

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

AUGUST 2017



AUGUST 6

HOLY EUCHARIST

The Rev. Eric Anderson
Lay Reader: Sam French
Altar Guild: Kate French

AUGUST 13

MORNING PRAYER

Lay Reader: John Tarver
Altar Guild: Becky Tarver

AUGUST 20

**HOLY EUCHARIST
BISHOP'S COMMITTEE AND
POT LUCK**

The Rev. Eric Anderson
Lay Reader: Don Kiefer
Altar Guild: Sheryl Kiefer

AUGUST 27

HOLY EUCHARIST

The Rev. Canon Bill Fasel
Lay Reader: Kate French
Altar Guild: Becky Tarver

SERVICES

9:00 A.M. - Sunday School
10:00 - Worship Services

A Word from the Bishop's Warden

Well I have had a header on a page now for about a week and not come up with what to write. We are in the dog days of summer and things are supposed to slow down, at least I hope that is the problem.

Instead of slowing down members of the congregation seem to have sped up, with all the travel, vacations and all. There is usually only half the attendance we usually have. While when we are the ones present we miss those absent and pray for safe travels always.

This is the season of Pentecost also called Ordinary time. Although it is the longest season of the church year it is not ordinary.

Since our travels are often to visit and share time with families I would like to start a theme and start sharing some of the wonderful prayers that are in the book of common prayer that many do not know are there with a collect for families.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who settest the solitary in families: We commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell. Put far from them, we beseech thee, every root of bitterness, the desire of vainglory, and the pride of life. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. Knit together in constant affection those who, in holy wedlock, have been made one flesh. Turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the hearts of the children to the parents; and so enkindle fervent charity among us all, that we may evermore be kindly affectioned one to another: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pax tibi
John

CHURCH INFORMATION

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 453 Clinton, MO 64735

GPS Address: 181 East Division Clinton, MO 64735

Priest in Charge: The Rev. Bill Fasel; fbillnerm@hotmail.com, 816-803-4010

Bishop Martin Field, Diocese of West Missouri

Bishop's Warden: John Tarver tarverjohn1@gmail.com

St. Paul's Website: <http://stpaulsepiscopal.diowestmo.org/>

NERM WEBSITE

<http://www.nermwestmo.org/home0.aspx>

MIRACLES OF JESUS

August 2017

Fr. Eric Anderson

Did you know that over seventy percent of the Gospels are on the miracles of Jesus? To understand fully our Christian faith, heritage, and traditions is to believe in miracles. The word miracles attributed to Jesus is taken from the Latin word *supernaturalis* meaning above nature. It is a word that explains what cannot be explained by the laws of nature. A miracle is God's interaction into time and place as a real historical event. Have you ever heard people talk about a miracle they witnessed or personally experienced and almost without fail they always say, "Thank God!" We praise and give thanks to God from whom the miracle comes. Prophecy ended with John the Baptist who was the last of the Prophets, but the miracles of Jesus Christ remain very much with us every day.

One cannot study Christian Scriptures, sing songs of praise, or worship God without hearing about the miracles that Jesus performed. I preached recently on Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30. Jesus said, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.' In this Holy Scripture, Jesus began to denounce the critics in whose presence most of his miracles had been performed and witnessed by because they did not repent. To dance for someone is to celebrate with them, and to wail for someone is to mourn with them. This is a measure of our full humanity, by loving others as we love ourselves. Christ's full humanity was realized when he suffered death upon the cross for our sins. Do you realize that Jesus dances for us and Jesus wails for us still?

The majority of Jesus's miracles are faith healings. Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well". They are also exorcisms, resurrection of the dead, and control over nature. Jesus miracles also include restoring sight to the blind, healing the lepers, curing the paralytics, the cure of the bleeding woman, healing Peter's mother-in-law, healing the mute, healing the man with the withered hand, healing the servant that the centurion loved, turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana, walking on water, calming the storm, the Transfiguration, feeding the multitude, and the greatest miracle of all- resurrection, eternal life, and salvation. My own heart bleeds for those who have witnessed or personally experienced a miracle or supernatural act of Jesus and fail to see and call it what it is, a gift of God. To seek another explanation sets oneself on the course of humanism, legalistic, and scientific questioning leading to a path where no real answer, no real hope can be authentically found.

I have shared previously that I am a cancer survivor for over 22 years. It was my own brain surgeon who named me as a miracle. After I had recovered enough following my thirteen hour brain surgery I went to see him. He and I talked for a long time about what took place in the operating room. I was inquisitive and curious about this life changing procedure I had gone through, especially being the first to undergo a procedure using MRI's, computers, and sensors to mark out where the healthy brain tissue was and where the unhealthy tumor tissue was located. He showed me slides of the surgery and the detailed and meticulous surgery. He told me that at any given time there were around thirty medical professionals in the operating room. I had been selected as the candidate over a period of months going through a series of tests, but that time I did not know I was being screened for this surgery, as I was given a different reason for what they were studying. What the doctor told me about why he chose me to be the first candidate to undergo this extensive surgery was my faith. I will never forget what the Neurosurgeon told me. "Eric, you are young, you are healthy, you have the best private insurance, but that only made you equal to all the other candidates. What made you stand out was even when you were told you only had months to live you never lost your positive attitude. You believed in the vision you heard and never lost faith that 'you were not going to die from this, but would be ill for a long time'. You lived with your brain tumor with a win/win belief that if you died you were going home to be with God, and

if you lived you will continue to proclaim the Good News of God.” He me that medically, my tumor became encapsulated, something he had never seen ever on an astrocytoma brain tumor. This was something all the doctors and neurologist did not see until you made an appointment with a radiologist who saw it on the MRI. If it was not for him starting you on radical radiation it would not have shrunken and you would not been here. Finally you had a great support system of family, friends, and a primary caregiver who loved you and never gave up on you. All these reasons are why you are a miracle. As the visit was coming to an end he said to me, “If you live beyond five years you should live a long life and in that process you will find your new normal in how your brain will function cognitively.”

Following several years of recuperation I was ordained as an Episcopal priest and have served churches in the Diocese of Washington DC and Diocese of Kansas before coming to the Diocese of West Missouri. As a parish priest I frequently heard a call to hospital chaplain ministry. I left parish ministry to enroll in Clinical Pastoral Education for a year earning the knowledge and units to become a certified hospital chaplain. In my ministry as a chaplain, I witnessed many miracles of healing. To understand the word ‘healing’ one must understand it first mean spiritual healing and then physical healing. I like to share two experiences of patients and their family that explains both types of healing.

I specialized as a heart transplant chaplain. One day I received a call from the heart surgeon to make a special visit to a patient who was in the ICU for over forty days waiting to receive a heart transplant. I knew this man well. He had become very depressed and anxious waiting so long and lying in bed day after day. As I entered his room it was dark as the window blinds were shut. I sat down with him as his chaplain and he began to talk. He had reached his human limits on waiting. I asked him what Jesus was telling him. He said, “I am not sure, but I think He is telling me to stop my waiting; that it’s time to let go. I asked him if he was telling himself this and thinking it was Jesus. He was not sure. I reminded him that Jesus talks to us through other people and asked what was Jesus saying to him through them? He said that he had not shared this with anyone except me. I reminded him how much faith his wife has and encouraged him to talk to her about his struggle and hear the voice of Jesus in her. He said that he had never thought about hearing Jesus’s voice in someone else as his relationship with God was so private and personal. I asked him if I could anoint him with oil and pray for him. He told me he had much to think about and then he dismissed me from his room. The next day he told me he talked to his wife and heard Jesus’s voice in her words and Jesus was telling him that he needed to continue waiting. Five days later he received a heart and had a successful match. After his recovery he left the hospital physically recovered.

I became very close to a patient in the ICC. She had been there a long time as she had come down with a blood disease following her transplant. Every day I would visit her and her husband who spent every day with her. They were both deeply faithful people. She had strength and courage beyond measure to endure pain and suffering that came with her disease. She never lost her hope and faith that she would get better. Every day the three of us prayed together and when there was medical staff in the room they would join in the prayer. She was loved by all but most of all by her husband. Her condition continued to worsen and she was moved into a special room reserved for long term patients. One cold and cloudy winter morning I received a call from her nurse saying that her family had gathered together and it was now her time and would I please come to her room. The mood was very sacred and quiet. I took my place at her head. The nurse sang a quiet and beautiful song. I anointed her for death and said the prayer of passage. Her husband who never left her side stood there with his hand on her heart. Even before the monitor stopped he looked at her and said, “She’s gone”. He walked out of the room as the family gathered closer to the bed. I followed him and stood a distance behind him as he went to a large window and looked up. I knew he was watching the angels taking her home. These words were spoken in my heart, “She is before the throne of God and now will serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over her. She will never hunger; and never again

thirst. The sun will not beat upon her nor any scorching heat. For the lamb at the center of the throne will be her shepherd; and he will lead her to springs of living water (Rev. 7:15-17). Her miracle was truly spiritual.

In the early spring of 2014 I convinced my mom that it was time to make an appointment for my dad with a Neuro-psychiatrist. My dad went through a series of tests and was diagnosed with stage five Alzheimer's. This was a life changing moment for all of us. My dad is a Professional Engineer, highly intelligent and skilled at everything. For my mom it was a pain that can't be spoken as this was a moment in her life she had never prepared herself for, if anyone really can. The Andersons' life had been changing but now we knew why. My dad's condition would not get better, only worse as time goes on. As a chaplain, I have studied about Alzheimer's and I had worked in nursing homes for Alzheimer's patients and what I saw and knew was not often good. Patients with private insurance could afford living in better facilities and receive more individual care, but those on government insurance often received little personal care and their days are spent in wheel chairs lined up in the hallways, at least at the time I was making these visits. My dad has always been there when I needed him in good times or bad times, it did not matter. Now it was my time to be there for him. I did not want my mom and dad to go into this time of their lives alone without family support. My mom and I decided that I would move home and I would do the house work, yard work, repairs, and drive them to appointments, while still maintaining being an active priest. This freed my mom to take over the finances and more importantly learn how to maneuver around the medical agencies and manage my dad's health. By moving home we were able to keep my dad home for two and a half years. This gave my mom time to get involved with the Veteran's Affairs Administration since my dad was enlisted in the Army in the Korean Conflict, and enabled my dad to receive medical and financial benefits. My mom and I joined the Alzheimer's family care support. In January of this year my dad's condition had deteriorated to a point where it was no longer possible to keep him at home. Through the VA in Topeka we were able to work out a month of respite care there for him and us. With the help of the VA doctors we were told he needed to go into skilled nursing care. This was something we unrealistically hoped we would not have to consider. As I shared this with a friend who had already had to cross this bridge with her own mother, she told me the best Christian advice anyone has shared with me, "Don't feel guilty." This has become a mantra for me ever since. We placed my dad into a nursing home, but unfortunately they were not trained to work with Alzheimer's patients. My dad fell breaking his femur and hip bone and got an infection. Soon after his operation we received a call from the special Alzheimer's Care Unit from the VA in Topeka saying they wanted to interview him as a potential new resident. At this time my mom asked me to call people to pray for this miracle. I did not hesitate to ask all the members of Saint Paul's Episcopal Church to prayer for this miracle and the next day the miracle happened when he was asked to be a resident there. Today he is getting daily physical therapy and is seen by a skilled group of professionally trained care givers and his quality of life has improved. Thank God and all of you for your prayers.

Alzheimer's is a disease without a cure today and it will grow exponentially worldwide in the coming years as our population ages and our professional care giving community decreases. Families are ill equipped to give long term care at home and affordable nursing homes are not there. As I have traveled around our diocese I have met and prayed with many people in every church which I have served who have lived through, are living through or know someone with this disease. This is not a disease that only takes a toll on the person living with it, but it is a disease that affects the entire family, especially the spouse or primary care giver. We need to pray and work together for a miracle cure and always have faith that God makes all his children well in the end. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life". (John 3:16)

DIOCESAN COUNCIL TO MEET

Don will attend Council meeting on Saturday, August 12 in Carthage, Missouri. The Diocesan Budget is on the agenda.

BISHOP FIELD'S SURGERY

Bishop Field's next surgery has been delayed. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

BIRTHDAYS

9-Betsy Gretzinger Vida
21-Gregg Etter Jr.
21-Lila Foster

ANNIVERSARIES

7-Sam and Kate French
19-Howard and Suny Johnson

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