, is that in Christ, both death and life lead to life!! His promise in death is eternal life. His promise in life is life, but not just any life...abundant life. ***I have come***, He says in the tenth chapter of John's gospel, ***that they might have life and have it abundantly***. That is our choice, a choice we make through our faith in Him...to live or to live abundantly. So what exactly does this look like?

It looks like a remarkable article from The Reverend Dr. Stephen Peay I recently read in Saint Mary's most recent newsletter. Father Peay was the Dean of Nashotah Seminary when I was a student. He is a gifted historian, teacher and priest. With joyful enthusiasm, he was delighted when I asked him if I could share his article in Saint Luke's Newsletter. I was deeply encouraged through his article, and pray you will be also.

God Bless
Father Matt



'If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.'

The texts from Paul and Luke both deal with real life. Paul confronts the reality of death squarely — not something most preachers like to do. The theologian Joseph Sittler once wrote, "We must stop this conspiracy of silence about death and talk openly about it. One can go to church a whole life-time and never hear a sermon on death. If I were a young preacher again, I would preach the Christian gospel of eternal life in God, but I would preach it sooner in my ministry, preach it throughout, and I would preach it more realistically." I agree with Sittler and

Continued on page 2

confess that I have not preached about death as often as I should have.

Death is real. Death is part what it means to be human, part of the total experience of what means to have lived. And, dear friends, death is inevitable; as surely as we are sitting here, one day we're going to die. Which reminds me of a cartoon I once saw in *The New Yorker*; it depicted a woman pointing to her husband and saying, "Oh, Donald's such a fatalist. He's absolutely convinced that he's going to grow old and die someday." It's not fatalistic or pessimistic, it's realistic. The question to us is what do we do with that knowledge? Or, to use a phrase from the Rabbis after reading from Scripture, "how then shall we live?"

I would suggest to you, first, that we should live, period. We should live with abandon, enjoying life and everything that it has to offer. The good God has made us and a wonderful world; we are to enjoy ourselves and enjoy this world. Now, does that mean we are to live recklessly, the old "eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die" clap-trap? No. But we are to remember that Jesus told us the reason he came among us was that we might have life and have it how? More abundantly. I would suggest to you that real abundant life is rooted in how we are oriented. If we live toward God and toward others, with open minds, open hearts, and open hands, we will experience that real life is abundant life. The beginning of our resurrected life doesn't have to wait until we experience physical death. Rather it begins with each new day when we get out of bed to greet that day. Real life begins for us when we come to understand that there is more to us than we can see or understand in the here and now. Real life begins for us when we realize and embrace that the center of life is not self but other-centered. Then look to be one with God and seek the good of the creation God made. Resurrection is, indeed, a rising to new life, but it first overcomes the death that is selfishness and narrowness long before it overcomes physical death.

Some would tell us that the resurrection is not scientifically proved. However, science has not disproved the Resurrection of Christ or the eternal life we are promised in the gospel. It simply cannot replicate the data. Well, of course it can't – we're talking about the Transcendent God taking flesh and dwelling among us. It's never happened before and we can't use scientific methods to prove something that transcends our experience of reality, which historians of science like the late Stephen Jay Gould (in *The Mismeasure of Man*) or

Thomas Kuhn (who gave us the concept of the paradigm shift in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*) have shown us can be skewed with subjectivism and are far from pure in their empiricism.

The truth of the matter is there is as much, if not more, faith involved in doing science as there is in religion. Our Christian faith is based on the testimony of those who experienced the risen, living Lord. We rely on their testimony, their evidence if you will, just as we rely on the testimony of physicists who tell us that the world, which we see as solid, is actually a mass of moving particles. The truth is that no one has ever seen an atom, a proton, or a neutrino; we have only seen their effects using Scanning Tunneling Microscopes, Scanning Probe Microscopes, and now Spectroscopy. We surmise from that how they look. When people open themselves up to the presence of the Risen Christ, we also see an effect. There is testimony to the reality of the Resurrection all around us.

Scientist, and believer, Francis Collins says, science is not the only way of knowing, nor is it the only way of pursuing truth. Perhaps the essence of what I'm trying to say is found in something the seventeenth century spiritual writer Angelus Silesius said, "Man has two eyes/One only sees what moves in fleeting time/The other what is eternal and divine." We feel what we feel. We sense that there is more to us, because of the imprint of the Creator on us. Because there is the Divine spark in each of us and thus a void in us that only God's presence can fill. Sometimes the "why" is more important than the "how" in coming to understand the truth about our world and about us.

As Collins says in his book, *The Language of God*, "Even Albert Einstein saw the poverty of a purely naturalistic worldview. Choosing his words carefully, he wrote, "Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind!" Who am I to disagree with Einstein, especially when he's correct!

Mysticism is about a direct or immediate knowledge of the divine. Physicist Paul Davies in his book *The Mind of God* points out that there are even times when scientists experience mystical knowledge. He writes: "In other cases mystical experiences seem to be more direct and revelatory. Russell Stannard writes of the impression of facing an overpowering force of some kind, 'of a nature to command respect and awe. . . There is a sense of urgency about it; the power is volcanic, pent up, ready to be unleashed.' Science writer David Peat describes 'a remarkable feeling of intensity that seems

Continued from page 2 (Fr. Peay's intensity that seems ...)

to flood the whole world around us with meaning. . . . We sense that we are touching something universal and perhaps eternal, so that the particular moment in time takes on a numinous character and seems to expand in time without limit. We sense that all boundaries between ourselves and the outer world vanish, for what we are experiencing lies beyond all categories and all attempts to be captured in logical thought." What Stan- nard and Peat describe is the essence of what we can know – that we aren't to be pitied – Christ is Risen, and so are we.

As people of the Resurrection we then have an obliga- tion to live in a certain manner. It is this manner or way of living that Jesus addresses in Luke's version of the Be- atitudes. Here Jesus talks about real life and real living as opposed to that which, for lack of a better expression, is false or half life. Notice he addresses all the things that we like to avoid in polite company in church like money and other worldly things. He addresses these things precisely because everything we do – whether it's economics or politics or anything else — is to be ap- proached from the real life view of our life in God. God made the world and everything in it, and if we are to be blessed, we are to live in accord with God's mind and God's will. Otherwise our life will be less than real and far less than abundant.

The real foundation for our future – and for our pres- ent – is based on "life that is really life" and then living it out. Thus, we look beyond self to the service of God and others. We give of ourselves, giving to God what's right, and not simply what's left after we've done what we like, and in that way we "take hold of life that is really life."

Let me offer just a sample of what I believe these cer- tainties of real life in God are. One, there is a God who made and ordered this world and all that is within it; two, God loves us and cares for us and our life has pur- pose and meaning; three, that God invites us to share the Divine life and to live in a way that is at once loving and life-giving; humanity has potential for goodness both in the here-now and in the hereafter that leads us to an urgency to live unselfish lives. We are not pitiable, for Christ IS Risen. Blessed are we and real life is within our world, within our reach, within us.

Real life sees humanity in all its fullness and knows that there is more. Real life may be hard, but heart and head working together make it abundant, make it bless- ed. Live real life, live abundantly, and be blessed.✠

Fr. Peay is Dean-President Emeritus of Nashotah House Theological Seminary and Associate Dean of All Saints' Cathedral-Milwaukee



The inscription on our bell at St. Luke's.....Come when I call, to serve God all

KEEP IN TOUCH

After a wonderful winter in town with her family, Sally King is back on "her mountain"!

She is settling in, enjoying the company of the birds out her window and the warm memories that fill each room.

She has a new telephone number and has asked that it be forwarded to her "church family".

It is: 518-677-3211

Please make a note in your phone books.

Thank you.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Weekly	Mass	Wednesdays	10:00 a.m. Church
	Bible Study Fellowship	Wednesdays	10:45 a.m. Parish Hall
	Men's Bible Study	Wednesdays	6:00 p.m. Parish Hall
	Co-Ed Bible Study: Revelation	Wednesdays	6:30 p.m. Parish Hall
	Sunday School	Sunday	9:00 a.m. Parish Hall
June	Daughters of the King	June 3,- Monday	10:00 a.m. Parish Hall
	Annual Diocesan Convention	June 7-9 - Friday/Sunday	Camp-of-the-Woods
	Gloria Palmer	June 17 -Monday	6:00 p.m. Parish Hall
	Vestry	June 18- Tuesday	6:30 p.m. Parish Hall
	Thank You Natalie Sieme-Giordano	June 23 - Sunday	After Church Parish Hall
	Father Matt preaching at the CtK Healing Service	June 25 - Tuesday	10:00 a.m. CtK

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR JUNE

Date	6/2/19	6/9/19	6/16/19	6/23/19	6/30/19
Old Testament	Carol Hamilton	Chris Crawford	Gail Bearup	Nancy P.	Bob Breese
New Testament	Delores M.	Bob I.	Lynn Wilbur	Lou M.	Steve S.
Prayers of People	Lynn Wilbur	Bobbie Stevens	Rick C.	Annie Franklin	Chris Crawford
Acolyte	Diana T.	Steve S.	Tara Keleher	Nate & Alex B.	Diana Tully
Chalice	Carolyn L.	Nancy P.	Lou Midura	Patty Midura	Steve S.
Prayer team	DOK	DOK	DOK	DOK	DOK
Greeter & Offering	Rick & Chris C.	Sally King	Bob & Roberta B.	Ron & Avril B.	Bobbie Stevens
Coffee hour	Nancy	Dolores	Dulce	Laurie	Gail & Ruth
Audio Visual	Danny & Rick				

MORNING THOUGHTS

This morning I read Psalm 78 in my daily scriptures. Vs 34 said, in reference to God and the Israelites:

“Whenever he slew them, they would seek him, and repent, and diligently search for God.”

(This passage refers to the time in the desert after God delivered His people from Egypt. They grumbled about thirst, so He gave them water from a rock... they grumbled about hunger, so He gave them manna - the food of the Angels - from heaven... they grumbled about having no meat, so He gave them meat... finally God had had enough of their “grumbling!”)

Though this is about the Israelites in this passage, I think it speaks volumes about the hearts of men (and women) throughout time.

Are we ever satisfied? It seems to me, we continually seek more and more...

As I sat with this it came to me that the “brakes” that can hold back our insatiable desire for more is Thanksgiving.

When we shift from asking to thanking we put our hearts in a humble place before the giver, whomever it may be.

As we live in a spirit of Thanksgiving before or Lord - the giver of ALL GOOD THINGS - our hearts are transformed into hearts of awe and praise, drawing us into a place of Divine humility... of peace, love - and being loved... of holy growth!

(It was a good morning with Our Lord... and now, as I look out my window, I will practice this lesson and “Thank” -and Praise - our Dear Father for MORE rain!!!

Blessings to all of you precious friends -Nancy