

THE SUNDAY CONNECTION

God speaks to us in many ways, including through the Sunday Scripture readings. The Sunday Connection provides useful background and activities to better understand the upcoming Sunday's Scripture readings, helping you to connect the Scripture to daily life in a meaningful way. These passages and reflections are from the Episcopal Church website Bible Study section.

Scripture Reading

Acts 9:1-20

Background on the Reading

Have you ever encountered someone you hadn't seen in a while who has completely changed for the better? Maybe a high school or university acquaintance, a cousin or other family member? Memories of taunting or even simply discomfort because of the way they previously acted might arise. Yet – they've changed! Really changed. They seem sweet and maybe much humbler than you remember. Our memories get confusing because you know something happened that way, and it probably did! Now, though, you find it hard to dislike them.

Somewhere along the way, they had a Damascus moment. You don't know what happened, but they seemed to have learned something profound. Perhaps you got an apology out of it. Reconciliation, thanks be to God! Maybe for them, a close death or near death experience, the harrowing of a relationship or health problem that they went through gave them a new perspective. Perhaps you're that person and you've come a long way since that former self. The harshest conversions, though, can be the most difficult to accept for us. But this is between God and the person, isn't it? Ananias is an example for us today. We might have a few questions about security, for sure, but we put away our pride and follow the Christian example to love and welcome those along our way, no matter their past.

HOMEWORK QUESTION FOR THE WEEK:

Perhaps you remember a time when you weren't as loving as you should have been. What did you learn from this experience and how did you grow?

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Dartmouth, Massachusetts

May 1, 2022

Third Sunday of Easter

The Rev. Scott A. Ciosek

Pastor, St. Peter's Episcopal Church

Executive Director, The Bridge: A Center for Hope and Healing

Chaplain, University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Sunday at 10:00AM

CONTACT US

Mailing Address: 351 Elm St., Dartmouth, MA 02748

Parish Office Phone: 774.510.5661 FAX: 774.202.6940

Parish Email: stpetersdartmouth@gmail.com

Website: www.stpetersdartmouth.org



PARISH STAFF & CONTACT INFORMATION

CLERGY

The Rev. Scott A. Ciosek

Rector, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Dartmouth
Executive Director, The Bridge: A Center for Hope and Healing
Chaplain, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

PARISH CONTACT INFORMATION

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Website: stpetersdartmouth.org
Live Stream: stpetersdartmouth.org/watch
Social Media: Find us on Facebook and Instagram

UMASS DARTMOUTH CAMPUS MINISTRY

Center for Religious and Spiritual Life
Rev. Scott A. Ciosek, Episcopal Chaplain
McLean Campus Center, Second Floor, Office 220
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THE BRIDGE: A CENTER FOR HOPE AND HEALING (Counseling Center)

Mailing Address: 351 Elm Street, Dartmouth, MA 02748
Office Phone: 508.997.0903
Email: thebridgeadartmouth@gmail.com
Website: thebridgedartmouth.org

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM (VESTRY)

Wardens	Susan Sousa and Michelle Woodacre
Clerk	Barbara Bosworth
Treasurer	Molly Armando
Members	Elizabeth Carbone, Martin Costa, Tanya Gouveia, Michaela Mello, Jeffrey Soares

PARISH STAFF / MINISTRY LEADERS

Director of Liturgical Music	Michael Moniz
Director of Youth & Family Ministry	TBA
Baptism Preparation Team Coordinator	Isabel Consoli
Administrative Assistant / Part-time (St. Peter's)	Kathy Thomas
Financial Administrator (St. Peter's & The Bridge)	Michelle Letts
Director of Parish Outreach Ministry	Barbara Bosworth
Building & Facilities / Sexton	Paul Costa
Building Rental/Use Supervisor	Martin Costa
Building & Grounds Committee Coordinator	Martin Costa
Pastoral Care for Homebound and Sick	Liz Carbone, Nancy Rolli, Susan Riley
LGBTQ Ministry	Jenn Oliveira
Concert Coordinator	Barbara Bosworth
Multicultural Ministry	Brittany Jenney
Altar Guild Coordinator	Jenn Oliveira
Keyboard Accompanist	Ann Lamoureau
Drummer	Kenny DeAlmeida
Guitar	Christine Homen

- Come after you if you leave
- Have you committed to an institution
- Hurt or kill you and/or the children
- Hurt or kill himself/herself
- Blames you for his/her problem
- Drives your car in a frightening way
- Have someone else kill you, your family, your friends etc.

ANGER AND INTIMIDATION

By:

- Changing mood suddenly
- Giving silent treatment
- Demonstrating anger
- Shouting or yelling
- Pounding fist on table
- Hitting the wall
- Throwing or kicking something
- Stomping out of the room/house

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Throws something at you
- Pushes, grabs or shoves you
- Pulls your hair
- Twists your arm
- Pins you to the wall, floor, bed
- Chokes you
- Kicks, hits or punches you
- Hits, or tries to hit you with something
- Threatens you with a knife, gun or other weapon
- Tries to run you down with the car
- Physically and/or sexually abuses the children
- Kills pets
- Deprives you of sleep

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Says things to spite or insult you in front of others
- Puts down your physical appearance
- Makes out you are stupid
- Criticizes your care of children/home
- Calls you names and swears at you
- Tells you that you are crazy/irrational
- Accuses you of having an affair
- Ridicules family or friends
- Does not show concern for children's needs or concerns
- Gets angry when children cry or make demands
- Goes through personal things ie: purse, drawers, pockets, email
- Frightens children's friends so they stop coming over

SIGNS THAT YOU'RE IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

ISOLATION

- Tells you that you cannot do something
- Jealous about who you see
- Monitors your time, makes you account for where you were
- Does not allow you to leave the house
- Makes it difficult for you to get a job
- Restricts your use of the car
- Tries to prevent you from contacting family
- Alienates you from family and friends
- Turns children against you
- Keeps you from getting medical care
- Withholds affection to punish you
- Tries to turn people against you

ECONOMIC ABUSE

- Makes you account for all the money spent
- Keeps you short of money
- Makes you ask for basic necessities
- Undermines your attempts to improve your education
- Undermines your attempts to get or keep a job
- Controls the money
- Makes you ask for money
- Refuses to give you money
- Makes all major decisions about money without consulting you
- Spends money only on things he wants

MALE PRIVILEGE

- Demands obedience like you were a servant
- Makes decisions without your input
- Treats you like you were inferior
- Tells you you can't cope without him
- Treats you like a child

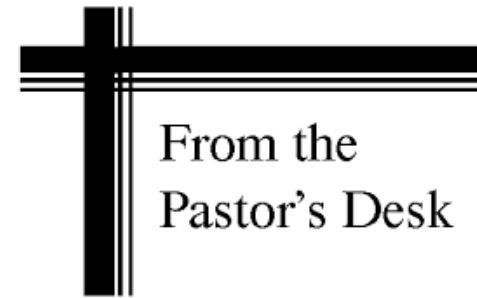
SEXUAL ABUSE

- Withholds sex to punish you
- Pressures you to have sex
- Forces you to have sex against your will
- Pressures you to have sex after being abused
- Pressures or forces you into unwanted sex acts
- Treats you like a sex object
- Inflicts pain on you during sex

THREATS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE

Threats to:

- Turn people against you
- Leave the relationship
- See someone else
- Take children away from you
- Leave you short of money



Dear Friends and Parishioners:

Our Bishops and Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts have suggested that each parish to take a "respite" of 2 weeks and give extra time off to clergy and employees who have worked so hard throughout the pandemic. Basically, they are recommending that parishes close down for 2 weeks. Because we do not have any full-time employees, I am suggesting to our parish leadership that we not take this time because we are in a big phase of growth right now with so much activity going on and I don't think it would be the best time

to close down. However, many other parishes in our diocese are taking advantage of the respite. If you notice some new faces this weekend and next (May 1 & 8) Grace Episcopal Church in New Bedford is shutting down for 2 weeks to give their clergy some respite time. That includes them not having Sunday Eucharist. I have invited the clergy of Grace Church to invite their parishioners here on May 1 and May 8. So, if you are joining us this weekend from Grace Episcopal Church, welcome!

Fr. Eric Fialho from St. Gabriel's in Marion and I should be able to announce within the next week or so the name of our new candidate for the staff position of **Director of Youth and Family Ministry**. This candidate, as you have heard, will minister in both parishes and will create a vibrant Youth Ministry. This will bring so much life into our parishes and will be a big draw for families in our area. You will come to know and love the passion and energy of our candidate as we begin this journey together. While each parish will offer their own programs, we will also be able to offer joint programs for youth and families throughout the year with the youth and families of both parishes, in alternating locations between the two parishes.

"COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP HOUR" returns this Sunday, May 1 after a very LONG respite due to Covid-19. Please join us in the Community Room for coffee and to catch up with your fellow parishioners. We will only be service coffee now because I am still feel a bit uncomfortable serving food. Moving forward, as with all things in parish life, we will evaluate how to use this "Coffee Hour" time. When there is Baptism Preparation, we will cancel Coffee Hour. On other Sundays, we may offer an Adult Formation program during this time. We want to use this time in a way to build community and go deeper into our faith lives. So, creative options will be explored.

The other exciting piece of news is a long-awaited upgrade to our physical plant. As many of you know, our **parking lot** is in deplorable condition. It is an absolute eyesore and is a liability to our parish. It was once a stone lot. All the stone has washed away. In the spring the lot becomes a big mud pile and swamp. In the the summer it creates a dust storm. In the winter, it becomes an ice skating rink because the plowing company cannot put the plow all the way down because of the many holes and bumps. I am grateful to Martin Costa, chair of the Building & Grounds Committee for working so hard in gathering proposals from several local paving companies. At our next parish Leadership Team meeting, we are going to review the proposals and take a vote to move ahead with this big project. The hope is to take a \$45,000 range loan from the diocese over 15 years which would cost about \$300.00-350.00 a month. We would like to host a parish-wide meeting to present the plan to the whole parish on Sunday, May 22 right after our Sunday Celebration of Holy Eucharist in the Community Room.

Liz Carbone is organizing a **Clam Boil** on June 26 on St. Peter's Field on Elm Street. Thanks, Liz, for coming up with this great idea. Hopefully everyone from our Leadership Team will attend and help to sell tickets so that this will be a huge hit and hopefully an annual event. We are hoping to have a Planning Committee meeting for this in the upcoming weeks. The proceeds of this event are going to support the new Youth & Family Ministry position. Please reserve the date!

Blessings in the coming week!

Peace,

(Rev.) Scott A. Ciosek, Rector



SOME CHANGES IN THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

I am writing to you today about some very important changes we are making in celebrating the SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM here at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

This weekend, I had a wonderful meeting with our new parish **Baptism Preparation Team**. It has been a priority for me for a while now to establish a Baptism Preparation Team in our parish. The first thing I wanted to do was listen to their suggestions and ideas and to share my own dreams. I want to be open to doing what is best for our parish and for the families who come to us to request Baptism. It was a great conversation with the spiritual growth of our parish family as the priority and guiding force.

As you know, one of the strong points of our parish (and of my own pastoral ministry as a priest) is to be welcoming. Our shared ministry as a parish is a ministry of "welcome" modeled on the ministry of Jesus.

When parents of young children request to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism for their child, we always want to be welcoming. In fact, we have always been very welcoming to every family who has come here. But, being "welcoming" goes beyond responding to a request that parents make to have their children baptized at St. Peter's. It has to go deeper. It is our job to connect these families into our community. The early Christian community after the Resurrection of Jesus "devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers." When Jesus met people, he met their needs and then he challenged them to grow in faith.

Of course, we want to continue to be welcoming. Being welcoming does not simply mean responding to someone's immediate need. Being "welcoming" also means that we do everything that we can to connect these young parents to a living, active life of faith in Christ. And, this is the job, not only of a priest, but of every member of our Christian community.

At the Baptism ceremony, parents stand before God at the Baptism Font, and before the Christian community and they make the commitment to raise their child in the faith. And, a big part of raising a child in the faith is being actively connected to a parish community. We can't do this faith thing alone! In fact, just the act of reaching out to the church for Baptism proves that fact. Faith is lived in community.

Did you ever notice in the Episcopal Church that we do not do "private" baptisms but we only baptize children during our Sunday Eucharist? The reason is that Baptism can only happen within the community. During the Baptism Ceremony we, the assembled community, pledge to do all in our power to help these young families in this journey. The community plays an important role and the response of the community during the celebration of Baptism is significant.

That is what I want to focus on today. How WE can help them!

When young parents request Baptism for their child at St. Peter's, there has been a common theme: the parents have usually had an "issue" or sadly have been made to feel unwelcome at a church of another denomination. The issue is usually that the other church would not baptize their child because the parents are not married or because an issue with sponsor/godparents. In the Episcopal Church, we believe the parents are the best ones to select sponsors and Christian role models for their children so that is not an issue for us. While I do not ever want to take anyone away from another church or denomination, if they have officially "checked out" from their former faith tradition, I always welcome them here.

After very long conversations with parents, they often say "this church is just what we are looking for." Or, "this is the kind of open-minded environment we want our child to grow up in." Often parents will comment on how welcoming we have been to them. And, 9 times out of 10, they will tell us how committed they are to remain connected to our parish and to start bringing their kids every week. And, 6 times out of 10, we never see them again. It is not only an issue at St. Peter's.

Join us for...

Discipleship 101

Adult Formation Series

Tuesdays in May & June
(exact dates TBA soon)

7:00-8:30PM

Using the new Episcopal Church video series

embracing
EVANGELISM

- ❖ Learn how to make the commitment to follow Jesus in daily life
- ❖ Develop practices for a "Jesus-Centered" Life and go deeper into your spiritual life
- ❖ Learn how to share the Gospel in parish life and in the world to form new disciples



From our Finance Office

First, thank you for your generosity in helping us to get through the Pandemic! Many parishes in our diocese came close to closing but we made it through the storm!

Our current challenge has been the fact that many people have become comfortable watching our weekly Service of Holy Eucharist on the live stream which means they may not contribute to the weekly collection.

We are trying to recover from our snow plowing costs from the Winter which we have been finally able to pay off. We are now trying to reduce our GAS & ELECTRIC bills which have a balance of **\$1,100** and our PROPERTY INSURANCE balance which stands at **\$880.00**. We also owe **\$560.553** to Church Pension Group. That leaves a current debt of **\$2,540.553** in outstanding bills. Again, much of this was caused by normal winter expenses of heating costs and snow removal.

It is always stressful trying to figure how to pay monthly bills as we all do in our homes. This is like our homes multiplied by five! As you know we do not have an endowment like other parishes have to fall back on in difficult times.

If you have not filled out a 2022 Pledge Form yet (you can actually find one in this bulletin) that would be SO helpful so that we can plan the rest of the year. Without pledge cards and knowing how much money will be coming in, it is very hard to do the work of parish administration. That is the only purpose of the pledge cards.

The other important way your Pledge Form will help is that (as you know) we are hiring very soon a parish Director of Youth and Family Ministry. This will increase our yearly budget by **\$17,000** which is a challenge we will be able to absorb with much creativity and help from all of you, especially with creating new fundraisers such as our new June Clam Boil....thanks to Liz Carbone for this amazing idea. We will share our Youth Minister with St. Gabriel's Episcopal Church in Marion, MA who will also contribute \$17,000. This is an important step in our parish as we strive to develop a strong youth and family ministry for our parish youth and for our families – as well as all the families yet to come!

If you are behind on your pledge and if you are able to catch up that would help us so much. If you are not currently pledging or contributing to the life of our parish, we encourage you to help out.

The dream we have for St. Peter's can only be realized if we all do our part in caring for OUR parish. This responsibility belongs to all of us.

Thank you for your continued generosity to our parish!

It is something that every church deals with. But, we can do better! And because we are so focused on discipleship here, we are going to do all that we can do to help these families to grow closer to God.

So, beginning immediately, there will be some changes here at St. Peter's Episcopal Church when parents request to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism in our faith community. The intention of these changes is out of **LOVE** and ultimately to **HELP** families to be more committed to their faith. The changes are also geared to creating a stronger sense of community within our parish.

I would like to highlight these changes below:

- Beginning immediately, when parents call the Parish Office and ask to have their child baptized, the first step will be to set up an **initial meeting** with the parents, two members of our parish Baptism Preparation Team and myself so that we can get to know one another. We also want to have an initial conversation about why they want to have their child baptized, why they chose St. Peter's, and what their faith means to them. We hope to learn more about their faith journey and their relationship with God.
- If the parents are ready to make the **commitment** to be **active participants** in the life of St. Peter's Episcopal Church by being regular and faithful participants at our Sunday Celebration of Holy Eucharist and in the life of our parish, we will then encourage them to explore the Baptism process more. We will then invite them to attend a **Baptism Preparation Session**. This gathering will consist of the parents of the child to be baptized, the child's sponsors/godparents, our parish Baptism Preparation Team, our new parish Director of Youth & Family Ministry and myself, the parish priest. This will be a time for them to get to know each other, to build relationships and to have conversations about their Christian faith and life as a parent.
- If parents are new to St. Peter's (or have not been engaged in the life of our parish) we will then invite them to regularly attend our Service of Holy Eucharist and to get involved in the life of our parish **for a few months before a baptism date is scheduled**. We want parents to experience the life of our parish and to see if our parish is a good fit for them before they make a commitment to become members. We also want them to be immersed in the parish where they will raise their children. It will also be a good time for them to meet other members of our parish family. (There is no "magical" time to celebrate Baptism. Some people believe that a child needs to be baptized immediately in the first few months of life. This is simply not true. If Jesus didn't say it, don't believe it.)
- There will now be 6 Sundays scheduled on the parish calendar at different times throughout the year when the Sacrament of Baptism will be celebrated during our 10:00A Service of Holy Eucharist. When scheduling a baptism, parents will then be able to choose from one of those scheduled dates. There will most likely be other children getting baptized on any of those Sundays. Most parishes in our area have a similar fixed schedule for Baptisms and families easily work around those dates. In the past, families could choose whatever date they wanted. This is no longer possible with the way the new program is structured with the Baptism Preparation sessions.

The mission of St. Peter's Episcopal Church is to **LOVE GOD. LOVE OTHERS & MAKE NEW DISCIPLES**. We believe this new process for celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism fulfills our mission. Our priority is to be welcoming! A big part of being welcoming is to help people to go deeper into being a disciple of Christ and to be changed by that encounter.

Let us continue to pray for our parish in this exciting time of growth! All that we do here is always done to draw people deeper and deeper into the heart of God! Please help us to spread the word about our new Baptism Preparation process to your family members and friends!

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott A. Ciosek". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

(Rev.) Scott A. Ciosek, Rector



REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER by Henri Nouwen

The Divine Spirit Praying in Us

The practice of contemplative prayer is the discipline by which we begin to see God in our heart. It is a careful attentiveness to the One who dwells in the centre of our being such that through the recognition of God's presence we allow God to take possession of all our senses. Through the discipline of prayer we awaken our selves to the God in us and let God enter into our heartbeat and our breathing, into our thoughts and emotions, our hearing, seeing, touching, and tasting. It is by being awake to this God in us that we can see God in the world around us. The great mystery of the contemplative life is not that we see God in the world, but that God within us recognizes God in the world. God speaks to God, Spirit speaks to Spirit, heart speaks to heart. Contemplation, therefore, is a participation in this divine self-recognition. It is the divine Spirit praying in us who makes our world transparent and opens our eyes to the presence of the divine Spirit in all that surrounds us. It is with our heart of hearts that we see the heart of the world. This explains the intimate relationship between contemplation and ministry.

Prayer and Suffering

"Come to me," Jesus says, "all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your soul will find rest, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 12:29-30) Here the deeper meaning of prayer becomes manifest. To pray is to unite ourselves with Jesus and lift up the whole world through him to God in a cry for forgiveness, reconciliation, healing, and mercy. To pray, therefore, is to connect whatever human struggle or pain we encounter—whether starvation, torture, displacement of peoples, or any form of physical and mental anguish—with the gentle and humble heart of Jesus. Prayer is leading every sorrow to the source of all healing; it is letting the warmth of Jesus' love melt the cold anger of resentment; it is opening a space where joy replaces sadness, mercy supplants bitterness, love displaces fear, gentleness and care overcome hatred and indifference. But most of all, prayer is the way to become and remain part of Jesus' mission to draw all people to the intimacy of God's love.

Finding My Way to Pray

There are many ways to pray. When we are serious about prayer and no longer consider it one of the many things people do in their lives but, rather, the basic receptive attitude out of which all of life can receive new vitality, we will, sooner or later, raise the question: "What is my way to pray, what is the prayer of my heart?" Just as artists search for the style that is most their own, so people who pray search for the prayer of their heart. What is most profound in life, and therefore most dear to us, always needs to be properly protected as well as expressed. It, therefore, is not surprising that prayer is often surrounded by carefully prescribed gestures and words, by detailed rituals and elaborate ceremonies.



PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND MINORS IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

We want parents to know that Episcopal Church has always worked for the protection of children, teens and minors. The Episcopal Church has always had very strong systems in place to protect our children, teens and minors.

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING is required of all clergy, diocesan employees and congregational employees. It is also required for wardens, vestry members, Eucharistic Ministers and lectors, pastoral visitors, youth leaders, Confirmation sponsors, acolyte leaders, choir directors, musicians, Faith Formation team members and volunteers working in a congregation on a regular basis.

IN ADDITION TO SAFE CHURCH TRAINING, all individuals 17 or over, who will or who may have access to children, MUST complete a CORI (Criminal background check) form prior to working or volunteering in the parish.

Because the Episcopal Church stands for the protection of children, teens and their families, we require a CORI check to be performed annually for the following people:

- All paid parish employees
- All vestry members
- Any parish volunteers (all organizations, committees, etc.)
- Anyone working with children ministries

Training teaches participants to recognize the signs of sexual abuse and the behavior of sexual perpetrators, how to respond to those signs and behaviors when they are observed, and provides screening information to help stop abuse before it happens.

A REMINDER TO PARENTS ABOUT BATHROOMS

Here at St. Peter's, children should never go to the restroom alone under any circumstances. This is just common sense. We are happy that you feel so safe here, but for the safety of our children, please do not allow them to wander around unsupervised and please do not ever allow them to go to the restroom unaccompanied by a parent. We always stand for the protection of our children and families.

SAFE CHURCH TIP OF THE WEEK

For the protection of everyone, it is absolutely essential that no one is ever in our buildings alone even if you have a key. There should never be a reason that anyone is in our buildings alone. This policy helps to create an environment that is safe for all. All ministry in our parish takes place in pairs. We embrace the "never alone" model.