



St. Thomas's News

Welcome to a brief update of news and topics of interest to members of the St. Thomas's faith community.

The Communications Team of St. Thomas's is happy to provide this printed update to those who may not be able to access our electronic communications channels.

December 2016



*Chapter 22, Page 175 – Forward in Faith
“The place God calls you to be is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”*

Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC
by Frederick Buechner

*“... and the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **PEACE**, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” Galatians 5:22-23*

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“While they were talking, Jesus stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’” The appearance of Jesus after his resurrection must have been an awesome moment for those frightened, depressed, and hopeless followers in that upper room. Yet I suspect the one thing they felt was not necessarily **peace** at his presence. I guessing there was still a pretty hefty supply of fear, amazement, guilt by those who fled from his trial and crucifixion, and yes, even doubt. Remember our namesake Thomas was “out and about” when Jesus appeared. When later told of Jesus’ visitation, he would not believe anything solely on the word of his companions UNLESS he saw

Jesus for himself. Eight days later he was with them. Jesus returned, sauntered up to Thomas, and offered his wounded hands and side. The rest becomes our faith history to this day, including Jesus’ evangelistic response to Thomas, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

This year, and particularly November, has felt just about as fear-filling, confusing, angering, hopeless, and anything but peaceful for many I have been present in these days. Like our namesake, we want to grab hold of something we can believe and trust for our days ahead. So we flock to the information sources that surround us at every moment, every turn, and every swipe of our thumb or the click of a mouse. We seek the proof we feel we need, and it rises tantamount over trust and faith, seeking information right now to be the best and most truthful, unable to sit and be in discernment to what is, and what can be, with others, in peace. We read books, seek out innumerable articles, attend real and virtual lectures, and conversation groups seeking, seeking, and seeking HOW we can find **peace** in this time. For me, my “peace seeking missile” self joins with other seekers and discerners, in prayer, together. We do this by **abiding** in a peace that we bring and that we share to each other. We gather in waiting, around

a table like ours, to be fed and to feed each other, and our world, with **peace**.

Fr. Richard Rohr offers wisdom to me in our times from daily meditations **Yes, And ...**

"T.S. Eliot said in the Four Quartets '[Human]kind cannot bear very much reality.' What we often prefer is highly contrived and costumed ways of avoiding the real, the concrete. So Jesus brought all of our fancy thinking down to earth, to one concrete place of ordinary incarnation – one loaf of bread and cup of wine. 'Eat it here, and then see it everywhere' he seems to be saying. As St. Augustine essentially said in an Easter sermon, 'You are what you eat.'"

He continues reminding me that the incarnated moment we share is **bread for the world** and not just a select few ...

"The standing, structural proof that Christianity was intended to be an inclusive religion is that two-thirds of our Christian Bible is, in fact, the Jewish Bible! Further, our entire Bible is filled with stories, metaphors, images, and even names for God that were taken from pre-Jewish religions, pagan sources, secular history, and Greek philosophy. We [have become] more exclusionary that the authors of our Bible were ... When we are true to our Jewish sources, Jesus is easily seen as the **INCLUSIVE Son of God, inviting us to join him there. It seems we found it much easier to worship him than to imitate him ... The Eucharist is telling us that **God is the food and all we have to do is provide the hunger. If you are filled****

with your own opinions, ideas, righteousness, superiority, or sufficiency, you are a world unto yourself and there is no room for one another – not even a baby in a manger. Despite all our attempts to define who is worthy and who is not worthy to receive communion, our only ticket or prerequisite for coming to the communion is HUNGER. And, most often, sinners are much hungrier than the so-called saints."

Like flickering luminaries, Advent points us along a pathway to finding peace. A peace come to earth, Love divine all love excelling, in the Christmas truth. We come to that peace for a day in time, around a table with bread and wine, together. We come to be fed, and then to be and see it everywhere.

Many will come to worship on Christmas. Some will come as a long standing tradition for the family, gathered in the darkened church to hear the story of shepherds and angels, Mary and Joseph, and this baby Jesus. Some will come to be embraced by flickering candles, transported by the smell of wafting incense, singing "Silent Night" with others we may or may not see again. Some come to be in a place and with people they know will provide sanctuary, hope, and peace for the soul in this precarious and unsafe world. Some will come because they are hungry for hope, hungry for truth, hungry for something.

So, come and be fed. Come and abide, together. Come for sanctuary and story long told. Come and be fed, then feed the world in peace. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

With gratefulness always, your servant in Christ, Fr. Paul+

ECM Sunday & Holy Eucharist – Sunday, November 13, 2016

Each year, in the Fall and Spring terms, we set aside one Sunday to recognize our Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM) program and the students involved in leadership and service. On Sunday, November 13, 2016, Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM) students served as greeters, ushers, lectors, fellowship hosts, preacher, and acolytes at the 10:30 a.m. service.

ECM student and lifelong parishioner Colleen Murray was our preacher at the 8 and 10:30 a.m. services. Colleen has grown up amongst us and it was moving to hear God's word in her story.

Additionally, we were delighted to welcome home the Reverend Ann Urinowski as our guest celebrant at both services. The Rev. Ann Urinowski was one of Rev. Deacon Cecily Sawyer-Harmon's first ECM students so it was fitting that she was guest celebrant and was able to join us for Thanksgiving dinner after the service.

After the 10:30 a.m. service, the ECM advisory board hosted Thanksgiving dinner for the ECM students, Deacon Cecily and The Rev. Ann Urinowski.

We enjoyed the grace that we share as a vital partner with our university in our love and support of our Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM) students.

Holy Hearts and Helping Hands

We ask your prayers and help to purchase a gift card that could help provide a tank of gas or to buy some needed grocery staples at a local store. Please give them directly to Cami Seward or put in an envelope marked to Cami's attention and place in the offering plate.

**St. Thomas's Episcopal Parish
276 S. College Ave.
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**Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday
Church office hours 9:00 a.m. - 2:00
p.m.**