

Trinity Topics

March 2017

From Father Brad

How do you spend your days?

Dear friends,

"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives," says Annie Dillard. How do you spend your days? Does your answer to that question sound like the answer you want to give to the question, "how did you spend your life?" If not, how will you spend your days differently? Stewardship of our time calls us to recognize our days as gifts from God and to spend them for God's glory.

One of the challenges of our age is the great busy-ness in which we participate. I know that each week Ellyn and I go over our calendars to make sure that children get picked up and delivered and that we keep our appointments. The process of working this out is absurdly comical some weeks. There is probably some app for ensuring that two parents don't converge to pick up one child while the other is stranded on a streetcorner. We all have to confess, though, that such busy-ness has become a source of pride. It's hip to be too busy. It's as though if life asks us for a date, we don't want to be too available. If our calendar is full, we must be sought-after and using our days to the fullest. May be.

Another great challenge to the stewardship of our time is the technology available to us. It is far too easy for a quick google to turn into a half hour tour exploring some tangential topic presented to me on a home page. Similarly, since we can have information quickly, we grow to feel that we need to check the news ever more regularly so that nothing passes us by. And, of course, our phones. Intended to help us multi-task, these devices can become our taskmasters; intended to connect us, they can enslave us, never letting us get away.

My point is that our lives and our days get cluttered. And I guess another point is that because it's all we've known, we are comfortable with our lives that way. Have you thought about that? Perhaps the clutter and the busy-ness with which we fill our lives distract us from things we're afraid of, like ourselves, and life, and death, and God?

Please think about how you use your time. It will not surprise you that I have some suggestions which I hope you will find helpful. First, do a time inventory. You may have done this with calories, but try it with time. Doing one day at a time for up to a week if you can, keep track of how you spend your time. Use increments no larger than an hour, and as small as fifteen minutes if you can. Design a little chart, or do it on your phone. Then look back at how you spent your life that week. How much sleep did you get? How much time did you spend on the computer? In front of the TV? With family and friends? Then ask? How much time did you spend in prayer and quiet? In exercise? In worship? In Christian Education? In serving the least of these?

An upcoming 5th Street ministry night is in the planning and will be announced soon! We need lots of people to help in this ministry!

Thanks,
Trevla



A few youth families went to Winston Salem and watched A CHRISTMAS CAROL at the Hanes Theater.

FROM THE SENIOR WARDEN.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP WITH OUR WELCOME MAT BEHIND THE SCENES.

Hospitality and the Peggy Woods coffee hour may be calling you? I have been working toward having coffee and some kind of snack available after the 10:30 service. I have tried to do this without a formal signup process, but I have found myself being pulled in too many directions in trying to meet with folks informally after church and sometimes to take care of other miscellaneous tasks. I feel that this opportunity to mix, especially with visitors and newcomers is important. This might be an opportunity for somebody to adopt this as a ministry and work toward coordinating sign ups or whatever might be accomplished to have this extra welcome mat for newcomers and to encourage a little extra fellowship.

Updates: We are having continued discussion and some potential design modifications for the Columbarium plans.

Behind the scenes:

Some time back we were offered a situation where we would become a middle man for appliances that were donated for a family whose home had burned in the Mooresville area. This was a unique situation. The appliances were held in donated space in a warehouse in the Troutman area for about a year. The recipient recently picked up those appliances for their new replacement manufactured home and they were very appreciative.

The Helping Hands group had an opportunity to help to move the belongings of a parishioner from an apartment into a storage unit where they will be held for a time. We have good participation from the helping hands group in boxing personal property ready for the movers.

What can you do to reach in and reach out this season?

Chris Shoobridge

Young Families ministries is actively seeking adults (singles or pairs) to volunteer to lead Childrens Chapel. We would like to offer it twice a month, but we need your help to make it happen. We have a great team of trainers who can work with your schedule.

Do you like Family Fun Nights? We want to hear from you. If you have attended one in the past, or would like to know what it's all about, please see, call, e-mail, or text Jenneffer at (719) 213-1597 or thesixkillerlibrarian@gmail.com. Our programs should fit you and your families' needs, but we need your input.

If you are interested in being on the communication list for Vacation Bible School, please let us know by April 30th.

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In compassionate service,

Jenneffer Sixkiller

From the Jr. Warden

The "new kid on the block" Jr. Warden has been busy over the past two months! Here's a sampling of activities completed around the church physical plant:

Light sensor malfunction has been re-wired to work on wall switch outlet only in one pre-school classroom.

Approximately 20.....yes, that's 20 light bulbs have been replaced from exit lights to floodlights outside the perimeter and in the courtyard areas.

Two toilets downstairs will be repaired with new working flush-valve chains.

Thanks to Chris Shoobridge for installing a new water source outlet on the east side of the building.

A new crepe myrtle bush has been given in memory of Francie Fanjoy and planted at the entrance drive to the front of the church.

The fire alarm system is up for servicing and will be done February 23.

The dehumidifier is working again in the boiler room to remove excess humidity and keep the floor dry.

The sign post which cracked due to heavy winds will be repaired so our special events banners can once again be installed.

A friendly reminder to all who make coffee to be sure that the coffee machines are turned OFF after each use.

Please bring to my attention any concern you see needing maintenance by calling the church office and having it listed on our ACTION LIST clipboard. I'll be calling folks to volunteer and help with the many tasks that keep our church facility functioning at its best!

Chuck Lindler

LENT AT TRINITY, 2017

"I invite you, therefore, to the observance of a holy Lent..."

Please consider the following as we approach Lent.

EVENING PRAYER EACH WEEKNIGHT AT 5:30

It's a 15-20 minute service of scripture reading and prayer in our Episcopal tradition.

SUNDAY NIGHT MOVIE GROUP

This popular offering will feature the movie Still Alice, "a caring and compassionate portrait of a linguistics professor stricken with early onset Alzheimer's." The group will meet from 5-7 for five Sundays beginning March 5. Each participant typically agrees to be part of the cooking team for one of the weeks. Child care provided. Sign up in Narthex.

THURSDAY NIGHT STUDY

"John: The Gospel of Light," an Adam Hamilton video study, will meet at the home of Walter and Haydee Patterson, 1121 Bunch Drive. (Begins March 9; Precise time TBA -- group limit 8. Sign up in Narthex.)

SUNDAY MORNING LENTEN STUDY

Beginning March 12, please come to the parish hall for a study titled "Forgiveness," from the Dark Wood Brew series. Does God always call you to "forgive and forget" when you are hurt? Is anything unforgivable? As Rev. Eric Elnes Ph.D. and popular series guest Rev. Bruce Van Blair argue, there are times when we are called not to forgive, and times we must forgive. Judgment, grace, Jesus, and the people you have a hard time forgiving are all front-and-center in this provocative and surprising examination of forgiveness.
9:30 -10:15



Outreach

The Oyster Roast held on [January 20th](#) was a great evening with checks now presented to Salvation Army and The Boys and Girls Club.

Trinity will be partnering with Grace Baptist on [April 30th](#) for A Stop Hunger Now meal packing event. Our financial commitment is \$1500.00 and containers with green lids have been placed throughout the church for individuals to start dropping pocket change in to help us meet our goal. 29cents will feed a family of five so bring your change to church and help us feel these containers and feed the hungry and malnourished. Mark this date on your calendar as we will need 15 to 20 volunteers to assist with the meal packing, its a unique experience, all ages welcomed, no experience required. The Outreach team is always looking for new and different ideas to REACH OUT, so come be a part of our team to help us visualize how best to do God's work in our own community and beyond.

Rowdy Armistead

Operating Fund:

	Total Receipts	Total Expense	Surplus (Deficit)	
2017 YTD Jan Actual	27,297.36	26,813.79	483.57	
2016 YTD Jan Actual	42,281.00	18,155.05	24,125.95	
2017 YTD Budget		21,086.87	21,086.87	0.00



The Alter Guild is requesting new members sign up. They provide such a service to our church and they could certainly use some help. Contact Betty Coltham.



We will have a senior lunch on [March 12th](#) at 12:00. Ulysses Long will be performing for us. We hope we'll have a big crowd!!

Forgiveness

My grandfather has recently developed tumors in the brain. These have caused several big changes to happen. First are the bodily issues: pressure creates nausea, pain, disorientation. He becomes agitated and angry that he cannot remember. Second, he was the only driver in the family; my grandmother lost her ability, along with mental acuity, a few years ago. As you can imagine, this illness has shaken him, and our family, greatly.

As the patriarch of the family and official, "worrywart," it was his job to: say Grace at mealtimes, save and plan financially, know the comings and goings of neighbors and family members, and teach a weekly Bible study class at church. He was very consumed with his functions and roles. Stroke survivor, author, and teacher Ram Dass writes about these very attachments in his book, *Still Here*. As someone who spent years with a guru at an ashram in India, and who has, since then, spent time working with people as they die, Dass has a great wealth of experience from which to draw. He focuses on not identifying with your functional body and its' roles, but on being still with yourself, the soul, in meditation.

Just being, just listening, to that stillness that is the Spirit. This is present in each of us, and we can know it if we are quiet, both in body and mind. Not trying to impart Sanskrit terms, or philosophies to the ailing, or even hold in mind what outcomes he perceives about the situation, Dass aims to merely be a kindred soul who can appreciate another, so that he can appreciate himself, even in death.

Do I think my Baptist, fundamental grandfather would ever read this book? No! But I needed it. I wanted to re-visit what it may be like for him, being closer to death than he has in many years. (decades ago, he had several heart surgeries, that was also scary). Even though he may balk at the idea of "meditation," however, he certainly knows the joy of the Lord, mentioned throughout the New Testament. His favorite book, one he has extensively researched and taught, is Paul's letter to the Romans.

Many times where joy is mentioned in the Bible, it is in the midst of suffering. Not when, say, you win the lottery. My grandfather has certainly seen a lot of suffering throughout his life. Growing up in poverty, he was spit on and called ugly names for being Cherokee. He endured military service in Louisiana, lost most of his siblings, his parents, and seen his children and grandchildren suffer through addictions, loss, pain, surgeries. So when I pray for him, and my supporting family, I don't just pray for a cure. I pray for healing, acceptance, and continued joy.

In, *The Book of Joy*, by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu, a powerful distinction is made by one of their attending physicians between cures and healing. "Curing involves the resolution of the illness...[but] healing was coming to wholeness and could happen whether or not the illness was curable (p 161)." Archbishop Tutu is intimate with cures and healing. Early in his life, he was diagnosed with TB and was nearly given up for dead. Facing such adversity with the body, the only vehicle we know that inhabits this world, must be scary for those of us who identify our being with our body.

However, the Dalai Lama offers another perspective, also from, *The Book of Joy*. "As a Buddhist practitioner...I take seriously the contemplation of the Buddha's first teaching, about the inevitability of suffering and the transient nature of our existence." He says it's important to meditate daily on our own mortality, because all earthly things pass away. His interpreter, Jinpa, explained further that confronting our own mortality is a, "true measure of Spiritual development."

Christians, of course, rejoice in comfort of being with the Lord, both in life and death. Romans 14 (KJV) says, "For whether we live, we live into the Lord; and whether we die, we die into the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. Although this passage provides comfort in the idea of death, the context is actually that of forgiveness.

Bishop Tutu and his daughter wrote a book on the topic in 2014, called, *The Book of Forgiving*. He was the chairman for the Truth and Reconciliation commission in South Africa, which promoted forgiveness and healing for a nation broken by apartheid. He says, "the quality of human life on our planet is nothing more than the sum total of our daily interactions with each other. Each time we help, each time we harm, we have a dramatic impact on our world." So by forgiving, we can mend our broken social fabric. "It is the way we stop our human community from unraveling" (p4).

By this logic, we can deduce that through forgiveness, we can also stop ourselves from unraveling. Maybe not physically, but emotionally and spiritually. When a person is in pain, or the body is failing, it is easy to blame: doctors, God, the body itself, our past choices, pollution, global warming, the breakdown of modern society, and on it goes. The beauty of Epiphany, whether you are healthy, poor, rich, suffering, is the beautiful gift we have received.

Imagine being angry at a newborn baby. Withhold forgiveness from an innocent child. Seen hard to imagine? Perhaps this season, we can use the vivid imagery of the Christ child to remind us that our failings, imperfections and suffering may not hold so much leverage after all. I will take it a step further and know that I don't have to blame anyone that my grandpa's body is failing. It's simply the nature of impermanence of this life, and it happens to everyone (save Elijah and Enoch). I always have the reminder of God's grace through his perfect Son, and that joy which comes from above, that was given to me when I was created. Contentment of spirit, being still and knowing, and rejoicing in the promise of the Messiah.

Jenneffer Sixkiller