

...what's happening at the friendly church on the hill

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# *This Week at Trinity*

...what's happening at the friendly church on the hill

## From the Rector

The attached article, "Are We Praying Wrong" appeared in the Autumn 2017 issue of [The Anglican Digest](#). It is reprinted here with permission, and I hope that you enjoy it, and that it speaks to you. The author, the Rev. Scott Gunn, is the Executive Director of Forward Movement Publications, the publisher of [Forward Day by Day](#) and other books and pamphlets about spirituality and the Episcopal Church whose mission is to "reinvigorate the life of the church."

Faithfully,  
Fr. Steve

### **ARE WE PRAYING WRONG**

The Rev. Scott Gunn

Some time ago, my attention was drawn to a 2014 Lifeway study on Americans' prayer habits. Not surprisingly, I suppose, the survey shows that we Americans are not praying the way Jesus taught us to pray; instead, we mostly pray for ourselves and our own personal needs.

As Melody Shobe and I wrote in *Faithful Questions: Exploring the Way with Jesus*, too often people think of prayer as a kind of cosmic

### ***Lectionary October 29, 2017***

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

[Deuteronomy 34:1-12](#)

[1 Thessalonians 2:1-8](#)

[Matthew 22:34-46](#)



### ***Prayer List***

**Immediate Needs:** Jenny, Cecily, Allison, and Donna

**Chronic Needs:** Ann, Cal, Norlyn, and Marlene

**Military:** Pvt. Gabe Davis

**The needs of the world:** For the homeless and the hungry, for those affected by natural disasters, for those dealing with issues of aging, mental illness, or addiction

**Thanksgivings:** For all the colors of Fall, for the search committee for those who protect and

vending machine: We put our prayers through the slot, and we expect results to pop out. It's a very transactional, me-focused model. And so it is that quite often when Christians are given an open invitation to pray, the requests are for one's own job, health, happiness, or perhaps the same for a friend or loved one.

But that's not how Jesus says to pray. When he gave us what we call the Lord's Prayer as an example of prayer, Jesus urged that prayer include several things:

- Praise of God and God's holiness;
- Prayer for the coming of God's kingdom;
- Prayer for God's will to be done;
- Prayer for sufficiency, for enough to make it through this day (and no more, if you get the biblical reference here); and
- Prayer for forgiveness of our sins, but also contrite hope that we might forgive the sins of others.

Beyond that template, Jesus had other things to say about prayer. He told us to pray for our enemies. He told us to bless those who revile us. He told us to pray with pure motive, not for show.

At least among Episcopalians (and, I suspect other mainline Protestants), I rarely hear prayers for our enemies, prayers for the coming of God's kingdom, prayers for sufficiency, or prayers

search committee, for those who protect and serve, for the blessing of friends, family, and neighbors



## Parish Activity Schedule

### Sunday, October 29

8:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite I  
9:00 am Trinity Choristers Rehearsal  
9:30 am Church School  
10:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II  
followed by coffee hour

### Tuesday, October 31

12:00 pm Holy Eucharist with

### Thursday, November 2

6:30 pm Bible Study

kingdom, prayers for sanctimony, or prayers about forgiveness. Even praise of God's holiness is pretty rare in extemporaneous prayer.

The Lifeway study confirms our off-the-biblical-script prayer habit. Among the findings:

- Most Americans (82%) typically focus on their friends and family or their own problems (74%);
- Just over half (54%) pray about good things happening in their life; and
- Over one third pray for their future prosperity (36%)

Nothing here represents prayer as Jesus taught. Now, to be fair, some 37% of people said they had prayed for their enemies, and 41% said they had prayed for people who had mistreated them, but those are pretty small numbers for such a basic practice, so clearly taught.

And from my perspective, it gets worse. It seems that these days nearly everyone agrees on one thing in American politics: Our situation is dire. Whether you are conservative or liberal, it seems likely you despaired over the recent presidential election and the conduct of the candidates. There is, I think, broad bipartisan support for the idea that our elected leaders could be doing a much better job. Here's the kicker: Only 12% of Americans say they have prayed for our political leaders. One in eight.

Shouldn't we all be praying for those who lead us? Especially since Americans seem to think prayer works:

- Most Americans who pray (83% think at least some of their prayers are answered. That includes one in four (25%) who say all their prayers are



© MARC CHAGALL: All Saints Necrology, 1911. Musée, Strasbourg, France

## **ALL SAINTS NECROLOGY**

Forms are available on the bulletin board outside the office to submit names of dearly departed family and friends to be listed in the bulletin for remembrance on All Saints' Sunday. Please return them to the office by November 1. As an added convenience, you may also reply to this email with your name submissions.



## **Covenant to Care Visit to Trinity**

Please plan to come to the 10am service, **THIS Sunday**, October 29 to welcome Selina Daniels of Covenant to Care and Marian Russo of Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families. Selina is our representative with Covenant to Care and Marian Russo is our contact at DCF. They are both looking forward to visiting and worshipping with us. They will also talk about our continuing relationship with Covenant to Care and how it helps children in need.

answered, one in five (21%) who say most of their prayers are answered, and more than one in three (37%) who say some of their prayers are answered.

If we think our prayers work, and if we are concerned about our nation, why aren't more of us praying for our leaders?

You can quibble with the survey data. People probably said what they thought they should say. Maybe if the sample wasn't skewed in some way, things would look different. But be honest: Think about the last time you were at a church meeting or a worship service and people were invited to pray. What were those prayers like?

Now in one sense, there is no wrong way to pray. That is, if our intention is to talk to God and to listen for God's still, small voice, we haven't gone wrong. But I think we could do better.

Renewal Works, a ministry of Forward Movement where I serve, had been collecting data on spiritual growth and vitality. We now know a lot about the spiritual health and vitality of our church. And we know a lot about the catalysts for spiritual growth. What pushes us to grow?

It turns out that prayer looks different depending on one's spiritual maturity. People who are spiritually less mature tend to pray for their own immediate needs. People who are moving along pray for the good of the world, for God's will to be done. People who are Christ-centered listen for God, spending less time telling God what to do. It makes sense, right?

St. Paul used the example of giving spiritual milk

They will both join us at Coffee Hour so please come and meet them. Each of them would like to get to know the people in our community.

Rev. Steve Ling  
Deacon Tom  
Kim Barton  
Leslie Sojka



## ***Foodbank***

**This week: spam**

**Next week: pancake mix**

## ***VOLUNTEERS NEEDED***

Monday and Wednesday from 9 am to 11 am to help sort and date food and stock shelves.

Tuesday and Thursday from 9 am to 12 pm to help as a "shopping pal" with our clients. Drivers are also needed to fill in and help pick up at local grocery stores. We pick up Monday through Thursday mornings. Drivers must have a small pick up truck or a large vehicle in order to carry donated food back to the food bank.

Volunteers needed to help with food drives.  
Help is needed with Food Drives from the Boy

to newborns in the faith, and solid food to more mature followers of Jesus. Think of infants who must have certain foods for their bodies to grow. Think of young children who are choosy about what they eat. And then think of a person who eats what is set before them, savoring it all – with much lousy food. (I have no moral high ground here; I eat way more junk food than I should!)

Might we try to develop our prayer life? Might we encourage others to do the same? In this contentious time, surely all of us could agree to pray for our political leaders and all those who seek political office. It would not be at all partisan to pray that God's will be done. Perhaps those of us who are church leaders should be encouraging this kind of prayer.

And maybe we should imagine what it would be like to pray for our enemies. I know one thing for certain: When I pray for my enemies, it changes my heart.

I once heard a wise man speak about his life of prayer. He told of going to Egypt to spend a month in the cell at a Coptic monastery. For a month, he ate every meal in his cell, leaving it only for daily worship. For a month, it was just this man, a few books, and his prayers. There, he prayed for a friend to get well, it was because he didn't want the sorrow if his friend didn't get well. It was about him, not his loved one. In that cell he learned to pray for the well-being of others, to pray for God's will to be done.

Most of us won't be able to go to the cell of a monastery to re-learn lifelong habits of prayer. But we can push ourselves a little. We can

Scouts, on November 11th 12:00 pm—3:00 pm and 3:00 pm—6:00 pm. And the Police and Haynes Food Drive, on November 18th 12:00 pm—3:00 pm and 3:00 pm—6:00 pm. We need your help to sort, date and box food. The location is the Seymour Oxford Food Bank at 20 Pine Street, Seymour. If you have any questions please call us at [203-888-7826](tel:203-888-7826). Thank you for helping to support our communities, Seymour Oxford Food Bank.



## **Ecumenical Hymn Sing**

To Commemorate the 500th Anniversary of  
The Reformation!

Join us at Immanuel Lutheran Church  
25 Great Hill Rd  
Sunday, October 29 @ 6:30 p.m.  
No talent required

Featuring  
Jeff Cregeur - piano & Noel Pease - organ  
and you!

Music from Lutheran, Methodist,  
Congregational, and Episcopal traditions

move from comfort and familiarity to a place of discomfort and challenge. For myself, I've decided to start praying for political candidates I don't much like. I'm praying for their well-being and for God's will to be done.

What about you? What about your life of prayer? If you are a lay of clergy leader in church, what can you do to help those around you deepen and enrich lives of prayer?

You might think that I, working in a ministry focused on daily spiritual practices, would be decent at prayer. But reflecting on all these things, I think I'm just getting started along the path that Jesus has laid out for me.

Pray for me, OK?



## **You are invited to take... A Journey to the Potter's House**

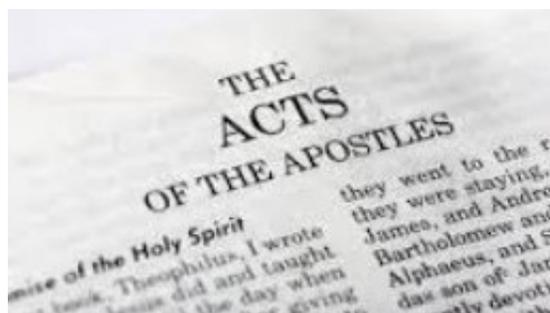
An illustrated parable that brings the gospel to life.

Jeremiah 18:1-2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message,"

Date: October 28, 2017

Time: 6:30pm (5:30 Dinner)

Place: Seymour Baptist, 104 Mt. Rd., Seymour



### ***Bible Study Continues***

Fr Steve's Bible study on the book of Acts continues on Thursday evenings from 6:30 – 7:30 pm, November 2 & 9. As we look at the early church, we will try to compare our purpose, action, and fellowship today. What roles does the church play? What struggles does the church have? Come join us to talk about these,

and how we measure ourselves as God's faithful people.

We meet in the Fellowship Room next to the kitchen. Bring your Bible and join us.

See you there!

[forward to a friend](#)

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