

February 2026

The Episcopal Church in
Gettysburg, PA

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The Memorial Church of the Prince of Peace

The Episcopal Epistle

From the Priest In Charge

The Rev. Jim Strader-Sasser



"Don't even begin to think that I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I haven't come to do away with them but to fulfill them. I say to you very seriously that as long as heaven and earth exist, neither the smallest letter

nor even the smallest stroke of a pen will be erased from the Law until everything there becomes a reality. Therefore, whoever ignores one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called the lowest in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps these commands and teaches people to keep them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I say to you that unless your righteousness is greater than the righteousness of the legal experts and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5: 17-20)

"The energy now spent on self-protection can be converted into positive energy if we're willing to encounter reality and see it clearly. Facing reality is an empowering act - it can liberate our mind and heart to discern how best to use our power and influence in service for this time." (Wheatley, 2017)

I'll begin by saying that I'm like many clerics. I frequently use scripture as a device to introduce a topic that I'm writing about in an article (like this one). On occasion, I'll also add a quote

from a subject matter expert that I admire. These techniques manifest the essence of what my position is on the matter. They present my biases too. It's

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obvious that a writer can “cherry pick” from thousands of biblical verses as well as dozens of scholars to support their discourse. We assuredly think that we’ve got the correct opinion and supporting facts. However, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s timeless quote: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts” is becoming increasingly invalid.

That said, I, along with hundreds of clerics, politicians, philosophers, commentators, and every day citizens have something to say about what’s presently going on in our nation – most specifically in Minnesota. Some people who read this article may think that it is inappropriate to mention socio-economic-political matters in church settings. My response is Jesus Christ’s Gospel is indeed radically relevant to The Way followers live out their lives and express their values. We manifest in the world what we share in corporate prayer and sacraments. Similarly, we would not have Christ’s Gospel without its foundation in Hebrew Prophetic declarations and demands for righteousness as defined in the Torah. It is well past time to make our words more than words and demonstrate Jesus’ strength.

Here’s an analogy regarding today’s reality. When someone has a compound fracture, the initial response is not to initiate a conversation about what needs to happen. A prayer circle is well intended, and it doesn’t provide immediate healing. A complex, compound fracture is a medical/neurological emergency! Someone needs to call 911, ASAP. Someone must carefully determine if

the victim is experiencing shock. Observers must act to terminate bleeding, promptly cover the wound, while praying. The injured person could die unless she or he receives urgent and effective care.

From my perspective, our nation’s ethical and relational bone structures are severely fractured. We are bleeding badly. Many of us are experiencing shock – at least spiritually and mentally. Dare I say, in Minneapolis (and around the country), things are more than fractured. People are being pulled from their cars and homes. Masked, armed, “stormtroopers” are shooting first and asking questions later. People’s 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th amendment rights are rejected. Instead, ICE officers spray peaceful protestors with teargas and shoot them with rubber bullets, including a Presbyterian minister. There have been more than the two tragic murders. Beyond Minneapolis, thousands of people are dying and suffering in profitable detention centers. Our nation’s leaders have lost their moral compass, if they ever had one. The occupant of the White House literally declares he hates his enemies. A significant number of his supporters willfully disregard scriptural commandments to care for the poor, offer sight to the blind, and stand alongside of marginalized people and communities. Instead, the government continues to fund ICE with billions of dollars while cutting citizens’ healthcare benefits. At a similar point in time, Jesus of Nazareth threw over tables, chased moneychangers from Holy Ground, and rebuked the responsible leaders.

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Photo by Mike Newbry on Unsplash

Theologically, morally, and spiritually, from almost any religious point of view, officials possessing political, economic, societal, and military power (locally and nationally) should not create chaos, replace democracy with fascism, and murder/ harm citizens and refugees alike. Today, billionaires and governing authorities act as if the Parable of The Good Samaritan, the Golden Rule, The Ten Commandments, and any number of other ethical/relational pronouncements are irrelevant if not stupid. Righteousness – behaviors characterized by standards of morality, justice, and uprightness— are dispensable. Consequently, the nation as we know and love it may die unless neighbors, citizens, and empowered leaders don't initiate immediate and appropriate trauma care. Such righteousness isn't only their responsibility. It is ours – in fact we have much greater spheres of influence, at least within our community, rather than requesting or wishing that someone else solve the problem.

You can read various leaders' calls for discernment, support, and action almost anywhere. I'll offer you a few links here. Episcopal bishops, especially the Rt. Rev. Craig Loya – Diocesan Bishop of Minnesota speak against tyranny. They offer suggestions for compassionate responses in this Episcopal News Service [article](#). The Rev. Pamela Cooper White offers us a host of local service agencies and compassionate care providers elsewhere in this newsletter. You can also find it [here](#). My spouse crafted a [letter](#) to his congregation. I recommend it to you. Reverend Paul Rauschenbusch, CEO and Director of the Interfaith Alliance, wrote an encouraging [article](#) on Substack. He concluded by saying:

In America today, we simply cannot say that we love our neighbor while tolerating ICE's cruelty and abuse. It is time for people of faith and for all Americans to choose love and solidarity over ICE's brutality. And, for the love of God, it is time for ICE to get out of Minnesota and all our communities. (Rauschenbusch, 2026)

Many of us are afraid and perhaps feel as if there is nothing we can do. All of us own telephones. It may seem worthless to call Senators and Representatives. Research tells us otherwise. Conversations with local and commonwealth officials are even more effective. We can find everything we need [here](#). For those of us who possess activist tendencies – here's a list of [actions](#) to support. Non-violent protesting on street

corners is an artform of sorts. Standing up for peace offers visible opportunities to resist evil. We join with other people who express signs of courageous hope too.

Matthew's Jesus is quite candid in Chapter 5 that our acts of righteousness are more important than our creedal statements of faith, repentant requests for forgiveness, or other acts of worship. It is very challenging to confront reality when so many of our natural evolutionary tendencies inform us to avoid dangerous situations, preserve ourselves, and resist exposure whenever possible. It is downright scary to fight back against a regime – especially when the regime declares such confrontations to be illegal. The Theology of The Cross requires bravery, a deep sense of trust in oneself, one's friends, and one's God(s). Socially diverse neighbors in Minneapolis, religious or not, are demonstrating that love for their shared communities and common values are indeed stronger than hate – even death. Their presence in sub-zero weather while standing up for themselves in the face of state-sponsored violence mirrors the faith of the early followers of The Way who bonded with one another and the Lord they believed in.

Our shared home is not on fire (yet) in Gettysburg. That said, there are neighbors who live within two or three blocks of our church buildings and grounds who are afraid to leave their homes or allow their children to go to school. We Episcopalians are quick to say that we love our neighbors, share communion with other Episcopal parishes, and live as agents of Christ's reconciliation. Recently Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe wrote:

“Carrying out the simple commands of Jesus—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, making peace—now involves risks for the church and grave danger for those we serve. As Christians, we must acknowledge that this chaos and division is not of God, and we must commit ourselves to paying whatever price our witness requires of us.” (Rowe, 2026)

It is time to faithfully collaborate and address reality, honestly. There are matters within our spheres of influence we can strive to accomplish. God does not call all of us to be martyrs. Christ does beckon us to live into our baptismal covenants. The Holy Spirit does have purifying and prophetic ideals for us to consider and pursue. God's triune love, in our Christian tradition, is sacrificial and communal.

Blessings along The Way, Jim+





From The Chaplain's Corner

Last month at a yearly doctor's check-up, I was left alone in the exam room between nurses. A computer screen kept flashing a company screen saver meant to inspire the medical employees in their service to patients. The screen was broken up into four sections under the broad category of "**Our Values.**" In the middle was the word, "**Integrity.**" Included in the four sections were terms like, "Excellence, Resourceful" and "High Standards." In the bottom left corner were the words, "**Caring**" and "**Listening.**" *Bingo! Now they were talking my language!*

My understanding went quickly to thinking of the doctors and nurses performing a *ministry*. Could it be that those terms in the office describe our service to one another in our Christian community? YES! Every week I see how members of Prince of Peace take care of their brothers and sisters as they navigate the celebrations and storms of their lives. *We care and we listen.* This activity represents the foundation of our healing ministry in our worship services, which will be restarting soon, but it starts in our hearts as we reach out in love and prayer for each other. We find our direction from Jesus Christ when he said to

Peter that he should *feed his sheep and tend his lambs*. He was also speaking to us. And we are all his beloved sheep. We show our love for Jesus by the way we care for one another. Listening and caring are expressions of love toward Jesus, even as they express our much needed and appreciated love for those we call brothers and sisters here at PoP. By my witness, this happens freely and generously. And with God's help, may it be that way forever.

God's Peace, *Rev Cathy+*





Pancake Day

It has been the tradition at Prince of Peace to host Pancake Day on Shrove Tuesday, the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday. In the past, Pancake Day was held at the Gettysburg firehouse and open to the local community. However, we lost use of the kitchen at the firehouse and, since then, Prince of Peace has partnered with Perkins Pancake House in which, by presenting a coupon, a percentage of the receipts collected was donated to Prince of Peace to our Outreach Distribution Committee for charitable giving. This year Pancake Day is coming back in house to Prince of Peace. A Pancake Breakfast will be offered on Shrove Tuesday, February 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the undercroft of the church. Pancakes, sausage, fruit, coffee, and juices will be available for a FREE WILL OFFERING for parishioners, family and friends. Coupons for use at Perkins will also be available for use on Shrove Tuesday at Perkins (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) where a percentage of the proceeds will be returned to the parish. What we are hoping you will do is not just come to breakfast here at Prince of Peace but also then head over to Perkins for lunch and or dinner on Shrove Tuesday and present your coupon.

On the table in the hallway by the parlor are two things. One is a sign-up sheet for volunteers to help out. On Pancake Day we need people to help set up, clean up, be runners, man the stations, and help cook. The second sheet is a sign up sheet to indicate whether you plan to come to Pancake Day here at the church. We need to get an idea of how much supplies to buy so, if you would like to attend, please sign up.

One final thing, as many of you know, Pete Lindquist, before he passed, was very involved in the parish and with Pancake Day. We would like to institute the Pete Lindquist Pancake Day challenge. In addition to your free will offering on Pancake Day and going to Perkins, if you would consider donating, if you can, \$10 for individuals and \$20 for families to the Pete Linquist Pancake Challenge Fund. Let's make Pete proud of us by renewing our Pancake Day tradition here at Prince of Peace.

Ash Wednesday

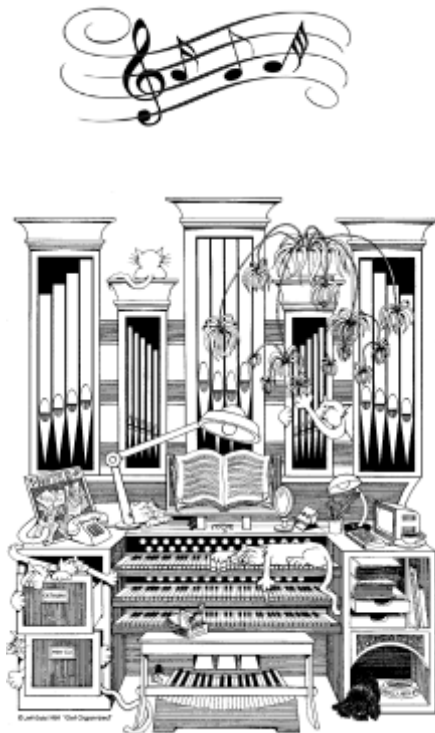
If Pancake Day is on February 17th, then it stands to reason that the next day is Ash Wednesday. There are two services of Holy Eucharist scheduled, with the Imposition of Ashes, at 12:00 PM and 7:00 PM.



Organist & Choir Director

FEBRUARY - - that cold, dark and dreary month: the month that brings Groundhog's Day, Valentine's Day, two President's birthdays, Ash Wednesday – the beginning of the season of Lent, maybe a big snow-storm (or two!) and the promise of the coming transformation from winter into spring. February, along with January, was introduced onto the Roman calendar by Numa Pompilius at approximately 700 BCE when the calendar was extended from ten months to twelve.

The word 'February' comes from the word 'februa' - which means "cleansing" or "purification," and reflects the rituals undertaken before Spring.



"When in our music God is glorified."

It is with a sense of joy and anticipation that I look forward to returning to Prince of Peace as your Organist and Choir Director beginning on Sunday morning, February 1, 2026. I eagerly look forward to being again with this congregation, to working with the members of the clergy and staff, and especially to making music with the choir(s) and parish musicians; and to experience again the beauty of the music and worship liturgy of the Episcopal Church.



The Prince of Peace Choir

It is never too late to become a part of the church's Music Ministry: all those who currently sing in the Prince of Peace Choir, or have sung in the choir in the past, OR would simply like to consider singing in the choir and just haven't gotten around to it . . . please consider yourselves invited to join us as we begin weekly choir rehearsals again beginning on **Thursday evening, January 29th at 7:00 PM**, and hopes to sing at worship the following Sunday, February 1, 2026.

The choir is open to anyone from high school age through adult. Please come and bring a friend as we celebrate together, *"Singing and making melody unto the Lord,"* – all are welcome!

The Prince of Peace Handbell Choir

The church has a three-octave set of handbells, as well as a three-octave set of choir chimes, and at one time had quite a fine handbell choir.

If there is an interest in starting up the handbell choir again, please speak with Cathy to discuss the possibilities.

HYMNAL HIGHLIGHTS:

Transfiguration Sunday - the last Sunday in Epiphany (this year on February 15th) – where Jesus and three of his apostles, Peter, James and John, go to a mountain to pray, and while there, Jesus begins to shine with bright rays of light; then the Old Testament figures Moses and Elijah appear, and he speaks with them.

The Transfiguration is a climactic point in the Christian calendar: on this day one passes from the season of light and revelation to the contemplative and introspective season of Lent.

One of the traditions practiced is that after this day the exclamation of praise, “*Alleluia*,” is put to rest, and will not appear again until Easter. For this reason, then, many of the hymns sung on Transfiguration Sunday contain “*Alleluias*.”

One of the hymns to be sung on this Transfiguration Sunday is “*Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*,” found in the Hymnal 1982 #410. This hymn - each verse an exuberant hymn of praise and thanksgiving, and ending with “*Alleluias*,” - was written by Anglican divine, hymnodist and poet, **Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)**, and is based on Psalm 103. Born in Scotland, he was described by his father as a “*ne-er do well*,” more interested in fishing and shooting than in facing up to his family responsibilities. In 1816, he experienced an evangelical conversion and began to study the Bible in earnest and to “preach in another manner.”

Lyte was an expert flute player, spoke Latin, Greek, French and enjoyed discussing literature. But despite his varied academic background, he was able to relate and identify with his parish of fishermen, visiting them in their homes and on board their ships in the harbor, supplying every vessel with a Bible, and compiling songs and a manual of devotions for use at sea.

This hymn is most commonly sung to the tune, **LAUDA ANIMA** (“*Praise my Soul*”), which was written as a setting for Lyte’s words by the English organist, composer and teacher, **John Goss (1800-1880)** in 1868. Born to a musical family, Goss was a boy chorister of the Chapel Royal, London, and later was a pupil of Thomas Attwood, organist of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Among his best-known compositions are his two hymn tunes, *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven*, and the Christmas song, *See, Amid the Winter’s Snow*.



THE SEASON OF LENT:

The season of Lent is a 40-day period of spiritual preparation in the Christian tradition that begins on Ash Wednesday – this year on February 18th - and ends on Holy Saturday. It is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving, a significant time for self-examination and spiritual growth within, aimed at reflecting on one's faith and preparing for the celebration of Easter, which commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Coming from the Anglo-Saxon word “*lencten*,” meaning “*lengthen*,” the term “*Lent*” refers to the lengthening of days as spring approaches.

On Ash Wednesday, clergy all over the world dispense ashes, usually made by burning the palm fronds distributed on last year's Palm Sunday, making the sign of the cross on the bowed foreheads of those people before them. As they “impose” or “dispense” the ashes, the pastor or priest recites a passage from Genesis 3:19: “*For dust you are and to dust you shall return*,” a reminder that our lives are short and we must live them to the fullest.

There is often a big party or celebration the night before Ash Wednesday: Mardi Gras, or “Fat Tuesday,” a secular observance that evolved out of “Shrove Tuesday,” the last hurrah – usually marked by the eating of pancakes, fastnachts, or other sinfully sweet foods – before the solemnity and penance of Lent set in.

Cathy Elkiss

They Couldn't Have Escaped Egypt Without Help



Ways to Help Migrants in Adams County

The Rev. Pam Cooper-White

Several people asked for more information about the various migrant ministries and services that I mentioned in my sermon on January 4. Here in Adams County there are quite a few migrant ministries and social services where you can volunteer or contribute funds to help those who, like the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt, are caught up in fear and distress.

Gettysburg Area Ministerium's refugee resettlement program: <https://www.gettysburgchurches.org/rrp>.

Pennsylvania Council of Churches' Fruitbelt Farmworker Christian Ministry <https://pachurches.org/ministries/farmworkermigrant-ministry/>

Adams County Literacy Council where you can be an English language tutor <https://www.iu12.org/programs-services/adult-education-programs/aclc>

Manos Unidas Hispanic-American Center in Gettysburg <https://www.facebook.com/manosunidasadamscounty/>

Pennsylvania Immigrant Coalition <https://www.paimmigrant.org/>

Pennsylvania Immigrant & Refugee Women's Network (Harrisburg) <https://www.pairwn.org/>

Latino Services Task Force of Healthy Adams County – scroll down on webpage <https://www.healthyadamscounty.org/task-forces-initiatives/>

Project Gettysburg-Léon's Casa de la Cultura <https://www.casagettsburg.org/>

Newcomers Welcome

Newcomers' Welcome: There are many new faces and folks attending worship and other parochial activities. It seems like a great time to say “hello” and get to know one another better. Let's put plans in place to have a welcoming gathering on Sunday—February 15th—following the 10:15 worship service. We're inviting new and not so new folks to chat with one another during coffee hour. We'll then gather our newcomers together for a little more conversation and information sharing.



Cat and Dog Product Donations

We continue our monthly ingathering of products for the two no kill shelters in the area we are supporting: Forever Love in Gettysburg and the Helen Krause Animal Foundation in Dillsburg. When you go to the grocery store think about “God's Little Ones” and pick up a can or two or a bag of cat or dog food to help these shelters feed, rehabilitate and find good loving homes, “Forever Homes”. We thank everyone for the very generous outpouring of support on Sunday, January 25th. The bin was filled once again and Lee has picked the products up for delivery to the shelters. He expresses his sincere thanks to everyone who donated. The bin will be in place for the next scheduled intake date, February 22nd.



SERVICE SCHEDULE

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist

WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

12:00 Noon Holy Eucharist



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February 1
Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
 Micah 6:1-8
 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
 Matthew 5:1-12
 Psalm 15

February 8
The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
 Isaiah 58:1-9a, [9b-12]
 1 Corinthians 2:1-12,
 Matthew 5:13-20
 Psalm 112:1-9,

February 15
Last Sunday after the Epiphany
 Exodus 24:12-18
 2 Peter 1:16-21
 Matthew 17:1-9
 Psalm 99

February 22
First Sunday in Lent
 Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7
 Romans 5:12-19
 Matthew 4:1-11
 Psalm 32

The Memorial Church of the Prince of Peace

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The Rev. James Strader-Sasser
 Priest In Charge

The Rev. Pamela Cooper White Ph.D. Priest Associate

The Rev. Richard A. Ginnever
 Priest Associate

The Rev. Cathy McKinney
 Chaplain for Pastoral Care

Cathy Elkiss
 Organist and Choirmaster

Marrie Sanders
 Parish Administrator
princeofpeace@gettysburgepiscopal.org

Tim Back, Sexton

Office Hours:
Monday-Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.