

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: Music Ministry

Saturday, March 3

Genesis 43:16-34 ...*the Egyptians could not eat...with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.* (v.32b)

While scholars debate the origins of today's reading, the truth is discrimination is found everywhere—in every age, in every society. "Loathsome" here is also translated "abomination," which simply means "abhorrence" and is something that occurs in every school yard in America.

Recently, third grader Gabrielle Vaughn of Harrisonville Elementary School championed the so-called buddy bench with a caption that reads "A friend is only a seat away." The bench is dedicated to lonely students looking for a seat—and a friend.

What can be seen as a tender childlike gesture was more dramatically portrayed at the peak of the crucifixion when the sky turned black, and the earth shook, and the Temple veil tore in half—abolishing divine discrimination once and for all.

If Christ died for all and made redemption available to all and forgave all, who am I to ever restore discrimination except by thoroughly degrading the crucifixion?

Psalms 75, 76; 1 Corinthians 7:10-24; Mark 5:1-20

Birthday: Sally Murphy, Joyce Holmes, Suzanne Pearson, Addison McGee, Caden Ferrara

Saturday's Calendar

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

Today's Ministry: Nursing Home & Home Visitors

St. Mary's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with Love

Good News Daily

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Sunday, February 25

Psalms 29 *The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is majestic. The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars....* (vv.4-5a NAS)

As a certified arborist, I have sat in on many safety seminars, most recently one on electrical hazard. While covering the obvious benefits we derive from electricity, the speaker also came loaded with graphic material. One video showed how easily tools can be destroyed by being placed too close to a transformer, another documented aspen trees spontaneously catching fire from nearby power lines and, of course, there was heartbreaking coverage of worker fatalities.

The intent of the seminar was not to be a gruesome horror show but, rather, to promote a sober respect for an unusual power. In today's reading the psalmist marvels at the majesty but also the power of the sheer *voice* of God that is able to break cedar trees *into pieces*.

Both the seminar and today's Scripture remind me of my conversion. While it was full of indescribable grace, unexpected wonder, and joy there was also a point in my epiphany in which the experience was so powerful I actually had to pull away.

Genesis 41:14-45; Psalm 24; Romans 6:3-14; John 5:19-24

Birthdays: Patty Hardman, Bob Bysse, Jean Lockwood, Carol McLaughlin, Scott, McNabb, Tom Bevan, John Lovett

Sunday's Calendar

Commissioning of Stephen Minsters at all Services

- Mission Sunday
- 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 Courtyard
- 10:15 a.m. Pre-baptism Class
- 10:30 a.m. Stephen Ministry Meeting
- 11:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist, Rite II
- 4:00 p.m. Financial Peace Class
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Confirmation Class
- 6:00 p.m. Youth Group

Today's Ministry: Mary's Kitchen

Monday, February 26

1 Corinthians 4:8-21 ...*when we are reviled, we bless...* (v.12b)

by William Bacon

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"Growing into Jesus - Reaching out with love"

The Clergy

The Rev. Dr. Todd L. Cederberg, *Rector* - trtodd@stmarys-stuart.org
The Rev. Christian S. Anderson, *Assistant Rector* - christian@stmarys-stuart.org
The Rev. Steve Fregeau, *Retired Assisting* - frsteve@stmarys-stuart.org

Lay Staff

Pat Channing, *Praise Band Director* - pat@stmarys-stuart.org
Debbie Flerx, *Facilities Director* - debbie@stmarys-stuart.org
Kelly Garner, *Children's Ministry Director* - kelly@stmarys-stuart.org
Sheryl Konen, *Office Manager* - sheryl@stmarys-stuart.org
Phillip Lindecamp, *Sexton* - phil@stmarys-stuart.org
Gideon Stence, *ProTem Choir Director*
Alexis Stuckey, *Youth Ministry Director* - alexis@stmarys-stuart.org



St. Mary's Episcopal Church
623 SE Ocean Blvd. | Stuart, FL 34994
Phone (772) 287-3244 | www.stmarys-stuart.org

By all accounts, Paul is taking direct cues from Christ in today's reading. It's the new rule. Not only are we commanded to turn the other cheek, we are ordered to love people who hate us and, in this case, those who *revile* or "spit insulting words" at us.

In 2016, America endured one of the most vitriol presidential campaigns in history. Towards the end, some anticipated physical violence between the candidates. Debates normally leave people fired up. These left people nauseated. From a studio audience came the last question of one debate: "Can you tell us one thing you *like* about your opponent?" As the candidates slowly answered, I have to admit, an astonishing calm came over me—like Pepto-Bismol to a frothing stomach.

Returning insults with blessings is a tough one. It demands all our pride. It jerks our natural instincts in reverse. But it is the end of all wars and is the ultimate elixir. When Christ forgave those set to kill him, he left this indelible example—and its unexpected rewards.

Genesis 41:46-57; Psalms 56, 57, 58; Mark 3:7-19a

Birthday: Denie Marshall

Monday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
4:30 p.m. ACA Step Study
5:30 p.m. Stephen Leaders Meeting
5:45 p.m. ACA Families
6:30 p.m. Life Group—off campus

Today's Ministry: Mary's Library and Book Store

Tuesday, February 27

Mark 3:19b-35 "...*whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness...*" (v.29)

As a teenager, I thought this was the scariest quote of the Bible. What if I do this in my sleep? What if I mistakenly do this? What if I do this unawares? I was haunted. Apparently, I wasn't the only one. Pastors throughout my life vaguely described it. Many avoided the subject altogether.

Finally, a couple years ago I heard a priest state, "We don't really know what it is." Crying out loud, I thought. Doesn't anyone have a dictionary?! So, I looked.

Vines derives blasphemy from *blapto* = to injure, and *pheme* = speech. Strong's Concordance calls it *scurrilous language* that is *defamatory*. Okay, so when an angry divorced parent bad-mouths their ex in front of the kids, that's blasphemy. In a word, slander.

We blaspheme all the time—and can be forgiven. But when the Holy Spirit healed a withered hand on the Sabbath day and the scribes called it Satanic, that was unforgiveable defamation—something you and I are not likely to commit in our sleep!

Genesis 42:1-17; Psalms 61, 62; 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

Birthdays: Ken Wall, Heidi McNabb

Anniversaries: Jason and Jennifer Hart

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
1:00 p.m. Stewardship Committee
6:00 p.m. Overeaters' Anonymous
6:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting
7:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Just for Today"

Today's Ministry: Mary's Library Book Group

Wednesday, February 28

1 Corinthians 5:9—6:8 *Actually then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?* (v.7)

There is a saying, "The more things change the more they stay the same." In the early 80's I completed my Bachelor of Arts degree at a well-known northwest Christian university. Just after my graduation, the university found itself embroiled in a lawsuit against a Catholic applying for a warehouseman position. The school argued the right to decline the position to a "non-evangelical" given the university was a private institution. The fact that the university was a *Christian* university—supposedly full of mercy and good fruits—was, apparently, entirely beside the point.

Do we measure ourselves by the world's virtues or by Christ's? Do I do that? Probably more than I should. Were the early Roman Christians more Roman or Christian? Are we more American or Christian? Every generation seems to be challenged to fully realize this *new* testament of faith.

The jury is still out with my alma mater. I sent my diploma back to the school telling them I would take it back when they withdrew their lawsuit. That was 1982. Still no word!

Genesis 42:18-28; Psalm 72; Mark 4:1-20

Birthday: Ruth Mary Race, Jeanne Ralicki, Helen Paul, Matthew Gallo

Anniversary: Dave & Nancy Von Holle

Wednesday's Calendar

6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study
7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
9:30 a.m. Staff Eucharist
10:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
4:45 p.m. Mary's Kitchen
5:30 p.m. AA "Daily Reflections"
6:00 p.m. Simple Soup Supper/Lenten Series
6:00 p.m. Life Groups
8:30 p.m. NarcAnon "Klean and Krazy"

Today's Ministry: Men's Cursillo

Thursday, March 1

Genesis 42:29-38 *"But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies.'"* (v.31)

While some argue Joseph's ulterior motives for lying were justified in today's reading, the story, nevertheless, captures the eventual

torment of mendacity.

As a young man, I took on managing a large private estate. I recall working tirelessly into the night, six days a week, coordinating endless garden tours, all during ruthless 80-degree weather. Out of the blue, a house sitter wrote my employer accusing me of scandalous behavior.

I was dizzy with emotion. Exhaustion. Disbelief. Confusion. Helplessness. Anger. After a heated phone call to my vacationing employer, the woman was sent packing within 24 hours. We later learned of her subsequent bouts with mental illness.

What haunted me was that, although my employer was convinced of my innocence, I realized there was nothing I could do to prevent her from later wondering if, just maybe, the house sitter was right. I learned that day the true evil of mendacity is not just its injury but its wicked shelf life.

Psalms 70, 71; 1 Corinthians 6:12-30; Mark 4:21-34

Birthdays: Barb Hendry

Thursday's Calendar

7:00 a.m. AA "Hour of Power"
10:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist
12:30 p.m. OA
5:30 p.m. ACA Men's Group
5:30 p.m. Qigong Class
6:00 p.m. Family Promise Meeting
6:30 p.m. Life Group
7:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. AIAnon "Stepping Stones"

Today's Ministry: Mission Trip

Friday, March 2

1 Corinthians 7:1-9 *But because of immoralities, let each man have his own wife and let each woman have her own husband.* (v.2)

I often wonder what makes a marriage holy. Paul seems to be suggesting here that it is not likely carnal behavior—in and of itself, anyway. When I was 11, my friend told me about the birds and the bees while walking home from school. He's crazy, I thought. My parents would never do anything so disgusting to each other.

Today, societies are grappling with *gay* marriage. A fundamental question is that of *preferential* carnal behavior.

I have a parable. A man owns a famous farm, raising the best stallions and the best mules. Hours before guest arrive; his prize stallion and award-winning mule escape and romp in muddy fields. They return filthy top to bottom. The question is, which was more unclean the stallion or the mule?

If carnal behavior is present in gay unions but also in straight unions, what is it that makes *any* union holy? Turns out I was very lucky with my "disgusting" parents. What made their union so special? Well, I suppose, aside from their carnal behavior—just about everything.

Genesis 43:1-15; Psalm 69; Mark 4:35-41

Birthday: Peter Dayton, Josephine Gallo