Use It or Lose It

“Use it, or Lose it” is a familiar phrase that applies to many disciplines. Professional athletes fear the effects of off-season sloth, so they do something about it. Not doing so leaves them prone to serious injury when the on-season gets rough.

Much the same can be said for other professions, from musicians to pilots. If finely honed skills are not continually used, then deterioration comes quickly. Some years ago, the FAA expressed concern that automation in today’s aircraft was leaving pilots “out of the loop” (out of context, out of engagement) and too often in dangerous situations when trying to “catch up” with an upset aircraft. It should be no surprise that sloth and ready don’t pair-up well.

I think much the same applies to our spiritual lives. If we focus on our spirituality only when we feel like it, then we may be surprised to find ourselves “out of the loop,” and with inadequate context in which to address life’s upsets.

When I hear comments like the following, I suspect a lapse in spiritual engagement: “Why did God do this to me?” (My question, “Why are you assuming God is to blame?”); and “God seems so far away.” (My question, “Where are you?”); and “I’ll get serious about following Jesus as soon as I get my life straightened out.” (My observation, “You’re too confident.”)

There is a passage in the Gospel of Luke (9:59-60) that starkly, and perhaps offensively to some, speaks to engagement. When a man responds to Jesus’ command to “follow me” by saying “Lord, first let me go and bury my father,” Jesus states, “Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Why was Jesus so stark? Because the young man simply offered an excuse, and Jesus chose to deal with it directly.

In a culture that called for a funeral and burial on the same day of a person’s death, why would the grieving son be casually talking to a rabbi that day? Because, almost certainly, the man’s father had not yet died. He simply may have been sick or aged, so the young man’s excuse betrayed a commitment so vague that it was meaningless.

By the time you read this, summer will be upon us, and so, too, will be many pleasant distractions and perhaps lost opportunities. Please understand our spirituality as a gift that needs nurturing the same as do our bodies, our social lives, and our financial lives. Continual attention to all four areas is essential for well-balanced lives.

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May Upcoming Events

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>Women of the Church</td>
<td>11:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>Bazaar Planning Meeting</td>
<td>2:00 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 18</td>
<td>Safe Church Training (registration required)</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Children’s Clangy Collection</td>
<td>10:00 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 28</td>
<td>Men’s Group</td>
<td>6:00 pm</td>
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Men’s Group Spruces Up the Grounds

Many thanks to the Men’s Group for cleaning up the flower beds and for spreading fresh mulch. St. Thomas’ looked fantastic for Easter and for the traditional Egg Hunt.

Participating in the April 6 work day were Tom, Jennifer and Nathaniel Kuntz, David Patterson, James Jessup, Scott Schaeffer, Connor Callahan, and The Rev. Bruce Heyvaert.

Among the important archaeological discoveries was a bone, thought by Nathaniel to be a “T-Rex thumb bone.” Further research is ongoing. :)

The St. Thomas’ Prayer List

For those who are ill:
Beth; Bill; Holly Chester Baker; The Rev. Tally Bandy; Lois Bauer; Jack Beyer; Bill and Carol Bradford; Gladys Cashman; Jean Cooke; Claudia Cox; The Rev. Mary Curtis; Trudy Forrest; Will Grissom; Charlotte Hohenstein; Richard Horne; Pat Kirkman; Dick Klancher; Sylvia Lowder; Mary Louise Matthews; Jane Miller; Robert Namy; Wayne Nesbit; Ann Osmolak; Rebecca Pascoe; Jeremy Strickland; Ann Taylor; Chris Weber; Nellie Yuskevich; Didi Zahlava; Dave Zeph.

For those who have died:
Marie Childress; Retta Gilman

For strength and guidance:
Mary and Dick Klancher; Sarah and Justin; the Vestry.

For all military deployed and at home:

Thanksgiving:
For the continuing growth of St. Thomas’
Camp Price Teaches Photography: WoC’s April Meeting

The Women of the Church learned *101 Steps to Better Photography* in a presentation by Camp Price on April 1. He explained the differences in cameras and showed us how to focus our cameras by lightly pressing the shutter button. Most importantly, he stated that you always take multiple photos of the same image.

Mr. Price’s tips for photographing people are worth noting:
For a full body photo, use the same space below the feet and above the head.
For a waist/bust to top of head photo, leave a small space above the head. NEVER have knees shown with NO feet!
For scenery, NEVER have the main point of interest in the middle of the picture. For architecture, use angles with foreground trees or flowers.

A delicious lunch of congealed tuna salad, asparagus vinaigrette, cheesy green bean salad, tarragon rolls, and chocolate cookie dessert was prepared by Frances Floyd.

Frances’s Cheesy Green Bean Salad

1 1/2 lb. green beans (or 2 cans green beans)
1 tsp butter
1 10 oz. package brown mushrooms
1 tsp garlic salt
3 Tbs flour
1 1/2 cups milk
1/4 tsp pepper
7 oz. Swiss cheese
French fried onions
1/4 cup Panko bread crumbs

Cook and drain beans. Melt butter in a large skillet. Add mushrooms and garlic salt and cook for five minutes. Whisk in flour and add milk slowly with pepper. Stir in cheese. Pour over beans in 9” x 12” pan. Sprinkle with fried onions and bread crumbs.

Bake at 375 degrees for 25 minutes.

Women of Church Meeting on May 6, at 11:00 a.m.

Speaker: The Rev. Bruce Heyvaert
Devotion: Diane Hancock
Lunch: Traditional Salad Day
Raffle Gift: Jo Ann Bowman
Easter Celebration on April 21

Our Easter Eucharist sermon was offered by The Rev. Bob Brown, who has retired from the NC Diocese. During coffee hour, he and his wife Jean were honored prior to their move to Pennsylvania.

Marie Martin honored her mother’s tradition by making a delicious and adorable Easter lamb cake. Deb Heyvaert supplied a selection of brunch foods.

The Godly Play Kids made tombs and crosses with natural materials and had fun searching for Easter eggs filled with goodies. Nathan found the Golden Egg containing $1! Deb Heyvaert and Micki VanOrden made fabric carrots filled with surprises for each child.

This year, Easter was a glorious experience celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.
Men’s Group Learns About Political Process and Government

Connor Callahan attended the July 2016 Democratic National Convention and presented his experiences to the Men’s Group on March 26. Serving as a delegate for the Bernie Sanders campaign, he was elected one of six Maryland district delegates.

Highlights were a speech by Jesse Jackson, a speech by Vice President Joe Biden, and meeting Governor Martin O’Malley… causing him to miss his Uber ride.

Afterward, Conner had a greater appreciation that politics influences everyday life, and that the spirit of apathy is a killer in the political system.

On April 23, Bob and Tom presented a segment on the continuation of government in case of nuclear attack or a severe crisis situation.

New Red Vestments for St. Thomas’

On Palm Sunday, St. Thomas’ celebrated with new red vestments and altar covers. These were given by The Rev. Bruce and Deborah Heyvaert to memorialize the life of their dear friend, Barbara S. Donnelly, who died on April 17, 2018.

Red is the color of the Holy Spirit. It calls to mind the flames that descended upon the Church at the Day of Pentecost and is the color of the Feast of Pentecost. Red is also used during Holy Week and for all Episcopal visitations, consecrations, ordinations, and confirmations.

Finally, red commemorates all martyred saints, recalling the blood shed for the Faith and the Church.
Safe Church Training at St. Thomas’ on May 18, 10:00 am—12:30 pm
If you work with children/youth or elderly shut-ins, Safe Church training is required every three years. Vestry members are encouraged to attend.
Registration is required and space is limited. Sign up at the NC Diocese website to reserve a spot.

Availability of Vestry Minutes and Financial Reports
The minutes of every Vestry meeting, along with the latest financial report compiled by Treasurer, Andy White, and reviewed by the Vestry, are posted on the board in the Lower Parish Hall.

Silence and Prayer
Before our Sunday services begin, please respect the Episcopal tradition of prayerful silence as you reach your pew. Thank you for your consideration of others.

Save The Date
November 16, 2019
St. Thomas’ Bazaar

Use It or Lose It (continued)

I’ve always found it interesting that when summer attendance falls off I’m told that, “folks are on vacation,” expressed with the assumption that Sundays are spent in a church elsewhere. But where is this Church of Elsewhere?

One of the “gems” our latest Adult Study Course uncovered was “What we focus on, will grow.” How about joining with me in making “a mid-year’s resolution” to focus on staying engaged in our spiritual lives so we don’t lose what we should be using!

Fr. Bruce+
Thomas’ Teens Movie Night

On Tuesday, April 9th, the Thomas’ Teens traveled to Cary for a special viewing of the movie Noah. This movie was actually recorded during a live stage performance of the musical, Noah, at the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA.

This Bible story came to life on a jaw-dropping scale, as Noah led live animals on stage with sets over 4 stories tall! The massive size of the production was incredible, and certainly gave one the feeling of immersion in the story!

We are excited for our next event and hope that all of the teens will be able to participate!

+ Sam
We extend a warm welcome from our church community.

We at St. Thomas’ believe that:

♦ Whatever your religious background
♦ Whatever your history
♦ However you have come to be drawn to the Lord

You are welcome to walk your journey of life with us at St. Thomas’ Episcopal Church.

Our Mission:

“To grow in the knowledge and love of God through our worship of Him, our service to Him, and our study of His Word; and to bring others to know Jesus Christ as Savior within the fellowship of the Church”