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The Steeple



June 12, 2024



The Weekly Newsletter of St. Luke's Episcopal Church



Law and Canon

In the past month and continuing this week, the concept of the rule of law has dominated the Nation's headlines. Along with it, there has been a considerable amount of commentary on the principles that help us maintain justice and order within our society. As Episcopalians, I think it is essential to understand how these principles function, not only within secular society, but also in how those principles are translated into the governance of our Church and what it means for our religious community's practice.

From what we've read (and I think you'll agree) is that the rule of law, fundamentally, ensures that all members of a society are subject to the same laws. This principle, as you would expect, is equally vital in the context of the Church too. Our canons—the laws governing the Episcopal Church—serve as the bedrock of our ecclesiastical structure. And, these canons provide a framework for governance, ensuring transparency and accountability in our communal life. They can be found by navigating to the link below:

<https://generalconvention.org/constitution-and-canons/>

We've, no doubt, learned and hoped, that the rule of law was created to help us safeguard against tyranny and the abuse of power, ensuring that justice prevails over individual whims. Similarly, within the Church, the canons protect against autocracy and ensure that decisions are made based on established principles rather than personal preferences. It is hoped that this will create a stable and predictable environment where all "members" know their rights and their responsibilities – not just the leadership and that there is structure to hold one another accountable in service to our mission.

Recent news coverage of the rule of law (however, sensationalized) highlights the rule of law's role in protecting our freedoms and ensuring justice. For those of us in religious communities, this underscores even more the importance of learning and adhering to our own canons, not merely as

a formality but as expressions of our commitment to justice, compassion, and the integrity of our Episcopal identity. Our canons help us navigate conflicts, guide our decision-making processes, and uphold the values that define us as a faith community.

Thus, living by the rule of law (or canons) of the Episcopal Church means fostering a culture of respect for established procedures and a commitment to the common good. It calls us to be vigilant in upholding these principles too, ensuring that our actions reflect the justice and love that is so central to our faith.

In a time where the rule of law is sometimes challenged in the secular world, may our adherence to it and how we practice it through our church canons be a testament to our dedication to justice, peace, and the values that unite us. However, the rule of law continues to be subject to opinion in secular governance, may we continue to embrace our commitment to ensuring its practice as Episcopalians as we seek to balance the aims of justice through transparency and accountability with the divine principles of faith, hope, and love.

In peace,

Nick+

Faithful Innovation “Post-Experiment” Report

Having recently completed our Faithful Innovation experiment (mentioned in the [Steeple of March 13th](#) and of [May 1st](#)), this [“Post-Experiment” Report](#) has been submitted to Canon Steve Carlson and Kate Bond.

Thanks again to all who participated, as well as for the support and prayers of the entire St. Luke’s Family! — Jeff



Ladies’ Prayer Group will meet once a month. If you would like to join this group of prayer warriors, please contact Sandy Whitson to get on the calling list.

Theologians Corner

Basil the Great

Bishop of Caesarea, 379



Basil was born about 329, in Caesarea of Cappadocia, into a Christian family of wealth and distinction. Educated in classical Hellenism, Basil might have continued in academic life, had it not been for the death of a beloved younger brother and the faith of his sister, Macrina. He was baptized at the age of twenty-eight, and ordained a deacon soon after.

Macrina had founded the first monastic order for women at Annesi. Fired by her example, Basil made a journey to study the life of anchorites in Egypt and elsewhere. In 358 he returned to Cappadocia and founded the first monastery for men at Iborra. Assisted by Gregory Nazianzus, he

compiled *The Longer and Shorter Rules*, which transformed the solitary anchorites into a disciplined community of prayer and work. The Rules became the foundation for all Eastern monastic discipline. The monasteries also provided schools to train leaders for Church and State.

Basil was ordained presbyter in 364. In the conflict between the Arians (supported by an Arian Emperor) and orthodox Christians, Basil became convinced that he should be made Bishop of Caesarea. By a narrow margin, he was elected Bishop of Caesarea, Metropolitan of Cappadocia, and Exarch of Pontus. He was relentless in his efforts to restore the faith and discipline of the clergy, and in defense of the Nicene faith. When the Emperor Valens sought to undercut Basil's power by dividing the See of Cappadocia, Basil forced his brother Gregory to become Bishop of Nyssa.

In his treatise, *On the Holy Spirit*, Basil maintained that both the language of Scripture and the faith of the Church require that the same honor, glory, and worship is to be paid to the Spirit as to the Father and the Son. It was entirely proper, he asserted, to adore God in liturgical prayer, not only with the traditional words, "Glory to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit;" but also with the formula, "Glory to the Father with the Son together with the Holy Spirit."

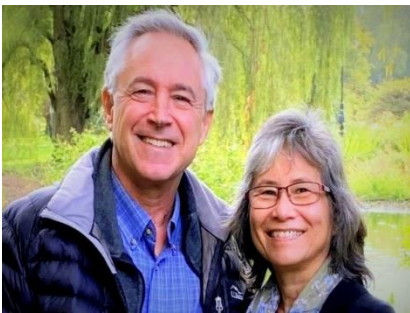
Basil was also concerned about the poor and, when he died, he willed to Caesarea a complete new town, built on his estate, with housing, a hospital and staff, a church for the poor, and a hospice for travelers.

He died at the age of fifty, in 379, just two years before the Second Ecumenical Council, which affirmed the Nicene faith.

Concern's current needs are: canned fruit, 18 oz peanut butter, flour, Spam, tuna, paper or plastic grocery bags and egg cartons. We also need volunteers for the summer. Please call 918-336-4693 and talk to Melody.

Concern appreciates your continued support.

June Item for Pack the Backpacks



News from the Greens

Hi friends,

I first met Fay at the marriage retreat last year. Our friend Por had recommended she go. After the retreat Fay and I started meeting for brunch when I was in Chiang Mai. Fay eventually became the Christian Education director at her church. Her church is the same church where most of the parents attend who are the parents who brought their children to the mother and daughter retreats and the father and son retreats. Now Fay and I are making plans to do the mother and daughter sessions not at a retreat but instead as a series of four after-church meetings. At this point Fay and I are planning to start a new group of mothers and daughters in September, if the Lord keeps schedules open for it. Praise to God for bringing exactly the right people to enable family ministries to be received by Thai Christians. Often I am seeing that the timing is just right, especially for families that I already know and love. Praise to God that His heart desires will not lack for His enabling. Please ask God to help Thai parents to make time in their busy schedules to have conversations with their teens to strengthen them for their future decisions.

After the Culture meets Scripture workshop that I last wrote about, Roger almost immediately went into a website workshop which he coordinated for representatives from about 10 language groups

from a nearby country. For each language group, they created websites where Scripture and other Bible materials could be accessed. Two men came from outside Thailand to teach the workshop. Before that workshop was finished, Roger and I (and the two men) came to a large conference in Chiang Mai. In Roger's first week at the conference, Roger received training on the challenges of ministering to refugees. In the last week I entered a training for ministering to people who have gone through an extremely difficult experience. Today we will return to the northern city where we live. Please ask God to keep preparing Roger and me well to become increasingly better equipped as we seek to encourage people in their walk with the Lord.

In two weeks Roger and I will lead our second marriage retreat for Thai couples. Roger is also preparing for a July workshop to help language group representatives who are interested to provide Bible programs on the radio for people who speak their languages. Please ask God to help both Roger and me to prepare well for leading the marriage retreat June 20 to 22 and for Roger to lead the radio programming training.

Roger and I are also looking forward to being in San Diego in August for Esther and Noah's wedding. Please ask God to provide for a joyous celebration together with friends and family from both sides.

Thank you for praying for our Scripture engagement work in Southeast Asia and for our family, too. May God bring great encouragement to Christians in Southeast Asia as they face challenges to family stability. May He also keep bringing our own family forward in having strong relationships with each other.

We are grateful for each of you. Thank you for journeying with us!

Joanne



Juneteenth, officially Juneteenth National Independence Day, is a federal holiday in the United States. It is celebrated annually on June 19 to commemorate the ending of slavery in the United States. It is also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Juneteenth Independence Day, and Black Independence Day. On June 19, 1865, Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, TX, and announced the end of the civil war and the end of slavery.





WALKING THE MOURNER'S PATH

A Christ-Centered Grief Ministry

SEPTEMBER 10TH - OCTOBER 22ND

The ministry of Walking the Mourner's Path seeks to serve individuals who are in grief through a series of Eight Weekly Workshops.

Together in the small group workshops individuals:

- Acknowledge the pain and brokenness
- Recognize that each journey through grief is unique
- Share stories
- Experience both tears and laughter
- Help each other in a safe environment to continue healing

Walking the Mourner's Path is a transformative eight-week journey that reflects on where God is in our grief and loss. If you are interested in finding out more or joining our next workshop, please contact Karole Cozby or Nancy Woods for more information.

"come to me all who are heavy laden and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28-29



**It's the simple moments of
Life in this world
that are so beautiful.**

(Photo courtesy of Laura Birk)

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