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
October 6, 2019
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!

The apostles came up and said to the Master, “Give us more faith.” But the Master said, “You don’t need more faith. There is no ‘more’ or ‘less’ in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, ‘Go jump in the lake,’ and it would do it’..... When you’ve done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, ‘The work is done. What we were told to do, we did.’ From Luke 17, The Message

What does the Lord require of you but do justly, love, mercy and walk humbly with your God. From Hebrew Scripture
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 the chaplains of Lakeview Hospital. And for all people within the world-wide Anglican Communion; pray for the Church in Wales.

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 & Dave+++ (brothers of Beckie Raemer), Jane+++ & Joanne+ (friends of Leslie Wood) Urs+++ (brother in law of Stacey Reko) Burr+++ (grandson of Barbara Wine) Gabrielle+++ (daughter of Bernadette Rothman), Dick+++ (brother in law of Derrell & Teddi Reeves) Fred+++ (brother in law of Linda Sears) Derrell+++ (Reeves), Chris++ (son of Elizabeth Fetter) Perry & Sherry+ (Martin) Anthony+ (son in law of Beckie Raemer) Janet+ (van Hartesvelt)

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.

THOSE WHO HAVE DIED......

PLEASE GIVE THANKS FOR.....
Our Stewardship Leader, Karl Sears and his family.

For those having Birthdays this week:
Jim Pignatelli & Cheryl Popple on Monday; Jay Mick on Thursday and Anne Bransford on Friday.

If your birthday does not appear on our list, please notify Beckie in the office so that she can add it.
COLLECT OF THE DAY: The simplest definition of “faith” is “trust.” To have faith in someone is to trust them; to have confidence in them. We pray to the wisdom to cultivate our faith in the Love, Compassion and Wisdom that are eternal for such is to have confidence in God; with Jesus our Brother, Teacher and Lord. Amen.

FROM THE HEBREW TRADITION:
Our passage from the Hebrew tradition comes from the 1st chapter of the Book of Lamentations. It is a warning to every nation on earth: allow corruption, cruelty, greed and the lust for power to overtake you and you may lose both yourselves and your nation. Please read with me from the Hebrew tradition by reading the parts in bold print.

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they have become her enemies. Judah has gone into exile with suffering and hard servitude; she lives now among the nations, and finds no resting place; her pursuers have all overtaken her in the midst of her distress. The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals; all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter.

FROM THE JAIN TRADITION:
In who or what are we to trust to guide our day to day life and decisions? The three guiding principles of Jainism, the “Three Jewels,” are Right Belief, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Please read with me from the Jain tradition by reading the parts in bold print.

Direct your life toward the liberation of the soul. Live rightly by following the Three Jewels of ethics. Practice daily Right Faith by seeing, hearing and feeling things properly. Avoid preconceptions and superstitions that get in the way of seeing clearly. Practice daily the learning of Right Knowledge. Develop an accurate and sufficient knowledge of the real universe and have that knowledge with the right mental attitude. Practice daily Right Conduct. Live your life according to ethical rules, avoid doing harm to living things and free yourself from attachment and other impure attitudes and thoughts. A person who has right faith and right knowledge will be motivated and able to achieve right conduct. Here ends the reading.

FROM THE CHRISTIAN GOSPELS:
Luke 17:5-10
People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.
The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"
The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"
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.]
Money, Fear and Suffering
Proper 21c - September 29, 2019

I suspect today’s Gospel story is symbolic in nature. It’s a fictional story about our deepest fears and insecurities. I think it is also about the suffering of all those within the human community near and far. And it’s about our largely unconscious need to protect ourselves from the overwhelming enormity of both our fear and the quantity of suffering in the world. I don’t think this story is about demonizing everyone who has done well financially in this life. I don’t think it’s about making a lot of money (as long as it was made ethically). I don’t think it is about literal geography, that is, you go to a land called heaven if you have been kind and generous and you go to a literal medieval torture chamber if you have been selfish and apathetic. And I don’t think it is about divine threats.

Before we get into interpreting today’s Gospel story, first a bit of background. Jesus lived 2000 years ago in Roman occupied Judea. What was the economic system into which Jesus was born? What would he have seen and experienced in his own day that would have influenced his thinking about wealth and poverty? From Wikipedia: Professor Walter Scheidel at Stanford, an economic historian, speculates that within the Roman Empire “households in the top 1.5 percent of income distribution captured about 20 percent of income. Another 20 percent went to about 10 percent of the population who can be characterized as a non-elite middle. The remaining ‘vast majority’ produced more than half of the total income, but lived near subsistence.” This means that, in the time of Jesus, approximately 88% of the population lived on barely enough to survive through farming or related craft-work while about 1.5% lived in opulence and luxury. (Jesus is thought to have been a stone mason.)

Inequality was typical for all the societies in the ancient world. M.I. Finley (1999) writes: “The obvious difficulty with the city-state as a community, with its stress on mutual sharing of both burdens and benefits, was the hard fact that its members were unequal. The most troublesome inequality was not between town and country, not between classes, but simply between rich and poor.[…] The social and economic policy of the Roman Empire could well be summarized in a phrase: ‘the Roman system of inequality.’ Governing the entire Mediterranean world, Rome maintained its domination through judicial institutions and brutal force. The whole system was based heavily on the inequality of people, which was thought to be either natural or at least inevitable, in order to secure peace and stability in the society.[…] According to estimations 9 out of 10 persons lived close to the subsistence level or below it. There was no middle class. The state did not show much concern for the poor.” (“Poverty in the first-century Galilee” by Sakari Häkkinen) See the icon entitled, “Gemma Augustea.”

With this in mind, let’s look at this story Jesus told and speculate on its possible meanings. The story begins with a scene, an image of the basic problem. There is a guy in what would have been a large, beautiful, opulently decorated house with an enormous 6 car garage containing a row of exotic sports cars walking around in his Alessandro Démesure Alligator Leather shoes and his Brioni suit pretending that all is well in the world. He’s comfortable. He’s a member of the 1.5%. He is not suffering physically in any way.

Just outside his gated driveway; just 10 or 20 yards from the house, however, lies a man sick and dying. He is dying of poverty; of having too little to care adequately even for himself. It is the relationship between these two men that is the point of this story. It is this stark contrast we are being invited to contemplate. And it is the economic system with its well-practiced fear, distorted values and inhuman social assumptions that create a world in which some have far, far more than they will ever need while so many more suffer and die from poverty and scarcity that is being challenged here. We are told nothing about how and why one person became fabulously wealthy and another fell into poverty. This does not seem to matter. What matters is the economic gap, the financial and relational distance between these two human beings. They are 20 yards apart, but they may as well be on different planets. What seems to matter to Jesus is that one man is suffering starvation and illness while another has more than he will ever need.

We can think about this distance in three ways: with respect to each of us as individuals; with respect to the economic system we are maintaining; and, lastly, theologically. With respect to each of us as individuals, the story calls us to think about our generosity; our willingness to give of the abundance of what we have to end the suffering of others. This brings to the topics of fear and psychic insulation. The typical Anglo-American gives about 2% of his or her income to charity each year. That number is higher among people of color: about 10% among blacks and 5% among latinos. This means that most of the people who attend a typical Episcopal church feel like and tell themselves that they must hold onto 98% of their income in order to be secure and happy. If someone suggests that we could make it on 95% or on 90% or on 80% in order to live more generously, we are flooded with adrenaline. Many seem to have an automatic fear-based fight or flight response as if our lives were being threatened in that moment. We may be flooded with feelings of anger, defensiveness and resentment, but all of these are “secondary emotions.” They are not the real story. The real story is the emotional flood beneath our anger and resentment. The real story is our “primary emotion:” fear.

Beth Borody: “Every day we have the opportunity to be generous to those around us. There is a fear around giving – that if I give you something, then I am losing something, and losing something is exhausting, especially when I worked so hard to get something. We have been conditioned to look out for ourselves, to make sure I am taken care of, then my family, then my friends, then maybe one of those children on TV, or that homeless man I walk past on the way to work. We have been trained to be afraid of generosity because we have responsibilities and obligations, and [we think] if we give, then we make it harder for ourselves to be happy and we are putting ourselves at risk.” We are afraid because we cannot tell the future; we do not know what will happen in our lives next week or month or year or ten years from now and not knowing what is coming leaves us feeling a little out of control. In response, we tighten up inside and cling to our money telling ourselves that doing so will keep us safe; clinging to our money is a way to be in control of our destiny.

That’s where most of us live and it’s perfectly normal. I think we can trace much of our cautiousness back to our earliest experiences as a species as we worked to survive in a dangerous and often unpredictable world, but there are a couple questions today’s Gospel
As individuals, what do we have to do to be liberated from our fear of generosity and of not having enough? We must take small, gradual steps toward the practice of greater generosity. We have to consciously and intentionally confront the voice of fear within us and take small steps toward that which fear would lead us to avoid. We must choose to act in order to be free.

Secondly, today’s Gospel urges us to think about our economic system and its effect on the way we live together in our society and nation. Before we get into this too deeply, let’s first stop and recognize that our economic system, any economic system, is essential a set of rules based upon another set of assumptions. And who writes these rules? Usually it is the group of people with the most power in a nation. They have acquired this power either through election to high office, through appointment by powerful others or through their wealth. In ancient Rome and Judea, the economic system, that is, the rules governing how things would work with respect to the exchange of goods and services and the use and flow of money and credit were determined by the Emperor and those he empowered. Today in our own country, the rules are written by state and federal government with lots and lots of input and influence by business and the wealthy. Rules are written by people. They can be manipulated, slanted, corrupted, reformed and corrected by people.

I had a learning moment a few decades ago which I will never forget. I was invited, along with Bonnie and both of her sisters, to attend a meeting between Bonnie’s parents and their family attorney. Bonnie’s dad had climbed the corporate ladder during his working years and had accumulated about $2 million dollars before retiring. He wanted that money to be protected from taxation as much as possible. The attorney explained that he would protect the family’s money by creating a fictitious person. This fictitious person would have the name of Such and Such Trust. The $2 million would be “given” to this fictitious person who did not have to pay much in taxes. You see, it seems that decades ago, the Congress of the United States wrote a rule, a new law that allowed for the creation of these fictitious trust persons. Wealthy families could then put all their money in a trust and avoid paying taxes on it. I was 29 years old at the time and, having been raised by a mechanic and his stay-at-home wife, I had no idea that such “mechanisms” existed. I was completely naive about how the rules of the game could be written to benefit some people over all others and how those who could afford to hire lawyers could have exemptions and protections not available to those who could not. That was when I realized that the rich and powerful can and do write the rules of the economic system in ways that give them advantages. The playing field is not level….by design.

Remember we noted earlier that the primary point of today’s Gospel story is the enormous gap between the day to day reality of the rich man and that of the poor man dying of poverty on the street. Recall that “merit” seems of no interest to Jesus. He never implies that the rich man is rich because he is superior and the poor man is poor because he deserves to be poor. No, Jesus’ concern is the suffering of the man who does not have enough. He is concerned with the reality that there is enough for both men to live comfortably, but that “the enough,” (the wealth, the community’s resources) are not being shared in a way that keeps everyone healthy, safe and satisfied. He is concerned about the...
fact that the way the economic and social rules of the Roman Empire have been written seek to keep the wealthy and powerful wealthy and powerful while all others live day to day in a chronic state of lack and fear of starvation. **In other words, Jesus is calling for economic reform.** He is calling the Romans and Jewish elites (the 1.5%) to rewrite the rules of the economy in such a way that the fruits of that economy are more properly distributed among all; to write a set of rules that will allow everyone to have enough.

With respect to the United States, we are being asked to consider how the current rules of our economic system have been and continue to contribute to the growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. According to the Brookings Institute, “The top one percent alone holds more wealth than the middle class. They owned **29 percent**—or over $25 trillion—of household wealth in 2016, while the middle class owned just $18 trillion.” From the same article: “While the middle class has seen modest growth of **7 percent** in their net worth since 1995, it has not yet recovered to its previous peak in 2007. This tepid recovery is driven by declines in home-ownership and stock market participation since 2007—if you do not hold assets, you cannot benefit from recovery in asset prices. In contrast, the wealthy have seen robust growth since 1995 and have fully recovered from the Great Recession. Median net worth for the top 80th-99th percentiles has increased by **149 percent** since 1995. For the top one percent, it has grown by **187 percent** from a far higher base, making it difficult to even see the wealth of the bottom 99 percent on the following chart!” The rules need to be rewritten.

Finally, we can think of this story as a story about the nature of God. Jesus did not directly say much about the nature of God, but whatever else he may have thought about God, he certainly associated the meaning of God with the Call to practice compassion and empathy. The tragedy of the relationship between the rich man and Lazarus was that the rich man never thought about Lazarus; never allowed himself to acknowledge the presence of someone outside his gate; never looked upon Lazarus’ profound poverty and suffering and, therefore, never took time to put himself in the shoes of the one suffering; to feel what Lazarus was feeling; to experience the suffering Lazarus was continually experiencing. The absence of empathy usually translates into the absence of compassionate action. The rich man did nothing to help Lazarus because he was so insulated from the suffering around him that he felt nothing.

I think it is very easy for us to shut ourselves off from the pain being experienced by others. We cut ourselves off; we refuse to look; we numb out all feeling because we are afraid we cannot cope with the quantity of suffering out there. This is understandable and common…and we are called to do better. In such a case, the Call is to express our love and compassion for those in right front of us; to do what we can in the here and now. That is where we can make a start and, having started, we can grow from there.

Blessings!
Charles+
Blessing of the Animals - 10:30 - Sunday, October 13th

Our pets quickly become family to us. We love them and benefit from their presence in our lives in so many ways. Each year, in memory of the Creation Spirituality taught and lived by St. Francis, St. Luke's celebrates the lives of our animal companions with all of creation.

This year, **Creation Sunday will be Sunday, October 13th.** The 10:30 service will be a special liturgy involving thanksgiving and prayers for the whole of creation and an opportunity to bring your pet to receive a blessing from a member of the clergy.

This is a great opportunity to invite your friends and unchurched neighbors to St. Luke's.

Remember......all dogs must be on a leash, all cats and other critters should be properly caged. We will meet in the sanctuary. Everyone with a pet will sit on one side of the sanctuary while those without pets will be invited to sit on the other side.

Come and participate in a morning of joyful chaos! All are welcome!!!

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The memorial service for Judy Hanley will take place at the church on Saturday morning, October 12th at 10:00 AM. In lieu of flowers, the family encourages donations to Unshackled/Flourish Bakery and/or St. Luke’s Mission Fund.

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Onyx Cameo: Gemma Augustea (early 1st century)
CHECK OUT 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.

A COURSE IN MIRACLES:
Our ACIM Study Group meets every Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. in the St. Luke’s Library. A Course in Miracles is a curriculum focusing on forgiving grievances, leading to a change of perception (the Miracle), which leads to inner peace. Feel free to join us. Our next meeting will by September 9th. For more information, call or text Ann Fiery, 304-617-5714

SHOP AT SMITH’S FOOD & DRUG & FLOURISH BAKERY WILL RECEIVE A DONATION! To participate in the program, visit the Smith's Food and Drug web site, log into your account, click on INSPIRING DONATION PROGRAM, search for Flourish Bakery SLCC by name (or use HE559, the Bakery’s nonprofit number with Smith’s). Every time you use your rewards card or phone number related to your account, Smith's will donate .5% of your purchase to Flourish Bakery. It's that simple! Flourish appreciates your support and this inspiring program both help Flourish grow and prosper.

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.

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

A FREE COURSE ON ISLAM:
We meet each Wednesday at 4:00 in the Church Office area. 30 minute lecture followed by an hour of discussion. Come anytime…..you do not need to have attended earlier classes to benefit from the class this week. BYOB or your favorite beverage and snacks to share. For info, call Charles+ at 435-901-2131. All are welcome!!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN THE CHOIR?
St. Luke’s Church Choir is looking for new members! A love of singing is the only requirement, although the ability to read music would be helpful. Whether you are a soprano, alto, tenor or bass, you’ll be most welcome! We meet to practice at 9am each Sunday, plus Thursdays at 6pm if you can make it. If you are interested, please see Manuel after the service, or email him at pianospecialists@gmail.com.

ECUMENICAL BIBLE STUDY:
All women are invited to join an ecumenical Bible study led by Cheryl Popple at Park City Community Church on Thursday’s at 9:30 a.m. We will be using the book, Pleading, Cursing, Praising: Conversing with God through the Psalms by Irene Nowell. The book can be purchased through Amazon in new or used condition. If you have any problems finding the book, please contact Cheryl. 435-901-3978 cropple@comcast.net

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.

WOMEN’S GATHERING:
We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM.

TAI-CHI:
There will be tai chi this Wednesday starting at 5:10. Registration for new students is closed.

JOIN US IN CELEBRATING BARBARA WINE’S LAST SUNDAY WITH US:
Sunday, October 6th will be the last day that Barbara Wine will be at church before she moves. There will be a special Coffee Hour hosted by Suzanne Pretorius. Barbara has been such an active member of St. Luke’s and will be dearly missed.

WEDNESDAY EVENING WOMEN’S BOOK STUDY:
We are studying The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope For and Believe by Richard Rohr. We meet each Wednesday from 6:30-7:45 in the Library at the Church. Please order the book through your favorite book vendor. We will have discussion questions weekly. For more information, please contact Mary Parsons at 435-901-2131.

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. 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!

You can now make a donation 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. You can also text the word "Give" to 385-219-4489 to make a donation right from your phone.