

# THE ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

# CALL

NO. 369  
SUMMER  
2015

## Summer and Spiritual Practices



The Rev. Adrian Robbins-Cole

**D**OWN THROUGH THE AGES, Christianity has made use of the latest communication techniques—whether the use of scrolls by St. Paul to write his letters or the enthusiastic adoption of the printing press during the Reformation. Now, we are inundated by millions of apps for our smartphones and tablets, including countless spiritual and Christian apps.

In keeping with the theme for this edition of *The Call*, *Summer and Spiritual Practices*, I would like to talk about several spiritual apps that I use. You might find these helpful with your spiritual practices while you are on vacation or away from church during the summer. The summer, when you might have a bit less on your plate, might be a good opportunity to try these apps out. Once you have used them, I think you will find that they are great resources to

help you find space during your day for prayer and reflection, not only in the summer, but throughout the year.

Before discussing the apps themselves, I would like to mention four regular spiritual practices that Christian apps can help support in your life. You could do one or more of these practices, spending from a few minutes to half an hour a day.

1. A short daily meditation on a piece of scripture: a few minutes a day
2. Daily reading of the Bible passages appointed in the lectionary: 5 to 10 minutes
3. Morning and/or Evening Prayer (including the daily Bible readings) from the Book of Common Prayer: 20 minutes each service
4. Silent contemplative prayer: 5 to 30 minutes

There are thousands of Christian and spiritual apps out there, but I would like to highlight three I find useful in my own spiritual life, and which support the four practices I have outlined above.

1. **Forward Day by Day** This app is free and is a wonderfully rich resource. It is very easy to use. The app has five simple sections. The first section (Today's Meditation) contains a daily meditation on a scripture verse that can be read in a few minutes. The second section (Daily Bible Reading) has the daily

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## Summer and Spiritual Practices, continued

Bible readings appointed by the lectionary. The third section (Daily Prayer) has Morning, Noonday, and Evening Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer with the daily readings. The fourth section (Daily Saints) has a brief biography of the saint of that day. The fifth section (Prayer Library) contains some useful prayer resources.

### 2. **Electronic Common**

**Prayer** This app costs \$6.99 and contains the whole of the Book of Common Prayer, as well as the texts of all the daily Bible readings appointed by the lectionary. The great feature of this app is that it does not need

Internet connectivity because all the information is stored directly onto your electronic device. The other nice feature of this app is that the home page is a calendar with all the daily Bible readings.

3. **Contemplative Outreach – Centering Prayer** This is a free app put out by Contemplative Outreach which was founded by Father Thomas Keating to support Christian silent meditation/centering prayer. This straightforward app contains an adjustable timer for your prayer session with opening and closing bells. It also contains guidelines for centering prayer.

What I find great about all these apps is that they can be used in all kinds of settings to create a sacred time for prayer and reflection. You could use them on the beach, on the train commuting to work, in-between appointments, or whenever you find you have a few spare minutes. You can sit there anonymously with your electronic device creating your own spiritual space.

Bon voyage on your electronic spiritual journey with these apps.

Yours in Christ,



## Warden's Letter

### Summer and Faithful Practices



Michael Vanin

*And he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near."*

— Luke 21:29

**A**FTER EXPERIENCING THE snowmageddon of 2015, no words could be more welcome. . . "Know that summer

is already near." Finally . . . time to kick back and let the memories of ice dams, down filled parkas, long nights, and frigid temperatures take a back seat to visions of summer-sandy beaches, shorts, t-shirts, endless days, and warm breezes.

But before you unpack your Ray-Bans, Topsiders, and sunscreen, consider the beehive of activity at St. Andrew's this spring:

#### March


- Lenten Choral Evensong
- A Special Visit from Bishop Gayle Harris
- *common cathedral* in Boston
- Confirmation Retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Camp

#### April

- Holy Week services
- St. Andrew's hosted confirmation for 35 youth from the Concord River Deanery
- Newcomers brunch (for over 20 newcomers with 9 children and 1 on the way)
- Spring Tea
- Diocesan Altar Guild Luncheon and Annual Meeting

#### May

- Bargain Haul, our major fundraiser, fellowship, and outreach ministry
- Bishop Bud Cederholm confirms 27 St. Andrew's teens, as well as candidates from five other parishes, at St. Andrew's
- Rite-13 Walk for Peace



A publication of  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

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- Adult mission trip to El Hogar, Honduras
- Church School, Rite-13, and High School Youth Group conclude for the year

### June

- Men's Book Club last meeting of the season (concluding its fifth consecutive year)
- Expect to complete search for our third clergy position
- Vestry begins work on developing our strategic plan

With all of that behind us, we can now begin the transition to a more carefree summer schedule. Soon most schools will have made up their snow days—and on that last day of school, summer will finally have its official start. But the question remains: how will you spend your days in June, July, and August? Summer is a time to be adventurous, to try something new, including how and where you worship. As you make plans for the season, give some thought to trying out a new approach to church. For instance:

- Be adventurous and join friends at their church for a service.
- Explore a house of worship of



Photo: Peter Lull

*Bargain Haul 2015*

another faith.

- Visit an Episcopal church in another town to expand your sense of our faith.
- Pop into the Cathedral in Boston or if you're in Wellesley, attend the rotation of ecumenical services offered in town during August.

By broadening your faith horizons during summer, you can bring a little enrichment in mind and spirit, and you'll have great stories to tell at coffee hour when you return to St. Andrew's in the fall.

Wherever your spiritual journey takes you this summer, keep in mind the second line from

Luke's passage: Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

No matter where your plans take you, keep God near and make time for faithful practice this summer, however you define it. And as the 1966 hit song suggests, "See you in September."

Respectfully,

*Michael*

## Words of Life

### *Summer Reading as Spiritual Practice*



*The Rev. Brian Rebholtz*

*All we need is some light to read by.* —Mary Catherine Richards

**R**EADING HAS LONG BEEN recognized as a spiritual practice. Yet, most of us would not describe our summer reading plans in terms of moral commitment or spiritual seriousness. Summer reading is usually something we do to "escape." Our escape might involve languidly skimming the thick volumes that continue to dominate our "to be read" pile. It might involve indulging in pure entertainment and fantasy, perhaps with a popular novel culled from the latest bestseller list. It might involve turning to a volume of poetry or creative fiction

that spurs us to reimagine our lives and the values we hold. Nevertheless, we escape. By reading and through reading, we transport ourselves outside the strictures of the ordinary and into another world.

I have no wish, of course, to spoil the pleasures of summer reading. Reading should be an activity we enjoy. But at the same time, I believe that reading is also serious activity. Books shape the lives of their readers for better or for worse—frivolous, sentimental, and gratuitously pornographic or violent books, as well as books that exemplify virtue, beauty, and

truth. Books shape us by what they take for granted, and by what they ignore or dismiss. They shape us by the narratives they unfold, and by the characters they create and reveal. The act of reading is never neutral. It can be sublime or subversive or even senseless, but reading always shapes us.

The reader, of course, participates in this shaping as well. Our fingers and eyes select volumes off the shelf according to our readiness to hear and receive; our minds evaluate and decide what to notice, recall, and retain. Every time we turn the page, we are engaging in a potentially life-orienting exercise. When we recognize this, we have the ability to see our reading in a different light, a light that encourages us to read not just for escape, but for life. This committed practice of serious, pleasurable, and transformative reading is a spiritual practice, and it is a practice I encourage you to try this summer.

Although it has become somewhat cliché for Christians to pride themselves on using purely secular sources for their spiritual reading, I emphatically disagree. During the year, I regularly read books of theology and spiritual classics as well as secular works. During the summer, I like to blend both elements for my summer booklist. Rather than read pure theology or pure fiction, I turn to books that treat spiritual and religious themes in enjoyable yet serious ways. Based on my own reading experience, I offer the following suggestions to you as candidates for your summer reading. I hope you will find them reading for life.

Faithfully,



## Transformative Reading

**Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*** A rigid Baptist missionary transplants his wife and three daughters to the Congo and watches his religion, his evangelism, and his family disintegrate in the face of African realities. Told in multiple voices—a masterpiece!

**Jacques Lusseyran, *And Then There Was Light*** An astonishing autobiography that tells the gripping, heroic story of the early life of Jacques Lusseyran, a leader of the French Resistance who overcame the limitations of physical blindness by attending—literally—to the light within his own mind. Through faith in the connection between vivid inner sight and outer events, Lusseyran fought against the Nazi occupation and survived the horrors of Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

**Carlo Levi, *Christ Stopped at Eboli*** A wry, humorous, yet sensitive portrait of rural Italian Catholic culture by a Marxist doctor who found himself exiled there in the mid 1930s for his anti-fascist beliefs. It tells the tale of a people who feel that they have been bypassed by the world, by the Church, and by history itself.

**Zora Neale Hurston, *The Sanctified Church* or *Mules and Men*** These collections of short stories exhibit Hurston's characteristic combinations of personal voice and powerful imagery. Both collections feature firsthand accounts and stories of African-American folk Christianity that either no longer exists or is now largely invisible to white eyes.

**Joyce Carol Oates, *Son of the Morning*** A study in religious conversion and charisma that focuses on a boy who becomes a powerful healer and preacher. This book is written with great sensitivity by one of the premiere novelists of our time. It is out of print, but you can find it in a library.

**Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*** St. Jude, patron saint of hopeless causes, is the most popular saint of the American Catholic laity, particularly among women. This fascinating book describes how the cult of St. Jude originated in 1929, traces the rise in Jude's popularity over the next decades, and investigates the circumstances that led so many Catholic women to feel hopeless and to turn to St. Jude for help. Though I disagree with several of Orsi's conclusions, the study is sensitive, compelling, and a modern classic.

**Cynthia Bourgeault, *Love is Stronger Than Death*** A true story of a woman who places herself under the guidance of an eccentric spiritual master: the American Trappist hermit known as Brother Raphael. The story contains a touchingly honest account of their deepening relationship, her unrequited love for him, and the ways in which his deep woundedness and profound spirituality intertwine. The book ends with Bourgeault's provocative account of communion and ongoing connection with Brother Raphael after his death.

**Karen McCarthy Brown, *Mama Lola*** A portrait of a Voodoo priestess living in Brooklyn who channels the traditional African and Haitian spirits in an urban American setting. This is one of the most important books in the modern study of religious leadership and practice, combining a deep personal voice with some truly thoughtful observations on spirits, possession, religious experience, women's experience, and religion itself, albeit from a secular perspective. Everyone who picks it up finds this book to be an exciting and worthwhile read.

**Malcom X, *Autobiography of Malcom X*** This is both an American classic and a fast, gripping read, chronicling the transformations of a small-time gangster into a devout member of the Nation of Islam and then into a devout Sunni Muslim.

# Bring Your Heart

## Not Just Your Hands, on a Mission Trip



Steve Taylor

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL years, my wife, Becky, and I have included a mission trip to Honduras in our summer plans. It is an important element of our shared understanding of Christian discipleship, and augments the spiritual formation that results from our regular church routine the rest of the year. For us, going on a mission trip is a way to put our faith into action.

Our trips are most often with a team of high school students from All Saints Parish in Brookline, where Becky works. It's important to us to introduce young people to other cultures, and to look for God in unfamiliar places. For instance, the people we meet at El Hogar in Honduras are a world away from our normal day-to-day routines. By the grace of God, we are always reminded that most of the world is not like Wellesley. This

helps keep us humble, and spurs us to work for economic change, especially where that change will benefit the lives of children.

Similarly, the youth of St. Andrew's often go on mission trips during the summer to places outside their comfort zones. Meeting people whose lives are very different from theirs, and sharing their gifts of time and talent, are key elements of the mission experience.

Perhaps the most important part of going on a mission trip is the right attitude. I think the following passage from the El Hogar Mission Team Handbook captures the spirit just right:

"The key to volunteering is that of service, both by having open hearts and minds and undertaking a project designed to meet the needs of the El Hogar community. When we allow ourselves to be among the poor and oppressed, we go to where God dwells in a unique way. We go to encounter and discover. We go to celebrate life, to touch and be touched, to give, and more importantly, to learn to receive. We travel across cultures with the hope of making connections. Thus, we hope to encounter God in a profound and powerful way."

The Diocese of Massachusetts, and indeed the whole of the Episcopal Church, holds up mission as a key element of our Christian formation. At a seminar

run by the diocese not too long ago, Becky and I were introduced to the concept of "accompaniment" as a way of thinking about mission. Being part of a mission team is not about doing something to or for the other. Rather, it's all about relationship—the joy of being with the other and learning from that encounter—learning about the other, about yourself, and about God's love. In fact, it's not about "us and them"—it's about finding common ground as people and as Christians (or non-Christians) and sharing our stories to understand how we all fit together into God's larger story.

By the time you read this, a group of adults from St. Andrew's will have returned from a mission trip to El Hogar's elementary school in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. And later this summer, a group of St. Andrew's high school students will visit the Navajo reservation in Utah. The trips are two important summer spiritual practices emerging from the life we share at St. Andrew's.

If you are interested in learning more about mission and participating in a trip, contact me at [stevet21@verizon.net](mailto:stevet21@verizon.net). It can be a very rewarding summer activity. To learn more about El Hogar, please visit their website: [www.elhogar.org](http://www.elhogar.org).

*Youth Mission trip 2012 in Navajoland*



Photo: Hope Aldrich

# Summer Worship



Anne Manners

**W**HEN I WAS A YOUNG girl at Tenacre Boarding School living in Bradbury House, now the Quaker meetinghouse, I used to run away from time to time. I always went to walk along the viaduct off Dover road. Looking at the beauty of the landscape, being alone in natural surroundings always calmed me and gave me courage to go on. Since that time I have always taken the months of July and August to look at God's

world in a different way. I rarely go to church, but instead make time to walk alone seeing God's work all around in nature, in close relationships, in smiles and the caring faces of friends. When I walk alone, I sometimes meditate and when walking with friends, I am able to share the loveliness of God's world with someone else. In a world so full of animosity and danger such interludes remind me of the goodness we can find amidst all the turmoil in our world.

# Education for Ministry

*Celebrates its Graduates, Welcomes New Members*



Ann Johnson

**E**VERYONE HAS A MINISTRY. Your ministry is whatever you are called to do with your life. Finding your ministry, however, can be a challenge. At St. Andrew's, we have a wonderful,

long-running program that's all about bringing clarity and direction on this important subject.

It's called Education for Ministry. EfM is a four-year program designed for Episcopalians by the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, to deepen an adult's understanding of Christianity and instill a sense of Christian purpose in one's life.

The program is designed specifically for the laity. It includes studying the Old Testament in the first year, the New Testament the second year, church history the third year, and theology, ethics, ecumenism, and spiritual exercises in the fourth year. Participants from all four years meet together and exchange insights from their

individual readings with the guidance of a trained mentor.

Over the years, many of us at St. Andrew's have attended EfM classes and found them to be invaluable in our spiritual formation. This year Dorothy Howells and I have been meeting weekly at the Church of Our Redeemer, Lexington with a group of nine participants led by our mentors, Rector Kate Ekrem and parishioner Mary Ucci.

Dorothy is graduating this year after four years of study with EfM. She has been an inspiration to our former group in Wellesley, which is now in Lexington, and generously shared her gifts for understanding and interpreting our reading materials. We all congratulate Dorothy for her faithful work, as well congratulate Maryann Kurkjian of St. Paul's, Brookline, who studied at St. Andrew's for three years and will be graduating at Our Redeemer, having completed her fourth year.

We welcome new members for classes beginning in September. We meet weekly on Tuesday mornings throughout the school year. Commitments are for one year at a time.



Photo: Robert Brandt

Jewelry table at Bargain Haul 2015

# Hidden Treasures of Bargain Haul



Margaret Zusky

Every year in May St. Andrew's Church opens its doors to the community to welcome thousands of shoppers to our annual Bargain Haul. The treasure shoppers find amid all of the donated goods is legendary. Fellow parishioner Margaret Zusky's captured the spirit of the day recently in the Wellesley Townsman. Following is a shortened version of her article.

## These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

Stories abound of treasures uncovered at St. Andrew's Bargain Haul. Fondly remembered finds from past years are vintage cut-glass iced tea glasses, a pair of Italian handmade shoes in exactly the right size, a Wedgewood cream and sugar set with matching dessert plates, an engraved wedding band from 1906, a just-like-new navy blazer, fabulous ties for 50 cents, an interview-worthy suit, a Simon Pearce footed glass

bowl, a set of 6 silver salt dishes and spoons, a 1930s brass desk lamp, a great party dress, and a black trench coat discovered in The French Shop 10 years ago that is still going everywhere with the happy shopper.

Eclectic yet appreciated discoveries: an autographed Celtics basketball, a complete drum set, a fish fossil for a budding geologist, a travel tumbler with Disney princesses—"The Dream Team" sent off to college as a reminder of sisters back home, Christmas sweaters, and a fist-full of mink tails. Just imagine!

We have many shoppers who make Bargain Haul an annual shopping trip—there is an elderly woman from the Cape who comes every year to freshen her wardrobe for the whole next year who relies on the advice and consultation of our professional shopping team; another woman comes at the end for the bag sale (\$5 per bag) and loads up on clothes that she ships to families in need in Honduras; and it was exciting to help a family furnish their first apartment with everything for the kitchen, linens and pillows for the bedrooms, even toys and books for the kids.

This year St. Andrew's Bargain Haul raised a record \$33,000 plus! Proceeds of the day go directly to the church's operating budget, including a portion to ministries in Outreach, Christian Education, and Adult Formation. The treasures found during the day are countless.



Photo: Robert Brandt

Looking for treasures



Photo: Peter Lull

Workers Auction, 2015

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