

The Epistle

September 2021

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Believe in our past, have faith in our future!

I consider myself incredibly lucky to have grown up in a loving Christian home, with parents who believed it was important for me to grow in my faith. Even more than that, I feel blessed that over time I cultivated my own faith to make it my own and not just the religion my parents practiced.

Sadly, the same is not true for a lot of young adults. I know numerous people (my own son in fact) who might have grown up in the church, but never found their faith to be an important part of their own life, or, perhaps found a different route to practice their spirituality. For those of us who are Christians, how can we spread God's word, reaching as many people as we can? Certainly not everyone is going to have the same preferences even in the church, but I do believe there are certain ways churches can make themselves more welcoming and accommodating to the growing number of people with little to no church background.

The church should never change their core Biblical beliefs to bend to societal standards. I would argue that our salvation is not dependent on traditions and customs, but the church should make accommodations to welcome people in.

I believe it is so important for the church to recognize areas that could use "updating." In this world where declining church membership and attendance is weakening it would be nice to see churches make small adjustments so we can invite as many people as we can to become a part of the body of the church.

Joseph's Storehouse—Food Pantry @ Gloria Dei

The Beggars Cloak

“As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.” - Mark 10:46-50

Joseph’s Storehouse continues to operate under Covid protocol, serving approximately 120 families every week with curbside pickup. While we have gotten very efficient with these procedures, we eagerly await the opportunity to get back inside. We can change over very quickly, so we are closely monitoring the situation, ready to act as soon as it is safe. All of the volunteers are fully immunized. An informal survey of our clients estimates that about 65% of our clients are also immunized. Not only do we want to get inside before the cold weather comes, but it also allows us to minister to our clients more personally. So, we will continue to monitor the situation and follow the guidance of leadership.

For some of our clients, they have hit a rough spell and need a little assistance to make ends meet. Others may struggle with some form of substance abuse, and others struggle with depression or other forms of mental illness. Still others are stuck in a viscous cycle of poverty and don’t know any other way. This lack in their lives has become their identity.

There are many lessons to be learned from the scripture above. Bartimaeus knew who Jesus was. He called Him “Son of David,” so he recognized that He was the Messiah that the scriptures foretold of. He also did not give up when his first request was not heard. He continued to cry out to Jesus until he was heard. (Do not stop praying until you get an answer!) And when he was finally called, he did not hesitate, he leapt to his feet and made his way to Jesus. He did something else that is often overlooked. He threw his cloak aside.

In those times, people often wore some type of symbol on their clothing that identified them. This was usually done with tradesmen, marking them as a carpenter, a tent maker or a tailor, etc. At the same time, the government issued special cloaks to people with some sort of handicap, which allowed them to legally beg on the streets. This cloak became their identity. Today, while society does not issue special cloaks, there is no question that we label people. We put a cloak on them. Some people also put that cloak on themselves because of some past hurt, failure or disappointment in their life. We all wear some identity on our sleeves, and all too often, we believe that that is who we are.

When Jesus calls us, He takes the cloak off and gives us a new identity! Galatians 3 says “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” When we answer the call of Jesus we become children of God! Wow! We are not beggars. We are not disabled or broken. We are not outcasts. We are not losers or failures. We are children of God! We can throw off our cloaks. We can throw off the labels that have been placed on us by others, and even by ourselves, and we can clothe ourselves with Jesus! Can I get an AMEN! You are not who men say you are. You are who Jesus says you are.

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This is the gospel of truth that we share with our clients. Jesus makes the bitter sweet (Exodus 15:22-26). He gives us new life and a new identity and a new purpose for life. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter who people say you are. It doesn't even matter who you think you are. Jesus is bigger than it all and He has a new identity for you. You are a child of God! Throw off your cloak and clothe yourself with Jesus. You've heard the expression "be all that you can be"? Can it be any better than being a child of God?

Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you!

Dennis Hood, Director of Joseph's Storehouse



Scriptures for September 2021

Sunday Sept 5—Pentecost 15

Isaiah 35:4-7a Psalm 146 James 2:1-10, 14-17 Mark 7:24-37

Sunday Sept 12—Pentecost 16

Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 116:1-9 James 3:1-12 Mark 8:27-38

Sunday Sept 19—Pentecost 17

Jeremiah 11:18-20 Psalm 54 James 3:13—4:3, 7-8a Mark 9:30-37

Sunday Sept 26—Pentecost 18

Numbers 11:4-6, 10-16, 24-29 Psalm 19:7-14 James 5:13-20 Mark 9:38-50

Stewardship

Regular giving ensures congregational cash flow stability throughout the year. Some members mail a monthly contribution at the beginning of each month to cover the Sundays following.

A growing number of people are engaging in “electronic giving” through Simply Giving where offerings are transferred automatically from bank, credit union, or savings accounts. This can be arranged on a weekly, bimonthly or monthly basis.

There is a convenient link on our web page to set up recurring giving or a one time special offering. Got to www.gloriadehuntington.org and click on the ONLINE GIVING tab. It is safe and secure!!

Please contact the office for more information.



Ruth Circle

The Ruth Circle Bible Study will resume on Tuesday, September 14 at 12:30pm at Joyce Moore's home (8 Vale Drive, Huntington—off Park Avenue.)

Please bring your bible and a sandwich for lunch.

Call Joyce at 631-421-0183 to let her know if you will be joining the group.

Please call Joyce if you have any concerns about Covid 19.

Waiting to hear from you—

Peace, love & blessings, Joyce



Lutheran Counseling Center—Update for September

Dare to Believe! By Angela Daubon, LCSW, LCC Counselor

How often have you looked at the limitations in life rather than the numerous opportunities? There are multiple contributions that form our beliefs on what is possible, such as life experiences, upbringing, current measure of faith, past traumas, view of one's self, a fear of failure, inability to handle rejection, unresolved previous disappointments or a current mental, spiritual or emotional condition. The list can go on and on. We can either let these factors be a tsunami that drowns us or a mountain that can be moved. Dare to consider that you can speak to the mountain and tell it to step aside!

Think about it---what things have you been talking about doing for the last ten years but have not made any significant strides in accomplishing? On the flip side, how many things have you impulsively done that left you feeling empty and more frustrated than when you started? Procrastination is often a camouflage for fear and conversely, acting in haste can be a smokescreen for lack of control and overcompensation for your insecurities. Reacquaint yourself with balance in your life; there is a middle ground between the two approaches called discernment.

Yes, there is such a thing as being realistic, but whose reality are you basing it on, yours or God's? Dare to imagine and believe beyond your current state of affairs. Be willing to reimagine your path with a new set of lenses, giving you 'new vision'. Yes, I said a new set. Sometimes the lenses you're wearing can't be repaired, because they are too broken, scratched or mangled. Maybe your prescription has changed and you keep straining to envision God through expired lenses. A new set may be needed in order for God to work anew in you this season.

Respect boundaries; however, be free to embrace new parameters. Don't be a 'string' when God is trying to stretch you like a 'rubber band'. Don't mistake the muddy waters you may have to travel through as cement. Don't be afraid to get out of the revolving door and step into your destiny. Don't let the gratitude and appreciation for where you are lure you into a state of stagnation. Stop making false claims of contentment while secretly harboring regret.

Be honest and true with yourself. What dream have you deferred? What purpose have you allowed to be compromised? What God-given assignment have you abandoned? This reflection is for acknowledgement purposes only. There is no time for self-criticism; don't waste your energy there. Turn your focus and attention to the matter at hand and get going. It's never too late! Today is the best day to start. You don't need to race in an effort to catch up. This is not a sprint, just a conscious decision to move forward with prayer, precision and purpose.

Simply put one foot in front of the other and press forward. Forward I said, not behind! Your head must be faced in the direction that you are going or you may stumble and fall. Even when going forward you may trip sometimes or experience setbacks. However, if you pick yourself up, dust yourself off and keep pressing on towards your goal, God will give you all that you need for the journey as you need it. Finally, if no one has told you yet, I would like to be the first to say, "I know you can make it". Dare to believe all the possibilities!

For more encouraging messages from Angela please visit agapeinspirations.com or on Twitter @InspiredByLv

Please visit our website at: www.lccny.org for more information. For a counseling appointment, call LCC at 1-800-317-1173. All sessions are virtual.



Carol DeVoti	9/4
Karlene Readinger	9/5
Michael Brennan	9/7
Kole Lemke	9/8
Jackson Kennedy	9/11
Margaret Franko-Filipasic	9/12
Margarete Hansen	9/12
Summer Lemke	9/18
John Siedlecki	9/18
Patricia Mills	9/19
Kristina Brennan	9/21
Michael Violante	9/25
Carl Grasso	9/26
Eric Jansen	9/30

Blood Drive...

*Fall is slowly approaching
and now is the time to save
your blood for Gloria Dei's
**OCTOBER BLOOD
DRIVE... TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 12...56 DAYS are
needed between donations***



STAYING CONNECTED

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Stephen Goldstein, Organist & Adult Choir Director
Email: inspanctus@gmail.com

Joseph's Storehouse Food Pantry, Olson Hall
Dennis Hood, Director
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