

The Steeple

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October 27,
2021

The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Grace

This past week my friend Charlie Olsen asked, "What aspect of God does the Church primarily focus on? Is it carrying out God's will? Sharing Jesus's story? Reasserting our beliefs? Worshipping the Holy Trinity? Or is it something else entirely?" My answer – "YES!" – my friend! I love you!

If you can't tell, I treasured that interchange and as I thought more about what I really should say in my answer, I asked myself what was it, when all the chips were down, what was it about my faith that I needed to know, to feel, in order to make it through the time that has been given to me. What is it I need to know, deep within my bones, when things don't come easy or when things aren't clear? What is it that I need in the moments when I didn't know in fact, just how much I needed Jesus until I found myself there? What is it about God that I need to know "in the moment" that will shape all my other moments?

Grace.

It's Grace my friends – the costly kind - that knows both wound and redemption, a love that knows how to channel pain and to free it when it doesn't make sense– a love that in that moment we know only God can give – and does in fact gives through us if we have the courage enough to "trust in the Lord and lean not on our own understanding."

I am reminded of Dietrich Bonhoeffer who once wrote: "Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. Costly grace, however, is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it "a man will go and sell all that he has." ... Costly grace is the Incarnation of God."

The incarnation of God working in us, my friends.

Charlie – thank you for reminding us all and especially me, that if there is one aspect we should focus on in the Church it should be showing the world - showing each other – and reminding ourselves how Grace works. So my friend, lets begin again with this prayer from our baptismal liturgy:

Heavenly Father, we thank you that by water and the Holy Spirit you have bestowed upon *us* your servants the forgiveness of sin, and have raised *us* to the new life of **Grace**. Sustain *us*, O Lord, in your Holy Spirit. Give *us* inquiring and discerning hearts, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen*.

Thank you my friend – Love,
Fr. Nick+

Review Committee Schedule - 2021

Review Committee

(Becky Liehr, Doug McIver, Kris Bonner, Dan Droege, convener)

Tuesday, Oct 5 – 12 noon-1 pm *(Done)*

First meeting of Review Committee to develop review documents and begin review process. Out of this meeting, three documents developed, based in part from evaluation documents provided by Diocese:

- Review Committee – Rector’s Evaluation
- Rector Review – Self-Evaluation
- Rector Review – Vestry & Congregation Support

Thursday, Oct. 7 *(Done)*

Blank copies of Rector’s Self-Evaluation and Rector’s Evaluation of Vestry & Congregational Support delivered to Fr. Nick. Committee members begin filling out Rector Evaluation forms individually in preparation for second meeting on Oct. 18.

Monday, Oct. 18 – 12 noon-1 pm *(Done)*

Second meeting of Review Committee to coalesce their comments on Rector’s Evaluation. Following meeting, Dan provides Evaluation to committee by email for final signoff before providing to Fr. Nick on Oct. 21.

Thursday, Oct. 21 *(Done)*

Review Committee delivers Rector’s Evaluation to Fr. Nick. Likewise, Fr. Nick delivers to the committee the completed Rector’s Self-Evaluation and the completed Rector’s Evaluation of Vestry/Congregational Support.

Monday, Oct. 25 – 12 noon-1 pm *(Done)*

Review Committee meets to review all documents.

Friday, Oct 29 – 3 pm-5pm

Review Committee meets with Fr. Nick to go over all documents. Out of this discussion will come assessments and recommendations to be undertaken over the next 12 months by the rector and by the vestry as representatives of the congregation.

Tuesday, Nov. 2 – 12 noon-1 pm – List of assessments and recommendations developed at Oct. 29 meeting provided to Fr. Nick and the Review Committee with opportunity to comment/fine-tune. Finalized list distributed to all parties via email.

Mon. Nov. 8– At vestry meeting, convener of the Review Committee (Dan) and Fr. Nick will summarize the above review process and outline major recommendations involving both the rector and the vestry.

This Sunday’s altar flowers are given by Mark and Mary Jo Peterson:
“In thanksgiving for God’s blessings and in memory of family and friends.”

Children's Programming is Back!

On October 24, we began gathering with children again on Sundays. Drop your K-5th graders off upstairs at 10:15 am. Each week, we will alternate between music and Godly Play, giving children a chance to experience both! The children will rejoin their families in church before communion.

We are looking for people to serve as doorkeepers. Please reach out to Keeli Droege at keelidroege@gmail.com to sign up!

*Children will be asked to wear a mask, and all adults working with children will be masked.



Trunk or Treat – October 31

After the 10:30 service on Halloween, we will host a Trunk or Treat for the young (and the young at heart!).

Decorate your trunk or bring a lawn chair and bowl of treats. Choose a parking spot or line up along the sidewalk next to Metcalf Hall at noon.

Bring your kids, grandkids, kids' friends, any age kid for treats.

Kids – come to church in your costume!
(Adults too, if you dare!)

Wrap in blankets if it's cool -- or enjoy the nice weather. Support our kids and come out! Enjoy our parish family.



Weekly Words of Wellness

Enhancing the Quality of Our Relationships

By Scott Stoner & Holly Hughes Stoner

Almost thirty years ago, I first wrote that "Few things affect the quality of our lives more than the quality of our relationships," for an article on marriage and family therapy. And I believe that quote is as true today as it was when I first wrote it.

The stress that people are experiencing from the pandemic is often showing up as more conflict in their relationships, which in turn creates more stress in their lives. Last week I wrote about stress resilience and the importance of being compassionate toward ourselves and others with whom we are in relationship. Knowing that being compassionate is a crucial tool in stress reduction is one thing; practicing it in our relationships is another. Once relationship patterns get set, they can be hard to break, especially if those relationship patterns are long-standing.

Most of us first learned our relationship patterns and skills at the "school of relationships" we attended as children. That school was run by the adults who raised us. In that school, we learned about all kinds of things that we came to believe were normal and good in relationships, and then we most likely adopted them. We probably carried those habits into our adulthood, often without awareness of whether what we learned was helpful or not.

The good news is that if we find our current relationship habits are not serving us well, we can change those patterns at any time. All it takes is humility, willingness to learn, and a commitment to doing the work it takes to break old habits and create new ones.

Here is one specific skill that I regularly teach that creates a new pattern in relationships. It is a skill I learned from the research of Dr. John Gottman, a marriage and family therapist and author of several best-selling books on relationships. The skill, known as the "soft start-up," has to do with how we choose to start a conversation.

Gottman contrasts a soft start-up with its opposite, a harsh start-up (often used when people are stressed). His research shows that depending on which of these two ways a conversation begins, one can predict how that conversation will end. For example, a harsh start-up, such as "You never listen to what I have to say about....." (especially when said with a stern tone) is likely to lead to a defensive response from the accused, which often leads to an escalation in the conflict.

A soft start-up, on the other hand, related to the same issue might sound like this. "I would like to talk with you about how lately I am not feeling heard when I talk about and I would like to address this before I get more upset. Would now be a good time to have a conversation with me about this?" Starting a conversation in this manner is much more

likely to lead to a productive and positive conversation. This kind of start-up seeks to resolve the conflict rather than inflame it.

If we attended a "school of relationships" where harsh start-ups and repeated relational conflict were common, we might believe that is typical for relationships. If no one ever shared their true feelings when you were growing up, you most likely learned to do the same. The good news is that we can all be life-long learners when it comes to finding more satisfying ways to be in relationship with others, no matter what we have learned through the years. Again, all it takes is humility, willingness to learn, and a commitment to doing the work it takes to break old habits and create new ones.

Making It Personal:

These prompts are offered to help you reflect on how you might apply the content of this week's column to your own life. You might write your responses to them in a journal, discuss them with someone else or in a group, or simply take a few moments to reflect on your responses.

1. Do you see a connection between your current level of stress and how it might be impacting your relationships?
2. Are you satisfied in general with your use of "soft start-ups" vs. "harsh start-ups?"
3. Is there a specific relationship where you would like to practice a different tone, including, perhaps, a soft start-up?

**Healthy Relationships is one of the eight dimensions of wellness in our Wellness Compass Model for Well-Being. You can learn more about that model [HERE](#).*

CONCERN Needs



CONCERN is in need of the following items: Ramen Noodles, Sugar, Tea Bags, Complete Pancake Mix, Jiffy Mix, Toothbrush Kits, and Deodorant.

Also, Thanksgiving is just around the corner.

Please consider offering a contribution towards our annual fundraiser for Thanksgiving Pies.

Make your check out to St. Luke's, and write Thanksgiving Baskets in the memo.

Thanksgiving Coloring Sheets!

[Click here for printable coloring sheets for your kiddos!](#)

Pub Theology at El Maguey!

Please join us on October 28th!

Pub Theology is scheduled for the 4th Thursday of each month.

The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 28th at El Maguey.

What is 'Pub Theology'? It's a time to gather informally and talk about different subjects around our core values of faith. What feeds your faith? Where did you see Jesus this week?

What literature are you reading that has had some inspiration for you?

A host of topics are brought up and discussed over drinks and appetizers.

(We pay our own tabs). There is usually a facilitator to throw out topics for discussion.

No politics, no gossip, and what is discussed in Pub Theology that is personal stays in the group. Respect the dignity of every person. It's a fun and relaxed time to get to know each

other. Call the church office and let us know if you will be joining us

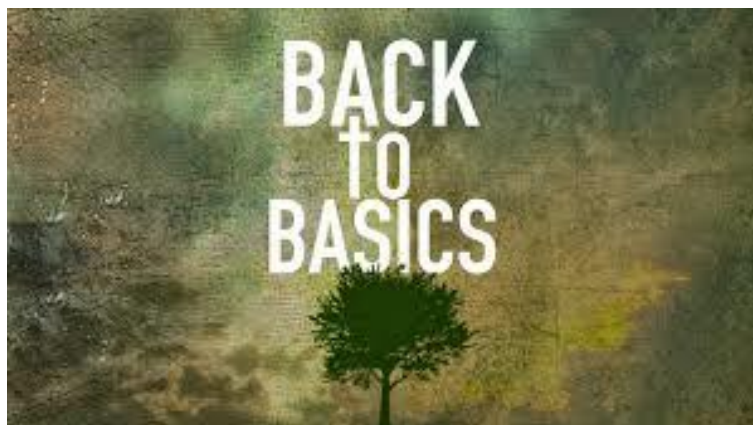
so we can have enough tables set up at El Maguey.

If you have any questions, contact Fr. Nick, Penny Williams, or Nancy Megee.

We will be happy to share. Let's share some theology!



Faith Forum Series



Sundays 9:15– 10:15 a.m. in Metcalf Hall

Rector's Bible Study



Thursday October 28th 9:00 a.m.

St. Luke's Vestry Members

Dan Droege, Sr. Warden – dbdcomm.2@gmail.com 918-331-7936
Doug McIver, Jr. Warden – dmciver@susandickcpa.com 785-342-4328
Jo Baughman – jybokla@aol.com
Karole Cozby – kscozby916@gmail.com
Chad Ellis – w.chadwick.ellis@gmail.com
Karen Lewey – kgrammy07@yahoo.com
Penny Williams – oklaborn@sbcglobal.net
Nancy Woods – Nancywoods120@gmail.com
Steve Van Aken – scvanaken@sbcglobal.net
Nancy Warring – newarring@cityofbartlesville.org
Katherine Powell – kmpbmp48@gmail.com
Nancy Megee – sc4me81@yahoo.com

St. Luke's Episcopal Church Contacts:

The Reverend Nick Phares, Rector 269-788-7063; RevPhares@outlook.com
Dolores McCreary, Choir Director/Organist 918-397-4828 dolomc37@gmail.com
Keeli Droege, Christian Education Coord.; 918-697-8509; keelidroege@gmail.com
210 East 9th St., Bartlesville, OK 74003
StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com

Connecting with St. Luke's

To learn various ways to connect at St. Luke's, visit our website at: <http://episcopalbartlesville.org/>

SOLICITATIONS

Be aware – No one from St. Luke's will request gift cards or other monetary support through email. If you receive such a message in your email, it is spam. All financial requests/special appeals at St. Luke's go through normal channels and any special requests will be made by phone or in person.

Agape Mission Volunteer Schedule

Thursday, October 28

10:45 am – 1 pm: Jeff Birk, Darian Kedy,
Becky Olsen, Dan Droege, Jo Baughman

12:45 pm – 2 p.m.: Steve Clark, Steve VanAken, Carol Murphy

Thursday, November 11

10:45 am – 1 pm: Fr. Nick Phares, Becky Liehr, Kris Bonner, Dolores
McCreary, Kathy Zervas, Jim Perrier

12:45 pm – 2 pm: Jeanne Julstrom, Peter Julstrom, Wendy Hall

Bereavement Team 1

Susie Clark
Nancy Woods
Jeanne Julstrom
Sally Lindsey

Bereavement Team 2

Laura Birk
Kris Bonner
Nancy Megee
Rita Childers
Carol Murphy

St. Luke's Prayer List

The prayer list can be found in
the Sunday bulletin and on
the St. Luke's website.

Call or email our office with
prayer requests at
918-336-1212 or
StLukesBartlesville@outlook.com

Birthdays and Anniversaries, October 21st – 27th

Birthdays

Grayson Ellis 29th
Rhonda McCallister 29th
Elaine Ryan 30th

Anniversaries

If your or a loved one's name doesn't appear on the list, please email or call
the office, and we will add your birthday or anniversary!