

# ***Christ Church***

## ***Good News and Notes***

**\* Please note that all new items for this edition are in red**

As you know we missed a Sunday to Hurricane Florence and I know you join with me in praying for those so severely impacted by this storm. What follows is the sermon I was going to preach on Sunday. Buckle up! The readings were all very challenging and I wanted to focus on the selection from the Book of Wisdom as it resonates still so strongly today.

### **When Wisdom Grows Weary**

From Proverbs 1: 20-33:

Wisdom cries out in the street;  
in the squares she raises her voice.

At the busiest corner she cries out;  
at the entrance of the city gates she speaks:

“How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple?

How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing  
and fools hate knowledge?

Give heed to my reproof;

I will pour out my thoughts to you;  
I will make my words known to you.

Because I have called and you refused,  
have stretched out my hand and no one heeded,

and because you have ignored all my counsel  
and would have none of my reproof,

I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when panic strikes you,

when panic strikes you like a storm,  
and your calamity comes like a whirlwind,  
when distress and anguish come upon you.

Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer;  
they will seek me diligently, but will not find me.

Because they hated knowledge  
and did not choose the fear of the Lord,  
would have none of my counsel,  
and despised all my reproof,  
therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way  
and be sated with their own devices.  
For waywardness kills the simple,  
and the complacency of fools destroys them;  
but those who listen to me will be secure  
and will live at ease, without dread of disaster.”

Wow! That little piece of Scripture will set your eardrums on fire!

But then, as now, there were many voices shouting multiple versions of their particular truth. And also then, as now, hearing the voice of Wisdom, the voice of God, over the clamor is very challenging.

On the face of it, this is a pretty brutal proclamation. Wisdom’s tirade is hard to hear but makes a lot of sense when we think about it!

When we turn our eyes to the suffering and pain of refugee children still separated from their parents, and the endless struggle of so many people being brutalized by despotic governments, pushed and herded like criminals, and how many vulnerable children and others are dying while countries worry about protecting their borders, we might hear Wisdom’s harsh words differently.

When I think on the hatred cut loose in the world, I hear less of a tirade and more of God’s ultimate sadness and lament that we just refuse to love one another, that we consistently choose alienation and hatred and fear over the simple, obvious beauty and promise of God’s love.

Love God and love your neighbor.

When people are in pain, when they are hungry, when they are thirsty, excluded and oppressed, when they are desperate for hope and freedom *love them*, put yourselves in their shoes and do for them what you would want done for yourselves.

Forget our manmade creeds, tribes, religions and political loyalties and feed them, clothe them, give them water and welcome them.

Among all of messages of God’s prophets and sages one clear note has been sung repeatedly. “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all of mind, and all of your soul and all of your will and love your neighbor as yourself.”

As Wisdom delivers her message with the voice of a prophet, she is simply saying *return*. Return to the heart of God. And as scorching as this message is to all who will listen to her anger and frustration, it is less a voice of condemnation than one of a desperate plea of a mother to her children as

she sees them choosing a destructive path.

Not even the most loving God can keep us from suffering the consequences of our actions. Who among us who has had a child go astray has not longed to use any means, any words possible to save them from the consequences of a destructive path?

How many among us have wept from the helplessness of watching someone you love suffer with no power to change his or her minds? How much more so with God? Return to me---this is God's eternal call.

The place where I struggle with Wisdom's pronouncement is how she tells us this is a simple straightforward message. I actually do agree the message is simple and straight-forward, but allowing the transformation that is required to become deeply aligned with God's purposes---that is where the struggle begins!

Jesus tells us, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?"

This is yet another way of God saying, "Return to me."

To be able to return to God from the places we have become lost in self, in culture, life, scarcity, anger or even simple distraction—well, that requires transformation.

Transformation requires us to change our minds about...

- who we are,
- what we think,
- who we love,
- who we reject and
- to change our minds about who or what we really serve.

This is the part of Jesus' message that doesn't sell so well...transformation asks us to give up comforting ourselves and instead dismantle ourselves.

Giving up our lives means to empty ourselves of our own egos, preconceptions, and certainties, and to become vulnerable to the realities of our failures and grief's, and to let go of our illusions of control.

When Jesus says "life" he is referring to what the Greek language would call psyche. Ego is actually a fairly new word and Jesus would not have used it.

So Jesus is saying that the salvation of the psyche—or soul—begins with its own demise. This is the challenge. Author Ken Wilbur says that in popular American usage, "soul" has come to mean little more than, "the ego in drag." And as Barbara Brown Taylor says, "We have been eating the spiritual equivalent of fast food, where religion is about comforting the self, not losing

it.”<sup>1</sup>

Transformation requires less self-comfort and more wrestling in discomfort as we push up against our own prejudices and fears.

Losing our life to find it means embracing our own frailties and vulnerabilities and shortcomings to such an extent that we can do no other than to see our own fragile humanity reflected in the faces of black men and women, the poor and homeless and in the eyes of Syrian, Sudanese or Central American refugees.

Losing our lives to find them means confronting our own failure to fully reflect God in our lives and world, and then being thrown to our knees with the wonder and beauty of God’s love and grace.

God does not wait until we are perfect to love us. Therein lies the hope and the promise that God’s prevailing message of love might be attainable after all.

God loves us. God cajoles us, God screams at us; God promises us that the world is a place of wonder when we love one another as God loves us. God is crying out in the streets, “Return to me.”

Amen.

\* \* \*

## **Episcopal Relief & Development Notice**

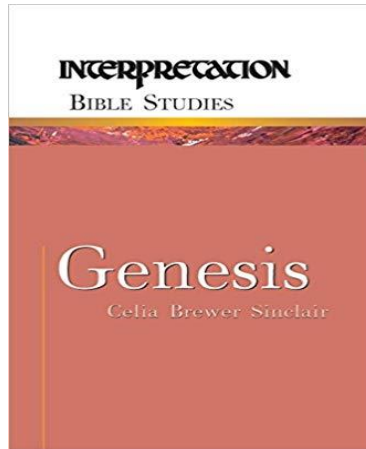
We respond to storms in the United States and U.S. territories through our U.S. Disaster Program. Through our partnerships with Episcopal dioceses, we offer resources and training to help people prepare for disasters and provide emergency support so vulnerable people can make a sustained recovery after the storm. The benefit of our partnership with Episcopal churches is that these congregations are already deeply integrated within their communities. In other words, the Episcopal Church is there before responders arrive and will remain long after the news cameras have gone. You can help provide critical relief to affected communities by donating to our Hurricane Relief Fund. To donate and read the latest updates, visit <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/hurricane-relief>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Brown Taylor, *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, pg. 87, Harper One, NY, New York 2014.

\* \* \*

## Genesis Bible Study

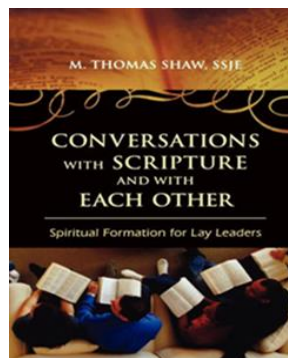


The **Genesis Bible Study** began yesterday and will continue on **Wednesday mornings at 11:30**. There is still time to join us. We will be using the book, *Genesis* by Celia B. Sinclair in *The Interpretation Bible Studies* series. You can order the book in paperback or electronically on Amazon.com. Bring a lunch and a friend, and let's go deep into the beginning of all things!

\* \* \*

**Neighborhood Bible Study meets TONIGHT,  
Thursday, September 20, 2018  
at 6 pm**

***Conversations with Scripture  
And With Each Other***



Please read **1 Corinthians 1-15** and **Chapter 4 from the book** in preparation for tonight's Bible study.

We are altering our every other week format, SKIPPING September 6 and meeting on September 13 and 20 THIS MONTH ONLY.

Please come join us TONIGHT at the Seckel's Barn on Vestal Road (308 Vestal Road) as we have a conversation with scripture and with each other.

\* \* \*

**SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!**



We will be kicking off our Fall Financial Giving series on **Sunday, September 30.**

**Our Festive Meal Luncheon will be November 3** with an exciting speaker and **November 11 will be our Consecration Sunday!**

Your Abundant Living Action TEAM will be bringing you inspiring stories of how lives are changed and ministries are funded through giving back to God what God has so generously given to us.

\* \* \*

## **The 97th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Western North Carolina**

This year's Annual Convention takes place **November 9-10, 2018** at Kanuga Conference Center. If you are interested in attending as either a delegate or alternate delegate of Christ Episcopal Church, contact Phil Donaldson at 336-372-7573 or email at [sld1400@aol.com](mailto:sld1400@aol.com).

\* \* \*

## **Friends in Faith (FiF)**

The Friends in Faith group meets **on Mondays at 11:00 am**. Please make a note of the schedule change. FiF gather as sisters in Christ to praise, pray, study, and share their lives. All are welcome!

\* \* \*

**Mountain Soul featuring Swingset on  
Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup>!**



Mountain Soul will be hosting the band Swingset from Winston-Salem, North Carolina on Sunday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm. They play light swing and jazz music, and the band includes:

Synthia Folwell (mandolin and vocals)  
Beverly Jones (guitar and vocals)  
Mark Leach (guitar and vocals)  
Susie Pollock (fiddle)

Please join us on the 30<sup>th</sup>!

\* \* \*

**Ongoing Items Needed for the Food Closet**

Please consider picking up one or two extra items when you're out shopping and bring to church with you on Sunday. You can place donated items in the Food Closet wagon and they will be delivered to the Solid Rock Food Closet. Most items on the list below cost between \$1-5. This is an inexpensive, easy way to give back to our community and *all* donations are appreciated!

The Food Closet always needs personal items such as:

shampoo  
soap [laundry, dish soap, personal soap]

toilet paper  
toothpaste etc.

**Second Harvest will be reducing food drive distribution by 50%!**

Additional needed items:

white rice (1 lb.)  
dry pintos (1 lb.)  
spaghetti (1 lb.)  
spaghetti sauce  
peanut butter  
canned soup (tomato, chicken)

***However, any dry/can good you wish to donate will be appreciated.***

Please put your donated items in the Food Closet wagon at the Church.

\* \* \*

**{REMINDER: Prayers are updated at the end of each month. If you'd like continued prayers for someone on the prayer list, please make sure you let Mary know before the end of the month.}**

The text "Prayer List" is written in a blue, cursive script font.

**Intercessions:** Ben, Denise H. (healing), Denise S., Ed & Jean, Fred P., Gina D., Julie O., Linda W., Mark & Julee W., Martha H., Suzanne & Lance B.

**Departed:** Aurelia Gray Eller (Sept 10)

**Birthdays:** Louise Law (Sept 25)

**Wedding Anniversaries and Other Thanksgivings:**

\* \* \*

## **Schedule**

**Thursday, September 20**

6:00 pm – Neighborhood Bible Study at the Seckel Barn, 404 Vestal Rd.



**Sunday, September 23 – Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

**Monday, September 24**

11:00 am – Friends in Faith meet

**Wednesday, September 26**

10:00 am – Holy Eucharist

11:30 am – Genesis Bible Study begins

**Sunday, September 30 – Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

9:00 am – Adult Forum

10:30 am – Holy Eucharist

6:00 pm – Mountain Soul presents Swingset

\* \* \*

Food & Fellowship Person of the Month for September is: **Deb Donaldson**.

She can be reached by telephone at 336.372.7573 or by email at

[sld1400@aol.com](mailto:sld1400@aol.com).

\* \* \*

Vestry Person of the month for September is: **Geoff Jones**. He can be reached at [geoff.jones@att.net](mailto:geoff.jones@att.net) or 336-200.4232.

\* \* \*

**If you have any questions regarding anything building or grounds related, please contact Phil Donaldson with your concern.**

\* \* \*

**For Urgent Prayer Request** – Contact Gary Medley. Please be sure to get permission to share any details for the Prayers. Also, if you like to be listed as an Urgent Prayer Partner, please let Gary know.

Great thanks & peace, Gary Medley

[gapdweller@gmail.com](mailto:gapdweller@gmail.com)

336.372.7464

\* \* \*



Please continue to recycle your prescription bottles (with lids) and with the labels pulled off. The recycling box for the bottles is on the floor between the mail slots and the Information table.

\* \* \*

**There have been no services for the past three weeks due to lockdown so there are no specific prayer requests from the staff and prisoners at River North Correctional Center, Independence, VA.**

**Let's continue to keep them *all* in our prayers again this week.**



\* \* \*

- Church office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm.
- The *Good News & Notes* is updated/reviewed/finalized on Wednesdays prior to being emailed on Thursdays. If you have a submission, please make sure you email it to Mary **no later than Wednesday at noon.**