



Trinity Topics

September 2023

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“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”—John 6:68-69

Christianity stands at a major turning point in Western history. Until recently we lived in what was called Christendom. Christianity was the environment we all grew up in. The Church was simply Jacksonville at prayer. We all had a congregation. Society was organized in a way that encouraged church membership. There was an expectation and respectability in church-going. Businesses and institutions conformed their operations to respect for the Lord’s Day. Most people knew at least the broad strokes of Christianity belief and morality. In those days, being a Christian was synonymous with being a good person.

Not so anymore. The number of people who do not consider themselves Christian has reached record levels and is rising all the time. People today see Christian belief as merely one option among many. People usually do not see why they should prioritize the worship of the Lord over things like soccer, dance, golf, or just sleeping in. Christian morality is no longer a set of common ethical assumptions we all hold, but has become another political battleground in a culture-war fought between sides that don’t much reflect on the Bible’s teachings with commitment or depth. It is not enough for churches to be welcoming today. Welcoming a person means he is visiting out of interest in finding a community, but the reality is that it doesn’t occur to most people that they need a church. It doesn’t occur to them that God is a matter to reflect on with much seriousness or to make any personal sacrifices for. Worst of all, for more and more people, Christianity is not really seen as a credible way of living at all.

As uncertain as we might feel at an increasingly secular future, we can and must look for the opportunities this new age offers in these challenges I have outlined. In Christendom, we might all have been Christian, but this allowed many people to carry on without reflecting much on what they believed and why they believed it. Church-going was often a mere duty or habit. Christian morality could be reduced to being a conforming and respectable member of society without much reflection or any sense of self-sacrifice. This new age demands that we know with clarity what we believe and always be ready to proclaim it with passion and sincerity. The Church is no longer just Jacksonville at prayer, so Trinity Church must be a community of men and women who, after conscious reflection on the Christian story, have decided to make a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

This is where we come in, as individual Christians. We all love this church, and we want it to be healthy into the future. But this demands something of us. We cannot just open our doors wide and expect people to come in. We cannot appeal to our community based on values we are certain we share. Church programs are not going to sustain a church when people in the community don’t see a need for those programs in the first place. The health of Trinity Church demands something deeper. We must know what we believe—this means serious study of what the Bible teaches. We must commit ourselves to those beliefs with continual prayer. We must show that the Christian faith is a credible way of life in our acts of self-sacrifice. We must proclaim the Gospel in all that we say and do. We must show that Christian life is possible, even in this modern age of ours, by seeking to live it ourselves. If we all can do those things, Jacksonville will yearn for what we have. They will say to themselves “What have they figured out that we haven’t?” Trinity Church, I do believe, offers something that Jacksonville deeply and truly needs.

Fr. Zach Brooks

A Course in Anglican History: Part LIV

In 1738, a young English missionary named John Wesley returned from the American colonies in defeat. On the way home his ship was struck by a storm. In his terror, he was struck by the calm faith of fellow passengers belonging to a German sect called the Moravian Brethren. He later wrote: “I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me? I felt my heart strangely warmed.” This idea that an English person might need conversion sounded bizarre in that day. Conversion was something that heathens needed. England was already a Christian country. Was not everyone in England a baptized member of the Church? What else was there to being a Christian? John Wesley’s experience of personal conversion reflected a growing belief that it just wasn’t enough to be an outwardly conforming member of a Christian society. Christianity was more than assenting to dogmas and participating in sacraments. The call of Jesus demanded one’s own relationship with Jesus and one’s own striving for holiness. John Wesley and his brother Charles began offering fiery sermons and writing hymns about a personal relationship with Jesus. They attracted greater and greater crowds, and were joined by other preachers like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. Their preaching became a whole movement across the English-speaking world in what became known as the First Great Awakening. The Church of England, having struggled with non-conformist sects since the English Civil War, was suspicious of these new preachers. These revivalist preachers were forced to preach in make-shift chapels established in things like warehouses and foundries, which came to be called Methodist Chapels (because John and Charles were known to be so *methodical* in their devotions). Despite the mistrust between Wesley’s movement and the Church of England, he remained a vicar in the Church of England his whole life, and his theology left a lasting mark on Anglican piety. Upon his death, however, his followers left the Church of England behind, founding what is today the Methodist Church.

This column is a monthly series on the history of Anglicanism and the Episcopal Church.

News & Announcements

Altar Guild Schedule

Members of Altar Guild will find a new calendar for the 2023-2024 year in this mailing.

Episcopal Church Women

All ladies of the parish are invited to attend the Build Your Own Salad supper on Monday, September 11. Lettuce, bread, and drinks will be provided. Each person should bring a salad ingredient to share.

Fellowship

Fellowship will study Max Lucado’s *In the Footsteps of Jesus*. In six videos he visits places where Jesus walked: Capernaum, Sea of Galilee, Mount of Beatitudes, Temple Steps, Garden Tomb, and Caesarea by the Sea. Then there is discussion of a passage of scripture. The first meeting of the year is September 5. Fellowship is an opportunity for fellowship and study of the Christian faith. Social time is from 7 to 7:30 pm, with the study from 7:30 to 8:30 pm.

News & Announcements, cont.

Evensong at the Cathedral

The Rev. Shawn Denney, longtime friend of Trinity Church, will be honored as a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral for his years of service to the Diocese of Springfield and the Episcopal Church. His installation at **St. Paul's Cathedral** (815 S 2nd St, Springfield) will take place with a festal Evensong on the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, at **5 pm on Friday, the 29th of September**. Trinity Church's Rector Emeritus The Rev. Christopher Ashmore will preach.

Outreach

Trinity Church will participate in the Jacksonville Area Council of Churches fall collection. Donations will be given to the Midwest Youth Services. A list of suggested donations will be posted soon.

Choir

Choir is resuming rehearsals on Sunday, September 3, from 8:45 until 9:30 am. Contact Mary Wilson if you are interested.

Church School

Church School will resume on September 10.

We need volunteers from parents and other parishioners to conduct lessons. All lessons are prepared ahead of time so there is no advanced planning for these volunteers. We do not have a regular nursery attendant so a volunteer could be used for that area also.

Please let the Parish Office know how you can help. We can set up a schedule for you if you are unable to help weekly.

Be Thankful!

The aim of the United Thankful Offering is for us to make an offering in thanksgiving for the blessings in our life. Traditionally, one takes home a box and makes regular offerings throughout the year in thanksgiving for the blessings and then brings the amount of money collected on the twice yearly Ingatherings. The funds collected are then used to help others in need. Boxes and envelopes are provided on the table in the foyer. Please consider making an offering on Sunday, September 24.

Death

Jerry Wilson died on August 15, 2023. We extend our condolences to Mary. Fr. Zach conducted a prayer service for him on August 25.

*May his soul and the souls
of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.*

****If you have news you wish to share, please contact the Parish Office.***

Lectors

September 3 Cathy Nelson
September 10 Alice Tracey
September 17 Forrest Keaton
September 24 Nancy Taylor Porter

Acolytes *(Let Jo Ann know when you are available.)*

September 3 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb
September 10 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb
September 17 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb
September 24 Bruce Evans, Clayton Robb

Ushers

September 3 Chuck Crim, Forrest Keaton
September 10 Bob Hardwick, Jim Herget
September 17 Chuck Crim, John Clancy
September 24 John Clancy, Jim Herget

Fellowship

Tuesday, September 5, 7:00 pm

ECW

Monday, September 11, 5:30 pm
Build Your Own Salad

Church School & Choir
will resume on
Sunday, September 10

Vestry Meeting

Tuesday, September 19
7:00 pm

The Fall Ingathering of the
United Thank Offering
will be on
Sunday, September 24.

*Make an offering in thanksgiving
for something or someone in your life.*

SERVICES IN SEPTEMBER 2023

SUNDAYS:

September 3:

The 14th Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

September 10:

The 15th Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

September 17:

The 16th Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist

September 24:

The 17th Sunday after Pentecost

8:00 am = Holy Eucharist
10:00 am = Holy Eucharist
4:00 pm = Evening Prayer

WEEKDAYS AT 10:00 am

Wednesday, September 6

Wednesday, September 13

Thursday, September 14:

Holy Cross Day

Wednesday, September 20

Thursday, September 21:

St. Matthew

Wednesday, September 27

Friday, September 29

St. Michael & All Angels

MORNING PRAYER AT 10:00 am:

On Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays