

September 2017

The Fisherman

Christian Prayer Provides Unity of Purpose

Fr. Reid

I am often asked about my view on prayer and thought I would share some thoughts. What is the difference between a person who says they don't need God in order to pray and a Christian who prays to God? Every human being "just" prays by virtue of continually processing ideas, thoughts, concerns and desires associated with the daily navigation of life. "Just" praying, however, has human limitations as compared to Christian prayer.

A Christian who prays invites God's interaction and consents to God's divine union through the personal relationship that we have with Jesus. We understand our life, identity and experience through Jesus of Nazareth - his life, death, and resurrection - who is simultaneously and inseparably human and God. Through Christian prayer, our Lord Jesus unites humanity in its frail and fallen state with His divine purpose of salvation.

Kenneth Leech states, "At heart prayer is a process of self giving and of being set free from isolation. To pray is to enter into a relationship with God and to be transformed by God and this relationship is close to the relationships we have with human beings. Many people however see prayer merely as asking God for things, pleading with a remote Being out of the needs and crises of the earth. Sometimes these pleas produce a response; often they do not. So prayer is seen in essentially functional terms - is it effective or not? Does it produce results? It is hardly surprising that we see prayer in this way. We live within a social order that is geared to the notion of efficiency and production as the supreme end of existence. But in order to pray well we need to disengage ourselves from this way of thinking." (*True Prayer*, p.6-7)

Each and every one of us has a need and/or desire for union and communion with God; it is often disguised in material desires that lead us to think we can pray on our own and get somewhere. Praying without including and inviting God is little more than talking to

(Continued on next page)

our selves. In actuality, when we feel the nudge to pray, we are experiencing God's grace at work in us. This grace will carry us deeply into the personal relationship that Jesus desires for us. This grace is also what draws us into community. As Christians, we cannot simply view our relationship with God as that which is separate from our relationship with each other. Through Christian prayer, our relationships with each other become our expression of our transforming relationship with God. These relationships are not separable, just as Jesus' divinity and humanity are not separable; Christian prayer is what unites us all.

This is a critical time for us as a collective Christian community to invite God's revealing love and fulfillment of His purpose, and to express thanksgiving for the grace that our Lord Jesus reveals through our intentional prayer life. If you are not already doing so, please consider beginning a prayer discipline, even if you begin with a brief ten minutes twice a day. Just as our individual vote counts in every political election, our disciplined involvement in divine union with God through prayer will direct our collective relationships and fulfill God's saving purpose for us. It is through cultivating our prayer life that we are more able to encounter and recognize the power of the living God's interaction in our relationships and in this world.

Praying is more than asking God for "things", it is consenting to the Lord who knows and unites us. We don't necessarily need God in order to pray, but if we desire clarity and unity of purpose, we must seek a divine union and personal relationship with Jesus. We cannot possibly achieve that sense purpose if we "just" pray to meet our individual needs. Jesus prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane for one purpose; he also prays with and for us today for that same purpose, that we "all may be one." (John 17:21) As we navigate life day in and day out, let us rely on the divine union that Jesus offers through praying with Him. TCCB.

-Fr. Reid

The Power of Prayer is amazing.

Praying lifts people emotionally and shares what is heavy on your heart with the Lord. There are many kinds of prayer, prayers of thanksgiving, prayer for scheduled surgery and healing for yourself, a loved one, friend or people you don't even know like those effected by Hurricane Harvey and those emergency responders.

Please take advantage of the prayer teams available here at St. Andrew's during communion. Our prayer teams have gone through training and anything you bring to Jesus through the team is held in the strictest of confidence.

I know there is great power in prayer and praising God. I try to always remember that God is in charge and He may not answer my prayers the way I would like but I will not stop praying because I don't get my way. His way is always better. I know that my life would not be what it is or where it is today without prayer. I hope you will take advantage of our prayer teams and experience the miracles God will perform in your life.

May God continue to Bless you,

Carol Armstrong

Hola

Another day in the neighborhood. If promises could be published, I could fill a New York City telephone book. What I have received from church members will barely fill a mattress ad pull-out in the Sunday supplement of the Podunk Post. Because of this, I have had to go far afield to find material to fill this edition of the Quarterly Fisherman. Several people have suggested to me that this publication should be monthly. If I cannot get enough support to do a quarterly edition, it is highly unlikely that a monthly edition would work.

On the musical front, the choir will be back on the Sunday after Labor Day. An interim organist and choir director has been hired. (See enclosed biography on her.) We are grateful to Fr. John Yoder and Sarah Brink for filling in over the summer. The Treasure Coast Symphony is again making St. Andrews their home for rehearsals. The concerts will be held in Martin County.

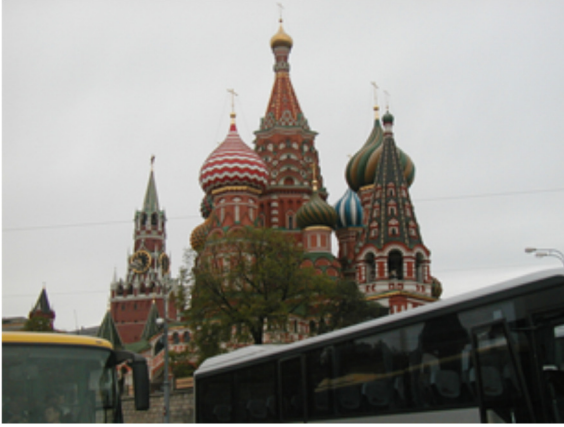
The Wednesday night program starts on the Wednesday after Labor Day. It will include a prayer service, dinner, teaching and a eucharist. It promises to be a valuable addition to our worship experience.

I have enclosed an article supplied by Bishop Nick Knisley of Rhode Island which looks at the Bible in a different way than I have looked at it. An interesting article which everyone should read. Also enclosed is an article by our presiding bishop which I lifted from the Living Church. In light of the storm in Texas, I have dug into my musty-dusty attic and repeated and enhanced an earlier article I wrote about hurricanes.

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Where do we find God's Glory?

People seek God in many places. Many prefer churches to satisfy their hunger to see God. I have had many “God moments” in a small country church in Rhode Island and in some of the massive medieval cathedrals I have visited in Europe and in Russia. Reading scripture is certainly another way to find God. John’s gospel is one of my favorite sources for contemplating divine reality, perhaps because, as a scientist, I can see how God’s power permeates all aspects of my thought processes.



All of the above are wonderful ways to grow closer to God, but as a naturalist I get closest to God by immersing myself in his creation. The psalmist says it best for me “Praise be to his glorious name forever, may the whole earth be filled with his glory” (Ps 72:19). Meditating on a high mountain filled with thousand-year old Bristlecone Pines or in a mosquito filled mangrove swamp watching little critters crawling in the mud and mangrove trees are truly spiritual moments for me. To me, this is the glory of God to the fullest. Man, by building his theme parks makes feeble attempts to duplicate what God has created. Not close and no cigar. The sight of a hundred foot Blue Whale surfacing next to a boat on which I was riding in the Pacific or seeing marine Iguanas sliding into the sea in the Galapagos is where I see God’s glory through his creation.

Many people do not have the desire to go “stomping” around in strange places to see how God’s glory permeates the world around them. It is just as easy to see this same glory by simply finding a quiet place in a wooded hammock or beach in our surrounding community. Pick up a piece of wet seaweed along a shoreline and see the myriad creatures which appear on your hand or kick open a rotten log and see how it is teeming with life. God’s glory is available for all, all one has to do is look.

David Mook

Why the Bible is worth reading if you're a progressive

Transmitted by Nick Knisely

By Adam Eriksen

On how a careful reading of the books of the Bible changes the way we view the world and redefines our neighborhood:

The Bible is progressive because it forces us to listen to the voice of the victim. Listening to the voice of the victim goes against most of human history, including the modern world. History is written by the winners, after all. The winners get to tell history from their perspective – a perspective which justifies their wars by demonizing their enemies.

But the Bible is told from the perspective of those who frequently lost in the ancient world. Cain killed his brother Abel and Abel's blood cries out from the ground. The enslaved Israelites cried out under their oppression and God heard their cry. The psalmist, the prophets, Jesus and the early Christians, they were all victims of violence. And yet, for the first time in human history, the Bible gives voice to those who were killed, conquered, and tortured.

God hears the cry of the oppressed. The Bible is progressive because it forces us to listen to that cry. Sometimes that cry makes us feel uncomfortable, like when the psalmist prays that the babies' of Israel's enemies will have their heads smashed against the rocks. I squirm when I hear that prayer, but it's a prayer with a historical context. Jerusalem was just conquered by the Babylonians, who destroyed the temple, homes, and villages. They enslaved and scattered the people throughout their empire. Before we get judgmental about such a prayer, we might ask ourselves how we would respond if anyone came to our nation, destroyed our homes, our way of life, and enslaved us. We might pray for a little revenge. We might even pray that the children of our enemies would be killed so that the generational cycle of violence might stop.



A Message to the Church from the Presiding Bishop

Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?

In this moment — when the stain of bigotry has once again covered our land, and when hope, frankly, sometimes seems far away, when we must now remember new martyrs of the way of love like young Heather Heyer — it may help to remember the deep wisdom of the martyrs who have gone before.

The year was 1967. It was a time not unlike this one in America. Then there were riots in our streets, poverty and unbridled racism in our midst, and a war far away tearing us apart at home. In that moment, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote a book, his last one, with a message that rings poignant today. It was titled, “Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?”

One of his insights then was that a moment of crisis is always a moment of decision. It was true then and is true now. Where do we go from here? Chaos? Indifference? Avoidance? Business as usual? Or Beloved Community?

I’m a follower of Jesus of Nazareth because I believe the teachings, the Spirit, the Person, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus have shown us the way through the chaos to true community as God has intended from the beginning.

Through the way of love, he has shown us the way to be right and reconciled with the God and Creator of us all. Through his way of love, he has shown us the way to be right and reconciled with each other as children of God, and as brothers and sisters. In so doing, Jesus has shown us the way to become the Beloved Community of God. St. Paul said it this way: “In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself” and now he has entrusted us with “the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:19).

I know too well that talk of Beloved Community, which Jesus was describing when he spoke of the kingdom of God in our midst, can be dismissed as nice but naive, idealistic yet unrealistic. I know that.

But I also know this. The way of Beloved Community is our only hope. In this most recent unveiling of hatred, bigotry, and cruelty, as Neo-Nazis marched and chanted, “The Jews will not replace us,” we have seen the alternative to God’s Beloved Community. And that alternative is simply unthinkable. It is nothing short of the nightmare of human self-destruction and the destruction of God’s creation. And that is unthinkable, too.

We who follow Jesus have made a choice to walk a different way: the way of disciplined, intentional, passionate, compassionate, mobilized, organized love intent on creating God’s Beloved Community on earth.

Maybe it is not an accident that the Bible readings for the Holy Eucharist this Sunday (Gen. 45:1-15; Isa. 56:1,6-8; Rom. 11:1-2a, 29-32; and Matt. 15:21-28) all point toward and bear a message of God’s passionate desire and dream to create the Beloved Community in the human family and all of the creation.

This Sunday and in the days and weeks to come, as we gather in community to worship God and then move about in our homes, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, social circles and more, we will be faced with a choice. I ask and invite us as congregations and individuals who are together the Episcopal Church of the Jesus Movement to intentionally, purposely, and liturgically rededicate ourselves to the way of Jesus, the work of racial reconciliation, the work of healing and dismantling everything that wounds and divides us, the work of becoming God’s Beloved Community. Resources that can assist us in doing this work are included with this message, including an adapted version of the Becoming Beloved Community vision that our church’s key leaders shared this spring. I urge you to spend time reflecting with them individually and in your churches.

Where do we go from here? Maybe the venerable slave songs from our American past can help us. In the midst of their suffering, they used to sing ...

*Walk together children
And don't you get weary.
Cause there's a great camp meeting
In the promised land.*

We will walk there ... together. We will make this soil on which we live more and more like God's own Promised Land. So God love you. God bless you. And let's all keep the faith.

Adapted from the [Office of Public Affairs](#)



Bonita R. Clark *Biography*

Bonita Clark is a Church Musician with expertise as organist, choral director, and liturgist. She has held church positions in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, California, and Ohio. As an organist, Bonita placed first in the 2010 University of Alabama Organ Competition. She has played in Master Classes with some of the leading organists in the field, presented Master Classes, and played recitals. As a liturgist, Bonita has created special liturgical services ranging from hymn festivals, to Lessons & Carols, to services featuring music of J.S. Bach. As a choral director, Bonita has worked with choirs of all ages and musical abilities. She has been a clinician and guest conductor, working with children and adults. She has also served on staff at a few of the RSCM Summer Courses.

In addition to Church Music, Bonita also frequently assists Music Educators with anything from teaching Band and Chorus classes, in their absence; to accompanying choral groups for concerts and competitions; to coaching and accompanying individual students preparing for Instrumental Solo & Ensemble Festival. She enjoys encouraging music students in their musical studies.

Bonita Clark is a native Floridian, born and raised in Florida's Panhandle. She attended Stetson University in Deland, FL, where she earned her Bachelor of Music Degree in Church Music, Organ. Her teachers included Paul Jenkins, Dr. Robert Fort, and Dr. Murray Somerville. Bonita is a member of the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians.

When not making music, Bonita enjoys time with her pets: Milo, a rescue dog, and Kitty Cat, who adopted Bonita and Milo. Bonita also enjoys cooking (especially baking!), movies, books, and sight-seeing.

Vergers Corner

People often ask Carl, our vergger: **What is a vergger?**

Maybe the FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions) will help.

What is a vergger?

A vergger is a person within the Church who assists the clergy in the conduct of public worship. It is said that the vergger serves the church in a ministry of welcome and the duties of the vergger vary from parish to parish. Verggers can be full-time or part-time, paid or volunteer. Their duties can be purely ceremonial or include other responsibilities such as parish administration, leadership of the worship committee, sexton, etc. He or she may serve in other capacities throughout the church; such as Sacristan, Acolyte Master, Sexton, Chalice Bearer, Lay Reader, Usher, Protector of the Procession, Doorkeeper, Grave Digger, Master of Ceremonies or anything else that the parish requires. The Office of Vergger dates back to the Middle Ages when the Vergger was the "Protector of the Procession." He led the procession into the church or cathedral, clearing the way for the procession and protecting it from vagabonds and animals that tried to attack it. Today, in many parishes and cathedrals you will see a vergger ceremonially leading the procession. The vergger wears a gown and carries a virge (Staff of Office) to help clear the way, and point the way for the procession.

Where did verggers originate?

The role of the vergger has its roots in the earliest days of the Church's history. It shares certain similarities with the former minor orders of "porter" and "acolyte." Generally speaking, in the olden days, verggers were responsible for the order and upkeep of the house of worship, including preparations for the liturgy, the conduct of the laity, and grave-digging. Although there is no definitive historical survey of the office of the vergger, evidence from Rochester, Lincoln, Exeter, and Salisbury Cathedrals indicates the existence of verggers as far back as the 16th century. A familiar sight today in parishes large and small, verggers have maintained the buildings and furnishings of the Church for many centuries. The Church of England Guild of Verggers (CEGV) was formed in 1932 as a fellowship of verggers within the Anglican Communion.

Are there really verggers today?

Yes! The contemporary role of the vergger is experiencing a rapid expansion within the Episcopal Church and in the Anglican Communion world-wide. Differing from the Church of England, where verggers are often full-time paid employees of the Church, verggers in America are more often volunteers with a special calling to the ordering and conduct of the church and the church's liturgy. Clergy have come to appreciate the ministry of verggers within their parishes. Verggers can relieve the clergy of the burden of liturgical detail so that they can concentrate on their duties to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments. No longer found only in cathedrals and large parishes, verggers are an asset to any worshipping community regardless of size or tradition. It is said there is a vergger in every congregation, whether one has been identified as such or not!

What do verggers wear?

Vergger paraphernalia can be as varied as the duties of the vergger! The basic vestment of a vergger is a black cassock. In some places, the cassock may be of another color such as purple at many cathedral parishes. Over the cassock (also known as street clothes), when performing a ceremonial function, the vergger might wear a gown. One type of gown is sleeveless and resembles a bishop's chimere; the other is cut more fully and resembles an academic gown.

What is a virge?

The virge is the staff that a vergger carries in procession. The name comes from the Latin "virga" which simply means a rod or staff; hence, a "verger" is one who carries a staff. The virge can trace its history back to the ceremonial maces carried before civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries. The Maces of State used in the House of Lords and the House of Commons of the British Parliament are examples of another modern use of the medieval symbols. Originally used to clear the way for processions (and control unruly choristers!), its use is now principally honorific. The size, style, and shape of a virge vary from place to place; but one end typically has a cross or other Christian symbol mounted on it. A longer variation of the virge is called the "beadle" originally used to lead academic processions.

What is the Verger's Guild of the Episcopal Church?

For many years, the few vergers scattered around the United States associated themselves with the Church of England Guild of Vergers. Then in 1988 an informal association of American vergers numbering about twenty, began to establish a network of mutual support and fellowship. One year later in 1989, thirty-two vergers gathered in Nashville to formally establish the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church on the feast of Saint Andrew. Since then, membership has continued to grow to over 1400 vergers across the country, with many having attended one of the annual conferences held by the Guild. Furthermore, diocesan chapters of the Guild have been organized in Miami, Atlanta, and Dallas, and others are in the formation stages. The Guild is an eclectic group of men and women who share a special vocation and ministry in Christ's Church.

What is the purpose of the Guild?

The purpose of the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church, as stated in the bylaws, is:

- To encourage, through the fellowship and work of the Guild, the sharing of ideas, skills, and pertinent information among the members;
- To promote communication between members of the Guild at all levels as a way of maintaining the pastoral, administrative, and liturgical traditions of the office of verger in the Episcopal Church;
- To provide mutual assistance by advice and counsel with on-the-job experienced by members of the Guild;
- To organize and promote courses of training in the office of verger problems;
- To foster a relationship between the clergy and vergers;
- To be open to the needs and concerns of the laity.

Are there other Guilds other than the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church?

Yes! There is the Church of England Guild of Vergers (also known as the CEGV). There are also many VGEC Chapters around the country which are organized by geographical region around Dioceses and Parishes.

Reflections from the Senior Warden

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of my personal experiences and lessons learned since becoming Senior Warden at the beginning 2016. Shortly after being named Senior Warden, Fr. John retired, which I knew would be happening. Your Vestry had three major challenges upon Fr. John's retirement. We had the pending Holy Week, we had to select an interim, and we had to select a New Rector Search Committee. Accomplishing these things required the commitment and dedication of many. By about June 1, 2016, I felt pretty good about what we had accomplished in our first four months of flying solo without a permanent rector. In fact, I felt so good about it that I became complacent thinking that Bishop Russ has things under control and my role as Senior Warden would be easier. What I didn't know then was that an intense period of learning and transformation was on our horizon.

I was certainly familiar with the term Servant Leadership and I thought that knew what it meant to be a Servant leader. That was until I realized that God sent Bishop Russ to St. Andrew's not only to be our Interim Rector, but to prepare us to be better Servants of God under the Rector that he will call to lead us into our next endeavor as a church family. Everyone knows about the changes that Bishop Russ made to services, some of which were received better than others. What many may not know is that the real transformation was with how he guided your Vestry to being a functional unit focused on Servant Leadership. The Vestry consisted of people with unique talents and skills and we were all very committed to our individual responsibilities. What Bishop Russ taught us was to let the Spirit of God guide us through our challenges. He did this by placing a greater emphasis on the spiritual aspects of our Vestry duties. We were all really good at tending to the business of the church, but what we lacked was the spiritual element. I distinctly remember the moment at which, I got it. The burden of being a Vestry member was gone, I truly looked forward to the work of the Vestry and being a Servant Leader. Bishop Russ truly brought me closer to God and I will always remember him and love him for that.

As we now welcome Fr. Reid and begin to foster God's Vision Our Mission, I encourage all to be Servant Leaders and not become complacent. Fr. Reid has proven in just a few months what a remarkable leader he is. He has pledged to love us and support us. He is our spiritual leader. He will guide us, but we all have a responsibility in the fulfillment of God's Vision for St. Andrew's. Your continued prayers, love and support are so appreciated and I just can't thank you enough.

In Christ,
Jeff Carver, Sr. Warden

Pastoral Care at St. Andrew's

Pastoral care is defined as an ancient model of emotional and spiritual support that can be found in all cultures and traditions. This ministry of caring is the heart of the church's life. At St. Andrew's, the pastoral care team is anchored by Father Reid and Reverend Sharon, and others assist as needed. Visits are made to parishioners in the hospital, rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, at home, and at end-of-life facilities. Counseling, prayers, phone calls, accountability, funerals, and weddings are also part of pastoral care. Referrals may be made to social service agencies, clinics, the Social Security or Medicaid offices, Veterans Affairs, Indian River State College, Learn to Read, support groups, etc.

Several groups and individuals support the pastoral care team in ministering both to parishioners and non-parishioners. These include but are not limited to: flower guild and flower delivery teams, lay Eucharistic visitors, healing prayer teams, prayer shawl ministry, the team who goes faithfully every Wednesday to Lake Forest Park and Broadmoor to conduct services for the residents, and the Daughters of the King who offer intercessory prayers for others upon request.

Please call us when you or a family member is going to or has been admitted to the hospital, someone is near death in your family, you are at home and not able to attend church, you have experienced a loss in your life, or a major change in your lifestyle is occurring. We do not have all the answers to life issues, but we want to come around you to support you, pray for you, stand by you during tragedies, and celebrate joyful events in your life.

A recent day for the pastoral care team included a funeral, praying with the parents of a premature baby in the neonatal intensive care unit at one of the local hospitals, visiting a parishioner's relative at the Hospice House, and making phone calls to shut-ins.

We are blessed to be a part of other's lives, and thank the Lord for this privilege and blessing.

Deacon Sharon Britcher

Hurricanes

June not only brings us a new rector, it is also the advent of hurricane season. I often think of hurricanes as groups of thunderstorms gone viral because the physics of their formation is the same. The driving force of these storms is heat. The energy that triggers these events is either from heating of the land surface or warm ocean waters. However, these sources are not the main powering forces.

Water vapor contains a tremendous amount of energy, called latent heat that is defined as the number of calories necessary to convert a fluid to its gaseous form to (water vapor contains about 540 calories of latent heat per gram). Since heat cannot be created or destroyed, the energy contained in the vapor needs to go somewhere and is released as heat energy. The other axiom that was drilled into my head as a high school student back in the Mesozoic was that expansion is a cooling process.

As humid air rises on a hot summer day, it expands and cools. As the water vapor chills, the moisture in the atmosphere condenses and releases tremendous amounts of energy (about 540 calories per gram) into the atmosphere, causing further heating and further expansion. This process can continue until the system reaches close to the stratosphere and produces the classic anvil shaped cloud tops seen in thunderstorms. This is clearly visible to anyone who steps outside on a hot summer afternoon and watches the clouds build. The sight can be quite impressive.

Over land and the ocean storm development can simply be a localized event, which generally stops when heating ceases at the end of the day. If conditions are ideal, this process can continue over a warm, humid ocean for a longer time. If enough thunderstorms are concentrated in a given area, hot, humid air can be drawn in to the system over a wider area of the ocean resulting in more saturated air being drawn into the system causing a further fueling of the developing storms. In larger systems, winds become deflected at an angle because of the rotation of the earth, resulting in the development of a tropical disturbance. In spite of the destruction that these storms cause, they provide an important mechanism for transporting oceanic heat from equatorial regions to the poles.

The recent storm in Texas was a result of several bad conditions. A warm core in the Gulf of Mexico caused rapid intensification just before making landfall. In addition, two high pressure areas over the American southwest and the southeast blocked the storm from moving northward resulting in days of excessive rain in Texas and Louisiana.

Presently, there are several potential catastrophic events that could befall the US. The Juan de Fuca plate off of the Oregon, Washington and Parts of British Columbia has the potential of shifting at the Cascadian fault, causing a major earthquake and tsunami in the Pacific northwest similar to what happened in Japan. The last trembler in that area was about magnitude 9.2. The fault break is very close to land making it doubtful that escape from the flooding could be avoided. There is also a string of active volcanoes stretching from northern California, two of which, Rainier and Hood, are adjacent to large cities. In addition, the Los Angeles area is long overdue for a major quake. Sleep tight.

Hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and other natural catastrophic events make this planet a fairly rough place to live but they all are results of the life sustaining processes need for life to survive. God has indeed given us an interesting world.

David Mook

The Last Page

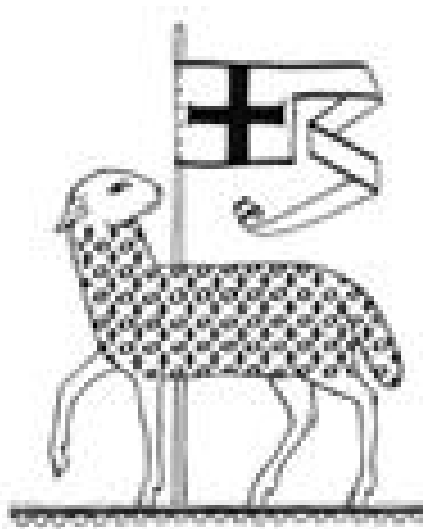
The Swastika

Several years ago, I visited an Episcopal church in New York City that was adorned with Tiffany stained glass windows. Some of these windows contained images of swastikas, which of course piqued my interest. Why swastikas? The building was constructed in the 19th century, long before Nazis were ever heard of. In further researching the issue, I discovered that the swastika is a very ancient symbol dating back almost 12,000 years and was used extensively on the Indian Subcontinent by various religions as a symbol of good fortune and hope. It was also used by some Native American cultures.

The swastika was adopted by the early Christian church and iterations of the figure can be found in ancient Roman catacombs and Byzantine structures. Christians had many interpretations for the swastika. One prevailing explanation that I like is that it represents Christ's body being broken for us in order that we have victory over death.

In the early 1920's, Hitler's Nazi party "hijacked" the swastika, changing it from a symbol representing basically good fortune and Christ's love to one of division and hate. Unfortunately, this is what most people believe that it denotes today. In light of the present turmoil surrounding the figure today, I seriously doubt that there is much hope in resurrecting its original intent today. I write this piece only to inform readers that the swastika was not always a symbol of hate and division. Long before Hitler, it had a totally opposite meaning.

David Mook





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St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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The Church Office will be closed
for the Labor Day Holiday on 4
September.