

# FAITH 2020

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## *A Mini-Newsletter + September 5, 2020*

Dear Friends,

This week I got to have a much-needed, long talk with a good friend and colleague, and I got to connect with the Episcopal clergy in NH via our weekly Zoom check-in meeting with Bishop Rob. It is easy to forget how much a part of one another we are in the midst of a year that is demanding endurance from all of us. Months ago, when we talked about the vitality of our churches, no one envisioned that by now our church buildings would have been closed for months amidst a pandemic that has taken thousands of lives but has also been politicized and weaponized in grotesque ways. Nor did most of us see ahead to a country and world so disillusioned by politics and in such enormous pain arising from social and inter-racial strife. Like pearls formed around the irritants in oysters' lives, I can tell you that great treasures are to be found in the oyster beds that are this exhausting, anxious, time of suffering, need, and tedium. The vitality that is the Kingdom of God among us is beginning to push forward pearls of great price.

The persistent presence of God, deep love and affection, faithfulness and commitment to social justice abound. We stay the course of keeping our churches as safe as we can: Our jaws drop as some pastors do rash things – like a pastor who officiated at a wedding in northern Maine that has led to the most severe COVID-19 outbreak that state has seen. So, we do not know when we will return to in-person, indoor worship. Our own little church has been richly blessed through our recorded mini-services, and I give thanks to all who have helped create them – especially Dave Jamrog, Nancy Jamrog-Couret and Bob Hughes. Some of you joined me in July for two outdoor prayer services at Abbie Griffin Park, and we have two more this month – see announcements below. Questions arose for all of us in the clergy discussion: What will we do with outdoor services when it gets cold? What can we learn from the solace and strength many people are finding through online worship – particularly live encounters on Zoom or Facebook Live? What can we send in writing that provides for more exploration on our own? Are there activities we can do alone or in small groups that we can enjoy and share with the whole group?

We are continuing with our much appreciated, recorded mini-services, for sure. Meanwhile, these questions lead me to: Initiate this mini-newsletter, learn more about online worship and “coffee hours” so we might connect more effectively that way, and look into activities other congregations are enjoying. When the Bishop’s Committee meets later this month, we will talk about some of these ideas.

Please get in touch with me with your pastoral needs, ideas, or even to share what is sustaining and renewing you in these days. I apologize for my wacky schedule, and that leads me to especially encourage you to text, email or message me on Facebook since I often respond when I get home from working at UPS. As always, you have my appreciation and prayers.





**LAUGHTER** – From Vicar Pat+ this week – feel free to send a contribution!

Last night at UPS I recorded three short videos for this week's mini service. Because that seemed like a way to pay tribute to Labor Day. When I watched them later, I saw that in the background there is a big shipping box behind me with big blue lettering that says, "ABSOLUTELY AWESOME".

**NOURISHMENT** – From Vicar Pat+ this week – feel free to send a contribution!

During my "stay-cation" I got to have my annual physical, my mammogram, dental check-up and cleaning, veterinary visits with both dogs (Ziva's urinary tract infection is now gone, at least for a little while!), and take care of some outstanding bills. How are you doing at "routine maintenance"? It actually really helps!

Music – I happened in to the world fusion works – many drawing on world religions – of the contemporary Welsh composer and conductor, Karl Jenkins. Highly recommend! I have also been refreshed and newly enthused by the United States Naval Band, particularly their renditions of "America the Beautiful", "Lean on Me", "Reach out/I'll be there" and "Circle of Life" – all on Youtube – here's a link to "America the Beautiful" -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSqVkuTegxY>

Literally – favorite restaurant this summer has been the outdoor roof patio at the **Pasta Loft** in Milford.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

At the Abbie Griffin Park gazebo – a brief **time of prayer** using the "Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families – In the Morning" (Book of Common Prayer page 137) at the following days and times. Please wear a face covering/mask, plan to social distance, and either bring your own Book of Common Prayer or use a disposable copy we will provide. We may visit for a little while afterward, with continued distancing and mask-wearing. Hand sanitizer will be available. There are granite benches; you may bring a chair or just stand as we pray.

- **Saturday, September 12 at 10:00** (Raining cats and dogs? Moved to Sunday!)
- **Saturday, September 19 at 10:00** (Raining cats and dogs? Moved to Sunday!)

The next **Bishop's Committee Meeting** is via Zoom at 7:00 pm Friday, September 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Regarding our treasury:** A big salute to Sue Gaillardetz for her efforts overseeing our finances in this utterly surprising year. **Using our post office box (see the masthead on the first page)** is still the best way to send your offerings, including pledges. Question: **Do ay of you wish to offer a matching gift in honor of Deacon John LeSueur?** In the past several years donors have pledged up to \$1000 to be matched by others. Please let Sue know if you would like to make such an offer, and be sure to specify whether you prefer to do so anonymously or by name.

**"Nana's Diaper Drive"** – at **Wheeler Memorial Chapel** – The diaper drive is September 26th from 10-3. Bring diaper donations to be given to Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter.

**PRAYER LIST AND COLLECTS** – Please send updates to the prayer list or prayers you find helpful!

**Please Remember In Prayer:** all those who are injured, ill or infirm, including Christina Rawley, Rhonda, Santos Lara Sr., Kirsten Draba, Julia DiStefano, Denys Ruel, Marjorie Johnston, Paul Roy, Steven Lassey, Elvira Lassey, Larry Carpenter, Alfred Panela, Jim & Margo Barbotsina, Rick

Fiacco, Daniel Parada, Mark May, Stephanie Holdgate, Nancy and Mike Colombo, Tim DiMatteo, Valerie Neill, Bill Lambrokous, Margaret Makowski Saunders, Mark Carter & Family, Anne & Paul Makowski, Vange DiStefano, Melanie Monroe, and Rachel Osborne. We pray for: those who seek health and safety for others, including Merrimack's Police, Fire and Rescue personnel; all medical workers; and all the "essential workers" who are keeping stores and other businesses stocked and open, buildings cleaned and trash picked up. We also remember those we join in mission, especially Bishop Hirschfeld and the Episcopal Church in NH; our Prison Ministries; the St. Petersburg Men's Ensemble; the Turkish Cultural Center; 4 Directions Outreach; our Food Pantries; Wheeler Memorial Chapel Trustees; our AA groups; Congregation Betenu, Qodesh Family Church and the other Merrimack Faith Communities.

**For this Sunday (Pentecost 14)** – Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

**For Labor Day** – Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

**For an Election** – Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges: Guide the people of the United States (*or* of this community) in the election of officials and representatives; that, by faithful administration and wise laws, the rights of all may be protected and our nation be enabled to fulfill your purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

**SCRIPTURES FOR THIS WEEK** – New Revised Standard Version <https://www.lectionarypage.net/>

Here is a vivid *celebration of work* from the lessons for Labor Day –

**Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 38:27-32**

So it is with every artisan and master artisan  
who labors by night as well as by day;  
those who cut the signets of seals,  
each is diligent in making a great variety;  
they set their heart on painting a lifelike image,  
and they are careful to finish their work.  
So it is with the smith, sitting by the anvil,  
intent on his ironwork;  
the breath of the fire melts his flesh,  
and he struggles with the heat of the furnace;  
the sound of the hammer deafens his ears,  
and his eyes are on the pattern of the object.  
He sets his heart on finishing his handiwork,  
and he is careful to complete its decoration.



So it is with is the potter sitting at his work  
and turning the wheel with his feet;  
he is always deeply concerned over his products,  
and he produces them in quantity.  
He molds the clay with his arm  
and makes it pliable with his feet;  
he sets his heart on finishing the glazing,  
and he takes care in firing the kiln.  
All these rely on their hands,  
and all are skillful in their own work.  
Without them no city can be inhabited,  
and wherever they live, they will not go hungry.



And Here are the lessons for September 6 – Pentecost 14 –

#### **Old Testament – Ezekiel 33:7-11**

You, mortal, I have made a sentinel for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, “O wicked ones, you shall surely die,” and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but their blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from their ways, and they do not turn from their ways, the wicked shall die in their iniquity, but you will have saved your life. Now you, mortal, say to the house of Israel, Thus you have said: “Our transgressions and our sins weigh upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?” Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?

#### **The Response – Psalm 119:33-40**

- 33 Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, \*  
and I shall keep it to the end.
- 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law; \*  
I shall keep it with all my heart.
- 35 Make me go in the path of your commandments, \*  
for that is my desire.
- 36 Incline my heart to your decrees \*  
and not to unjust gain.
- 37 Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless; \*  
give me life in your ways.
- 38 Fulfill your promise to your servant, \*  
which you make to those who fear you.
- 39 Turn away the reproach which I dread, \*  
because your judgments are good.
- 40 Behold, I long for your commandments; \*  
in your righteousness preserve my life.

### **The Epistle – Romans 13:8-14**

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Besides (of) this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

### **The Gospel – Matthew 18:15-20**

Jesus said, “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

