St. Luke's Episcopal Church is a Christian community composed of free thinkers who include conservatives, moderates, liberals, skeptics, believers & atheists. All are welcome!

St. Luke's Weekly Magazine
February 23, 2020
Please take this home with you today.

Love God….Think for Yourself!

TO OUR GUESTS  -  WELCOME  -  THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE TODAY!
All spiritual seekers who are searching for an approach to faith that makes the most sense to them personally are welcome here!

God of Hope
The land is stripped of what was strong.
The long months of waiting has begun.
  I enter the vigil of emptiness.
Keep alive the memory of its harvested seeds
  while winter stretches for her frosted fingers
  around the corners of my watchful heart.
  I will enter the lengthy darkness
  with the strong arms of your love
  wrapped around my waiting heart.

From The Circle of Life, adapted.
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 Chaplains of St. Mark’s. And for all people within the world-wide Anglican Communion; pray for the Church of Central America.

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), Jennifer++++ (Strachan), Randy & Calvin++++ (brother and grandfather of Beckie Raemer), Jane++++ (friend of Leslie Wood) Julie++++ (niece of Don Wood) Gabrielle++++ (daughter of Bernadette Rothman), Fred++++ (brother in law of Linda Sears) Derrell++++ (Reeves), Melissa & Mike+++++ (daughter and son-in-law of the Jennings) Jayme++++ (sister of Felicia Lundie)

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY AROUND THE WORLD:
† Pray for our nation and the whole human community that we may find the wisdom to live in greater respect and harmony with each other and our planet home.
† For safety and recovery for all people effected by natural disasters throughout the world.
† For healing for every soul captured by fear, bigotry and resentment. May we all develop the ability to see the Sacred in those most different from ourselves.

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED……

PLEASE GIVE THANKS FOR.....
Our Nancy Conrow, our Flower and Decorating Leader, and her family.

For those having Birthdays this week:
Drew Bell and Ann Deyo today.

If your birthday does not appear on our list, please notify Beckie in the office so that she can add it.
The Scriptures

Last Sunday of Epiphany - February 23, 2020

COLLECT OF THE DAY: On this final Sunday of the Season of Epiphany, we pray that we might be transformed by the trials and struggles within life’s journey so that we may come to perceive the unity and goodness of all that is; with Jesus our Brother, Teacher and Lord. Amen.

FROM THE HEBREW TRADITION:
Our passage from the Hebrew tradition comes from the 24th chapter of the Book of Exodus. Please read with me by reading the parts in bold print.

The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” So Moses set out with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. To the elders he had said, “Wait here for us, until we come to you again; for Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a dispute may go to them.” Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights. Here ends the reading.

FROM THE HINDU TRADITION:
The following is taken from the Hindu “Song of the Lord,” in the Bhagavad-Gita. The Lord, the beautiful youth Krishna, is an incarnation of Vishnu, the Universal God; Prince Arjuna is his disciple and friend. Please read with me by reading the parts in bold print.

Arjuna bowed his head to the Lord, joined his palms in salutation, and addressed him: “In your body, Oh Lord, I behold all the gods and all the diverse hosts of being — the Lord Brahma, seated on the lotus all the patriarchs and celestial serpents… You are the Supreme Support of the universe; you are the undying Guardian of the Eternal Law; you are, in my belief, the Primal Being.” Here ends the reading.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN GOSPELS:

Priest: The Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew. (17:1-9)

People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.”

Priest: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.

OFFERTORY SENTENCES:

Priest: Now 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 you heart, soul and mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

[Hebrew & Christian scripture passages are reprinted with permission from the World Council of Churches. Passages and commentary from World Scriptures were edited by Andrew Wilson.]

Copy of the full text of the sermon are located on the Information Table in front of the sound booth [just in case your curiosity was piqued.] It will also be sent via the weekly St. Luke’s All Parish Email next Thursday. Please set your spam filter to allow emails from pastor@stlukespc.org Thanks! : )
Question: As I begin to write this message, I realize that it’s not at all clear in my mind what exactly I want to say, just that I need to say something. My name is Harry and I live close to the city of Bristol in the United Kingdom. I really hope that this message reaches you, as I’ve just watched a video that I stumbled upon after much reading and watching of other documentaries and religious talks, a series of lectures, which you delivered under the title: “Why Christianity as We Know it is Dying.” I feel the need to express my appreciation.

I must admit that I do not describe myself as a Christian, but I would say that one of the main reasons for this is the yawning gap between what I perceive as the positive, charitable, loving message of the New Testament and the all too common face of Christianity today which is today so often intolerant, woeful and almost unrecognizable as a religion of peace or of love. Too many times I’ve found myself pushed away from the Bible by people who preach messages of hate, of prejudice and of things, which simply don’t make any sense regardless of your standing in life. When I study the biblical text, I find a lot that I admire, a lot, which I feel people could learn from today and that people should consider, but can’t reconcile that with the need for mysterious or gory symbolism, the gold finery that dresses the altar and the clergy, to say nothing of the practice of immersion in water as a cure all for previous trespasses.

I was reading Matthew 6, where Jesus is quoted as saying “Do not worry.” I feel it is such a beautiful passage and yet where is this message in the Christian Church today? I’ve never heard it spoken of; it is absent. The Christianity I know simply doesn’t have a place for it, just as it doesn’t have a place for many things which Jesus was said to have taught. The Bible for me cannot be an entirely accurate, entirely literal account of past events nor can one reading of it be the only way to avoid eternal punishments when our lives come to an end.

That the Bible exists at all means that there were followers of Christ long before it was written and compiled as we know it today, so are we to believe, for example, that all the early Christians reside in hell, given that they couldn’t have possibly followed a book to the letter, which in their time didn’t exist? There must be room to interpret and discuss the Bible in the context in which it was written and to do away with much of the now obsolete traditions and rituals which still surround it.

I need to express my appreciation for your words, for your open-mindedness and also for your humor. I know you aren’t the only person who questions the faith and continues to work with the Bible as opposed to supporting fundamentalism or simply casting it aside altogether, but you are the first person I’ve seen speak (albeit via a computer screen), who has expressed views, which resonate with my own and make me feel more comfortable about reading the Bible again.
I can’t deny entirely my belief in God, but I also can’t identify with “the old Christianity,” which seems totally bent on control of those people who simply want some guidance in their lives. I’m not sure where my journey will take me from here, but know that this marks an important step. So I will now watch the second lecture from that same conference, “What a New Christianity for a New World Will Contain.” I wish you well and hope that my message will be received.

Answer:
Dear Harry,
Thank you for your letter. I am sorry that through your years of association with the Christian Church, you have received such a distorted and woeful view of the Bible and of Christianity itself, which you reveal in your letter. It is not the Bible’s fault that so many have made an idol out of the scriptures.

In the name of that idol, we have over the centuries opposed democracy in the name of the divine right of kings, become oppressively anti-Semitic, justified the Crusades as the necessary killing of “infidels,” most of whom were Muslims, burned “heretics” at the stake, enslaved people of color, forced women into being second class citizens’ oppressed homosexual people and justified many a war. If the “Word of God” results in that kind of behavior then I for one want no part in it.

A literally understood Bible is not benign, it is an absolute evil. The Bible itself can be a great asset to faith. It asserts the holiness of life. It portrays the love of God as infinite and universal. It calls us in the Holy Spirit to be all that we can be. It is not now and never has been the literal word or words of God. One does not want to blame God for some of the things included in the Bible like the execution of disobedient children, those who worship a false God and homosexual people.

I am glad you finally heard something different. I hope you will continue to explore the still developing Christian story. Perhaps you will help to develop that story. I will be doing a lecture tour of Scotland, Wales and England in October. I would love to meet you at one of the venues.

+John Shelby Spong

Art & Soul: Spiritual Exploration through Art
The second Saturday of each month. (March 14th)
9:30 AM to 12:30 PM
At the church in Silver Springs
For more info, contact Claudia+ at 435-513-0441
HOMILY: FOUR TRANSFIGURATION STORIES

Mythological - Symbolic Language: A Review

How symbols function
Aquinas and the Upanishad: “To know is to not know….”
Mystical literature is not scientific literature.

Four Mystical Stories - Four Myths:
From the Hebrew Tradition - Moses on Sinai.
From the Hindu Tradition - Arjuna on the battlefield.
From the Christian Tradition - Jesus with Peter, James and John
From the Buddhist Tradition - The Serpent King ministers to Bhagava.

Mystical Ideas Held in Common:
(1) The idea that our physical plane is not the only one.
   We can experience seeing with more than our eyes.
   A good concept? If it nurtures openness and curiosity.
   A dangerous concept? If used to attack those who see it differently.
   Speculation is not knowledge.

(2) The hero touches both the temporal and eternal planes…..stands as bridge
    between them.
   Remaining open to the More-Than-Physical willingness.
   Communion between human and Ultimacy.

(3) Expansion of Consciousness Through Risk and Suffering.
   A willingness to leave home and “climb.”
   We mature only by taking risks; by stepping outside our bubble.
   Moses receives new moral insight (the laws for his people).
   Arjuna perceives the cosmic unity of all things.
   Peter, James and John see the light within the Jewish prophetic tradition.
   The Serpent King gives himself in service to God and finds wisdom and happiness.

(4) Rejection of our narcissism and our attachment to that which is passing away.
   Each hero walks the path toward self-negation.
   The spiritual principle: Only by increasingly loving God (relinquishing our narcissism)
   do we come to perceive the love and joy at the center.
   This, of course, is an ideal….a “North star.”

Closing:
Let the Christian community no longer place itself above others, but in respect and openness seek to learn
from other faith traditions in addition to our own.
BISHOP HAYASHI WILL VISIT ST. LUKE’S NEXT SUNDAY

Our bishop will visit us next Sunday, March 1st. Here is the schedule for that day:

- 7:45 AM  Bishop preaches and celebrates Holy Eucharist
- 10:30 AM  Bishop preaches and celebrates Holy Eucharist
- 11:45 AM  Special Coffee Hour
catered by Flourish Bakery
- 12:30 PM  Bishop and Vestry meet in the Church Office

Please be sure to tell all your friends about this special day at St. Luke’s and let’s have a wonderful turn-out to welcome Bishop Hayashi.

A RED-BLUE BETTER ANGELS WORKSHOP - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29TH @ ST. LUKE'S:

Red-Blue Better Angels Workshops enable Republicans and Democrats to listen to and learn from one another in a safe and respectful environment. They are a tool in our battle against enmity and tribal divisiveness in our families and community.

If you have not yet participated in a Red-Blue Workshop, please sign up for the one taking place at St.Luke's on Saturday, February 29th  8:30 AM to Noon.

Register by emailing Charles+ at pastor@stlukespc.org

If you have already participated in a Workshop, please help recruit the 7 Reds and 7 Blues needed on the 29th. A "Red" is someone who tends to vote Republican most of the time while a "Blue" is someone who votes Democrat more often than not.

So far, we have 2 Blues and no Reds registered. So please mention the workshop to family and friends. Encourage them to register by emailing Charles+

Thanks for your help with and interest in the Better Angels Project!
CHECK OUR OUR WEBSITE:

You will find info about our church and what to expect when you visit.

www.stlukesparkcity.org.

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.

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 reading "Holy Envy: Finding God in the Faith of Others" by Barbara Brown Taylor. Please join us for coffee, fellowship and a lively discussion! For more info please call Nancy Conrow, nancy.conrow@gmail.com or 435-640-0556.

DONATIONS WELCOME

No energy to climb up to the attic to put away all your Christmas decorations? Or cleaning out closets to make room for all your Christmas gifts? Please consider donating your extra Christmas decorations or unwanted items to our Missions Table. All proceeds go to support local non-profits or St Luke's ministries. Just leave your items under the table (or on the table, if there is room) and we will make them available to support our mission fund. Thank you!

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.

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, harrietmstephens@gmail.com, (435) 655-1888.

WOMEN'S GATHERING:

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM. Bring an appetizer and a drink to share.

WEDNESDAY EVENING WOMEN'S BOOK STUDY:

We will be studying “Dust Bunnies in the Basket” by Fr. Thomas Schenk for lent Wednesdays March 4 through April 8th from 6:30-7:45 pm in the library. Please let me know if you can join us this time. All are welcome. For more information, please contact Mary Parsons at Mary.Parsons@hsc.utah.edu. We will not meet on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 26th.

CHRISTIAN CENTER FOOD PANTRY:

Please bring canned goods and non perishables to St Luke's as we will be making regular donations to the Christian Center's food pantry. Please donate only the kinds of foods you would want to feed your own family. Let's fill the red wagon each week in the foyer! PCHS senior, John Reko, will be picking up our donations and making regular deliveries to the Christian Center. Thanks for supporting this important ministry!

ROAD HOME

The Road Home is in need of volunteers, January and February, to serve the men lunch and dinners at the MRC, located in South Salt Lake. You can sign up individually, with friends or as a group. The time goes quickly and the men are so appreciative. Below is the link for the signup! https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e084dacaf2fa2f94-mens1 Thanks so much.

PLEASE JOIN ONE OF THE ST. LUKE'S DINNER GROUPS (a.k.a. Shepherding Groups)

There are numerous dinner groups at St. Luke’s that meet a few times each year for conversation and friendship building. If you would like to participate in one of our parish’s dinner groups, please contact Beckie in the Church Office at 435-649-4900 Ext. 12 or at beckie@stlukespc.org All are welcome!