

I must ask myself, have I lost the excitement of conversion? How about you? Perhaps it's time to embrace the gift God gave us and return to the joy we experienced when we first accepted Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

Isaiah 33:17-22; Psalm 93; Revelation 22:6-11, 18-20; Luke 1:57-66

Birthdays: Bonnie Rech, Fr. Todd Cederberg

Anniversary: Tom & Pam Baker

Friday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:00 a.m.	A Way Out
9:30 a.m.	Friday Life Group
10:00 a.m.	Friday Bible Study
12:00 p.m.	NarcAnon "Clean at Noon"
8:00 p.m.	Friday Night Young Peoples' AA

Today's Ministry: Worship Assistant

Saturday, December 24

Psalm 46 *God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.* (v.1)

I chose to suffer the temporary pain of hip replacement so I could eventually live pain free. Recovery is difficult. Much harder than I expected. My biggest challenge besides the shower, is getting on and off the bed. My leg will not move of its own accord. As I try to will my leg to move, it appears to have a mind of its own as it lies heavy on the bed. "God is my strength," I repeat over and over.

It's then I think of our "Wounded Warriors." Unlike myself, they didn't choose to suffer pain—loss of limb or sight. They face challenges far greater than mine. Let us keep these brave warriors in our daily prayers. Pray for God to give them strength so they will know without a doubt God is their refuge and ever-present help in all situations. Pray each day they're given strength for one small step toward recovery, knowing God's always there to help. And give thanks for the sacrifice they made for our freedom.

Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 45; Revelation 22:12-17, 21; Luke 1:67-80

Birthdays: Nathan White, Susan Melians

Saturday's Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m.	AA Step Study for Women
12:00 p.m.	NarcAnon "Clean @ Noon"
4:00 p.m.	Family Christmas Eve, <i>Church</i>
5:00 p.m.	Family Christmas Eve, <i>Pittenger Center</i>
6:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Under the Stars, <i>Courtyard</i>
8:30 p.m.	Christmas Eve Eucharist, <i>Church</i>
11:00 p.m.	Midnight Mass, <i>Church</i>

Today's Ministry: Youth Group

"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with love"

The Clergy

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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 18

Psalm 29 *The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.* (v.11 NIV)

The Lord blesses his people with peace. Where might I find a word to bring me more comfort than the word peace? The dictionary describes peace as quiet, tranquility, calm, and serenity. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still and know that I am God..." "Peace be with you," is often times used by Christians in parting.

At the church I attend, there's a mid-week service of "Nourishment & Healing." Thirty minutes to quiet our souls and rest our bodies in the middle of a sometimes tumultuous day. Along with a couple hymns, Scripture readings, and silent meditation, we confess our sins followed by Communion. As long as I am able, I will humbly kneel before my Lord at the kneeling rail. And, I admit it's easier to descend than to rise again. In the final portion of the service, we're invited to come for the anointing with oil for healing of body, mind, and soul.

We depart the sanctuary knowing we've been reconciled with God, and greet each other with signs of peace. "Peace be with you."

Isaiah 42:1-12; Psalm 24; Ephesians 6:10-20; John 3:16-21

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

Sunday's Calendar

7:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite II
9:00 a.m.	Contemporary Family Worship Service
9:10 a.m.	Sunday School
10:15 a.m.	CFW Coffee in Meeting Room #3
10:15 a.m.	Coffee in the Courtyard
11:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Today's Ministry: Table Toppers

Monday, December 19

Psalm 62 *My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, you people; pour*

out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. (vv.7-8)

“I don’t know my role in this family!” my daughter lashed out over the phone from 2100 miles away. Stunned, I didn’t know how to respond. I never thought of my three adult children as having a role and wondered what that would be. There’s the first born, my daughter, the middle who I live by, and the youngest. The youngest alienated himself from the family years ago. What other role is there?

I refuse to get in the middle of any squabbles between these siblings. As she rehashes an old quarrel, I suddenly wondered if they’re ten and eleven years old, or adults in their 50’s.

After saying goodbye, I poured my heart out to God. “Lord, why can’t I fix this? Will dissent in my family ever end?” As I prayed my anxiety was released. I know only God can repair the pain and hurt we hold onto. Please Lord, let there be no more resentment toward each other when words hurt. Let each of us rest in Your strength, trusting, and knowing You’re in control.

Isaiah 11:1-9; Psalm 61; Revelation 20:1-10; John 5:30-47

Birthdays: Virginia Harrison, Kyle Resetar

Anniversaries: Jim & Pat Northcutt, Eric & Kathy Peterson

Monday’s Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA “Hour of Power”
5:00 p.m.	Angel Tree Party
5:30 p.m.	ACA Meeting (Adult Children of Alcoholics)
6:30 p.m.	Life Group

Today’s Ministry: Ushers

Tuesday, December 20

Isaiah 11:10-16 *In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.* (v.10)

When God called Isaiah as a prophet, He told him eventually some of the people would listen. Isaiah told the people the Root of Jesse would bring forth Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. The Messiah would bring a message of forgiveness, comfort, and hope. Perfect tranquility will be possible when Christ reigns over the earth.

Aiden, not quite three years of age, was visiting me for the first time. I was recovering from surgery and his grandmother and aunt offered to lift me up in prayer before leaving. We joined hands, Aiden on my lap. They no sooner finished their prayer than Aiden said, “My turn.” He grabbed my hand, bowed his head, and closed his eyes tightly. I couldn’t make out the words he softly mumbled, but his “Amen” and big grin said it all.

The golden age is still to come. We must prepare ourselves through prayer and teach the children so they will one day play among the wild animals in peace and love. Let’s look forward to the time of peace when Christ returns.

Psalms 66, 67; Revelation 20:11—21:8; Luke 1:5-25

Birthdays: Janet Helms, Kirsten Halpin, Billy Jones

Anniversaries: Brent & Kathy Butcher, Bob & Debbie Crowder

Tuesday’s Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA “Hour of Power”
9:00 a.m.	Women’s Bible Study
9:00 a.m.	Tuesday Bible Study
12:10 p.m.	Holy Eucharist and Healing
1:00 p.m.	Bridge Club
4:00 p.m.	C-Ed AA Step Study
6:30 p.m.	Vestry Meeting
7:30 p.m.	NarcAnon “Just for Today”

Today’s Ministry: Vacation Bible School

Wednesday, December 21

Luke 1:26-38 *But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”* (vv.30-33)

“I know it sounds morbid to plan a funeral before he’s passed away, but I’m a planner and always have been,” my friend handed me the men’s slacks to shorten. Her favorite uncle suffered a heart attack and lay in a coma at the hospital. My friend wanted to be sure her husband and three children possessed suitable attire for a funeral—just in case.

This got me thinking about God’s plan for each of us. How does He control the lives of so many? Is he a *planner*? Does He make lists? Does He have a schedule for the plan He has for each of us? “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Think of God’s plan for our salvation—how detailed. So, when life wears you down and dims your hope, think of the Virgin Mary and the trials she willingly suffered as she patiently waited for God to finish His plan.

Isaiah 28:9-22; Psalm 72; Revelation 21:9-21

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

Anniversary: Cecil & Linda Sewell

Wednesday’s Calendar

6:30 a.m.	Men’s Bible Study
7:00 a.m.	AA “Hour of Power”
8:45 a.m.	Reunion Group
9:30 a.m.	Holy Eucharist
10:00 a.m.	Staff Meeting
1:00 p.m.	Waters Edge Recovery
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 Crazy”

Today’s Ministry: The Vestry

Thursday, December 22

Isaiah 29:13-24 *The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.”* (v.13)

Hypocrisy. The last thing I want is to be labeled a hypocrite. I appear and profess to be a Christian in every way. However, the weeks of post-surgery recovery caused me to question my own obedience to God. My religious routine has been interrupted. Unable to attend church, women’s Bible study, or mid-week service for nourishment and healing, I feel lost. I’m told it’s normal to feel depressed following major surgery. But my early morning routine of coffee with God feels empty. After giving thanks for the new day, it’s the prayer Jesus taught us to pray that gets me through the day. “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 9:9, 10). I know then it’s okay if I’ve no further words to pray out loud because God already knows my needs. He knows each thought and each prayer in my heart.

Psalm 80; Revelation 21:22—22-5; Luke 1:39-56

Birthday: Kelly Garner

Thursday’s Calendar

7:00 a.m.	AA “Hour of Power”
10:00 a.m.	Holy Eucharist - Rite II
12:30 p.m.	Overeaters’ Anonymous Meeting
5:00 p.m.	Chorister Rehearsal
6:30 p.m.	Life Group
7:00 p.m.	Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m.	AIAnon “Stepping Stones”

Today’s Ministry: Wedding Guild

Friday, December 23

Psalm 96 *Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples.* (v.3)

“I feel like knocking on doors and telling everyone about Jesus.” Praise for our creator overflowed from my neighbor’s lips. I listened as she poured out her heart. Although she was saved many years ago, she was just now beginning what I called her “Baby Christian” time. Her soul hungered for knowledge as she searched the Bible for understanding. She now recognized Scripture in songs played on the local Christian radio station and viewed religious shows on TV.

I recognized her thirst from my own past, however, I didn’t feel qualified to answer her many questions so I asked her one. “Have you ever read the Old Testament?” Her answer was no. I left the room and returned with a *Women’s New International Version Bible* complete with devotionals and handed it to her. “Start with Genesis—the beginning.”