



ADVENTures *a weekly newsletter*

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September 13, 2020 The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Worship with the Diocese of Albany at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjVmrEwtur7R8akk7Drd9TQ>

At Advent

Worship is scheduled for Sundays at 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. We will be celebrating the Holy Eucharist with a special service.

Matthew 18:21-35 The Challenge of Forgiveness

I am not great at making oatmeal. It shouldn't be that difficult, but I invariably end up with lumps. So, I have found that adding raisins is a great idea. It tends to mask the lumps! I prefer smooth oatmeal. At the heart of the faith, there are some lumps. Every Sunday, we ask not only for forgiveness of our debts, but we pray that we will forgive our debtors. Do we really believe that? Or is that a lump we disguise in different ways?

I think we do the same with forgiveness. Let me tell you three of the ways we try to disguise that. The first is by saying "look how I serve God in all of these ways." Are there people in your life, even at Advent that you have difficulty forgiving? Are you compensating by thinking about the good things you are doing or have done?

There is a second way of disguising our difficulty with Jesus' teaching on forgiveness. I know people who have left a church because they know in their heart that they cannot forgive a certain person. They know what Jesus' teaching is and it is the higher road to leave. Even then, have they dealt with the real unresolved heart?

Then, there's the third way of disguising this lump. We say that we believe what Jesus said. We're to forgive others, but there are exceptions. If the injustice against us is quite serious, who could be asked to forgive such an offense? If somebody does this thing to us or others repeatedly, how can we forgive more than once; aren't we simply encouraging the behavior? Unless we are able to at least move toward the work of forgiving the person, even if the person does not deserve our forgiveness, this can affect both our mental and spiritual health.

In this week's Gospel, Peter had done his math. It was tradition that you could forgive three times, but not four. It came likely from the misreading of Amos 1, where it was understood that God only forgives three times for the same offense. Peter took the three, doubled it and added one. Who could ask more than that? He came up with the number of completeness.

Jesus said to him, "No! Seven times seventy. It was a way of saying infinity. This is similar to Buzz Lightyear: "to infinity and beyond!" Jesus was using the numbers to say don't put limits on your forgiveness because God hasn't put limits on forgiveness and mercy toward you.

Then Jesus tells a parable. A middle eastern king is offended by a subject who owes ten thousand talents, which was the largest number used in everyday math and the largest number used in financial dealings. This person owed him everything: the whole ranch. He begged forgiveness and the king forgave the debt. Then, in the same scene the forgiven person he goes forth from the grace of forgiveness, and sees somebody that is in to him for a hundred, not ten thousand. He will not forgive and comes down hard on him. The punishment by the one who will not forgive, but is lavishly forgiven, is incredibly disappointing.

The truth is that we punish ourselves; we cut ourselves off from the free flow of God's grace when we don't forgive. It's not the person who needs our forgiveness who has the most difficult time. We are the ones. If you forgive a person who has wronged you, mercy and grace are added to your life. If we don't forgive, our life becomes a study in subtraction. We become smaller and smaller. There is an epitaph in an Atlanta cemetery that a woman had inscribed on the tomb of her adulterous husband. It said, "Gone, but not forgiven." When we do not forgive, do the math. We become less and less, instead of more and more.

The Lord Jesus bless you this week,

Pastor Paul Laursen

This Week at Advent

Sunday, September 13

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Monday, September 14

Tuesday, September 15

7:00 p.m. Vestry Meeting

Wednesday, September 16

7:00 a.m. Men's Bible Study at Advent
7:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Prayer Group
7:00 p.m. The Praise Community

Thursday, September 17

7:00 p.m. Dar's Happy Hour Zoom Meeting

Sunday, September 20

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Server Schedule Today, September 13

8:00 a.m.

Assistant Dick McCormick

10:00 a.m.

Assistant Denise Geyer-Keller

Lector Denise Geyer-Keller

Prayers of the People Denise Geyer-Keller (Form 2)

Ushers Jan & Jerry Nagy

Intercessory Prayer Bev Cummings

Counter Anne Crothall (9/14)

Close Advent Peter Meckes

Next Sunday, September 20

8:00 a.m.

Assistant Kathleen Huffman

10:00 a.m.

Assistant Denise Geyer-Keller

Lector Denise Geyer-Keller

Prayers of the People Denise Geyer-Keller (Form 3)

Ushers Jim Edwards & Max Gage

Intercessory Prayer Ray Busony

Counter Anne Crothall (9/21)

Close Advent Denise Geyer-Keller

Prayer Request

Health and Recovery

Lillian Kwasny	Dave Luptak	Joan Joye
Mary Lou Dixon	Marilyn Decker	Stacey Smith
Bob Allen	Karen Zolar	Rose Walker
Barb Frank	Lois Zolar	Arthur Beel
Michael Uhrich	Sharon Rice	George Belinsky
Bill & Judy Arkley	Steve Boyce	Shirley Moore
Marcia Duennes	Bruce Finch	Lucille Benedict

Friends of Advent

Toni Kulma, wife of	Pastor Kulma	Fr. Richard Lutz
Ken and Jim		Betty Clark

Eliza Jennings residents
Liz Schilling, friend of JoAnn Beck
Pastor Joyce Williams, friend of Bev Cummings
Stella, friend of Bev Cummings
Tina, friend of Bev Cummings
Jan, friend of Bev Cummings
Residents of Pinzone Tower
Will Hayes, friend of Cynthea Sabolich

Safety Protection

David Arkley, Detective for Cleveland Police
Son of Bill & Judy Arkley
Rachel Moffitt, ER Nurse daughter of Bill & Judy Arkley

Please contact the church office if you would like your name added or removed from our list.

National and Global Day of Prayer and Repentance, Sept 26, 2020:

Ray Busony, Paul Laursen and I deeply hold the belief that America is in deep trouble, has lost its spiritual way, is following “too much the devices and desires of our own hearts”, and that America as a country and its people are not following the Lord’s commands and decrees. Finn Laursen, a leader in The Praise Community, shares these convictions. We are convinced this is a critical time in our history and in our lives as believers. You’ve frequently heard 2 Chronicles 7:14 but we believe it is so foundational especially now. Several of us have been led to prophetic announcements from teacher, rabbi and Messianic Jew Jonathan Cahn. He has written books including The Harbinger, The Paradigm, and The Oracle. His writings are grounded in numerous, numerous Biblical references. He is a modern-day prophet. He and others are organizing a National and Global Day of Prayer and Repentance on September 26 to be held on the Mall in Washington DC. The Board of Trustees includes Pat Robertson, Kevin Jessip, Anne Graham Lotz (Billy Graham’s daughter), Dr. Alveda King (Martin Luther King’s niece), and James Dobson. I encourage you to visit the website <https://thereturn.org/> and experience for yourself what is planned. The Return is a movement, an appointed time, and a specific day set apart for one purpose – the return to God by coming before His presence in humility, in sincerity in prayer, and repentance.

Advent will be a simulcast site for this event on September 26. Right now, we’re not sure what impact COVID-19 social distancing will have but we’ve got time to sort this out. Please add your prayers for the Lord to do powerful works leading up to and during this time of prayer.

Please use the sign-up slips on the Usher’s stand to let us know you will be attending.

Regards,
Dick

Holy Eucharist Restart!

Bishop Hollingsworth has authorized a resumption of our participation in Holy Eucharist starting September 6. This is welcome news! The following are guidelines we will follow during this restart:

1. All involved in preparation and celebration will wear masks and thoroughly wash hands before handling elements and vessels.
2. Paul will set the table and be the only person to stand at it for the Great Thanksgiving. There will be no acolyte or chalice bearer.
3. Paul will handle the elements, and only after thoroughly cleansing his hands with sanitizer. This is what he has been doing.
4. Only Paul will consume the “Priest Host” and the wine.
5. Baptized communicants may consume the wafers brought to the table for consecration in a covered container. It shall remain covered through consecration until distribution.
6. Communicants will not receive the wine, only Paul.
7. Distribution will be in front of the altar. We will not kneel at the altar rail.
8. Ushers will release communicants from pews row by row as normal.
9. Communicants will come forward individually and in single file, wearing masks, and practicing safe distancing of at least 6 feet.
10. Paul will place the consecrated wafer into the open hand of the communicant.
11. The communicant may either:
 - * lift the mask, consume the sacrament, replace the mask, and return to the pew, providing as much safe distancing as possible, or
 - * leave the mask in place, receive the wafer, return to the pew, and commune the wafer in the pew.

We are grateful for this important step as we move toward a day when we can worship and have fellowship together in an historical and normal manner. Some continue to choose not to worship corporately. This individual and family decision is honored, respected, and not judged. We endorse the individual freedom to worship and participate in services in the ways most comfortable for each believer. Hopefully all will feel this small step forward helps to mitigate fear and despair that so permeates our culture right now. Peace be with you!

Regards,
Dick