

The Spire

Newsletter of the Church of the Resurrection
A Welcoming and Inclusive Faith Community

November 2009

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Message from the Rector

Beginnings and Challenge

Advent, the season marking the beginning of a new church year, begins Sunday, November 29th. This new liturgical year inaugurates a cycle that conveys both natural and theological understandings.

Advent begins as autumn wanes. The harvest has been brought in. Days are colder and darkness falls ever more deeply. Our ancient forbears must have worried whether their stocked supplies were sufficient to withstand the cold, threatening winter to come. For early Christians, winter's physical threat must have sharpened John the Baptist's challenge to repent while there still might be time.

Many of us don't worry about surviving the winter. We have, many of us, heat enough and food enough to tide us over until spring. Some of us worry more about which version of video game we'll present to our children or grandchildren. Many more of us still worry about how to pay the mortgage or rent.

This may be as timely a year as any to just quit giving things to family, children and other people who simply don't need trinkets or video games. This is the time to give in honor of our loved ones to Episcopal Relief and Development, or the Red Cross, or the Heifer Project, and put our money to good and lasting use. Let's find ways of giving back to our communities with our money, our energy, and our time.

John the baptizer minced no words. He called the people gathering for ritual baptism to a life of conscious awareness both of God and community. John demanded that they, and by implication, *we*, look fearlessly into the mirror, to see what is there and *not* there, and to make needed changes.

Advent is the season of change. Advent reminds us that it is never too late to make the changes in our lives that, for the sake of the world and our souls, we need to make.

A Good Advent to you all.

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*Have you let your light
shine?*

Please keep in your prayers:

Gia Adams Brandon Baker
Ryan & Veronica Byrnes
Irene Cole
Eleanor, Peter & Janet Dickey
Eileen Falkenborg
Amy Ford Peggy Green
Claudette Hark Lewis Heald
Harold & Stella Hurt
Suzanne Kortus Andy LaChance
Genevieve LaRusso
Sandra Ann Mark
Fred & Mary Moody
Betty Moubray Dolores Pearson
Natalie Richards Judie Vajda
Valverde-Rodriguez family
Barbara Weber Nicholas White
Will Williams

*Names on the Prayer List are shown
for one month, unless you let us know
they should be retained for longer.*

*Pray for those currently
serving in the armed services
around the world:*

Gavin Amy
Galo Barrezueta Cody Bergen
Jason Hull
Robert Hull Mark Latham
Darius Malveaux Thomas Moore
Meera & Michael Noe
Charles O'Brien Eric Wiese

*We extend our sympathy to
the family and friends of those
who have died.*

Marty Paone Zanna Landolt
Ansley Starr Ken Bruntel
Jimmy Danford
Sophia Wilkes
Mary Jaworski Bedosky
Al Caffo Dorothy Graham
Betty Gail Elliott

*Rest eternal grant to them, O
Lord; And let light perpetual
shine upon them.*

ADVENT DINNER, SILENT AUCTION AND ART SHOW ON DECEMBER 5

This year's advent dinner will be held on Saturday, December 5 and will include the now traditional silent auction with a new art show component. As in the past we will be soliciting donations to the silent auction from local businesses. You can send your suggestions for businesses to be approached to Kat Turner at ksturner@aamc.org or 703-750-3137 (evenings). Or, if you are a good client of the business, it might make sense for you to make the approach directly; Kat can give you a sample letter that you can use. Although the donations from local restaurants and businesses got a good response at last year's auction, some of the most fiercely contested items were those donated by imaginative parishioners. Begin thinking now of what themed "basket" you might want to put together for this event. To get your creative ideas flowing, here are two possibilities:

Valentine Day's Celebration: chocolates, champagne, and scented candles

Rainy Weekend Special: some good books to read, English Breakfast Tea and mug, and cookies.

The new addition to this year's event is an art show being coordinated by Judy Isaacs. If you are a Resurrection artist or friend you will be able to show your work for display, sale or both. Payment will be made to church of the Resurrection for the price of the item. The artist will donate 20% of their sales to the church. Please contact Judy Isaacs at 703/578-3678 prior to the middle of November if you would like to participate. We will have forms available for the name of the artist, name of the work and pricing information. There may be a limit to the number of items to display, depending on the type of art.

Michelle McBride is coordinating the dinner planning, so please contact her if you can help with set up or/and cleanup. 703-988-9564 The dinner is \$25 per person and there are scholarships available. You can make your reservation by calling the office or signing up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board. Reservation deadline is Sunday, Nov. 29

Mark the event on your calendar and begin thinking about how you can participate in this fun event to support our parish community.

**ADD YOUR HANDS OF
THE LORD TO THE
TREE!**

HOLIDAY OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

ANNUAL COAT COLLECTION

It's that time of the year again....the weather is turning cool, and perhaps some of us are cleaning out our hall closets. During the month of November there will be a collection box in the front hall at Resurrection for gently used coats for adults and children. These coats will be taken to Weichert Realtors in Reston and then in turn cleaned by Bergmann Cleaners before being distributed to those in need in our Northern Virginia communities. Please take a few moments to consider if you have coats or jackets that you no longer use and would be willing to donate. Remember to check the pockets for hidden surprises, and then bring these much appreciated items to Resurrection any Sunday in November, and they will be prepared to spread warmth throughout the holidays and new year.

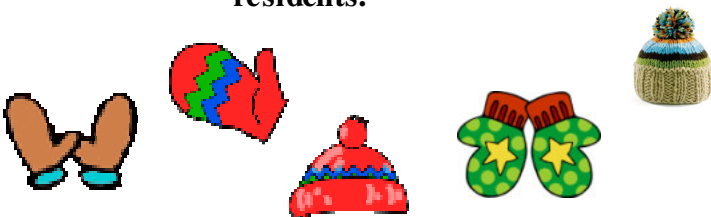
If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth White at 703-354-3166.

WALK FOR THE HOMELESS

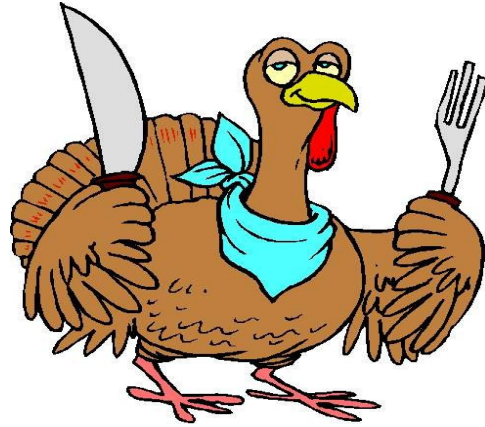
We support our ALIVE! House friends by walking on the National Mall on Saturday, November 21 in the Fannie Mae Help the Homeless Walkathon. If you would like to walk or sponsor a walker, please tell Maureen Bryant our ALIVE! representative at maureen229@yahoo.com

Mittens and Hats

During December, we will again have a mitten tree in the narthex where you may place new mittens, gloves, and hats for adults. (Children are already provided for.) These warm items are given to Carpenter's Shelter residents.



e-mail: rector@welcometoresurrection.org



TURKEYS

For the last several years, we have helped provide a turkey to each family who comes for the ALIVE! Holiday Food Distribution, which will take place in our church on December 12. We are serving more needy families than ever before and we hope to make their holiday meals more substantial with this gift. To contribute, please write a check to the church and indicate "Turkeys for ALIVE!" in the memo-line. There will be no food distribution in November.

Network Pre-School Gifts

We will be supporting a classroom of children and their families with Christmas Gifts again this year. Network Pre-School is a nationally acclaimed and accredited school providing caring high-quality free education to at-risk children and their families, empowering them for success in school and life. They currently serve over 200 children and their families at 5 program sites in Alexandria and Arlington. We will receive the names of children and their family members in November and you may participate by taking a child's name and buying and wrapping Christmas presents for them. We help make the holidays very special for these special children.

office@welcometoresurrection.org

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November

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
8 23 Pentecost 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2 11:20 am – Forum 1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave) 7:00 pm-Focus Inn	9 7:30pm—Circle of Prayer (Library)	10 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Evening Bible Study (Library)	11 VETERNS' DAY Office closed 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	12 5:30 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	13 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	14
15 24 Pentecost 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2 11:20 am – Forum 1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	16 7:30pm—Circle of Prayer (Rector's Office) 7:30 pm—Vestry Meeting (Library)	17 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Evening Bible Study (Library)	18 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	19 5:30 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall) 7:15 pm—Ministry of Healing (Library)	20 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	21
22 Last Sunday after-Pentecost 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1 With Healing 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2 With Healing 11:20 am – Forum 1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	23 7:30pm—Circle of Prayer (Library)	24 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Evening Bible Study (Library)	25 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	26 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed 10:00 am Thanksgiving Joint Service with Meade Memorial	27 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	28
29 First Sunday of Advent 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2 11:20 am – Forum 1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	30 7:30pm—Circle of Prayer (Library)	1 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Evening Bible Study (Library)	2 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	3 5:30 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	4 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	5 6:30 pm—ADVENT DINNER (Parish Hall)
6 Second Sunday of Advent 8:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 1 10:00 am – Holy Eucharist Rite 2 11:20 am – Forum 1:00 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	7 7:30pm—Circle of Prayer (Library)	8 8:00 am – Bible Study (Parish Hall) 7:30 pm - Evening Bible Study (Library)	9 7:30 pm - Choir Rehearsal (Nave) 8:30 pm – AA (Parish Hall)	10 5:30 pm - Boy Scouts (Parish Hall)	11 7:30 pm – Iglesia Nueva Vida (Nave)	12 8:30 am ALIVE! Food Distribution

November Birthdays

If we have not listed your birthday, please contact the parish office, and we will add it to our records.

11/03 Marion Earle
 11/06 Lyn Hainge
 11/10 Margaret Green
 11/16 Peggy Tiedemann
 11/18 Richard Robinson
 11/20 Lori Thurgood
 11/22 Samuel Guyidde
 11/25 Walter Boyden
 11/25 Samuel Dillon
 11/28 Stephanie Pile
 11/30 Jane Williams
 11/30 Ester Kagulu

2009 Vital Statistics

2009 Budget \$268,579

Income

Budget: (Jan.-Sept.) \$201,434
 Actual: (Jan.-Aug.) \$189,377
 Over/Under Budget: (12,057)

Expenses

Expenses: (Jan.-Sept.) \$198,979
 Collections (Jan.-Sept.) \$189,377
 Difference: (9,602)

“Thank you” to each of you for your generosity and continual support in helping to meet our budget for 2008.

Attendance

September 20 106
 September 27 114
 October 4 103
 October 11 86
 October 18 91
 October 25 100
 November 1 157

Church of the Resurrection

Betsy Faga, *Register*
 Frances Williamson, *Treasurer*

Vestry 2009

Larry Dye, *Senior Warden*
 Kat Turner, *Associate Senior Warden*
 Terry Kester, *Junior Warden*
 Judy Isaacs *Associate Junior Warden*
 Bob Barnett
 Jacki Bracewell
 Kenneth Gay
 Kathy Graham
 Lawrence Huskin
 Michelle McBride
 Kathy Parnell
 Susan Weber

Upcoming Sunday Services

November 8, 2009	November 15, 2009	November 22, 2009	November 29, 2009	December 6, 2009
23 Pentecost	24 Pentecost	Last Sunday After Pentecost	First Sunday of Advent	Second Sunday of Advent
8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1	8:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 1
10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2	10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2	10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2	10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2	10:00 am Holy Eucharist, Rite 2
Readings:	Readings:	Readings:	Readings:	Readings:
1 Kings 17:8-16	Daniel 12:1-3	Daniel 7:9-10;13-14	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Baruch 5:1-9
Psalms 146	Psalms 16	Psalms 93	Psalms 25:1-9	Canticle 4
Hebrews 9:24-28	Hebrews 10:11-25	Revelation 1:4b-8	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13	Philippians 1:3-11
Mark 12:38-44	Mark 13:1-8	John 18:33-37	Luke 21:25-36	Luke 3:1-6
<i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<i>Chase Danford preaching</i>	<i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>	<i>Anne Ritchie preaching</i>

Ingathering Sunday is November 8

Community Forum Change

The Community Forum originally scheduled for October 4 was postponed so it would not conflict with the annual pet blessing. The Community Forum series began on November 1 with the presentation on emergency preparedness, led by Bob Naismith. The forum on getting one's affairs in order will be held in January.

No Community Forum will be held in December because of the annual parish meeting, but they will resume in January. Please share your ideas for future topics and speakers with Kat Turner (ksturner@aamc.org) or any member of the vestry.

PLEASE MAKE A FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO RESURRECTION. OUR VISIBLE COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER AND THE COMMUNITY DEPENDS ON IT!

Want to Visit the Holy Land?

The Diocese of Virginia is organizing a pilgrimage to Jerusalem February 22—March 10, 2010. They will be staying at St. George's College, plus one night in Galilee and attending their "Palestine of Jesus" course. This is part of the Jerusalem Mile Project, a new effort to help people in the diocese of Virginia become effective partners for peace with the church in Israel-Palestine through pilgrimage, mission and education. Space is limited. Get information and register on line at www.thediocese.net.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM

I quote from an article in the September issue of "American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem"--which may be read online at www.afedj.org. Christ School is an example of the Diocese's major concern for children's education in an atmosphere of interreligious understanding. "Christ School Rises Above Nazareth" is the headline. "Fourteen hundred hard-working students are crammed into the beautiful Christ School campus perched above Nazareth. The waiting list is long... Christian and Muslim kids study computer programming, English, physics, and other disciplines, preparing them for good jobs and a real future, but space is so limited that classes are occasionally held outside and in corridors. The Diocese made the bold decision to expand, allowing more families access to the values taught here. Bishop Dawani is counting on the generosity of donors to support construction cost for an eight classroom addition." We might want to bear Christ School in mind as we consider the annual St. Nicholas Day (December 6) promotion of giving to the AFEDJ. The patron saint of children--the real Santa Claus--is an appropriate saint for needy children today. The meaning of giving can appropriately be part of our Advent preparation for Christmas. Children, and all the rest of us, can ponder the joy of giving gifts in response to God's self giving to us in Jesus.

This year December 6 falls on the Second Sunday of Advent, which rather neatly ties together the Saint and the Season! If you wish to support Christ School, or the work of the Diocese in general, checks may be made out to: AFEDJ and mailed to this NEW office address: American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem

25 Old King's Highway North, Suite 13
Darien, CT 06820

Secure donations may also be made at: www.afedj.org



SERMONS

ONE THING YOU LACK

By H. Vance Johnson, Jr.
19th Sunday after Pentecost

The gospel story today is one of the most familiar stories of the New Testament and one of the most difficult - both for what it says about those who are wealthy - and for what it says about who in fact can inherit eternal life, who in fact can enter the Kingdom of God.

A man, who is according to Matthew "young" and according to Luke is "a ruler among his people" approaches Jesus with a question. "*Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?*" It is a question which reveals a lot about the man.

This is a rich man it seems who doesn't have much to worry about in his life. His mortgage is paid off. His creditors have been paid. His investment portfolio is brimming over with only blue chip properties. He is truly blessed in the ways that most people count blessings. And he wants even more: he wants the blessings of eternal life - he wants to enter the Kingdom of God in this life and the next.

I don't have any doubts about the sincerity of this man. Jesus sees in him a genuine yearning. His question shows that he knows something is missing in his life. He is sensitive to the possibility that there is something beyond what he already knows and he is reaching out to find it. When Jesus asks him if he has kept the commandments - and in particular those that relate to how we treat one another - Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother, -- he responds that he has kept them all faithfully from the days of his childhood -- and Jesus, we are told, looked at him and loved him.

Jesus tells the man that he lacks one thing, "*Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor*", Jesus says, "*and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.*" Take note of the **full** message here. In the first part of the message, he says "Go, sell everything and give it to the poor", and that is the part of the message that most arrests our attention. But notice also the second part of his

message. He loved the man so much that he says to him, what he said to Peter, Matthew, James, John, and the rest of the 12 disciples, "*Come, follow me.*" He is inviting the man to become one of the inner circle of his most trusted followers. Clearly Jesus thought the man had great potential.

In this story, I don't believe that Jesus was making a generalized prescription for everyone. He was not suggesting that poverty is a requirement or an ideal for everyone. Rather, he looked on this sincere man and loved him as an individual who had a very specific specialized need. Seeing that need, he suggested a course of action that would free him from the one thing that was holding him back. If we were on the road with Jesus, perhaps he would have given us different prescription, a different test.

Mark never really tells us how things turn out for the rich young ruler. We do know that he goes away from Jesus very sad, because he had great wealth. What we don't know is whether he later followed the prescription that Jesus gave him and became a follower. But Jesus does say something after the young man goes away that really gets the attention of his disciples. He says to them

"How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God."

And, when the disciples are amazed by these words, he goes on to say "*Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.*"

The disciples are really perplexed to hear these words. They, like many of us, believed that earthly wealth - especially that wealth acquired by those who adhered to the customs, traditions, and laws of Moses - was a sign of God's blessing.

But Jesus is saying, even if the blessings the man enjoys are God-given, they do not make it possible to inherit eternal life. Good works and many earthly advantages do not entitle anyone to God's Kingdom. In fact, in the case of this young ruler, they prevented him from it.

The disciples were dismayed when they heard these words and they said to each other: "Who then can be saved?"

Indeed, who can be saved?

What a question that is. One that echoes in my heart not only as I consider the rich young ruler, but also as I consider how much I love God and yet how far I am from the potential that God wants of me.

“One thing you lack....”

I think every one of us here today, if we are brutally honest with ourselves, realizes that we lack at least one thing - perhaps even more than one thing - in living up to the potential God sees in us.

As the reading from Hebrew's today says,

“The Word of God is ... sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to ... soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” (Heb 4:12-13)

God's Word most surely judges us - and finds in us - not just one thing that is lacking - but in many cases, many things lacking.

Was the rich young man's problem simply that he loved money more than he loved God?

Perhaps.

The love of money is most certainly an evil and Jesus' words about the danger of being rich should give us all pause. But all in all, money is but a symbol of what stands in the way of our entering the Kingdom of God and it is entirely possible to give up everything for God - and still not have the heart that we need to enter into his presence.

Could the rich young man have given everything away and thereby entered the Kingdom of God?

The Apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians reminds us:

If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions to the poor... but do not have love, I gain nothing. (I Cor. 13:2-3)

So, even if we give up our idols, even if the young ruler gave away all his wealth, he would not automatically inherit eternal life.

“Who then can be saved?” the disciples ask. It is profound question. Jesus answers it by saying, “With man this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.”

All three scripture readings today speak to us of how the word of God reveals to us, sometimes in the starkest fashion, just who we are and how far we are from entering the Kingdom of God. A message, in short, that would be thoroughly depressing - if it were not for the fact that the core message in today's Gospel reading is this answer of Jesus to the disciples – “All things are possible with God.”

So how is it that God makes it possible for us to enter His Kingdom? Let's look to the second part of Jesus' prescription to the rich young ruler: “Come, follow me.” Enter into a relationship with Me.

We can see a description of that relationship in today's Epistle lesson, the Letter to The Hebrews. In Christ we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with us and help us. He knows all our flaws and imperfections and yet intercedes on our behalf. Because of his goodness we can approach the throne of grace with confidence - and we are called to do so - that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. (Paraphrase of Heb. 4:14-16)

What must I do to inherit eternal life? The answer is that we can do nothing. It is not up to us. Inheriting eternal life is not something that we can earn, either by something we do, or by something we give up. Entering the Kingdom of God is entering a relationship with Him. It is free gift from God. All we have to do is to reach out and accept the gift. It's both the easiest and the hardest thing we can ever choose. It is easy because the gift is freely given. It is also hard for us because too often, like the rich young ruler, our hands and hearts are too full of other things.

“CHRISTIANITY AND HEALING: THE GOSPEL OF HEALTH AND WEALTH OR THE WAY OF THE CROSS?”

Chase Danford

1st Sunday after Pentecost

Lectionary Readings: Psalm 126; Jeremiah 31:7-9;

Hebrews 7:23-28; Mark 10:46-52

In the Name of God: The Source of Life, the Bread for Our Journey, and the One Who Soothes Us
When we Stumble

Today is healing Sunday, and what appropriate scripture readings the lectionary has provided for

us on this day. In Jeremiah, we hear of the God who consoles the blind and the lame, and who keeps this motley crew from stumbling. In the psalm we hear of God as the one who restores, the one who turns tears into joy. And in the gospel we hear of Jesus healing a blind beggar, Bartimaeus. These are readings that many treasure who need consoling, who need to be healed, who need to be restored, and who need to have their tears turned into joy. But they are also readings that, like all scripture passages that speaks to God as healer and consoler, ring hollow for many people and are twisted by others into a false gospel.

Purveyors of the so called "health and wealth" gospel, also known as the "prosperity" gospel, use these and other texts to defend a theology that teaches that God will grant you whatever you ask for, as long as you pray and you have unshakable faith. Some of you may have read the article in the New York Times that was published in August that highlighted some of the most perverse and repugnant aspects of this movement, with the televangelist Gloria Copeland, who shares a ministry and a luxurious lifestyle with her husband Kenneth, proclaiming that "God knows where the money is, and he knows how to get the money to you." The catch is that you have to demonstrate your faith by generously donating to their ministry. In return, God will bless you and return your money 100-fold. Well, clearly, people are not getting this kind of return on their faith investment, but they keep on giving anyway, believing that it will come one day. This same movement says the same thing about healing. Merely believe, have perfect faith, and "seed" money to your faith healer, and you or your loved one will be healed. Well, it doesn't always work out quite like that. Of course, people look for signs and see miracles when there are other explanations, and that's ok. What's not ok is the predatory "teaching" and "preaching" of leeches like the Copelands, Cre-flo Dollar, Benny Hinn, and others of their ilk, who pervert Christianity into some kind of Bernie Mad-off-style ponzi scheme wrapped up in religious packaging. Of course, there are many well-intentioned people who teach, preach, and believe this kind of theology, but we have a responsibility to point out that they are misguided.

For people who believe in this kind of theology, when God doesn't grant them their prayers, all too often they get blamed by their pastors and

prayer partners for not having enough faith. And, of course, they blame themselves, for who doesn't have a sliver of doubt, even when living in near perfect certainty? Everyone does, and that's one of the many reasons why it doesn't come down to belief. In my experience, no one believes in healing like a parent with a sick child, and yet this summer while I worked as a chaplain intern at Texas Children's Hospital, I sat helplessly with a mother as she watched her eleven year old son die of cancer. She couldn't understand why God didn't answer her prayers. She said to me, the Bible says, ask and you shall receive. She had fallen victim to these health and wealth evangelists who teach that the Bible is like some kind of magic book of invocations that you only have to repeat with perfect faith and God will grant your prayer. But Christianity is not a magical system. We don't just say words and see them come to life. For that matter, neither do people who practice actual magical religions. Because a tragedy like this doesn't fit into the magical system of the prosperity gospel, scripture began to ring hollow for this mother, and she started to get angry with God.

This mother had a friend visiting her and her son, and she was on an entirely different wavelength from the gospel of health and wealth. She was a staunch Calvinist, and she chastised her friend and said, "You just need to accept God's sovereignty, and if it is God's will to take your son, you can't question that and you can't get angry at God." Well, friends, I submit that there are very few less helpful answers than that to someone in that kind of tragic situation. For one, it is not God's will to take anyone's life, especially not that of an eleven year old boy. Unfortunately, death is merely part of the natural cycle of life, and even more unfortunately, it comes much too soon for far too many. Second, it's ok to get angry at God; God is used to it. Eleven chapters before today's reading from Jeremiah, the prophet speaks of being enticed and overpowered by God. As I learned in Resurrection parishioner Dr. Stephen Cook's Old Testament class last year, this is violent and harsh language in the original Hebrew that basically means that Jeremiah is saying that God raped him. If God didn't smite Jeremiah down for saying that, I think that God can handle our anger and disappointment when our prayers do not seem to be answered.

So, if we can't count on God to grant our

every request, even those that are the most deserving of a yes, why do we keep praying? Well, for one, prayer is a bit of a mystery, and mystery is not a bad thing. Science is even embracing mystery now. Quantum physics is showing us that the world is more complicated than we knew. Who knows how our intentions in prayer might gain energy and affect the fabric of the universe?

Why pray?

When we enter into communion with God in prayer, perhaps we will be consoled, as God consoled the blind and lame in Jeremiah. And even when God can't keep us from stumbling, God can soothe us like a loving mother when we do fall.

Why pray?

Prayer puts us in communion with our fellow human beings, and God works through each of us to be an answer to prayer for one another. As this parish's mission statement says, "We are the hands of the Lord in this place, reaching out to our community and the world." We may not be able to cure a sickness, but we can bring food, give rides, and just visit with people.

Why pray?

God grants sight to the blind, like we read about today with Jesus and Bartimaeus, the blind beggar. We are all blind beggars before God, but through our worship, through our prayer, through our community of faith—the Body of Christ, that which we are by virtue of what we receive here at this table, through all of this, we see a little more clearly. Our religion gives meaning and context to suffering and death. We may not, we will not, get everything we want or need, but we do get bread for the journey, and we get strength and comfort. And we need strength and comfort for this Christian journey, for it is not an easy one. It is worth noting that when Jesus restored Bartimaeus' sight, he didn't go back to life as normal. Instead, he followed Jesus on the way. The way that Jesus was going was toward Jerusalem, toward the Cross. This is Christianity. Life, death, new life. We gain life when we give up life, when we take up our cross in imitation of Jesus and sacrifice for the sake of others. We gain eyes to see when we accompany a loved one during an illness, when we go on a mission trip to another country or to the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast, or when we distribute food to those in need here with the ALIVE ministry. Life, death, new life. In the Bible, it's the journey to Jerusalem, crucifixion, resurrection. In our lives, it might be the journey with sickness, eventual death, and eternal life with God. It's also our communal struggle for peace and justice, our sacrifices to build the beloved community here on earth, our new common life out of these efforts. It's not health and wealth, it's not the prosperity gospel. It's just *the* gospel.

Amen

THE SAINT IN US

A homily preached by the Reverend Dr. Anne Gavin Ritchie on November 1st, All Saints' Day, based on the Wisdom of Solomon 3:1-9 and St. John 11:32-44.

Happy All Saints' Day, the day after Hallowe'en! If you are offended by my mentioning Hallowe'en, I understand. Hallowe'en stands for "All Hallows' Eve," the evening before our All Saints Christian festival. But that's not how it always was...

What we think of as "Hallowe'en" was an ancient Celtic folk rite. It marked the end of one year and the beginning of another. On October 31st, huge bonfires would be set to drive away all the evil spirits of the old year. (Think Times Square on New Year's Eve – rituals die hard!)

Christians wanted to establish a day commemorating the martyrdom of early Christians. When the early Church spread to Western Europe, especially to England and France, it countered these long-established pagan festivals by setting November 1st the new year, as the observance of All Saints' Day. By medieval times, pagan and Christian traditions blended, with children going door to door begging for "soul cakes" for the wandering spirits. If no treats were offered, the beggars would play pranks. Trick or treat.

Many of these ancient Celtic traditions were brought to America by the Irish in the mid-nineteenth-century, fleeing the potato famine. "Tricks" at that time included such things as un-hinging fence gates and tipping over outhouses.

Our beloved All Saints' Day has its own ambiguity. Many of us find it difficult to relate to officially designated "saints." When we see them in stained-glass windows, they look so tranquil, so sure of themselves, so removed from our own experience. Their peaceful images make it almost impossible to think of them as the struggling, doubting, failing human beings that they actually were.

To know that we only have to look at St. Peter. Poor, impulsive, foot-in-his-mouth Peter. The one who always acts first, then thinks about it later. There's St. Thomas Aquinas, author of the brilliant theological treatise the *Summa Theologica*, who had such severe self-doubts that he called himself "dumb ox."

St. Teresa of Avila became so annoyed with

God that she once exclaimed, “If *that’s* how you treat your friends, no wonder you don’t have many!” The Gospels and stories of the lives of the saints show them not as the self-assured, tranquil figures we see in stained glass, but as the same struggling, searching souls that *we* are.

We need look no further than today’s Gospel story about the raising of Lazarus of Bethany. We already knew how outspoken his sister Martha was. But now sister Mary, quiet, unassuming Mary, shows anger at our Lord: “If you had been here, my brother would not have died.” Martha, practical Martha, warns Jesus that it’s too late, “by now there will be a stench.”

Jesus, knows that God brings life out of death, but still mourns his beloved friend. In one of the most moving passages of Scripture we hear “Jesus began to weep.” A few moments later, drawing upon the power of God, Jesus commands “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man, still swaddled in his grave clothes, walks out of the tomb and finds new life.

Baptism has always been about dying to old life and rising to new life. Although we pour only a little water over the heads of the baptized, the original experience is meant: total immersion, dying to the old; coming out of the water, rising to the new.

THANKSGIVING DAY SERVICE

Every year we hold a joint service with Meade Memorial at 10:00 am. This year the service will be held here at Church of the Resurrection with The Very Reverend Collins E. Asonye of Meade Memorial preaching.



In a few moments we will be welcoming two new “saints” to our parish family: Fiona Kathleen Reynolds Barnett and Riley Michelle Vicks. We will be praying for Fiona and for Riley that they come into this new life fully; that they will have inquiring and discerning hearts; that they will have joy and wonder in all God’s works. We will commit to raising them in the Christian way and life, so that they will hold love and forgiveness in their hearts, and be willing to be loved and forgiven in turn.

This baptismal liturgy teaches us what it means to be a saint. *Not* to be made of bits of stained glass, or to be encased in marble, but simply to follow Jesus. Saints, old and new, bring their reservations, doubts and fears along with them. Saints, old and new, teach us that following the best we know, our truest spiritual path, gives us new life. There is always the chance to walk out of our tombs of darkness and despair and begin to really live again.

On this All Saints Day, let us celebrate the famous saints, the official, stained-glass ones. Let us remember with gratitude those who have been saints in our *own* lives: parents, teachers, friends who have made all the difference. Let us welcome Fiona and Riley as our newest saints, and look forward to all they have to teach us.

But while we’re honoring *them*, let’s not forget the saint who lives in *us*.

All sermons are available
on our web-site.:

www.welcometoresurrection.org/sermons/



THE WAY FORWARD - PART 2 Nov. 14

Make plans to attend a Workshop to explore The Way Forward to full inclusion and blessing in the Church within this Diocese. Members of parishes who participated in the Diocese’s listening process last spring and summer have been invited to discuss their experiences. We will also discuss the next steps in our discernment for “the way forward.” Carpools are being organized. Call the church office, 703-998-0888, to be included. A light lunch will be provided and a \$6 donation is requested. RSVP to St. Anne’s Episcopal Church 703-437-6530.



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Great Giving

Over the years at Church of the Resurrection, we have received several planned gifts. These include bequests made through wills, contributions of life insurance, charitable trusts and outright gifts of stock, and other assets. Each one of these gifts has been received with sincere and enthusiastic appreciation.

Although every gift has a special quality, we have learned that some gifts stand out from the rest as extra special. Interestingly, it's not the size of a gift that makes it particularly special, though we are always encouraged when a larger asset comes our way.

What makes a gift extra special are the circumstances surrounding it, including the attitude of the donor. As we look back over the many gifts, certain common characteristics emerge that combine to make a good gift great. See if you agree.

1. A great gift is motivated by our objectives and the faith of the donor.

Something intangible, yet valuable is added to a gift when it addresses the purposes of our faith community. The donor identifies with our mission statement – “We are the hands of the Lord in this place and in the community.” The donor’s planned gift reflects a sense of leaving a legacy and of partnership. Such a gift warms and inspires us more than, say, a gift that comes to us anonymously . . . or a gift that is motivated solely for tax purposes.

2. A great gift is well planned.

Great giving requires time and effort. One must consider a variety of factors and options and select the right asset for the right gift vehicle at the right time - and do it in a manner that will appropriately address his or her overall estate plan, as well as the needs of Church of the Resurrection.

As the saying goes, anything worth doing is worth doing well. Great giving may require more work, but the rewards are worth it.

3. A great gift pleases the donor.

That is, the donor is convinced his or her gift will make a positive difference in bringing future believers to a deeper knowledge of God and to meeting the needs of our community. It has been well planned and there are no regrets. A sense of fulfillment prevails and crowns the gift with added value. The gift is made greater by the glow of satisfaction.

As you consider what kind of planned gift you would like to give to Church of the Resurrection, we urge you to contact our Rector or a member of the Vestry by contacting the church office.