MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR:

As I contemplated what to write in this month’s Pathway, I found myself reflecting on life. I realize this broad subject covers many different aspects, but I personally find my life right now to be a bit of a whirlwind.

Our church is experiencing a growth period. We are receiving new members and are welcoming new visitors almost weekly. In addition to our numbers increasing, we have seen wonderful spiritual fruit in the lives of both long-time members and the newcomers. It is exciting to witness the Lord moving in our midst (about which I will discuss in more detail at our Annual Parish Meeting).

On the home front, Alison and I are busy keeping up with three growing boys who are active in church, sports, school, and many other extra-curricular activities. Owning your own home is probably one of the biggest investments you will ever make, but along with that comes the responsibility of maintenance and repairs. Sometimes, all of this combined becomes overwhelming and exhausting.

This article is not intended to be “woe is me,” but I am certain that many of you can relate to this whirlwind we often experience. The real challenge we face is setting aside the time to be still and “know” the Lord in the midst of life’s chaos. Below are two simple suggestions that I plan to work on to achieve this goal, and hopefully, we can do this together as a church.

First, start with a goal that is attainable, such as reading a few passages from the daily lectionary in your prayer book (BCP p936ff) and including them in your prayers for the day. Once this habit is established, you will often desire to “carve out” a little more time in the coming days and weeks.

Second, commit to worshipping the Lord. Our Sunday morning worship hours are vital for the body of Christ. It is a time when we gather together to encourage and build-up one another through preaching, teaching, song, and praise to the Lord. The author of the book of Hebrews says this in chapter 10:25, “let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” You could compare this to filling up your gas tank as the needle edges toward the empty mark. As each week goes by, we use up our physical and spiritual energy, and by the time we reach Sunday, we have the opportunity to fill up our “tanks” and be with God’s people.

Today’s life is crazy for most, but let’s commit together to invite Jesus into the midst of our “crazy” and trust Him to sustain us and give us new life every day!

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25
**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

For our Nursery to hold babies, read Bible stories, and sing songs with our youngest members (ages: birth to 4 years old) during the Sunday School and 10:30am service. All volunteers are required to pass a background check and take a short online course about protecting our children. Contact Heather Johnson at heather@holycrosstrussville.org for more information.

**CHILDREN’S MINISTRY**

Is asking for donations of snacks and drinks for our Sunday school class and nursery. Suggested food and drinks: Individual size packages of cheez-its, goldfish, graham crackers, chips and cookies, 100% juice boxes (low-sugar preferred) and small bottled water. Cash donations are also accepted. All donations can be placed on the table in the Children’s Sunday school room.

**TEAM ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE**

Saturday, February 8th at the Great Harvest Bread Company (218 Main Street #110, Trussville) you can drop off food donations for TEAM (Trussville Ecumenical Assistive Ministry). If you bring 5 or more items, you will get $2 off a loaf of bread from Great Harvest. On Sunday, February 9th, Courtney Dollar will pass out TEAM collection bags to parishioners at each service. Everyone is encouraged to participate in this ministry!

**MISSIONS**

In 2019, we studied our mission ministry partners through Pathway articles and informational sessions at the Rector’s Forum. TEAM, Serving You, and Graceworks representatives worshipped with us and taught about their organizations at those sessions. At our June “Third Wednesday” program, The Loveladies of the Lovelady Center shared dinner with us and offered spoken and “cardboard” testimonies of participants in the center’s faith-based programs.

For 2020, the Vestry and Missions Committee aspire to focus on hands-on participation with our local mission partners. Fran Bramblette is serving as team leader for a February 1 workday at Graceworks’ new facility, Grace Place in Woodlawn, and encourages volunteers for Graceworks’ summer programs. TEAM is now open two Saturdays a month and needs volunteers. Serving You offers many ways to volunteer, some as simple as bringing lunch for its job skills programs. We will certainly have opportunities to serve the Loveladies. Our small parish always responds to big needs in our community. Please pray for our mission partners and consider serving and supporting when and where you are able in the coming year – with our partners or with other missions that touch your spirit.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Barnard

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**ECW LUNCHEON MEETING**

Is scheduled for Wednesday, February 19th at 11:15am in the Genesis Room. “Bring your own sandwich” and we will provide the trimmings and beverages.

**SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER**

Mark your calendars for “Fat” Tuesday, February 25th at 6:00pm, when we gather for our annual pancake supper. As usual, the Holy Cross youth will host the event, and the men of the church will help serve up the pancakes, bacon, and sausage. The cost is $5 per person ($20 max per family) and proceeds support our youth group. Please make plans to join us for this fun event as we enter a Holy Lent.

**LENTEN STUDY**

Join us during this season of Lent, beginning Ash Wednesday, February 26th, as we read through the books of Colossians and Philemon. Journals and reading plans will be available at the Ministry Table beginning Sunday, February 16th. On the following five Wednesdays (March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, and April 1st) at 6:00pm, we will meet for dinner followed by a teaching and small-group discussions about what we’ve been reading and how it is impacting our lives.