

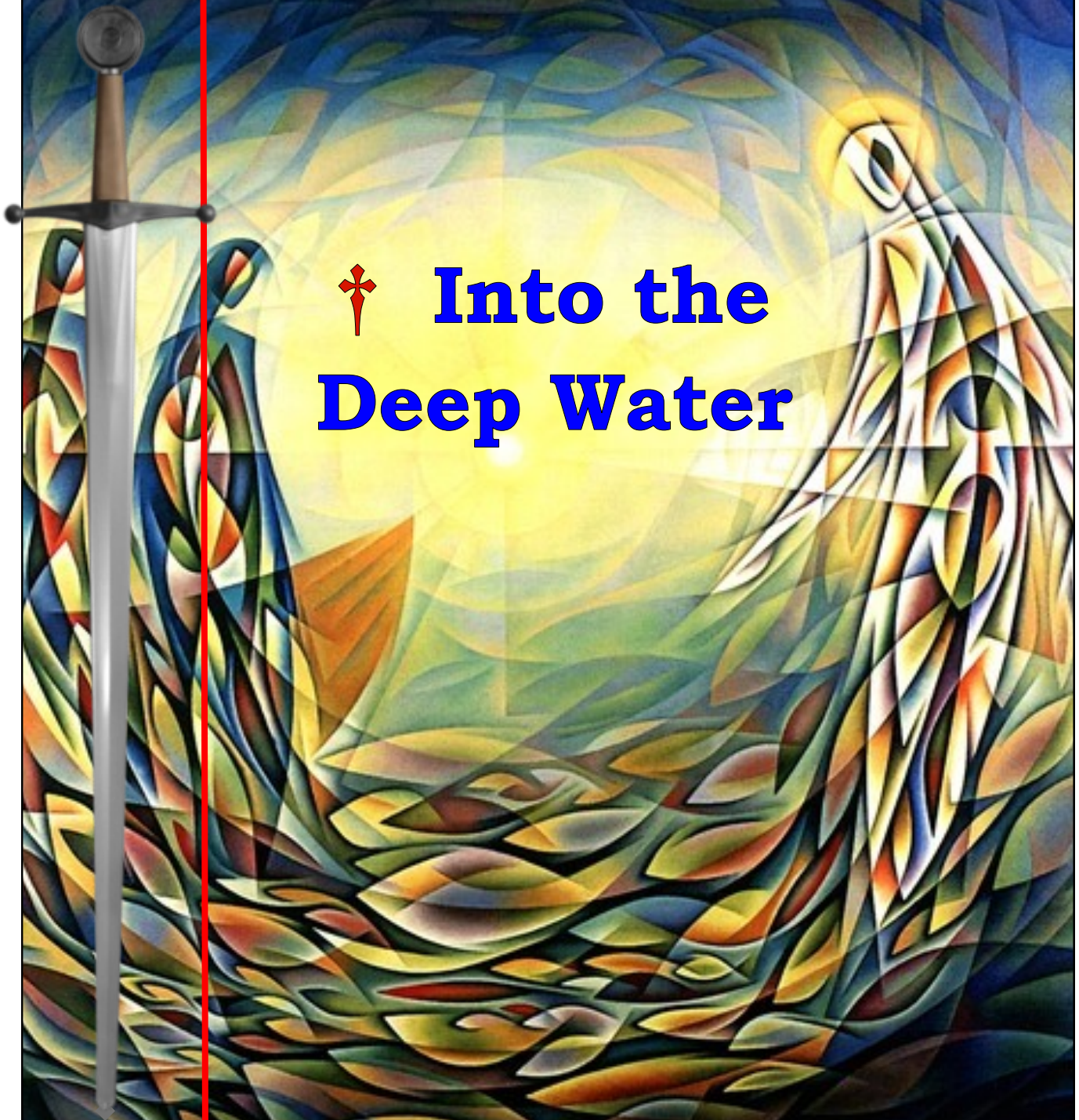
*Transforming
Lives Through
Jesus Christ*

SWORD POINTS

February 6, 2025

www.SaintPaulsBrookfield.com

(203) 775-9587



† **Into the
Deep Water**

† Long Haulin'

We often hear and/or use the word “call” as, for example, “They are called to ordained ministry, working with homeless shelters, political activism, or medical training, etc. In the lessons and the Gospel appointed for this week we are hearing the language that expresses a calling. The dictionary defines calling in this context as, 1: a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied by conviction of divine influence; and 2: the vocation or profession in which one customarily engages. We also use the word “commission” when one has been more formally launched into their given duty to a person or group of people; and 2: a group of people officially charged with a particular function.

One can decline a call and quit a job, but that divine spark, that still small voice within that nags will continue to make itself known whether or not you accept. When a sense of a divine call is allowed to bubble up, one may then be commissioned to engage with it throughout the entirety of one’s life, in many and various and surprising ways.

Isaiah engages us immediately with his vision that places him in the presence of the Divine. In the Lord’s presence, Isaiah declares that he is unworthy as a man of unclean lips. The description that Isaiah then gives when the seraph touches his mouth with a burning coal makes us want to put ice on our lips! Seraph is the highest order of angels and that informs us that this encounter is clearly significant. The angel tells him that now his guilt has been sent away and his sin is blotted out. God speaks asking “Whom shall I send?” Isaiah answers, “Here I am, send me.” He then clearly accepts the commission of the Lord who tells him all that he must do. When Isaiah asks, How long, O Lord?, the answer is stark. It is a very long time indeed.

Paul’s calling was abrupt and startling as we know in Acts 9 and it is Ananias who is then called to commission him on behalf of Jesus. In this letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminds us of his own feelings of unworthiness when he tells us that Jesus also appeared to him as he had to many others. Paul, feeling especially unfit as a persecutor in his former life, now speaks of his sense and earnestness of mission in his words, “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain...I worked harder...though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”

And then we come to our favorite fishermen. Jesus calls them to go to the deeper water with their nets. You can almost hear the sigh of Simon, who, weary after a full night of fishing with no yield, says, “...if you say so, I will...” Simon has perhaps felt the call and although he is still uncertain, he follows an instinct and does as Jesus says. In a parallel to Isaiah and Paul, Simon stunned by the overly abundant haul of fish, and realizing the reason, spontaneously tells Jesus to go away from him because he is a sinful man. The

(Continued on page 3)



(Continued from page 2)

Long Haulin'

initial commissioning for Simon who becomes Peter, and for all those with him comes with the words of Jesus, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." And they all accepted by leaving everything to follow him and embark on an unexpected new life. They are given the Great Commission by Jesus after the Resurrection (Matthew 28:19-20) which fills the rest of their lives.



Isaiah, Paul, Peter and those who became disciples/Apostles, were in it to win it for God, for Jesus, for the abundant catch of people, for whatever came to them and at them for the length of their lives. They acknowledged, accepted, and obeyed the call. We, too, are what we are by God's creation. Now all we have to do is acknowledge that we are each called by God to discern and accept the commission through the words of the Gospel, then work it every day so that God's grace within us is never in vain. The Good News in Christ is that we are in this together, setting sail in smooth seas and rough, in the shallows and in the deep, with the breath of God always filling our sails.

† *This Week at St. Paul's*

- Thu, Feb 6 - 9:30 am - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
- 7:30 pm - Property Committee, Guild Room
- 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- Sat, Feb 8 - 7:30 am - [John 21:12](#) Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford
- 8:00 am - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall
- Sun, Feb 9 **The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**
- 8:00 am - **Traditional Holy Communion** ([YouTube Live](#))
- 9:15 am - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room
- 10:30 am - Sunday School, Classrooms
- 10:30 am - **Contemporary Holy Communion** ([YouTube Live](#))
- 11:45 am - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room
- 6:00 pm - Super Bowl Party, Guild Room
- Mon, Feb 10 - 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study, Crocker Hall ([YouTube Live](#))
- Tues, Feb 11 - 9:30 am - Ladies Tuesday AM Bible Study, Guild Room
- 7:00 pm - Boy Scout Troop #5
- Wed, Feb 12 - 10:00 am - **Healing & Holy Communion** ([YouTube Live](#))
- 7:00 pm - Ladies Evening Zoom Bible Study ([Zoom](#))
- 7:30 pm - Vestry Meeting, Guild Room
- Thu, Feb 13 - 9:30 am - Iron Sharpens Iron Discussion Group, Guild Room
- 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- Sat, Feb 15 - 7:30 am - [John 21:12](#) Group, Theo's Downtown Diner, New Milford
- 8:00 am - Men's Prayer Breakfast, Crocker Hall
- 10:00 am - St. Paul's Quilters, Crocker Hall
- Sun, Feb 16 **The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany**
- 8:00 am - **Traditional Holy Communion** ([YouTube Live](#))
- 9:15 am - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room
- 10:30 am - Sunday School, Classrooms
- 10:30 am - **Contemporary Holy Communion** ([YouTube Live](#))
- 11:45 am - Sermon Talkback, Guild Room
- 7:00 pm - Recovery & Self-Reflection, Guild Room ([Zoom](#))

Check our website daily for schedule updates.

What's Happening This Week



The Priest-in-Charge **WEEKLY**

Fr. Nate, our Priest-in-Charge is distributing a weekly e-mail to communicate things directly from his desk to yours. **Connection, communication, and care** are among the highest priorities of his new ministry, and he wants to make sure there are regular touch points between us. If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **already receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, you don't have to do anything - you're already included on the list! If you would like to receive "*The Priest-in-Charge Weekly*" and **DO NOT receive weekly e-mails from St. Paul's**, or if you want to opt out, write Fr. Nate at priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com and let him know.



What exactly is a Sermon Talkback? Well, in his landmark book on preaching, *The Witness of Preaching*, Thomas G. Long argues that - in being tasked to preach a "sermon" - the minister has been commissioned and set apart, by the church, to study the sources of our faith, on behalf of the church, and discern what God is saying to his people.

Part of what that means is that the preaching "event" is meant to be a community event. Sermons are not meant to be one directional communication from the mind of God, through the mind of the preacher, to the mind of the congregation. Preaching is something the clergy do not only for God's people, but with God's people, in an ongoing conversation.

Inspired by this concept, my plan is to do regular "Sermon Talkback" series at least a couple times a year. During these series, you'll be invited to gather for a roundtable discussion of the sermon from that day. This will be a time when you can ask questions, give feedback, and in general, help us all deepen the conversation that the sermon has only just begun.

I am excited to learn more from you, and growing in life with God together. Sermon Talkbacks will be offered after both the 8 and 10:30 am services each week thru March 2nd. Nate+





Upcoming Preachers



Sunday February 9th: Greg Garrett is the author of thirty books, including the recent *Rowan Williams and Greg Garrett: In Conversation*, the novel *Bastille Day*, and *The Gospel according to James Baldwin*. He is the Carole McDaniel Hanks Professor of Literature and Culture at Baylor University and serves as Canon Theologian to the American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Paris. He speaks, teaches, and preaches across the US and Europe, with recent appearances at the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, BBC Radio, Trinity Church Wall Street, Washington National Cathedral, and Gladstone's Library in Wales. He lives in Austin, Texas with his wife Jeanie and their daughters Lily and Sophia.

Sunday February 23rd: The Rev. Dr. Todd Brewer is the managing editor of Mockingbird Magazine (mbird.com). He graduated from Durham University with a Ph.D. in New Testament Studies. His thesis, *Hermeneutics and Early Christian Gospels*, compared narrative and non-narrative interpretive approaches to the Jesus tradition through a study of the Gospels of Thomas, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It will be published by Mohr Siebeck in early 2025. He also co-edited the [*Cambridge Companion to the Gospels, 2nd edition*](#).



When Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him, what did he see at the water's edge? [Luke 5:2](#)

Isaiah 6:8 ends with the Lord saying: "Who shall I send, and who will go for us?" As those wishing to be faithful stewards, will our response be the same as the one in the lesson - "Here am I, send me."?



† Being a Disciple

[Isaiah 6:1-13](#); [Psalm 138](#); [1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#); [Luke 5:1-11](#)

To be a disciple one needs two things - a master and a teachable spirit. If the meaning of *disciple* is *learner*, then a disciple must be dependent upon a teacher. But at the same time, to be a learner, the disciple must be willing to be taught. To be in such a relationship, the disciple needs to be willing, humble, and dedicated. St. Peter demonstrates all three elements in the story of Jesus' calling of the first disciples.

In St. Luke's narrative, Jesus had been healing and teaching in Capernaum and had healed St. Peter's mother-in-law, so there already was some evidence of his authority and power. What he asked the fishermen to do made little sense. The professionals had done what was the right practice of fishermen of the region and had utterly failed. Indeed, they were probably muttering over their nets when Jesus arrived. How absurd was it for a carpenter and itinerant teacher to direct them to fish at the wrong time of day and where they had just proven there were no fish? Despite that, St. Peter was willing to do what Jesus directed.

When the catch turned out to be almost too much for the fishermen to handle, they, in the person of St. Peter, illustrated the second necessary attitude of a disciple: humility. In the face of the Master, disciples must acknowledge their true condition and their absolute need. Only when we recognize our total dependence on God, and we contribute nothing of our own to his absolute gift of grace, are we in the proper posture to be taught the ways of God and prepared to be proper vessels of his blessings to others. Without humility, one cannot serve.

When Jesus calls the fishermen to follow him, they leave everything to do so. Although

on the surface the dedication of the disciples appears to entail a change of vocation, the take-home message is that being a disciple requires a radical change in our priorities. God's plan for disciples is for them to announce the good news of salvation.

Ultimately, the really good news is that Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, not only suffered but actually died. The crucifixion, death, and burial of Jesus are historical facts and testify to God's love for us. From the salvation perspective, there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22). From the physiological perspective, there can be no resurrection without a death - anything else is merely a resuscitation. The killing, the dying, and the burying are all necessary for Easter morning to have any lasting meaning. It would not be particularly remarkable to meet and speak with a person who had been saved from drowning and resuscitated by CPR. Indeed, that would be the expected result, rather than one that would serve as a life-transforming event. It would also be the continuation of the pre-resuscitated life and not a transformed and new form of life.

But Jesus did die - he was buried and remained dead and buried until the third day. Only then was he raised from the dead, an event that was both prophesied in Scripture and attested to by 500 human eyewitnesses. And they were all changed dramatically. The scared and timid apostles became bold witnesses, even to martyrdom, of the message of Jesus Christ. St. Paul, himself a persecutor of the Church, became perhaps its greatest advocate and missionary. Because Jesus really died, death is no longer an end for believers, but is now a beginning. Since all are destined to one day die, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the universal good news of hope for humankind. For his disciples, it is to be the message of our lives.

Look It Up: Isaiah 6:5-8

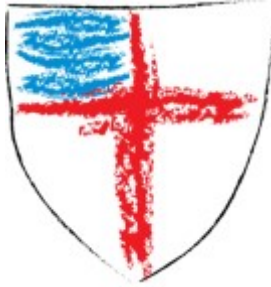
Think About It:

"[D]iscipleship never consists in this or that specific action; it is always a decision, either for or against Jesus Christ" (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*).

- by Rev. Chuck Alley, *The Living Church*, 2025



*Tu Es Petrus | Fr.
Lawrence Lew, O.P./
Flickr*



† Ih-pis-kuh-puh I / Dik-shuh-ner-ee

(Episcopal Dictionary)



† Fair Linen

/ fair - lin-uhn /

Fair Linen - A long white cloth that covers the top of the altar. It typically hangs down some distance over the ends of the altar. The Book of Common Prayer (BCP) directs that at the eucharist the altar "is spread with a clean white cloth during the celebration" (p. 406). Historically, in the early church, a small table was brought out and put in place for the liturgy of the table. A white cloth was spread on the table at this time. As late as the eighth century, a white cloth was spread upon the holy table during the eucharist by deacons after the liturgy of the word. It is appropriate for the altar cloth to be spread on the altar before the service or at the offertory. It may be embroidered with five crosses, one on each corner and one in the center. References to the fair linen date from the 1552 BCP.



† Transforming Stewardship

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' 'Here I am,' I said, 'send me!'" (ISAIAH 6:8)

Every day, in little ways and in big ways, God asks, "Whom shall I send?" Whether it is someone to take on a new ministry, to give a friendly smile to a stranger or say a word of encouragement to a friend, God constantly provides opportunities to help someone in need. The next time you hear God calling, have the courage to walk through the door and say "Here I am, Lord."

† An Ember Touched My Lips

In 742 BC--the year King Uzziah died--a young man has a remarkable dream. Isaiah envisions the inside of the Temple in Jerusalem. God appears to him in an overwhelming display of majesty. Around Him are angels that look like fiery, winged beings. Isaiah is struck with fear over the sight. He recognizes his own unworthiness and the impurity of his speech.

Then one of the angels takes a piece of charcoal from a brazier used for burning incense. The angel touches Isaiah's lips. It symbolically cleanses Isaiah so that he may speak for God. The Lord then commissions Isaiah to serve as a prophet.

Priests and deacons still recall this image before they read the Gospel at Mass. They say, "Lord, wash my lips that I may fittingly proclaim your holy Gospel." Every lector or reader should have the same reverence for God's word.



Take note

by Kirsten Peterson, Organist & Choirmaster

Greetings!

This Sunday, we will hear the passage from Luke where Jesus instructs Simon and the other fishermen to put their nets out for a catch. Of course, the fishermen had had no luck prior to this, but Simon says, "Okay...we'll try again." And wouldn't you know it! Their nets came back full! When the stunned men got back to shore, Jesus tells them "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." The story of Jesus calling his disciples is a beautiful one, and I especially like the concept of fishing for people. And yes, there's a hymn for that!

Sylvia G. Dunstan (1955-1993), a minister in the United Church of Canada, wrote a fantastic hymn in 1984 that was inspired by an essay entitled "Fishing: A Metaphor for Ministry." The hymn is entitled "You Walk Along Our Shoreline" and her words make a perfect framework for our hearing of the Gospel:



Sylvia Dunstan



Christ Calling the Apostles Peter and Andrew by Duccio de Buoninsegna (1308-1311)

*You walk along our shoreline where land meets unknown sea.
We hear your voice of power, "Now come and follow me.
And if you still will follow through storm and wave and shoal,
Then I will make you fishers, but of the human soul."*

*You call us, Christ, to gather the people of the earth.
We cannot fish for only those lives we think have worth.
We spread your net of gospel across the water's face,
Our boat a common shelter for all found by your grace.*

*We cast our net, O Jesus; we seek your promised reign;
We work for love and justice; we learn to hope through pain.
You call on us to gather God's daughters and God's sons,
To let your judgment heal us so that all may be one.*

Dunstan died at the age of 38 from liver cancer, but her legacy of hymnody lives on in two collections of her texts: *In Search of Hope and Grace* and *Where the Promise Shines*. Many contemporary composers have set her

words.

I first came upon this hymn as it appeared in the New Century Hymnal (associated with United Church of Christ). The words were set to the Irish folk tune *Salley Gardens*, which makes for a lovely pairing. We will be singing it, however, to another well-known hymn tune, *Munich*. This tune is one that we typically use with the hymn "O Christ, The Word Incarnate." It is believed that the melody dates back

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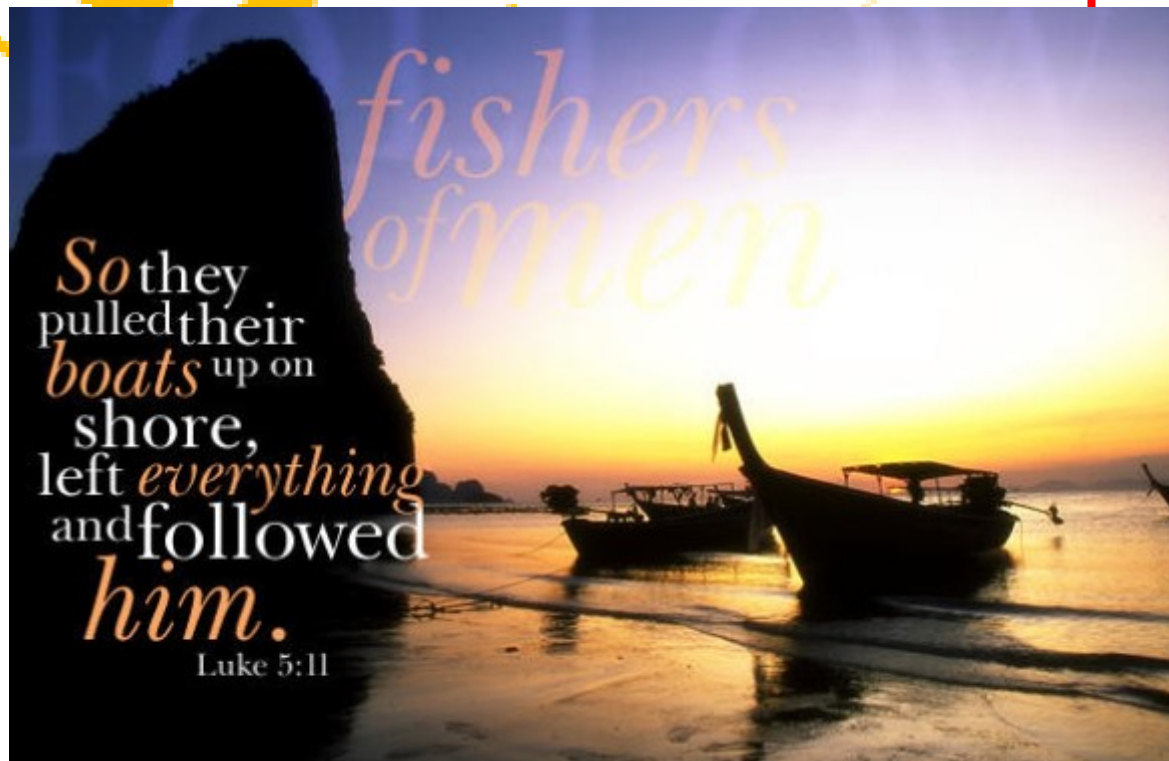
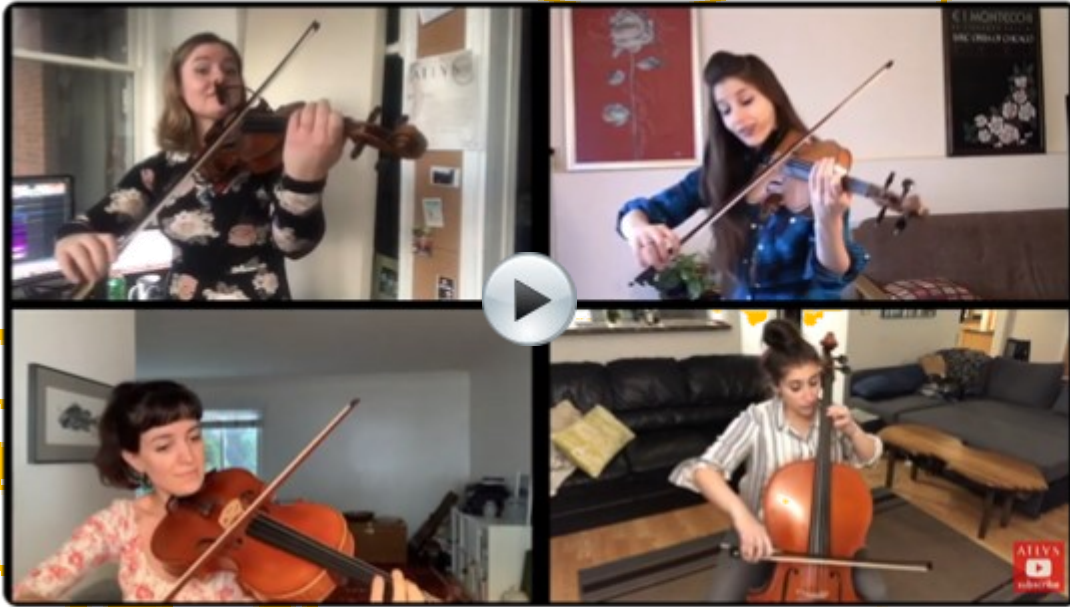
Choir Notes

to 16th century Germany, but it's popularity was sealed when Felix Mendelssohn used it in his oratorio, *Elijah*. At any rate, I could not find text and tune together, but you can enjoy this lovely version for string quartet!

Peace and blessings,
Kirsten



Felix Mendelssohn





† Helping Our Neighbors

Here is an update about St. Paul's ongoing food-related ministries serving our community:

Drive Thru Food Collection - occurs every other Wednesday from 11 am - noon. We have now held 126 food drives since April 22, 2020! Last time our trucks delivered to Bethel Community Food Pantry and the Jericho Partnership in Danbury.

Our next food collection, will be Thursday, February 6th and will support the Victory Christian Center, Danbury, and the Jericho Food Pantry in Danbury.

Thank you all for your ongoing generosity and to the many volunteers who have helped to load the trucks and deliver food to the pantries.

Next Drive-Thru Food Collection Thursday February 6th



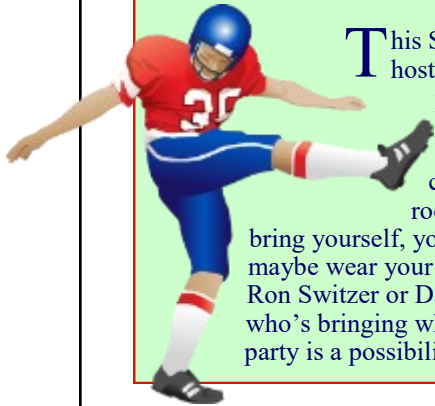
*Help us,
Help others!*

11 am to Noon

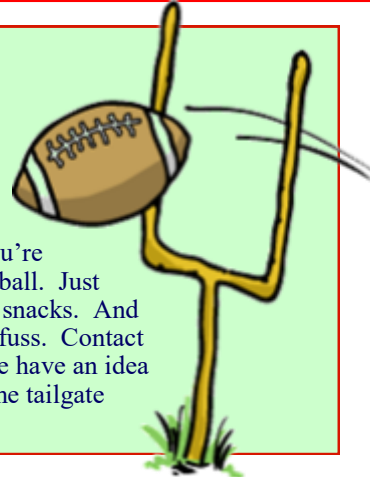
If you would like to request Altar flowers for a particular Sunday in Memory of a friend or loved one, please fill out the flower chart or envelope located in the back of the church or send an email request to dszen@yahoo.com or contact David Szen.



† **“It’s Good!”**



This Sunday February 9th we will be hosting our 10th annual Super Bowl party! We’re setting up our big screen in the Guild Room. And you’re invited. Men, women, children. It doesn’t matter who you’re rooting for. Or even if you like football. Just bring yourself, your favorite appetizer, beverage or snacks. And maybe wear your favorite team shirt. No cost. No fuss. Contact Ron Switzer or Dave Szen if you’re interested so we have an idea who’s bringing what. Weather permitting, a pregame tailgate party is a possibility!



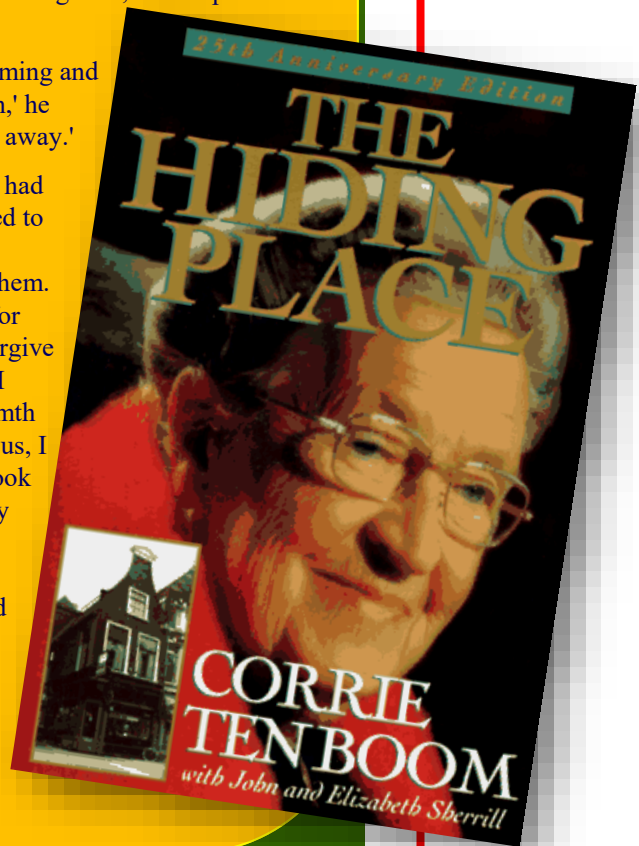
† **Weekly Thought for Reflection**

- from Fr. John Morrison

"It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former SS man who stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of all our actual jailors that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there - the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanchd face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein,' he said. 'To think that, as you say, he has washed my sins away.'

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive, and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand, but I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness. As I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness, any more than on our goodness, that the world's healing hinges, but on his. When he tells us to love our enemies, he gives, along with the command, the love itself."



Corrie ten Boom, *The Hiding Place*

The Wonderful Sounds of SONG and MUSIC

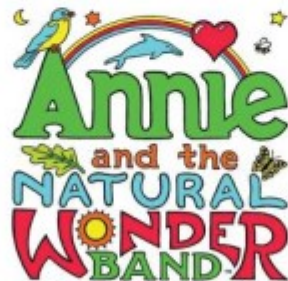
FREE REFRESHMENTS



Share with us a Joyous Saturday
Feb. 8th. at 2:00 pm

Snow Date, Feb 22nd.

Children of all ages...from 3 to 100 years



Christ Church
4 Wellers Bridge Road, Roxbury CT

† *Art in the Christian Tradition*

Balloons

by Jinho Kee

painted in 2020, oil on canvas

© Jinho Kee / Saatchi Art

What does a picture of balloons have to do with our readings? Sunday's gospel reading reveals the power and generosity of God and identifies the uniqueness of the disciples. It reminds of the following story:



A professor gave a balloon to every student, who had to inflate it, write their name on it and throw it in the hallway. The professor then mixed all the hundreds of balloons. The students were given five minutes to find their own balloon. Despite a hectic search, no one found their balloon. At that point the professor told the students to take the first balloon that they found and hand it to the person whose name was written on it. Within five minutes everyone had their own balloon.

The professor said to the students: "These balloons are like happiness. We will never find it if everyone is looking for their own. But if we care about other people's happiness....we'll find ours too.

That is why Jesus called the twelve disciples: to work together as groups and in teams to be able to achieve so much more than each of us can individually.

This painting is by South Korean artist Jinho Kee. For years he has painted balloons. He views balloons as a metaphor for life: at first loose and formless, then stretched and tense when inflated, displaying magnificent colors; before eventually relaxing again, wrinkling and, one day, inevitably popping. Yet, it is the vibrancy of their colors that lifts our spirits, reminding us to embrace each day as a new adventure. They symbolize our shared journey, each of us a single unique balloon among many, but when we come together, we can soar to far greater heights.

Israel - Walking in Jesus' Footsteps

✠ The Jesus Boat ✠

In desert country life, a drought is as much a part of living as dying. The desert is a harsh place, especially in biblical times when those in Galilee depended on fishing to survive. A drought almost always brought bad times, even death.

Late in January 1986, during one such drought, between the ancient harbors of Gennesar and Magdala, local residents (ironically fisherman brothers like Peter and Andrew) made the



chance discovery of a boat's oval outline in the muddy lake bed.

Word spread like wildfire. In less than two weeks, local newspapers were announcing discovery of "the Jesus Boat!"

Archaeologists, called to examine the still unexcavated vessel, announced it was the first ancient ship ever found in the Sea of Galilee. They suggested that it was built and used between 100 BC and 100 AD – the time of Jesus of Nazareth!

Marathon, round-the-clock

excavations ensued, racing against both the now-rising waters of the Sea of Galilee and treasure seekers. The archaeologists even invented new techniques of excavation and preservation as they went along. Just before the site was flooded, the almost completely intact hull was fully excavated, encased in polyurethane, and floated to shore for further study and conservation.

The boat is almost 27 feet long, just shy of eight feet wide, and roughly four and a half feet high. It was probably one of the Sea of Galilee's largest class of ships. Fore and aft sections were most likely decked and it had a mast, meaning it could be both sailed and rowed depending on the weather.

Evidence of repeated repairs suggests the boat had a long life. Studies of ancient ships suggest this vessel had a crew of five (four rowers and a helmsman). The ancient Jewish historian Josephus Flavius referred to such ships holding 15 people. Skeletal remains from Galilee during this period indicate males averaged five feet, five inches tall, and weighed

(Continued on page 15)

Walk in Jesus' Footsteps

Our next trip to the Holy Land is scheduled for July of 2025!

We leave on July 1st for a two-week journey into our faith.

This trip includes the model of the ancient city and will cover all the basics and have many optional add-ons.

Brochures are available from Pam or David Szen.

(Continued from page 14)

The Jesus Boat

roughly 140 pounds. Fifteen such men could easily fit into this vessel. So that begs the question: did Jesus and His 12 men sail together in this boat?

The Galilee boat dates to the general time of Jesus' ministry. It was the type used by Jesus and the Twelve, and large enough to hold 13 men. It could have been in use at the same time He sailed the sea here, but Jesus cannot be connected to this particular boat with any degree of certainty. Still, it does help us visualize daily life in Galilee, daily life as Jesus knew it.

Today, you can see the Jesus Boat at the Yigal Alon Center (operated by the Kibbutz Ginosar), on the western shore of the Sea of Tiberius. It's something you should not miss. You'll be treated to a fascinating video about the boat's history, discovery, and journey to the museum. The gift shop has some amazing items related to the boat's history as well. If you exit at the rear of the museum, you'll be greeted by the Sea of Galilee. Use this once in a lifetime opportunity to take a boat ride on the same lake that Peter and his friends fished, and where the Jesus Boat sailed so many years ago.

It's all rather surreal when it sinks in that these men really lived here, droughts and storms and all, and used a boat just like the Jesus Boat. Perhaps the other amazing part of this story is how a drought gave life, maybe for the first time ever, to a kibbutz and their two fishermen, Moshe and Yuval. No doubt Peter and Andrew would approve!



† As Long as the Story Is Told

[1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)



Does Paul seem to be a bit defensive of his ministry in this letter? He claims to be the least, but believes himself to be the best. And while he gives credit to the grace of God working in him, that implies the other apostles have less of whatever makes Paul more. But then he is a man of passion and contends for the faith with the same zeal with which he persecuted it. The Corinthians are no strangers to passion either. Speaking in the tongues of humans and angels they have divided the body of Christ and given themselves over to spiritual excess or perverted the freedom of the Gospel in lustful pursuits.

Confident in their own wisdom they neither respect nor appreciate Paul or each other for that matter and are not afraid to say so. How is it that a faith that celebrates the ultimate act of sacrificial love, sacrifices love so quickly? It is human pride and selfishness that turns good news into bad and resurrects what Christ was raised to destroy. But even when church conflict is so commonplace as to be the norm and we think it a miracle when the church actually is what it claims to be the story keeps getting told. Jesus died for sin, was buried and was raised on the third day. You can check the scriptures if you like. As long as the story is told the church has reason to hope that the grace of God was not given in vain.

† Ladies Tuesday Morning Bible Study

The Women's Tuesday morning Bible Study meets every Tuesday from 9:30 to 11 am in the Guild Room. They are currently studying Proverbs to discuss and uncover the foundation of wisdom, mark out the paths that make us wise, and points us to the ultimate source of all true understanding: Jesus Christ

All are welcome to join in person or through Zoom. The link is available on our website, or contact Mary Beth Durkin durkin.mb@gmail.com for the Zoom link and further information.



† Wednesday Service Growing in Popularity

Our mid-week Wednesday morning 10 am Holy Eucharist with healing prayer has been growing consistently. With live music and a brief homily, this service is just what you need to sustain you through the week. Come join us and check it out or watch on YouTube Live.



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

Persian

Country: Iran | Population: 42,823,000 | Language: Persian | Main Religion: Islam | Evangelical: 1.60%

Persians have a rich history of kings, kingdoms, poetry, art, and advances in math and science. Their last king (or shah) was overthrown by Islamic revolutionists in 1979. Iran then became an Islamic nation ruled by the Ayatollah, or religious leader. Persians are very devoted to family, gathering together almost every day. Iranian law dictates that women cover their heads and wear special dress in public. Most women abide by these rules since penalties can be very severe. It is estimated that less than 10 percent of Persians strictly follow the practice of Islam. Pray for evangelization efforts since witnessing is illegal and conversion carries severe punishments. Pray for religious freedom in the country so churches could meet legally and openly.



† Saints of God

Thursday, February 6th

The Martyrs of Japan,

King and Martyr, January 30, 1649

The Christian faith was first introduced into Japan in the sixteenth century by Jesuit and later by Franciscan missionaries. By the end of that century, there were probably about 300,000 baptized believers in Japan.

Unfortunately, this promising beginning met reverses, brought about by rivalries between different groups of missionaries and political intrigues by the Spanish and Portuguese governments, along with power politics among factions in the Japanese government itself. The result was a suppression of Christians.

The first victims were six Franciscan friars and twenty of their converts, who were executed at Nagasaki on 5 February 1597. (They were tied to crosses, the crosses were raised to an upright position, and they were then quickly stabbed to death by a soldier with a javelin.)

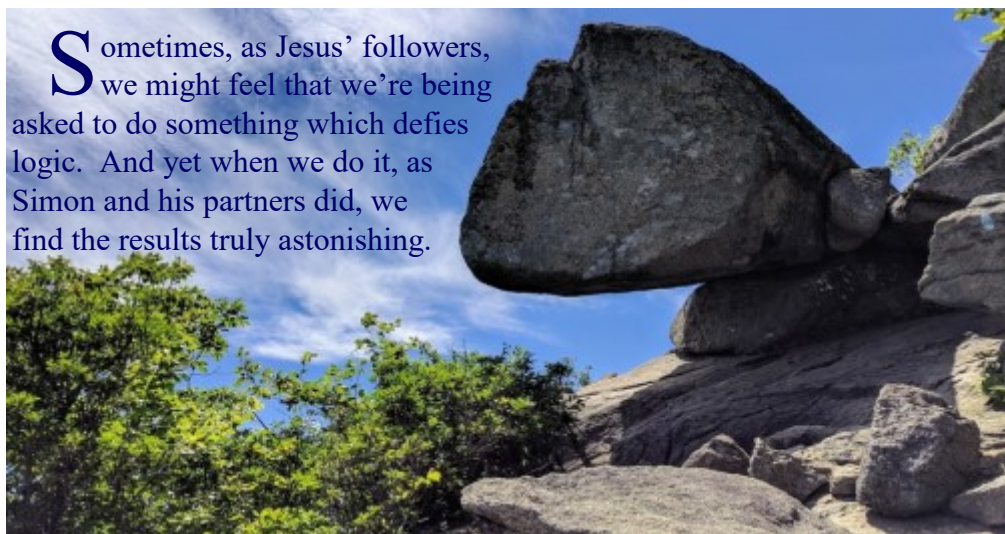
After a short interval of relative tolerance, many other Christians were arrested, imprisoned for life, or tortured and killed; and the Church was totally driven underground by 1630.

However, when Japan was re-opened to Western contacts 250 years later, it was found that a community of Japanese Christians had survived underground, without clergy, without Scriptures, with only very sketchy instructions in the doctrines of the faith, but with a firm commitment to Jesus as Lord. (I remind you that 250 years is a long time - 250 years ago Americans were loyal subjects of King George II.)

written by James Kiefer



Sometimes, as Jesus' followers, we might feel that we're being asked to do something which defies logic. And yet when we do it, as Simon and his partners did, we find the results truly astonishing.



✠ Join the Chorus

Psalm 138

This is a psalm with high hopes. All the kings of the earth will sing of the ways of the Lord, despite the lyrics “he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away” for kings, or queens for that matter, are not generally addressed as “your lowliness.” But they have been humbled by the words of God’s mouth and so they join the psalmist in praising God and even the little “g” gods have to listen to the song. In

the *Large Catechism* Martin

Luther defines a god as

anything or anyone “upon which you set your heart and put your trust.” The pantheon of little “g” gods, wealth or ability or intellect or religious pedigree, etc. would prefer to stop up their ears and ours to the sound of the song of praise to the

big “G” God. In times of

trouble when souls grow weak they sing their own song offering comfort or escape in the small “g” god

of indulgence or denial. But little “g” gods always disappoint for only a big “G” God can save us from ourselves and fulfill the high hopes of the psalm. Humbled by the words of God’s mouth who hears our cry for help, preserved and delivered in the day of distress, God’s purpose is fulfilled for us. And this is the highest hope, that in spite of our addiction to little “g” gods the big “G” God sang for us the endless song of enduring, steadfast love and invites us to join the chorus.



After-Service Prayer Teams - We now have prayer ministers available after each service to meet with people in the first pew. This is in addition to the Wednesday prayer offered at the altar and Healing Sunday prayers at the altar. Please feel free to come forward to ask for prayer for yourself or others.

Phishing Scams - Don't fall for them! Please do not respond to any message from clergy or St. Paul's by email or any other method of communication that asks you to purchase something (often a gift card) or asks for a "favor." **Delete reply, do not click links in the messages, mark them as** any doubt about the veracity of a text or email, at (priest@saintpaulsbrookfield.com) or the

these messages, do not Spam or Junk. If there is contact Fr. Nate by e-mail office



† One Untimely Born

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Saint Paul gives some biographical information as he testifies to the validity of his doctrine. He mentions several post-resurrection appearances of Jesus--including some not otherwise mentioned in the Gospels. He ends with a recollection of his own vision of the Risen Lord.

Because Jesus had ascended into heaven some time before, Paul felt that his experience made him like a child untimely born. Paul had encountered Jesus while traveling to Damascus, Syria. His mission had been to arrest and execute Christians. Suddenly a bright light and powerful voice literally struck Paul. This experience would heavily influence Paul's teachings, especially that of the spiritual link between Jesus and all of his followers.



THE GOSPEL OF
LUKE

1 M any have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled[a] among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in

Our Men meet weekly study on Monday nights. They are currently dissecting the Gospel of Luke. Join them each Monday night at 7 pm in Crocker Hall. All the studies are available live on YouTube.

† Greeters Needed

Greeting people in a warm way makes them feel good about their presence in church.

At St. Paul's, we are always looking for people who feel called to serve in this important ministry. If you are interested in becoming a greeter, please contact Pam Szen (prszen@gmail.com) or David Szen



† Ladies Wed Evening Bible Study

All women are invited to join the Ladies Wednesday Evening Bible Study for our new study of the book of Ephesians. Every Wednesday evening, 7-8 pm by Zoom. This letter includes many praises and

prayers to God for his saving love and gifts to the church. We look forward to studying and sharing our questions and experiences together. Please join us as we receive God's Word (3:17) "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being

rooted and grounded in love." Call or text Carol Wheeler at 203-525-0011 with questions or to be added to the weekly Zoom link email.





Camp Washington

February 14 - February 16, 2025

Winter Wonderland Weekend



**REGISTER NOW AT CAMPWASHINGTON.ORG
OR CALL 860.567.9623 FOR MORE DETAILS**



Our annual mid-year camp reunion for our younger campers - all the fun of Camp- Snow or No Snow!

Join us for some wintery fun at CW!
Hot chocolate! Games! Marshmallows! Laughter!
Fort Building! Friendship! Memory making!

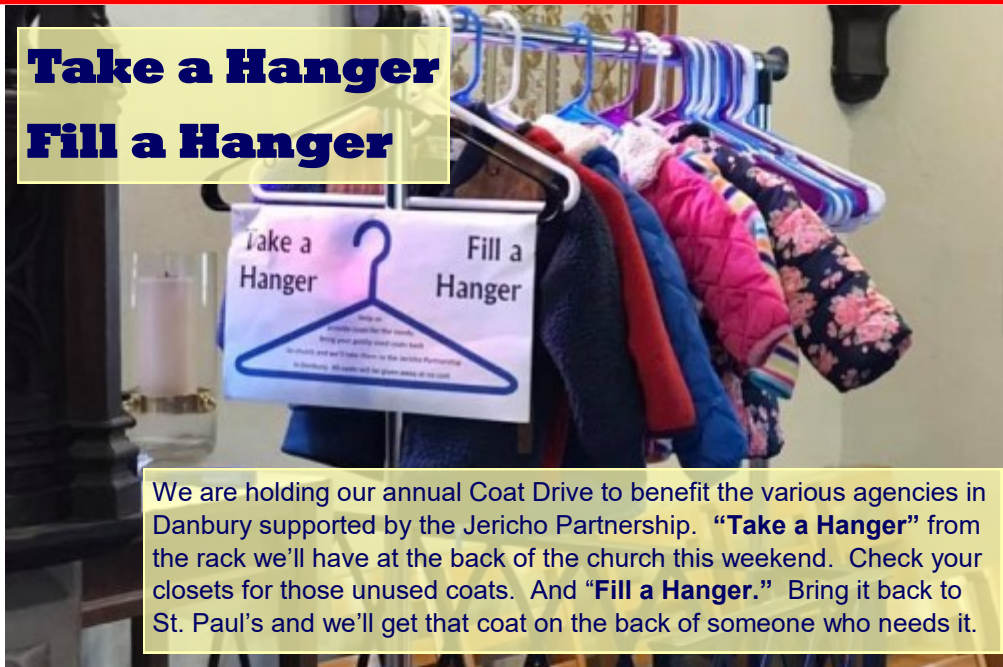
AGES 7-12
\$185 per person

Scan QR Code to register



Camp Washington | 190 Kenyon Road | Lakeside, Connecticut 06758

Take a Hanger Fill a Hanger



We are holding our annual Coat Drive to benefit the various agencies in Danbury supported by the Jericho Partnership. **“Take a Hanger”** from the rack we’ll have at the back of the church this weekend. Check your closets for those unused coats. And **“Fill a Hanger.”** Bring it back to St. Paul’s and we’ll get that coat on the back of someone who needs it.

Psalm 122:6

Pray
for the
peace
of
Jerusalem;

May they prosper that love you.



Website Links - Usher, acolyte, lector, intercessor, and lay reader schedules are published monthly on our website at [saintpaulsbrookfield.com / parish ministries / acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors / downloads](http://saintpaulsbrookfield.com/parish-ministries/acolytes-lay-readers-lectors-intercessors/downloads). Our parish member directory is posted on our website at [saintpaulsbrookfield.com / about / member directory / downloads](http://saintpaulsbrookfield.com/about/member-directory/downloads).

† **Sunday School Info!**

ATTN: PARENTS OF ALL SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Bring your Sunday School students to the classrooms by 10:30. Children will be returned to the sanctuary in time for Communion.



† **“Open Table” Coffee Hour**

We are adding something new to our Coffee Hour Ministry! Occasionally, you will see OPEN TABLE written in one of the Coffee Hour slots. This means that anyone from Saint Paul's is invited to feel free to leave a food item on the table in Crocker Hall as a donation to that particular Coffee Hour. That's it!! Just something different occasionally and nothing else to do! We look forward to your participation and donation on that particular designated Sunday. Thanks all!
Mary Allen, Coffee Hour Coordinator, 203-775-6633 or chamla@charter.net.



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS

Feb 9th	8 am - Beck's	10:30 am - Switzer's
Feb 16th	8 am - Boy Scout Troop #5	10:30 am - Boy Scout Troop #5
Feb 23rd	8 am - Polly Sorrentino	10:30 am - Kronberg's



COFFEE HOUR HOSTS NEEDED

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



THE
Episcopal
CHURCH



February 9, 2025 – Epiphany 5 (C)
Epiphany Bible Study: Week 5

During the season of Epiphany, The Episcopal Church's Office of Global Partnerships is offering a weekly Bible study prepared by writers across the church and Anglican Communion. Each piece, consisting of the Sunday readings, can be studied alone, in small groups, or even with a congregation. You can find the whole study for each week at www.sermonsthatwork.org. This week's study for Epiphany 5 (C) was written by **the Rev. Sharack Owuor**, a priest formed in Butere, Uganda, currently serving as the rector of Grace Episcopal Church in Port Huron, Michigan.

Isaiah 6:1-8

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty, and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. ⁵And I said, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said, "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." ⁸Then I

heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

Commentary from Shadrack Owuor

Isaiah is overwhelmed by the majesty of God. The seraphim's cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," reveals the unmatched holiness of God. Confronted with God's splendor, Isaiah is painfully aware of his sinfulness, exclaiming, "Woe is me! I am lost." Yet God does not leave him in despair. The seraph cleanses him with a live coal, a powerful symbol of forgiveness and purification. Set free from guilt, Isaiah responds eagerly to God's call: "Here am I; send me!"

Isaiah reminds me of our own lives, especially those moments when we feel unworthy in the face of God's holiness. However, through Christ, we are encouraged that our sins are blotted out, freeing us to embrace our calling as messengers of his love. We cannot encounter the holy God and remain the same.

Discussion Questions

How does God's grace free you to respond to his call?

How do the holiness and love of God inspire both awe and action in you?

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Lois Hunt & Chuck Paulsen opens presents today. Bill Bennett, Eric Sampson & Sandra Sampson celebrate on Saturday. Paul Astbury will have a super day on Sunday. Throw a party for Tanya Goodman & Toni Foster on Wednesday. Have a blessed day everyone!



RFB 

Presents

COFFEE WITH JESUS

Fish Magnet



My pastor says we should share our faith, Jesus, but people don't really want to hear me talk about it.



Well, your liitle fish magnet on the back of your truck has won a total of... let me count... zero souls, Carl.



So, now you're against fish magnets, Jesus?
Man, you can be harsh.



Fish, Carl.
And be a magnet.



CoffeeWithJesus.com



JESS RAY

Thurs., Feb. 6, 2025 | 7:00 P.M.

Tickets \$20

www.communitycoffeehouse.org



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

† This Sunday's Readings

(Click on the red links for the readings)

A Miraculous Catch

[Isaiah 6:1-13](#)

Our first reading is Isaiah's vision of the Lord and his prophetic commission. The earthly temple becomes an icon for the temple in heaven. Isaiah is purged of his guilt and sin and responds to the Lord's call. The church hears in the thrice-holy song of the seraphim an anticipation of its praise of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Once the new prophet has been made ready for his task, he is given his first word for the people, an ominous warning of judgment.

[Psalm 138](#)

A hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord on high, who has saved God's servant and cares for the lowly.

[1 Corinthians 15:1-11](#)

Paul reminds the Corinthians of his basic proclamation concerning the Lord's resurrection. All these things happened according to the scriptures. Beginning with a manifestation to Cephas, Paul recounts six appearance of the risen Lord to his followers. The last, which must have taken place several years after the others, gave this former persecutor of the church his commission as an apostle.

[Luke 5:1-11](#)

Our gospel is the story of the calling of Simon Peter, together with the brothers James and John, to be disciples of Jesus. This happens by the Lake of Gennesaret or Galilee. Jesus amazes Peter by showing him where he can catch a great haul of fish. Peter pours out his feelings of unworthiness, but from now on Jesus tells him, he will be catching people.

[Luke 5:1-11](#)

We should also remember that this is the last time that Simon, James, and John will fish in the old way. Jesus is about to ask them to re-imagine what it means for them to be fishers - and to re-imagine who "fish" might be. So the moral of this story is NOT, "Let's keep doing what we have always done before and trust that one day God will fill our nets." But rather, we must constantly re-learn who are the fish now, and what are the nets?



† Sermon Shorts

“Clothe Your Ministers with Righteousness” To replay all our sermons, audio and videos follow this link for the [Sunday Sermons](#). Check out our [Sermon](#)



† Your Prayers Are Requested For...

It is such an intimate time when praying for the health and well being of others and such a privilege. God of wisdom and love, hear the prayers of your beloved children in our faith community and bring help to all in need, as we prayer for:

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

.....**St. John's**, Essex; **St. Paul's**, Fairfield; **St. James'**, Farmington.

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

.....Haitian ministry in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

.....For the Peace of Jerusalem. - *Psalm 122:6*

.....**Clayton Ferry, Barbara Hock, Jim Megura, Peter Scalzo, Sr., Peter Scalzo, Jr., Doris, Karen, Beverly Hall, Robert, Roger, Fred, Cynthia, Valerie, Heidi Pinheiro, Dale Mitchell, Larry, Ruth, Rob Duckett, Blake, Nick Marcalus, Susan Morrison, David McQueen, Pam Altemus, Mary Perry, Helen Picheco, Cliff, Elana and Veronika** continued healing.

.....the people of **Ukraine**; the people of the **Republic of Albania**; the people of **Mauritius**; the bishop, clergy and laity of the Diocese of Louisiana - The Episcopal Church; and our sister and brother members of the **Pasundan Christian Church**.

.....For the Church: that we may be attentive to God's invitations and allow Jesus to draw our attention away from our fear and limits so that we can respond to all that God asks.

.....**Victory Christian Center**, Danbury and their Food Pantry, which is the recipient of our food basket collections for the month of February.

.....Our missionaries, **Will & Becky McLaughlin** and their family, and their ministry in Cambodia; and for all missionaries: that God will inspire the message that they offer, help them to recognize how they can best serve their communities, and sustain them in times of loneliness.

.....**Victory Christian Center**, Danbury, a church partner of the Jericho Partnership.

.....**Protection**.

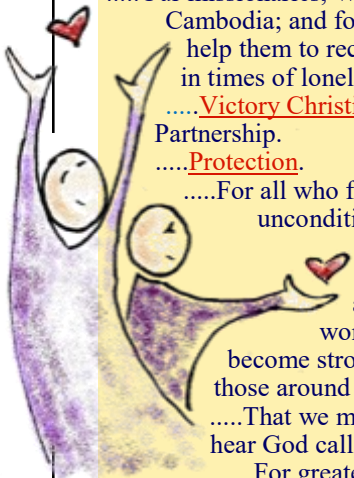
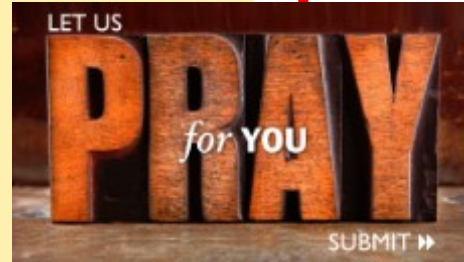
.....For all who feel unwelcome or unworthy before God: that God's unconditional love may heal and free them so that they may live in the freedom of the children of God.

.....For the one third of humanity that does not have access to the gospel, for zealous preachers of the word, that by the Holy Spirit, they that they would become strong in their faith, grow in numbers and be a light to those around them.

.....That we may eagerly respond, "Here I am, Lord," whenever we hear God call upon us to be his hands, feet, and voice here on earth.

.....For greater trust: that we may rely upon God's love and providence as we enter the deeper waters of vocation, marriage, parenting and employment.

.....**Peace Among the Nations**.



GIVE
IT TO
GOD

Jesus' Miracle Catch of Fish

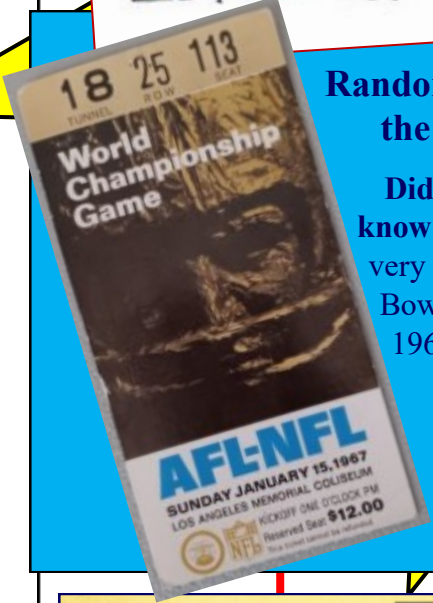


"Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."



Just For the Joy of It!

(And Christian Fellowship)



Random Fact of the Week!
Did you know ... that the very first Super Bowl ticket in 1967 cost \$12?



Find us on **Facebook**

Follow us on **Twitter**

Find Us On **Instagram**

Watch us on **YouTube**

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