

August 2025

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*



Ancient Ruins - Roman Forum

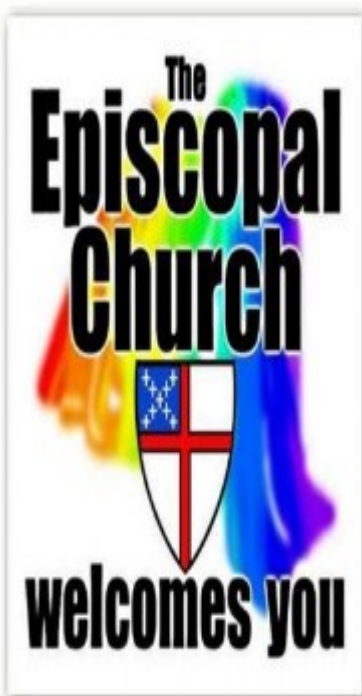
Then he told them a parable: "A certain rich man's land produced a bountiful crop. He said to himself, What will I do? I have no place to store my harvest! Then he thought, Here's what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. That's where I'll store all my grain and goods. I'll say to myself, You have stored up plenty of goods, enough for several years. Take it easy! eat, drink, and enjoy yourself. But God said to him, 'Fool, tonight you will die. Now who will get the things you have prepared for yourself?' This is the way it will be for those who hoard things for themselves and aren't rich toward God." ([Luke 12: 16-21](#))

Archaeological and historical data indicates that Macedonian Ruler, Philip II (Father of Alexander the Great) brought the walled city of Philippi into being in the 4th Century BCE. The city was influential and wealthy because of nearby deposits of gold and silver. (Britannica, 2023). Octavian established a colony of Roman veterans there following the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE. (Britannica, 2023).

Builders of The Roman forum, pictured above, began their work sometime between 30-50 CE. Scriptural documentation along with some archaeological data indicates that Saul (Paul of Tarsus) arrived in Philippi about the same time, 49-50 CE. (Visit Kavala, 2025).

Philippi was the arrival point for Paul's second missionary trip.

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He initiated his first mission in Eastern Europe there. If we are to believe the (suspicious) historicity of the Acts of Apostles, Luke was an apostle who traveled to Philippi with Paul. Some scholars suggest that Luke, possibly remained there, following Paul and Silas' imprisonment and subsequent departure for further missionary work.

New Testament scholars generally concur that both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were originally composed in Koine Greek between 80 and 110 CE – quite a bit of time between Paul (and Luke's) presence in Philippi. Christianity became a settled, widely accepted religious system, especially with Gentiles throughout the Mediterranean basin. Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, historically valid or not, are definitively important roots of Christianity's emergence, theological/dogmatic concepts, and spiritual practices. Undeniably Christianity socio-political-ethical evolution has had profound impact upon ancient, medieval, and contemporary peoples and societies around the world. We shouldn't forget that many early "Christ-followers" were generally marginalized, economically poor, and the victims under imperial rule.

Similarly, we should faithfully and knowledgeably ground our contemporary and varied Christian beliefs with devoted consideration for the ancient persons' and their communities' contexts, religious beliefs, cultural perspectives, and spiritual experiences.



Mosaic tile from the 4th Century CE cathedral in Philippi

Then as now, Christians have lived their beliefs, liturgical practices, and apostolic faith pluralistically – constantly debating one another and schismatically declaring that one particular expression is orthodox and all the others are heretical. There is clear evidence of such debate in Luke's writings as well as Paul's epistles. How we presently engage in this exploration is constantly (mis) informed, "biased," and revised because of the numerous interpretations, redactions, and doctrinal stipulations initiated and instituted by ancient Patristic theologians and subsequent ecclesiastical authorities. Reformers such as Augustine, Luther, Thomas Aquinas Calvin, Wesley, Hooker and hundreds of countless other scholars and Christian leaders further developed subsequent pertinent, controversial, and foundational concepts, doctrines, and worship practices.

Anglicans state that we are a Christian faith thriving in unity without uniformity. Our particular Christian vision is that Anglicans can faithfully live under a large, compassionate, and mutually faithful tent. There is certainly plenty of evidence

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suggesting that this is an aspirational hope rather than a verifiable reality. Thus, we, who claim to be Episcopalians, must continually profess in prayer, sacrament, and deeds that we are one, holy and apostolic Church advancing our efforts because of God's eternal love. Of course, we can only seek to achieve these goals because of God's Grace and our devoted attempts to, in Paul's words, run the race that is set before us. (1 Corinthians 9: 24).

Luke 12 supports at least one or two constitutive and enduring commandments that Jesus of Nazareth and the early apostle Paul taught to disciples and early Jewish and Gentile followers of The Way. First, those who state they are followers of Jesus (believers in Christ) must love God and their neighbors. Their understanding of compassionate neighborliness ([*Ἀγαπήσεις*](#) – wholehearted love) went far beyond ancient Greek and Roman philosophical understandings. Second, we should not profess or constrain God's Reign in the construction of buildings or excessive wealth. Yes, sacred spaces such as the 4th Century Cathedral at Philippi (dedicated to St. Paul's presence in Philippi), are sacred and beautiful. And such places would not exist if Paul had not devotedly and courageously gone out to preach, teach, and share his understanding of the Gospel. God's love is incarnate and shared in compassionate, sacrificial ways.

Our Christian pilgrimage is our contemporary effort to uphold the very blessed aspects of what has been handed

down to us as well as how we can better learn and live into the true nature of our human nature. Worship in valuably sacred spaces offer opportunities to offer thanksgiving, seek repentance, as well as impetus to go out to love and serve the One who taught us to love God and one another. Blessings along The Way, Jim+

Wetzer Scholarship 2025

The Wetzer Scholarship Committee members Bob Gough, Terri Johnsen, and Carolyn Fouts received and reviewed the five applications which were received from our young adults currently studying for their undergraduate degrees. We recommended to the vestry that each student be awarded a \$7,500 scholarship to help defray their school expenses. The recipients for the 2025 – 2026 academic year are as follows:

Anne Bair, entering her senior year at Colgate University, in Hamilton, New York.

Spencer Kennedy, entering his junior year at Swarthmore College, in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

Savannah Schneider, a first-year student at Ithaca College, in Ithaca, New York.

Sarah Swope, entering her junior year at Penn State, University Park, Pennsylvania.

Ryan Van Dyke, entering his senior year at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

We congratulate our young adults on their academic achievements and wish them success in the coming year. This year marks the first time that we have a second-generation parishioner receiving a scholarship from the Wetzer fund. Savannah's mother, Danielle, also was a

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recipient of scholarship help from the fund in the early years of its establishment.

The Wetzter Scholarship Fund was a direct bequest of \$150,000, in the will of Hilda Wetzter, who died in 1993. We have been fortunate with the healthy financial markets, and that fund is currently in a position to help our young people in their educational endeavors for the foreseeable future.

PoP Women's Get Together

"Mark your calendars! The next PoP Women's Get-Together is Saturday, 16 August 2025, from 11:00 am to 2:00ish in the Undercroft.

Theme: *I Pledge . . . Bingo! . . . and just to get to know each other.*

Please come and bring your brown bag lunch (Drinks and Dessert provided). Fun ice-breaker questions and "I Pledge . . . BINGO!"

If you win the round of BINGO!, you sign a Pledge Card with a designation of a gift for your favorite charity. Winner takes home a modest door prize and their Pledge Card as a reminder of their commitment. If you don't want to play the BINGO! Please come just to chat and chew! All are welcome. If you would like more info, please contact Heather Swope or Barbara House. A Sign-Up Sheet is in the Narthex."

Grateful 

High Street Marching and Chowder Society Gathering

When: 6pm, Thursday, August 14

Cost: \$15.00 Pay financial officer, Bob Gough, when signing up!! A sign up sheet is posted. Deadline for signing up is August 11.

Where: Ben's Deck, Agenda: Chowder, Chicken and Cheer

All men of the Memorial Church of the Prince of Peace are cordially invited to attend.

Thank you,

Ben Jones



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 this past Sunday, July 27th. 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, Sunday, August 31st. **THANK YOU!**



Mark Your Calendars

Please mark your calendars for the upcoming events at Prince of Peace:

Thursday, Aug. 14th: High Street Chowder and Marching Society Gathering

Saturday, Aug. 16th: Women’s Group Bingo

Tuesday, Aug. 26th: Deadline for the September newsletter.

Saturday, Aug. 30th: Holy Strollers—Strawberry Hill Walk

Sunday, September 7th: Annual service and picnic at Gettysburg Area Recreation Park. This year we have reserved the Lions Pavilion.

Help us keep our records up to date.

Have we missed listing your birthday or anniversary in the past?

We may not have the information in our database. Please contact Marrie at the office with your information.

717-334-6463

princeofpeace@gettysburgepiscopal.org

SERVICE SCHEDULE SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist

10:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist

TUESDAY Compline 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

*The obligation to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human being is binding for all the baptized. The authority with which **leaders**—ordained persons, adults who minister with minors (**children** and **youth**), youth in leadership roles, and adults who minister with vulnerable humans—are entrusted creates an inherent power imbalance in the relationship. ([Episcopal Church - Safe Church](#))*



The
EPISCOPAL CHURCH in
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

Parishes Must Adopt Safe Church Policies by August 31

The Council of Trustees approved the adoption of two model Safe Church policies from The Episcopal Church, one for Children and Youth and one for Vulnerable Adults. Parishes have until August 31 to adopt these policies or adapt their guidelines to meet or exceed the requirements outlined in them. Parishes must also complete an annual Safe Church Self-Audit. Learn more [here](#).

[Parishes Must Adopt Safe Church Policies by August 31](#)

The parish administrator and I have received a significant amount of correspondence from the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Rt. Rev. Dr. Audrey Scanlan regarding updated diocesan and denominational requirements for providing safe, sacred spaces for congregations, especially infants, children, and youth as well as chronologically elderly persons and those persons living with disabilities. These policies are more restrictive than those I've experienced in earlier parochial settings. I infer this reality will be true for us as an Episcopal parish now. My purpose with this article is to inform you of these updated policies and the impact upon The Memorial Church of The Prince of Peace's congregational and programmatic lives.

Here are some examples, Policy changes include a requirement that every parish must provide the diocese audited updates to its compliance with Safe Church practices. Similarly, everyone desiring access to enter the parish's buildings must complete a set of uncomplicated, notionally time-consuming, yet informative Safe Church modules. Sunday School, and similar external/internal youth group offerings must be offered in spaces that are "well-monitored, visually accessible spaces providing supervised visual contact with the adult program leader. ... not near unused spaces in the building complex." And, parochial clerical and lay leaders, depending upon their span of responsibilities, must complete a set of background checks (as required by Commonwealth of PA, and denominational policies. There is a defined list of those requirements [here](#) and [here](#).

[DIOCPA Policy and Background Checks - Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania](#)

[Required Modules - Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania](#)

My interpretation of these new policies is that neither Marrie, as the parish's Safe Church Administrator, or I as the parish's priest, possess much if any degree of latitude in implementing these updated Safe Church programs. There is an August 31 deadline for us to do what we can in the short term of be in compliance. Consequently, the vestry has been addressing these matters. The junior warden and parish administrator, based upon the vestry's and Priest-in-Charges oversight will undertake efforts to make the church building safer for the congregation as well as for other community groups who access the parish's properties. One of the first steps, in the upcoming weeks, will be to re-key the doors offering entry into the parish building. Persons seeking access (keys) for the outside doors must complete these four required [modules](#):

- **Safe Church, Safe Communities: Introduction & Theological Background** (25 mins.)
- **Safe Church, Safe Communities: Organizational Rule & Policies** (15 mins.)
- **Safe Church, Safe Communities: Healthy Boundaries** (15 mins.)
- **Safe Church, Safe Communities: Inclusion** (15 mins.)

As mentioned earlier, Marrie is the parish's dedicated Safe Church representative. She, along with me, are morally and legally responsible for maintaining and updating the parish's Safe Church records, issuing keys based upon policy requirements and completion, and providing access to the required training modules. I understand that some of you may view these policies as the diocese "overreaching" its interest in your personal, familial, or professional backgrounds/privacy. I construe that the new audit process provides opportunities for us and other parishes to express our concerns and related complications. And, such input won't immediately change the new "status quo." Please help Marrie, the vestry and me, in establishing these best practices as we strive to ensure providing safe and holy spaces for younger and more elderly persons, and this Christian community.

Blessings along The Way, Jim+

God is our refuge and
strength, a very present
help in trouble. Therefore
we will not fear though the
earth gives way, though
the mountains be moved
into the heart of the sea,
Psalm 46:1-2

**August 3
Pentecost 8**

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14;
2:18-23
Psalm 49:1-11
Colossians 3:1-11
Luke 12:13-21

**August 10
Pentecost 9**

Genesis 15:1-6
Psalm 33:12-22
Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16
Luke 12:32-40

**August 17
Pentecost 10**

Jeremiah 23:23-29
Psalm 82
Hebrews 11:29-12:2
Luke 12:49-56

**August 24
Pentecost 11**

Isaiah 58:9b-14
Psalm 103:1-8
Hebrews 12:18-29
Luke 13:10-17

**August 31
Pentecost 12**
Sirach 10:12-18
Psalm 112

**The Memorial Church of the
Prince of Peace**

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