



Reaching out
Reaching within
Proclaiming God's Love

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

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The Messenger

September
2021

"A New Beginning"

Renewal of Ministry with the Welcoming of Fr. Les Jackson
Feast of Bishop Jeremy Taylor
August 30, 2021
Trinity Episcopal Church – El Dorado
Fr. Marc McDonald

Prayer May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my spirit be acceptable to you, O Lord my strength and my redeemer. Amen.

I want to thank Fr. Les for inviting me to speak this evening. I count you not only as my colleague, but also my friend and I am honored to be here. Now, Fr. Les and I share many things in common. For one, we both spent some time in the Church of the Nazarene. This shared heritage introduced us to Jesus and I am thankful for this introduction. Flash forward, a few years and we both have become priests in The Episcopal Church a place where theology is grace filled and expansive, where the Spirit of God feeds us in liturgy and prayer, through regular participation in worship and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Finally, we both married women with similar sounding names. My wife is Linda and of course, Fr. Les married Valinda. Two of the best things that has ever happened to us was finding spouses who have supported us through the many changes of life, not to mention a late journey into the Episcopal priesthood. On August 13, Fr. Les celebrated the 10th Anniversary of his priesting. 10 wonderful years of full-time ministry after having one of the longest stints as a transitional deacon, a mere 12 years which I am told might be an all-time church record. But like fine wine, some things take longer to become great.

Now, August 13 in the Episcopal Cycle of saints commemorates Bishop Jeremy Taylor. Bishop Taylor was born in 1613 and became a cleric in the Church of England. He achieved fame as an author during the Puritanical Cromwell years and was a key exemplar of pastoral care as well as a gifted and prolific writer. As

such, he wrote a piece entitled: *"Rules and Advices to the Clergy of the Diocese of Down and Connor, For their Deportment in their Personal and Publick Capacities."* In this work he gives some advice which I would like to impart to Fr. Les this evening, paraphrased of course because the Bishop was a bit wordy.

Under "Personal Duty" we read this advice, quote:

"Let every [cleric] strive to understand himself best; and then to understand others. If he be learned, let him show it by wise teaching, and humble manners. If he be not learned, let him be sure to get so much Knowledge as to know that, and so much Humility, as not to grow [brazen] and puffed up by his Emptiness. For many will pardon a good man that is less learned; but if he be proud, no [one] will forgive him." Good advice! The second quote I would share is this...

"Remember that no Minister can govern his people well, and prosperously, unless himself hath learn'd humbly and cheerfully to obey his Superior." Important to listen to your Bishop! Right Bishop?

The third piece of advice is of utmost importance, Bishop Taylor writes, *"Strive to get the love of the Congregation; but let it not degenerate into popularity. Get their love by doing your Duty, but not by omitting or spoiling any part of it: Ever remembering the severe words of our Blessed Savior, 'Wo be to you when all speak well of you.'" Remember that in times of conflict. And finally, the good Bishop exhorts his clergy to:*

"[Invite] no clerics into your [worship] from other Parishes [to speak]..." Well, Les, you already messed that one up tonight!

Psalm 16:6 reads, *"The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage."* While we cannot be sure of the exact circumstances that surrounded the Psalmist as he wrote his expression of faith in his heritage, we know enough about the general situation to fill in most of the background. He belonged to a tiny nation that had served as the football for the more powerful nations to the northeast and the south. Israel had known few periods of peace and

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none free from the threat or the actual fact of war itself. She had seen her great cities destroyed, her leaders taken captive, her temple desecrated. She had seen a remnant of survivors come back from exile and start all over again, rebuilding the city, the temple, and the spiritual and moral fabric of the people.

Looking back on all this—an experience that stretched over several hundred years, the Psalmist lifts his voice in praise to the God of his fathers. He sees in all that has happened to his people, the hand of God dealing with them. He says with conviction, *“I have a goodly heritage.”*

In saying this, the Psalmist was rejoicing in the evidence of the goodness of God in the life of his people; he was gratefully acknowledging the existence of those who had gone before him. Looking on these clear evidences of the hand of God in the life of God's people, the Psalmist is not afraid to take up the lines of responsibility that fall to him and his generation.

Like the psalmist we acknowledge and celebrate a ‘goodly heritage,’ but we also recognize and take responsibility to pass it on. We do that by seeking to know what Jesus would have us do – and when we know – by doing it well.

In John 3, Jesus engages the powerful, prestigious, political Nicodemus by saying, *“Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. Do not be surprised at my saying ‘You must be born again.’”* A fresh start... a new beginning. This is where we find ourselves this evening. As a parish, you have been given a good priest these past 17 months. You can look at your past and say, you have had a “goodly heritage” with many wonderful lay and clergy leaders. But this evening, we can celebrate a new beginning because our God is always a God of new beginnings.

What does this spiritual birth that Jesus invited Nicodemus into do for us? It gives us breath. Life can knock the breath out of us. Spiritually speaking, Jesus says to Nicodemus, *“Pay attention to your breath, Nicodemus.”* Breath, wind and spirit in the Bible are the same word. You have got to pay attention to the Spirit, Nicodemus. Life has knocked the wind out of you—too many late night meetings, too many hard decisions, too many worries, too many doubts—you are out of breath. Let the Holy Spirit breathe into you the breath of life.

Spiritual birth gives us eyes that are open to new in-

sights, ears that are open to new voices, hearts that are open to God's people.

“For God so loved the world that God gave God's one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” God so loved the world. Not part of the world, but all of the world. Not just certain people in El Dorado but all of the people in El Dorado. You can't believe John 3:16 and be a pessimist. Hate is incongruent with the will of God. The world is not coming to death, it is coming to life.

We call it Transformation. *“If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come”* (II Corinthians 5:17). Transformation means change from the inside out, conversion from the old to the new. Transformation is our path to true freedom, our hope of becoming fully human.

And new birth means new life in community. I know there are times when we'd would rather do it ourselves, but we aren't wired that way. We are made to belong, to be a part of the family of God, to become the Body of Christ. The Church is not perfect. How could it be? It's made up of people like you and me. But the Church is God's best hope for humanity. Do you believe that Trinity? You need to believe this. You are God's best hope for this community to not just exist but to thrive and to find it's truest measurer of humanity, empathy, and spiritual vitality.

Every time we come into this place, we ought to be prepared to encounter the living God. Every time we gather, every time we open the Word, every time we kneel in prayer, every time we receive Holy Communion, is a time of new beginning. If we are prepared to encounter God, a new beginning is inevitable.

This evening as each of us renews our call to ministry first given at our baptism, I invite you to recommit your support for Fr. Les's ministry among you. You can do this first of all by praying daily for your priest. It is a tremendous responsibility overseeing two parishes. It may be easy to become discouraged from time to time. Discouragement drains the life of creativity away and leaves the minister burnt out. Fr. Les and Valinda covet your prayers. They need your prayers. Ask God to give your priest wisdom and the grace to serve you faithfully.

New Ministry
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St. Matthew's Outreach

Food Cart

20 non-perishable food items were delivered to the Salvation Army "Harvest of Love" food bank in the month of August. Please remember those who don't have enough to eat. Thanks.

Back to School

136 school items were delivered to Northridge elementary school in August. They were very excited and grateful to receive this bounty.

Of course a lot of items were in packs of 10 and such. We did not count those items individually!!!

All money collected was taken to Salvation Army. We were able to help at two places that needed help! How wonderful is that?

Thanks to all for doing God's work by helping those in need!

New Hope Shelter

During the month of September, we will be collecting personal hygiene items for the residents of New Hope Shelter. (razors, deodorant, toothpaste, feminine products, toothbrushes, etc.) There will be a blue bucket to deposit items in the front hallway.

Soldiers & Shut Ins

If anyone has a soldier or shut in that they would like to add to our boards in the parish hall, please contact Melissa. A picture would be wonderful, too.

September Coffee Hour Hosts

September 5 - Mary Upton
September 12 - Melissa Keenan
September 19 - OPEN
September 26 - Elizabeth Hill




Please sign up to host coffee hour on the calendar in the parish hall.

There are plenty of openings. People can buddy up together, committees, or groups... If you cannot sign up, a contribution of supplies or crackers, cookies, etc., would be greatly appreciated!! Any concerns or questions, please contact Melissa. Thanks!

?? ? **Bible Quiz** ? ?

How many times in the Old Testament do people cross a body of water on dry ground?

- A. once
- B. twice
- C. three times
- D. four times



Answer: C (See Exodus 14; Joshua 3; 2 Kings 2.)

Paying it back — and forward

During the pandemic, acts of kindness seemed especially meaningful. Last spring, as Covid-19 hit Native American communities particularly hard, an interesting transatlantic outreach occurred. Donations from Ireland began appearing in a relief fund for Navajo and Hopi families, leading administrators to suspect the account had been hacked. Then they realized a cross-generational payback was underway.

In 1847, Choctaw Tribe members sent \$170 overseas to Ireland to help with Potato Famine relief. That generosity was never forgotten, and by May 2020, people in Ireland had contributed more than \$4 million toward pandemic assistance for relatives of people who'd helped their ancestors. Many donors included an Irish proverb meaning "In each other's shadows the people live."

The concept of paying it forward dates back to a 1784 letter by Benjamin Franklin. It also echoes Jesus' Golden Rule: "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Luke 6:31). How might you live out this practice today?



St. Matthew's Food Pantry

The Little Food Pantry can have donations of hotel soaps and shampoos as well as children's books and non perishable food. Remember as the temperatures go up to choose foods that won't melt or get too hot.

Thank you for your support.



Please join Deacon Barbara for Evening Prayer every Wednesday at 6:30 pm on Facebook.

Everyone is welcome

Come take a few minutes to end your day with prayer

Altar team for September: Chris Simmonds, Margie Knupp, Katie Reese, Elizabeth Hill



Altar Flowers

Altar Flowers for September

September 5—Darlene and Ron Hall
"In memory of Charles and Dorothy Elliot."

September 12—Joe and Joy Robb
"For blessings received"

September 19—Stephanie and Katherine Lindgren
"For blessings received."

September 26—Rich Stinnett & Charlie Robinson
"For blessings received."

If you would like to donate towards Altar Flowers to honor someone or in thanksgiving, please contact Twila Lockaby.

St. Matthew's Prayer Chain

If you have a request for prayers for yourself or others, please contact Mary Upton at **316-841-1736**. The information you share with me will then be passed on to the chain leaders who will then pass the information on to their team. The members of the chain will then add your request to their prayers. The information you give me is confidential and will not be shared with others outside the prayer chain without your permission.

If you have a prayer request, would like more information and/or join the St. Matthew's Prayer Chain, please contact Mary Upton at **316-841-1736**.





New ministry
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And remember, he cannot do it alone. You did not call him to do your ministry for you. You called him to pray for you, to equip you and to lead you in carrying out the Great Commission given to all believers in our baptismal vows. Your faithful participation does two things. First, it reveals your support of your priest, and the direction God is leading this church. Second, it's both an affirmation and encouragement to Fr. Les that you recognize that God is in this calling.

In just a moment, we each will have an opportunity to renew our baptismal vows. Once again, dying to ourselves and rising to new life. May it be the sign and seal of a new beginning as God's new creations ready to live the challenge of our high calling in Christ Jesus. And may the people of Trinity Church led by a gracious and godly priest (and an awesome Deacon) be bound in Christ's love together. May your commitment lead you from this place ready to share the love of Christ that others find God's great love in their lives also. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Under the Broom Tree

Elijah's desert journey to God's mountain is fraught with thirst hunger and a desire for God to take his useless life while resting under the Broom Tree but God of course has a better idea an angel arrives ordering Elijah to eat mysteriously delivered bread and water much-needed restful sleep only to again be angelically awakened with the same orders and divinely provided with bread and water and peaceful sleep the same orders of self-care each of us need to continue our sometimes desert journey of day-by-day lives falling asleep under the healing Broom Tree

Joan Breit
Summer 2021
Blessings to you and yours!



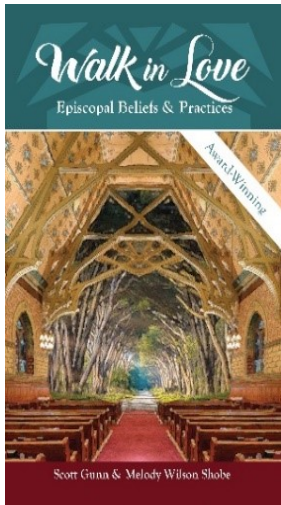
Do no harm –

This summer I have been thinking about some simple principals that I have tried to practice over the years.

When I was much younger and heading out into the world, many of these were handed down to me by older family and friends as I learned my way.

Don't invite Trouble was one of the first ones as I was learning to tent camp with friends. This means not leaving food out or dirty dishes around that will invite trouble with the wildlife. If you are in bear territory then you have to be even more careful with food and residual smells. But it also means to keep your belongs with you in an airport, bus terminal, etc. and certainly don't flash money around – you might be inviting a mugging. Then there is **Clean up after yourself**, this lesson came from parents at home and is still there – go on a picnic, pack out your trash, leave the site better than you found it. This can also be applied to everywhere we go – push your cart to the holders in the parking lot rather than just leaving them sit in a parking place, and while you are at it – take someone else's who didn't put it away. Oh and a favorite, **If you can't say something nice . . .** I still struggle with that one at various points in time... I swear sometimes I feel like I might bite my tongue off! One from work, **Be solution oriented, blame never fix anything.** I always find it amazing how it changes people's attitude when they are asked to suggest solutions rather to place blame for the problem. What do all these have in common? The idea of **Do no harm** is what come to my mind. Living a more thoughtful life and being aware of the consequences of our actions. I believe that if we can just practice these and other principals we might lighten our footprint on the world and our community.

Margie



Coming Attraction! New Zoom Book Study
Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs & Practices
Tuesday, September 7–November 2, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Winner of a 2019 Illumination Book Award for Theology! Take a journey through The Book of Common Prayer, the Christian life, and basic beliefs of our faith, guided by two Episcopal priests. Walk through the liturgical year, the sacraments of the church, habits of daily prayer, and the teachings of Anglican Christianity. See how our prayer shapes our belief and our lives and how our beliefs lead us into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. Walk in Love is a comprehensive look at the practices and beliefs found within the Episcopal faith.

Let Fr. Les know if you will join fatherles@stmatthewsnewton.org



Our help — past, present and future

This month, America marks the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, which ended almost 3,000 lives and

changed life forever for millions more. The nation was shaken to its very roots, with violence jolting out of us any assumption that “it can’t happen here.” September 11 banished any lingering notion that being on the side of “liberty and justice for all” served as insulation against mass tragedy. We now had more to fear than fear itself.

Psalm 46 reminds us that “though the earth should change” (v. 2) — as it did on 9/11 — God remains “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (v. 1). We are never alone or without hope, even on life-altering days.

How have God’s presence and power sustained you through life’s changes? How might sharing your story help someone else when their world or faith gets shaken?

—adapted from *The Wired Word*



**is our
refuge
and
strength,
a very
present
help in
trouble.**

Psalm 46:1



SEPTEMBER

Birthdays, Baptisms and Confirmations

Remember to pray for each of these persons on their special day.


Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

September Birthdays

- September 2—Adam Simmonds
- September 9—Cole Irving
- September 7—David Hughes
- September 14—Jennifer Beck, Toby Tyner
- September 17—Mariah Dove
- September 21—Ron Hall
- September 22—Jill Loyd
- September 24—Brier McCloud
- September 26—Jill Jantz
- September 28—Jane Orr
- September 29—Taten Penner

If you know of other birthday, confirmation, or baptism dates that are not listed, please contact the office so they can be included. Thank you.

It was a wonderful day at St. Matthew's on Sunday, August 29. The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Bascom was here to serve as Celebrant & Preacher. She also confirmed Chris, Sarah, Jenna, and Benjamin Teichler and welcomed them as the newest members of the Episcopal Church!



PUZZLE

Teach us to pray

In Luke 11:1-13 (NIV), Jesus teaches about prayer.

Directions: Add or subtract the letters indicated and unscramble the letters to form a new word, using hints from the passage. Then unscramble the circled letters to answer the question below.

party - t = p r A y (v. 1)

lady + i = _ _ o _ (v. 3)

drab + e = _ o _ _ _ (v. 5)

rod + o = _ o _ _ (v. 7)

bask - b = _ _ _ _ (v. 9)


keeps - p = o _ _ _ (v. 9)

define - ee = _ o _ _ (v. 9)

shift - t = _ _ _ o (v. 11)

sneaky - y = _ _ _ _ _ (v. 11)

sift + g = _ _ _ o _ (v. 13)



What will the Father give to those who ask of him?
_ _ _ _ _ (v. 13)

Answer: pray, daily, bread, ask, seek, find, fish, snake, gifts, Holy Spirit

