

Lord with my whole heart, shared my fears about my mother's prognosis, my anger that He seemed deaf, and my need to know if He cared. Expecting nothing, a blinding light filled my yard at 2 am; night became day as the Lord gave me a visible sign of His presence. FYI... Jesus our Healer coordinated a surgical healing that allowed my mother to be Nana to my infant son for two years.

Esther 8:1-8, 15-17; Acts 19:21-41; Luke 4:31-37

Birthdays: Samuel D'Auria

Anniversaries: Alan & Carol Block

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: Life Groups

Saturday, September 24

Psalm 90 *And the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.* (v.17 NKJV)

What a beautiful prayer—to desire the Lord's beauty in our work, not mine, but the Lord's. The Lord gives us the vision to do beautiful work as He directs.

Help me, Lord, to stay tethered to you as You lead me beside still waters and restore my soul. Guide me in paths of righteousness for your name's sake (see Psalm 23:2-3).

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. May I not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that I receive; it is pardoning that I am pardoned; and is in dying that I am born to eternal life (A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis, BCP p.833)

I pray others will see the beauty of the Lord in me; that I will try to obey God's call; and that I will trust God to establish the work of my hands.

Hosea 1:1—2:1; Psalm 87; Acts 20:1-16; Luke 4:38-44

Birthdays: Billy Tischbin, Art Lorr, Morgan Lansing, Lisa Hader, Fred Cone

Anniversaries: Tricia & Jason Cooper

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: Mary's Bookstore & Library

by Jane Shinn

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“Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love”

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ST. MARY'S
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Sunday, September 18

James 1:19-27 *But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and being not just hearers who hear but hearers who act—they will be blessed in their doing.* (v.25 NRSV)

We hear the word in Hebrews 11:1 that faith is the substance or assurance of things we hope for, but have not yet received. Faith comes before my prayer is answered. James encourages us to be hearers and not just doers.

There is someone whom I care for deeply who used to have “big issues”. Along the way I have intervened to “save” this person from harm or danger. My worry and compassion clouded the scene; I trudged along trying to do my best, without allowing God to do the rest! Can anyone relate to me?

Exhausted and needing help and hope, I prayed and surrendered this person into the healing hands of Jesus, only to snatch that person back when another issue arose. Exhausted, I began hearing God's word from James in a new way. Freedom—liberty from the responsibility or blame/guilt etc.—was a promise that I knew was mine. Waiting on the Lord became a delight. In the process, His blessings continue in daily quiet time and my perspective is realigned to His perspective, not mine.

Esther 3:1—4:3; Psalms 93, 96; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Birthdays: Ben Norris

Anniversaries: Audley Haynes & Winsome Coley-Haynes

Sunday's Calendar :

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite I
9:00 a.m. United at 9 in Ross Hall
10:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
3:00 p.m. FDO: The Big Swingin' Band Concert

Today's Ministry: Hospital Visitors

Monday, September 19

Psalm 80 *Restore us, O Lord, let your face shine, that we may be saved.* (vv.3, 7, 19)

Repetition of this verse is significant. We know God’s faithfulness is steadfast and is not dependent on our choices. We are always invited into relationship no matter how we feel, what we have or haven’t done, what someone has done to us.

A dear friend of mine endured the return of cancer three times before the only recommendation was organ replacement. Lasting more than 16 hours with 4 surgeons in attendance, my friend awoke to a surprise colostomy in addition to numerous pumps/tubes for monitoring, IV fluids/medications, or drainage. With severe physical and emotional pain, my friend faced numerous minor setbacks.

On day 5 post-surgery, her husband arranged the time for me to call and we connected. Exhausted and in pain, all the unexpected events were overwhelming to her. She was hoping that on the doctor/intern rounds that morning, she could speak frankly. As an attorney she values truth. In addition, I know her as a woman who seeks the Lord daily for help and comfort.

When I asked her if she had been able to pray, she burst into tears. She had not been able to pray since before the surgery and was filled with guilt, sadness, and hopelessness. In prayer, the hands of God covered her with love and mercy. She received the blessed assurance that God knows her, sees her, loves her, and calls her Beloved.

Esther 4:4-17; Acts 18:1-11; Luke 1:1-4, 3:1-14

Birthdays: Michael Ferrera, Davin Badzinski

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: Hospitality Ministry

Tuesday, September 20

Acts 18:12-28 *One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid but speak, and do not be silent; for I am with you and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.”* (vv.9-10)

The opening scene is the Jews rejecting Paul’s teaching about Jesus as their Messiah; Paul announces he will take the Good News to the Gentiles. Led next door to a synagogue ruler’s house where all believed in the Lord, Paul received this vision: assurance of the Lord’s protection to speak boldly as directed. Remaining in Corinth for another season, Paul grows to powerfully and publicly refute the Jews, with scripture that the Messiah is Jesus. Here is faith in action: receiving a word from the Lord and acting on it.

God’s truth does set us free, doesn’t it? I ran into an old acquaintance one evening and attempted to connect. She brushed me off, unlike her. I went home wondering what happened, what I had unintentionally done perhaps, or... I went to the Lord in prayer for His perspective and truth.

The Lord led me to reach out to her with kindness and compassion. She was battling depression alone and afraid. Her medication was expensive and needed readjustment. Her sleep was disrupted. Gradually her capacity to receive returned and welcomed a few of us to walk with her out of this valley. Her persistence was fueled by God’s grace. Today she knows it is the faithfulness of God who promises that His love never ceases and His mercies never end.

Esther 5:1-14; Psalm 78:1-39; Luke 3:15-22

Birthdays: Bob Kloppenborg, Jacki Nardone, Dax Ferraro, Meghan Faulkner

Anniversaries: Flip Stevens & Sandy Banyard

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

Today’s Ministry: Intercessory Prayer Group

Wednesday, September 21

Psalm 119:97-120 *How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* (v.103)

For me, the word of God becomes sweeter than honey day by day... For me, knowing God’s perspective is of utmost importance, whether it is in His word or in His visions or His speaking. My perspective is my reality, but it is not God’s perspective. His perspective of me and my steps is critical to my having a good day or not. His word is a lamp unto my feet and a light on my path.

This morning, I was busy trying to finish up details for an upcoming trip and didn’t begin with praise, worship, and prayer. My activity was distracting. When I finally settled down, my devotions took me to the Prodigal Son—my rebellion of sorts and the power of the Father God’s love. “But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithfulness” (Psalm 86:15). God patiently waited for me as keeper of my heart. I received just what I needed to direct my steps as His presence allowed me to rest in the knowledge of His love and presence which is sweeter than honey.

Esther 6:1-14; Acts 19:1-10; Luke 4:1-13

Birthdays: Ryan Strom, Quin Calkins, Jeri Gumbinner, Dr. Terry Scheid, Lillian Garcia

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
 1:00 p.m. Miaraaka Informational Meeting
 4:30 p.m. Mary’s Kitchen
 6:00 p.m. NAMI

Today’s Ministry: Interfaith Forums

Thursday, September 22

Psalm 146 *Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. I will praise the LORD all my life. I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.* (vv.1-2 NIV)

Here is a word to start your day off on the right foot! This psalm of praise tells us where, when, how to praise; explains what praise does; takes our mind off problems and turns our focus to Almighty God Father, Son, Holy Spirit; lifts our perspective from earthly to divine; and prepares our hearts to receive God’s love and mercy through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just ponder: Our praise and worship blesses Lord God and brings Him joy which we always receive in His presence.

When I read this psalm, Kim Walker’s (of Jesus Culture and Bethel Church) song starts playing in my head. The repeating bridge in “Here Is My Song” is: Here is my song. Here is my heart. Here is my love. All for you, Jesus. Those words set the stage for me to seek the Lord, listen to Him, and rest in Him.

Praise and worship are powerful connectors to the presence of God. However, because each of us is created uniquely, my way may not be your way. Go with what is working and perhaps consider trying on a little praise and worship....

Esther 7:1-10; Psalm 147; Acts 19:11-20; Luke 4:14-30

Birthdays: Betsy Landry, Julia Buckley, Cooper Freese, Jeanine Webster

Thursday’s Calendar:

7:00 a.m. Hour of Power AA
 10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
 1:30 p.m. Grief Support Group
 7:00 p.m. AI-Anon—Stepping Stones

Today’s Ministry: Lay Lectors

Friday, September 23

Psalm 88 *O Lord, the God who saves me, day and night I cry out before you. May my prayer come before you; turn your ear to my cry. The darkness is my closest friend.* (vv.1-2, 18b)

Here is a psalm of crying out in despair with no relief in sight. The writer expresses a troubled soul, weak, near death, forgotten, cut off, covered with Gods’ anger, confined with no escape, wonders if God’s love or faithfulness or righteousness can penetrate the darkness. The psalm ends with darkness as his best friend. But it begins with prayers of hope for salvation in the Lord even when God appears silent.

Have any of you all ever been deceived by the darkness? I remember a time of despair where I cried out to God for help. It was the beginning of a new and precious relationship with the Lord.

At that time, I was one of those Christians who sat in the pews with prayers consisting mostly of a laundry list. That night I went to the