

Birthdays: Joanne Weidman-Gallagher, Omar Qadir

Friday's Calendar:
7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
9:30 a.m. Life Group
10:00 a.m. Bible Study
12:00 p.m. A Way Out
8:00 p.m. AA Friday Nite Young People

Today's Ministry: Facilities Committee

Saturday, December 17

Luke 3:1-9 *Bear fruits worthy of repentance.* (v.8a)

I have been struck again and again this week when reading over the lessons how many times they tell us that it is not just our words that matter in Christianity. It is our Christian praxis [action]. Do we put our money where our mouth has been? Do we—or I—walk the way or just talk about it? Our prayer life becomes real, all the lessons imply, by the kind of life we are striving to live and by the warmth and depth of the love and generosity that we show to all our brothers and sisters.

Hebrews 12:28 on Sunday told us “Give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe.” 2 Peter on Monday urged us not to be ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (1:8). Thursday, in the 50th Psalm, we were told again to “Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High” (v.14). And today John the Baptist tells us to “Bear fruits worthy of repentance.” Praxis is the word. To action!

Isaiah 10:20-27; Psalm 55; Jude 17-25

Birthdays: Benjamin Brooks

Anniversaries: Mike & Marcie Ferraro

Saturday's Calendar:

10:00 a.m. Bible Study ONLINE
8:30 p.m. Not Alone Group
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II

Today's Ministry: Family Promise

by Sister Mary Michael SSM

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“Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love”

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Sunday, December 11

John 3:22-30 *“You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.’”* (v.28 NRSV)

All through the Hebrew Scriptures we find the authors speaking of the people of God as God's bride. In the New Testament the apostle Paul continues this imagery picturing the church as the bride and Christ as the bridegroom. In our Gospel reading today from John we have John the Baptist seeing himself as the one who is bringing the people of Israel to God, as the friend who is leading the bride to the bridegroom.

John the Baptist tells his disciples that he does not have the leading role in the story of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He is simply the one who prepares the way for Christ.

You and I—lovers of Christ and would-be faithful disciples—have been given John the Baptist's role in our own day. We might ask ourselves, who is it that we are supposed to guide to an encounter with Christ today? This would be the greatest, most loving and life-enhancing role we could possibly play in someone's life. Seek and you will find someone to lead to Christ today.

Isaiah 13:6-13; Psalm 63; Hebrews 12:18-29

Birthdays: Barbara Dupont, Peggy Wood, Jen Morris

Sunday's Calendar :

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m. Contemporary Family Worship
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
2:00 p.m. Advent Walk

Today's Ministry: Communications Team

Monday, December 12

2 Peter 1:1-11 *For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (v.8)

Peter tells us in his second letter not to be ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If, for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, we long to be effective, fruitful Christians, how would our lives be different from what they are today?

The prophets have told us over and over again in one way or another to do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8). The Mosaic Law has told us in great detail what we should and should not do. Jesus himself summed everything up in two great commandments: love God, put Him first in our lives; and love one another with the same kind of selfless love that He has shown us.

The great good news is that Jesus did not become incarnate and live among us just to tell us how to live nor just to give us an example. He will give us every bit of grace we shall ever need to become all he would have us be. And he has promised to enlighten, empower, and strengthen us. All for the asking in prayer.

Isaiah 8:16—9:1; Psalms 41, 52; Luke 22:39-53

Birthdays: Melinda White, Natalie Norris, Leslie Doyle, Aidan Guzi

Monday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
 10:00 a.m. Praying Hands (1st & 3rd Mondays)
 3:00 p.m. Daughters of the King (2nd Mondays)
 5:45 p.m. ACOA

Today’s Ministry: Cursillo

Tuesday, December 13

Luke 22:54-69 *The Lord turned and looked at Peter.* (v.61a)

It is only Luke’s Gospel that tells us Jesus turned and looked at Peter just after Peter had vehemently denied three times that he had ever known him. Peter was warming himself by a fire in the courtyard where the crowd of chief priests, officers of the temple police, and the elders had brought Jesus. Luke also tells us that when he remembered Jesus’ warning to him— “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times,”—Peter turned away from the comfort of the fire, went off by himself, and wept bitterly.

Each one of us knows all too well what emotions were visible in Jesus’ searching look: love, compassion, forgiveness, disappointment. How many times have we seen that look on the faces of those we love best? May bitter tears of repentance enable us to grow beyond being the cause of such disappointment to our Lord Christ and to one another.

Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 45; 2 Peter 1:12-21

Birthdays: Susie Speer, Brigitte Martin, Kinsley Billings

Anniversaries: Danie & Charles Victor-Laguerre

Tuesday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
 9:30 a.m. Women’s Bible Study
 9:30 a.m. Life Group ONLINE
 12:10 p.m. Healing Service
 7:00 p.m. Bonifantes Boys Choir in Ross Hall

Today’s Ministry: Daughters of the King

Wednesday, December 14

Mark 1:1-8 *The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* (v.1)

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I think this is one of the most beautiful verses in the Scriptures. A few verses later in Mark, Jesus tells us, “The kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news” (v.15). I think I have seen glimpses of the kingdom of heaven many times in my life—times when someone has forgiven me an ugly, hateful fit of temper; times when I have watched a glorious sunset, viewed the Grand Canyon, the Rocky Mountains, the coast of Maine; heard incredibly beautiful and profoundly moving music; or had a quiet time in a church or chapel. At such times the kingdom of heaven seemed very real and near to me.

I believe I would find the kingdom of heaven—God’s kingdom of love—even more real and nearer than ever if I could imagine it in every encounter with others when we really listen to one another, grow together, love one another, and actively carry out God’s will together.

Isaiah 9:8-17; Psalm 119:49-72; 2 Peter 2:1-10a

Birthdays: Ernie Kiel

Anniversaries: Matt & Kimberly Brooks, Kathy & Dave Fuller

Wednesday’s Calendar:

6:30 a.m. Men’s Bible Study
 7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
 9:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist
 10:00 a.m. Life Group
 4:30 p.m. Mary’s Kitchen
 6:00 p.m. NAMI

Today’s Ministry: Bible Study Groups

Thursday, December 15

Psalm 50 *Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.* (v.14)

The Cloisters in New York City is a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art which has been put together from the furnishings of French and Spanish monasteries of the 12th to 15th centuries. I visited there recently and sat in the lovely herb garden with its magnificent view of the Palisades listening to a recording of monks chanting their prayers. I was moved to tears of thanksgiving by the thought that I, in this generation, was part of the countless number of Christians throughout the ages who have struggled to offer themselves for the love of Christ to his service.

Pope John XXIII once wrote that the Christian’s life should really be one long Festival of Joy. We realize how true these words of his are when we take time to thank God for our great blessings as Christians and try to become the kind of person we believe He would have us be.

Isaiah 9:18—10:4; 2 Peter 2:10b-16; Matthew 3:1-12

Birthdays: Roberta Breene, Debra George, Janet Giannotti, Anne Seifert, Leighan Talton

Anniversaries: Valentino & Laura Rangel

Thursday’s Calendar: Christmas Flower Names Deadline

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
 12:00 p.m. Lunch & Chamber Music
 1:30 p.m. Grief Support Group
 7:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Stepping Stones

Today’s Ministry: Eucharistic Visitors

Friday, December 16

Psalm 40 *Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear.* (v.6a)

Mother Teresa of Calcutta ministered with her Sisters to thousands and thousands of “the poorest of the poor” all over the world. She urged all of us, “Never let anything so fill you with sorrow (your own or that for others) as to make you forget the joy of Christ risen.”

But God didn’t create us just so that we might experience joy in His presence. A Presbyterian minister once told me that each one of us is created by God as His promise to His universe that He still loves and cares for it. What a mind-boggling challenge!

Barbara Brown Taylor tells us in her book *Gospel Medicine*, “What we have been called to do, is to ignite, inflame, combust, burn, shine with the glory of God who has chosen us, and given us to the world, bright lights to the end of the earth.” Our obedience to God’s calls, the open ear we offer Him and our response to His love, is our own love for Him put into action.

Isaiah 10:5-19; Psalm 54; 2 Peter 2:17-22; Matthew 11:2-15