



# The Beacon

May 2015

St. Christopher's  
Community Church  
7902 Steamboat  
Island Road NW  
Olympia, WA 98502

(360) 866-2111  
office@stchristopher  
olympia.org

**Sunday Worship  
and  
Sunday School  
10:30 am**

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## Pastor's Page—

### Inclusiveness and Exclusiveness: Defining an Identity of Welcome

You may or may not be aware:

St. Christopher's has a purpose and values statement. It says:

#### Our Purpose:

***St. Christopher's lives, shares, celebrates, and grows in the transformative and inclusive love of God through Christ.***

#### Our Values:

- 1. Jesus is the center of our community and shows us who God is.***
- 2. God's empowering love offers renewal each day.***
- 3. The diversity of all life is a gift of God.***
- 4. Created by God, we are connected to all of God's creation.***
- 5. Questions are part of a living faith.***
- 6. The Spirit moves all to share their gifts.***

As you can see 'inclusiveness' is a significant part of who we are, and rightfully so. Part of the Biblical Gospel witness is that God has turned us from creatures into servants, from servants into friends, and from friends into children and heirs of the Household of God. Each of those transitions offers an opportunity to be more exclusive, to cull the herd and make a hierarchy of status. But God does not do that. In fact, everyone is a creature and all who choose may become servants of God, friends, and children of God. If there is any exclusion here, it is not God's, but of our own making. Simply put, we can choose not to be included.

So if God is so inclusive, does that mean that God's inclusion is limitless? Can we attribute exclusiveness to God at all? Yes. An essential understanding of Christianity is that our existence is not as it should be. Tragedy, shame, betrayal, cruelty, hate, vengeance, addiction, illness, murder, genocide and a host of other things we call evil fill our world. Christian belief is founded

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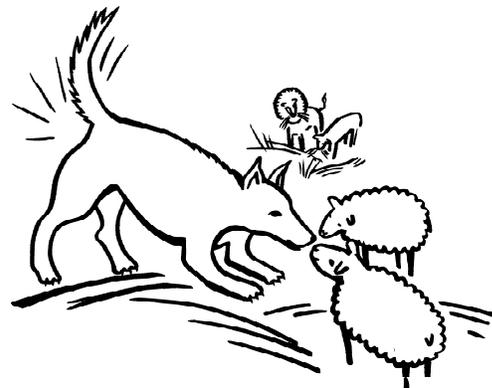
*Pastor's Page cont.*

on a hope that there will be a time when these are separated from our existence. The Realm of Heaven cannot be paradise with these things present. Heaven necessitates their exclusion.

What the inclusivity of God means is that anyone and everyone is welcome to God's family. The caveat is that we all must learn to accept that God is also exclusive. Although evil resides within us, God does not accept that as a permanent situation. We may begin our time in God's household with selfishness, grudges, prejudice, racism, arrogance or pride, but God is purging the household of these things. Why? Because ultimately, evil and sin divide us. They make us exclude God and one another. The inclusiveness of God

**Questions for reflection:** How can I mirror God's inclusiveness of others and God's exclusiveness towards evil? How will I show God's inclusive Gospel of love and grace to those who are leading others in the opposite direction? Consider the Biblical stories of Jesus and Judas Iscariot, Jesus and Peter, and the Early Church and Saul/Paul.

-Fr. James+



*"...he wants us to feel more ease in our souls and more at peace in love, rejoicing in him and no longer considering all the tumults which might keep us from the truth..."*

*- Julian of Norwich, A Revelation of Love*

## **Three Reasons Why It's Hard to Read Your Bible Regularly**

By Daniel Hames

From the earliest years of your Christian life— whether as a child raised in a Christian home, or as somebody brought to faith and disciplined in a church group— you will have been told how important it is to read your Bible regularly. You decided to try some sort of Bible read through and set to reading four chapters a day. Early zeal meant you tore through the Gospels and enjoyed the drama of Genesis, but before long you ran into rock solid Romans, or life-draining Leviticus. You missed a few days out, and then... well, it's been a while since you found the will to pick your Bible up again.

Every now and then, first thing in the morning and last thing at night, you see it on your bedside table and it stares you out. It's at these times that other things tend suddenly to grab your attention. 'I really ought to mow the lawn!', 'I never did write that thank you card to Aunt Daisy!'. 'Wouldn't it be lovely to bake some bread?' It's so easy to drop reading the Bible down the list of priorities just a little bit, and never get around to it. Why is that? There are three very common reasons, and they all have solutions that aren't so much to do with how well disciplined you are, but more about the way you think about the Bible. The first reason isn't even really a proper reason, so we'll start with that one and get it out of the way.

### **1. You don't have time**

This may be the most common 'reason' we give to explain to ourselves why we've not read the Bible for a while: events of the day got on top of me, my feet have hardly touched the ground, I overslept. Yet of course this isn't a serious reason for missing out on the scriptures. We all make time for what we believe we need, and we certainly make time to do what we want! Life is rarely too busy to surf the Internet, watch the television, or go to the pub. The fact is that our priorities reveal what we truly value, and the 'not enough time' excuse is most likely a cover-up of one of the two reasons below. So if this first one is you, admit it's nothing more than an excuse and read on!

## **2. You think the Bible is about you**

The first is that deep down, you feel your Bible reading isn't 'working'- and it's really because you read the Bible with your eyes on yourself. As you read it, you're looking for practical lessons on life, instructions on how to behave, and commands to go away and do right now. And you find that the Bible doesn't provide these particularly well!

It's hardly the best 'how to' guide for life: it's full of ancient history, genealogies, instructions for priests and kings, bizarre-sounding visions, and precious little in the way of direct instructions to you, the reader. Even in the New Testament where things seem a little easier to apply to you, vast chunks go by without a word on how to live! The whole of Acts passes without even one command to go and do evangelism like Paul did; Romans takes 11 long chapters to get to any application.

This can be immensely frustrating for us at times as we often want some moral guidance so that we can take whatever nugget of wisdom we need for the day, and get going with life. This will lead us to ignore the 'boring' bits, allegorize and twist the difficult bits, and generally stick to our favorite bits. We focus on what we think will directly apply to us, and generally avoid instructions about the tabernacle, minor prophets, and anything about numbers of people in tribes.

The solution to this problem is to see that the Bible is about Jesus and not us. The solution is to take our eyes off ourselves and begin to look at Jesus in the Bible. Despite all that our hearts would have us believe, the Bible isn't a book given to dole-out moral lessons, but a book given to us to teach us about Christ so that we can delight in him. If you've found yourself treating the Bible as a moral 'how to' guide, your next move is to start reading it differently. Let the Bible show you the glory and beauty of Jesus, and you will find that as you do, love for him will bubble-up inside. Believe it or not, *"Three Reasons" cont.*

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you will see him held-out to you in even the obscure passages you've always avoided. You will find that far from dutifully going to the Bible for handy hints for the day, you will gladly run to it so that Christ will conquer your heart afresh; so that you will take your gaze off yourself and obsess over him instead.

### **3. You think your Bible reading is for God's benefit**

Everyone will be familiar with this situation: you've been going strong with your Bible reading, enjoying it and feeling your love for the Lord grow. But something comes up (perhaps opportunity for a Saturday morning lie in) and you miss a day. Somehow the next day gets dropped too and, before you know it, it's been a week. Maybe two or three. The feeling you get isn't a stomach-rumbling or a dry throat; not a spiritual hunger or thirst. It's a nagging guilt which tells you that if you really cared about God then you would have read the Bible, that you really should have finished Jeremiah by now. The flipside of this feeling is, of course, a sense of satisfaction (dare you admit it, a smug satisfaction) when you do read the Bible, especially when you manage a whole book in one go. You think, 'I'm obviously maturing as a Christian!', and are tempted to drop into conversations that, 'Yes, I was in Ezekiel 47 this morning. Marvelous chapter!'

The diagnosis for you is that you imagine your Bible reading to be doing God a favor. The crushing guilt you feel when you miss it is your heart telling you God is displeased, and the slightly haughty contentment you feel when knocking out five chapters instead of your usual four is your heart telling you that God is now smiling on you.

The solution is to recognize and live in God's grace. You are eternally loved and accepted by the Father because of Jesus. He and he alone is the reason that sinful people can relate to God at all; as we find ourselves in him we are adorned with his status and standing before his Father. That is the heart of our salvation and the ongoing reality that dominates the Christian life. To imagine that regularity with which we read our Bible can in any way augment or diminish this in some way is to totally misunderstand our very salvation! Missing a quiet time could never

change God's gracious love for us! If you have thought this way, you must realize that you're cheapening what you have been given in Christ and attempting to wrestle back from the Jesus the great burden of pleasing God. Give it back and pick up your Bible- it's much lighter!

In this context the Bible is given to us as a gift to feast on, rather than a project to complete before judgment day. We will find we go to it to savor and enjoy, and when we miss a day we might feel hunger pangs, but we could never feel guilt, fear, or condemnation. In the same way that skipping breakfast is more of a missed opportunity than a morally dubious choice; not going to the scriptures for nourishment is not a matter of calling down the anger of God, but of omitting to take advantage of his good gifts to his children.

### Conclusion



The Bible has been given to us to help us know and love Christ. Our Father is generous and loving, and loves to communicate with us; the Spirit has inspired the scriptures so that they bring life, joy, and fullness to the Christian walk. If you have misunderstood or abused the Bible up until now, making it about you and your efforts, simply look to Jesus instead: the One of whom the Bible speaks, and the One on whom your salvation rests. Read it to love and trust him more.

*This article was originally published under the title "Three Reasons Why You Don't Read Your Bible" on the Theology Network website located at <http://www.theologynetwork.org/bible-reading/three-reasons-why-you-dont-read-your-bible.htm> . The author, Daniel Hames trained for ordination at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. He has degrees in Theology and Ecclesiastical History, and is a Theology Network Associate Staff Worker for UCCF.*

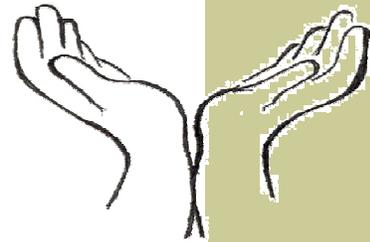
**The Buzz—****What's happening behind the scenes at St. Christopher's**

- **Blueberry Bash:** We have begun initial planning. We have hired a band. We are still in need of 3 coordinators, one each for Food, Activities, and Promotion/Signs.
- **Volunteers:** The Volunteer Connections Committee has met for the second time. They will be making assignments for coffee hour soon, including an option to opt out. Someone will contact you.
- **Stewardship:** The newly formed Stewardship Committee has met for the first time. They are making plans for our Fall Pledge Dive and Ingathering. They are also formulating ideas for year-round stewardship teaching and opportunities. We are seeking more members for this committee.
- **Baptisms:** Jasper Kolb and his father Damien will be baptized at the Vigil of Pentecost, May 23rd at 3pm. This liturgy will be held at the Kolb home, and is open to the entire congregation.
- **Vestry Council:** The Vestry Council and Fr. James met this last month with a facilitator to create a Mutual Ministry Agreement. This agreement identifies working expectations and goals. The three goals for the next 12 months are:
  - ⇒ Gather inside data to inform 2nd service (Such as survey to congregation)
  - ⇒ Develop marketing strategies to communicate about St. C. (Including branding and identifying places to outreach with)
  - ⇒ Fun youth (middle & high) activities (one summer / one winter ) - like hiking, picnic, camping, boating, bowling, sledding, skating)
- The Building Committee continues its work on a new sewer and a new well.
- The Open Hands Food Bank Garden is in full swing, meeting weekly at 5:30pm on Wednesdays.
- Becky Finn has given notice and will be leaving her position as Office Manager. She will be assuming a full time job in the communications field. We are currently seeking candidates for the Office Manager position.

### **Open Hands Food Bank Garden**

**Every Wednesday—5:30 p.m.**

Come help with the gardening that provides fresh fruit and veggies for our food bank families. We are in need of donations of gardening tools that are in decent condition: shovels, forks, hoes, trowels, etc.



*Please contact Bill Hanna for more information.*

### **Safeguarding God's Children:**

Safeguarding God's Children is the Episcopal Church's child abuse prevention program, and it is required for all staff, Vestry, and volunteers who work with children. There are 2 opportunities coming up:

**Saturday, May 9, 2015—9:00am - 12:30pm at St. Timothy, Chehalis**

1826 SW Snively, Chehalis

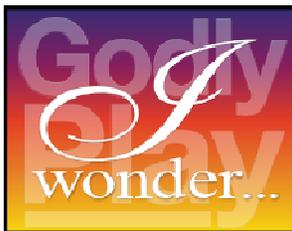
To RSVP please contact John Long at 360 245 3388 or

jmlong10@centurytel.net

**Saturday, May 30—9:00am - 1:30pm at St. Benedict's, Lacey**

Registrations either by email, [sbechurch@gmail.com](mailto:sbechurch@gmail.com), or phone at

(360) 456-2240.



### **Godly Play Training for Sunday**

**School Teachers:**

**Friday, May 29—6:00-9:00 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 1515 Harrison Ave NW, Olympia**

We are partnering with Gloria Dei Lutheran Church to provide this training for anyone interested in teaching Sunday School. A potluck dinner will be held beforehand at 4:00 p.m. Attendance is free and childcare will be provided. Please RSVP with the St. Christopher's office.



### May Youth Events

#### Youth Group

St. Christopher's Youth Group regularly meets every other Sunday—Middle School at 5:00 p.m., and High School at 6:45 p.m. This month's dates are **May 3 and May 17**.

#### Fries 'n' Floats

**Monday, May 25—6:30 p.m.**

Sr. High Hang out on Monday, May 25, 6:30 p.m. at Red Robin Restaurant (600 Cooper Point Road Southwest, Olympia). No charge for friendship but BYO \$ for food. (Hint: root beer floats and fries are bottomless at Red Robin!)

#### Christikon—help our youth get to camp in Montana!

- \$20 shares available before and after service every Sunday in May and June.
- Bake sale on Sunday, May 10 after service.
- Car Wash on Sunday, June 21 in the St. Christopher's parking lot.
- Reception after camp on Sunday, August 23 after service.

*If you have any questions, please see Annette Settle.*



### **Men's Breakfast and Fellowship Group**

The men's breakfast group meets every other Thursday morning at 7:30am at the IHOP in West Olympia (1520 Cooper Point Rd. SW) for good company, good food, and conversation about our faith. This month we'll gather on **May 14th and 28th**. All are welcome!



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### **Save the Date for Camp Michael—July 21-25**

**Camp Michael** is the local Episcopal summer camp in Lacey. It has programs for 1<sup>st</sup> graders through 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and this year's camp is July 21<sup>st</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>. Registrations for campers and sign-ups for the rest stop fundraiser for Camp Michael are available in the back on the sign up board. If you have questions, contact Lindy Vincent or the church office.

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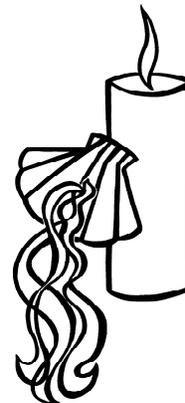
### **Blueberry Bash Coordinators and Helpers Needed!**

Blueberry Bash is coming up in August, and we need three coordinators -- food, activities, and promotion -- to make sure planning and preparation go smoothly. We also need lots of booth helpers, so please sign up. Full job descriptions are available at the back of the church on Sundays (in the purple binders), or from the church office.

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### **Vigil of Pentecost and beach-side Baptism** **Saturday, May 23—3:00 p.m.**

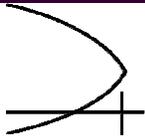
Celebrate Pentecost and welcome Jasper and his father Damien Kolb into the St. Christopher's family in a beach-side baptism service at the Kolb Family home.



# May 2015



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>31</b> Education Hour—9:00 a.m. Family Worship—10:30 a.m.					1	2
<b>3</b> Education Hour—9:00 a.m. Family Worship—10:30 a.m. Vestry Council Mtg.—12:30-4:30 p.m. Middle School Youth—5:00 p.m. High School Youth—6:45 p.m.	<b>4</b> Office Hours—2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>5</b> Office Hours—2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>6</b> Open Hands Food Bank Garden—5:30-6:30 p.m. Stewardship Committee Mtg.—7:00 p.m. AA—8:00 p.m.	<b>7</b> Office Hours—2:30-5:30 p.m. Choir—7 p.m.	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> Safeguarding God's Children at St. Timothy's, Chehalis—9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
<b>10</b> Education Hour—9:00 a.m. Worship/Sunday School—10:30 a.m. Christikon Bake Sale—11:30 a.m. Building Committee Mtg.—12 p.m.	<b>11</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m. Vestry Council Mtg.—7:00 p.m.	<b>12</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>13</b> Open Hands Food Bank Garden—5:30-6:30 p.m. AA—8:00 p.m.	<b>14</b> Men's Group—7:30 a.m. Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m. Choir—7 p.m.	<b>15</b> Synod Assembly in Vancouver, WA (Fr. James + 2 delegates attending)	<b>16</b> Synod Assembly in Vancouver, WA (Fr. James + 2 delegates attending)
<b>17</b> Education Hour—9:00 a.m. Worship/Sunday School—10:30 a.m. Worship Committee Mtg.—12 p.m. Middle School Youth—5:00 p.m. High School Youth—6:45 p.m.	<b>18</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>19</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>20</b> Open Hands Food Bank Garden—5:30-6:30 p.m. AA—8:00 p.m.	<b>21</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m. Choir—7 p.m.	<b>22</b> Beacon Articles Due	<b>23</b> Vigil of Pentecost & Baptisms at Kolb residence—3:00 p.m.
<b>24</b> Education Hour—9:00 a.m. Worship/Sunday School—10:30 a.m.	<b>25</b> Memorial Day Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m. Fries 'n' Floats—6:30 p.m.	<b>26</b> Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m.	<b>27</b> Open Hands Food Bank Garden—5:30-6:30 p.m. AA—8:00 p.m.	<b>28</b> Men's Group—7:30 a.m. Office Hours 2:30-5:30 p.m. Volunteer Connections—6:30 p.m. Choir—7 p.m.	<b>29</b> Godly Play Training at Gloria Dei—6:00 p.m. with potluck dinner at 4:00 p.m.	<b>30</b> Safeguarding God's Children at St. Benedict's, Lacey—9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.



St. Christopher's Community Church  
(Episcopal/ELCA)  
7902 Steamboat Island Road NW  
Olympia, WA 98502

## St. Christopher's Community Church

**Office Hours**  
**Mondays, Tuesdays,  
& Thursdays, 2:30-5:30 p.m.—  
or by appointment**

360-866-2111  
office@stchristopherolympia.org  
www.stchristopherolympia.org

**Pastor & Priest**  
**Fr. James Thibodeaux**

### **Sunday Worship Hours**

Worship and Sunday School  
at 10:30 a.m.,  
with nursery care