

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Early January is the time when many take it upon themselves to examine the coming year and resolve to change something in their lives. Weight loss and exercise regimens often lead the list of those things we promise to ourselves we will address.

I have a different resolution for you to consider. This one is also about exercise, but you don't have to shed a single drop of sweat or change a single aspect of what's on your table—at least, not for what I have in mind here.

Two of the most basic disciplines of the faith are Bible reading and prayer. This year, I am challenging you to do the following: read the Bible and pray at least four times per week. That's it!

Why?

If you have ever participated in some sort of exercise regimen, you

know that while at first the course of exercise is difficult, as one begins to see and feel the difference, you begin to long for the exercise. You begin to realize that change is not

only possible, but is actually happening.

Reading and prayer are like that feeling. The Psalmist expresses

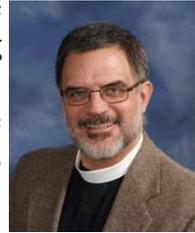
that value of Scripture reading and prayer using a different analogy.

"Blessed is the man [whose] ... delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. *He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither.* In all that he does, he prospers." (Psalms 1:1-3)

I don't know if you need to do more exercise or lose weight. That's between you and your doctor. However, as a physician of your soul, my prescription for your soul's health is this: read the Scriptures and pray at least *four times per week*.

If you're not sure where to start, take a look at the weekly bulletin, there is a Bible reading schedule printed in there. If you don't know how to pray, you can use the simple A-C-T-S method: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. The weekly Psalm reading will help you as well.

You'll be hearing more about these things in the week to come, but for now, get started! Since we're



Inside This Issue:

Opening Letter	1
Baker Library Book Brief	2
The Good of the Order	3
Life in the Diocese of Christ Our Hope	4
Our Own Devices	4
Christmas Pageant	7
Monthly Calendar	8

St. John's Anglican Church
1150 Bristol Road, Southampton, PA 18966
Worshipping at Abington Baptist Church,
1501 Huntingdon Rd., Abington, PA 19001
Church Office: (215) 396.1970
Family Resource Center: (215) 337-2018 ext. 3
email: info@toknowchrist.org

not a car insurance company, the 15 minutes will probably not save you a lot of money, but it will refresh and rekindle the work of God's Spirit in you!

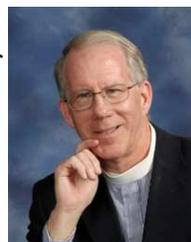
Your fellow servant, Dr. Mark

Baker Library Book Brief *By Ken Cook*

From time to time we have been able to add a volume from Simonetta Carr's "Christian Biographies for Young Readers" series to our congregational library. Such is the case this month. The newest installment in this series, *Martin Luther*, is set to join previously-purchased books on Athanasius, Augustine of Hippo and Anselm. Rather than suggesting a fixation with names beginning with the first letter of the English alphabet, the sequence of these youth biographies has to do with the history of key figures of Christian leadership. It is altogether fitting to add this newest volume in the series at this time since we are currently in the midst of international celebrations commemorating the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting his "95 Theses" on the doors of the university church in Wittenberg, Germany on October 31, 1517.

As is the case for each volume in this growing collection of youth biographies, *Martin Luther* comes in an 8" X 10" hardbound format that runs to 63 pages. Each book includes a helpful map, attractive ancient and modern artwork and full-color photographs of key sites and objects related to the subject's life and work. I know this book is aimed at an audience of seven to twelve year olds, but having picked this slender publication up, I could not put it down until I had read it all an hour later. Although I could have easily paged through it in half the time, I found myself captivated by a reproduction of the colorful woodcut of 15th Century Erfurt on page 10 and the pho-

tographs of Luther's Augustinian monastery, the Cathedral of Worms and the Wartburg Castle. As well, I savored the details in the timeline of Luther's life found on page 60



and several pages with the full text of key articles from Dr. Martin's *Small Catechism*, namely "On Creation", "On Redemption" and "On Being Made Holy". I have no regrets for the time that elapsed for it was time well spent in meditation on the life of one of the most important Christians to have lived, served and praised God. If this seems like crass Protestant overstatement concerning the significance of Luther's life and legacy, perhaps we should consider the contemporary testimony of Augustinian scholars. Their order considers it likely that their greatest gift to the Church of Christ is the German monk who unintentionally became the founder of international Protestant Christianity. Incidentally, another adult has insisted that they have the next opportunity to read this introduction to an unforeseen development in "Christ's one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" that began with the prayerful Bible studies of Martin Luther. Kids, you might have to fight for your chance to read this book!

I conclude this review with the citation of an overview from the back cover of *Martin Luther*. "Five hundred years ago, a monk named Martin Luther wrote ninety-five theses, hoping to start a discussion about sin and repentance at the University of Wittenberg in Germany. In a few

months those questions had stirred the nation; a few years later, the continent. Today we know these theses changed the course of both the Western church and world history. In this volume for children, Simonetta Carr tells the compelling story of this father of the Protestant Reformation, tracing his quest for peace with God, his lifelong heroic stand for God's truth and his family life and numerous accomplishments. The Reformer's greatest accomplishment, she writes, 'has been his uncompromising emphasis on the free promise of the gospel.'"

Additional publications from this series include Jonathan Edwards, Lady Jane Grey and Peter Martyr Vermigli and will be eventually added to our library.



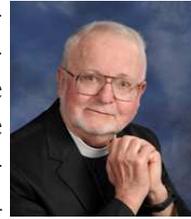
The Good of the Order
By Bill Kenney

Our Armed Forces provide all of us, in addition to military protection, a benefit no one usually thinks of. We need to be reminded about the value of sound order and loyal obedience to it. Once you sign up in the service, you surrender many aspects of your former freedom and independence to make your own personal decisions, whether getting your hair cut or settling marital problems.

Eventually, you surrender much for the good of the order, for the long-term welfare and morale of all your comrades, which you put ahead of your own.

Jesus met a Gentile officer in the Roman army one time and was the very model of the ideal I have just described. This man had a servant at

home who was seriously ill, and the officer implored Jesus to provide healing. However, he respected, not only Jesus' capacity to heal but also Jesus' character as a loyal, self-disciplined, devout Jew, who possessed both humble obedience and the innate authority to command. Knowing himself to be a Gentile, ceremonially unclean, he sent word to Jesus, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should come under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me, and I say to one, 'go,' and he goes, and to another, 'come' and he comes, and to my servant, 'do this,' and he does it."



When Jesus heard this he marveled and said ... "Truly with no one in Israel have I found such faith." (Matt. 8:8-10)

In other words, Jesus found someone whose faith was exactly what he was trying to instill in his own disciples and in other fellow Jews. How had this officer's life experience been so arranged that he was then prepared to place his trust in Jesus?

He was committing his welfare and that of his servant to the wisdom, power and good order of Jesus. He had learned how to do this in the Army! No wonder Jesus was amazed. Let us all thank God for the Armed Forces as they still seek to portray loyal obedience and good order.

Bill

*Life in the Diocese of
Christ Our Hope: A
Twelve Part Series
By Bishop Breedlove
January 27, 2017*

In the Diocese of Christ our Hope, we are called to follow and serve Jesus Christ, maintaining the faith we have been given, living lives that honor God in the ways he commands, and pursuing the mission Jesus himself has established.

In other words, our basic commitments of faith, lifestyle, and mission are not “up for grabs.” They are not something we figure out. They are “givens.”

In addition, we share these things in common with all other Dioceses in the Anglican Church in North America and with faithful Christians of every tradition throughout the world.

On the other hand, our values and emphases, our shared culture, are somewhat distinct. This “life together” is something that has been passed on by those who have led and nurtured us in the faith. It is something that we believe the Holy Spirit has strengthened and deepened as we have walked together over years of co-laboring in ministry. It is the product of being friends who are frequently surprised by the blessing of yet other “fellow pilgrims” that God brings to share life together in our Diocese. We gratefully receive this “life together” as God’s gracious blessing, and we seek to be stewards of these gifts.

We have sought to discern the elements of our shared life, that we might nurture and strengthen them.

In this process, we tried to whittle them down to a more manageable number, but we found ourselves holding onto twelve distinct shared commitments (or values) as crucial to our Diocese.

It is our prayer that these values will lodge deeply into our minds and souls, so that we might be strengthened as stewards of the grace of God that he has freely given us. “For the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof . . .” Thanks be to God!

*Our Own Devices
By Joseph Clair
12-6-2016*

A flickering glow welcomed me to my university’s chapel service. Votive candles? If only. No, these were glowing smartphones, as thick as fireflies on a summer’s evening. It was a scene of tremendous absurdity, like a man watching TV while making love to his wife: distracted people distracting themselves during a sacred act. It struck me as oddly understandable (I even joined them to check my email during the sermon), yet also as the foretaste of some looming spiritual crisis. So much has been written lately about the perils of smartphone use that I’m reluctant to join the chorus. Yet I feel that many Christians—I include myself—have yet to find any healthy forms of resistance to this new cultural habit.

Attention is precious. It is that part of our soul we give to the world around us, the gateway to the self. “My experience is what I agree to at-

tend to,” William James said; “only those items which I notice shape my mind.” What if, at the end of each day, you received a statement from the Bank of Attention updating all your recent expenditures, along with a heat map of smartphone use? Where did you leave your soul today? Did you blow your precious morning hours surfing ESPN, reading about a baseball player’s groin strain? I confess that I did.

Information dissemination has a long technological history—from papyri and codices to the printing press and digital media. But there is something new and worrisome about the capacity of smartphones to master us. Never before has so much information been so readily available and well-packaged. With push notifications, you don’t even need to go surfing. The gale of information assails you freely, carrying you where it will, shaped to your personal search and purchase history. And our devices aren’t neutral platforms for information delivery. They shape our thoughts and character and desire. As MIT’s Sherry Turkle and others have documented, our phones are changing the very nature of our relationships with one another. This all hit me when my wife gave me an anniversary card that read: “There is nobody else I’d rather lie in bed and look at my phone next to.”

Attention is the mind’s desire. We attend to what we want, what we need, what we find interesting, attractive, and so on. Thus the problem is less about distraction than about desire. Our dwindling capacity for attention reveals our fractured worlds of desire—hyper-temporary,

dazzled by light and color, summoned by restlessness rather than meaning. We have lost our ability to give our

This fall I took my dad flyfishing on Oregon’s Deschutes River—one of the most beautiful trophy trout streams and desert canyons in the world. Navigating our boat, reading the water, and casting my line across riffles and breaks focused my mind. The mysterious green current, blue sky, and expansive canyon of sage—they possessed my whole mind. I felt my soul uncoiling from the confines of those five beloved inches of touch-screen, and for a moment I was fully present. Nature has the power to gather our scattered attention by captivating us with the un-manmade.

That night I still had a trace of stillness in me and stopped to pray. I recalled the beauty of those trout and let my soul give thanks. I thought of my wife and kids and said a word of praise. I left the shimmering screen in the truck and felt still for a moment. The great French philosopher, mystic, and factory worker, Simone Weil once wrote, “The habit of attention is the substance of prayer.” Prayer is attention pointed in the right direction. For Weil, however, attention is not only the substance of prayer but the essence of our relationships with others: “Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” And for contemplatives like Weil, attention to God and neighbor is the essence of happiness.

As our phones splinter our attention and the infotainment machine shortens the time between impulse and satisfaction, we are deliv-

ered from the old agonies of patience—wherein attention and desire stretch to receive gifts that we didn't know we wanted. Weil: "We do not obtain the most precious gifts by going in search of them but by waiting for them."

Our capacity for attention is a matter of Christian conviction and witness. In this age of distraction I want to learn what it means to embody reverential awareness of others—attunement to the world in all its glory and boredom and limitations of time and space. In a sense, this is the movement of Incarnation, of the Word made flesh. It speaks to the satisfactions I've found recently through intentional encounters with the unscreened world: in helping my neighbor load up his baby pigs; putting my phone in a tray as I come through the front door so that I remember to give my kids my whole self; observing the way the Benedictine monks on the hill near my home bow in greeting one another and the way their eyes pierce me—greeting me, the stranger, as a guest, as Christ.

All the metaphors central to Christian community—the Pauline body, Augustine's concentric circles, Kuyper's spheres—work on the basis of attention first to what is near, slowly extending to include the wider realms of association. Indeed, on the basis of Matthew 25, ordering our attention and overcoming our addiction to distraction has everything to do with our ability to recognize Christ in one another and to learn what it means to be the body of Christ, a people formed by habits of good attention, giving and exchanging the

gifts of attention in a world of distraction.

Joseph Clair is assistant professor of religious studies at George Fox University.

This article appeared on the following website:

www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/12/our-own-devices

A Place for Me

@2016Linda Barrett

After my soul leaves the corrupt shell
of my body,

And I rise to Heaven above

Let all who see me know

That life is but a brief moment

Compared to the palace of eternity

I step from Earth into another place

Leave behind all my fears and regrets

Upon that fleeting world below

In a many roomed mansion,

Bought and built by a Prince of Love,

All my tears and sorrows will be
wiped away

Disease and corruption reversed

My flesh fully restored and glorified

At that long-awaited day.

Reader,

Peruse this verse and realize

That death might be the worst event

You might face before your worried
eyes

However, believe in the unperishable
hope

Which I cannot deny or forget

And you will finally be able

Awaiting the time impatiently

For death to pass away

And well in the vast, endless mansion

In the Son's designed castle alongside
me.

Christmas Pageant 2016

St. John's enjoyed the privilege of our first formal service at our new location in Southampton on Saturday, December 20th, as the Christmas Pageant recounted the birth of "Christ the Lord". A mixed crowd of about 70 parishioners, families and visitors were present for this event. Musical accompaniment was provided by Jim Cushing and (the Rev.) Phillip Shade; many were excited to hear the familiar Christmas hymns and choruses played on St. John's brand-new Mason and Hamlin grand piano.

Mary and Joseph were played by Sarah Wilson and Joe Baumher. Jim Cushing, Dennis McKnight and Phil Tolbert were kings, assisted by Ben Cushing, Philip Touch* and Matthew Tolbert who played the roles of pages. The host of angels included Abigail Tolbert (as archangel), Tiffani Cushing, Susan Tolbert, Katie Bobb, Ellie and Madeline Issler, Becca Geberth, Cora Oberly, Camryn Jewel, and Hailey, Chloe and Caylee Baumher. Carol McKnight served as the innkeeper. The shepherds counted among their number Dan Issler, Elijah Evans, Judah Baker, Henry Cushing and London Evans. Animals at the manger included Natalie* and Anthony* Yim, Azuriya* and Azariah* Chan. The reader of the biblical text of Christ's birth was Christa Issler. Vikki Baker and Molly George assisted this host of actors with all the details of their costumes. Ken Cook was the officiant and homilist. Ray Baker served as the producer and director. Almighty God, the Fa-

ther, the Son and the Holy Spirit, was given all the glory as *Luke 2:1-20* was acted out by the cast. Afterward, a delightful meal and a time of meaningful fellowship completed the occasion for everyone. [An asterisk (*) indicates participation by a student from Logan Hope school, for which we are thankful.]

Ken



~ February 2017 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 9a Holy Communion 10a Women's Bible Study 6p Light Meal @ St. John's 7p Eve. Prayer @ St. Johns 7p Future Blessings Fund Mtg.	2 What's the Buzz Due 6:30a Men's Morning Bible Study 8:30a Clergy Prayer-SJ Office 10a Caregivers 7:30p Choir Practice	3 7:30p Kingdom Fellowship	4 9a Small Group Leaders Mtg.
5 Martyn Minns, Retired, Bishop of CANA 7:45a Holy Communion—Parlor 9a Morning Prayer—Sanctuary 11a Pot Luck-Family Day 11:30a Annual Parish Meeting 2p Holy Communion—Lancaster 5p Community Life Group	6 7:30p Missions Committee 7:30p Study of 2 John SJ Office	7 9:30a Staff Meeting - SJ Office 11a Liturgy Meeting 7p Womens Bible Study Chalfont 7:30p Christian Ed Mtg	8 9a Holy Communion 10a Women's Bible Study 6p Light Meal @ St. John's 7p Eve. Prayer @ St. Johns 7p St. John's Property Meeting	9 What's the Buzz Due 6:30a Men's Morning Bible Study 8:30a Clergy Prayer-SJ Office 11a Redeemer Village Communion 7:30p Choir Practice	10 7p Friday Night Abington Bible Study	11
12 7:45a Holy Communion—Parlor 9a Holy Communion-Sanctuary 10:45a Christian Education-Hall 2p Holy Communion—Lancaster 5p Community Life Group	13 7p Eve Women's Fellowship 7:30p Study of 2 John SJ Office	14 9:30a Staff Meeting - SJ Office 7:30p Vestry Meeting-SJ Office	15 9a Holy Communion 10a Women's Bible Study 6p Light Meal @ St. John's 7p Eve. Prayer @ St. Johns 7:30p Men's Group-How People Change	16 What's the Buzz Due 6:30a Men's Morning Bible Study 8:30a Clergy Prayer-SJ Office 7:30p Choir Practice	17	18 7p Kingdom Fellowship
19 FLOWERS IN MEMORY OF ANNE WIL-LIAMSON 7:45a Holy Communion—Parlor 9a Holy Communion-Sanctuary 10:45a FLEX SUNDAY 2p Holy Communion—Lancaster 5p Community Life Group	20 7:30p Study of 2 John SJ Office	21 9:30a Staff Meeting - SJ Office 7p Women's Bible Study Chalfont	22 9a Holy Communion 10a Women's Bible Study 6p Light Meal @ St. John's 7p Eve. Prayer @ St. Johns	23 What's the Buzz Due 6:30a Men's Morning Bible Study 8:30a Clergy Prayer-SJ Office 7:30p Choir Practice	24 Evangelist Articles Due 7p Friday Night Bible Study	25
26 7:45a Holy Communion—Parlor 9a Holy Communion-Sanctuary 9a Holy Communion-Sanctuary 10:30a Christian Education-Hall 2p Holy Communion—Lancaster 5p Community Life Group	27 7p Eve Women's Fellowship 7:30p Study of 2 John SJ Office	28 Mardi Gras 9:30a Staff Meeting - SJ Office	Notes:			