I’ve heard it said that every preacher has only one sermon, and that each message is simply a variation on it. I know this about myself, not only as a preacher but also as a writer and artist. I’m not sure what the title of my core sermon would be, but I know it has something to do with these questions: what are the habits, patterns, and rhythms by which we live our lives? Do they enable us to live in freedom, fully open to the presence of God? Or does our way of life hinder us from this? Are there patterns and habits that, over time, have become confining, keeping us bound and bent and feeling less than whole?

Jan Richardson
Painted Prayerbook

Perhaps justice has something to do with these questions.

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.”

Bishop Desmond Tutu

Jesus asked, "How can you interpret the present time?"

Contemporary Justice and Child by Symeon Shimin
Used by Permission: Art in the Christian Tradition
A project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

TO OUR GUESTS - WELCOME - THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TODAY!
St. Luke's Episcopal Church is a Christian community composed of free thinkers who include: conservatives, moderates, & liberals; agnostics, skeptics & atheists. All spiritual seekers who are searching for an approach to faith that makes the most sense to them personally are welcome here!

PLEASE NOTE: During the 10:30 worship service, we normally video-record the sermon for posting on You-Tube. Your image may be captured during recording.
In Need of Prayer? St. Luke’s Prayer Ministers are available during and after the 10:30 AM service to pray with you. Our Prayer Ministers are trained to be emotionally safe, supportive and maintain confidentiality. Seek them out during Holy Eucharist or after the service. If you would like a name added to our Prayer Chain, contact Tami Wrice with your request at 435-901-1128 or t-wrice@hotmail.com

PLEASE PRAY FOR...........

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:
✓ Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Scott, our Diocesan Bishop and for ALL the people and parishes in our diocese. Pray especially for St. David’s in Page, AZ.
✓ All people within the world-wide Anglican Communion; pray for the people & leaders of The Church of Ireland.

OUR NATION & ITS LEADERS:
✓ Our government leaders that they may live & work in a spirit of calm reason & cooperation on behalf of the common good.

THOSE WHO ARE FACING SUFFERING & HARDSHIP:
✓ Robert++++ (husband of Iris Thompson), Pat++++ (Sanger), Rita++++ (wife of Kevin Tischner), Alexa++++ (granddaughter of Deedee Sihvonen), Gerry ++++(wife of Jim Brooks) Mildred & Tom ++++(mother and brother of Cheryl Popple) Cassie & Gabrielle+++++(daughters of Richard & Bernadette Rothman) Claudia+++ (friend of Beckie Raemer) Tom+++ (brother of Joe Cordery) Kelle +++ (mother of Aimee Altizer), Aone+++ (sister of Ted-di Reeves) Mary Gene++ (mother of Sharon Christiansen) Jill++ (friend of Susan Brewer)

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD:
✓ Both protection for all law enforcement officers as they seek to protect the public and an end to all forms of racism, prejudice and injustice. Let compassion reign in our hearts.
✓ Comfort for the friends and families of the victims of this week’s terrorist attacks.
✓ An end to the conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq & Afghanistan and healing for all victims.
✓ A lasting, permanent peace between Israel & her neighbors.

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED……

PLEASE GIVE THANKS FOR......
✓ For all of Our Sr. Warden, Karl Sears, and his family.
✓ And for those having birthdays this week: Alan Sihvonen today; Jim Jennings on Tuesday; Colin Bergin and Cindy Hall on Thursday.
The Scripture Passages
Proper 15c - August 14, 2016

Collect of the Day: Dearest God, your nature is that of pure and absolute Love. Your presence in our lives brings a Love that seeks harmony wherever there is division and healing wherever there is injury. Grant us the grace to continually manifest this Love in all of our relationships; with Jesus, our Brother, Teacher and Lord. AMEN.

The Hebrew Scriptures:
Reader: Today's reading from the Hebrew scriptures comes from the 82nd Psalm. Psalm 82 is short, but it is far and away the most difficult to interpret. The volume of scholarly literature is enormous, and not simply because scholars like to get published. The interpretive challenges are real, but the reward for engaging them is substantial. There really is something here for everyone: questions about the origins of Israel's religion, connections to the prophetic witness for justice, affirmation of God’s involvement in human history, and links to the theology of the New Testament. Please read with me by reading the parts in bold print.

God takes his stand in the council of heaven; * he gives judgment in the midst of the gods: * "How long will you judge unjustly, * and show favor to the wicked? Save the weak and the orphan; * defend the humble and needy; Rescue the weak and the poor; * deliver them from the power of the wicked. They do not know, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness; * all the foundations of the earth are shaken. Now I say to you, 'You are gods. * and all of you children of the Most High; Nevertheless, you shall die like mortals. * and fall like any prince.'" Arise, O God, and rule the earth, * for you shall take all nations for your own. Here ends the reading.

The Zoroastrian Scriptures:
Zoroastrianism is the ancient, pre-Islamic religion of Persia. Founded by the Iranian prophet and reformer Zoroaster in the 6th century BCE, Zoroastrianism contains both monotheistic and dualistic features. Although a fairly small religion today, numbering about 200,000 adherents, it shares many central concepts with the major world religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Please read with me from the Avesta, Yasna 30 by reading the parts in bold print......Yes, there are two fundamental spirits, twins which are renowned to be in conflict. In thought and in word, in action, they are two: the good and the bad. And between these two, the beneficent have correctly chosen, not the maleficent.

Furthermore, when these two spirits first came together, they created life and death, and now, in the end the worst existence shall be for the deceitful but the best for the truthful person. Of these two spirits, the deceitful one chose to bring to realization the worst things. But the very virtuous spirit, who is clothed in the hardest stones, chose the truth, and so shall mortals who shall satisfy the Wise Lord continuously with true actions. Here ends the reading.


People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.
Jesus said, "I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided: father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, 'It is going to rain'; and so it happens. And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat'; and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

Offertory Sentence:
Priest: My brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, when you come to the Table of the Lord, come not only to receive the presence of the Lord, but also to give your life completely to Him. As Jesus said, the Greatest Commandments are these:

People: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

[Hebrew & Christian scripture passages are reprinted with permission from the World Council of Churches. Passages from extra-biblical sources are reprinted with permission from World Scriptures.]
The Conflict Between Two Empires  
Proper 15c - August 14, 2016

This homily is based upon commentary written by David Lose, Ph.D. with Lutheran Theological Seminary. Today’s Gospel passage from Luke may seem puzzling at first. Isn’t it a contradiction to suggest that Jesus would ever want to bring division and conflict into the human community? Are Jesus’ words here best understood as a statement of intention or a description of the unavoidable consequences of Jesus’ values and message coming into contact with the world?

The passage unfolds through three related metaphors and activities. Jesus came to bring fire, to be baptized, and to bring division. Let’s look briefly at each of these.

Fire is a common yet powerful biblical image. In the stories of the exodus of the Hebrew people from Egypt and the birthing of the mission of the Church in the Book of Acts, it represents the presence of God. In the Book of Revelation where Evil is destroyed by fire, it represents the end of pain, evil and suffering and the climax of history. And the Hebrew Prophets used the metaphor of fire to call for the purification of their nation. Israel must be purified just as silver is purified by intense heat and flame. Which of these did Luke have in mind as he wrote this story? Probably all of them because they are all aspects of that sacred biblical vision which foresees a new human community; a new way for being human together throughout the world.

Baptism also is used in the New Testament to represent both judgment and purification. In today’s Gospel, Jesus uses the term baptism in reference to his mission. Faithfulness to his mission in life and a willingness to accept the inevitable consequences was his baptism. Baptism is from the Greek word that mean “to completely immerse or cover over.” This experience of being completely immersed and consumed by a phenomenon more powerful than oneself is how Jesus experienced his sense of mission, his intuition of being called to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is already here and his gut instinct to always call the members of his society to take seriously the values of love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness and the struggle for universal human justice. Like all of God’s prophets throughout human history, his sense of purpose was more important to him than his physical safety and life.

Finally, Luke has Jesus saying that he has come to bring division. Division was something the first century community that produced the Gospel of Luke would certainly have experienced. Division or conflict comes from two or more people having a different perspective about the nature of reality. This reminds me of a cute story….Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Officer asks a young engineer fresh out of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "And what starting salary are you looking for?" The engineer replies, "In the region of $175,000 a year, depending on the benefits package." The interviewer inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?" The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it."

Continued on next page...........
If division was something the first century community would certainly have experienced, what was the nature of the conflict driving people apart? There were many, no doubt, but perhaps the chief source of tension that would have likely been in the mind of Jesus was the conflict between the values of the Kingdom of God and those of the Roman Empire. Dr. Lose notes, “The Kingdom of God Jesus proclaims represents a new order governed not by might but by forgiveness, not by fear but by courage, and not by power but by humility. Yet those invested in the present order; those lured by the temptations of wealth, status, and power will resist this coming kingdom for it spells an end to what they know and love (or at least have grown accustomed to). Hence Jesus, by preaching the values of the Kingdom, the values of a new order that is already here but has not been fully actualized brings division, even to the most intimate and honored of relationships, that among family.”

But if Jesus’ call to a new way of relating to each other -- via forgiveness, courage, and humility -- stirred up division during his time and that of the early Church, what does it bring today? Does the tension that lived in the hearts, minds and souls of all of those first century Christians live in us as well? Are we conflicted and torn inside between our allegiance to the values of our empire, the American Empire and the values of the Kingdom of God - God’s Empire? Of course we are! How could we not be? We live in a world that prizes wealth, status and power more than life itself. We know this because whenever someone is said to be “successful,” it almost always refers to their wealth, status and power. When was the last time you were at a cocktail party and overheard someone say, “I hear he is very successful. He is the most loving, compassionate, forgiving and humble person I know. He constantly seeks the well-being of others?” You and I live in a society that strives to achieve the goals of a wealth and power-based empire. At the same time, the Call to the ethical life lives in our hearts. Something deep, deep inside of us knows that the life of love, compassion, mercy, forgiveness and the struggle for justice is the best life, the sacred life, the life to which we are all called.

So all of us live each day with a question ringing in our ears: to which value system, to which vision of human community will I give my primary allegiance and energy today? What can I do to make the values of the Kingdom of God an actual reality in my life and in the lives of those around me? And am I willing, along with Jesus, to face the consequences of doing so? It is your decision, your choice.

Blessings,
Charles+

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A HUGE THANK YOU to Deedee Sihvonen and her granddaughter Emmy Kanarowski and friend Bella for their tireless hard work. They have spent many many hours and days cleaning the upstairs.

They have sorted through the many piles of items that have accumulated over the years and they are organizing them.

Nancy Conrow and Leslie Wood have also jumped in and are organizing the many seasonal decorations and flowers that are used at both the Church and Chapel. Not an easy feat!

Thank you for taking the time to take on these huge jobs!!!!
Continuing to combat racism and oppression; working towards reconciliation

By Daphne Mack

On the eve of observing August 23 as International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, the Episcopal Church continues to address its role in slavery and heads towards reconciliation.

“The significance of the abolition of slavery bill is that we really do have to own up to our part, in keeping as one speaker called it ‘that heinous institution’ alive and well,” said the Rev. Jayne Oasin, social justice officer for the Episcopal Church.

“So we [the church] need to be one of the major voices that say it was wrong that we ever supported this [slavery], and that we apologize.”

Resolution A123, “Slavery and Racial Reconciliation” which passed at the 2003 General Convention, declared “unequivocally, that the institution of slavery in the United States and anywhere else in the world” is a sin. Oasin said Resolution A123 called on the church to acknowledge its history and participation in this sin.

Through the resolution, Executive Council initiated a comprehensive program urging every diocese to collect information about the complicity of the church towards the institution of slavery in its communities, including the economic benefits the church derived. The resolution also called on the Presiding Bishop to name a Day of Repentance at Washington National Cathedral; dioceses would be asked to hold similar services.

At present the dioceses of Maryland, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania and Newark have completed their studies which will be available in September on the Peace and Justice website as examples for other dioceses to begin similar work. Oasin also said that Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori will be calling for a Day of Repentance in 2008.

Oasin recommended that August 23 be a catalyst to an entire week or liturgical season dedicated to liturgical expressions of repentance and rededication for adults and children. She added that anti-racism training would be an “appropriate place” to begin.
episcopallife this week

To date, some 30 dioceses have participated in the anti-racism trainings which aim to help participants understand the basic issues of prejudice, stereotyping, scapegoat, discrimination, racism and “institutional white privilege.”

These trainings, Oasin said, are not gatherings for “shame or blame” but for dialogue.

Oasin said that the Episcopal Church’s current nine-year initiative for anti-racism expires in 2009. Her prayer is that the commitment last forever because “no form of oppression should have a time limit on it.”

For more information visit: http://www.episcopalchurch.org/social-justice.htm.

Daphne Mack is a communications specialist for the Episcopal Church.

Remembering the slave trade and its abolition

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has designated August 23 as International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition.

This date was chosen as a reminder that slaves were the principal agents of their own liberation when they caused an uprising from August 22-23, 1791, in Santo Domingo (today’s Haiti and the Dominican Republic), which played a crucial role in the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

The transatlantic slave trade was the trade of African slaves by Europeans that occurred in and around the Atlantic Ocean. It lasted from the 15-19th century. Most slaves were shipped from West Africa and Central Africa and taken to the New World. Some slaves were captured through raids and kidnapping, although most were obtained through coastal trading. Most contemporary historians estimate that between 9.4 and 12 million Africans arrived in the New World, although the number of people taken from their homestead is considerably higher. Some estimates cited numbers as high as 25 to 40 million. Slaves were one element of a three-part economic cycle—the Triangular Trade and its Middle Passage—which ultimately involved four continents, four centuries and millions of people.

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is intended to inscribe the tragedy of the transatlantic slave trade in the memory of all peoples.

Resources

- Episcopal Church Social Justice Ministries
  http://www.episcopalchurch.org/social-justice.htm

- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
  www.unesco.org

- Why, as Christians, We Must Oppose Racism by Archbishop Desmond Tutu
  http://www.episcopalchurch.org/social-justice_40860 ENG HTM.htm?menu=undefined
CENTERING PRAYER:
Meets Monday mornings at 9:30 AM and Friday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Jerusalem room. Please join us in this contemplative practice of Holy Silence. For any questions contact Jan at jan.e.hafner@gmail.com

ST. LUKE’S CARE GUILD
If you or someone you know has any requests or needs, please contact Harriet, harrietmstephens@gmail.com, (435)655-1888 or Katherine Martz at katherinemartz@comcast.net.

CONSIDERING JOINING THE ST. LUKE’S COMMUNITY? JUST WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH?
Our rector would be delighted to make an appointment to meet with you. He will do his best to answer your questions and to help you to feel welcomed and included at St. Luke’s. When you are ready to have a conversation, just let him know at either: pastor@stlukespc.org or 435-901-2131.

AUTUMN GOSPEL GROUP FOR WOMEN 50ish & UP: FOURTH SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 10:00 AM
Meets on the fourth Saturday of each month, 10:00 - NOON. We are beginning a new book, “A New Harmony: The Spirit, The Earth, and The Human Soul” by J. Phillip Newell. Please join us for coffee, fellowship and a lively discussion! For more info. please call Dyan Pignatelli, 435-782-3330 or Joyce Pearson, 435-659-0724.

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY
Will resume in the Fall. Our tradition has been to pick a book to read over them summer and get together for a Sunday brunch, hike, and discussion of the book. Our book this summer is "Crazy Christians-A Call to follow Jesus" by Michael Curry. The get together will be on Sunday 8/21 at 12:30 after church. We will have brunch, a hike, and discuss "Crazy Christians" at Mary Parsons house 7868 Long Rifle Rd.

TAI-CHI
Is taking the month of August off. Classes will resume in September.

WOMEN’S GET TOGETHER
Please join us on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM. We gather to get to know and support one another. Please bring an appetizer, dessert, main or drink to share.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES
Our A Course in Miracles study group will continue to meet during the summer. Please join us at 4:00 each Wednesday in the St. Luke's library to read and discuss theory and practice of this thought system based on non-judgment and love. For information call Ann Fiery, 304-617-5714, or visit www.acim.org.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE:
WWW.STLUKESPARKCITY.ORG
It’s not completely finished, but there is enough content to make it worth a visit. On the website newcomers will find info about our church and what to expect when they visit. In addition, there is information about all of our missions, finances and programs. You can view previous sermons through a link to You-Tube on your phone or home computer. Happy exploring!!!

REMEMBER that you can now donate online through our website to contribute to our church and its missions. Click in the “Make an online donation” button and you’ll be able to use your credit or debit card. www.stlukespc.org You can also fill out an offering card found in the pews to make a Credit Card donation.