

SOUNDINGS

Saint
Christopher's
Episcopal
Church



March 2017

From Your Rector



The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Rector

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your father in Heaven...."

Let me begin by stating the obvious: There are powerful enemies wreaking havoc in the world around us.

The dictionary definition of an "enemy" is as follows: "A person who hates or opposes

another person and tries to harm that person. A hostile nation or its armed forces or citizens, especially in time of war."

"Real" enemies include both individuals as well as collective groups: terrorists, the violent, the murderous; ISIS, nations who indiscriminately kill and inflict suffering upon the innocent (think Syria, Russia, Iran); those who degrade and enslave other human beings. The list goes on.... These are "real" enemies.

And then there are what I will term enemies "imagined." They are, among

others: immigrants, Muslims, minorities, members of the LGBTQ population, and many more. Through prejudices, fears, stereotypes, misunderstandings, and scapegoating, we transform individuals and groups—who are different than us—into enemies imagined.

And here is yet another category of enemies:

political enemies. They are Democrats, if you're a Republican; Republicans, if you're a Democrat! These new enemies have been named; the line in the sand has been drawn; and there are battles being fought in Washington, at town hall meetings, in the media, at dinner tables, cocktail parties, and who knows where else. Common wisdom tells us that we won't make America better, much less great, if we become the America of 1861 and we refight the Civil War along ideological and party lines!

Into this milieu, the authentic followers of Jesus are called to bring to bear the words, wisdom, actions, and love of Jesus Christ into American life.

How should we treat our enemies? It is a very complex and difficult question to say the least. But this is not the case for Jesus, who said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your father in Heaven...."

"Love your enemies": It's hard enough to love our neighbors!! "Pray for those who persecute you": Oftentimes we don't even offer a measly thank you for all the "inestimable" gifts of love that we have received! "Love your enemies": IMPOSSIBLE!

Loving our enemies does not preclude the fact that evil exists and real enemies must be named and resisted. Samantha Power, the former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, scathingly criticized and chastised Syria, Iran and Russia for the atrocities they committed against innocent men, women and children



St. Francis makes a friend out of an enemy (The wolf of Gubbio, depicted by Swanson)

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From Your Rector, continued

in Aleppo, Syria, when she stated, “Are you truly incapable of shame? Is there literally nothing that can shame you? Is there no act of barbarism against civilians, no execution of a child that gets under your skin?”

Even the Bible tells us to *reprove* our neighbor, so that we will not develop resentment and hatred in our hearts. The logic is this: Open, honest, gracious, and humble dialogue helps to preserve healthy relationships and prevent disharmony, discord and disaster.

But some Americans are taking the act of reproof too far. Reproof has degenerated into reprimand, censure, rebuke, scolding, admonishing, chastising, chiding, “a raking over the coals,” so to speak. Many of us feel called to point out the error in the other person, while proclaiming THE Truth. Of course THE Truth oftentimes masquerades as our own prejudices, misinterpretations, and misconceptions. We are turning our friends and family into political foes to be persuaded, convinced, and corrected! And if that does not work, then “rake them over the coals!”

The Christian Century invited a number of readers to address in writing one word: “enemy.” Here is how one writer misconstrued a fellow airline passenger:

“I had boarded the plane and was settling in my seat when I heard voices from several rows behind me. The dialogue was emphatic, even explosive. Were the words being thrown back and forth in anger or frustration? The language they were speaking sounded foreign. Was the flight attendant aware? Were these two people plotting something?”

“When we reached cruising altitude I couldn’t stand it anymore—I had to know what was going on. I stood up and moved down the aisle as if headed for the restroom. About five rows back was an elderly couple, still speaking loudly and emphatically in a Slavic language. They supplemented their conversation with hand gestures. Clearly both of them needed hearing aids. The woman had a scarf covering her gray hair, the man wore a black suit with a collarless white shirt that had seen more than its share of washings. They were holding hands and smiling.” (Kay Ward, *Enemies: Essays by Readers*)

The intent of biblical reproofing is to prevent hate, not create it. One translation of the Bible, *The Message*, states it clearly: “Don’t secretly hate your neighbor.

If you have something against him or her, get it out into the open; otherwise you are an accomplice in his guilt.” “Reproving” is carried out only with kindness and caring intent. There is no place for random judgment.

“Getting it out into the open” must be dealt with by face to face engagement; it must be rooted in relationship; there must be humility and a willingness to be corrected. Most importantly, we must be open to reproof coming our way. In short, reproofing others must be done sparingly and cautiously.

Rachel Cusk wrote an article in the *New York Times Magazine* (February 15, 2017) entitled, “The Age of Rudeness.”

***“Do I not
destroy my
enemies when I
make them my
friends?”***

***~ Abraham
Lincoln***

The author recounts how at an airport she reprimanded a very cranky worker by calling him rude. He in turn called her rude, and it degenerated into a yelling match. Her reproof backfired! Months later she was traveling with a friend when they were confronted by a belligerent security area worker who

was abusing everyone and anyone indiscriminately; literally, treating them like animals. When this particular worker harassed her traveling companion, his response was surprisingly effective: “He looks at her in silence. He is looking directly into her eyes. He stands completely quiet and still. The look goes on for a very long time. Her eyes are small and pale blue and impotent: I did not notice them until now. My friend neither blinks nor looks away, and the woman is forced to hold herself there as the seconds tick by, her small eyes open and straining. During those seconds, it seems as if layers of her are being removed: She is being simplified, put in order, by being looked at. He is giving her his full attention, and I watch the strange transformation occur. Finally he speaks.”

Reproof without recrimination!

Back to Loving your Enemies. G.K. Chesterton
continued on page 4

Children, Youth, and Families



Kerén Castro
*Director of
Children, Youth,
and Families*

St. Christopher's will be welcoming a new children's section to the church library within the next month. With the help of Tammy DePasquale, Youth Services Librarian at the Eldredge Public Library, the church will have a collection of books that touch on issues children deal with and will hopefully give them insight on how to cope with them, and/or open the opportunity for dialogue with the adults in their lives. The topics include bullying, fear, divorce, death, potty training, and how to cope with a new sibling. Everyone will be encouraged and allowed to borrow these books.

I would like to thank Martha Harrison, without

whom this would not have been made possible, as she initiated this project and helped St. Christopher's receive a \$1000 grant in 2012 from the Diocese of Massachusetts.

On another subject, I want to recognize the great work the students have been doing in their Faith in Action service. Their meals are providing a much needed mission connecting with others in our parish. Their gift of cooking reached the entire congregation on Sunday, February 26, when the Sunday School children baked cookies and prepared refreshments for Fellowship following the 10 am Choral Eucharist.



Stephen Ministry



Susan Newlin
Stephen Leader

Three new Stephen Ministers were commissioned on Sunday, February 26, after the 10 am Choral Eucharist. Don Chalker, Ali Crockett and Vi Fellman join our continuing Stephen Ministers, Larry Jobson and Jo Vachon, and our Stephen Leaders (also serving as Stephen Ministers), Susan Newlin and Carolyn Otis.

But what is Stephen Ministry? Many have likely heard of it but don't really know it. It is the "quiet ministry" of pastoral care at St. Christopher's. It is, according to Rector McGurk, Christian friends visiting friends; acting as an extension of the Rector's pastoral care services by helping people stay connected to the St. Christopher community. And through all of us, it helps people stay connected to God's healing grace.

Stephen Ministers are specifically trained to walk side-by-side with those in need. It may be that an illness or injury keeps a fellow parishioner at home, or maybe someone is suffering from grief, separation, family challenges, financial distress or any other life challenge. Stephen Ministers visit such parishioners



at the Rector's request and on a regular basis. They help bring God's love by their presence, their listening and their caring. Visits continue for as long as there is a need. All assignments and all discussions are completely confidential.

The ministry is named for St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr mentioned in the Scriptures and described as "a man full of God's grace and power, [who] performed great wonders and signs among the people." (Acts 6:8) Simply put, Stephen Ministry at St. Christopher's is God's way of caring for people through people. St. Christopher's Stephen Ministry has been partnering with our friends at the First Congregational Church of Chatham for training and continuing support of our Stephen Ministers.



From Your Rector, continued

wrote, “The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies, probably because they are generally the same people.” How many of our friends, family, and neighbors do we now classify as our enemies?

Eugene Peterson (in the *The Message*) describes the better way of Jesus, the “higher road,” so to speak:

“You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that.

“In a word, what I’m saying is, grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

“Grow Up!” Grow into the grace and love you have been so generously given and spread it out into your world!

Abraham Lincoln agreed with Jesus: “Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?” Martin Luther King said, “Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.”

Jesus said, “Be perfect.” Specifically, “Be perfect in love.” Set love as your goal in life; strive for it. Perfection is less about getting things morally right and more about loving others as God loves us. Those who know God’s love can attempt to love their enemies. And their neighbors too! It sounds impossible, but there are examples.

Here is another story from *The Christian Century*’s article on enemies:

“In 1983 I was an observer at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, British Columbia. One afternoon a resolution was brought to the floor calling for an end to the practice of apartheid in South Africa. Before a vote could be taken, a diminutive man wearing a magenta clerical

shirt stepped quickly up to a floor microphone.

Following protocol, he introduced himself. ‘My name is Desmond Tutu,’ he said. He lauded the motion and thanked the resolutions committee for its work. Then in a soft-spoken voice he said (here I paraphrase): ‘I have only one concern about the declaration. I note the absence of any expression of love for our white South African brothers and sisters, even those who support the existing unjust policy that’s so destructive to my people and our nation. We, of course, want change; indeed, we must have change. But we want our oppressors to know that though we oppose their policies, we wish them no ill. Fairness and just treatment for all people in South Africa is all that we want, and when this policy is eventually overturned, we want to work side by side with all South Africans toward peace and reconciliation in our nation.’

“It was an electric moment. A hush fell over the assembly, and we sensed the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our midst. Bishop Tutu moved that the resolution be sent back to committee for the inclusion of these sentiments. The motion received unanimous approval.” (Craig T. Anderson)

The world does possess people who put others first, who can look at others and see them as capable of giving and receiving love—as difficult as that is in our day and time. In a world full of enemies, Jesus offers us an alternative vision for the world: A world where love is freely received and given, openly and generously.

The ancient wisdom of the East (The Bhagavad Gita) reminds us that there are really no “enemies-out-there” when it says, “The self is the self’s only enemy.” Perhaps we can begin to love our neighbors and our enemies by first looking within and loving ourselves, as God unconditionally loves us.



Music & Liturgy



Maury A. Castro
Organist &
Choirmaster

On February 11, the 14 Choristers of St. Christopher's collaborated with the Choristers of St. Mary's Epsicopal in Barnstable to present a Choral Evensong and Holy Eucharist at St. Mary's. The service included music by Gustav Holst and Sarah MacDonald. The choir schools will collaborate again on April 29, although this time at St. Christopher's.

On Sunday, March 19, at the 10 am Choral Eucharist, four new choristers will be admitted to the Choir School: Chiara Castro, Annaleigh Massey, Mercy McClardy, and Paul McClardy. I look forward to welcoming them into full membership of the Choir School.

On another subject, we look forward to gospel sequence hymns during the season of Lent that reflect the theme of the winter/spring Gallery exhibit, *Jesus: Good Shepherd and Lamb of God*. This exhibit features a variety of images depicting Jesus as good shepherd, and I hope that the images coupled with music will comfort and uplift as we look forward to Easter. Many thanks to retired priest and parishioner, Homer McCue, for this thoughtful idea.

Next, I wish to remind you that St. Christopher's



is establishing a Friends of Music program. We have already received a very positive response to this meaningful endeavor, but wish for all who may want to support music, at any level, to do so. If you wish to participate in this undertaking, please simply deliver a check to the church, made out to St. Christopher's, with "Friends of Music" on the memo line. You may also read more about this program, or give online, by going to www.stchristopherschatham.org, and clicking on "Music."

Finally, a humorous anecdote: A few weeks ago, I was preparing a setting of the Magnificat with the choristers for an upcoming Evensong. We came across the passage that states, "He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel: as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever." I thought that it might be beneficial to the younger choristers to review the story of the patriarch, Abraham, and so asked the assembly, "Who is this Abraham?" Blank stares. "Who is the virgin Mary talking about here?" Silence. Then one of the older choristers raised her hand and said, "Wasn't Abraham a president of the United States?"

Together with Africans

A letter from Prince and Relhetta Wreh of the Goll Farm School in Liberia:

We bring you greetings from Goll Farm School and hereby acknowledge your sacrificial services that offer our children the opportunity for learning. Your continual intervention at this time of their lives is an invaluable contribution, not only to their individual lives, but also to their communities, our country and the world as a whole. We pray that you remain blessed.

We are aware that the cultural and economic gap between those at the lowest rung of our social ladder and those at the top makes communication between them very difficult. Each of them look at their conditions from where they stand to the extent that each of them understand why the others behave the way they do. For example, it is unimaginable for the

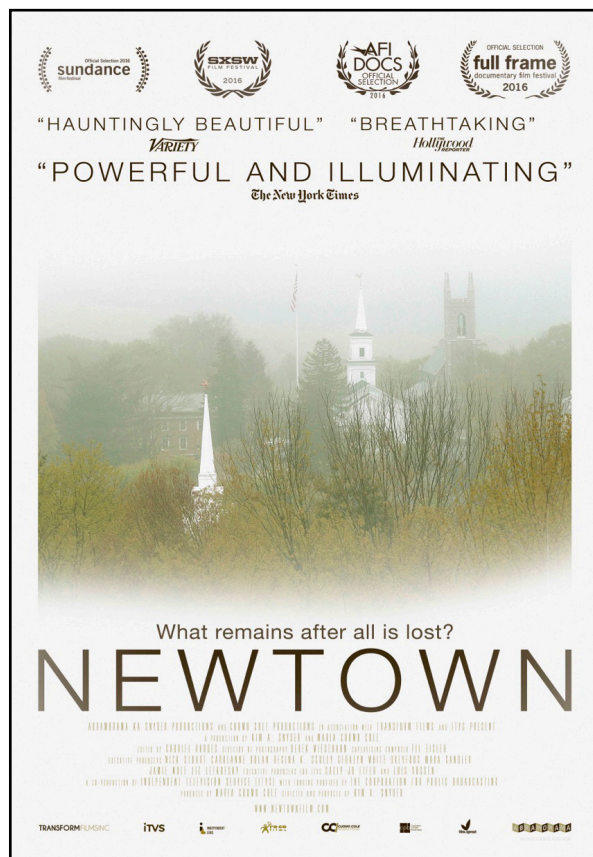
privileged to think that survival preoccupies the minds of poor parents who live at the doorsteps of schools and yet unable to let their kids enter. From the point of view of the privileged, this is parental irresponsibility or lack of interest in education. What most people fail to understand is that the poor parents and their kids do not have the keys to the doors in which their opportunities are locked by our social and economic system and structures. They have dreams, ambitions, and potential, but lack the opportunities to unlock them. In other words, they have the desires and the abilities but lack the opportunities....

This is an excerpt from a January 2017 letter that is available in full by going to www.stchristopherschatham.org and clicking on "Together With Africans."

Film Screening

On Friday, March 24, at 9:30 am, St. Christopher's will sponsor a screening of the critically acclaimed documentary, *Newtown*. The venue will be the Orpheum Theater, and the executive producer (and St. Christopher's member), Nick Stuart, will be on hand to discuss this important film. Tickets are free and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis **at the Orpheum box office**.

PBS will premiere this film nationally in the spring. The film has been critically acclaimed. The New York Times calls it "powerful and illuminating." For more information, go to www.newtownfilm.com.



Parish Statistics

Transfers Out

Dennis Johnson and Pat Petrash
to Cathedral of St. John in the Wilderness,
Denver, Colorado
February 2017

Baptisms

Jeffie Karlens Francois
February 19, 2017

Deaths

Jane Haven
February 2, 2017

William Everett Gould
February 3, 2017

Church e-mail list: If you are not on the church e-mail list and would like to be, please subscribe yourself at the bottom of the homepage of the church website, www.stchristopherschatham.org, or e-mail Maury A. Castro at mcastro@stchristopherschatham.org. By adding your address to the list, you will receive the weekly mid-week e-mail and periodic messages from the Rector.

Digital Soundings: All who are on the e-mail list receive *Soundings* electronically via the mid-week e-mail, and it is available on the website. If you would like to be taken off the print list, please contact Maury.

Saint
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Episcopal Church

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Rector

The Rev. Dr. John Martinier
Priest Associate

Maury A. Castro
Organist & Choirmaster;
Communications Director

Haskell Thomson
Musician-in-Residence

Kerén Castro
Director of Children,
Youth, and Families

Jamie Chalker
Parish Administrator

Barbara Bush
Administrative Assistant

Ali Crockett
Facilities Manager

David Smith
Treasurer

Bridgette Renaud
Assistant Treasurer

Lou Augustin
Sexton

Priscilla Chick, R.N.
Parish Nurse

Judi Stella
Manager, Gift Shop

Sandra Bowden
Curator, The Gallery

Ted and Martha Miller
Managers, Food Pantry

Lynn Van Dine
and Tim Weller,
Soundings copy editors.

March 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Ash Wednesday 9 Contemplative Eucharist & Discussion 9:30 Play Group 5 Holy Eucharist & Imposition of Ashes 6 Adult Choir	2 10 Women's AA	3	4
5 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship	6 Church Closed 6 Squire Night	7 9 Morning Prayer & Bible Study 10 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School	8 9 Contemplative Eucharist & Discussion 9:30 Play Group 4 Finance Comte No Adult Choir	9 10 Women's AA 10:30 Liturgy, Worship, and Music 12-4 Vestry Retreat @ Sargents 3 Shawl Ministry	10	11 11 Memorial: Jane Haven
12 Daylight Savings 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship & Forum: Hope & Renewal	13 Church Closed	14 9 Morning Prayer & Bible Study 10 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School	15 9 Contemplative Eucharist & Discussion 9:30 Play Group 10 Parkinson's Support Group 10:30 EPL Course 5:15 Adult Choir	16 10 Women's AA	17	18 1-3 Choir School 5 Celtic Evensong & Communion
19 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist & Sunday School 11 Fellowship	20 Church Closed	21 9 Morning Prayer & Bible Study 10 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School 4 Vestry	22 9 Contemplative Euch. & Disc. 9:30 Play Group 10:30 EPL Course 10:30 Holy Euch. & Healing @ LC 4:30 Tog. W/ Africans 5:15 Adult Choir	23 10 Women's AA	24 9:30 Screening: Newtown at Orpheum	25
26 8 Holy Eucharist 9:10 Gospel Glimpse 10 Choral Eucharist, Baptism, & Sunday School 11 Fellowship	27 Church Closed	28 9 Morning Prayer & Bible Study 10 Staff Meeting 3:45 Choir School	Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. ~ Psalm 91:1			



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March 2017

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CELTIC EVENSONG AND COMMUNION

In Commemoration of St. Patrick

Saturday, March 18, 2017 | 5 pm
The Rev. Brian W. McGurk
Maury A. Castro, piano



Music by Keltic Kids!



Dance by Kanaley School
of Dance!

Photo: Rince and Repeat Photography