

The Messenger...August, 2017

*A publication of St. James on the Lake Episcopal Church
in Covenant with the Anglican Communion*

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FR. MELTON'S MUSINGS...

Why are you a Christian? Why do you attend St. James? Why do you live your life as you do? What is your WHY? Do you know? More specifically WHY are we a church? The Church's WHY is very simple. The self-evident reason that the Church exists is to help its members KNOW GOD, so that we can make God known. It's not about how much we learn ABOUT God, but how well we KNOW God, as in developing a relationship with the Lord. Anything less and we're just a religious club.

Our WHY is vital for us to know because it inspires and influences all the decisions, actions, thinking and behavior in our personal life, parish life and community life. It's the driving force behind everything. If our WHY is just an afterthought, then we're likely engineering our own agenda based on personal preferences alone.

We come to KNOW God to the extent that we choose to participate in the full life of the Church, the Body of Jesus Christ, of which we are members and Jesus is the head (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The physical presence of Jesus on earth, the Church, is much more than a building or religious institution. The Church is the organic gathering of God's people, where the Holy Spirit lives and moves, to teach, convict, inspire, forgive, heal, convert, strengthen, feed and empower us to become more like Jesus. None of us can do this alone. And no one here is expendable. God's plan is for each of our gifts to work in coordination with one another and the Holy Spirit, drawing us closer to Jesus, so that we grow into a more mature knowledge of God. We can then discern his guiding voice, and recognize God's love made known through God's people both now and from all times (2 Peter 3:18).

Jesus' first sermon is "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Christians are to spend our whole life repenting, like breathing. We start by asking God to heal, forgive and reorient us toward himself time and again. The Greek word for repent is "metanoia" meaning literally "to change one's mind." This is important because thoughts determine behavior. We repent, or change our mind, more and more until we attain the mind of Christ more fully by our thinking (Romans 12:2).

LOOKING UP

REACHING OUT

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That's another reason we need one another. The Church already has the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). But as individuals, we don't. The Bible, the sacraments, the liturgy, the prayers, the spiritual disciplines, and especially the Holy Eucharist, all express the mind of God in Jesus Christ. We belong to Jesus' Body in a very real way, but if we separate from the Body, our souls will begin to shrivel up.

The Church is the vine of life. By maintaining communion, everywhere we go we are the Church. We bring Christ's Body with us in every breath we take as we witness for Jesus and glorify the Father in union with the Church. Always surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, we never go or do anything alone, even when we go by ourselves. Christians always have the Church watching our back. "Lone Rangers" are not truly real; they're more like phantoms. One cannot be a Christian outside of the Church in the fullest sense because at our baptism, we're grafted into the Body of Jesus himself, where Jesus is made present to us most clearly in the visible Church (Romans 11:11-32), so that we can be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). We become by grace what Jesus is by nature from the nurture we receive through the Body of Christ.

In John's gospel, Jesus says that God so loved the world that he gave his only son—WHY?—so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life (John 3:16)! And what is eternal life? "This is eternal life, that you KNOW the only true God, and the one he has sent, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). So, as we come to KNOW God (not just know ABOUT God), we also come to personally know God's love. We're then inspired to love God back and to love all that God loves in the same way that Jesus loves. That includes people we don't like and those who are even our worst enemies.

St. Silouan, an early 20th century Russian monk, said we know we have a mature faith when we love our enemies. Until then, God's still got a lot of work to do with our formation. We begin to change our way of thinking when we allow God's light to shine on our deep and painful inner wounds and our repetitive sins that are caused by our spiritual sickness. The better we KNOW ourselves, the more aware we are of our need to repent. Repentance results in receiving the grace to be transformed in our minds and hearts, so we come to KNOW God even better, and become more like him.

KNOWING God leads to an enthusiastic (en-thus = in-God) desire to make God known to others because then we actually have the personal knowledge, experience and natural inclination to do just that. Acts of love are the fruit of faith. But the WHY that drives those acts begins with knowing God, then making him known. Do you know how your personal WHY fits into the Church's WHY? How are you being called to KNOW God and make God known? That's the gift of eternal life!

Fr. Randy+

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...the Church, is much more than a building or religious institution. The Church is the organic gathering of God's people, where the Holy Spirit lives and moves, to teach, convict, inspire, forgive, heal, convert, strengthen, feed and empower us to become more like Jesus.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR AUGUST ...

- 9th Daughters of the King – 4:30 pm
Praise & Worship – 7:00 pm
- 30th Evening Prayer and Parish Dinner – 6:00 pm

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ONGOING EVENTS...

- Men’s Reunion Group – Every Tuesday @ 7:00 am
- Women’s Reunion Groups – 1st and 3rd Tuesday/month @ 9:00 am and 5:00 pm
- Prayer Group – Every Tuesday @ 4:00 pm
- Men’s Bible Study – 2nd and 4th Monday/month @ 6:30 pm
- Men’s Bible Study – Thursday @ 6:00 pm **ON HIATUS UNTIL FALL**
- Evening Prayer and Parish Dinner – last Wednesday/month @ 6:00 pm
- Daughters of the King – 2nd Sunday/month @ 4:30 pm
- Praise and Worship – 2nd Sunday/month @ 6:00 pm

SUNDAY MORNING MINISTRIES AUGUST...

Remember, it will be up to you to get a replacement if you cannot fulfill your obligation.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Greeters</i>	<i>Altar Guild</i>	<i>Acolyte</i>	<i>Crucifer</i>	<i>Lesson Reader</i>	<i>Chalice</i>	<i>Coffee Hour</i>	<i>Sunday School</i>	<i>Fred</i>
6	O’Connors	Nancy Willene	Terry	Bill	Sunny Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99 or 99:5-9; 2 Peter 1:13-21; Luke 9:28-36	Paul Gail	Gail Deanna Dawn	Young kids: Gail Older kids: Bob	Phil
13	Davises	Nancy Willene	Art	Terry	Marian Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28; Psalm 105, 1-6, 16-22, 45b; Romans 10:5-15; Matthew 14:22-33	Bill Paul	CarolM Annette Dot	Young kids: Kelley Older kids: In church	Vicki
20	Jenkinses	Sharon Denise	Gary	Tina	Ray Genesis 45:1-15; Psalm 133; Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32; Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28	Gail Sharon	SusanD Patsy RitaF	Young kids: Martha Older kids: Linda	Paul
27	Tissy Gail	Sharon Denise	Paul	Phil	Kelly Exodus 1:8-2:10; Psalm 124; Romans 12:1-8; Matthew 16:13-20	Sharon Bill	RitaD Bari Claire	Young kids: Sharon Older kids: In church	CarolM

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AUGUST BIRTHDAYS...

1	JoAnne Tuttle	15	Josey & Mallory Scott
4	Jackie Weems		Barbara Austin
6	Hannah Gowan	18	Dawn Striplin
9	Tina Wage	19	Debi Jost
10	Jim Dill	21	Sandy Hale
11	Valerie Stacy	29	Denise Waldrep
	Fr. Randy		Canon Jerry Morriss
			Rose Mary Blaase



AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES ...

2	Marshall & Nancy Barton
11	Phillip & Kelley Boughton
23	Gil & Deanna Drab



AUGUST MEMORIALS...

1	Burke Stanard	22	O. D. Hankins
	Helen Hedden	23	Barbara Acquisto
6	Buzzy Hale		Dale Holt
8	Ryland Bradley	26	A. P. Waldrep
12	Lena Wilcox	27	Al Olsen
14	Ed Corbett		Denice Denton
17	Lois Olsen	28	Jack Moffitt
20	Joyce Hankins		Dennis Lane
21	Ola Stout		

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