



November 2024

Sundays

- 8:00a.m. H.E. Rite I
- 9:15a.m. Adult Christian Education
- 10:30a.m. H.E. Rite II

Wednesdays

- 10:30a.m. Healing Service

Coming Up

- | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Nov. 2 | Men's Club | 8:00am |
| Nov. 4 | St. Elizabeth's Guild | 12-1:00pm |
| Nov. 8 | UCM Cookout | 10:00am |
| Nov. 12 | Book Club | 10:00am |
| Nov. 15 | Shrimparoo | 6:00pm |
| Nov. 15 | Vestry | 6:00pm |
| Nov. 22-23 | Convention | |
| Nov. 23 | TRCC | 3-5:00pm |
| Nov. 25 | Thanksgiving Boxes | 9-11:00am |
| Nov. 26 | Townes Home Owners | 4:30-6pm |
| Nov. 28-29 | Office Closed | |

Prodigal

Introduction

October is a season of giving and thanksgiving. I love this time of year despite the proliferation of pumpkin spice and the fact that there is no squashing the sudden use of vegetables for decoration. **I love it because both in church and in our wider community there is this annual renewal of gratitude and giving.** One of Jesus' parables is fused with this season in my mind which is funny because most Christians attach it more to lent. **This is the parable of the prodigal.**

As I see it, there are really 4 different key points or chapters in this story. I am going to jump into each with some reflection.

Chapter One – "I want it now!"

"Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the wealth that will belong to me.' So he divided his assets between them." - Luke 15:11-35

In psychology, there is a famous test called the **marshmallow experiment**. Basically they put a marshmallow in front of a kid and tell him/her that they can eat it or if s/he can wait 10 minutes they will give him/her another marshmallow for waiting. Apparently the kids that can wait have a much higher probability of success in life. I hate thinking about this test because I feel for the agony of the poor child struggling with his/her own patience.

But patience is an important skill. In the story of the prodigal son, **the son gets lost in large part because of his lack of patience.** The son goes to his father and asks for his inheritance now. His father is very much alive but the son doesn't want to wait. He wants wealth and the success and freedom that come from it now.

Few of us are insensitive enough to ask for our father's inheritance now, but we often want security, and safety now. It is good to be prudent, but often we can close ourselves off to generosity and to what is really important to us if we are too focused on protecting our future.

This is why during stewardship seasons like this one churches ask their members to pray about **giving a percentage of income. You will never know how much to have in your rainy day fund because we don't have any idea how much rain is coming.** This is why we give based on income. Usually we encourage people to either give 10% or to work toward that goal. **You give a share of everything rather than waiting until you have enough** because if you wait then nothing will ever feel like enough. The spiritually healthy thing is not "I want it now," but rather "give it now."

Still making it through the anxieties of the world is no easy thing which is why you shouldn't take just my word on it. **Pray** about it.

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It wasn't just that the Prodigal Son didn't have the patience to wait for his inheritance, it is also **that he didn't have the ability to see the value he had living in his father's house.** Prayer helps us see value much more clearly. This is especially true for prayer of gratitude. When I was a kid, I think I would have failed the marshmallow test spectacularly. I probably still would unless I remembered to pray. That is because prayer focuses us on our gratitude rather than our hunger.



Chapter 2 – “Hitting Bottom”

“But when he came to his senses.” -Luke 15:17

Growing up in my family, you learned a lot of respect for Alcoholics Anonymous. There are actually case studies in “the Big book” that are based on members of my extended family. Maybe for this reason, **I have always been interested in the notion of “hitting bottom.”** What is it that actually makes people give up what they used to think was everything and start in a new direction?

Reading through the story of the prodigal son, **we come to his bottom point.** The youngest son took his father's inheritance and the freedom it could buy. He left all those who loved him and could hold him accountable and headed off to a new land. Quickly, he realized that the inheritance that he had traded everything for scattered like dust in a windstorm. He was forced to get a job as a servant feeding pigs (an absolutely disgusting idea to Jesus' Jewish audience). Here in this place the Bible says, “when he came to his senses” or in an older translation **“he came to himself.”** I love that line.

There in the darkest of the dark, he found out who he truly was and what actually mattered to him. The prodigal discovered that for him more money had actually meant more problems, and **he had to sacrifice his very worldview to reconcile the truth he discovered.** He had to come to realize that even life as a servant in his father's house was better than what all his Dad's riches had bought him.

This is why giving isn't just important, sacrificial giving is important. To stay spiritually centered you need to give to the point you feel it. You actually need to give up something. Whether it be a sacrifice of worldview like this prodigal son or the sacrifice of time in a life dedicated to ministry or the sacrifice of material comfort from those who show great generosity, **it is sacrifice that shows us who we are and what really matters to us.**

Put another way, if you want to know which way is up, you need to know where your bottom is. **What is it that you need to give up to stay rested in your father's arms?** Is it an idea? Is it a security blanket? Is it a damaging relationship? What do you need to come to terms with before you can grow closer to God?



Chapter 3 – “Time to Celebrate”

I firmly believe that Christians should know how to party. Joy is an essential part of our faith. Jesus even said the reason why he came was so that our joy might be complete. I am not sure how we got the reputation for being stogy or overly serious, but if you have been here even one Sunday, you could probably tell that I am doing all I know how to change that reputation.

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Joy and celebration are at the heart of the story of the prodigal son. Many people assume the word “prodigal” means wayward, lost or bad, but actually the word prodigal means “extravagant” or “lavish”. Some pastors argue that we should stop calling this story the story of the “prodigal son” because it puts the emphasis on his mistakes rather than the grace of the father. Given the actual definition many have said we should call this the story of the prodigal father. (If you noticed earlier, I just called it the parable of the “prodigal” for that reason). Because the father is lavish with his love and forgiveness, and if you notice with his material stuff too.

The father has already given his youngest son half of all he owns and his son has squandered it. Most of us are moved by the fact that as the son is returning the father runs to embrace and forgive him before the son can even apologize, but did you notice what happens next? **The father throws a party!** He gets his youngest the nicest robe he owns and slaps a ring on him, and calls for them to cook their finest meat. **This parable is not comparing prodigal vs prudent.** If you compare the younger son with the father (or especially with the older son) you begin to see that **it is not a cautionary tale about avoiding lavishness, it is a story about where to place your extravagance.** What is really worth a party or the nicest things you have? It is our loving relationship with God that deserves our best and most lavish giving.

The bible talks about offering “first fruits” to God. That is because at the harvest the first fruits are the best. Often though when people think about charity they give the leftovers, but when it comes to church I am not sure that matches what we believe. I am confident God is grateful for all of his gifts regardless of the size, but **this life-saving, world-changing, eternal love of God... maybe it deserves something prodigal.**



Chapter 4 – Jealousy

“Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice.’ Luke 15:31-32a

“Comparison is the thief of joy.”
-Theodore Roosevelt

The conclusion of the prodigal son story is the most important and most forgotten part of the story. In my years of doing ministry, I will often ask people to retell the story of the prodigal son. It has always touched me **how moved so many people are by this parable even 2,000 years after it was written.** One thing I find though is that often **people forget to tell the ending of the story.**

I believe that the reason the end is ignored is because that’s when the story gets hard. Most of the story is about the father’s relationship with his younger son, but in the end of the story after seeing the lavish party the father throws for his youngest son, his oldest son is angry and refuses to join in the festivities. The father, being truly caring and loving, goes out into the fields to find the oldest and plead for him to come in. **The oldest is claiming that what the father is doing is unfair. He is jealous of the younger brother and all he gets despite his mistakes.** One of the reasons this is the tough part of the story is that the older brother is not wrong. The situation is unfair. **Grace is by definition unfair.** Mercy is by definition unfair. **Still the jealousy that the older son is experiencing is much more detrimental to him than anything his father ever did.**

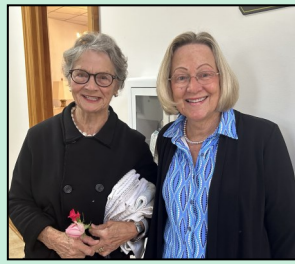
Ofentimes when other churches argue about budgets, someone will suggest, “why don’t we just take what we need, divide it by our membership and then ask each person for that amount.” **People are looking for what their fair share is.** However, there is literally no non-profit on the planet that works that way and it is good that they don’t. It is generosity that transforms us and generosity is unfair. **If we spend our lives measuring what other people get and comparing it to us then just like the older son, we will miss the party.**

Jesus, like the father in this story, **pleads with us to be more than fair.** Not just because it is good for others, but **because it is good for us.** So be generous. **Join the party. Love when you don’t have to. Give when it is not required. Forgive those who have not earned it. Find the freedom that comes from the father’s love.**

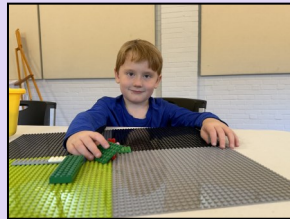
Conclusion



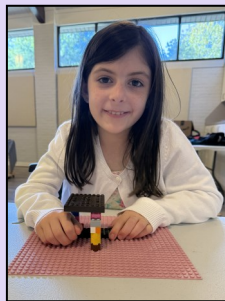
I don't know if the reading of this story makes sense to you, but ever since I looked at it this way I can't see it any other way. Stewardship season, thanksgiving, and this story all come together to me. It constantly teaches me, not about the dangers of **extravagance** but about the spiritual importance of it.



Learning about Esau and Isaac in Children's Chapel



Story depicted in Legos of Esau the hunter in the background and Jacob, his younger brother, standing by his father's bed awaiting his blessing.



An afternoon with EYC, Oct. 13:

Attendees: Landon Newcomb, Lauren and Megan Renck and Liam Jenkins.

Father Les led us through improv ice breakers and a tune or two. It had us all laughing!! Followed by Ping-Pong fun!

Even using his Uke to get in the game!

The Jenkins parents brought us some yummy chicken and green beans.

Lovely afternoon!



An afternoon with EYC, Oct. 27

Attendees: Landon Newcomb and Jack Lea.

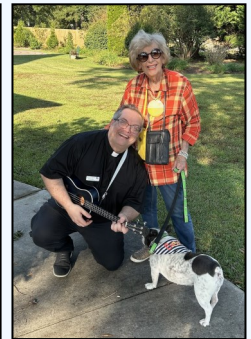
Decorating for fall, Scavenger hunt about the inner church, BoJangles, and Ping Pong.

Blessing of the Animals

The Preschool Blessing took place Friday, October 4th out on our playground. Dogs, fish, and plenty of beloved stuffed animals received a blessing from Rev. Les.



St. Andrew's Blessing of the Animals took place on Saturday, October 5th. Rev. Les led us in service and serenaded all the animals with the ukelele.





NOVEMBER 2024



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>8:00 am HE Rite I Pack backpack food bags 9:15 am Adult Ed 10:30 a.m. HE Rite II</p>	<p>4 St. Elizabeth's Guild 12pm TRAC 6:30-9:00pm</p>	<p>5 Food Pantry 9-11am Book Club 10:00 am</p>	 <p>6 Food Pantry 9-10:30am Healing Service - 10:30am</p>	<p>7 Food Pantry 9-11am TRCC 5:00-7:00pm</p>	<p>1 Men's Club 8am Turn clocks back 1 hour</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>10 8:00 am HE Rite I Pack backpack food bags 9:15 am Adult Ed 10:30 am HE Rite II</p>	<p>11 TRAC 6:30-9:00pm</p>	<p>12 Food Pantry 9-11am Book Club 10:00 am ADK 4:00pm Lion's Club 6:00pm Finance 6:00 pm</p>	<p>13 Food Pantry 9-10:30am Healing Service 10:30am</p>	<p>14 Food Pantry 9 -11am Meals on Wheels—10am TRCC 5:00-7:00pm</p>	<p>15 Shrimparoo 6pm</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>17 8:00 am HE Rite I Pack backpack food bags 9:15 am Adult Ed 10:30 am HE Rite II Pack food pantry bags</p>	<p>18 Gamma Tau 4:30pm TRAC 6:30-9:00pm</p>	<p>19 Food Pantry 9-11am</p>	<p>20 Food Pantry 9-10:30am Healing Service 10:30am Vestry 6:00 pm</p>	<p>21 Food Pantry 9-11am TRCC 5:00-7:00pm</p>	<p>22 Convention</p>	<p>23 TRCC 3:00-5:30pm</p>
<p>24 8:00 am HE Rite I Pack backpack food bags 9:15 am Adult Ed 10:30 am HE Rite II</p>	<p>25 Thanksgiving Food Bags 9-11am TRAC 6:30-9:00pm Preschool Closed</p>	<p>26 Food Pantry 9-11am Townes Homeowners 4:30-6pm ADK 4:00pm Lion's Club 6:00pm Preschool Closed</p>	<p>27 Food Pantry 9-10:30am Preschool Closed</p>	<p>28  Office and Preschool Closed</p>	<p>29 Office closed Preschool Closed</p>	<p>30</p>



NOVEMBER

2024



LAY/LEM READERS

November 3
 8:00 Dick Arnow
 Ramona Orzell

10:30 Jeanie Armstrong
 Elizabeth Pope

November 10
 8:00 Albert Corinth
 Ramona Orzell

10:30 Matt Smith
 Sandy Suggs
 Linda Hutcheson

November 17
 8:00 Tim Knapp
 Ramona Orzell

10:30 Pete Roy
 Elizabeth Pope
 Leslie Hall

November 24
 8:00 Lynn Arnow
 Tim Knapp

10:30 Terry Shackelford
 Jeanie Armstrong
 Martha Lamm

Acolytes

November 3
 10:30 Walker Wells
 Jack Lea

November 10
 10:30 Lauren and Megan Renck

November 17
 10:30 Mericle Family

November 24
 10:30 Landon Newcomb
 Liam Jenkins



*Lord God, our hearts are
 crowded with gratitude as we
 celebrate the feast of Thanksgiving.
 We have come to this our feasting
 table with great joy and eagerness, for
 we are truly grateful to you, our God,
 for all that we have been given.*

~ Edward Hays

USHERS

November 3
 Billy Suggs
 Steve Thurkill

November 10
 Jan Arnold
 Mike Pitt

November 17
 Dan Melnyk
 Don Mucci

November 24
 Angela Reid
 Tom Jenkins

Kitchen Clean Up

Rita Coggins and EYC

Pantry Distributors

Tuesday—Patty Kennedy
 Wednesday—Tommy Parker
 Thursday—Elizabeth Hunter

Pantry Volunteers

Rita Coggins
 Rosemary Clark
 Missy Filletaz

GREETERS

Lori Joynes



"Andrew's Rock"

Lyrics by Rev. Les—Tune to "Jail House Rock"



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"Went to a party at a rockin' Church"



"Y'all come won't you sing along. We are going to jam with Pete Armstrong"



"All are welcome to join the fam. We are going to party like Martha Lamm!"



"We're dancing to Andrew's Rock"





“Let’s Rock, like the ages lets rock,
Everybody in the whole square block
We’re dancing to Andrew’s rock”



Hurricane Relief

Thank you to everyone who helped in our endeavors to bring much needed supplies to Western NC after Hurricane Helene. We were able to take up two loads of supplies, one the Monday after the storm and then a week later, we packed up a U-Haul full of much needed items that our Senior Warden Pete Armstrong and George Greer drove up and delivered to Newland and West Jefferson, NC.

First Delivery:



Thank you to the Earps for the donation of a generator to West Jefferson!



Second Delivery:



Supplies donated from Wake Med were picked up on the way up to the mountains.



Filling up the U-Haul



Men's Night Out—Steakout

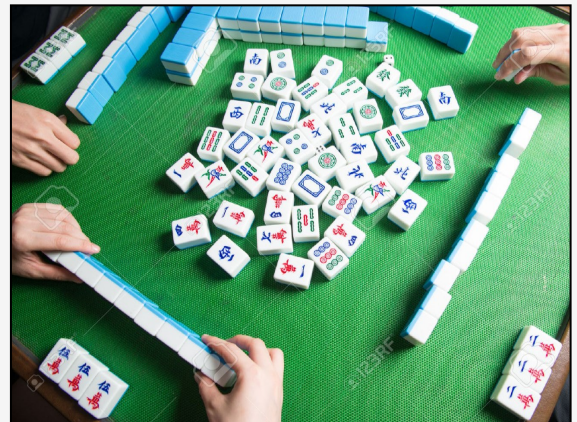


Episcopal Mahjong

Join us to play Mahjong with fellow Episcopalians from St. Andrew's and Good shepherd. To begin, let's meet on Wednesday, November 6th at 6pm in the Parish Hall at St. Andrew's. Be sure to bring your 2024 Card.

Kind Respond,

Sissy Dunton 252-883-3464
Boyd Harris 252-904-6647
Terry Noble 252-813-4646



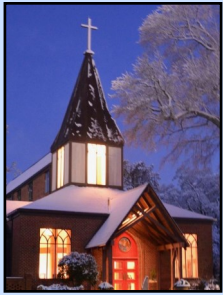


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 301 Circle Drive • Rocky Mount, NC 27804

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Return Service Requested

Our Parish Family



Shrimparoo

Friday, November 15th
 6pm in the Parish Hall

Come join us for a delicious meal hosted by the Men's Club! Please call or email the office to register.



The Men's Club is meeting Saturday, November 2nd at 8am.



Every Sunday after the 8am service, we will be packing food bags for the students at Winstead Elementary.

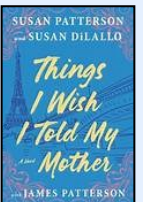
On November 17th, we will pack bags for the food pantry after the 10:30am service.

Angel Tree is starting up again soon! The children at Carriage Court Apartments are our special mission throughout the year. If you've helped in the past, thank you; for those who are busy, please



consider choosing a child in this season celebrating the birth of our Lord. Angel Tree will be open starting December 1st and all gifts need to be returned by December 17th.

St Andrew's Book Club will meet on Tuesday, November 12th at 10am. We're reading Things I Wish I Had Told My Mother by Susan Patterson. Everyone is welcome!



Thanksgiving Gift Boxes

We are collecting money to make 75 Thanksgiving boxes. One box is \$20 and that will feed a family of 4 a delicious Thanksgiving meal! We will give out the boxes on Monday, November 25th between 9-11am.

St. Elizabeth's Guild meets on Monday, November 4th at 12:00pm.