

FOCUS ON STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship means using everything God has given us—life, talents, possessions—to serve God with love and gratitude, and to promote the mission of His church. The Stewardship Committee, which includes John and Maria Kaprielian, Jan Corning, and Father Hal, will work to encourage good stewardship practices in our congregation.

"You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

II Corinthians 9:11

Well, we made it through the holidays! Things are getting back to a somewhat calmer schedule; we had our annual meeting and things are looking pretty good right now. Our final pledge total for 2017 was 65 pledges, for a total of \$165,171, which is a wonderful increase and a blessing. Many thanks again to everyone who pledged, and also to those who give every week but have not pledged; your gifts are just as important.



As we go into this new year, there are just a couple of points I would like to make. First is to make sure you keep up your pledges – especially once we move into the summer months. One way to do this and free yourself up from having to remember to write a check every week (I know I often forgot) is to sign up for e-pledging through the Diocese. Once you fill out the form and supply a voided check, they will deduct your pledge amount from your checking account and send it to Good Shepherd. It's safe, easy, and you won't have to get new checks as often! See Chris Palmer or Paul Miller for the forms.

Another thing I have been thinking about is planned giving – leaving something to the church in your will. No one likes to think or talk about these things, but one of the reasons our church is on relatively sound financial footing is because of bequests made to the church by parishioners like you and me. The Stewardship Committee is hoping to sponsor a talk or workshop about this sometime this year, but there are resources available if anyone is thinking about writing or revising their will in the near future. The diocese has information available here: <https://www.dioceseny.org/administration/congregations/parish-finance-administration/stewardship/planned-giving/> and I would be happy to help find additional resources – just ask.

As we head into Lent let us use this time to reflect upon what our church life means to us, and how we can learn and grow spiritually in order to do God's work and be the best people we can be.

Yours in Christ,

John Kaprielian and the Stewardship Committee.



FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

There are two adjectives that are over-used and exaggerated... great and exciting. However, it's fair to say that the fundraising committee is working on four events that are truly great and exciting and you can throw in wonderful. This is the line-up for 2017:

May 20th: Movie Event, soda, popcorn and gift bag for all the kids.

October 14th: Antiques Appraisal, Arts Jam, Fashion Show (kids will be models), and Adopt-a-Pet

November 17th: Tastes of Somers, Wines, Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, passed hors d'oeuvres, and a couple of surprises.

December 9th: Christmas Bazaar. You will be asked to bake something that is special to you and your family during the Christmas Holidays with a description and explanation of why it is special, plus Crafts.



Independent of fundraising, a couple of parishioners and I are working on the possibility of a parish trip to the Sight & Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA to see the Miracle of Christmas. Shows on a weekend are more expensive than a weekday. Cost per child (3-12) is \$21, adult is \$51.30. We would need to rent a bus. If partial scholarships can be arranged for kids and the bus is donated, there's a good chance that it is doable. We have to meet with Fr. Hal to discuss this and we'll keep you posted. In the meantime please visit their website, sight-sound.com

Deacon Norm, Chair – Committee: Maria Kaprielian, Rick Vesperman, Glenn Hintze, Fran DiBernardo, Megan Whelan, Cecilia Sparacio, Diane Buschel, Courtney Velzy, Amanda Slattery, Sharen McKenna, Arleen Flury, and Kathleen Parsons.



First Event – The Movies – May 20th

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OUTREACH NEWS

CCNW

We collected and delivered a total of 1,762 lbs of food and 15.9 lbs of clothing to the Community Center of Northern Westchester last year. During the month of November our Youth Group is took part in the “Share the Warmth” drive by collecting new sleepwear, robes and slippers for children and youth. We were so pleased to learn that the Basic Human Needs grant from Episcopal Charities, which Good Shepherd applied for on behalf of CCNW has been renewed for 2017 in the increased amount of \$6,500.



Our representative to the Center is Cathy Trinidad, who would be delighted to have some help. If you are able to volunteer, please let Cathy or myself know.

American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

Throughout Advent we once again supported the children and refugees in schools run by the church in Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. Many parishioners supported the Giving Tree in the breezeway during Advent and a total of \$430 was received as a result of this initiative. Many thanks to all who participated. At our St. Nicholas Day celebration on December 4, Mite boxes were

distributed to the Sunday School children and were filled with coins during the Advent and Christmas seasons. In addition, during Advent the Sunday School children collected \$30.52, sufficient to purchase 2 books for Sami, a refugee child at the Theodore Schneller School in Amman, Jordan, one of the schools run by the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem. Thank you!

Women's Resource Center of Putnam and Northern Westchester

For the first time, Good Shepherd took part in the "adopt a family" program for Christmas. Yolanda Alexander and Maritza Rosso spearheaded the collection and delivery of a list of items needed and wanted by a family of a mother and two children. Thank you to everyone who made this Christmas a special time for this needy family. At our Twelfth Night celebration we again collected baby items for this organization.



Next meeting

The next meeting of the Outreach Committee has been scheduled for Sunday, March 12 at 11.30am, when Anne Nadig, Associate Executive Director of the Women's Resource Center for Putnam and Northern Westchester will address the meeting. All are invited.

Amanda Slattery, Outreach Coordinator



SUNDAY SCHOOL: Pageant, 12th Night: New Session Begins



What a wonderful Christmas Season for the COGS Sunday School Program. We began in December with a visit from St. Nicholas on the 4th. Everyone loved receiving mite boxes and finding a sweet treat in their shoes! On December 18 the children performed "Christmas Around the World" in lieu of the homily for the 10am Service. They all did a marvelous job sharing the traditions of Christmas on each continent. The pageant was followed by a multi-cultural and festive coffee hour sponsored by the Sunday School Committee. We would like to thank Megan Whalen, Glenn Hintze, Amy Baisley, Kerry Irwin, Teresa Larson and Cindy Rubino for their assistance with the Pageant Season.



The Twelfth Night celebration was supposed to be held on January 7, 2016 but was postponed to January 14 due to snow. We prayed, ate, played BINGO, the "Magi" brought gifts for the children, the adults brought charitable donations for the Women's Shelter and the children's Saint Nicholas Mite Boxes were collected. We added a new outreach element for the holiday

season by collecting money to purchase books for a refugee child in the Holy Land. Our child, Sami, sent the children a thank you letter for their generous donations of \$30 to

purchase 2 books. We are grateful to those who helped with this festive event and especially appreciate the generous donations.

In January, our three levels of Sunday school resumed and will continue until February 26, when Family Sunday will be held. During that 10am service, the children will perform most of the duties in the church. February's Family Sunday will have a special Mardi Gras theme. Children (and kids at heart) will wear costumes, listen to Mardi Gras



music, receive beads, eat New Orleans style foods, bring a charitable donation to CCNW of beans or rice (1-2 lb. bags only please) and process to "When the Saints Go Marching In". This should be a fun celebration in the dark, dreary winter months. We thank Megan Whalen, Teresa Larson, and Kerry Irwin, for working with Grades PreK-5, and Glenn Hintze, Yolanda Alexander, Vernon Alexander, Amy Baisley, Jose Trinidad, Jeff Donaldson, and Bruce Barber for working with Grades 6-8 this winter.

It might be cold, icy and white but we are looking ahead to spring. There will be regular Sunday School through March and early April. On Palm Sunday kids will participate in the Palm Procession and then go to Sunday School. Easter Sunday there will be no Sunday School but the 10 AM service will be followed by our Annual Easter Egg Hunt. In May we will have regular Sunday School and our Sunday School Concert scheduled for May 21 during the 10 AM service. Then in June we are planning our trip to St. John the



Divine Cathedral in New York City. The Sunday School and Youth Group will take a bus together from COGS. The Sunday School children will explore the mysteries and highlights of the cathedral and take part in a hands on workshop. The Youth Group will participate in the "On Common Ground" workshop, which tours the cathedral and explores the diverse faiths of our world. Graduation will be June 11.

Finally, we are planning to hold our 4th Annual Summer Bible Camp August 22-24 from 9am-12 noon each day. All Sunday School parents will receive an email about it. We'll have lessons, crafts, games, activities and tons of fun. Open to children 3-12 years old. Counseling opportunities for teens 13-18 years old! This year we hope to invite children from many Episcopal Churches in our area along with neighbors and friends who might be interested. ALL ARE WELCOME. There will be more to come in the June newsletter. Please see us for any questions!

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Whalen, for the Sunday School Committee (Suzanne Bracken, Arleen Flury, Glenn Hintze, Amy Baisley, Maritza Rosso, Kerry Irwin, Fran DiBernardo, Cathy Trinidad and Father Hal)

YOUTH GROUP



Dinner & painting at the Rectory!



Sindey & Brittany presented the Youth Group report at the Annual Meeting.



We are looking for ways to contribute to making our world a better, more peaceful living place: so our new motto!



Bishop Mary loves her new COGS Youth Group shirt!



Calling all Readers!

We are looking to increase the number of people who will read the lessons and the prayers of the people at our 10.00am Sunday service. If you would like to volunteer please contact the office or email admin@goodshepherdny.org.

A training video will be provided!



THE SENIOR GROUP: A NEW START

The Seniors Group is getting reinvigorated and will be meeting on Sunday, February 26 at 11:30 am. All are invited to join us for some fun as we plan what's next!

THE WRITERS GROUP

Meets on the 1st Monday of the month, at 7:30PM in the Guild Room.

THE WOCOGS BOOK CLUB

The Women of the Church of the Good Shepherd (WOCOGS) Book Club meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:30PM in the Guild Room.



MARDI GRAS FAMILY SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 26, 2017

February's Family Sunday will have a special Mardi Gras theme in 2017. Children (and kids at heart) can wear costumes, listen to Mardi Gras music, receive beads, eat New Orleans style foods, and second line to "When the Saints Go Marching In". Please consider bringing a charitable donation to CCNW of beans or rice (1-2 lb. bags only please) as well as a New Orleans style coffee hour item to share. This should be a fun celebration in the dark, dreary winter months. See Father Hal or Megan Whalen for more information.



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

MARCH 1, 2017

8:00AM – Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

12:00 noon – Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

6:30PM – Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

LENT

LENTEN STUDY: KNOWLEDGE & ETHICS

By Wilfried Haensch

And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad (Gen 9)

And the LORD God commanded the man saying: "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die." (Gen. 16:17)

We all know how this worked out. Did you ever wonder why God did not prohibit eating the fruit from the tree of life? We can of course speculate about this and the results will probably be very illuminating. It will, however, not change the fact that our time on earth is finite. Another fact we cannot deny is that our lives are driven by hope and fears of what could come and what could not come. In fact, as soon as we enter this world we are experiencing separation anxieties at a non-cognitive level and as we grow older and accumulate knowledge about the world our anxieties move on to a cognitive level – telling us what is bad and what is good for us. And since our knowledge of the total world will always be limited, so will our knowledge of what is bad and good. In light of this part of the human condition, it is clear that eating from the tree of knowledge produced a curse – ultimately enabling us to understand our own mortality.

The nature of knowledge is in general neutral: facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through experience or education. The question is what are we doing with the acquired knowledge? This is where the cycle closes with scripture. Eating from the tree of knowledge made us a creature of choices. The burden falls on us to decide what we do - the first choice has a ripple effect through the ages. Even doing nothing is a valid choice.

Science and technology are abundant sources of creating knowledge with a degree of complexity that is beyond the common man to understand. We are all consumers of the results of technological advancement and often forget the implications of this technology beyond providing more convenience. A good example is for instance that Google or Amazon know us well enough to suggest what would be appropriate for us to buy before we even think about it.



I would like to invite you to a Lenten Study to explore the problem of knowledge and ethics. To make this topic digestible, I will start the discussion with the play “The Physicists” by the Swiss playwright Friedrich Duerrenmatt. This text is about 50 years old (1962), it is more relevant than ever. In one of the comments Duerrenmatt states:

“Every attempt of an individual to solve a problem that impacts everyone is determined to fail.”

To step into the immediate future people of faith have to wrestle with this topic so as not to be blindsided. With the first bite we took from the forbidden fruit we opted for free choice: a burden that we have to acknowledge and find an answer within our fabric of faith. The question at this time is not what would Jesus do – it is what we should do!

We will meet the first Sunday of Lent March 5th after the 10AM service in the Guild Room to talk logistics. I plan to have four sessions. You can also reach me at haensch5@aol.com for details.

DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IN LENT: A NEW OPPORTUNITY

Fridays: March 10, 17, & 31

Eucharist at 6:30pm and simple supper at 7:00pm.

These will be 30-minute, “Rite 3” Eucharists (page 400-405 from *The Book of Common Prayer*) The pattern we have discovered that works well is to introduce an idea during the 5 minute reflection which lends itself for discussion afterwards over dinner. On March 10th, Michael Wilson, a postulant for the priesthood from St. Mark’s in Mt. Kisco, will lead a reflection and discussion afterwards on a terrific mission trip he leads annually to West Virginia in June. I would like us to consider getting involved in this mission trip in the future; if this is something that might interest you, try to come to this service and talk.

Our very own Wilfried Haensch and Fay Wright shall each offer reflections at the other two Eucharists, March 17th and March 31st.



ANNUNCIATION Saturday, March 25, 2017

Please join us to celebrate this Holy Day. We will share Evening Prayer at 5:30PM, followed by our annual potluck Soup and Chowderfest. A signup sheet will be posted in the breezeway. Questions see Chris Palmer or Diane Buschel.

LENT & HOLY WEEK 2017

ASH WEDNESDAY – March 1, 2017

8:00AM, 12:00 Noon, 6:30PM

Said Eucharist with Imposition of Ashes

SUNDAYS IN LENT

5:00PM Stations of the Cross

PALM SUNDAY – April 2, 2017

8:00AM Rite I Eucharist with Palms

10:00AM Palms, Procession, Rite II Eucharist with Hymns

MAUNDY THURSDAY – April 6, 2017

6:30PM Potluck Mediterranean-themed Agape Dinner

7:30PM Maundy Thursday Liturgy

GOOD FRIDAY – April 7, 2017

6:30PM Soup & Bread Potluck Dinner

7:30PM Good Friday Liturgy

HOLY SATURDAY – April 8, 2017

6:30PM Pizza Fest

7:30PM Easter Vigil

EASTER SUNDAY – April 9, 2017

8:00AM Rite I Eucharist

10:00AM Rite II Eucharist with Hymns

Festive Coffee Hour and Amazing Easter Egg Hunt



The Church of the Good Shepherd

IS

TURNING 60!

Please join us for the prayers, parties and fellowship to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of our church.

- Thursday, May 4 9:00 AM Anniversary Eucharist Celebration
- Saturday, May 6 7:00 PM Celebration of Anniversary and spring – details TBD but it will be a lot of fun!

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FAMILY MOVIE DAY

Saturday, May 20, 2017 10:00 AM



Please join us for a Fun Family Movie on Saturday, May 20 at 10:00. Tickets include popcorn and a soda for all attending. The movie title and location will be determined soon and announced. Bring friends, bring neighbors and enjoy this morning of fellowship and fun! Questions contact Norm Fulton or a member of the fundraising committee.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CONCERT

Sunday, May 21, 2017 10:00AM Service



Mark your calendar for Sunday, May 21st! It will be a morning of making Joyful Noise unto the Lord. The Sunday School children will provide a concert during the 10AM service with singing and instrumental performances. Hope to see you there.

ASCENSION DAY & STEAKFEST

Thursday, May 25, 2017



Please join us to celebrate this Holy Day. There will be a 6:30PM Eucharist followed by our fantastic annual Steakfest! A signup sheet will be posted in the breezeway. More information to come as the day gets closer.

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PENTECOST SUNDAY

Sunday, June 4, 2017



Please join us to celebrate the birthday of the church. After the 10:00am service we will have our first BBQ to open “Hot Dog Season”. Wear **RED** – Let’s celebrate the Spirit! More information to follow as it gets closer.

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SOMERS RELAY FOR LIFE

Friday, June 16, 2017 7:00 pm-11:30pm

Somers Middle School (250 Route 202)
Team Good Shepherd Needs YOU to walk with us & support our team!

We are signed up as a team and our team captains are Sidney & Brittany. Go to Team Good Shepherd’s team page and join

http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLCY16EA?pg=entry&fr_id=73603

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

February Birthdays

Yolanda Alexander (2/3)	Joseph Corcione (2/15)
Gwendalyn Hohwald (2/4)	Dorothy Baeder (2/16)
Charlotte Stebbins (2/6)	Nancy Haensch (2/19)
William Anderson (2/7)	Glenda Jordan (2/20)
Samuel Parsons (2/7)	Alex Palmer (2/20)
Lorne Robbins (2/7)	Emily Vesperman (2/23)
Ryleigh Harris (2/10)	David Kaprielian (2/24)
Matthew Corning (2/11)	Maria Kaprielian (2/24)
Kea Harris (2/11)	Gretchen Hintze (2/26)
Megan Whalen (2/11)	Brhet R. Hohwald (2/27)
Richard Slattery (2/12)	Hugo Pizzuti (2/27)
David Whalen (2/14)	Fran DiBernardo Gannon (2/28)

March Birthdays

Robert Bubeck (3/1)	Evan Weig (3/14)
Margaret Parsons (3/3)	Brittany Alexander (3/15)
Victoria Mattos (3/3)	Lily Roark (3/16)
Jessie Lewis (3/4)	Thelma Barlow (3/17)
Jack McKeown (3/6)	Hal Roark (3/24)
Jeff Weig (3/7)	Katharine Martin (3/25)
Amanda Corcione (3/8)	Michael James Anthony Harris Jr. (3/27)
Vilma Mulholland (3/10)	Ashley Alexander (3/31)

April Birthdays

Laura Traynor (4/1)	Susan Hintze (4/18)
Hayley Larson (4/5)	Katie McKeown (4/20)
David Stevens (4/5)	John Feaver (4/23)
Gwendolyn Greene (4/11)	Maegan Wilson 4/24)
Jaclyn Stebbins (4/12)	Daniel Bacal 4/28)
Norman Fulton (4/13)	Cynthia Rubino (4/29)
Margery Hall (4/14)	Noah Stebbins (4/29)
Courtney Velzy (4/15)	

SERVER, READER & ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

****ALL CRUCIFERS ARE REQUESTED TO BE AT CHURCH AT LEAST 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO SERVICE START IN ORDER TO BE READY FOR PROCESSION****

FEBRUARY 19:

CHALICE: DIANE BUSCHEL

CRUCIFER: CLAIRE HINTZE
READERS: WILFRIED HAENSCH
MICHAEL MARKUMAS

PRAYERS: BERNIE SOTTER

USHERS: BERNIE SOTTER
RIC LARSON

COUNTER: MEGAN WHALEN

MARCH 5:

CHALICE: JIM CORNING

CRUCIFER: EMILY VESPERMAN

READERS: CHRIS PALMER
RICK VESPERMAN

PRAYERS: ARLEEN FLURY

USHERS: ARLEEN FLURY
RICK VESPERMAN

COUNTER: PHILL PINKNEY

MARCH 19:

CHALICE: PHIL LEVY

CRUCIFER: CHRISTIAN TRINIDAD

READERS: FAY WRIGHT
MICHAEL MARKUMAS

PRAYERS: BOB BUBECK

USHERS: BOB VELZY
RIC LARSON

COUNTER: COURTNEY VELZY

FEBRUARY 26: Family Sunday

CHALICE: PHIL LEVY

CRUCIFER: CHRISTIAN TRINIDAD

READERS: SUNDAY SCHOOL

PRAYERS: SUNDAY SCHOOL

USHERS: SUNDAY SCHOOL

COUNTER: JOSE TRINIDAD

MARCH 12:

CHALICE: DIANE BUSCHEL

CRUCIFER: CLAIRE HINTZE

READERS: WILFRIED HAENSCH
MICHAEL HAGEN

PRAYERS: BERNIE SOTTER

USHERS: GLENN HINTZE
BERNIE SOTTER

COUNTER: VILMA MULHOLLAND

MARCH 26:

CHALICE: JIM CORNING

CRUCIFER: EMILY VESPERMAN

READERS: CHRIS PALMER
RICK VESPERMAN

PRAYERS: JAN CORNING

USHERS: RICK VESPERMAN
JOSE TRINIDAD

COUNTER: VERNON ALEXANDER

Poets' Corner

FROM THE WRITERS GROUP: TRANSPARENT DECEPTION

We heard the world came to an end
But no one knew except the humble
Whose voices were never heard
Until it was too late
Drowned out by the perfect arrogance
Of the holy confidants in their gilded
cages

While A cunning serpent resting in his
nest of treachery
Willing black clouds to hide the falling
rain, snickers
gathers celestial confidence with each
drop
as people struggle between the
drops, beseeching God's aid
when the sky rumbled and storms
gathered

Below the flock scrambled
shepherds abandoning their sheep
counting fools gold in their sleep
And we looked and smiled
waiting for happiness
promised by vipers, with
Judas lips, kissing ignorance
with false assurances

Of opulence

No Satan, we are alive
Our dreams will survive
No tarnish souls will disrupt
Our goals
Not bold promises
To unfold
or gifts of gold

We know false rainbows are an illusion
Not a conclusion but pollution
On healthy hearts seeking solutions
Without confusion or delusion

Fly away demon
We are freemen
Flesh and blood human,
not demean men preachin'
beefin' or cheating
Nor media soothsayers
Seeking pleasures
But bold spirits of love
Outlasting the antipathy
Of a devil's ashes
By Bill Greene



THE RIGHT TIME

It wasn't the right time when the roses
turned red
not
Right time when the sun blot out the
clouds
Nor the right time when pompous
orchids
shed its beauty for
commonality, and spoke of the vulgarity
of the masses unkindly

Or the right time for
Bees to suck forbidden nectar
reveling in their
rapture in disobedience,
Unaware of the weeds encircling them
exterminators everywhere
carrying spray guns spewing
liquid death, permeating leaves and
trees
targeting vegetation
with the arrogance to survive

Or the right time to whisper penitence
After granting clemency to evil
Unshakable in its desire to harm
Bouquets of love,
by sowing seeds of destruction
when our hearts sting with compassion

Will we produce forgiveness,
Or will the illumination of fulfillment
be planted in our souls,
replacing the roots of evil
with a garden of love

Can even weeds grow in a tangled
garden
So morose that hope vanishes
And will the hero emerge to save the
day

Is that the right time
Is that the right time
By Bill Greene

VICTORY

Can you dodge an arrow
With skill
At the last minute shift
Turn jump, bend
Until the adversary exhausted
turned the pages of life
To the end of the chapter,
Renouncing victory acknowledging
Agility and persistence
In dodging the nameless bullet

But an arrow with less precision
Wins in the end
Because luck has a mind of its own
Even though Devine providence
Steals a mention

The fisherman realizes this
And casts a longer net
Until he feels a tug
A nibble
Realizing arrogance swims in the same
sea
As humility
Victory is more than meets the eye
By Bill Greene



WOULD YOU

Would you kiss Lucifer and ride in his
satanic bubble,
Fly high in a cloud of illusive smoke
dreams

Would you cry in the middle
Of a demonic nightmare,
and freedom dance on
Tombs of heroes shattered in combat

Or worship faithfulness
As loyalty to greed,
in limousines driven by ghosts

Can you comfort hearts broken by
desires muted in fits of passion,
frozen in anger
even when the sun shines

Would you
Weep

Can you harmonize
A delta blues melody in silence
played by fingers dripping in sweat from
unmerciful cotton
fields, and exonerate vengeance with
obsessive passion
For justice

Maybe
By Bill Greene

BLACK HISTORY IS WHITE HISTORY AND SO IS RELIGION

By Bill Greene

"When you show deep empathy toward others, their defensive energy goes down and positive energy replaces it. That's when you can get more creative in solving problems."

Stephen Covey

In America, former white slave masters, white indenture servants, colonialists, sharecroppers and black former slaves share indelible relationships in developing our United States of America. So black history is white history. America would not exist if that were not the case. Our cultures intertwine whether we like it or not. But our history books reflect a bias, one-sided view of these relationships, in particular, superiority vs. inferiority with white over black in all instances. During Black History Month there are truths we need to examine if our Christianity is important as we profess.

WHAT IS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The importance of black history month is an awakening of what it means to be human, and especially as a Christian. It is not simply a show of black pride, but a far more inclusive symbol of brotherhood. And that means to have the ability to share, identify and understand one another's situation, including feelings and motives. This is empathy in the truest sense of the word. Devoid of empathy, the "other" become nonhuman, something to shun and be fearful of, and subsequently relegated to abuse. When we are segregated from each other by race, religion, or ethnic origin *our communication is distorted*. We tend to view others in a stereotypical fashion, bearing little resemblance to reality.

African slaves, Native Americans the early Irish, Italians, Jews and Asians, and now Muslims and Mexicans--to name a few-- have suffered abuse and discrimination in the United States of America. So what's the difference now? None, really, except many of the previous groups—Italian, Irish and Jews, in particular, have become mainstream and no longer suffer the intense bigotry of the past—that African Americans view as “white skin privilege”—in effect, a form of Affirmative Action. There is no need to go into particulars, all one has to do is understand American History. The lesson to be learned is we profess to be a nation of *inclusion* not exclusion.

IS HUMANISM THE ANSWER?

Some believe Humanism should replace religion? Humanism is "an outlook or system of thought attaching prime importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. Humanist beliefs stress the potential value and goodness of human beings,

emphasize common human needs, and seek solely rational ways of solving human problems."

PERHAPS ECONOMIC EQUALITY IS THE ANSWER?

There are those who suggest that economic inequality is the basis for our social separation. While there is certainly some truth to this allegation, the late James Baldwin poses this question: "If economic equality were to exist would prejudice vanish".

THE NEED FOR A GOD PERSPECTIVE

But simply solving problems from a rational perspective, although it sounds very seductive, lacks a God perspective that recognizes as "man" we are weak and easily influenced by our emotional needs and are psychologically vulnerable to forces outside of our control. When tragedy occurs in our lives we are filled with grief and suffer overwhelming remorse, contrition and distress, not subject to rational interpretation. And only through a personal savior will we get solace from the terrible obstacles we face as part of the human condition.

AN AFRICAN AMERICA ODYSSEY

The African American Odyssey through the American experience was accomplished because of a strong reliance on Christianity. It was the impetus for the creation of music, dance, theatre and art. Gospel, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues (R&B)--all of these genres are currently incorporated in pop music, including hip-hop. Other accomplishments include sports and medical science. In a strange way, black entrepreneurship reached its highest point during the height of segregation from 1910 to the late 1950s, largely because of the strict apartheid rules disallowing them to purchase goods freely in retail stores. And of course recreational services like playgrounds and swimming pool were off limits. Public schools offered sub-standard education. Despite all these setbacks the rise in black Christian colleges across the South began to flourish resulting in state sponsored land grant colleges for African Americans. It allowed for the rise of the black professional class. The result has been that roughly 90-95% of African American doctors, lawyers, dentists, architects, engineers, professors and teachers were graduates of black colleges and universities. Much of the same statistics remain in spite of the dream of the full integration of higher education. In contrast, primary and secondary education remains highly segregated, even today in 2017.

Despite the dark clouds of today's political instability, we must remain hopeful that, as Christians, we don't sit on Lucifer's lap and beg for mercy.

PRAYER LIST (AS OF FEBRUARY 19, 2017)

We pray for the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem; the women and orphans of the Kwithu (*KWEE-too*) Feeding Center in Malawi; for the Community Center of Northern Westchester; and for Somers Boy Scout Troop 376. We pray for all who serve in the armed forces, especially Noah, Matthew, Billy, Brendan, and Nicholas; for all who are in seminary, including Paul; for all those suffering from addiction, and those who love them; and we pray for Arleen, Michelle, Sally, Gonzaga, Janice, Christine, Kim, Jim, Sarah, Doug, Stanley, Rachel, Amelia, Scott, Elaine, Edward, Randy, Julie, George, Debbie, John, Paul, Anna, Sharen, Greg, Laura, Margery, Franca, Arianna, Florence, Al, Lois, Lee, Herb, & Maureen; and we pray for all the departed, especially Roy, Maurice, John, Bob, Gail, & Patricia, and for all those who mourn.



2017 COGS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 1, Sunday: Nine Lessons & Carols at 10 am (Amanda)
- 6, Friday: Epiphany Eucharist at 9 am (Hal)
- 7, Saturday: 12th Night R3 Eucharist & Potluck at 5:30 pm (Megan)
- 22, Sunday: annual meeting (Maria)

February

- 2, Thursday: Candlemas & Fr. Hal's Institution at 6:30 pm (Fay & Amanda)
- 5, Sunday: Superbowl Potluck at the rectory at 5:30 pm (Hal and Lori)
- 14, Tuesday: Valentine's Evensong & Reaffirmation of Vows at 6:30 pm (Hal)
- 26, Sunday: Mardi Gras Family Sunday (Hal & Megan)

March

- 1, Wednesday: Ash Wednesday Services at 8 am, noon, 6:30 pm (Hal)
- 5, 12, 19, 26, Sundays in Lent: Stations of the Cross at 5:00 pm (Chris)
- 10, 17, 31, Fridays: Deepening Our Relationship with God in Lent Rite 3 Eucharist at 6:30 & Potluck at 7:00 pm (Hal).
- 25, Saturday: Annunciation Evening Prayer at 5:30 pm and Soup & Chowderfest (Chris)

April

- 2, 9, Sundays in Lent: Stations of the Cross at 5:00 pm (Chris)
- 9, Sunday: Palm & Passion Sunday (Hal)
- 13, Maundy Thursday: Mediterranean potluck at 6:30 pm & Maundy Thursday liturgy at 7:30 pm (Chris, Diane, & Hal)
- 14, Good Friday: Soup & Bread Potluck at 6:30 pm & Good Friday liturgy at 7:30 pm (Chris & Hal)
- 15, Saturday Easter Vigil: Pizzafest at 6:30 pm & Easter Vigil liturgy at 7:30 pm (Chris, Fay & Youth Group)
- 16, Sunday: Easter and Easter Egg Hunt (Megan, Diane, & Hal)
- 29, Saturday: potential Family Movie Day (movie TBD) (Megan & Norm)

May

- 4, Thursday: COGS 60th Anniversary Rite 2 Eucharist at 9 am (Hal)
- 6, Saturday: COGS Celebration of Anniversaries & Spring at 7 pm (?)
- 14, Sunday: Mothers' Day & Episcopal Charities Sunday – Men's breakfast (?)
- 20, Saturday: COGS Outdoor Spring Cleaning Fest and cookout (Rick)
- 21, Sunday: Family Sunday & Sunday School Concert (Megan) & New Member Ice Cream Social (Paul, Lorraine, & Hal)
- 25, Thursday: Ascension Day Eucharist at 6:30 & Steakfest at 7 pm (Chris, Rick, & Hal)

June

- TBD, Saturday: Youth trip to St. John the Divine in NYC (Megan & Fay)
- 4, Sunday: Pentecost & Parish BBQ Picnic; beginning of hotdog season (Hal, Megan, Rick)
- 11, Sunday: Family Sunday & Sunday School graduations (Megan)
- 16, Friday: Somers Relay for Life (Youth, ?)
- 18, Sunday: Fathers' Day (?)

July

- 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, Sundays: Fr. Hal away; supply clergy

August

- 22 -24, Tuesday -Thursday, Vacation Bible School 9 am-noon (Megan)

September

- 10, Sunday: Start of the Program Year & Parish Picnic: Blessing of Backpacks, Grandparents' Day & Big Parish Cookout (Hal, Megan, Rick)
- 15, Friday: Holy Cross Rite 3 Eucharist at 6:30 & Chickenfest at 7 pm (Chris)
- 17, Sunday: Sunday School starts (Megan)
- 29, Friday: Michaelmas at 6:30 pm and Oktoberfest at 7:00 pm (Chris); Bishop Mary Glasspool will be preaching.

October

- 1, Sunday: Support Connection Walk
- 14, Saturday: The Fall Extravaganza (Fundraising committee)
- Stewardship begins this month
- 29, Sunday: Family Sunday & Halloween party (Megan)

November

- 2, Thursday: All Souls R3 Eucharist at 6:30 pm and Slow Cooked Dinner Potluck at 7 pm.
(Hal & Chris)
- 5, Sunday: All Saints Sunday & Memorial Garden blessing (Hal)
- 17, Friday: The Tastes of Somers Fundraiser at 7 pm.
- 19, Sunday: Yorktown Interfaith Prayer Service at COGS at 3 pm.
- 24, Thursday: Thanksgiving Rite 2 Eucharist at 10 am

December

- 3, Sunday: Advent begins. St. Nicholas visit. (Amanda, Megan)
- 8, Friday: Quieter Advent Prayer Service at 6:30 pm (Hal) with simple supper at 7 pm.
- 9, Saturday: Christmas Bazaar (Arleen)
- 10, Sunday: Christmas Around the World & World Food Fest (Megan)
- 15, 22, Friday: Deepening our Relationship with God in Advent Rite 3 Eucharist at 6:30 pm & Simple Supper at 7 pm (Hal)
- 24, Sunday: Christmas Eve Services at 4 pm & 7:00 pm?
- 25, Monday: Christmas Day – Quieter Christmas Said Eucharist at 8 am & Rite 2 Eucharist with Hymns at 10 am
- 31, Sunday: Lessons and Carols service at 10 am.