

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I went to the eye doctor the other day after attempting to hold off the visit for as long as I could (8 years). As I spoke to the Dr. she noted that more and more people need glasses because we are spending between 4-10 hours a day in front of screens. What's more, those hours *didn't* include work! It turns out that most Americans are becoming more and more engrossed with Internet and TV in a way that is unprecedented, and we as the church tend to follow the course of our culture in this practice.

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My wife and I recently noted that we will often "unwind" with a show at the end of a stressful day of screaming children and emails and diapers, with the hopes of settling down before we go to

sleep and start the cycle the next day. And while a little R&R is certainly not a problem, we found that we were watching TV to relax without critically thinking about what we were doing. And in doing this, we often miss God's care for us in helping us to taste and see his goodness in our lives, forfeiting his grace for a distraction to pass the time.

Jesus offers us a refreshment that is unlike any other, giving us his life-giving waters of grace and comfort that satisfies the hearts in a

way that speaks to a desire that is designed for Him. Sadly, we can use distraction at the end of the day to slowly fade into the evening, rather than receiving the life-giving grace that Christ desires to offer through the Holy Spirit. What we do with our free time in the evening affects how we remember the day, and gives us an opportunity to consider God's provision for that day and the promise of his grace in the day to come.



Consider the following collect from Evening prayer: *Lord God, you who know our every weakness, put away from us all worry and every anxious fear. Having ended the work and play of this day under your care and protection, we now commit ourselves, and all whom we love, into your gracious keeping; and as night comes, provide for us, we pray, your priceless gift of sleep; through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Draw near to Jesus in the evening, and trust Him when he says to you, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give

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you rest." He desires to offer us not just a distraction, but a harbor in the midst of life's storms as he communes with us His earthly family.

Your brother in Christ,
Phil

Simply Shocking
By Bill Kenney

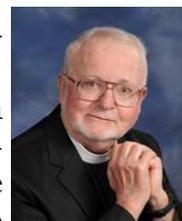
We have probably all seen some people displaying body piercings that must have been culled from an old tool box. Eyebrows, noses and lips are "enhanced" in a way that nauseates and shocks us normal folks. I think we are being subjected to an act of defiant rebellion, and the more outrageous, the better.

This one form of defiant rebellion afflicts our culture today, but we have other forms just as blatantly spiteful, just as insistent upon shocking us, like gangster rap and filthy school sports team initiation rituals. But our fellow human beings who practice such degeneracy are by no means beyond all hope of redemption.

Jesus illustrated this point about redemption in the story of the prodigal son, who was so determined to live defiantly for his own pleasure. The first thing he denied was any sense of loyalty, or obligations, or even affection for his family. He wanted his cut of the family fortune right away before his father had even died! As soon as he was legally entitled, he converted all his assets to cash to speed up his departure. And when he actually left, he chose a destination so far away from his family and nation that neither they nor he would ever again be likely to communicate. He was utterly renouncing all he had known with shocking finality. Then, with total independence and personal freedom achieved, he set about this longed-for task of

blowing every last penny on immediate gratification of every last urge.

At each decision point, this son re-committed himself more and more deeply to shockingly extreme prodigality.



Into this story of outrageous selfishness leading to predictable self-destruction, Jesus described a surprising turn of events. The debased, debauched, desperate son, while still in his self-induced prison of a pig pen, repented. And his repentance was genuine. Jesus gave his assurance of this fact by telling us of the son's determination never again to claim the position of son and heir.

He determined not to focus on the question of inheritance, but to focus on his father (finally!) and on his father's character, so full of justice and kindness toward everyone.

Jesus put yet another surprise into the story. The father turned out to be as prodigal, extreme, and over-the-top as the son. The father, however, used his prodigality for good! He went wild, hysterically rejoicing over the son's return. And he had seen the son travelling closer and closer, while the son was still a long way off. I think this suggests that the father was yearning for the son's return long, long before the son's repentant exit from his pig pen.

I think that Jesus' point in this story is to show all of us that no matter how low we are determined to sink, if we agree to allow him to do so, God will delight in rescuing us. It is His nature ever to have mercy.

Bill

Plowing the Ground for 1150

Every Wednesday Evening we begin with a light meal at 6pm and follow with prayer at 7pm at the home of Mark & Lynn Rudolph. Everyone is welcome.

If you are unable to make it, we offer up the following to keep in your personal prayer devotions:

- Patience and wisdom for the Property Committee, Architects, our Clergy, our Vestry and our Wardens, our Staff, and our congregation;
- Good weather during the transition
- Compassion for the current tenants
- Good health and no injuries during the moving process
- Acceptance of this gift from God with graciousness and humility
- Financial guidance as we contemplate any changes needed
- We use this gift to the honor and glory of God in harmony with each other.

¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17 (ESV)

Walking the Straight and Narrow Dressed in Blue

A typical day in the life of a police officer can be pretty boring. You drive around your beat, respond to calls comprised largely of family disputes and neighbors arguing. Maybe you pull over a few vehicles for traffic violations.

However, things can go from boring to life threatening in the blink of an eye.

An officer executes a routine car stop for a minor traffic offense, only to discover that the car had just been stolen in an armed carjacking, a fact forcefully made clear to the officer by means of gunfire and screeching tires. Responding to a domestic dispute, the officer expects to provide counseling and write a standard report about the event. Instead, an enraged boyfriend comes at the officer with a butcher knife.

Officers are tasked with being ready for anything, every day, and all day. A law enforcement officer must be respectful to everyone and prepared to subdue anyone. Being surrounded by constant darkness and suffering is a heavy burden to bear and over 700,000 men and women have willingly taken it up.

I know that many of you are afraid—afraid of the dangers that surround you, from criminals to terrorists. I know that you are worried that the police officers who are sworn to protect you are self-seeking and trigger-happy.

I cannot speak for every officer, but I know that my heart aches for the brokenness I see almost every single day—families ripped apart by violence, dreams crushed by crime, joy extinguished by drugs, lives ended over disagreements. I have heard the cry, “No justice, no peace” and I heartily agree. As an officer, I continually turn to the only true Source of justice and peace: God, who is “the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who

does no wrong, upright and just is He” (Deuteronomy 32:4).

Psalm 82:3–4 describes our Creator’s law enforcement plan, and, in accordance with that plan, I pray that the Lord uses each of my brothers and sisters in uniform to “defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

With joy I can report that the Lord has used me and many of my coworkers for these exact purposes. This is not true for every single officer and so I pray that more officers will turn to the God of justice and peace—serving beyond their human strength—so that they will fulfill our King’s desire to “do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with [their] God” (Micah 6:8).

With that in mind, we can serve these officers through praying, and therefore, I ask you to join me in praying this petition from *The Book of Common Prayer*:

O Lord our King, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to Your merciful care, that, being guided by Your Providence, we may dwell secure in Your peace. Grant to [law enforcement officers] wisdom and strength to know and to do Your will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in Your fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

Aaron Rudolph has been a police officer for eight years. He is married and has four children.

Our Father Who Art in Heaven

By Eric Meckley

June 28, 2016

The days following the horrific attack at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, I’ve struggled to know how to respond: shock, anger, solidarity, support, sadness, despair... I have moved through all these responses and many more in the days since. Ultimately, I’ve found myself echoing Luke’s gospel, “Lord, teach me to pray.”

Jesus’ response, of course, is what we call the Lord’s Prayer and the cornerstone of our prayer lives. If “Our Father...” is the refrain we are called to echo each day, it should also be accompanied by prayer in ever-modulating verses responding to the specific joys and sorrows we face throughout our lives. So, how do we pray particularly for a world beset by conflict and violence, especially when we find ourselves at a loss for words and deeds?

First, our prayers must acknowledge the brokenness of our world. This is lament: a questioning, pleading, angry outcry against the destruction of sin and death. When we pray for the kingdom come, it always implies the question, “How long, my Lord?”

Second, our prayers for a violent world must lead us to reflection and repentance. When we respond to conflict and violence in prayer we have an opportunity to acknowledge our own complicity in the world’s brokenness. Are we willing to consid-

er how we perpetrate violence through our own attitudes, actions, and inaction, in our attempts to be righteous and because of our own sinfulness? We must have the courage in our prayer to ask God to show us how we have failed to love our neighbor and seek forgiveness from God and those we have wronged.

Third, as impossible as it may seem, our prayers should lead us to forgive. I do not know how to understand this except in relation to the words of Jesus on the cross: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" and those of the father of the possessed boy in Mark 9: "I believe; help my unbelief!" We must pray for the strength and wisdom to follow the Apostle Paul's direction and resist at all costs the twin temptations to curse those who persecute us and repay evil with evil.

Fourth, and finally, we must believe and trust that prayer is not a passive acceptance of evil; it is active resistance against the very powers of hell. For our prayers are not ultimately individual and our own, rather they remind us that we are part of the body of Jesus Christ. Our lives are not our own. We belong to the One who died and rose again and we belong to one another. Our prayers must ultimately drive us out of ourselves and into the company of others, invigorating thoughts and actions that acknowledge and mend brokenness, seek and bestow forgiveness, and pursue peace and love. This is perhaps the hardest part as we seek to be the compassionate hand of God and engage with our fami-

lies, coworkers, communities, and congregations.

As Samuel Wells and Marcia A. Owen, wrote in their extraordinary book *Living without Enemies: Being Present in the Midst of Violence*: "In the resurrection, God made clear to us in Christ that nothing – neither death nor life – can separate us from God's love. And in the sending of the Spirit, God promised to be with us always, to the end of time, and to empower us to be Christ for others and find Christ in them, beyond our own strength and courage.

Eric Meckley is a member of All Saints Church in Durham, NC and is working towards his doctorate in English at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Uncle Charles' Last Trip @2016 Linda Barrett

On his next trip,
Charles Reeder won't need plane tickets
There's no train taking him
where he's going next.
The former art teacher
won't have to wait in long lines
for that vehicle to fly him there
The passage has been paid for
purchased by a King's shed blood.
It's a place where
he'll be far from the Anzio beaches
and the Europe which he saved
seven decades ago.
When he finally arrives
at his Savior-promised resort
with its many roomed mansions,
will he need to pack his
art supplies?
and what kind of medium
should he use to
depict Heaven's
unfathomably beautiful landscapes
on his canvas?

Upcoming Events

Sunday, Aug. 7th
Following 9am Service
Pot Luck Meal *Oriental Theme*



Sunday, Aug. 14th
following 9am service
Shoe Box Prep



**American
Red Cross**

Blood Drive
Friday, August 19th
1:00-6:00 pm
See posters at Church for more details.