

community mental health system. I did well and was encouraged to go to graduate school. Then it was job hunting time as we were moving to a new town. I applied for jobs that were a stretch, as well as others. I applied for a Planner and Evaluator job which I didn't get. At the time, the only job I could get was as a county social worker. It was hard work that I was not very good at. Very shortly, I received a call from the agency with the Planner job asking me to come for a second interview. They had hired someone who, upon further exploration, turned out to be dishonest. They offered me the job right then and there. After 2 years, our Executive Director left and, with encouragement, I applied for the position. I did not get the job; however, shortly the Board came back and offered it to me because of irregularities in the other person's resume!

Zechariah 7:8—8:8; Psalms 40, 54; Revelations 5:6-14

Birthday: Kelly Garner

Friday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m.	A Way Out
9:30 a.m.	Life Group
10:00 a.m.	Bible Study
8:00 p.m.	Friday Night Young Peoples' AA

Today's Ministry: Bell Choir

Saturday, December 23

Matthew 25:31-46 *"Then he will answer them, 'I tell you this: anything you did not do for one of these, however, humble, you did not do for me.' And they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous will enter eternal life."* (vv.45-46)

I find this a difficult command to understand and to follow. The balance between personal safety, as my parents taught me to be aware of, and being consistent with biblical principles is a major conflict to which I have not found an easy resolution. Currently, I make donations to the organizations which feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless, clothe the naked, help the mentally ill and their families, and several others.

I believe this is how Jesus needs us to act. We are the Body of Christ, with each person having their part to fulfill so the body can be whole—with everyone sharing their time, talents, and treasures in their unique God-given way.

Do I give to people living on the streets and assume they are safe to approach? What do I tell my children when they ask what's wrong with that person and why doesn't he have a home? Why don't we take him home with us?

Zechariah 8:9-17; Psalm 55; Revelation 6:1-17

Birthdays: Fr. Todd Cederberg, Bonnie Rech

Anniversary: Tom and Pam Baker

Saturday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m.	Shepherd Group
9:30 a.m.	AA Step Study for Women
12:00 p.m.	NarcAnon "Clean at Noon"
5:00 p.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
6:30 p.m.	NarcAnon "Kleen N Krazy"
8:30 p.m.	NarcAnon "Not Alone"

Today's Ministry: Women's Cursillo

by Jean Hess

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"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with love"

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St. Mary's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 17

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 13-17 *Stand firm, then, brothers, and hold fast to the traditions, which you have learned from us by word or by letter.* (v.15 NRSV)

Traditions have been vital in helping me navigate the challenges of life. They help me to grow in both family life and my Christian faith, and help define my choices when times are confusing and uncertain. My family traditionally spends time during the Christmas, summer, and fall seasons in North Carolina. The ages range from 1 to 89 years old and we are spread out from Florida to Connecticut and as far as the northwestern United States. There is much diversity. The traditions have kept us close despite our geographic separations. When family members are unable to participate, they are missed—not harassed or berated.

I find it important to examine traditions occasionally to help ensure that they still carry value and have not become oppressive. Sometimes this is a fine line and needs to be discussed with the people who are affected. The process of examination also helps us to experience who we are as a member of the nuclear family, the extended family, and the larger family of Christ.

Amos 9:11-15; Psalms 63, 98; John 5:30-47

Birthdays: Stan Valentine, Benjamin Brooks

Anniversary: Mike and Marcie Ferraro

Sunday's Calendar

7:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m.	Contemporary Family Worship Service
9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:10 a.m.	Sunday School
10:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour in the Courtyard
11:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
12:00 p.m.	Greening of the Church Campus

Today's Ministry: 20's and 30's

Monday, December 18

Psalm 41 *Happy the man who has a concern for the helpless! The LORD will save him in time of trouble. The LORD protects him and*

gives him life, making him secure in the land; the LORD never leaves him to the greed of his enemies. (vv.1-2)

My mother has reached out to hurting people throughout her life. She has great compassion for those who struggle. Through the Holy Spirit's subtle guidance, she helps the person in need for whatever time is necessary.

Most recently Mom noticed a confused, elderly woman walking in the neighborhood. Mom took the time to connect with her. She now writes her new neighbor notes about the activity for tomorrow, calls her an hour before it's time to go, and makes sure she has transportation and a companion. She continues to find other people who can include her in their activities. She helped my friends when I was in high school.

Mom is grieving the death of her husband of sixty-four and a half years. Surrounded by those who love her, she has learned many skills she never thought possible. Her confidence in living as a single person is increasing. She stays busy and many of the people she has helped now comfort her. God's grace is obvious in this season of her life. Praise be to God.

Zechariah 1:7-17; Psalm 52; Revelation 3:7-13; Matthew 24:15-31

Birthdays: Bud McCollum, Francis Wu, Jim Parker, Gavin Rancour

Anniversary: Jim and Audrey Gillis

Monday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
4:00 p.m.	DOK Meeting
4:30 p.m.	ACA Step Study
5:00 p.m.	Angel Tree Party
5:30 p.m.	ACA Meeting (Adult Children of Alcoholics)
5:30 p.m.	Stephen Ministry Training
6:30 p.m.	Life Group

Today's Ministry: Acolytes

Tuesday, December 19

Matthew 24:32-44 Hold yourself ready, therefore, because the Son of Man will come at the time you least expect him. (v.44)

To be ready, I need to spend regular time quietly focusing on God's word and listening. During prayer time my brain, filled with earthly concerns, gets in the way as I practice hearing and then acting on the gentle direction of the Holy Spirit. I cannot be fully who God made me if I cannot "step up to the plate" when I am needed.

The woman who took care of one of my children while at home with her child was uncharacteristically upset. Her husband had an accident and she didn't know what to do with the children. I told her to go and I would take care of them. We went to my house, had pizza, played on the slip-n- slide, read stories and had a memorable, loving day. Many years later I saw her child; she talked about the day her father died. She said it was very

upsetting. She also told of having a good time at my house, feeling safe and knowing that she was loved. I thank God for the opportunity to serve.

Zechariah 2:1-13; Psalm 45; Revelation 3:14-22

Birthdays: Virginia Harrison, Kyle Resetar

Anniversary: Eric and Kathy Peterson

Tuesday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m.	Women's Bible Study
12:10 p.m.	Holy Eucharist & Healing
5:30 p.m.	Overeaters' Anonymous Meeting
6:30 p.m.	Vestry Meeting
7:30 p.m.	NarcAnon "Just for Today"

Today's Ministry: Alpha Course

Wednesday, December 20

Matthew 24:45-51 "...the master will arrive on a day that servant does not expect, at a time he does not know, and will cut him in pieces." (vv.50-51)

We had a young man working for us we had known for years through sports and school. He consistently demonstrated trustworthiness. We decided to have him take care of our fish and plants while we were out of town. It went very well so we used him as our main caretaker. Awareness slowly dawned on us that he had used our house for parties and allowed our car to be driven. He was distressed when we confronted him. The mother was devastated. We thought carefully about how to handle the situation. Then we were robbed. Items taken included irreplaceable family heirlooms.

The police caught the thieves, who were some of the people at the parties. We prayerfully developed a plan with the police and mother that would help him experience being "cut" in pieces. He had to continue to work to face the staff who knew of the breach. He had to pay us what we had lost from his actions. This repayment plan included actions that demonstrated his remorse and a plan to help those he had hurt.

Zechariah 3:1-10; Psalm 119:49-72; Revelation 4:1-8

Birthdays: Janet Helms, Kirsten Halpin, Billy Jones, Emily Stevens

Anniversaries: Brent and Kathy Butcher, Bob and Debbie Crowder

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m.	Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
10:30 a.m.	Reunion Group
1:00 p.m.	Journaling 101

4:45 p.m.	Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m.	AA "Daily Reflections"
7:00 p.m.	Life Group
8:30 p.m.	NarcAnon "Klean and Krazy"

Today's Ministry: Altar Guild

Thursday, December 21

Psalm 50 Offer to God the sacrifice of thanksgiving and pay your vows to the Most High. If you call upon me in time of trouble, I will come to your rescue, and you shall honour me. (vv.14-15)

In the past, when visiting my parents, we would start the day with "This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it." This tradition established the seed of positivity that is in me.

Currently, I start the day by giving thanks for 3 blessings and for God's grace. The Bible says to give thanks in all things. This is difficult after terrorist attacks. I find I can praise God that people come together to help. Seeing the world through a heart focused on praise, versus one filled with disdain, creates such exceptional differences in how I view life. To love God above all else and to love my neighbor as myself is the cornerstone.

What I focus on significantly impacts my attitude, what happens, how I interpret the events, the impact on others. We can have a positive influence on the environment in which we live by choosing to focus on the love which Jesus came to teach us. The forgiving, grateful focus becomes contagious.

Zechariah 4:1-14; Revelation 4:9—5:5; Matthew 25

Birthdays: Tom Winter, Shannon Cooper, Dale George, Douglas Shaw

Anniversary: Cecil and Linda Sewell

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
12:30 p.m.	Overeaters' Anonymous Meeting
5:30 p.m.	ACA Men's Group
6:30 p.m.	Life Group
7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m.	AlAnon "Stepping Stones"

Today's Ministry: Backpack Buddies

Friday, December 22

Matthew 25:14-30 "Well done, my good and trusty servant!" you have proved trustworthy in a small way: I will now put you in charge of something big." (v.21)

In my family, I often heard, "To those to whom much is given much is expected." I have been richly blessed and have seen this truth at work. I worked hard in college and earned my degree in social work and went immediately to work in the