Advent: Awakening to a new heaven and a new earth

The proclamation of a coming new heaven and new earth calls us to counter-cultural thinking and living. It invites us to learn some form of downward mobility and to do it with joy. Franciscan theologian Richard Rohr calls this process “falling upwards”. It is a falling that doesn’t feel like a loss but instead brings with it a new kind of freedom.

This is the kind of freedom that can come to us in the practice of contemplative prayer. In contemplative prayer, as we practice letting go of our attachments to our own ideas, emotions, and world views, we can begin to create an inner life of compassion that is expressed in outward ways of being.
If you need pastoral support or know someone that does, please call Fr. Charles+, at 435-901-2131. Remember, Charles+ still can’t read minds so he will not know unless you tell him. Calls will be kept confidential.

In Need of Prayer or Home Communion?
St. Luke’s Prayer Ministers are available during the 10:30 AM service to pray with you. If you would like a name added to our Prayer Chain or someone who needs Home Communion, contact Beckie in the Church Office.

PLEASE PRAY FOR............
THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY:
Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Scott, our Diocesan Bishop and for ALL the people and parishes in our diocese. Pray especially for St. James’ in Midvale. And for all people within the worldwide Anglican Communion; pray for the people & leaders of The Church of North India.

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++++(Baden), Alexa++++(granddaughter of Deedee Sihvonen), Gerry++++(wife of Jim Brooks) Bonnie++++ (wife of Fr. Charles) John++++(son of Dave & Nancy Garrison) Jennifer++++(Strachan) Tom++++(brother of Joe Cordery) Richard++++ Lori++++(brother in law and sister of Krissa Bolton) Feryerith++++ (friend of Bob Casey), Peggy++++(Bergmann) Sue+++ (sister of Teddi Reeves) Casey & Linda++++ (friends of Harriet Stephens)

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD:
Pray that the human community may find the wisdom to live in greater respect and harmony with our planet home.
Safety and recovery for all people effected by natural disasters throughout the world.
Healing for every soul captured by fear, bigotry and resentment. May we all develop to ability to see the Sacred in those most different from ourselves.
A lasting and permanent peace between Israel and all of her neighbors.

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED……

PLEASE GIVE THANKS FOR.....
And for our Sr. Warden, Karl Sears and his family.

For those having Birthdays this week: Mary Freer on Monday and Katherine Martz on Tuesday.

If your birthday does not appear on our list our list, please notify Beckie in the office so that she can add it.
The Scripture Passages
Advent 3B - December 17, 2017

The Collect of the Day:  Baptism seems to mean different things to different people. We pray for the ability to remember that, at its heart, baptism represents our commitment to walk the path of peace, justice, compassion and mercy; with Jesus our Brother, Teacher and Lord. Amen.

From the Hebrew Tradition:
Our first passage is found in the 61st chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. It is found in Third Isaiah (chapters 56-66); the historical context is the dashed hopes of the earliest returnees from the Babylonian Exile. All is not as the returnees have imagined and hoped it would be. Coming on the heels of the beautiful poem of Isaiah 60, Isaiah 61 speaks of a human agent upon whom the spirit of the Lord rests, who is anointed, and who brings news that liberates the human psyche. Please read with me from the Hebrew tradition by reading the parts in bold print……The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

From the Hindu Tradition:
Similar to Christian Baptism in several respects, the Hindu Thread Ceremony is a ritual involving a young person, usually between the ages of 5 and 24, that grants them a guru who will reveal to them the secrets of the Veda. It is a rite of passage that embarks any person, boy or girl, of any caste, into the path of learning and education. The Thread Ceremony makes you a dvija, or “twice born.” Please read with me from the Hindu tradition by reading the parts in bold print……The hallmark of having gone through the Upanayana ceremony is the wearing of the "Sacred Thread" on the body. The thread is circular, being tied end-to-end with only one knot; it is normally supported on the left shoulder and wrapped around the body, falling underneath the right arm.

Each of the four fingers represents one of the four states that the soul of a man experiences: waking, dreaming, dreamless sleep and knowledge of the absolute.

The Sacred Thread is one thread, folded three times and tied together, each consisting of three strands. These threads represent the Goddess of mind, the Goddess of word and the Goddess of deed. The Sacred Thread reminds a twice-born Hindu to lead a regulated life with purity in his thought, word, and deed. These threads also represent the debt that is owed to the guru, parents, and society. Here ends the reading.

From the Christian Gospels:  John 1:6-8,19-28
Priest:    The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.
There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’” as the prophet Isaiah said. Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Priest:    The Gospel of the Lord.
People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

The 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.
To the people of St. Elizabeth’s: During the past several weeks at St. Luke’s, we have been examining the origin of the ancient concept of “the Messiah” and how best to interpret that concept in the 21st century. We have also been looking at two other ideas closely linked to that of the Messiah: the establishment of the Kingdom of God (the universal kingdom of peace and mercy) and the time of great global suffering, tribulation and death that comes before. Last week, we asked ourselves this question, “Is the literature about a time of cataclysmic suffering, global tribulation and massive death to be interpreted literally or symbolically?” Is it literature that should be read as predictions of what will inevitably take place because the future is preordained or is it literature about what may take place if we do not open our eyes and make the changes we must make in order to avoid apocalyptic suffering and death? And that led us into a conversation about the possibility of nuclear war, about how the use of nuclear weapons would lead to the kind of apocalypse forewarned in the scriptures, and about how we can and must take responsibility for our own future.

Today, I invite you to think with me about another potential source of world-wide catastrophe facing the people of the 21st century: climate change, a.k.a. global warming or “our Mother the Earth has a fever.” There is a story from the Cherokee wisdom tradition that can help us think about this. It is entitled, “Awi Usdi, the Little Deer.” Back when the world was young, the humans and the animal people could speak to each other. At first they lived in peace. The humans hunted the animals only when they needed food or skins to make clothing. Then when the humans discovered the bow and arrow, they began to kill animals with ease, even when they did not need them for food or clothing. It seemed as if all the animals in the world would soon be exterminated. The various animals began to meet in council to discuss the problem. The bears decided they would have to fight back. “The humans will shoot us with their arrows before we come close to them,” said one of the bear warriors. Old Bear, their chief, agreed. “We must learn how to use the same weapons they use.” They made a very strong bow and fashioned arrows for it. But when they tried to use the bow, their long claws got in the way. “I will cut off my claws,” said one of the bear warriors. He did so and was able to use the bow arrow. His aim was good and he hit his mark every time. “That is good,” said Old Bear. “Now, can you climb this tree?” The bear without claws tried to climb the tree, but he failed. Old Bear shook his head. “This will not do. Without our claws we cannot climb trees. Without our claws we will not be able to hunt or dig for food. We must give up this idea of using the same weapons that the humans use.”

One by one each of the animal groups met. One by one they came to no conclusion. It seemed there was no way to fight back. The last group to meet was the deer. When all were gathered together, their leader, Awi Usdi, spoke. “We cannot stop the humans from hunting animals. That is the way it was meant to be. If they do not respect us and if they hunt us more than is really needed, they may kill us all. I shall go and tell the hunters that whenever they wish to kill a deer, they must prepare in a ceremonial way. They must ask permission and after they kill an animal, they must ask pardon when an animal was killed. Some of the hunters, though, paid no attention. They continued to kill animals for no reason. Awi Usdi came to them and, using his magic, crippled them. Then they will no longer be able to walk or shoot a bow and arrow.”

At night Awi Usdi, Little Deer, whispered into the ears of the hunters, telling them what they must do. When they awoke, some of the hunters thought that they had been dreaming. Others, realized that Awi Usdi had truly spoken to them. They hunted for deer and other animals only when they needed food and clothing. They remembered to prepare in a ceremonial way, to ask permission before killing an animal, and to ask pardon when an animal was killed. Some of the hunters, though, paid no attention. They continued to kill animals for no reason. Awi Usdi came to them and, using his magic, crippled them. Before long, all of the hunters began to treat the animals with respect and to follow Awi Usdi’s teachings. So it is that the animals have survived to this day.

............continued on next page
To this day, even though the animals and people no longer can speak to each other as in the old days, the people still show respect and give thanks to the animals they must hunt.

This story is thousands of years old, but it is very relevant today. You see, for a long time now, humans have once again been taking too much, taking far more than is needed for survival. We have for at least the last 150 years been taking too much from the animals and from our Mother the Earth by not only extracting minerals from the ground, but also by cutting down the forests for cheap lumber and by dumping the poisonous by-products of our factories into the air, the streams, rivers and oceans, and the ground. Scientists around the world are now warning the human community that we have to stop taking more than we really need to survive; that we must find a way to respect and live in harmony with the animals and Mother Earth. For example, the Center for Biological Diversity: “Our planet is now in the midst of its sixth mass extinction of plants and animals. We’re currently experiencing the worst spate of species die-offs since the loss of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. Although extinction is a natural phenomenon, it occurs at a natural ‘background’ rate of about one to five species per year. Scientists estimate we're now losing species at 1,000 to 10,000 times the background rate, with literally dozens going extinct every day.” As many as 30 to 50 percent of all species may be extinct by mid-century.

In addition, scientists who study the climate are warning us that another consequence of human pollution, of humans demanding too much is that temperatures around the world are rising and will continue to rise during the coming decades and centuries unless we stop “taking more than we need.” This means, among many other things, that the places where we grow our food will become more and more desert-like. Humans will no longer be able to grow the crops that sustain life. Billions of people may die of starvation and the wars that are triggered by the competition for fewer and fewer resources.

Is this apocalypse inevitable for us? Do we think this is what God wants and has planned for us? Or, can we hear the wisdom of the animals in the Cherokee story and of the scientists around the world and change our path? This is where you and the other native peoples of North America and around the world can come in. In the 1850’s, Smohalla, the Wanapum Holy Man reminded his people of their sacred pact with the Earth. To save themselves from ruin, they must reject the ways of the whites who use violence against Mother Earth to take more than they need. And Young Chief, the leader of the Cayuse in the Washington Territory said, “I wonder if the ground has anything to say? I hear what the ground says, ‘It is the Great Spirit that placed me here and I am placed here to produce all that grows on me, tree and fruit. It was from me that man was made. The Great Spirit, in placing men on earth, desired them to take good care of the ground [and the air and the waters] and to do each other no harm.’” It is my understanding that at the core of Native Tradition is the clear recognition of our essential relationship with and our need to respect Sacred Earth. Native peoples have always understood what others have forgotten; that Mother Earth will care for us only if we first respect and care for Her. Please take that message beyond the boundaries of your tribe and speak to whomever will listen. Please be the voice crying in the wilderness reminding all of us that our hope rests upon our willingness to listen to the voices of the animals and of the ground, air and water; the Voice of the Great Spirit. Our future is our responsibility; it is in our hands. Happy Advent and Merry Christmas!

Blessings,
Charles+
Annual St. Luke’s Parish Evaluation 2017

It’s that time of year. We will collect your thoughts, feedback and good ideas from now until January 1st. The survey has these 7 questions:

1. What is the Rector doing now that you would like him to continue to do or do more of?
2. What is the Rector not doing that you would like him to begin doing?
3. What is the Rector doing that you wish he would stop doing?
4. What is the Vestry and/or Parish Staff doing that you would like them to continue doing or do more of?
5. What is the Vestry and/or Parish Staff not doing that you wish they would begin doing?
6. What is the Vestry and/or Parish Staff doing that you wish they would stop doing?
7. If someone asked you the main purpose or purposes for St. Luke's existence as a religious community, what would you say? What is most important to you that we accomplish as a parish community over the next one to five years?

And at the very end, before you click on “Done,” you will be asked for your name and email address: “Please enter your name and email address in the box below. Thank you!! (P.S. If you are unwilling to give us your name, that probably means you are ashamed of something you have written. Would you like to go back and say it a different way? You can you know. Only surveys with the respondent's name and contact info will be read and included in the final report.)

To fill it out, put this web address in your browser: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XT7YFPB

THANK YOU!!!

Winter Supplies of All Kinds Needed for the Homeless to Survive This Winter in SLC

It’s not just coats and warm socks….please donate things to help men, women and children survive on the streets of SLC during the winter months. We will collect items everyday between now and New Years. Please help us spread the word and please give generously. Someone’s health or life may depend on it this winter. Thank you!!!
HOPE ALLIANCE NEEDS 3-4 VOLUNTEERS IN JANUARY

Hope alliance will be going down to Moab on January 25 - 27th, 2018. They need 3 -4 more people to help at the Vision Clinic.

You will arrive in Moab on Thursday night to set up the clinic. There will also be a nice dinner with the clinic employees and possibly the Lions Club. On Friday morning the clinic will be open from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM. At that time participants may choose to leave the clinic however you are welcome to stay for dinner and explore Moab at night.

You will need to provide your own transportation and lodging. Scholarships are available from

To the People of St.Luke’s…..Congratulations!

Even though our Annual Celebration is more than a month away, we already have three nominees for Vestry to replace the three vestrymembers who will rotate off in February 2018. Those three nominees are Julie Fiscus, Bob Casey and Deb Walters.

Our Annual Celebration is scheduled for Sunday, Feb 4th at 11:45 AM. During the meeting, elections will take place for Vestry and Delegates for Diocesan Convention. Additional nominees, if there are any, for Vestry will be accepted at that time.

We are grateful for the faithful service of the three vestrypersons who will be leaving the Vestry: Bernadette Rothman, Susan Brewer and Sharon Christiansen. Thank you!!!
AUTUMN GOSPEL GROUP FOR WOMEN 50ish & UP: Autumn Gospel meets the fourth Saturday morning of each month from 10 to noon, in members' homes. We use books as a springboard to share and discuss our own spiritual journeys at this stage of our lives, we are starting to read "The Book of Joy" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Please join us for coffee, fellowship and a lively discussion! For more info please call Ann Deyo, 435-615-7478 or Judy Hanley, 435-649-7607.

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE: Newcomers will find info about our church and what to expect when they visit. www.stlukesparkcity.org In addition, there is information about our missions, finances and programs. You can view previous sermons through a link to You- Tube on your phone or home computer. Go to You Tube, St Luke’s Episcopal Church Park City, UT.

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY: Our book is "Crash Test Dummies: Surprising Lessons from the Book of Judges" by Talbott Davis. We meet at 6:30 in the library on Wednesdays. We will not be meeting Wed 12/13 or 12/20 but will do chapters 5 and 6 with our potluck on Tuesday 12/19. Please let me know if you can come and what you would like to bring. Please contact Mary Parsons at Mary.Parsons@hsc.utah.edu if you have questions.

WOMEN'S GATHERING: Meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30. Please bring a dish or drink to share.

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

CHRISTIAN CENTER DINNERS: There are changes in the schedule for Tuesday Night Dinners at the Christian Center. This year due to construction and Sundance, the Christian Center is modifying their normal dinners to incorporate some more activities and relationship building with the visiting seasonal workers. St Luke’s is scheduled for JANUARY 23 for our Seasonal Workers ministry. Our responsibility will be on a Tuesday night during Sundance. 1/23 - movie themed- Location TBA - No dinner, Just popcorn and snacks. Details and location will be forthcoming. Mark your calendars and I hope we can get some good St Luke’s participation as we have in the past! And as always, we are continuing to collect canned goods and non perishable food products to donate to the Christian Center Panty. Look for the little red wagon in the foyer!

CENTERING PRAYER: Meets Monday and Friday mornings at 10:00 AM in the Library. Please join us in this contemplative practice of Holy Silence.

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING THE CHALICE BEARER MINISTRY: We need additional help with the chalice bearer ministry at the church. We schedule 5 chalice bearers each Sunday to help with the wine, grape juice, and gluten free wafers. Brief training is done before your first Sunday. Please contact Mary Parsons to join our team!

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.

NEW WAY TO MAKE A DONATION: You can now do it directly from your mobile phone, computer or a tablet. Go to our new website: www.stlukesparkcity.org to make a one time donation or set up a recurring donation from a credit card or checking account.