

# Holy Communion Newsletter

*Teachings & Reflections*



*The Holy Scriptures:  
Hear, read, mark, learn,  
and inwardly digest them,  
that we may embrace and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life.*

(Common Prayer)

Spring 2022: *A publication of Holy Communion Anglican Church  
Reviewed by The Reverend Nathan Stomberg, Rector*

*The Mission  
of  
Holy Communion Anglican Church  
is to proclaim  
the Gospel of Jesus Christ  
and  
worship Him  
in  
Word and Sacrament.*

*Holy Communion Anglican Church  
is an autonomous  
Christian Congregation  
grounded in the  
Liturgical,  
Theological,  
and  
Ministerial Traditions  
of the  
Anglican Heritage.*

# *Join us for Holy Week Services!*

## **Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday**

April 10, 2022

Holy Eucharist: 5:00 p.m.

*“Blessed is the King  
who comes in the name of the Lord!”*  
(Luke 19:38)

## **Good Friday**

April 15, 2022

Good Friday Liturgy: 7:00 p.m.

*“And being found in human form, he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross.”*  
(Philippians 2:8)

## **The Great Vigil of Easter**

April 16, 2022

Holy Eucharist: 6:00 p.m.

*Alleluia! Christ is risen.  
The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

## **There is no Service on Easter Day**

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## **Church Cleanup**

**Sundays, March 20 and April 3 at 3:30 p.m.**

Many hands make light work! We will arrive at the Grange to do some light cleaning in our Worship space, kitchen and bathrooms. Some basic supplies will be provided, but we ask you to bring your favorite supplies if possible

# Moving Forward Through the Wilderness

The Rev. Nathan Stomberg

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This year my wife and I moved to the town of Scituate, Rhode Island. As anyone native to Rhode Island knows, this sleepy rural town is best known by its defining feature: the Scituate Reservoir. Since moving to Scituate, the history of the reservoir has fascinated me, particularly the intrigue and vast consequences of its construction.

The Scituate reservoir is the largest inland body of water in Rhode Island, with a capacity of roughly 39 billion US gallons, and covering 5.3 square miles. Construction began on the reservoir in 1915, and when it was finished in 1926, it was among the most technologically advanced dam systems in the country, and the only one of its kind in New England. One of the dams by my apartment, the Horseshoe Dam, was built in 1918 and holds 421 million gallons of water about fifteen feet deep. For its time and even to this day, the size and scope of the project is hard to comprehend, and its construction would take an incredible toll on the thousands of families who lived in Scituate.

The City of Providence claimed the watershed for the Scituate Reservoir by eminent domain because the growing city needed drinking water. Overall, 35% of Scituate's land mass was claimed. Over the decade it took to build the reservoir, from 1915 to 1925, over 1,195 buildings were destroyed. The demolition included hundreds of homes and barns, which were either burned down, torn down, or relocated. Seven schools were taken down, as well as six churches. In addition to homes, schools, and places of worship, countless people lost their livelihoods as well: ten general stores, six mills, thirty dairy farms, multiple post offices, ice houses, taverns, and fire stations. Entire cemeteries had to be relocated. When the Pawtuxet River was finally dammed to fill the reservoir, seven villages would be completely erased from the map: Kent, Richmond, South Scituate, Ashland, Saundersville, Ponagansett, and Rockland. Parts of Clayville and North Scituate were also lost.

Despite years of legal battles, the people of Scituate were powerless to stop the reservoir project. Thousands of families had no choice

but to leave their homes and relocate. The emotional toll of Scituate's exodus out of the watershed left scars which remain and define the town's character to this day. When the reservoir was constructed, the landscape and culture of Scituate were fundamentally changed forever. But the people had to move forward. There was no going back to the way things were before. I think we as a church can learn from their resilience.

In February 2022, Holy Communion Anglican Church faces a similar inflection point in her experience, as do all Biblically orthodox churches across the Western world. This inflection point is the realization that the landscape of our culture has utterly changed. Our comfortable Christian lives have been flooded and washed away, and we now find ourselves displaced, in a culture and a church we do not recognize. Now more than ever, we Western Christians find ourselves as strangers and sojourners wandering across a desert wilderness. Our challenge, if we wish to grow and do effective ministry into the future, is threefold. First, we must remember that God's people have always existed as pilgrims and sojourners in a foreign culture. Second, we must acknowledge the ever-changing cultural and demographic touchstones around us and understand how they will make the Church look different. And third, we must trust God moving forward into the wilderness, knowing the fundamentals of the Church Universal will never change: Pure doctrine; the Sacraments, administered according to Christ's holy institution; and the right use of church discipline.

### **Pilgrims and Strangers**

We read this promise in the 43rd chapter of the book of Isaiah:

**“Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”** (Isaiah 43:18-19)

In this passage, God offers comfort to His people through the prophet Isaiah, who makes a future-oriented address to the Jews in Babylonian exile. The take-away for Isaiah's audience, as well as us, is that God's power is never exhausted. Isaiah reminds the listener that God's deliverance did not end with the original Exodus out of Egypt, but in fact continues in a pattern of Exodus-like

deliverances, which we know culminates in Christ's deliverance for us on the Cross.

Yet, even though Christ's work is accomplished once and for all, the image of God's people delivered through the wilderness is still instructive for us today. In fact, Israel's repeated desert wanderings are descriptive of the life of anyone who seeks after God. The reality of life is that the way forward is always through the wilderness, and we have no control over that. The path forward in life is not always clear, and we do not get a say about it. Present circumstances may exhaust us, but we cannot always change them.

So, thanks be to God: When God calls us forward through the wilderness, though the path is unclear, He creates a way for us; When we find ourselves in the desert without relief, God refreshes us; When we are exhausted by the trials and calamities of this world, God's power to save is never exhausted.

Our responsibility is to trust this promise, and to follow the LORD where he leads us. Like Abraham when God called him forth, like Moses and the Israelites in Egypt, like the Israelites exiled in Babylon, we as God's people live as pilgrims and strangers this side of Heaven. And like our spiritual fathers before us, we face the temptation to mutter and complain, and to yearn for the "good old days" we once knew (see Numbers 13:2-3). But God does not call His people back into slavery in Egypt, he calls them forward into the desert, to deliver them into the promised land! The reality is that the nostalgia we have for the past is a mirage, and it is impossible to go back to the "way things were before." The changing circumstances of life outside of our control mean the world we live in today is different from the one we knew yesterday, like it or not!

### **The Church You Grew Up in No Longer Exists**

The dramatic disruption to daily life caused by Covid and the protracted government response has forced everyone to reckon with how much life has changed from the one we knew before 2020. In a very real sense, we have collectively undergone a process of mourning for a type of cultural innocence we once had (either real or imagined), free of the present political and economic challenges we now face. I recently encountered a poignant picture

on social media which I think encapsulates this complex present reality.

The picture in question is that of a young girl, perhaps 5 or 6 years old, standing in a large, grassy park in New York City. She has her hand to her face, looking wistfully into the distance beyond the camera. It is a hazy summer day, and there are people lounging in the grass behind her. The mood is both innocent and carefree. Yet the real subject of the picture is in the background, for behind the girl stands the old World Trade Center, both towers rising above the landscape. The picture is captioned, “The world you were raised in no longer exists.”

What so resonates about the picture is not the picture itself, but the reality it represents: a time of innocence cut short by tragedy, a time to which we can never return. But despite all our yearnings, we could not possibly re-build the rubble that was left behind from that national tragedy. The only thing we could do as a country was clean up, move forward, and build something new.

As a Church, we have a tough pill to swallow: It is worthless to try and “re-build” a church back to “the way things were before” – that cultural reality no longer exists. The church we were raised in no longer exists. Rather than forever chase the past, we must embrace the adventure God has set before us, and by His Holy Spirit seize the new opportunities for ministry that await.

### **A Once-and-Future Mode of Ministry**

An honest accounting of the world around us tells us that churches will look drastically different in the coming years than they ever have in our lifetimes. These drastic changes will be the result of the one-two punch of increased cultural opposition and the falling away of lukewarm Christians. Churches will be smaller and leaner, yet more financially and theologically engaged. Socially, Christianity in the West will become increasingly costly, so only the most serious Christians will endure. In most places, congregations of fifty or more will be considered large. These congregations, especially those with limited resources, will need to adopt the flexibility and resilience of the Church Militant throughout history, and indeed across the world today: firm in the face of state persecution, willing

and able to meet in unconventional places, and fiercely committed to passing on the Gospel to the next generation.

I firmly believe Holy Communion Anglican Church is well-positioned for this once-and-future mode of ministry. We have demonstrated this through our willingness to gather anywhere to worship God in Word and Sacrament, and our uncompromising commitment to Biblical Truth and Church Tradition. But our work is far from over; in fact, it is only beginning.

The pace of cultural change is rapidly accelerating. It is therefore pointless to try and mimic cultural trends for the sake of “relevance.” What is relevant now will be ancient history in a week. Take Facebook, for example. While many of us here may regard the behemoth social platform as a hub for the next generation, the reality is Facebook has long been replaced by Tik Tok as the “platform of choice” for anyone under the age of thirty. This is just one of many examples of how cultural trends change before our very eyes, without us even noticing.

At the same time, we must not blatantly disregard the innovations and cultural touchstones of generations to come. Like it or not, the public square is where we are called to spread the Gospel. We must engage it with wisdom and discernment, not retreat into our own echo chambers.

It is also important to recognize that our church will not revive herself. Only through the eager and obedient ministry of the faithful will there be any revival. This includes: the commitment to growing in the knowledge and stature of Jesus Christ through Word and Sacrament; the commitment to consistent weekly church attendance; the discipline of the 10% tithe as a baseline for Christian giving; sacrificing personal time for worship, instruction, and fellowship; and tirelessly inviting family, friends, and neighbors to share in our church community.

As we navigate the shifting realities of living in a post-Covid Western culture, an unwavering commitment to the above principles will stand out in stark contrast to the following cultural dynamics (which is by no means an exhaustive list):



First, the majority of people's lives are increasingly lived in virtual space. Not merely "virtual reality," but also through social media, remote work, virtual school, and online communities. In-person community will be the exception and not the norm. Our generations are starved for real community, and the Church must be willing and ready to provide it.

Second, the majority of people in the United States will soon have grown up in single parent or unmarried households. The nuclear family will therefore be both a superpower (for the God-ordained blessings it provides) and a cultural lightning rod (as the family unit is maligned by a hostile collectivist mindset).

Third, when the youngest generations among us come of age, they will be the most emotionally and developmentally scarred of any in our lifetimes. They have been abused sexually and psychologically through transgender and critical sexual ideology, and through the fetishization of mental illness. They have been abused emotionally and physically through forced masking and social isolation, which has robbed them of their childhoods. They will distrust every institution, because all have lied to them and sacrificed them on the altar of pride. These generations will also distrust themselves because they have been manipulated by adults for political gain their whole lives.

The Church must be ready to offer coming generations the healing and peace which only Christ can provide, through consistently and steadfastly speaking the truth, being slow to speak and quick to listen, affirming their dignity as made in God's image, loving them sacrificially, and welcoming the repentant into deep spiritual community.

### **The Need to Speak the Truth**

Indeed, the vision for ministry above only works if Christians are obedient to our duty to speak the truth in charity. Public discourse is now more than ever dictated by a socio-political monoculture. People are told not to believe their eyes when they observe the state of the world around them but are instead told to accept a pre-approved narrative. A church grounded in the simple realities of God's good creation and Natural Law, and willing to defend them,

will be an oasis in the desert to a silent population desperate for sanity and deeper meaning. These realities include:

- God created men and women different, with distinct but equally dignified roles. Likewise, men cannot become women and women cannot become men.
- Marriage and the family form the foundation of society.
- Parents know best how to raise their children.
- All people have dignity, from conception to natural death. This dignity extends to those of an opposite or even hostile political and ideological worldview.
- There is an objective moral truth, rooted in God's creation of the universe. Because truth is objective, the good, the true, and the beautiful are intrinsically linked, and Christians should live in a way that makes our love for the three evident and inviting to the world around us.
- True freedom, given by God, is the liberty to choose right over wrong. That freedom ceases to exist when the right becomes compulsory, or when the wrong is given full license. Freedom is rooted in love, for such is the way God loves us: we are neither forced to follow Christ, nor are we permitted to pursue the desires of the flesh without consequence. As the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen said, "Freedom does not mean the right to do whatever we please, but rather to do as we ought. The right to do whatever we please reduces freedom to a physical power and forgets that freedom is a moral power."
- Finally, true love for our neighbor supersedes fear of offense or risk to personal health. It is not loving to hide the truth from one who needs to hear it. Nor is it loving to deny someone personal liberty and freedom of conscience for the sake of avoiding illness and death. Christ sacrificed all out of love for us: "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)

## **Principles for 2022 and Beyond – Lively Faith & Christian Adventure**

In summary, our path forward in ministry is a call to lively faith. The Christian life calls us to so much more, not the same old thing, and not less. The Christian life requires so much more of us, not because we can accomplish anything by the might of our own hand, but because we eagerly and willingly offer ourselves to be used as God's instruments of salvation. We are called to adventure precisely because our lives are a journey to the ultimate standard of love, holiness, and sacrifice set forth by Christ, and what a journey it is, considering how far we start from Him!

Therefore, if we merely long to go back to our prior state, we are not following the path God has set before us. God has, and God will, make a way in the desert. To stay on that path requires discipline, now more than ever. Such discipline includes constant prayer, time set aside for personal study of Scripture, consistent church attendance, reverence in worship, and a willingness to linger in fellowship after. It includes discipline in the practice of a 10% tithe, an unwavering commitment to speaking the truth, and getting creative with how we minister to our friends, families, neighbors, and each other.

When the Scituate Reservoir was completed, it had immediate and long-lasting benefits for the State of Rhode Island. Over seven million evergreen trees were planted around the reservoir to protect and clean the surrounding environment. The twenty-eight islands within the reservoir have been home to bald eagles. But most importantly, today the Scituate Reservoir supplies over 60% of Rhode Island's clean drinking water. Without the reservoir, over half the state would not have clean water to drink. If the reservoir had not been built, Rhode Island would not have a proper water supply, and Scituate would remain a town of swamps and abandoned mills. Tragic though the circumstances were one hundred years ago, the reservoir project brought untold beauty and good to the state. Of course, the Scituate residents at the time did not know all that would come of the reservoir, but they had to move forward, nonetheless.

The same is true for God's people. At the end of the Genesis account of Joseph, he shares these words of comfort to his brothers after the death of their father, Jacob:

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.’” (Genesis 50:19-20)

Joseph was once captured by his jealous brothers, beaten, and sold into servitude in Egypt. But after reuniting with his brothers, Joseph knew that God had ordained all the evil that had been done to him and used it to bring great good to others. Joseph rose in favor with Pharaoh by his prophecy and came to power in Egypt. Then Joseph multiplied Egypt's blessings during the seven years of plenty. When the seven years of famine came, the resources Joseph set aside saved countless lives, including those of his own family, whom he was eager to bless.

As a church, we must not give in to the temptation to despair. Yes, our lives do not look the way we imagined them. Yes, we see the multiplication of evil in the world around us. But God is greater than all our fears and concerns, and He has ordained our present circumstances to carry out His good purposes.

The way forward does not lead us back into Egypt, nor back into Jerusalem, nor back into Babylon, nor back to the large, affluent, socially relevant congregations of our past. Yes, God can bring an increase of people and resources – and we pray for such revival in His Universal Church. But as with the Israelites, the world where we once worshipped no longer exists. The way forward is only through the wilderness, through the desert. And God will make a highway and a river to lead us, but it is our responsibility to follow him and not go astray. Thus, it is not about your way or my way, but about God's way. May Holy Communion Anglican Church in 2022 and beyond be faithful to follow God's way, wherever it may lead.

# WHAT WE ARE FOR

The Rev. Mark R. Galloway, BA, ThM, MA, STM

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On both our church's website and Facebook page you will find the following concerning our Congregation's theological identity and mission:

*Holy Communion Anglican Church:  
STANDING FIRM on Biblical Truth and Church Tradition.*

*We are an independent Christian Congregation grounded in the Anglican tradition. Our mission is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ and worship Him in Word and Sacrament.*

*Join us for Christ-centered worship and trusted teaching that cuts against the grain of woke culture.*

Committed as we claim to “Christ-centered worship and trusted teaching that cuts against the grain of woke culture,” we know by moral conviction what we are up against at Holy Communion Anglican Church: Transgenderism, the Woke revolution, the Cancel culture movement, etc., etc., etc. But what are we FOR as a Congregation? Indeed, this is a most important (and even urgent) question, for the power of “yes” is always greater than that of “no.”

As I have personally pondered that question, here are some thoughts as to what I believe we should aspire to affirm as an orthodox Christian Congregation “STANDING FIRM on Biblical Truth and Church Tradition.”

*The Triune God's authority is a blessing for the Church Universal.* From our founding, Holy Communion Anglican Church has defended the Holy Scriptures as being the rule and ultimate standard of the Christian Faith, defended orthodoxy in doctrine, dignity in liturgy, and depth in devotion, as is all codified in the venerable tradition of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. We do so with the great confidence that walking in the way of Our Lord Jesus Christ brings true happiness to the human soul. We are not a community of Believers who grind our teeth and force ourselves to dutifully obey the Word of God. Ours is a joyful Faith.

In the years to come, Holy Communion Anglican Church shall continue to bear uncompromising witness to the Good News. We in the Congregation have a shared conviction that the secular conceit of man's self-sufficiency (see Jeremiah 17:5) demoralizes the human spirit and ultimately dehumanizes all people. To expectantly respond to Christ's call to follow Him daily and carry our respective crosses (Matthew 16:24) prepares us as a church to engage in the fulfillment of His collective plan for us – the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), that is, to make disciples of all we meet.

*Truth and beauty are a gift from the Triune God and are meant to be enjoyed.* We live in an immensely political time in history, within which partisan (and uncharitable) hysteria threatens to wipe away the magnificent achievements of Western Civilization. A vast majority of secular universities and colleges have allowed radical political activism to take sole possession of the humanities, social sciences, and in many cases even the natural sciences. And liberal “Christian” seminaries have long ago forfeited historical biblical orthodoxy. Everything, for the “Progressive” (Marxist) ideologues, must be tossed into their (falsely claimed) great cause of social justice.

This mentality rejects Christian contemplation, which produces in us a gratefulness of what we, by God's grace, learn and study, rather than using it as a tool to pound out an ungodly political agenda. Holy Communion Anglican Church resists this latter temptation. Whether it's Saint John Chrysostom (c.347-407), Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), blessed Richard Hooker (1554-1600), blessed C. S. Lewis (1898-1963), the Venerable Servant of God Fulton J. Sheen (1895-1979), blessed John Stott (1921-2011), or the incomparable Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI (b. 1927) – among many other of the faithful across the course of two-thousand years – we seek to take the measure of the great touchstones of our Christian culture (“Biblical Truth and Church Tradition”) – and to be measured by them.

An immeasurable “treasure in earthen vessels” (2 Corinthians 4:7) is at stake in today's cultural and political social civil war (both inside the Church and out). But true regenerate Christians who walk as “children of the light” (Ephesians 5:8) refuse to capitulate to “the way of the wicked [which] is [ultimately] doomed” (Psalm 1:6). We

endeavor to stand in awe and wonder at the infinite majesty of the Triune God and in the magnificence of His created order (the entire universe) and of all nature, as well as in the great works of Christian and classical art, literature, history, philosophy, true scientific discovery, and orthodox Christian theology: “Taste and see that the LORD is good” (Psalm 34:8).

*A conservative outlook, widely understood, is what we must pursue.* Since the end of World War II, the progressive outlook has incrementally taken hold of the Western world. Our most pressing current social and political problems stem from the disintegration and dissolution of the once solid foundations of a robust Judeo-Christian culture: the centrality of marriage between a biological man and a biological woman, the nuclear family as the essential unit of a functioning society, the local faith community as the cultural center of identity, the integral coherence of the Judeo-Christian moral life, and a nation that truly believes all our rights and true freedom come from the Creator Himself and not from a governmental edict. Today, all these things have nearly fallen completely apart.

“Conservatism” (from a traditional Christian perspective) honors, preserves, and renews the authority of Natural Law and the Sacred Scriptures, which have been the glue that have held a functionary free capitalist society together in this land for the past 246 years. We know that in 2022, we need as a church to be defending the sacramental Rite of Holy Matrimony, encourage married couples to want to joyfully give birth to children, strive to restore the proper place of biblical morality, and do our part to renew our national covenant with the “Creator” – “Nature’s God” -- who has “endowed” us “with certain unalienable Rights,” including those of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” (see The Declaration of Independence). Doing this, of course, means speaking boldly of the immutable fact of the Natural Law and the orders of all creation. It means always using an unapologetically biblical vocabulary. It means proclaiming faithfully the true Gospel which “cuts against the grain of woke culture” – not with self-righteous arrogance, but with a certain confidence that comes from the knowledge that our Christian witness harkens us to a higher calling than just being the citizens of a free, massively prosperous country of incomprehensible military power.

Our greatest challenge in 2022 and beyond as a Congregation and as Christians in general is twofold: addressing modern people's preoccupation with the management of their own inner psychological state and individuals who simultaneously always attempt to achieve "happiness" without the acknowledgement of the existence "Nature's God" – He alone who can give any larger significance or purpose to human life.

"Progressives" who (falsely) claim to be followers of the Nicene Creed make the conscious decision to sponge off the secular system for their own self-comfort. Refusing to face the facts or tell the hard truths of what is really going on – and that is what one day will be figuratively inscribed across their headstones. In a subtext it could also be added that they died from a lack of integrity. It seems to me to be fitting to quote here from the Venerable Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen: "It is a characteristic of any decaying civilization that the great masses of the people are unconscious of the tragedy. Humanity in a crisis is generally insensitive to the gravity of the times in which it lives."

Holy Communion Anglican Church is firmly grounded in the Truth that endures. We join in the battle for the soul of contemporary society with the confidence that it is the Triune God who oversees the Church Universal's victories and her setbacks. This confidence allows us to see clearly and speak boldly of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2) during such turbulent times.

Now is the time for us with a new vigor to marshal our gifts and talents for the glory of God. We must stand up for "Biblical Truth and Church Tradition." For if souls are not worth saving, then nothing is. That is WHAT WE ARE FOR.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.*

*For God did not send his Son into the world  
to condemn the world, but in order that the world  
might be saved through him."*

(John 3:16-17)



# Let Us Raise a Standard

Deacon Doug Stomberg

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In 1787, George Washington reluctantly presided over the Constitutional Convention, also known as the Federal Convention, held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania from May 25 to September 17. Washington had to be convinced to preside, for he longed to retire to Mt. Vernon, and he did not want to be perceived as grasping for power.

George Washington would seldom participate in debates, however during the course of the Convention, suggestions would be watered down by compromisers. One day Washington stood up and rebuked with the statement,

*“If, to please the people, we offer what we ourselves disapprove, how can we afterward defend our work? Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair; the event is in the hand of God.”*

In contemplation of George Washington’s statement, does it not apply to aspects of our lives, in church, at work and at home?

We have seen in our current time, the decay of large church denominations and American institutions because of compromise. The Episcopal and Methodist churches have become apostate, the Boy Scouts of America is now something other, and the “Woke” movement has infected the military and professional sports.

What is the standard for the follower of Jesus Christ? The answer may be easy. The application of the answer, not so easy.

The standard for us is the Holy Bible and the Gospel within, the keeping of God’s Commandments, the saving Grace that comes from Jesus’ work on the cross, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. This is the standard to be held up. Self-discipline will be needed for it not to be compromised.

Consider the support of scripture the Apostle Paul gives to Timothy. It is a true endorsement of the true standard.

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

Not only do we, as followers of Christ, raise up Scripture as a standard, but we raise up Christ himself. We must be like Peter with his confession (Matthew 16:14-16). We must proclaim who Jesus is, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Because we are human and broken, application of Scripture can be difficult. The secular culture will surely belittle followers of Christ if we should fall from the standard.

Saint James warns us of the condemnation due to compromise.

*“But above all, my brothers, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath, but let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation.”* (James 5:12)

Also, Saint Paul gives the church in Philippi advice on behavior.

*“Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.”* (Philippians 2:14-16)

We will sin. We cannot help ourselves. Our self-discipline is not foolproof. And when we do sin, the Pagans, the Secularists, and those on the Left will pounce. And there are those who are on the side of evil, who not only get enjoyment in exposing the shortcomings of the righteous, but more so, to discredit them. They must place doubt on the truth, for the truth is not compatible with the objectives of the Left. However, believers in Jesus Christ can lean on the Gospel. Repentance and humility are good. Taking responsibility for our actions is good. The apostle John gives assurance in his letter (1 John) to churches possibly in the area of Ephesus.

*“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”* (1 John 2:1-3)

May this be the message our foes receive upon seeing our light, for maybe they too will come to know Jesus Christ the Righteous!

To my church family and fellow Christians, continue in prayer and brotherly love.

# Forming the Moral Conscience of the Faithful in an un-Christian Age

The Rev. Mark R. Galloway, BA, ThM, MA, STM

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The unremitting preaching of “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) shines a light, since the Fall in the Garden (Genesis 3), on mankind’s central predicament: our critical need for a personal relationship with the LORD God Almighty; a need which is concealed by the distractions and temptations of this morally broken world.

Perhaps in times past, it was easier to find that transcendence – but “there [really] is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9). Yet today, American society is certainly far more secular than it has ever been in its history, and Marxist opponents of religion in general (and especially of biblically orthodox Christianity in particular) are far more aggressive in their unceasing desire to thoroughly eliminate it from the public square.

The refusal to “shrink [back] from declaring” (Acts 20:27) the Holy Scriptures as being the rule and ultimate standard of the Christian Faith offers relief from the forceful polemics of our polarized society with the enduring Truth “of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). Such commitment and courage provide reasoned arguments in defense of the said Gospel, and the strengthening of the Baptized, who gather to share in Our Lord’s great gift of his real presence in His very Body and Blood in the communal celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Never has there been a greater need for this sacred gathering in our lifetimes.

As secular society claims more and more territory all around us, Holy Communion Anglican Church calmly asserts that immutable truths emanate from the Triune God’s revelation of Himself in Holy Writ – the immutable truths that should be shaping the boundaries of the civil government’s discourse.

Here is the simple fact of it: Many American Believers, including some of our most prominent “Christian” leaders across the denominational spectrum, assume that we live in a country that (in

reality) no longer exists – at least, not in the fairytale form they imagine. Meteoric demographic, technological, legal, and cultural changes have transformed the United States since the end of World War II into a different nation from the one that preceded it. But the “delusion” of America as a religious (even as a biblically grounded “Christian”) nation persists. And this belief lingers strongest among millions of still practicing Christians of the so-called Baby Boomer Generation (born between 1946 to 1964) – the last demographic cohort that still has a reasonably accurate knowledge of the facts of the founding of the American Republic (having learned actual civics while in public school!). Members of this age group are now between the ages of 76 and 58 and are dying off with the inevitable greater frequency. Most importantly, for the purposes of this article, Baby Boomers are the people most actively committed to their religious and moral convictions and their faith communities.

I was born on February 28, 1964. Thus, I am literally among the last of the Boomers to have come into this world. Having said that, I know the following to be true:

1. The America I came of age in has rapidly evaporated and in most places is already gone.
2. Regenerate Baby Boomers must comprehend that the old world has passed away, just as the once mighty Roman and British Empires did. Regarding this second point, perhaps the actual symbolic day and ceremony have not occurred, but the stage has been set and the play is almost over. Therefore, whatever is good and “worthy of praise” and “whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable” (Philippians 4:8), must now be snatched up and preserved -- the orthodox Christian Faith itself being the most important of all. This is the conversation that must now dominate in the homes and lives of Baby Boomer Believers.
3. The Triune God will never abandon those who are faithful.

As the number of the Baby Boomers still alive are precipitously in decline and our Christian practice diminishes, so does the influence of biblical moral thought upon our land. The “common good” for

the modern progressive Marxist is ever so different from that of the Christian Baby Boomer. Indeed, no true “common good” can exist without an understanding of who and why the human person exists in the first place, and what defines the proper destiny for the soul of mankind. American culture, in the name of individual autonomy, now overwhelmingly orders itself against any such traditional (biblical) defining narrative. This, of course, has immeasurable civic implications, because dominant political control always builds new models of (oppressive) human anthropology.

Hence, the most important vocation for the Church Universal today is to have a laser focus on forming a new generation of faithful disciples of Jesus – “to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). A vibrant generation, born in this century, who shall effectively and joyfully give witness to their Christian Faith into a decimated cultural environment that is beyond pagan in its perspectives. C. S. Lewis once stated, the pagans of antiquity at least had a sense of an enchanted world and the supernatural realities behind it. The self-described “post-Christian” Marxists of today lack even that.

This is what we can do. Convert society gradually from within, one person and one community at a time, with no explicit political intentions. That happened once after Constantine’s famous Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. – which legalized the practice of Christianity within the Roman Empire. It can happen again. The same challenge of conversion presents itself today, but, because the supernatural dimension of life is virtually removed from the modern imagination, with an added and serious obstacle. Restoring it is the work of a new generation of leaders in the Church. Forming and sustaining that generation is the work (the final sprint to the finish) of the last of us Baby Boomers – educating their minds and consciences and inspiring them to be the divine agents of the Master. This task is the emphatic and necessary work of Holy Communion Anglican Church and every other orthodox assembly of Christians in America at this moment of history.

# Where is Your Heart this Lent?

The Rev. Nathan Stomberg

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We receive this warning from Jesus in the Gospel passage for Ash Wednesday: “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19-21)

I have preached before about our proclivity to accumulate junk in our lives. In the United States we are shamefully effective at hoarding up possessions in our homes, most of it useless! But while Jesus’ words do apply to our physical treasure, there is a much deeper reality I encourage us to reflect on this Lenten season. The deeper reality we are dealing with is also the conclusion to Jesus’ warning: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). The question for us to ponder on Ash Wednesday, as we enter our Lenten journey, is, “Where is your heart?”

When the Biblical authors refer to the heart, they do not mean the organ inside your chest. Instead, the heart refers to one’s innermost thoughts, emotions, and desires. More so than the junk we own, our innermost affections are what draw us closer to God or drive us away from Him. Our actions bear witness to that which we desire most. When we desire God, when we rely upon Him, when we trust in His Son to save us and sustain us, then we will seek to cultivate our relationship and draw nearer to Him. On the other hand, when we lack discipline in prayer and Bible study and worship, when we lust after the desires of the flesh, when we pursue pride and personal gain, then we turn away from God and move farther from Him. Like any relationship, our love for the Lord will only grow stronger if we practice. Yet we spend ninety-nine percent of our time practicing the wrong things.

The choices we make everyday shape us and mold us, down to the most mundane of decisions. When we act, we practice. What we practice, we get better at. And when we practice an action over a long period of time, it becomes a habit. This is true of sports,

playing an instrument, speaking a language, or learning a new game. This is also true of what we consume - not with our mouths, but with our eyes, our ears, and our hearts. Our attention is a limited resource, and when we give something our attention, we are training our brain to say, "this thing is valuable." What we watch, and what we choose not to watch; what we listen to and choose not to listen to; what we read and choose not to read - all of it shapes and forms our heart. We are practicing what we love.

Take marriage for example: As a husband, if you do not spend any time with your wife, will you ever grow any closer to her? If you do not talk to her, will you ever learn more about each other? The answer is no! What if, when you got home from work, instead of embracing her and asking how her day went, you hopped on your phone and spent hours looking at other women online? That would be awful, and you would be actively undermining your relationship! Beloved, we regularly treat our relationship with Jesus Christ the exact same way.

What we practice reinforces what we desire. And in our Western culture, we are trained to consume. What do we reach for when we first wake up in the morning? Our phone. What do we look at while we eat breakfast, lunch, or dinner? Our phone. When we get a break at work, or there is a commercial on television, or we are waiting in line at the store, or we realize we have been alone with our thoughts for two whole minutes, what do we look at? Our phone! It could be videos, podcasts, radio, social media, print media, or television that we consume. The bottom line is so much of our lives is dominated by media consumption. And the more we practice, the better we get at it. We are training our hearts to say the thing on our screen is more valuable than time spent with God.

Of course, you can replace smartphones with pretty much any modern vice in this example, but the phone is by far the most prevalent. This is because we are easily addicted to anything which draws us out of our present reality. (And it is no secret that reality is not going so well right now.) Our addiction to escapism is further fueled by the fact that our modern lives are so incredibly isolated from the reality of death. We have been blessed to see our life expectancy double in the United States over the last 150 years (from

39 years in 1860, to 78 years in 2020) - but on the other side of that coin, we are now so insulated from death, that we pretend as if we are going to live this life forever. And now, when we get even the tiniest reminder of our own mortality, we have a total meltdown.

The Psalmist understood the human condition when he prayed to God, “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.” (Psalm 119:37)

When we give our attention to worthless things, we are robbing God of that same attention. Not that God needs our attention, but that we abandon His ways, and we allow our relationship with Him to wither. We give our attention to that which we value most at that moment in time. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

By God’s Grace, Mother Church provides us with the season of Lent every year to hit the reset button on all those sins which “cling so closely” to us (Hebrews 12:1). Our observance of Ash Wednesday is in fact the antithesis of every self-consumed moment we have every other day of the year. We have a lot of practice consuming spiritual junk food and filling our hearts with gunk; Lent gives us the perfect opportunity to begin practicing those disciplines which re-order our desires and put us on the path to holiness: prayer, fasting, self-denial, and reading and meditating on God’s holy Word.

When we receive the imposition of ashes, we hear these words: “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” These words allude to Psalm 103, which we just read: “[The LORD] remembers that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:14). How far these words are from our modern-day cult of self-worship! What we pray for on Ash Wednesday is nothing short of a total transformation of our hearts: We ask for the ashes to be a sign of our mortality (a reminder that we will die) and of our penitence (that only by Christ’s merits and death do we receive eternal life). The ashes remind us that we are sinners in need of a savior.

Like those in Scripture who themselves repented in dust and ashes, Lent can mark a turning point in our own spiritual journey. Consider: what things does our heart treasure, and do they bring us closer to God, or pull us away from Him? We therefore have this



opportunity to lay aside the weight of sin and begin anew the disciplines of holiness. You know what your weights are - why not put them down? Seriously, what are we afraid of? What is the worst that could happen if we used our phone less, watched less television, read less news, and read the Bible and prayed more? My guess is, we are afraid of confronting the terror of our own mortality without the anesthesia of digital sedatives. So we instead choose to no longer be present in our lives.

Of course, this fear is itself a self-deception of which we must confess. For our God is mighty to save, and through faith in His Son our Savior Jesus Christ, He pardons all those who truly repent.

As we explored in our church vision for 2022 and beyond, true change requires us to journey through the wilderness. Perhaps new spiritual discipline is a wilderness for us this year. But Christ is inviting us to join Him in the wilderness these forty days, and by His power we can overcome temptation. Beloved, if our treasures are on this earth, we will never follow Him. Let us examine our hearts, put down our weights, and pick up our cross. *Amen.*

*I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church,  
to the observance of a holy Lent,  
by self-examination and repentance;  
by prayer, fasting, and self-denial;  
and by reading and meditating  
on God's holy Word.*

(Common Prayer)



*prayer · fasting · almsgiving*

## Prayers for Holy Week

*Almighty God, ...*

... whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace.

... by the Passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life: Grant us so to glory in the Cross of Christ, that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ.

... whose blessed Son our Savior gave his body to be whipped and his face to be spit upon: Give us grace to accept joyfully the sufferings of the present time, confident of the glory that shall be revealed.

... we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

(Common Prayer)

# Stabat Mater

At the cross her vigil keeping, stood the mournful  
mother weeping, where he hung, the dying Lord:  
there she waited in her anguish, seeing Christ in  
torment languish, in her heart the piercing sword.

With what pain and desolation, with what grief  
and resignation, Mary watched her dying son.  
Deep the woe of her affliction, when she saw  
the crucifixion of the sole-begotten one.

Him she saw for our salvation  
mocked with cruel acclamation,  
scourged, and crowned with thorns entwined;  
saw him then from judgment taken, and in death  
by all forsaken, till his spirit he resigned.

Who, on Christ's dear mother gazing,  
pierced by anguish so amazing,  
born of woman, would not weep?  
Who, on Christ's dear mother thinking,  
such a cup of sorrow drinking,  
would not share her sorrows deep?

Jesus, may her deep devotion  
stir in me the same emotion,  
Fount of love, Redeemer kind;  
that my heart fresh ardor gaining,  
and a purer love attaining,  
may with thee acceptance find.

# HOLY COMMUNION ANGLICAN CHURCH

*meeting at the*

Rocky Hill Grange  
1340 S. County Trail  
East Greenwich, RI

*The Reverend Nathan Stomberg, Rector*

website: [holychommunionri.org](http://holychommunionri.org)

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## Sunday Worship

Holy Communion	5:00 p.m.
Adult Education	6:30 p.m.

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*“Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man  
and drink his blood, you have no life in you.”*

(John 6:53)