

The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

August 2023

RAMBLINGS FROM THE

PARISH READING

GOODWOOD UNITED CHURCH

FREE COFFEE
EVERLASTING LIFE
YES MEMBERSHIP HAS
ITS PRIVILEGES

SERVICE 9:30 640-1781 REV. ELAINE LUSH, M.DIV

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4:18-19 NRSV)

Why is it so hard for us to embrace evangelism as Episcopalians and ELCA Lutherans? What is it about that word that sends us scurrying into our corners or ducking down behind the pew in front of us? You would almost think that someone was asking us to talk about money or politics!

Maybe it is because we have such toxic examples to follow. On the one hand we have our history of colonialism and the accompanying missionary movement which tried to impose western Christian culture wherever it went, often with lethal consequences for the evangelized. On the other hand we have the modern American evangelical movement which is all about conversion to a particular expression of Christianity, judgement, and spreading fear of losing one's soul in hell.

Neither of these examples has much, if anything, to do with the word "evangelion" at all. It appears in the quote from Luke above. It is directly translated as "good news" and is usually paired with "the poor." Jesus tells us to bring good news to the poor! This is evangelism!

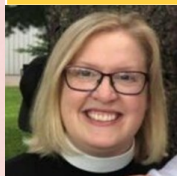
Evangelism is not advertising. It is not judgement. It is not saving souls. It is not making new Christians (although we are called to do that as well). It is spreading the good news of the Love and Acceptance found in the message of Jesus Christ, particularly as it applies to the poor and marginalized.

Rev Warren Huestis

EXTRACTED FROM THE CLUTTER OF THE RECTOR'S DESK

A Bible Study on Non-Creepy Evangelism

God's activity of wholeness, restoration, and liberation.



Libby Howe

Pastor Libby Howe was ordained in the ELCA in 2002. She serves as the Congregational Support Coordinator for Peace and Justice Ministries with the Wisconsin Council of Churches working with congregations and leaders to integrate community-focused peace and justice initiatives into their regular, ongoing ministries. She enjoys reading, writing, praying, and walking with her old dog, Marley. She lives in La Crosse, WI on the banks of the beautiful Mississippi River. More information about her work can be found here:

<https://www.wichurches.org/leadership/>

Read Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:6-9

In Matthew 28 and Acts 1 we have two versions of Jesus' last words to the disciples. They are classic evangelism texts. These Matthew verses are known as the "Great Commission," and for centuries the Christian church has heard them as our marching orders from Jesus: GO to all nations, MAKE disciples, TEACH Jesus' commands, BAPTIZE in the name of the Triune God, and REMEMBER God's presence with us always. Jesus' post-resurrection, pre-ascension words in Acts 1 seem to reinforce that job description with emphasis on being a WITNESS to Jesus from the place where the disciples are standing, Judea, all the way "to the ends of the earth."

>What has your experience with either of these passages been?

Historically, the western Christian church has used these marching orders to justify the worst of human atrocities in the name of Jesus. "Making disciples of all nations" and going "to the ends of the earth," coupled with the greed of empirical adventures by Rome, the United Kingdom, and the United States became the foundation of "missionary" efforts meant to colonize entire continents, committing genocide and wiping out generations of culture, language, and religion all over the globe. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus tells a parable about the final judgment of the nations where the sheep on the right hand enter eternal life and the goats on the left enter eternal punishment, to add to the mix. Not only shall we take over the world in the name of Jesus, but the threat of never-ending torment awaits all who do not comply.

I wish I could say that this understanding of evangelism no longer dominated the western Christian mindset, but I can't. Scaring people into following Jesus, regardless of the fact that Jesus never did that, is still quite common. Now there is less of an emphasis on conquering nations to save them from their so-called uncivilized selves and more of an emphasis on the individual soul that needs to be saved from its immorality. When I was a teen in the 1990s, the phenomenon of Halloween "hell houses" emerged in the United States. As a [2008 article](#) by Jason C. Bivins explains, "These [Hell Houses] ... explicitly engage the hot-button political issues central to New Christian Right activism and organizing. Hell Houses' individual scenes illustrate to adolescents the harms (such as abortion, gay weddings, and school shootings) awaiting them in a society that ... has unwittingly drawn them toward hellfire."

While that is a most extreme example, many people have experienced a creepy evangelism assault. Some well-meaning person approaches a friend or stranger with the goal of getting that person to "accept Jesus Christ as their personal lord and savior." By the way, that phrase is so common that Google Docs auto-wrote it as I was typing it. So you should know, that phrase never shows up in the Bible. There is no Biblical story that depicts one person approaching another with that question. Even if this kind of "evangelist" does not begin with this agenda stated outright, they eventually get there, after expressing interest, care, and concern for the recipient.

Continued on page 2

VESTRY

John Joy, Sr Warden
 Charles Everhart, Jr Warden
 Richard Davis
 Andrea Harner
 Judy Sauer
 Barb Zumwalde
 2 openings
 Newsletter editor—John Glaze

Samaritan Outreach Services (SOS)

is in need of paper goods! When you shop, please remember YOUR NEIGHBORS and pick up some extra items. There is a box in Lacy Hall to place them.

Monetary donations accepted also!

If you have questions, see Rich Davis!

THANK YOU!

“good news” is simply identified as “Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David” (2 Timothy 2:8). Sometimes he refers to “the good news” (or “gospel”) as a dynamic event, the exercise of God’s power for human and cosmic restoration: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith” (Romans 1:16).

So at the heart of evangelism is God’s activity of wholeness, restoration, and liberation. Do you see how far away that is from getting people to convert to a particular belief system? Evangelism for us is to participate in God’s wholeness, restoration, and liberation project. Our evangelism is to attend to people and places that are broken and destroyed. Evangelism skills have little to do with skills of persuasion, marketing, or even preaching, and much more to do with repair, reconciliation, *Continued on back page*

Ramblings (continued)

ent of their efforts. A lot of evangelism tactics look a lot like a cheap sales job and feel just as dishonest, self-serving, and manipulative. To convert someone to Christ is proof of one’s own goodness, and the converted soul is a feather in their cap, a jewel in their crown, and another golden brick to pave their own way to paradise.

Most mainline Protestants I know shy away from this type of evangelism, and by “shy away” I mean they run as fast as they can the other direction. I count myself among them. But I admit I haven’t been satisfied with its replacement. Like many people in the institutional church, I got comfortable conflating evangelism with marketing and advertising. To avoid the awkward encounter with a person, we put up better signs and created better messaging, not so much to get people to believe in Jesus, but to get people to join our church. We became “invitational” evangelists in the way that Jesus invited people to follow him saying “come and see” when he called his disciples (John 1:39-41). Our hope was that if we could just make a good invitation, the Holy Spirit would do the rest. If we could lure them into our club, they would naturally want to be a part of it because it was so good and fulfilling. Evangelism became synonymous with “church growth.” But the same critique can be applied: that is not Biblical either. There is no place in the Bible where someone follows Jesus because of the better sign outside the church building or the really catchy, brightly colored mailer inviting them to Christmas Eve worship services.

Questions for reflection:

1. What is your experience of evangelism? When has it felt creepy?

Why are you a follower of Jesus? What is it that first drew you to Jesus and what is it that continues to do so?

Another Way

Scripture: Isaiah 61 and Luke 4:18-19

Luke wrote his gospel around 85 CE in the wake of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE. The infancy narrative (Luke 1:5-2:52) and the travel narrative (Luke 9:51-19:47) make it clear that Jesus is coming to save the world through the restoration of Israel, which cannot be understood apart from the rebuilding of Jerusalem and its temple. In Luke 4, at the very beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, he goes to the synagogue in Nazareth and reads from the scroll of Isaiah. The portion of Isaiah that he reads from is believed to have been written for those who were returning to Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile (597 to 537 BCE). The Babylonians destroyed the temple in 587/586 BCE. So it makes sense that the words of the prophet that gave hope to the exiles who were returning to a decimated Jerusalem in 537 BCE would also give hope to the world following the fall of the Jerusalem temple in 70 CE.

Just hold that bit of history for a moment while we review what the word evangelism actually means. It is Greek, and it literally means “good news.” Jesus does not use the phrase often. In Matthew 11:4-5, “Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have *good news* brought to them.’” And in Luke 4:18-19, reading from Isaiah 61, Jesus says, “‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring *good news* to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’” In the Apostle Paul’s writings

SENIOR WARDEN REPORT

Let’s get a few quick building updates out of the way first. The HVAC and Electrical drawings have been delivered to the city of Hillsboro for permits. The electrical work can begin once the permits are approved and the contractor’s schedule allows. We have three reputable HVAC firms reviewing the HVAC drawings and expect to receive bid from all three. A huge thank you and “shout out” to Rev. Warren, assisted by Rob and Tyler Harner, who got the wiring infrastructure installed under the floor for a much needed and improved audio-visual system. The wiring they put in place will allow us to install an improved and updated speaker system and allow more convenient streaming of our services! Please join me in thanking them for their work. Also join me in thanking Charles Everhart for his work with a local contractor in getting the uneven sidewalk on the north side replaced, along with the repair of the handrail on the rear kitchen steps. We are still waiting on a contractor response to start repair of the roof on the new building.

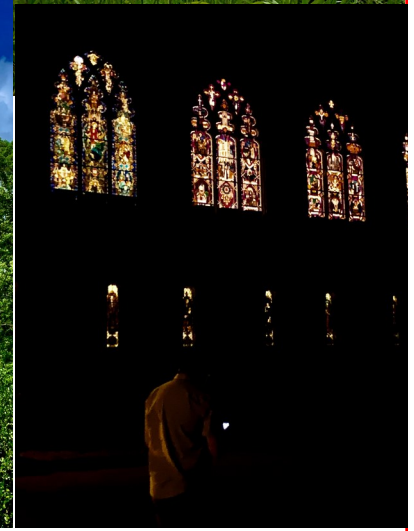
If you have been at our 9 am Sunday service either of the past two weeks, you may have had a challenge in finding a seat! We are truly blessed that we have had a noticeable increase in attendance and have essentially filled up the seats in Lacy Hall the past two weeks. I would like to thank you all for attending to, and responding to, those new and returning folks who have joined us on Sunday. Thanks to Lynn Lowell for filling in for John Glaze, who was away at Sewanee attending the annual Sewanee Church Music Conference this past week.

Let’s close with a couple reminders—mark your calendars that on July 30, there will no Sunday service in Hillsboro. St. Mary’s is invited to All Saints in WCH for a joint service and carry-in, and to hear updates on the Bishop selection process. Please see Barb Zumwalde if you are able to help with a booth at the Highland County Fair; she would like to know if we have enough to staff a booth at the Fair and needs to let the Fair office know early in August.

John Joy, Senior Warden

Service Time for the rest of the year: 9 am

SEWANEE - 2023



THE HILLSBORO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

—WILL—

OPEN ITS FALL SESSION SEPTEMBER 6th, 1887.

SUPERIOR ADVANTAGES IN

Music, Elocution, Art, Modern Languages and Literature.

At Moderate Expense. Both Private and Class Lessons will be Given. For Circular address

J. H. McKENZIE, A. M., Director,

HILLSBORO, OHIO.

j2m2



Our History

As I have mentioned before, most of our stained glass windows have little history represented in our written records. The St. Cecilia window, however, is an exception. We know the company who produced the window and followers of the history of that company know of our window. In the January 1917 issue of the diocesan magazine, an article regarding the chancel and altar work presented by Rev. Louis Durr was announced, as well as the gift of the St. Cecilia window. But what about the giver of that window? We read:

"Rev. John H. McKenzie, of Howe, Indiana, presented the singularly expressive and appropriate St. Cecilia window in memory of his sister, Mrs. Ida McKenzie Hammond, who will be recalled by many as his co-worker when in charge of the Conservatory of Music here. Though not Episcopalians, they gave their service to the choir; and though there was no rector, but a lay reader at that time, they faithfully and loyally gave of their best. They were justly popular, and St. Mary's is very happy to be the recipient of this artistic token of love from brother to sister. The walls are finished in soft gray, and the light reflected from them gives an added luster to the memorial windows.

As you can see from the advertisement at the left, Rev. McKenzie was Director of the Hillsboro Conservatory of Music. Hillsboro, at one time, had THREE colleges in operation! To read more about higher education in Hillsboro, I recommend you stop by Highland House and purchase a copy of Tara Beery's new book about the subject!



*August
Happy Birthday!*

*2 Aug Connie Reynolds
31 Aug Larry Addington*

The Red Door

St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St.

SERVICE TIME
Sunday - 9 am



and restoration. Christian evangelism efforts may look much more like seeking justice for people who have been treated unfairly, imagining and creating economic systems that are not oppressive, and advocating for ways of life that make people well, give people rest, and contribute to their healing. For those of us in the western Christian church, evangelism must include repentance for the ways we have hurt others for centuries in the name of Jesus. It should look like working for environmental justice, repairing the damage we have done to the earth, and overhauling a criminal punishment system that has never sought restoration of individuals or communities.

Just as the words of Luke 4 and Isaiah 61 gave hope to people in a destroyed and messy world, they give us hope. The good news is that in the risen Jesus God continues to promise a better future, not because we have done everything right or believed all the right things, but because our God insists that the brokenness, lifelessness, and hopelessness of our world can and will be overcome.

Questions for reflection:

1. What is a "good news" moment in your life—when you felt hope was lost and saw God do a Good, New thing?
2. Who in your community needs good news today? What good news do they need? and how will you partner with God in making that good news happen for them?

<https://enterthebible.org/a-bible-study-on-non-creepy-evangelism>



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH INFORMATION

The Diocese of Southern Ohio
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
234 N. High St Hillsboro, OH 45133
937-393-2043

The Rev. Warren Huestis
Rector

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 9 am
In person & Streaming on Facebook

2nd & 4th WEDNESDAYS
Not held in July & August

COMMUNION FOR THE HOMEBOUND
Sunday after service.

*We strive to be safe and make our parishioners and
guests feel safe and welcome!*

WEB SITE:
www.smehillsboro.weebly.com