

*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

July 20, 2023

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587

† Jacob's Ladder?



† Let Us Not Be the Enemy

"Pogo" was a daily American newspaper comic strip by Walt Kelly that ran from 1948 to 1975. Set in the Okefenokee Swamp in the deep south, it used animal characters that portrayed human characteristics, and often mixed comedy with social and political satire. On the second Earth Day, in 1971, Pogo the possum is trudging through the swamp with his friend, Porkypine. In this two panel rendering, the characters bemoan the state of the swamp with the overwhelming amount of rubbish that has been dumped in it, and Pogo utters a now iconic phrase that captures us all too well still today: "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

We are often, and in many ways, our own worst enemies. Jacob is frequently a victim of his own schemes (learned at his mother's knee) as he, in this case, has run away from his understandably angry twin Esau, and will never see his mother again.

The verses of Psalm 139 in this reading are the comforting ones that we use in Liturgy. See verses 18-21 for those days when a harsh look at our sometimes unkindly selves and a cathartic venting feels necessary!

Paul speaks to our inward groaning and mortal struggles to avoid the deeds of the body as he exhorts us to hope for what we do not see and wait for it with patience.

But it is this parable of Jesus, often known as the wheat and the tares [noxious weeds that resemble the wheat sprouts], that offers us a lesson in prudent personal agronomy. It takes an experienced farmer/gardener to know the difference between seedlings that grow into the desired plants and those that produce invasive, destructive weeds. The Master of this field wisely leaves well enough alone, as at maturity, the reapers will have no difficulty in distinguishing the wheat from the weeds, knowing which to save and which to burn.

While the Master of this story blames an enemy for the deliberate seeding of tares in his field, we can look to ourselves for the crop of noxious weeds we produce. One grows each time we point a finger in hate, however self-righteous and correct we think we are. Another shoots up each time we judge and belittle those we believe to be the enemy of our personal agenda (even if they are). The next grows tall every time we decide who is an undesirable and useless plant growing where it isn't wanted. And half-an-acre rises up especially when we believe we know who God will - or should - burn. It is so easy to sow another seed of soul-destroying rubbish in our own spiritual ground, reducing it to an unholy swamp.

The message is pretty clear, and always difficult: it's not our job to reap the harvest and separate the weeds from the wheat. We are called to be the good seeds, the children of the kingdom, to be fruitful and nourish the fields of the Lord. In growing strong in Christ together, we will crowd out temptation, resist and lessen the impact of the noxious weeds in God's Creation. The true and fertile seeds of the Spirit are ready to sprout. God is the true and only judge of the hearts of others. Jesus came to save the fallen, not just the faithful. Let us not be the enemy. Only God is the One to untare the wheat.

About the Cover:

Imagine our surprise on Monday morning when we saw this ladder in our Memorial Garden knowing that this Sunday's Old Testament reading was the story of Jacob's dream.

Why was it there? Our landscapers were trimming our tress and shrubbery.

✠ **We Are Weed and Wheat** Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

The first hearers of this parable were no doubt encouraged by it. Justice will be done and love wins as good will triumph over evil. It is a good word for all who weary of a world infested by evil and the misery it causes even if one hopes God's judgment is tempered by mercy for weeds as well as wheat. In the end the job of judging between wheat and weeds is none of our business and naming good and evil us and them might just mean we have some weeds in our wheat as well. Maybe that is the point of the parable on a more personal level. We are weed and wheat, saint and sinner, and only God can pull out one without uprooting the other.



✠ ***This Week at St. Paul's***

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--|
| Thu, Jul 20 | - 8:00 am | - PraiseBarre (Zoom) |
| | - 9:30 am | - Men's Study / Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| Sat, Jul 22 | - 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 | - PraiseMoves (Zoom) |
| | - 2:30 pm | - Healing Payer Training, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Jul 23 | | 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) |
| | - 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |
| Mon, Jul 24 | - 7:00 pm | - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (YouTube Live) |
| Tues, Jul 25 | - 8:00 am | - PraiseKicks (Zoom) |
| | - 9:30 am | - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room |
| Wed, Jul 26 | - 10:00 am | - Holy Communion & Healing (YouTube Live) |
| | - 11 to Noon | - Drive-Thru Food Collection |
| | - 7:00 pm | - Ladies Evening Zoom Bible Study (Zoom) |
| Thu, Jul 27 | - 8:00 am | - PraiseBarre (Zoom) |
| | - 9:30 am | - Men's Study / Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| Sat, Jul 29 | - 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 | - PraiseMoves (Zoom) |
| Sun, Jul 30 | | The 9th 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) |
| | - 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |

Check our website daily for schedule updates.

† **Where You Are, God Is**

Genesis 28:10-19a - Psalms 139: 1-11, 22-23 - Romans 8:12-25
Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Where shall we find the rock that is God, our only hope and our salvation? We may, by the largesse of omnipresent being, discover God anywhere, and sometimes in strange and arid places, sometimes through the instrument of visions and shadowy dreams.

“[Jacob] came to a certain place and stayed there for the night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, the top of it reaching to heaven; and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood beside him and said, ‘I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring, and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you’” (Gen. 28:11-15).



*Jacob's Dream
at Bethel*

Jacob's vision recapitulates the promise to Abraham, but it does more than that. It reaffirms the promise in a particular place and circumstance - where Jacob is and while he sleeps. This sense of divine nearness is what startles the patriarch. “Surely the Lord is in this place - and I did not know it!” “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Gen. 28:16-17). The revelation of God “in this place” ought to startle us as well. “Do you not know,” St. Paul asks, “that your body is a temple of

the Holy Spirit?” (1 Cor. 6:19). Jesus says, “The kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). God is always “in this place,” every location being a portal to the heavens.

Wherever we are, there is a ladder connecting heaven and earth. Upon that ladder, the Son of Man ascends and descends. He comes down to us as if a gardener, sowing the good seed in his field - our lives and the world. The seed grows, but so do weeds sown by an enemy. Good and bad grow together until the harvest, at which time the weeds are gathered and burned, while the wheat is gathered into a barn. Until the end of time, the seed of the Word and the weeds of the enemy exist together, and so humanity and all creation exist in tension and conflict, awaiting a completion known as yet only by hope. “We know,” St. Paul says, “that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved” (Rom. 8:22-24).

We shall not always groan. The weeds of the enemy, that is, “all causes of evil,” every cause of sorrow, every occasion of lamentation, will be thrown into a furnace of fire. Like “silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the fire,” we shall, through a fortunate and necessary purgation, ascend finally with the Son of Man (Ps. 12:6, BCP).

Look It Up

Read: Genesis 28:16-17

Think About It

You are the house of God.

- from *The Living Church*, 2023

† Prayer as We Search for a New Rector

Almighty God, you know the needs of your church in every place: look graciously upon us, the people of St. Paul's Parish, and grant us the guidance of your Holy Spirit as we seek a new Rector for this parish.

Jesus, you have blessed and sustained us through the past 238 years. We ask that you continue to lead us, stretch us, and direct us, in our search. Raise for us a priest and pastor who will boldly proclaim your Gospel, faithfully administer your sacraments, and serve your people with love and compassion, that we may continue to grow in the likeness of Christ and be a beacon of love and hope to our community and the world.

Give us discernment, wisdom, and confidence in your timing. Guide the members of our Search Committee, as they labor to be faithful in seeking your will.

We pray for the life of our parish, that we may continue to be strengthened in our mission to transform lives, being Jesus' heart, hands and feet to our neighbors no matter where they are on their journey of faith.

Bless us with mutual trust and respect, courage, and foresight as you shepherd our community through its journey.

Grace us with continuous direction and inspire us toward genuine self-reflection.

All this we ask as we walk in your ways to the glory of your name. **Amen.**



† In Hock?

In hock to the flesh and cannot conceive of a payment plan that will get you out of debt anytime soon? Based on Paul's struggle in the previous chapter "I do not understand what I do..." (Romans 7:15) our guess is that Paul was paying down his debt his whole life as well. But putting to death the deeds of the body is not as much about freedom from the flesh as it is trusting while in the flesh that our cry "Abba! Father!" is heard no matter what. Like paying a mortgage on a house we get to live in even though the bank holds the note. But unlike human lenders the Lord doesn't evict us if we miss a payment and truth to be told the permanent dwelling is already decided to us because of the down payment Jesus made on our behalf. So we are debtors in debt forever to Christ and gladly so.





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 over 85 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time our trucks delivered to the Jericho Food Pantry, Danbury and the F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry, Newtown.

Our next food collection will be next Wednesday, July 12th and will support the F.A.I.T.H. Food Pantry, Newtown & Sandy Hook 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 trucks and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection

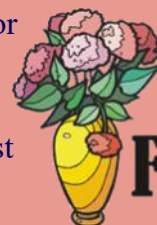
**Wednesday
July 26th**

*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 an envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.



**Altar
Flowers**

† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares,

by Pieter Jalhea Furnius (1545-1610),
engraved in 1585, after Gerard van Groeningen,
From the Series Thesaurus Sacrarum Veteris et Novi Testamenti,
Publish by Gerard de Jose (1509-1591),
Engraving on paper

Our engraving was published in 1585. We have to view it against a background of the Counter-Reformation, when the Catholic Church was fueling a response to the Protestant reformation which began around 1520. Print making became an important medium for protestants and catholics alike, to spread their message. For the very first time



in history, pictures and texts could be mass-published and widely spread, almost as pamphlets. Both groups used print making to get their message out to the people as a whole. It was just as revolutionary as the advent of the internet and social media in the 21st century, now reaching even more people.

This print by Flemish engraver Pieter Furnius, graphically shows what the parable of today means. To 16th-century eyes, this would have been quite a scary, graphic and challenging

depiction. Our 21st-century eyes have become quite accustomed to seeing images of violence, deceit and evil through television, papers and the internet. By contrast, in the 16th century, art such as this engraving would have had quite an impact. We see Satan, depicted as a monstrous man with a wild boar's head, hoof feet and human hands, sowing dandelion. The people asleep in the foreground indicate that it is nighttime, when people are asleep, as in the parable. The dandelion is a difficult plant to deal with, as it is virtually indistinguishable from the young shoots of the healthy wheat. In a way the parable is not just about how we have to be aware of evil catching us out when we are (spiritually) asleep, but also about trusting in God that he will take care of the harvest. When we leave the dandelion among the wheat, rather than trying to extract it, ultimately God will harvest it all and then separate the weeds from the healthy wheat....

When we see great injustices or evil around us, we sometimes have to trust and rest assured that God will have the last word. God is a patient and tolerant 'farmer' where his primary care and love is for the 'good seed', the wheat, which he sowed initially. He will not jeopardize its growth by trying to extract the evil weeds as the field's crops grow. No, he is patient and will remove the weeds from the good wheat when he harvests.

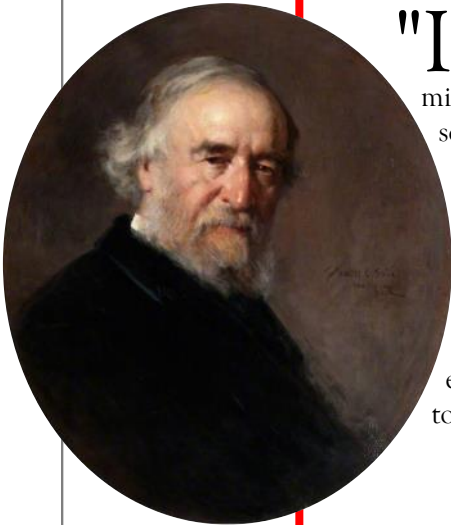


As part of our outreach, St. Paul's donates gift cards and non-perishable items to six area food pantries. The non-perishable items are provided by our generous congregation and are truly appreciated. Donations for the food pantry can be left in the basket at the back of the church. Delivery is made to one food pantry each month. Thank you.

Take note

by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

Greetings!



Walter Chalmers
Smith

"Immortal, Invisible God Only Wise" is a perennial favorite of hymn singers around the world. Walter Chalmers Smith (1824-1908) was a Scottish minister and poet, and he composed these lines as a way of describing something that is really beyond words. As hymnologist C. Michael Hawn puts it: "How do you express the inexpressible mystery of the Creator whose name was unutterable in Hebrew Scriptures, save the self-described 'I AM'? How do you put into words what cannot be known? How do you sing about the One who is ineffable ~ beyond all words?"

Smith was inspired by the following line from 1 Timothy 1: 17: "To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Originally a hymn with five verses, the four in use today are as follows:

*Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
In light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious, thy great Name we praise.*

*Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains high soaring above
Thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.*

*To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
In all life thou livest, the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish, like leaves on the tree,
Then wither and perish; but nought changeth thee.*

*Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light,
Thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render: O help us to see
'Tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.*

Two things are prevalent in this hymn: the transcendental nature of God and an attempt at identifying who he is to us. The transcendence of God, his superhuman, beyond-our-knowing identity is saturated with this idea of light...light so blinding that it obscures us from ever really knowing who God is. Even the angels have to "veil their sight." And I've always loved that line "silent as light"...we can't see God, we can't hear him either. Our senses are overwhelmed by his presence!

But, as the hymn expresses, we do know that God is good, "only wise." He is a ruler, and a just ruler. He is a creator of both small and great. He is consistent and

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

Choir Notes

true; nothing changes him. He is true life itself. We can't see him, but we are proof that he's there because he made us.

The joyous tune that has accompanied this hymn for over a century is *ST. DENIO*, a tune that was first published in a collection of Welsh hymn tunes in 1839 by John Roberts. Originally, it was a folk ballad known as "*Can mlynedd i nawr*" or "A Hundred Years from Now." Roberts, a Welsh composer and musician, adapted this and many tunes for use in his *Caniadau y Cyssegr* (*Hymns of the Sanctuary*, 1839). And its association with "Immortal, Invisible" was cemented with *The English Hymnal* of 1906. This is just more proof that the Welsh are responsible for some really great melodies!

In case you are curious, St. Denio refers to St. Dennis (or Denis), the patron saint of France. St. Dennis, whose feast day is October 9, was sent to France in the 3rd century to convert the pagans. Because of his success, he was beheaded by his enemies. In artwork, he is frequently depicted holding his head in his hands. I don't know why the tune acquired that name, however. It has also been called *PALESTRINA* and in Wales, *JOANNA*...just to add to the confusion.

The video today is from Halifax Minster, a church in West Yorkshire, England. Feel free to join in with the glorious hymn singing!

Peace and blessings, Kirsten



“Mercifully give us those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask...” If we truly believe God's promises, and trust that, in his unfathomable love and desire to be in meaningful relationship with us, he will indeed hear us, and proved for, not our wants, but our real needs. God is eternally faithful to those who love him.



*St. Dennis by
Thesupermat*





† Making Sense of God's Guidance Guidance - Ordinary or Extraordinary?

When praying for discernment or guidance, we often look for something unusual or even dramatically spectacular to confirm what we should do or which direction we should follow. There is something in us that is always seeking a tangible sign of God's leading especially when the stakes are high, or the dangers of a mistake are great. Often, we are like Gideon in the Book of Judges and need to see a fleece before we are really assured that God is in the thing we are seeking. We feel torn at times between just using our heads and choosing and following our hearts in a leap of faith. But the key question is whether God typically uses the routine decision-making process, or should we expect to see his fingerprints all over the decision before acting? How ordinary or extraordinary does guidance have to become before we can decide with confidence?

Perhaps praying for guidance is a bit like praying for healing. There is no doubt that at times God used miraculous means to bring about healing as seen in both the Old and New Testament accounts. But mixed in with this are often very ordinary tasks or steps. Think of the story of Naaman for a moment (2 Kings 5). Naaman is described to us as a captain of the army of the king of Aram. This means he was the General of the Syrian or the Aramean Army and second in command to the King. He was a man of great authority and position. He was a great man in the sight of his master, and highly respected, because through him the Lord had given victory to Aram (2 Kings 5:1).

Naaman was respected as a valiant warrior, but he had a very serious problem - he was a leper! His name may give an indication of his normal appearance. Naaman comes from the Hebrew verb *naem*, "be delightful, pleasant, and beautiful." It has the idea of "gracious" or "well formed." His name suggests that he may have been a handsome man, at least before the leprosy. But his name now stood in stark contrast to his marred appearance because of the disease which had attacked his body.

As the story unfolds, it is instructive to see just how the Lord brings healing to Naaman's life. It begins with the simple testimony of a girl who was an Israeli captive but now serving Naaman's wife. One day she plants the idea of possible help and healing when in genuine concern for her master she says to Naaman's wife, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:3). Without this young Israeli's offer of hope, likely Naaman would have remained at home and continued in his suffering until the disease finally took its toll. Instead, the Lord started the guidance process to healing through a softly spoken word by a servant girl.



We next see Naaman approaching his King with the request, "Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. "By all means go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold and ten sets of clothing. The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy." (2 Kings 5:4-6). What an amazing set of circumstances was set in motion by very ordinary means - one person offering pertinent information, and then another acting on it. Approval is given by the King to go along with an offer of reward to grease the wheels for a successful outcome.

Naaman goes first to the King of Israel apparently not knowing quite where to get help. He assumed that the king could issue an order to make it happen. You can imagine the sense of dismay when King Joram was confronted by Naaman with his unusual request, "As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!" (2 Kings 5:7).

Naaman's story could have come to a roaring halt at this point, but rather cryptically, we read, "When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

Ordinary or Extraordinary?

him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." (2 Kings 5:8). How Elisha heard about this incident at King Joram's court is not revealed but obviously without someone gossiping what had happened, Elisha would likely have remained unaware and Naaman unhealed. Finally, Elisha issues a set of rather mundane instructions through a go-between to pass on to Naaman. What follows is really a classic case of our inclination to want something spectacular and dramatic when expecting God to heal!

Instead, Naaman is simply told to go and wash in the Jordan River and his health would be restored. At first, he is totally incredulous and lashes back in frustration at these silly instructions by exclaiming, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So, he turned and went off in a rage." (2 Kings 5:11-12).

In the end, God did bring healing and wholeness to Naaman's life. Through the simple act of "following directions," Naaman was cured of his leprosy. We can only imagine the huge sense of relief and gratitude he experienced as he came up out of the river. Now Naaman knew that there was truly a God in Israel greater than anything else he had been led to believe in Syria. God led Naaman to that place of help and healing but used a whole series of "ordinary" things before the "extraordinary" act of healing took place.

It seems to me that God does use the "ordinary" most of the time to direct or guide us. Sometimes it is a timely word from a friend or advisor; sometimes it is a set of circumstances that seem to be pointing in a certain direction. A door will seemingly open or close and we accept that as God's guidance. At the same time, there are moments when we sense that something extraordinary is happening that gives confirmation or clarity to our decision or choices. At times of illness, it is always appropriate to pray for God's healing touch. However, that doesn't mitigate the use of means as well. God will heal; usually he works through the natural process of our immune system fighting off disease along with medication and treatment as well. There are times, however, when it is apparent that God has intervened in an extraordinary way to bring healing.

For some Christians, the ordinary somehow doesn't seem very God-like! In other words, shouldn't God's guidance be a bit more dramatic or visibly a God-act if he is guiding us? To us, the unusual should be the norm. We open our Bibles and expect to see the answer in a verse which somehow jumps out and gives us the guidance we need!

And yet, the life of faith implies that we don't walk by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). We trust God's promises and step out believing that he is behind the scenes working out his best for us even when we can't visibly see his presence or power. Normally God works through the ordinary; he uses people and resources to meet our needs and provide the direction we desire, but at times we do catch a glimpse of the extraordinary that almost takes our breath away, and like Naaman we exclaim, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel." (2 Kings 5:15).

- Dan Bacon



† Saints of God

Thursday, July 20th

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1902; Amelia Bloomer, 1894;
Sojourner Truth, 1883; and Harriet Ross Tubman, 1913**
Liberators and Prophets

Elizabeth Cady Stanton 1815–1902

Born on November 12, 1815, into an affluent, strict Calvinist family in Johnstown, New York, Elizabeth, as a young woman, took seriously the Presbyterian doctrines of predestination and human depravity. She became very depressed, but resolved her mental crises through action. She dedicated her life to righting the wrongs perpetrated upon women by the Church and society.

She and four other women organized the first Women's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls, New York, July 19–20, 1848. The event set her political and religious agenda for the next 50 years. She held the Church accountable for oppressing women by using Scripture to enforce subordination of women in marriage and to prohibit them from ordained ministry. She held society accountable for denying women equal access to professional jobs, property ownership, the vote, and for granting less pay for the same work.

In 1881, the Revised Version of the Bible was published by a committee which included no women scholars. Elizabeth founded her own committee of women to write a commentary on Scripture, and applying the Greek she learned as a child from her minister, focused on passages used to oppress and discriminate against women.

Although Elizabeth blamed male clergy for women's oppression, she attended Trinity Episcopal Church in Seneca Falls with her friend Amelia Bloomer. As a dissenting prophet, Elizabeth preached hundreds of homilies and political speeches in pulpits throughout the nation. Wherever she visited, she was experienced as a holy presence and a liberator. She never lost her sense of humor, despite years of contending with opposition, even from friends. In a note to Susan B. Anthony, she said: "Do not feel depressed, my dear friend, what is good in us is immortal, and if the sore trials we have endured are sifting out pride and selfishness, we shall not have suffered in vain." Shortly before she died in New York City, on October 26, 1902, she said: "My only regret is that I have not been braver and bolder and truer in the honest conviction of my soul."



Amelia Jenks Bloomer 1818–1894

Amelia Jenks, the youngest of six children, born in New York on May 27, 1818, to a pious Presbyterian family, early on demonstrated a kindness of heart and strict regard for truth and right. As a young woman, she joined in the temperance, anti-slavery, and women's rights movements.

Amelia Jenks Bloomer never intended to make dress reform a major platform in women's struggle for justice. But, women's fashion of the day prescribed waist-cinching corsets, even for pregnant women, resulting in severe health problems. Faith and fashion collided explosively when she published in her newspaper, *The Lily*, a picture of herself in loose-fitting Turkish trousers, and began wearing them publicly. Clergy, from their pulpits, attacked women who wore them, citing Moses: "Women should not dress like men." Amelia fired back: "It matters not what Moses had to say to the men and women of his time about what they should wear. If clergy really cared about what Moses said about clothes, they would all put fringes and blue ribbons on their garments." Her popularity soared as she engaged clergy in public debate.

She insisted that "certain passages in the Scriptures relating to women had been given a strained and unnatural meaning." And, of St. Paul she said: "Could he have looked into the future and foreseen all the sorrow and strife, the cruel exactions and oppression on the one hand and the blind submission and

(Continued on page 13)



(Continued from page 12)

Saints of God

cringing fear on the other, that his words have sanctioned and caused, he would never have uttered them.” And of women’s right to freedom, “The same Power that brought the slave out of bondage will, in His own good time and way, bring about the emancipation of woman, and make her the equal in power and dominion that she was in the beginning.”

Later in life, in Council Bluffs, Iowa, a frontier town, she worked to establish churches, libraries, and school houses. She provided hospitality for traveling clergy of all denominations, and for temperance lecturers and reformers. Trinity Episcopal Church, Seneca Falls, New York, where she was baptized, records her as a “faithful Christian missionary all her life.” Amelia Jenks Bloomer died in Council Bluffs on December 30, 1894.

Sojourner Truth, “Miriam of the Later Exodus” 1797–8 to 1883

Isabella (Sojourner Truth) was the next-to-youngest child of several born to James and Elizabeth, slaves owned by a wealthy Dutchman in New York, in 1797 or 1798. For the first 28 years of her life she was a slave, sold from household to household.

She fled slavery with the help of Quaker friends, first living in Philadelphia, then New York, where she joined the Mother Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church when African Americans were being denied the right to worship with white members of St. George’s Church in Philadelphia. Belle (as Isabella was called) became a streetcorner evangelist in poverty-stricken areas of New York City, but quickly realized people needed food, housing, and warm clothing. She focused her work on a homeless shelter for women.

When she was about 46, Belle believed she heard God say to her, “Go east.” So, she set out east for Long Island and Connecticut. Stopping at a Quaker farm for a drink of water, she was asked her name. “My name is Sojourner,” Belle said. “What is your last name?” the woman asked. Belle thought of all her masters’ names she had carried through life. Then the thought came: “The only master I have now is God, and His name is Truth.”

Sojourner became a traveling preacher, approaching white religious meetings and campgrounds and asking to speak. Fascinated by her charismatic presence, her wit, wisdom, and imposing six-foot height, they found her hard to refuse. She never learned to read or write, but quoted extensive Bible passages from memory in her sermons. She ended by singing a “home-made” hymn and addressing the crowd on the evils of slavery. Her reputation grew, and she became part of the abolitionist and women’s rights speakers’ network.

During a women’s rights convention in Ohio, Sojourner gave the speech for which she is best remembered: “Ain’t I a Woman.” She had listened for hours to clergy attack women’s rights and abolition, using the Bible to support their oppressive logic: God had created women to be weak and blacks to be a subservient race. In her speech she retorted, “If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.”

Sojourner Truth died on November 26, 1883, in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Harriet Ross Tubman, “Moses of her People” 1820–1913

Slave births were recorded under property, not as persons with names; but we know that Harriet Ross, born sometime during 1820 on a Maryland Chesapeake Bay plantation, was the sixth of eleven children born to Ben Ross and Harriet Green. Although her parents were loving and they enjoyed a cheerful family life inside their cabin, they lived in fear of the children being sold off at any time.

Harriet suffered beatings and a severe injury, but grew up strong and defiant, refusing to appear happy and smiling to her owners. To cope with brutality and oppression, she turned to religion. Her favorite Bible story was about Moses who led the Israelites out of slavery. The slaves prayed for a Moses of their own.



(Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13)

Saints of God

When she was about 24, Harriet escaped to Canada, but could not forget her parents and other slaves she left behind. Working with the Quakers, she made at least 19 trips back to Maryland between 1851 and 1861, freeing over 300 people by leading them into Canada. She was so successful, \$40,000 was offered for her capture.

Guided by God through omens, dreams, warnings, she claimed her struggle against slavery had been commanded by God. She foresaw the Civil War in a vision. When it began, she quickly joined the Union Army, serving as cook and nurse, caring for both Confederate and Union soldiers. She served as a spy and scout. She led 300 black troops on a raid which freed over 750 slaves, making her the first American woman to lead troops into military action.

In 1858 - 59, she moved to upstate New York where she opened her home to African American orphans and to helpless old people. Although she was illiterate, she founded schools for African American children. She joined the fight for women's rights, working with Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, but supported African American women in their efforts to found their own organizations to address equality,



25 Stories for 25 Years

Virginia
Konopka

JERICO VOLUNTEER
CLASSROOM
MONITOR/DONOR

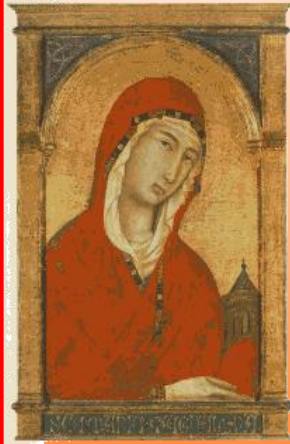


"I come back (time after time) because of the joy I get when one of the children understands a new concept, starts to believe that they can accomplish things that, in the past, they thought were impossible, and believes that they are able to learn. The kids are amazing and I love spending time with them. They challenge me and they bring me great joy."

✠ This Date on the Church Calendar

Saturday, July 22nd

Saint Mary Magdalene



Mary Magdalene is mentioned in the Gospels as being among the women of Galilee who followed Jesus and His disciples, and who was present at His Crucifixion and Burial, and who went to the tomb on Easter Sunday to anoint His body. She was the first to see the Risen Lord, and to announce His Resurrection to the apostles. Accordingly, she is referred to in early Christian writings as "the apostle to the apostles."

Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany (sister of Martha and Lazarus), and the unnamed penitent woman who anointed Jesus's feet (Luke 7:36-48) are sometimes supposed to be the same woman. From this, plus the statement that Jesus had cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2), has risen the tradition that she had been a prostitute before she met Jesus.

Because of the assumption that Mary Magdalene had been a spectacular sinner, and also perhaps because she is described as weeping at the tomb of Jesus on the Resurrection morning, she is often portrayed in art as weeping, or with eyes red from having wept. From this appearance we derive the English word "maudlin", meaning "effusively or tearfully sentimental." There is a Magdalen College at Oxford, and a Magdalene College at Cambridge (different spelling), both pronounced "Maudlin."

written by James Kiefer

||| A THIRD OF US

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

Jebala

Country: Morocco | Population: 1.25 million | Language: Arabic | Main Religion: Islam | Evangelical: 0.00%

The roots of the Jebala Arabs go back to the original Arabs from the Arabian Desert. From there, their ancestors migrated into northern Africa. Although there was some mingling with the native Berbers of the area, the Arabs remained a distinct group. Most Jebala Arabs are rural peasants who farm for a living. As a means of preserving their people and as an influence of their Muslim religion, Arabs practice endogamous marriages (marrying only within a small social circle). Very few Jebala Arabs have heard a clear presentation of the Gospel. Even among the few who have heard, a profession of faith in Jesus may cost them their families, honor, jobs, and sometimes their lives. Pray for doors to open to the Gospel in Morocco. Pray that the Gospel message would be clearly translated and presented for the Jebala. Pray that whole communities would come to faith in Christ, and that families would remain intact.



Holy Land Revisited

✠ Magdala, Hometown of Mary Magdalene ✨

Magdala was a major first-century port on the Sea of Galilee, a center of trade and commerce, and an exporter of salted fish to markets as far away as Europe. Archaeological discoveries early in the 21st century have made it a burgeoning pilgrimage destination.

Magdala's fame down the centuries rested on one notable person, Mary Magdalene. This enigmatic woman - revered as a saint by the Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran churches - was one of the few persons named in the Gospels as being present at Christ's crucifixion and the first recorded witness of his Resurrection.

Whether she lived in Magdala or was simply born there is unknown, but she was apparently a wealthy woman.

The city, on the western side of the Sea of Galilee between Tiberias and Capernaum, is mentioned only once in the New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew (15:39) says Jesus went there by boat - but even this reference is uncertain, since some early manuscripts give the name as Magadan.

Both Matthew and Mark say Jesus preached in synagogues "throughout Galilee," and Magdala was only about 6 miles from Capernaum, where he based his ministry.

The Jewish historian Josephus says Magdala had a population of 40,000 people and a fleet of 230 boats about 30 years after Jesus died.

Mary was called 'apostle of the apostles'

All four Gospels refer to a close follower of Jesus called Mary Magdalene. Luke says she had been cured of "seven demons" and he lists her first among the women who accompanied Jesus and supported his ministry from their own resources (8:2-3).

After Jesus died she was one of the women who took spices for anointing to the tomb. They found the tomb empty, but "two men in dazzling clothes" gave them the news that Jesus had risen. (Luke 24:1-12)

Later Jesus appeared to Mary. At first she thought he was the gardener, but she recognized him when he spoke her name. Then she announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord". (John 20:1-18)

By the 3rd century, Mary Magdalene was described by the theologian Hippolytus of Rome as the "apostle of the apostles."

Identity became confused

But Mary's identity became confused in 591. In that year Pope Gregory the Great gave a sermon which expressed his belief that the Mary who had been cured of seven demons was the same person as the penitent prostitute who anointed Jesus' feet with ointment (Luke 7:37-50) and Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume (John 12:3-8).

A revision of the Catholic calendar of saints in 1969 reverted to the Eastern tradition of distinguishing Mary Magdalene from the reformed prostitute. By then, however, this persona had endeared her to artists down the centuries.

More recently, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* mined a rich lode of pseudo-Christian

(Continued on page 17)



Synagogue uncovered at Magdala.

(Continued from page 16)

Magdala

texts to present Mary Magdalene as the wife of Jesus and co-founder of an arcane dynasty at odds with the institutional Church and its beliefs.

And what really became of Mary? A Greek tradition has her dying in Ephesus, with her relics preserved in Constantinople. A French tradition says she converted Provence to Christianity and her relics ended up in Vézelay Abbey in Burgundy, where they are still venerated.

City fought Romans on the sea

The city that gave its name to Mary Magdalene became a fortified base for rebels during the First Jewish Revolt in AD 66-70, even engaging the Romans in a disastrous sea battle.

According to the historian Josephus - who commanded the Jewish forces in Galilee - the Sea of Galilee became red with blood and "full of dead bodies." Of the survivors, emperor Vespasian sent 6,000 to build a canal in Greece and ordered more than 30,000 to be sold as slaves.

Magdala continued as a much-reduced Jewish village during Roman and Byzantine times, and in more recent centuries as an Arab village until 1948. Mark Twain visited it in 1867, calling it "thoroughly ugly, and cramped, squalid, uncomfortable, and filthy."

In the 4th century a church was built on the reputed site of Mary Magdalene's house. Destroyed in the 7th century, it was rebuilt by Crusaders in the 12th century but was converted into a stable when the Crusaders were expelled from the Holy Land.

Port and city uncovered

Beginning in the 1960s, Franciscan archaeologists discovered Magdala's ancient port and a city grid, with paved streets, water canals, a marketplace, villas and mosaics - one depicting a sailing boat.

Buried in the mud covering a thermal bath complex were ceramic crockery, perfume jars, jewelry, hairbrushes and combs, and bronze applicators for make-up.

The discovery of the massive foundations of a tower may account for the city's name. Both Magdala in Aramaic and Migdal in Hebrew mean "tower."

First-century synagogue identified

More archaeological remains were uncovered in 2009 on an adjacent property newly acquired by the Legion of Christ to establish a hotel, institute for women and retreat center. The Legion, a Catholic congregation, manages the Notre Dame Center in Jerusalem.

Three interconnected ritual baths were discovered, the first found in Israel using groundwater from springs - which for purification purposes was considered "living water" - rather than rainwater.

In the remains of one building, under a thin layer of soil, excavators found a stone block engraved with motifs including a seven-branched menorah, the type of lampstand used in the Temple. This significant find led to the identification of the building as a synagogue.

Unlike other first-century synagogues found in Galilee, the Magdala building had ornate mosaics and frescoes.

In 2021 a second synagogue dating from the Second Temple period was found at Magdala.

It was smaller and not so ornate as the first one, with an earthen floor that had been plastered. Archaeologists believe both existed at the same time, from about 50 BC until AD 67.

In 2014 the Legion opened a new church on the site, simple in design but also rich in mosaics and murals, focusing especially on women in the Bible. It is named Duc in Altum (Latin for "Put out into the deep", from Christ's words in Luke 5:4). The altar is in the shape of a first-century boat, standing in front of an infinity pool leading the eye to the lake beyond.

In the crypt is an ecumenical worship space, called the Encounter Chapel, paved with stones from Magdala's first-century marketplace.

Jesus Boat found nearby

Magdala's port, now submerged in the beach, had a stone breakwater that extended into the sea and curved around the harbor to protect boats from the sudden storms that buffet the Sea of Galilee.

In 1986 the hull of the so-called Jesus Boat, a fishing boat old enough to have been in use during the time of Christ, was found in the lakebed near the ancient port of Magdala.

Our next trip to the Holy Land is in May of 2024! We leave on April 30th for a two-week journey into our faith. Watch future *Sword Points* for more info.

† This Date on the Church Calendar

Tuesday, 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

† Something Different: Sibling Rivalry Redux - Jacob and Esau

Truth be told, in Genesis, Jacob the younger brother never rules Esau the older. The stolen blessing of supremacy won by Rebekah and Jacob's deception is never consummated. Rather, it inaugurates twenty years of flight, exile, and servitude for Jacob and loneliness for Rebekah, who never again sees her favorite son: The clear lesson is that those who live by deception suffer by deception...

And finally, the crowd-sourced preaching direction:

*"There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold,
And she's buying a stairway to heaven..."*

According to composer Robert Plant (who co-wrote "Stairway to Heaven" with Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page), the lyric "was some cynical aside about a woman getting everything she wanted all the time without giving back any thought or consideration. The first line begins with that cynical sweep of the hand..." Or, as Kathryn Zucker Johnson pointed out, "... there was a wealthy woman who thought she could buy her way into heaven... or trick her father Jacob into giving her what was really Esau's."



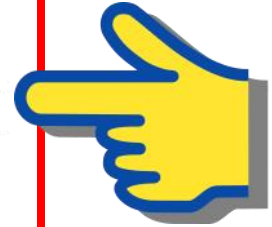
Stairway To Heaven

Led Zeppelin

Led Zeppelin IV



Bonnie Wanzer cheerfully reports the final results of the Hopeline Baby Bottle Campaign. Thanks to the generosity of the St Paul's family we were able to send a check for \$3,250.00 to Hopeline. Thank you all



SWORD POINTS

**SWORD POINTS WILL NOT BE PUBLISHED NEXT WEEK.
WE WILL RETURN ON AUGUST 3RD.**



And Jacob dreamed,
and behold a ladder set up on the earth,
and the top of it reached to Heaven: and behold
the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

Genesis 28:12

And Jesus saith unto him,
Verily, verily, I say unto you,
Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open,
and the angels of God ascending
and descending upon the Son of man!

John 1:51

Can you see the connection?!

Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them! Please do not respond to any message from Fr. Joe 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 reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, (dszen@yahoo.com) or warden George Stowell

these messages, do not Spam or Junk. If there is contact the office (mail@ihramllc.com).



† Ladies Evening Bible Study

During the summer the Wednesday evening women's Bible study is doing a new thing, which is open to everyone!

On Thursday, July 13, the 15-minutes-a-day Bible study begins! The challenge is to read and meditate on ONE psalm a day (15 mins.). A good routine for our spiritual health, right?

Here is a list of the psalms and the weekday reading dates:

July 13-14	--	Ps 131, 132
July 17-21	--	Ps 133-137
July 24-28	--	Ps 138-142
July 31-Sept 4	--	Ps 143-147
Sept 7-9	-	Ps 148-150



Set aside 15 minutes during each week day to read one psalm.

Have pen and paper ready to write your answers to two questions

Pray: Ask God to teach you about who He is and how to apply His Word to your life.

Read the psalm for the day (You might read a short psalm several times or you might not finish a longer psalm in 15 minutes.)

Write your answers to two questions:

What does this psalm tell me about who God is (His character, His actions)?

How can I apply this psalm to my life?

Thank God for what He is doing in your life.

When the group meets on the following Wednesday at 7:00 on Zoom, we will read parts of the five psalms and share our answers to the two questions.

Those who are not doing the challenge are still welcome to join the group on Zoom.

As always, feel free to invite a friend!

Contact Carol at cmeadwheeler@hotmail.com or 203-525-0011 for the Zoom link or check the calendar on the church website.

What was Jacob using for a pillow when he saw a ladder in a dream as he slept?

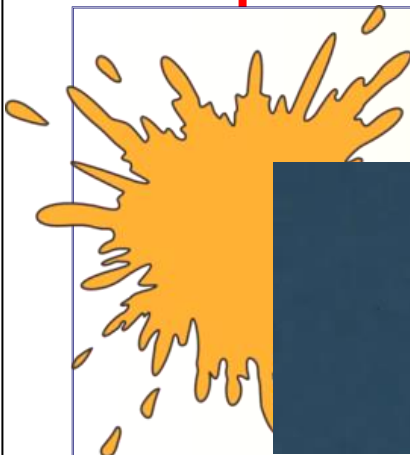
Genesis 28:10-12 NIV



† Recovery & Self-Reflection Group

Every Sunday evening at 7 pm in the Guild Room, Gordy Hiltz is convening a new Recovery & Self-Reflection group. It will be a

"fellowship meeting for those who are looking to make amends with past decisions by reflecting on where we've been, are now, and would like to be. This will be accomplished using topic guided discussions, increasing self awareness for our day to day actions, with the goal of being a slightly better version of ourselves from who we were the day before each and every day."





If you came to the 8 am service last Sunday,
we know we had a great deal of rain in a short time, giving
us waterfront property for a brief period!



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, visiting clergy 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.



† Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study

The Tuesday morning Ladies Bible Study is in "Summer Session" gathering to discuss the appropriate daily devotion from *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers. .

Zoom is available and all ladies are invited. They meet every Tuesday at 9:30 in Crocker Hall or by Zoom. Contact Mary Beth Durkin durkin.mb@gmail.com for the Zoom link and further information.



† Wednesday Service Growing in Popularity

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer has been growing consistently. 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.

COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Jul 23rd	8 am	- Mary/Chuck Allen	10:30 am	- Koniecki/Hiltz
Jul 30th	8 am	- Pat Brought	10:30 am	- Amy Boyce
Aug 6th	8 am	- Bennett's	10:30 am	- Monique Gordon



**COFFEE HOUR
HOSTS NEEDED**

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





Last Saturday afternoon about a dozen of us from St. Paul's spent time at the [Lucky Orphans Horse Rescue](https://www.luckyorphanshorserescue.com/) in Dover Plains, NY. Be sure to join us for future events. For more info contact GordenHiltz@gmail.com.

FOR TICKETS SCAN BELOW OR VISIT:
AMANDAMAMMANA.COM



GA: \$25
VIP: \$40

WITH SPECIAL
GUEST:

SPARKO

JULY 22, 2023 | 7:30 PM
FAIRFIELD, CT

AMANDA MAMMANA
IN CONCERT

† What Difference Does It Make

This Sunday's Gospel of the Wheat and Tares Parable from Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43. No doubt we'll get into the meaning this weekend and we're all fairly familiar with this. Instead let's get a visual that perhaps might give us a greater understanding of why Jesus chose wheat and tares to distinguish between the genuine and false.

Look at the picture to the right and particularly the middle stalk. Do you think that is wheat or a tare? Answer: it is a baby tare yet a baby wheat stalk looks exactly the same. In fact they're indistinguishable. The only way to tell the difference is when they both mature in the Spring.

As you can see from this picture, there is a marked difference. The tare on the left is light and lacks substance but the wheat on the right is heavy and bears fruit (grain). There are tiny black seeds inside the tares and if you eat it, it can cause dizziness and nausea. Also notice that the tare stands straight up and proud while the wheat bows from the weight of the fruit in humility. Talk about the perfect physical and spiritual contrast between the wheat and the tare. One gives life, the other kills. Those in Christ have life, and the other death.

Matthew 13:38-30 "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up' "

'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest.'

This is because they both share the same root. Even if you grabbed the tare, you will also pull up the wheat. And so the farmer is to wait until the harvest to pull them up and separate them and so shall it be for us.



† Transforming Stewardship

"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field...He who sows good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed the children of the kingdom."

- Matthew 13:24, 37-38

As children of God, we are all "good seeds," blessed by God with the potential to accomplish much good in the world. We fulfill God's plan when we share our talents and our financial gifts to help build God's kingdom on earth. Through our stewardship we sow "good seeds" on earth to ultimately help each other get to Heaven!



† Trusting God To Get Us To “Tip-Top House”

*F. WHITE, Manufacturer of Stereoscopic Views,
Lancaster, N. H.*



*TIP-TOP HOUSE,
Mount Washington, N. H.*

All things work together for good to them who love God and trust Him. The skeptic jeers at this, but the trusting Christian knows it from actual experience. It is often a dear-bought experience, for some of God's truths are knocked into us by hard blows, and some lessons are spelled out through eyes cleansed with tears. Our perverse mistake is that we demand that God explain Himself at every step, instead of waiting for Him to unfold His intricate purposes at His own time and in His own way.

Twenty years ago in 1862, on a day of thick fog and storm, I ascended Mount Washington in New Hampshire by the old bridle-path. Over the slippery boulders we picked our toilsome way, unable to see anything but our surefooted horse and our guide. A sulky company were we when we reached the “Tip-Top House,” a simple stone lodge at the mountain summit.

But presently a strong wind swept away the banks of mist, and revealed the magnificent landscape from the mountain's base to the great wide sea. As the wonderful vision unfolded itself to our delighted eyes, we could mark the pathway by which we had been led up to that mount of discovery. Tenfold more delightful was the outlook because we had gained it by such hard toil and it had been so long hidden from our sight.

That day's experience was a sermon to my soul. It taught me afresh just how a believer must leave God to order his footsteps, and how he must wait for God to unfold the hidden purposes of His love. Faith's stairways are steep and slippery. They can only be climbed by a sure foot and a steady hold on the Unseen Hand. In the hard chamber we are often thrown down on our knees. Cry as loudly as we may in the driving mist for “more light,” we do not receive any other answer than this: “Fear not! Only trust!”

If we unloose our hold on God's hand for an instant, we go over the precipice. But the more tightly we cling, the steadier we walk; the more willing we are to be humbled, the more certain are we to get upward; the more crosses we bear for Christ, the lighter will be our hearts; and by-and-by we shall reach that gate of pearl, the opening of which will unfold to us the everlasting flood of glory.

— Theodore Cuyler, from *God's Light On Dark Clouds*, 1882.- Charles H. Spurgeon, updated excerpt from a 1908 sermon.



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



The Feast of St. James, Apostle and Martyr

On July 25th, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. James, apostle and martyr.

This James is often styled “St. James the Greater,” to distinguish him from the other Apostle of the same name and from James, “the brother of our Lord.” Along with his brother John, James was called by Jesus at the Sea of Galilee as they mended nets with their father, Zebedee, and his hired hands. St. James is named regularly during major events in the Gospels, witnessing the Transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9), the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5, Matthew 9; Luke 8), and Jesus’ agony in the garden (Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22).

For all this honor, though, James also receives correction from Jesus on more than one occasion. He and his brother are given the nickname “Sons of Thunder,” or *Boanerges*, for their zealous and temperamental dispositions. For example, when Samaritan villagers refused to welcome Jesus, the brothers eagerly asked whether he would have them call down fire from heaven to destroy the town. The Lord rebukes them and instead moves on to another village (Luke 9). The Gospels record the brothers (or perhaps their mother) asking the Lord to place them at his right and left hands in his kingdom, which also results in admonishment (Matthew 20), and James is among the apostles who fall asleep in the garden while Jesus prays (Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22).



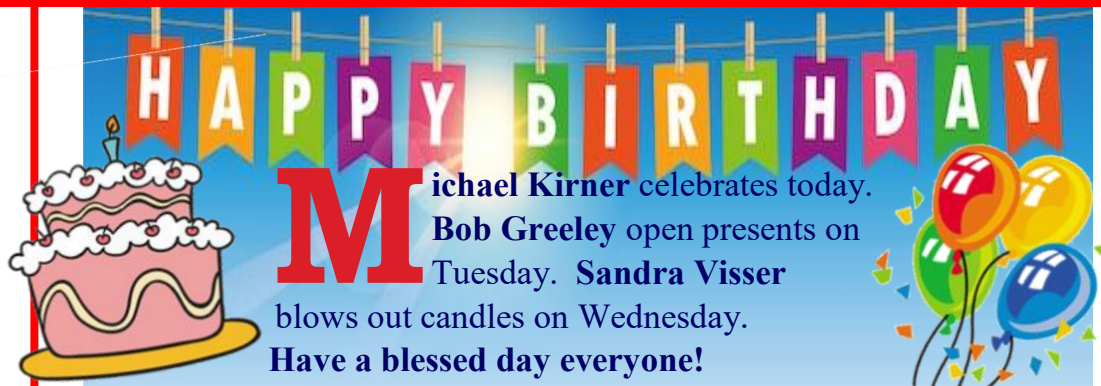
St. James the Greater,
Altarpiece of Mount San
Martino; Carlo Crivelli, c.
1480.

Still, James’ dedication to Jesus is without question, as he is understood to be the first of the twelve to die for him. As the Acts of the Apostles records, “About that time Herod the King laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the Church. He killed James the brother of John with the sword” (Acts 12:1–2).

Holy Women, Holy Men explains the veneration of and devotion to St. James following his death: “According to an old tradition, the body of James was taken to Compostela, Spain, which has been a shrine for pilgrims for centuries” (p. 484). His name was translated from the Hebrew *Ya’akov* to the Spanish Iago; thus, “Saint James” becomes “Santo Iago,” or “Santiago.” Santiago de Compostela was an extraordinarily popular destination for pilgrimages, leading to the development of the Camino de Santiago, a route across the countryside, marked by the fisherman’s symbol of a scallop shell.

Collect for St. James

O gracious God, we remember before you today your servant and apostle James, first among the Twelve to suffer martyrdom for the Name of Jesus Christ; and we pray that you will pour out upon the leaders of your Church that spirit of self-denying service by which alone they may have true authority among your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*



RFB 

Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

**When You
Shut Up**



I'm so sick of getting into
battles on social media with
my friends and followers,
Jesus.



Have you considered
being quiet, Kevin?
Don't engage.



But they're **WRONG**, Jesus!
I need to correct them.



You'd be surprised what you
can hear when you shut up.

©Radio Free Babylon® All rights reserved. "Dialog" means listening. So many voices out there right now. Most of those voices are shouting, not listening at all. They're screaming, "Listen to me!" I don't know about you, but when someone tells me, "Look," or "Listen," I stop looking and listening. You're off on the wrong foot from the get-go. You have instantly alienated me. That's no way to solve problems. You're getting nowhere with that tactic. With respect comes receptivity.

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

“Wheat Among Weeds”

[Genesis 28:10-19a](#)

God comes to Jacob in a dream and, in a vision of a ladder between earth and heaven, renews with Jacob the promise made to his grandfather Abraham. Jacob will become the father of a great nation. Jacob awakes astonished at God's self-revelation and sets up a sacred pillar, calling the place “Bethel,” a site which will one day become an important northern shrine city.

[Psalm 139: 1-11, 22-23](#)

With wonderful wisdom God alone perceives the heights and depths of life.

[Romans 8:12-25](#)

In this lesson Paul teaches that, if we follow our lower nature, we are enslaved and destined to death, but when we are moved by God's Spirit, we become God's children and heirs with Christ. The Spirit prompts us to call upon God as Father with the same Aramaic word (*Abba*) that Jesus used. Indeed, as heirs with Christ, the whole of creation is now linked with human destiny. As creation shares in the penalty of slavery to mortality and corruption, it will through our freedom as children of God participate in our full redemption. This is our saving hope, greater than any sufferings of this present age, and though still hidden, we now enjoy the first fruits of the Spirit.

[Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43](#)

The gospel is the parable of the wheat and the weeds, for which Jesus then provides an explanation. The story points to a mystery: why there is both good and evil in life. The parable may at one time have been used to suggest that it is not so easy for humans to know what is good and what is bad from the divine perspective. In a strangely mixed world one must carry on with patience. The allegorical explanation emphasizes the judgment which will take place in the end at the hands of the Son of Man.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

This is a parable about the **FIELD** - about the collective experience. At the end, the weeds **ARE** separated and burned. At the end, what is pleasing to God is taken in to God's care and keeping. But remember, think of yourself as the **FIELD**. At the harvest, the weeds in you are removed, and the wheat in you is gathered in.



† Sermon Shorts

Follow the Guidance of the Holy Spirit. 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. As we reach out our prayers and our energies beyond the walls of this gathering space, hoping that God's reign may be the deepest desire of every human heart, in the Spirit we pray for:

.....Joe Hock, Harlan Jessup, Jan Brochu, Ed Licence and other parishioners convalescing in extended care facilities.

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

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

.....Parish office volunteers; curates; seminary interns; parish assistants and associates; missional curacies.

.....Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Jr., Gail, Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Robert, Eve, Roger, Barbara, Fred, Cynthia, Arlene, David Williams, Heidi Pinheiro, Donna, Denny, Dale Mitchell, Larry Wanzer, Joe, Ruth, Jayne, Ken, Mark Baird, and Presiding Bishop Michael Curry continued healing.

.....the people of Ukraine; the people of Mongolia; the people of the British Antarctic Territory; the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Virgin Islands - The Episcopal Church (II (2) Province); and our sister and brother members of the African Christian Church & Schools.



.....for farmers, harvesters, and migrant workers and for fair compensation toward those who work the land.

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

.....Ridgefield Baptist Church, a partner church of the Jericho Partnership.

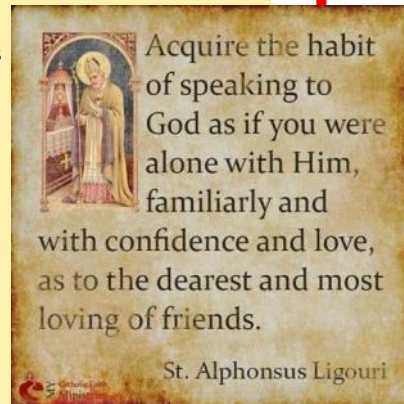
.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; that the Cambodians

would come to recognize the true beauty of Christ and accept His love.

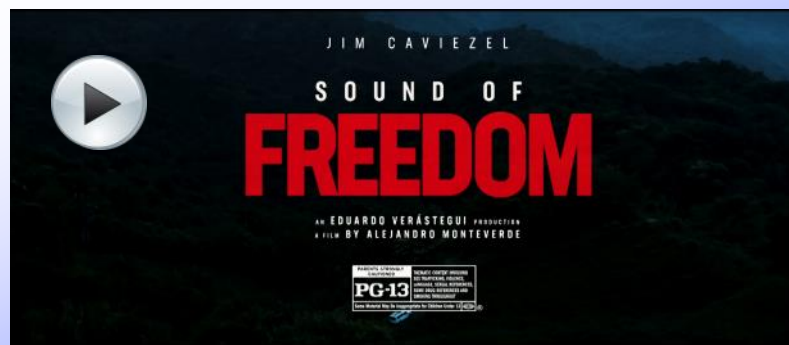
.....that we may allow stewardship to blossom in our hearts and joyfully share our gifts.

.....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 open the ears of their hearers to the good news of salvation and their eyes to the loveliness of God's wisdom.

.....All Sorts and Conditions.



Sound of Freedom



Many of St. Paul's parishioners have already seen this movie... "because God's children are not for sale."



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)



No one liked having pillow fights with Jacob!

Random Fact of the Week!

Did you know ... that Patricia Davies and Jean Argles, two sisters who signed the Official Secrets Act as World War II codebreakers, did not find out about each other's top-secret work until the 1960s?



The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Instant Replay of Jacob's Ladder Dream did reveal one Angel with Vertigo. **Ge 28:12**

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