

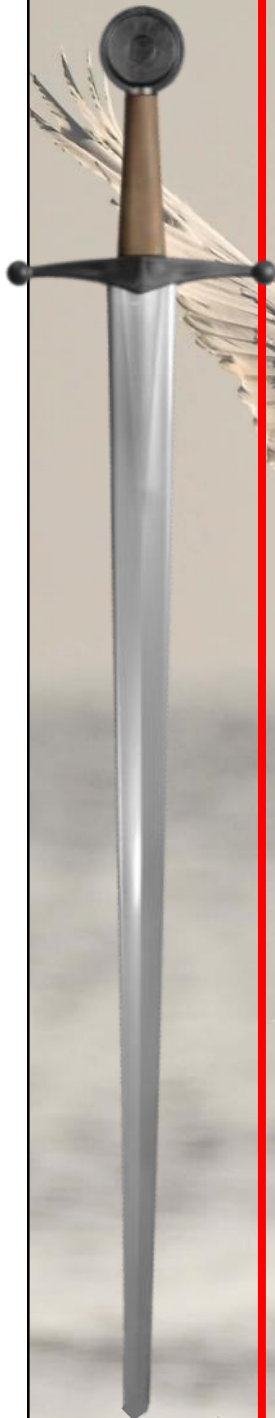
*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

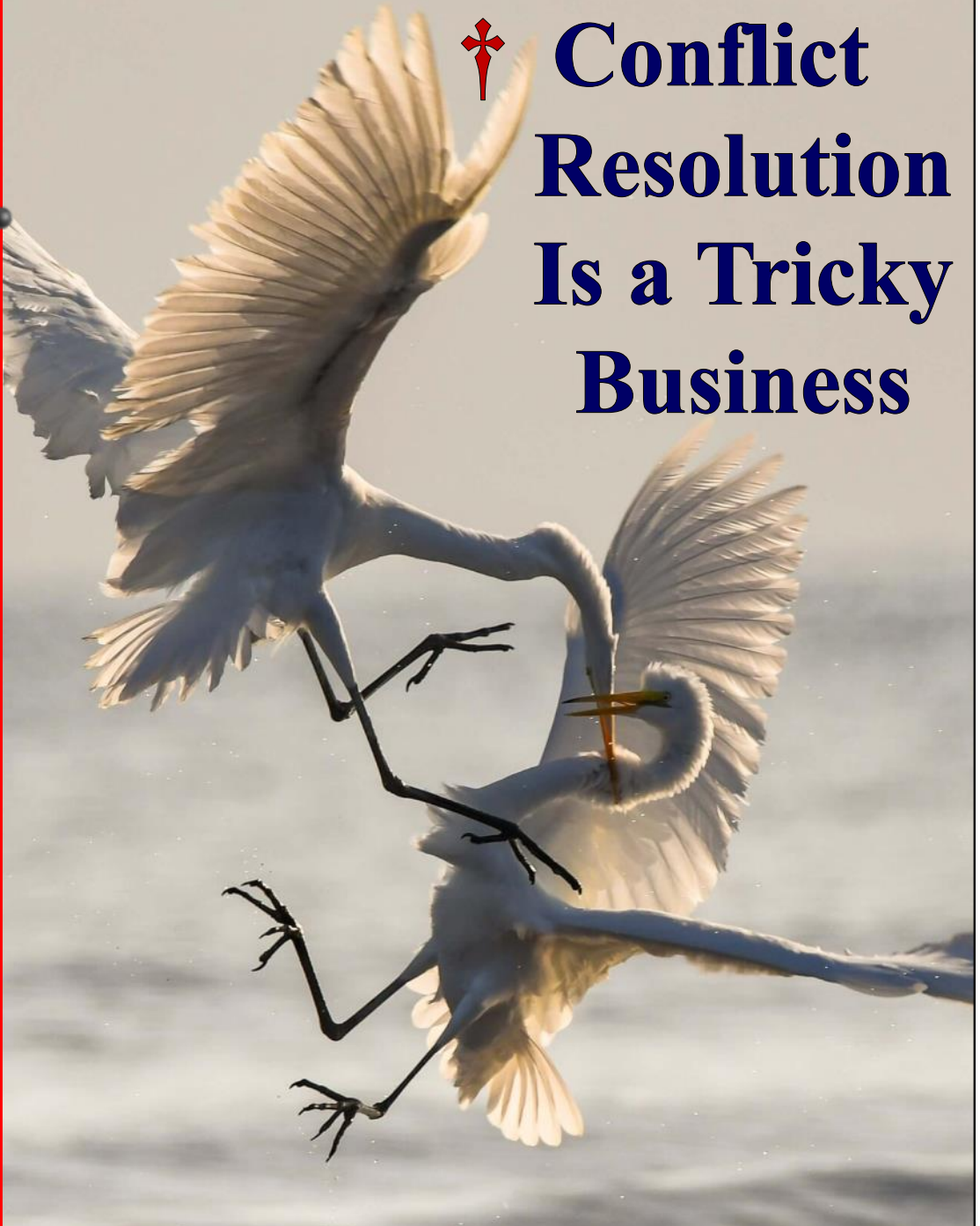
September 10, 2023

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587



Conflict Resolution Is a Tricky Business



✝ The Time Is Now

This week we are given the details of the tricky, and likely nervous-making preparation for the LORD's *pass over* that spared only the families who were given, and accurately followed, the instructions. Jesus lays out a plan for conflict resolution in the Church, which if followed without a sense of sincere discretion, care, and responsibility, may have a similarly fatal effect for individuals and the community itself. He tells us again, *whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven* which should have a chilling and sobering effect on how we decide to act. Conflict resolution is tenuous in the best of times, a huge responsibility for all parties. The pointing out of faults is always easier when you yourself have none. But if we each look deeply enough into that "troublesome person," most of us can see ourselves at some point or another in our lives. We must each consider, how would I want to be approached if my behavior or attitude was a problem for someone else?

Paul reminds, because we need to hear again and again, as Jesus said, "Love your neighbor *as yourself*." Most of us hear that as "love your neighbor as *you love yourself*" and, of course, if one has difficulty loving oneself it would be apparent in the way s/he treats others. Yet in the fuller sense, now read it as written - love your neighbor *as your self*. THAT person is YOU. Loving *them*, *is* to love yourself, to discover a mirror image in another and love that part of them that is you. Jesus promises that in unity and community, when two or three or more gather in his name, we bring Christ into our midst. That may not make it easier for us, yet it gives us a place to start; a new song to sing. "Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." [Romans 13:10]

But of course the world is full of fanatics, psychotics, and sociopaths, and just plain disagreeable people who don't understand that OUR opinion is the correct one! And we'd paint our doorpost with whatever God wants if that would protect those we love, but it appears that is no longer an option. Of course we must admit that we have trouble liking some people let alone loving them, especially the people that want to do serious harm. Try as we might, the reality is that we cannot change what anyone else does; we can only change our response to it. No easy task, no easy solution but one certainty exists: *Salvation is nearer* to us now, and every passing moment brings it closer. The time is NOW to turn to Christ, to act for Christ, to love in, through, and as Christ - whew, hard



work when there are so many other pleasant distractions available and no guarantees that your efforts will be appreciated in this life. If only we could just wait a little longer to get in there and do all that we should. But, time's a -wastin' and for those of us who believe in and want eternal Salvation, this is THE wake up call!

✠ Parish Input Meeting

Please join us for a **Parish Input Meeting** on **Saturday, September 16th, 9:30 - 11:30 am** in **Crocker Hall**.

We will meet to assess our parish identity in terms of our mission, evaluate our strengths and weaknesses, and sketch our vision for the future.



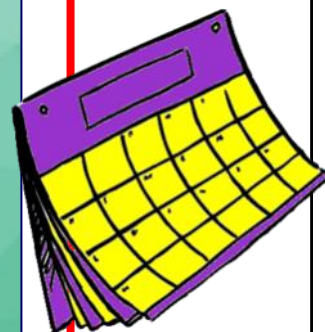
Please sign up if you plan to attend. Coffee and pastries will be available.



✠ This Week at St. Paul's

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------|---|
| Thu, Sep 7 | - 9:30 am | - Men's Study / Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Mission Committee, Guild Room |
| | 7:30 pm | - Property Committee, Crocker Hall |
| | 7:30 pm | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary |
| Sat, Sep 9 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Sep 10 | | The 15th Sunday after Pentecost |
| | - 8:00 am | - Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:30 am | - Adult Class, Guild Room |
| | 9:45 am | - Sunday School Teachers Meeting, Classroom |
| | 10:30 am | - Blessing of Backpacks & Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |
| Mon, Sep 11 | - 7:00 pm | - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall (YouTube Live) |
| Tues, Sep 12 | - 9:30 am | - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room |
| | 7:00 pm | - Boy Scout Troop #5 |
| Wed, Sep 13 | - 8:00 am | - PraiseMoves (Zoom) |
| | 10:00 am | - Holy Communion & Healing (YouTube Live) |
| | 7:00 pm | - Ladies Evening Bible Study, (Zoom) |
| | 7:30 pm | - Vestry Meeting, Guild Room |
| Thu, Sep 14 | | Holy Cross Day |
| | - 9:30 am | - Men's Study / Discussion Group, Guild Room |
| | 7:30 pm | - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary |
| Fri, Sep 15 | 6:30 pm | - Young Families Bible Study & Gathering |
| Sat, Sep 16 | - 7:30 am | - John 21:12 Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford |
| | 8:00 am | - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall |
| | 9:30 am | - Parish Input Meeting, Crocker Hall |
| Sun, Sep 17 | | The 14th Sunday after Pentecost |
| | - 8:00 am | - Traditional Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 9:30 am | - Adult Class, Guild Room |
| | 10:15 am | - Sunday School, Classrooms |
| | 10:30 am | - Contemporary Holy Communion (YouTube Live) |
| | 7:00 pm | - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room (Zoom) |

Check our website daily for schedule updates.



† **Body and Soul Set Free**

Exodus 12:1-14 - Psalms 149 - Romans 13:8-14 - Matthew 18:15-20

However habituated to their own bondage, the children of Israel could not but, in the deepest places of their broken hearts, pray for and hope for deliverance and freedom. They would hope and groan for years and years under the weight of oppression and vile abuse until, as if suddenly, God acted on their behalf. At that moment, everything was to be done with expectancy and haste.

On the tenth day of the first month, a lamb was taken for each family. It was held until the 14th day to ensure that it was spotless. Then, at twilight, it was slaughtered; its blood was applied to the two doorposts and lintel of every home as a sign to ward off the angel of death. To hurry the cooking, the meat was to be roasted. The meat, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs were eaten in precisely this way: "Your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord" (Ex. 12:11). The moment of freedom was at hand.

The body must be freed from abuse, individual bodies and the body politic, persons and whole communities. There is, however, another form of bondage caused by internal disturbances and unruly desires, which is no less oppressive than taskmasters. As if possessed by an evil power, people repeat patterns of destructive behavior. St. Paul describes this condition with two long lists of defects: reveling drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarreling, and jealousy (Rom. 13:13); and fornication, impurity, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, anger, dissensions, factions, envy, and carousing (Gal. 5:19-21). He warns, "Those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Indeed, those who do such things will not even inherit a measure of peace among other people or in the depths of their own souls.

To be free, we must wake from sleep, "For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers" (Rom. 13:11). "Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom. 13:12). Christ is the light, the inner flame that purges the soul of every stain, orders affections to their proper end, and brings illumination and wisdom. In a word, Christ the light sets us free - free in our bodies and free in our souls unto everlasting life. This is a process, it lasts a lifetime, and it involves setbacks as well as advancement.

The light of Christ purges, in part, through prohibitions. "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet" (Rom. 13:9). These "and any other commandment may be summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Remarkably, love is first concerned with what we don't do. "Love does no wrong to a neighbor" (Rom. 13:10).

Putting on the armor of light, we set out to live honorably as in the day. We so much as begin and we fail, and so we face again our transgressions and the sins that weigh down upon us (Ezek. 33:10). In this situation, we endure two trials: the trial of conscience and the trial of hearing from others a truthful and helpful account of our failings (Matt. 18:15-20). To be known in this way and to face the truth requires deep humility and maturity.

Ultimately, God wants us to turn again and again toward the one true light so that we may be free in body and soul unto the ages of ages, so that the mystery of being, the wonder of beauty, the buoyancy of bliss, may set us upon a freedom march from grace to grace.

Look It Up

Read: The Collect

Think About It

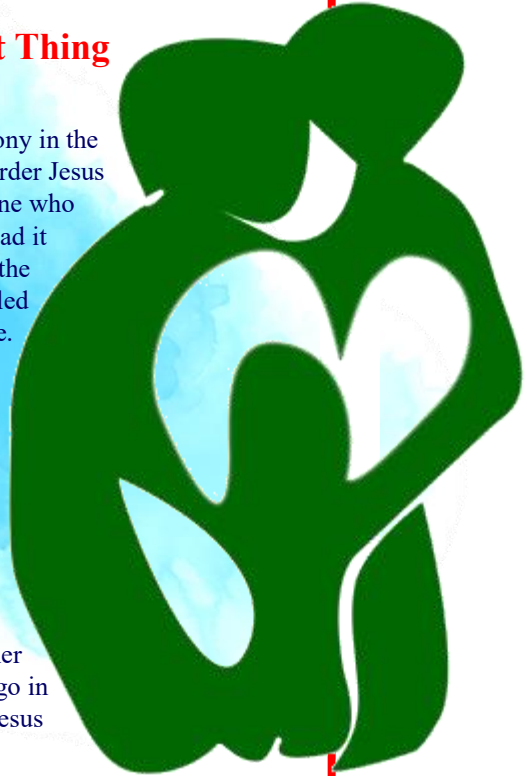
Confide not in your strength. Boast in the mercy of God. - from *The Living Church*, 2023



† Loving the Other Enough to Do a Difficult Thing

Matthew 18:15-20

The Matthew 18 step by step process for promoting harmony in the church is often cited but rarely followed, at least in the order Jesus intended. More often than not we stop speaking to the one who has offended us while “venting” to one or two others who then spread it around the church until it gets back to the source of the sin. Along the way some will side with the sinner and the church becomes embroiled in a conflict that was originally a private matter between two people. Meanwhile the pagans and tax collectors look on and laugh and wonder why in the world anyone would want to belong to such a dysfunctional family. But maybe that is where the trouble starts for us. We all say the church is made up of sinners but then seem surprised when members of the church sin against each other. Let’s just own our dysfunctional status and agree that conflict in the church is the inevitable result of putting sinners in the same room and expecting them to get along without telling the truth to each other. But Jesus hopes that his love for us will lead to our loving him and our loving him will inevitably lead to loving the other sinners in the room enough to do a difficult thing. The reason you go in private to the one who has sinned against you is because you love Jesus and Jesus loves the dysfunctional family that bears his name.



† 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.**





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 89 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time our trucks delivered to the Jericho Food Pantry, Danbury and the Daily Bread Food Pantry in Danbury.

Our next food collection will be next Wednesday, September 20th and will support the St. James' Episcopal Church, Danbury and their Daily Bread 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 trucks and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection

**Wednesday
September 20th**

*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**

† Host Homes and Transportation Needed

Bishop Todd McGregor, who lives in Florida, will be our visiting celebrant and preacher several Sundays in October. We are going to need a host home and two.

Bradley Airport transportation is also needed for each of two weekends. The first date is October 7th & 8th. The second is yet to be determined.

There is a sign-up sheet on the back table or contact Joyce Sarver at jsarver13@comcast.net.

Please prayerfully consider volunteering. Thank you.



THE SOBER THINK TANK AND LUCKY ORPHANS

HOPE

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 22ND
6 - 10 PM

HELP

BRING ALL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

CONNECT

BRINGING AWARENESS AND HELP
TO ALL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
STRUGGLES IN OUR COMMUNITY

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<https://www.luckyorphans.org/>

RECOVERY

PTSD

DEPRESSION

ANXIETY



Lucky Orphans Horse Rescue
People Helping Horses Heal People

† **Saint of God**

Thursday, September 7th

Elias Neau

Huguenot Witness to the Faith, 1722

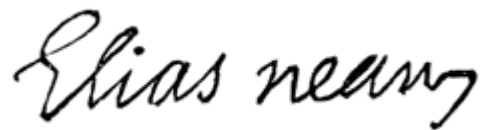
- from "The Work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts among the Negroes in the Colonies." by CE Pierre, appearing in the *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 1, 1916:

The most effective work of the Society [for the Propagation of the Gospel] among Negroes of the Northern colonies was accomplished in New York. In that colony, the instruction of the Negro and Indian slaves to prepare them for conversion, baptism, and communion was a primary charge oft repeated to every missionary and schoolmaster of the Society. In addition to the general efforts put forth in the colonies, there was in New York a special provision for the employment of sixteen clergymen and thirteen lay teachers mainly for the evangelization of the slaves and the free Indians. For the Negro slaves a catechizing school was opened in New York City in 1704 under the charge of Elias Neau. This benevolent man, after several years' imprisonment because of his Protestant faith, had come to New York to try his fortunes as a trader. As early as 1703 he called the attention of the Society to the great number, of slaves in New York "who were without God in the world, and of whose souls there was no manner of care taken" and proposed the appointment of a catechist to undertake their instruction. He himself finally being prevailed upon to accept this position, obtained a license from the Governor, resigned his position as elder in the French church [Église du Saint Esprit] and conformed to the Established Church of England, "not upon any worldly account but through a principle of conscience and hearty approbation of the English liturgy." He was later licensed by the Bishop of London.

Neau's task was not an easy one. At first he went from house to house, but afterwards arranged for some of the slaves to attend him. He succeeded, however, in obtaining gratifying results. He was commended to the Society by Rev. Mr. Vesey in 1706 as a "constant communicant of our church, and a most zealous and prudent servant of Christ, in proselyting the miserable Negroes and Indians among them to the Christian Religion, whereby he does great service to God and his church." Further confidence in him was attested by an act of the Society in preparing at his request "a Bill to be offered to Parliament for the more effectual Conversion of the Negro and other Servants in the Plantations, to compell Owners of Slaves to cause children to be baptized within 3 months after their birth and to permit them when come to years of discretion to be instructed in the Christian Religion on our Lord's day by the Missionaries under whose ministry they live."

Neau's school suffered greatly in 1712 because of the prejudice engendered by the declaration that instruction was the main cause of the Negro riot in that city. For some days Neau dared not show himself, so bitter was the feeling of the masters. Upon being assured, however, that only one Negro connected with the school had participated in the affair and that the most criminal belonged to the masters who were openly opposed to educating them, the institution was permitted to continue its endeavors, and the Governor extended to it his protection and recommended that masters have their slaves instructed. Yet Neau had still to complain thereafter of the struggle and opposition of the generality of the inhabitants, who were strongly prejudiced with a horrid motive thinking that Christian knowledge "would be a means to make the slave more cunning and apter to wickedness." Not so long thereafter, however, the support of the best people and officials of the community made his task easier. Neau could say in 1714 that "if the slaves and domestics in New York were not instructed it was not his fault." The Governor, the Council, Mayor, the Recorder and the Chief Justice informed the Society that Neau had performed his work "to the great advancement of religion in general and the particular benefit of the free Indians, Negro slaves, and other Heathens in those parts, with indefatigable zeal and application."

Neau died in 1722. His work was carried on by Mr. Huddleston, Rev. Mr. Whitmore, Rev. Mr. Colgan, Rev. R. Charlton, and Rev. S. Auchmuty.



† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

Interior of Saint Bavo, Haarlem ,

by Pieter Jansz. Saenredam (1597-1665)

Oil on panel painted in 1631,

© Philadelphia Museum of Art

“Where two or three meet in my name, I shall be with them.”

We can often be obsessed by numbers, and that is true even within the context of the church. We check how many are coming to services or how many are signing up for an event, a bible study, a prayer group or a ministry. Jesus’ way of looking at things is somewhat different to ours. Numbers did not seem to be an issue for him. He understood the value of the one. For example, he spoke of the shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep to go in the search of the one who was lost. In this Sunday’s gospel reading he declares that where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them.

The smallest gathering in a tiny parish room is just as significant as the huge congregation in one of the great cathedrals or basilicas of the world. In these days of declining numbers within the church, the Gospel teaches us to appreciate the significance of those present, regardless of how few, rather than allowing ourselves to become too discouraged by those who are not present. Of course this

doesn’t mean that we can become complacent and not try to attract the larger numbers, but somehow today’s reading may make us feel somewhat more accepting of the decline in the numbers of those attending church. If we are open and responsive to the Lord’s presence among us, few though we may be, he will draw others to himself through us, and that will ignite a new generation of churchgoers.

Our painting from 1631 by Dutch artist Pieter Saenredam shows the interior of a Calvinist church. The church is painted as being a rather blank, sterile space with white walls, clear glass windows, and a notable lack of decoration and color. Even though this type of church interior painting became largely emblematic of what Dutch



Calvinist sacred spaces were like, it conveys a somewhat similar feeling when we go to churches nowadays, where there is often a sense of emptiness largely fueled by the lack of church attendance.

Many people nowadays say they believe in God but don’t feel the need to go to church. However, autonomous Christianity doesn’t really work, because our faith life was designed by God to be a community project.

We’ll close with a quotation by Scottish theologian James Denney (1856 -1917):

When you were born, your mother brought you to church.

When you were married, your wife brought you to church.

When you die, your friends will bring you to church.

Why not try coming to church on your own sometime?

✠ This Date on the Church Calendar

Friday, September 8th

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Monastic, 1928

On this day many Christians celebrate the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The gospels tell us little about the family and 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.

The modern canon of scripture does not record Mary's birth. The earliest known account of Mary's birth is found in the *Protoevangelium of James*, an apocryphal text from the late 2nd century, with her parents known as Anne and Joachim. The *Protoevangelium of James* describes Mary's father Joachim as a wealthy member of one of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. He and his wife Anne were deeply grieved by their childlessness.

Pious accounts place the birthplace of the Virgin Mary in Sepphoris, Israel,



near Nazareth, where a 5th-century basilica is excavated at the site. Some accounts speak of Nazareth and others say it was in a house near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. It is possible that a wealthy man such as Joachim had a home in both Judea and Galilee.

The earliest document commemorating this feast comes from a hymn written in the 6th century. The feast may have originated somewhere in Syria or Palestine in the beginning of the 6th century when, after the Council of Ephesus, the cult of the Mother of God was greatly intensified, especially in Syria.

The first liturgical commemoration is connected with the sixth century dedication of the Basilica Sanctae Mariae ubi nata est, now called the Church of St. Anne in Jerusalem. The original church built, in the 5th century, was a Marian basilica erected on the spot known as the shepherd's pool and thought to have been the home of Mary's parents.

In the 7th century, the feast was celebrated by the Byzantines as the feast of the Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Since the story of Mary's Nativity is known only from apocryphal sources, the Latin Church was slower in adopting this festival. At Rome the Feast began to be kept toward the end of the 7th century, brought there by Eastern monks.

More at [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nativity_of_the_Virgin_Mary).



Do you love to sing? Join our worship choir

this fall! Rehearsals resume on Thursday, Sept.

7th at 7:30 pm in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

Blessing of the Backpacks- On Sunday, September 10th at the 10:30 service, there will be a Blessing of the Backpacks. Students of all ages are encouraged to bring their backpack to the service to receive a special "Back to School" blessing!



25 Stories for 25 Years

Ashanda Council

JERICOH FORMER MENTEE,
NOW TUTOR



"What would my life be like if NOT for Pathways or Jericho? Good question. I have no idea. I will say that I would have not graduated with a Bachelor's Degree. There were multiple workshops that Michelle (Ross, my mentor) and Ms. Perkins made sure that I attended to be aware of the college application process and how important education is. I will also say that I would have been lost, spiritually."



✠ Making Sense of God's Guidance Can You Trust a Group to Decide? (Part 2)

Making decisions in groups can be a risky business, but may also be the best way to make sure that we are getting the necessary input and perspective on God's best. God placed us in the Body of Christ and within local communities of fellow believers for a reason - namely because we need each other to discern his will and avoid the snares of self-deception or undue subjectivism in our decisions. Groups do come with complications; however, they also provide the checks and balances as well as the support and encouragement to make the best choices. What else can help a group make the right decisions?

Beware of Deception. That we are vulnerable and that there are lying spirits out there seeking to mislead us, is not a new idea. Jesus spoke often about the forces of deception in our world. In his awesome Olivet discourse just prior to the crucifixion, Jesus paints a breath-taking portrait of what's ahead in the coming period between his first and second coming. His initial words of warning are arresting when he dramatically states, "Watch out that no one deceives you" (Matt 24:4). Of all the things which he could have mentioned, it is instructive that he begins with an acknowledgement of just how subject to deception we are. Knowing full well our tendency to want to interpret the future, Jesus makes clear that we are all susceptible to deception and thus cautions believers to not embrace every new idea and popular trend. Repeatedly, the Lord underscores our weakness when it comes to discerning the true from the false (Matt. 24:5, 11, 24) and highlights our critical need to follow him and his words closely.

If we are so at risk, how then do we avoid deception whether in terms of false doctrine or in succumbing to those voices within ourselves or within our meetings which equally can lead us astray and into bad life choices or ministry decisions?

1. **Stay True to the Word.** Paul, in writing to his son in the faith, Timothy, warns that in the later times, some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits (1 Tim. 4:1). To combat this threat, he urges Timothy, as the young pastor of the church in Ephesus, to stay rooted in the revealed truths of the faith and the good teaching which Timothy had received and been seeking to follow (1 Tim. 4:6-7). Paul reminds him to avoid godless myths and old-wives tales and in their place, to train hard in godliness. And what might myths and old-wives tales look like today in our deliberations? Perhaps they point to ideas that reflect the so-called "wisdom that comes from below" as James put it. "But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" (James 3:14-16). A somber warning about our need to stay grounded in Scripture.

Earlier, the Apostle Paul had written strongly to the church in Thessalonica about the danger of deception as well when he warns, "Don't let anyone deceive you in any way..." (2 Thess. 2:3). He goes on to remind these believers that unbelief or a refusal to believe is a very dangerous place to be. When we pursue our own way and choose to ignore God's view of reality, we may face a judicial hardening of our heart. Paul concludes, "They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason, God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:10-12).

As I reflect on these on these sobering statements, I'm reminded of just how easily I can talk myself into believing something just because it meets my needs or gives me what I crave. Psychologists tell us that we typically interpret reality in keeping with our own self-image or perceptions. In other words, if I see myself as unworthy or ugly, then I tend to interpret comments, looks, or actions by others in ways which reinforce my self-perception. We, likewise, look for those things around us that will confirm or reinforce our personal



(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

Can You Trust a Group to Decide?

desires and as a result, we can easily talk ourselves into believing that something is God's will. Over the years I have often counseled people who are convinced that a course of action must be of God when in fact, every other objective indicator points to the opposite. What we want can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if we are not rooted in God's Word and what God has clearly revealed as spiritually true and healthy.

2. Put on Your Spiritual Armor. It may sound over simplistic to simply state that to avoid deception we need to prepare for its possibility, but the principle is absolutely relevant. In Ephesians 6 we are introduced to God's provision for spiritual warfare - the armor of God. The Apostle Paul does not offer this equipment as a take-it-or-leave-it suggestion, but as a vital necessity to protect us from deception by the devil's schemes. The word scheme here carries the idea of a well-experienced strategist. We are reminded that Satan doesn't play fair or fight fair and has had lots of practice in deceiving people from the Garden of Eden onward. The devil will use every trick of the trade to distract, discourage or defeat the child of God. And thus, the Apostle Paul exhorts, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand" (Eph. 6:10-13).

3. Live by Means of the Spirit. We all are subject to the downward pull of the flesh as well as to the wiles of the devil. And during it all, there is the siren call of the world seeking to sell us another story of what will truly make us happy and fulfilled. So again, the Apostle Paul relates to us the vital necessity to live life and make our choices by another resource - the Holy Spirit. He summarizes this alternative with the words, "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:16). There is a tug of war going on inside each of us and only the indwelling Holy Spirit can empower us to live as we should and thus direct our energies and activities in God-honoring ways.

At one point, when I was struggling as the director of our ministry in trying to figure out what was God's will, these words of wisdom from a colleague were passed on to me and became a real help. He began by quoting Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control."

My friend went on to say that as a rule whenever a response or intended action on my part would reflect any of these fruits of the Spirit, that likely this was the will of God for me! In other words, whatever kind of action would generate peace and unity, demonstrate love, show kindness to those in need that I probably didn't even need to pray about it. These things are the will of God! The point is, that left to myself and my own resources, the desires of the sinful flesh will seek to control and guide my actions. However, when living by means of the Spirit, and in keeping in step with him, I have the assurance that God will guide and give direction for group or organizational decisions.

It would be naïve to think that every major decision for change is welcomed and cheerfully embraced by all. Change doesn't come easy for many of us. It isn't so much that we fear change but rather our perceived loss that makes the change process difficult. Even though it appears all is well, there will likely be some grumbling and resistance as the implications actually began to sink in. However, the test of a godly decision led by the Holy Spirit is usually confirmed in the long run rather than just by initial popular acclaim or even immediate backlash. Nevertheless, one necessary part of the process is to help those affected understand both the rationale for the change and how the decision was made.

- Dan Bacon



✠ That “Love Thy Neighbor” Thing...

Romans 13:8-14

It is not a debt we care to own up to, as loving neighbor as yourself is not as sweet as it sounds. First of all we hardly love ourselves, although we like ourselves well enough to fulfill desires as if they were needs. We almost always neglect the “neighbor” as defined by the parable of the Good Samaritan and avoid contact with them when we can. We don’t even fully love those who love us, withholding a certain amount of capital in reserve, fearful that full commitment may lead to personal bankruptcy. That’s the truth. Fear drives the process and love demands more than anyone is willing to pay. If it came easy we’d be better at it and the Bible wouldn’t have to talk about it so much. But as it is, we are reluctant to love fully, especially when it means we have to sacrifice time or energy or pay real dollars on the debt. There are some who recklessly disregard conventional wisdom and even if they had a rainy day fund would have spent it long ago on the needs of others. We call them saints and most of them are dead or in prison or live in ways the rest of us do not care to live, thank you, very much. They do inspire us, though, don’t they? Maybe enough to put ourselves on a payment plan to pay down the debt of love we can never repay. For the Jesus, who inspires saints to live with and love neighbors not like themselves, died to save us all and rose to pay the debt the law demanded.



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

Xiangtang

Country: China | Population: 108,000 | Language: Dongshanba Lalo | Main Religion: Ethnic | Evangelical: 0.12%



The Xiangtang live farther south than any other Yi people in China. Government efforts to encourage assimilation into mainstream Han culture have largely succeeded, but small, remote pockets of Xiangtang still follow the old ways. Traditionally, their diet consists of maize, buckwheat, bean curd, pancakes, and sour or dried vegetables. At meals, important guests sit by the hearth with the host to their right, while those of lower rank sit close to the door. Xiangtang beliefs combine ancestor worship with animism. They revere the dragon and the “spirit of the ravine.” Very few Xiangtang have encountered Jesus, and no known missionaries have ever lived or attempted to plant a church among them. Ask the Father to defeat the dragon who oppresses the Xiangtang. Pray for Scripture to be quickly and accurately translated into their heart language. Ask God to burden and raise up faithful laborers for this harvest.



Let's Learn and Work Together: Stop Human Trafficking in Connecticut

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

10:00 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Hosted By

ST. JAMES' EPISCOPAL CHURCH
25 WEST STREET
DANBURY, CT 06810

9A.M. On-site registration opens. Coffee, Tea and More donated by Trinity Christian Tabernacle

9:45 A.M. Conference Welcome

10 A.M. Keynote Speaker Rob Morris, Co-founder Love146

Rob Morris is the CEO and co-founder of Love146, an international human rights organization working to end child trafficking and exploitation. Prior to co-founding Love146, Rob worked with Mercy Ships International directing training schools at the International Operations Center. He has lectured and taught in over 20 countries on issues of justice, compassion, and human rights.

11 A.M. Discussion: Questions and Answers

Underground New England is a faith-based, non-profit organization that provides ministry and support in the anti-trafficking movement. UGNE acts as a catalyst in unifying faith-based communities to transform and heal the culture of sexual exploitation in Connecticut and to see a God-shift in a way that compels change: Awareness, prevention, and direct support for victims and survivors.

11:45 A.M. Lunch and Round Table Conversations

Enjoy lunch and gather ideas and possibilities for going forward BEYOND the Conference close at 1:00 P.M.

Suggested \$5.00 donation at the door

Nearby parking available

Proceeds donated to Underground New England

Eventbrite Registration Link Below:

<https://cimn-missionevent.eventbrite.com>

Sponsored by Companions in Mission Ministry Network

of the EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

Thank you to St. James' Episcopal Church, Danbury CT and Trinity Christian Tabernacle, Danbury CT

† Memorial Garden Fees to Increase

Please note: The Memorial Garden fees for in-ground and wall niches will increase January 1st, 2024. Ground purchase will increase from \$350 to \$500; Wall niche purchase will increase from \$500 to \$750. This is the first fee increase in over 20 years. The fee includes the niche, opening and closing, service, engraved plaque and perpetual maintenance in our beautiful garden. For information please contact Mary Beth Durkin at durkin.mb@gmail.com.



Self, That Wily Devil, Can Wear Such Masks

What a foe to one's peace is one's own spirit! And what shall I call it? It is often an infernal spirit. Why? Because it bears the mark of Satan upon it. The pride of our spirit, the presumption of our spirit, the hypocrisy of our spirit, the intense selfishness of our spirit are often hidden from us.

Self, that wily devil, can wear such masks and assume such forms. Self, that serpent, can so creep and crawl, can so twist and turn, and can disguise itself under such false appearances that it is often hidden from ourselves.

Who is the greatest enemy we have to fear? We all have our enemies, of course, but who is our greatest enemy? It is he that you carry in your own bosom. It is your daily, hourly, and constant companion that entwines himself in nearly every thought of your heart. It is he that suggests well-nigh every motive; that sometimes puffs up with pride, sometimes inflames with lust, sometimes inflates with presumption, and sometimes works under feigned humility and fleshly holiness.

Now this self must be overcome; for if self overcomes us eventually, we shall perish in the condemnation of self. God, however, is determined to stain the pride of human glory. He will never let self wear the crown of victory. It must be crucified, denied, and mortified. It must be put off, so that Jesus may be put on. We deny self so that Jesus may be believed in; and that in the crucifixion of self, there may be a solemn spiritual union with Him who was crucified on Calvary.

So are we overcoming self? The Spirit of God gives us the answer in a tender conscience: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Therefore, the way to overcome self is by looking away from self and gazing at Him who was crucified upon Calvary's tree; to receive His image into our heart; to be clothed with His likeness; to drink into His spirit; and "receive out of His fulness grace for grace."

— J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)



What was to be in the Israelite's hand as they ate the passover meal?

- a) Spoon b) Yeast
- c) Staff

Exodus 12:11 NIV

“For wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” Someone once wrote that Jesus said “feed my sheep, don’t count them!” But in reality, numbers do count, and the support we give each other by faithful attendance at worship and by our personal and financial participation for parish ministries is a morale boost to all who are involved. Pray (and do your part) to be an active part of a lively, God-centered congregation!



How old was the passover lamb selected for each family to be?

- a) 1 year b) 2 years c) 3 years

Exodus 12:4-5 NIV



† 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.



MY UTMOST FOR
HIS HIGHEST
Oswald Chambers

† 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

Sep 10th	8 am	- Beth/John Beck	10:30 am	- Joanne Siergiej
Sep 17th	8 am	- Greeley's	10:30 am	- Switzer's
Sep 24th	8 am	- Polly Sorrentino	10:30 am	- Barbieri's



**COFFEE HOUR
HOSTS NEEDED**

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



† Sunday School Update!

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS' MEETING: This Sunday September 10 at 9:45, promptly in the Grade 3-4 classroom.

SUNDAY SCHOOL begins Sunday, September 17th, with a gathering of **PARENTS** of Sunday School Students at 9:40 am in the Guild Room.



Parents, please fill out a registration form so we'll know each child's grade in school and allergies, if any. You'll get some info on our teachers, classes and curriculum. There will be coffee and donuts for all and coloring pages, markers, and crayons for the kids.

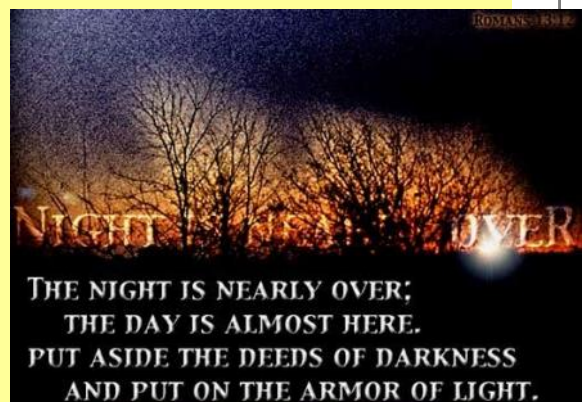
† Bible Study for Families

Starting Friday, September 1, there will be a Bible study for families. The Bible study will meet the first and third Fridays of each month with dinner and fellowship from 5:30-6:30 and a Bible study for parents from 6:30-7:30. There will be an activity provided for any kids attending during the Bible study. For more information, or to RSVP (so we know how much food to bring) please contact Max Kronberg at (203) 216-4037.



† The Armor of Light

Like Jesus, Paul often used examples drawn from daily life to illustrate his teachings. Soldiers in armor would be a common sight in the lands occupied by Rome. They were necessary to maintain order and prevent revolutions. The Roman soldiers may have lived in excess during off-duty moments. The "orgies and drunkenness" would be a witness to the power and degradation of Rome. By non-Romans the Roman Soldiers might have been seen as armies of darkness. Paul suggests that the Christians should don virtues that would be the armor of the forces of light.





✠ Israel, Revisited ✠



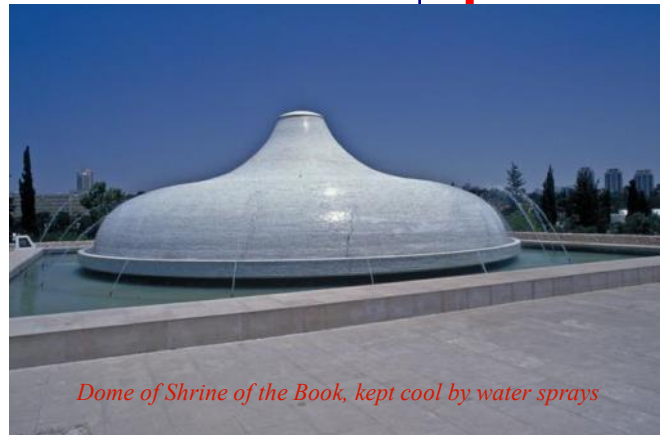
✠ Shrine of the Book ✠

The Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem uses quirky contemporary architecture to house and display ancient manuscripts - including the first Dead Sea Scrolls to be discovered.

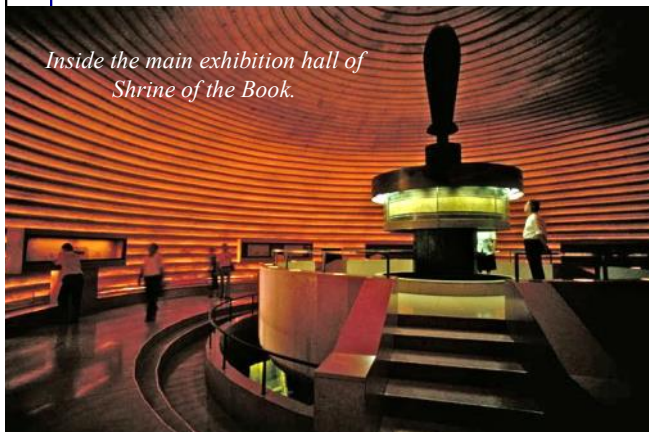
The building's white-tiled dome is shaped like the lid of the first jar in which the scrolls were found at Qumran. In contrast nearby stands a black basalt wall. The black-white imagery symbolizes the theme of one of the scrolls - The War of the Sons of Light Against the Sons of Darkness.

The rest of the structure, two-thirds of it below ground level, recalls the caves in which the scrolls were found.

The Shrine of the Book is a wing of the Israel Museum in western Jerusalem. Also on the museum's campus is an extensive outdoor Second Temple Model of Jerusalem in AD 66, before its destruction by the Romans.



Dome of Shrine of the Book, kept cool by water sprays



Inside the main exhibition hall of Shrine of the Book.

The Shrine of the Book holds all seven of the scrolls found in what is called Cave 1 at Qumran, near the Dead Sea. They are Isaiah A, Isaiah B, the Habakkuk Commentary, the Thanksgiving Scroll, the Community Rule (or the Manual of Discipline), the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness (or the War Rule) and the Genesis Apocryphon. All are in ancient Hebrew except the last, which is in Aramaic.

A facsimile of the scroll of Isaiah, arranged around a huge elevated spindle, provides a

dramatic centrepiece in the exhibition hall under the dome.

Also at the Shrine of the Book is the Temple Scroll, the best-preserved of the Qumran scrolls. At more than 8 metres long, it is the longest of the Qumran manuscripts.

The Community Rule is the rule book for the group that wrote or copied the library of scrolls - believed to be a group of Essenes, a strict Jewish sect, who lived an austere lifestyle in their remote desert surroundings.

On every trip to the Holy Land we visit the Shrine of the Book.

Our next trip to the Holy Land is in May of 2024! We leave on April 29th for a two-week journey into our faith. Watch future *Sword Points* for more info.



Our Daily Bread - The *Our Daily Bread* devotional pamphlet for September, October & November is now available at the back of the church. *Our Daily Bread* contains a scripture verse and meditation for each day.



SHINE YOUR LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

† **Ladies Evening Bible Study**



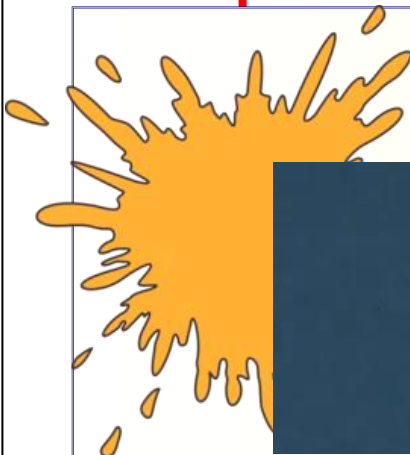
The Wed Evening Ladies Zoom Bible Study will start up again on Wednesday, September 13th from 7-8 pm and all are invited.

We will be studying prayers from the Bible, beginning with the prayers of David in 2nd Samuel and continuing with prayers from other kings and prophets in the OT. There is no homework, and there will be good discussions, so please feel free to join us and make new friends as we study the Bible together and seek to follow the Lord more closely. To be added to the weekly email with the zoom link, or with questions, please contact Carol Wheeler at cmeadwheeler@hotmail.com or call 203-525-0011.

The zoom link is the same every week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4245653965?pwd=RXI4b3ZWS1p6TFpwQk8xMlh1NzY2Zz09>

† **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."

✠ Extending Grace Not Judgment

by Mari-Anna Stålnacke @flowingfaith

Do you have spiritual friends? Do you have at least one friend that shares your beliefs? If you are alone on your way to heaven, you're in high risk of becoming spiritually barren. Yes, we are meant to grow together. We are a body of Christ. We are a family of God. There is no children without siblings in God's family. Even Jesus cultivated spiritual friendships and showed us what it is to love your friends.

This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. (John 15:12, CEB)

Spiritual friends help each other to grow in faith. When they gather together in Christ, they are much more than just two individuals. They help each other in the process of becoming what God has created them to be and doing what God has prepared in advance for them to do.

*If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care - then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, **be deep-spirited friends**. Don't push your way to the front; don't sweet-talk your way to the top. Put yourself aside, and help others get ahead. Don't be obsessed with getting your own advantage. Forget yourselves long enough to lend a helping hand. (Phil. 2:1-5, MSG. emphasis added)*

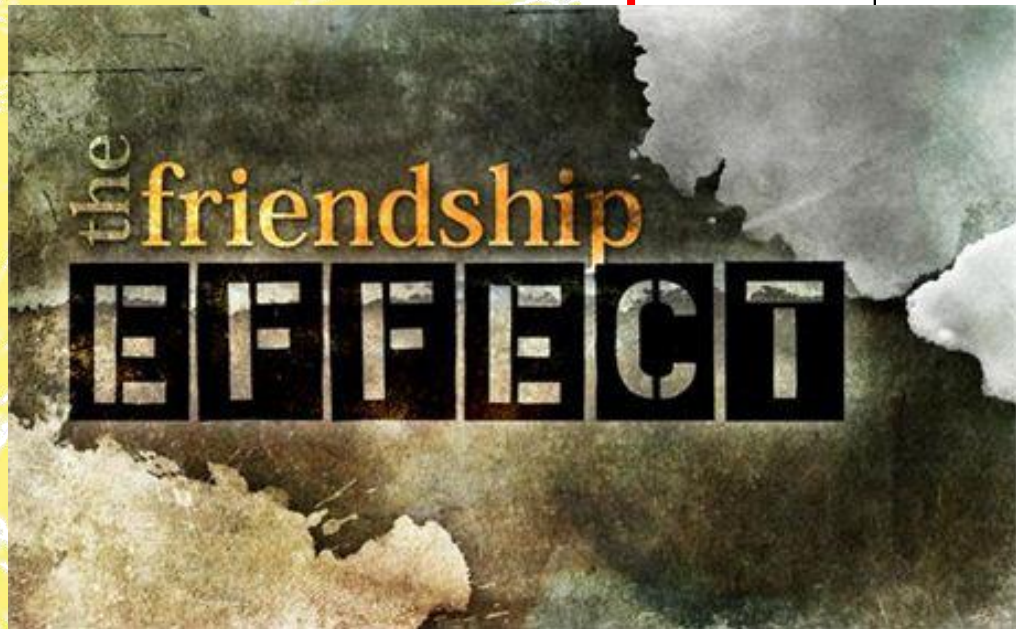
Being deep-spirited friends is the best life can offer. With the words of St. Aelred: "But how happy, how carefree, how joyful you are if you have a friend with whom you may talk as freely as with yourself, to whom you neither fear to confess any fault nor blush at revealing any spiritual progress, to whom you may entrust all the secrets of your heart and confide all your plans. And what is more delightful than so to unite spirit to spirit and so to make one out of two?"

If you yearn to have this kind of spiritual friendship, ask God to show you who could be your deep-spirited friend. And, remember, it takes time to cultivate spiritual friendship. It takes spiritual nakedness and vulnerability. It takes lots of prayer, lots of listening. But, yes, it's so worth it. Any friendship has an effect on us. But the impact of a spiritual friendship is even more powerful. The benefits of spiritual friendship are indeed out of this world. *For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them (Matthew 18:20, NLT).*

Gracious God,
We yearn to have deep-spirited friends.
We yearn to live the way you want us to live.
We yearn to love like you loved us.
Create new spiritual friendships for us.
Empower us to grow together in you.
Be with us as we gather in your name.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Q4U: Do you have spiritual friends? How do you grow together in Jesus?

Be blessed, my fellow pilgrim, as you enjoy spiritual friendships!



† Tomorrow's Leader,

by Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)

Oil on canvas painted in 1959,

© Boy Scouts of America / courtesy of the Medici Museum of Art

When some of us were young boys, we were a member of the Scouts. One of the mottos of the scout movement is 'Be prepared!' Before we went hiking we had to make sure we had all we needed to meet with any unexpected eventuality that might arise. The preparation was almost as important as the event that followed. Five of the bridesmaids in Matthew's gospel of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13) would probably not have made good scouts. They weren't prepared for the late arrival of the bridegroom and, as a result, their oil had run out; with empty oil lamps, they couldn't escort him into the wedding hall.

The last time the same parable was read in one of our Bible studies, one of you commented 'Why didn't the wise virgins not share their oil with the foolish ones? Wouldn't that be the right thing to do?' Yes, that is right indeed. The parable is, however, not

necessarily about the call for generosity, but is more about the call to be ready, to be prepared. The parable calls on us to be ready with our lamps brightly burning and have plenty of oil reserve to fall back on.

Preparation is indeed key. Our painting by American artist Norman Rockwell shows the role scouting played in the American family during the 20th century. It shows a boy scout in a pose reminiscent of classical sculpture. The wall behind him carries a large scouts logo with the words 'be prepared.' Further painted roundels on the walled surface depict an oil lamp with bible, a white dove, bow and arrows... a myriad of instruments the scouts fall back on for when they prepare for a long journey. It is a charming painting of a young man fully prepared for the adventure that lies ahead.



† **St. Paul's Sponsorship of
Cub Scout Pack #135 & Boy Scout Troop #5**

St. Paul's has been the sponsoring organization for The Boy Scouts since 1942. Sponsorship means, providing leadership and meeting facilities plus assuring that the national standards for the Boy Scouts of America are being met.

Scouting has been a proud tradition for St. Paul's for many years, providing learning, adventure, and leadership opportunities for hundreds of our neighborhood youth.

Currently, there are about 60 boys and 10 leaders registered in Cub Scout Pack 135, plus 40 boys and 12 leaders registered in Boy Scout Troop 5. Both units are among the strongest in the Connecticut Yankee Council of the Boy Scout organization.

Troop 5 is beginning its' 82nd year in Brookfield. The Troop proudly displays a plaque in the Parish Hall with the names of all 79 Eagle Scouts - with several more to be added soon.

The Troop performs many community services, well beyond the many Eagle Scout service projects. This year, flags were placed on Veterans graves in each of Brookfield's 11 cemeteries; a fall yard cleanup for senior citizens (including two parish members); Town hiking trail maintenance; Christmas tree pickups; Salvation Army Bell ringing at Town Hall.

This past summer over 30 boys and 8 leaders were at the weeklong Camp Sequassen in New Hartford, CT. Additionally, 12 senior boys and 6 adult leaders were on a Maine Allagash River 50 mile canoe trip this summer. Of interest is the fact that Troop 5 has not missed a monthly campout since 1964! That is a remarkable 700-plus consecutive months of camping - sometimes even when it did not rain or snow!

You can see the Troop 5 trailer parked in the north parking area.

Scouting in Brookfield has been a proud tradition for many years! We have been blessed with excellent leadership and facilities as well as the many youth who have benefited from our program.

Both units thank St. Paul's for their invaluable sponsorship! And, we cordially invite your active participation in our youth activities!

The Scout Law: A Scout is: Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH



September 10, 2023 – Pentecost 15 (A) Welcoming Young Adults into Your Congregation

Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. - Matthew 18:5

"If we lose a generation of young people in the church, it won't be because we didn't entertain them. It will be because we didn't dare to do something meaningful with the Gospel in light of the world we live in." – Shane Claiborne

Young adults (18-30 years old) enrich our communities with a variety of gifts, experiences, and perspectives. You may have heard a lament that young adults aren't coming to church. We want them to be part of the life of the church, but where and how do we engage in ministry with them? The inclusion of young adults in the life of the church requires a sincere and intentional invitation, welcome, and inclusion.

Welcome and Relationship

Young adults want to be treated and welcomed just as anyone else. Introduce yourself, be attentive, and respect their boundaries. Strike up a conversation without assuming things because of their age. "Hi. My name is _____. I don't think we've met." "Tell me about yourself and what brought you here today." "Can I introduce you to my friend?"

Community and Empowerment

Young adults experience a variety of transitions and a community of faith creates an atmosphere of support and belonging. From this sense of community, young adults will seek ways to live out their Christian calling. We have an obligation to empower young adults in their lives in Christ and how they might be feeling called to engage.

Mentoring Environments

The presence of young adults in our parishes provides them an opportunity to engage with God through the Episcopal tradition and experience. A mentoring parish recognizes, challenges, supports, inspires, and engages young adults in order to foster their faith. The prophetic voice of young adulthood can challenge the church to more fully live into its calling as the body of Christ.

Our Responsibility to Young Adults

We are called to share the wealth and worth of the Christian story with young adults and hear what the Christian story means to them. We must engage young adults in honest and sophisticated conversation about God and the calling and value of every human being. We must equip young adults with the tools of our tradition for facing the tough ethical, moral, ecological, relational, and religious challenges of the broader world.

For more information about ministry with Young Adults, visit episcopalchurch.org/yacm.



MISSION TRIP TO AFRICA 2023

Kindly join me in being blessed by bringing Jesus to three African countries this October. Let us make a difference !

• Tanzania • Kenya • Uganda

I will be living with the people, eating and sleeping in their homes. Just like the disciples did.

(Entirely Scriptural, plus low expenses)

I will be traveling with a pastor from each country going out two by two. Also as the disciples did.

(Also quite Scriptural)

I will be working only with Christians that believe in working with each other at various churches.

(Jesus last prayer before the cross Jn.17:21)



Minister Bob Cutting
www.bobcutting.com
203 778-2672

We expect God to show up!

What qualifies me for Africa?

- I have lived humbly among the people in Honduras
- Helped, then directed Minutemen United, Christian recovery efforts after Hurricane Katrina.
- Visited Tanzania on a Mission Trip in 2018
- Certified in Critical Incident Stress Management by A. C. C. A. & Pending with B.G.E.E.
- Turned my Facebook account into a worldwide ministry for Christian leaders.



Here a choir sings in a church without a roof.
Hungry for Jesus?
This church grew to 200 in 3 months!



Scan this code and hear
our Kenyan Coordinator talk
about our upcoming visit.



The view out the windows is
always fantastic in the
back country.

Estimated costs:

International Airfare: \$1,500. Visas (3 countries \$600.)

In country airfares: \$900. Miscellaneous: \$300.

Any extra funds will be given to local Christians for Bibles in their native language(s).

Kindly join we me in beating these expenses.

Donations accepted at Go Fund Me. com. Tax deductible checks to:

Insight Ministries Inc. 50 Oak Ridge Rd., Bethel, Ct. 06801-1151

All donations of \$25. or more will be sent a copy of my new book

"MESSAGE MISSED, What is the Main Idea of Christianity?"



Some people say that they can't see or find Jesus anywhere in their lives. In this weekend's gospel, Jesus reminds us that he will be found wherever two or three are gathered together in his name. Sounds like Jesus likes to be among company. How often do you gather with others "in his name"?



BROTHERS MCCLURG w/ GUEST PATRICK O'CONNORS

September 15, 2023 | 7:30 P.M.

\$15 tickets adv. | \$20 at door

www.communitycoffeehouse.org



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



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Paula Pascoa, Mary Thomas & Joe Hock celebrate tomorrow. Cigdem Usekes & Will McLaughlin open presents on Saturday.

Bake a cake for **Ken Kast** on Tuesday.

Michele Janofsky & Pat Sciallo are a year older and wiser on Wednesday **Have a blessed day everyone!**

RFB

Presents

**COFFEE
WITH
JESUS**

**Distant
From You**



Jesus, please take away those things that I know cause me to be distant from you.



Problem is, Kevin, you love those things. You want me to just rip them from your life?



If that's what it takes, Jesus, yes.



What if you first let them go? Be a whole lot easier for me to pick them up, right?

©Radio Free Babylon.® All rights reserved. What are the things that you know keep you distant from God? Are they habits? Relationships? Attitudes? Prejudices? In any friendship, domineering behavior is going to create resentment. Do you want Jesus to be your friend, or your dictator? Trust me, he wants to be your friend. He wants you to recognize the things that hinder your walk. He will gladly take those things away, but he wants you to let them go first. And he will cast them far away.

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

Reconciliation and Unity

[Exodus 12:1-14](#)

In our Hebrew Bible lesson instructions are given, and the meaning of the Passover meal is told: it is a remembrance and reenactment of Israel's beginnings as a people when they were saved out of slavery in Egypt. The details indicate that several different traditions stand behind the Passover memorial. Perhaps it was the Israelites' attempts to keep ancient spring rites, derived from their shepherding and agricultural backgrounds, which caused the Egyptians to persecute them. With these traditions the story of God's judgment on Egypt and victory for the people has become richly entwined.

[Psalm 149](#)

A joyful song in which the faithful praise the Lord and anticipate the victory of justice.

[Romans 13:8-14](#)

In this reading Paul summarizes the heart of the law and urges a way of life in full awareness of the nearness of salvation. All the commandments and all human responsibility for others are fulfilled by "loving your neighbor as yourself." Disciples must recognize that the nighttime of sinfulness is passing. The daylight, the time for new conduct and the following of Jesus, comes now.

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)

Our gospel presents teaching about how to deal with sin and grievances within the Christian community. The early churches did not have established codes and regulations and had to fashion their own ways of dealing with such matters. Here every effort is made to bring the sinful member to repentance. Failing this, the individual is to be treated outside the church. Such decisions are understood to be ratified in heaven and by Christ's presence even in the smallest of Christian gatherings.

[Matthew 18:15-20](#)

"Real churches have - or should have - real conflicts. The only real harm that will come to a church community is to refuse to deal with conflicts. Conflicts do not kill churches. Refusing to deal with conflict kills churches."



† Sermon Shorts

Say Yes to God. 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. God's word tells us that those who love their neighbors have fulfilled the law. Out of love and compassion for a broken world, let us pray to the Lord for:

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

.....**L'Eglise de L' Epiphanie**, Stamford; **St. Andrew's**, Stamford, **St. Francis'**, Stamford.

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

.....The Province of New England; the Dioceses of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Western Massachusetts; their bishops, clergy, parish and diocesan staff, and congregations; Provincial Synod, all Provincial Networks.

.....**Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Jr., Gail, Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Robert, Eve, Roger, Barbara, Fred, Cynthia, Rocky, Valerie, Geri, Arlene, David Williams, Heidi Pinheiro, Donna, Dale Mitchell, Larry Wanzer, Joe, Ruth, Jayne, Ken, Alex, Elana, and Veronika** continued healing.

.....the people of **Ukraine**; the people of the **Slovak Republic**; the people of **The Gambia**; the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Zaria - The Church of Nigeria (Anglican

Communion) (Kaduna Province); and our sister and brother members of the **Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church**.



.....For ourselves, our families, and our communities, who are daily faced with questions of faith.

.....**St. James' Episcopal Church**, Danbury and their **Daily Bread Food Pantry**, which is the recipient of our food basket collections during the month of September.

.....**New Hope Baptist Church**, Danbury, a partner church of the Jericho Partnership.

.....Our missionaries, Will & Becky McLaughlin and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; the Holy Spirit will provide them with words that communicate effectively in the Cambodian culture and language.

.....that we go beyond the minimum required and give generously in proportion to what God has given each of us.

.....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.

.....**The Harvest of Lands and Waters**.



Who Do You Spend Time With?



Common wisdom tells us we become the people we spend the most time with, so choose your friends wisely. This video expands upon that advice to encourage Christians to spend more time with God in prayer, and surround ourselves with people who practice Christian virtue.



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)

Random Fact of the Week!

Did you know ... that the "G" on the Green Bay Packers helmet does not stand for Green Bay?



LOVE THY
NEIGHBOR
AS THY
CELL PHONE

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(See Exodus 12:1-30)

DURING THE PASSOVER ONE SHEEP WISED
UP AND DRESSED UP IN WOLF'S CLOTHING

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