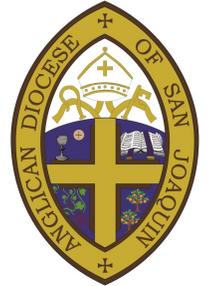


THE SAN JOAQUIN ANGLICAN



The Bishop's Corner

The Right Reverend Eric Vawter Menees

J. I. Packer, Author of *Knowing God*, Dies at 93

by Leland Ryken

James Innell Packer, better known to many as J. I. Packer, was one of the most famous and influential evangelical leaders of our time. He died July 17, at age 93. Packer's final lesson for the church: Glorify Christ every way.

J. I. Packer was born in a village outside of Gloucester, England, on July 22, 1926. He came from humble stock, being born into a family that he called lower middle class. The religious climate at home and church was that of nominal Anglicanism rather than evangelical belief in Christ as Savior (something that Packer was not taught in his home church).

Packer's life-changing childhood experience came at the age of seven when he was chased out of the schoolyard by a bully onto the busy London Road in Gloucester, where he was struck by a bread van and sustained a serious head injury. He carried a visible dent in the side of his head for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, Packer was uncomplaining and accepting of what providence brought into his life from childhood on.

BISHOP'S SCHEDULE AND DIOCESAN CALENDAR

August 5 - 10:30 am - Diocesan Clergy Meeting on Zoom

August 6 - The Transfiguration

August 8 - 90 Days before Convention

August 11 - 10 am - Rural Deans on Zoom

August 15 - 10 am - Standing Committee Meeting on Zoom

August 19 - 10:30 am - Diocesan Clergy Meeting on Zoom

August 30 - Bishop at St. Augustine's, Tres Pinos

September 2 - 10:30 am - Diocesan Clergy Meeting on Zoom

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Much more important than Packer's accident was his conversion to Christ, which happened within two weeks of his matriculation as an undergraduate at Oxford University. Packer committed his life to Christ on October 22, 1944, while attending an evangelistic service sponsored by the campus InterVarsity chapter.

Although Packer was a serious student pursuing a classics degree, the heartbeat of his life at Oxford was spiritual. It was at Oxford that Packer first heard lectures from C. S. Lewis, and though they were never personally acquainted, Lewis would exert a powerful influence on Packer's life and work. When Packer left Oxford with his doctorate on Richard Baxter in 1952, he did not immediately begin his academic career, but spent a three-year term as a parish minister in suburban Birmingham.



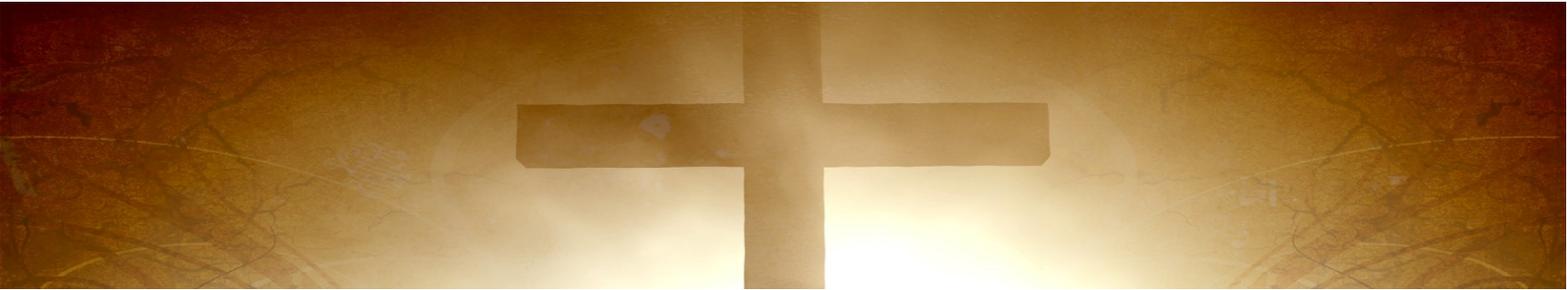
Packer had a varied professional life. He spent the first half of his career in England before moving to Canada for the second half. In England, Packer held various teaching posts at theological colleges in Bristol, during which he had a decade-long interlude as warden (director) of Latimer House in Oxford, a clearinghouse for evangelical interests in the Church of England. In that role, Packer was one of the three most influential evangelical leaders in England (along with John Stott and Martyn Lloyd-Jones). Packer's move to Regent College in Vancouver in 1979 shocked the evangelical world and enlarged Packer's influence for the rest of his life.

Source: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2020/july/j-i-packer-died-evangelical-theologian-knowing-god.html>

Author Leland Ryken is Emeritus Professor of English at Wheaton College, where he taught for half a century. He has written a biography of J. I. Packer, titled J. I. Packer: An Evangelical Life. His article on J. I. Packer appeared in the on-line publication Christianity Today, July 17, 2020.



Comment by Wendy Murray Zoba from an article entitled, The Lonely Journey of a Passionate Puritan in Christianity Today, July 17, 2020. "Part of Packer's legacy was thus helping Christians set the right agenda and concern themselves with the right things. Packer's list of priorities included the Bible, the church, correct theology, holiness in life, and vocation. The reason Packer wrote on such a broad array of subjects is not only that he had an active and capacious mind, but also that he was concerned that Christians think correctly on all subjects that relate to life. Packer had a passion for truth in every sphere."



Responding to the Sin of Racism

by Father Ryan Bradley

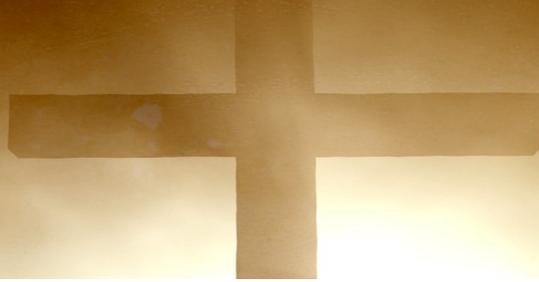
There are many sins that are difficult to confront, both for church members and clergy. My first week as a new rector, a church member asked me never to talk about abortion (I couldn't agree). The biblical teaching on divorce shows up in the Sunday lectionary, and it is difficult to address because pastors know how sensitive the topic is for many church members. However, of all sins, there are unique challenges when we address racism. Addressing some sins upsets people because they disagree with Christian teaching (abortion and the biblical definition of marriage are two examples). Other sins are difficult to address because few people they know are guilty and feel the sting of conscience. Racism is one of a few sins that cause Christians to say, "It is a sin, I am not guilty, and I am upset or angry when it is mentioned."

We need to begin by recognizing that we are all vulnerable to sins of the heart and mind. For example, we struggle with anger, pride, lust, greed, and envy. As individuals, we don't struggle to the same degree with each of these sins, but no Christian is immune to any of them. Likewise, we are all vulnerable to many kinds of prejudice. When someone says, "I don't have a racist bone in my body," or "I don't see color," that can be like saying, "I never have an envious moment or an impure thought." At the very least, we should be extremely reluctant to make any claims like this. All of us need to ask the Lord to search our hearts, teach us about our prejudices, and bring us to repentance and growth.

While no one is immune to anger, some Christians have more severe struggles with sinful anger. Sadly, behaviors like child and domestic abuse are more common in the church than we would like to admit. Regrettably no one is immune to sexual temptation and impure thoughts and behaviors like adultery are more common in the church than we would like to acknowledge. While no one is immune from prejudice, severe sins of racism certainly do exist in the church today. We need to acknowledge and address the seriousness of racism in the body of Christ. Indeed, as Christians, we need to confront this sin openly and thoroughly (vocally and also from the pulpit), even though it is uncomfortable. For example, when we confront child or domestic abuse, we are not saying that all parents are abusive who struggle with keeping their temper. If a parent feels remorseful for his or her short temper after hearing preaching or conversation about abuse, we are rightfully confronting this serious sin. Another issue Christians face is being made to feel shame because they are white. This false accusation should be challenged with the truth of what racism really is.

Confronting sin is also important when addressing individual hearts. We should not assume that racism (or any other sin) exists only in individual hearts. At the beginning of Ephesians in chapter 2, we are warned against "following the course of this world" and "the passions of the flesh." In other words, sin is in our hearts and minds through our habits and behaviors ("the flesh"). Sin is also present in our culture and communities, our institutions and ideologies ("the world"). There may be examples of sin that show up only in the flesh or only

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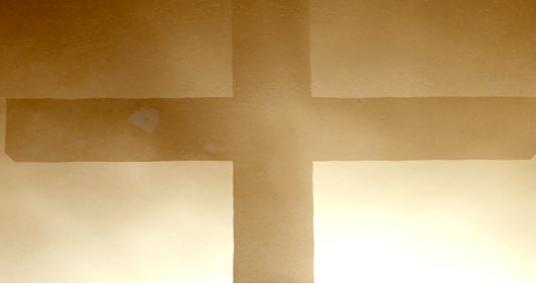
the world. However, in most cases we find sin in the flesh to be the most prevalent, but we should be alert about following the course of this world as well. For sexual sin, it isn't enough to take every thought captive to Christ. We need to be alert to how everything "following the course of this world," from popular entertainment to academic theories denying we are made in the image of God. For sins such as abortion, we need to consider unjust laws without neglecting the hearts of those tempted to end the life of their children.

Further, the Bible teaches us that sin has long lasting effects. It tells us that the sins of a father effect generations, and we can see the reality of this when (for example) a father abandons or abuses his son and that son's pain has consequences for his own children. If that is true for individuals, how much more serious are the lasting effects of racism? We have made great progress in America, but sins such as slavery and the violence of the "Jim Crow" era were so serious and so common that they surely have some continuing effects today. Indeed, many of our church members were raised during a time when the segregation of races was legally mandated. If the sins of an individual can have consequences lasting for generations, how can we imagine that the consequences of widespread sin would disappear in a single lifetime?

Finally, we need to remember our Lord's summary of the Old Testament law that we are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind," and to "love your neighbor as yourself." In Micah 6:8 scripture records, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." In both these summaries, our Lord forbids apathy to suffering or injustice. Repeatedly in the Old Testament, the Lord goes beyond accusing people of harming others – He accuses those who ignore suffering or injustice even if they did not cause it. In other words, we must love the poor, even if we didn't impoverish them. We must weep with those who weep, even if we didn't cause their tears.

So, when anyone, especially our brothers and sisters in Christ, say that they have been mistreated, we need to lend an ear with compassion and humble listening. If we have been reluctant to listen to others in the past, it might explain why others are reticent to tell us about their experiences. We may have friends and fellow church members we have known for years who have never shared their personal experiences of racism with us. When we listen with compassion, we are willing participants of the commandments given to us by our Lord, and we often become aware of our own personal prejudices. We need to begin going further than trying to avoid personal prejudice and start actively working against the suffering and injustice of racism.





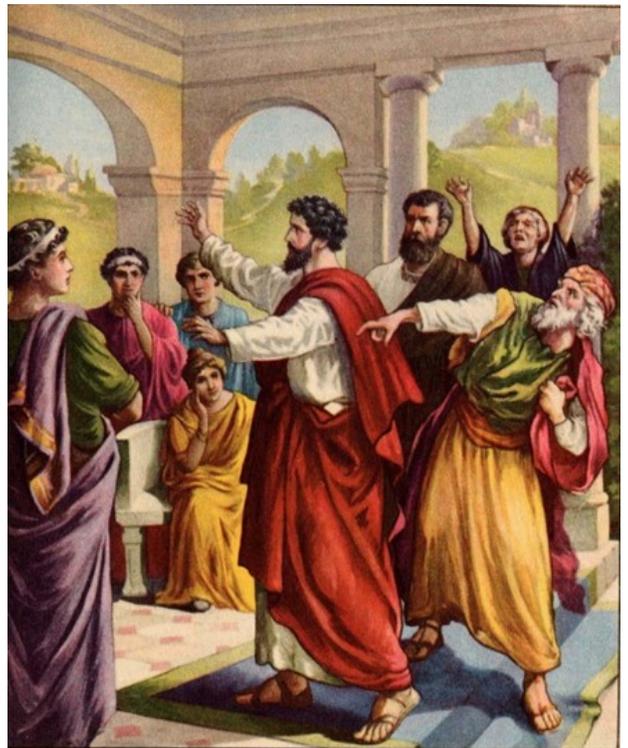
Apostle Paul, the Preacher

By Susan Schnetz

The Apostle Paul was one of the most effective preachers of the Word in the Early Church and was the most prolific of writers of the New Testament. From his letters to the churches, we discover he successfully established many churches throughout the Roman Empire. Now we read and study these letters written some 2,000 years ago and share their great truths with each other and our congregations.

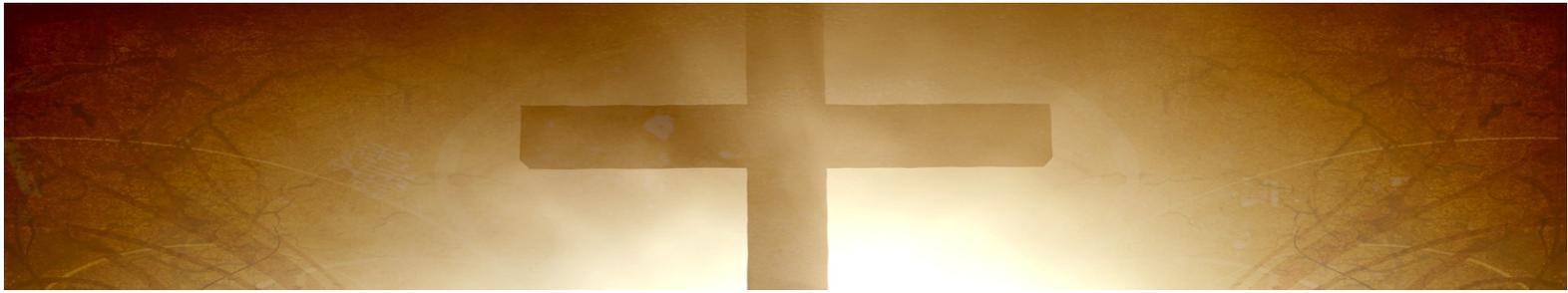
Of the 27 books in the New Testament, 13 or 14 are traditionally attributed to Paul, although only 7 of these Pauline epistles are accepted as being entirely authentic and dictated by Saint Paul himself.

- The sixth book of the New Testament, the Letter of Paul to the Romans, was written by Saint Paul while he was in Corinth about 57 CE.
- The First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians and the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians were both written by Saint Paul. The first letter was probably written about 53–54 CE at Ephesus and the second letter was written from Macedonia about 55 CE.
- The ninth book of the New Testament, The Letter of Paul to the Galatians, was authored by Saint Paul, likely written between 53–54 CE.
- The Letter of Paul to the Philippians is believed to have been written when Saint Paul was in prison, probably at Rome about 62 CE.
- The first Letter of Paul to the Thessalonians was written by Saint Paul from Corinth about 50 CE.
- The Letter of Paul to Philemon was probably composed by Saint Paul in a Roman prison about 61 CE, though some sources date it earlier.



Paul was so bold that he once walked unannounced into the Areopagus and preached to thousands of Greeks who knew nothing of the One True God. The Areopagus was a civic center in Athens that included temples, cultural facilities and a high court. The Areopagus Council included many of the king's advisors and was very powerful in discharging the law and religious and educational directives. Paul told them in contrast to an altar in one of the temples that was dedicated to the “unknown god” that he was about to proclaim to them the “God who made the world and everything in it” (Acts 17:23-24). Prior to that he boldly walked into the local synagogue and told them

(Continued on page 6)



about Christ and those in the public square that Jesus whom they had crucified was God in the flesh (Acts 17:17). Courageously every day he proclaimed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Because of the excessive persecution aimed at Christians, Paul acknowledged that he experienced fear and trembling in preaching the Gospel and telling others that Christ was the Only Son of God (Phil 2:12).

Today, millions of Christians across the globe live in perpetual fear that they will be punished, harmed – or even killed for merely practicing their faith. Worldwide persecution continues with varying degrees of affliction for those who openly embrace Christianity. A reported 260 million Christians live in places where there is a high level of persecution, amounting to one-in-eight Christians worldwide. While we may not be confronted with life-threatening attempts to silence our faith in Christ as was Saint Paul or those today in other countries, as Christians in America there are times we face situations where we experience fear if we stand up for what we believe or witness the truth of the Gospel. The easier route is to be complacent.

Take heart to know God is always on our side! It is important to remember that with the Holy Spirit's guidance, we can do His will regardless of the circumstances we face. When God leads us into a situation that requires spiritual strength we can follow the example of Paul and bravely face our fears and proclaim the gospel of salvation.

Encourage each other with these words that Paul wrote in Romans 8:38, "And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love."

Susan Schnetz is a published author, editor, and graphic artist and former computer instructor for a private school in Auburn, California and a junior college in Reno, Nevada. Currently she is the editor of the newsletter for Saint Mark's Anglican Church in Loomis, California where she attends church.



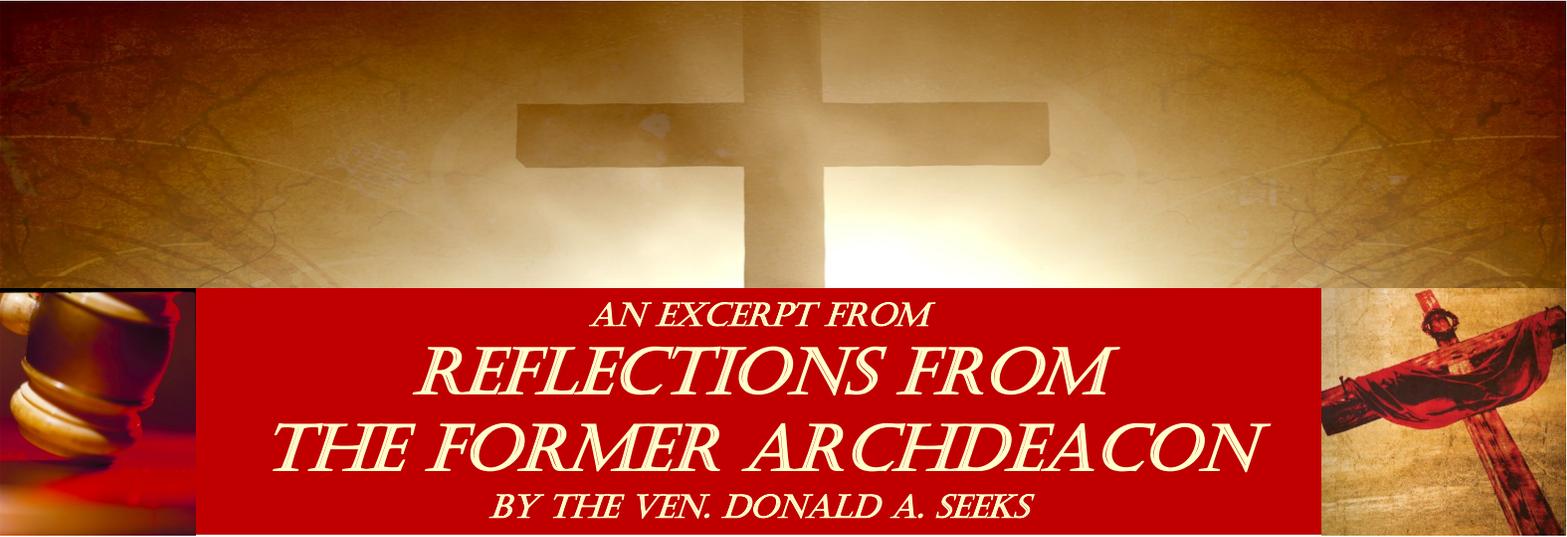
AN EXCERPT FROM
REFLECTIONS FROM
THE FORMER ARCHDEACON
BY THE VEN. DONALD A. SEEKS



The Importance of Principles

Recently I read an article by the Rev. Dr. Warren Wiersbe, a retired Protestant minister who is a man of my age. He outlined some of the principles which guided his ministry over the years. The article began with a bit of doggerel taken from Dr. Wiersbe's college days: "Methods are many, Principles few, Methods always change; Principles never do." The dictionary informs us that the word "principle" is "a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption." It is derived from the Latin word "principium" which means "beginning."

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AN EXCERPT FROM
REFLECTIONS FROM
THE FORMER ARCHDEACON
BY THE VEN. DONALD A. SEEKS

Wiersbe found that if he always went back to beginnings and built his life on principles, he discovered he was in step with what God was doing.

That discovery led him into a lifelong search for principles, those foundational truths which never change, yet always have fresh meaning and application to each new situation. One practice established was never to adopt a method until the principles upon which that was based were fully understood.

Living by such a practice can simplify anyone's life because our minds are no longer like those of children who, writes Saint Paul, are "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles." Rather, those principles tend to act like stabilizers and help us steer a steady course toward our Christian goal, which is to mature spiritually into the image of Christ Himself.

One principle which could be useful for most of us to adopt is that it is God who makes every worker; then He uses that worker to make a work. Each one of us, who follow Christ whether lay or clergy, is given a special and unique ministry to share with one another. We can never give to others what we do not have ourselves so we shouldn't be surprised if it takes time for God to produce in us what He is looking for. He spent years shaping and molding his best workers: 13 years for Joseph and 80 years for Moses. The history of Scripture and of the Church clearly show that God must first build character in a person before He can build a ministry. And of course, there is no better example than that of Saint Paul himself.

Christian character is present or is in the developmental stage if a person is acting with integrity. Integrity is something not always seen in some of our national leaders in politics and in the Church. Lest someone remind me of our Lord's admonition to "judge not," we also need to recall that He balanced this and said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." We have permission thereby to evaluate the work of our fellow Christians in terms of their work and witness. We are not to condemn, but certainly we must try to correct, in love. How much integrity do you find in the life and witness of your present archdeacon? Our Lord warns us that we cannot serve two masters. Saint James writes that a "double-minded man (is) unstable in all his ways," and can receive nothing from the Lord. Dr. Wiersbe declares, "The opposite of integrity is duplicity."

Can you see any of the fruit of the Holy Spirit at work in my life? Each one of us must be willing to risk response if we are to serve others. Of course, I am not a finished product, so I ask for your patience as well as your response! But if God is at work building my Christian character then you have the right to expect me to act with integrity and you eventually should see some value in having an archdeacon.

"It is God who makes every worker; then He uses that worker to make a work." This principle simplifies life because we don't have to depend upon our own wisdom and energy. It will simplify life because it is a principle by which we can evaluate the character and the integrity of every Christian worker for Jesus.



News from our Seminarians: Dolores Vargas



My name is Dolores Vargas. I have been attending Saint Matthias Anglican Church in Oakdale, California since 2017. I am married to Peter Vargas, and we have three children. One of our children passed unexpectedly in 2019, but God has blessed us with four grandsons who are our joy. I work as a phlebotomist/EKG Tech at Memorial Hospital. For fun I like to run, read and try to learn more about what it means to be a follower of Christ.

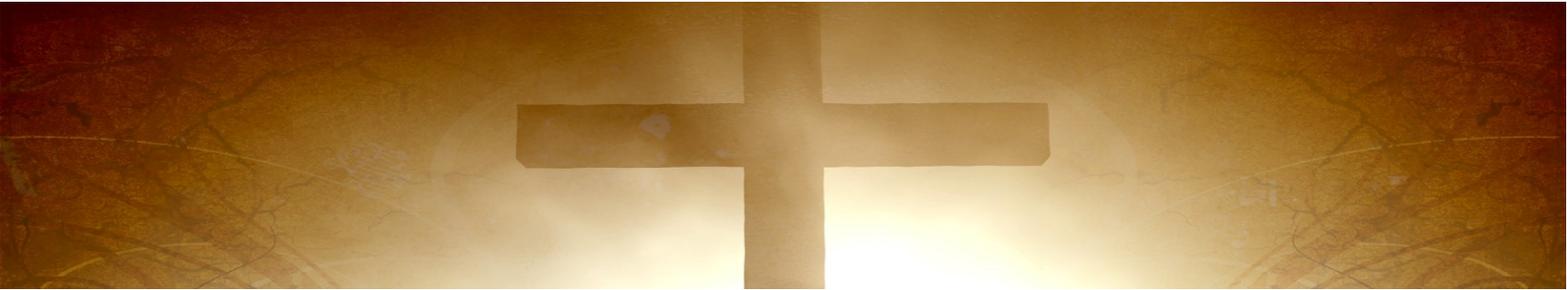
When we first visited Saint Matthias, I was unfamiliar with Anglicanism and had no idea what I was walking into. I was raised in the Charismatic/Pentecostal tradition and continued it in my adult years. I was involved with the worship team as a bass guitarist of a mega church in Modesto for 20 years. After a few visits to Saint Matthias, I began to feel a peace that I hadn't felt in a long time. I was hearing the gospel (by the preaching of the Word) in a way I never had before as well. I began to fall in love with the liturgy and hymns and the sacrament of Holy Communion.

My husband and I were confirmed in 2018 by Bishop Eric. Soon thereafter, an announcement about a new Catechism school (Anglican Catechist Training School or ACTS) was announced. I was extremely interested in learning more about what it meant to be Anglican, which was my initial intention for enrolling. There were many gaps in what I believed about God as well as my understanding of the Bible. I was hopeful that a program such as ACTS would be helpful. The class proved to challenge these areas among others. I felt accepted by the directors of ACTS, Anthony Velez and Elizabeth Conkle, who took me under her wing. By God's grace those gaps became less as I relearned the foundations of what it meant to be a Christian through this course. It was towards the end of the first year that I began to feel a call to become a Deacon. I didn't know what it would take, so after speaking with my Rector Father John Roberts and Bishop Eric I began with an application. Still uncertain of God's direction, I initially pulled my application. But with the Holy Spirit's continued inward work, and while attending the June 2019 Provincial Assembly in Texas and during ACTS year two, I ultimately made a decision to continue with the process.

I have now completed the six-month discernment process and am discerning God's path for me as a Postulant. I am enrolled in the Trinity School of Ministry Diaconate program. This is a vigorous course with studies in Survey of Old and New Testament, Systematic Theology, History and Theology of the Diaconate, Global Missions, Church History and Anglican Tradition.

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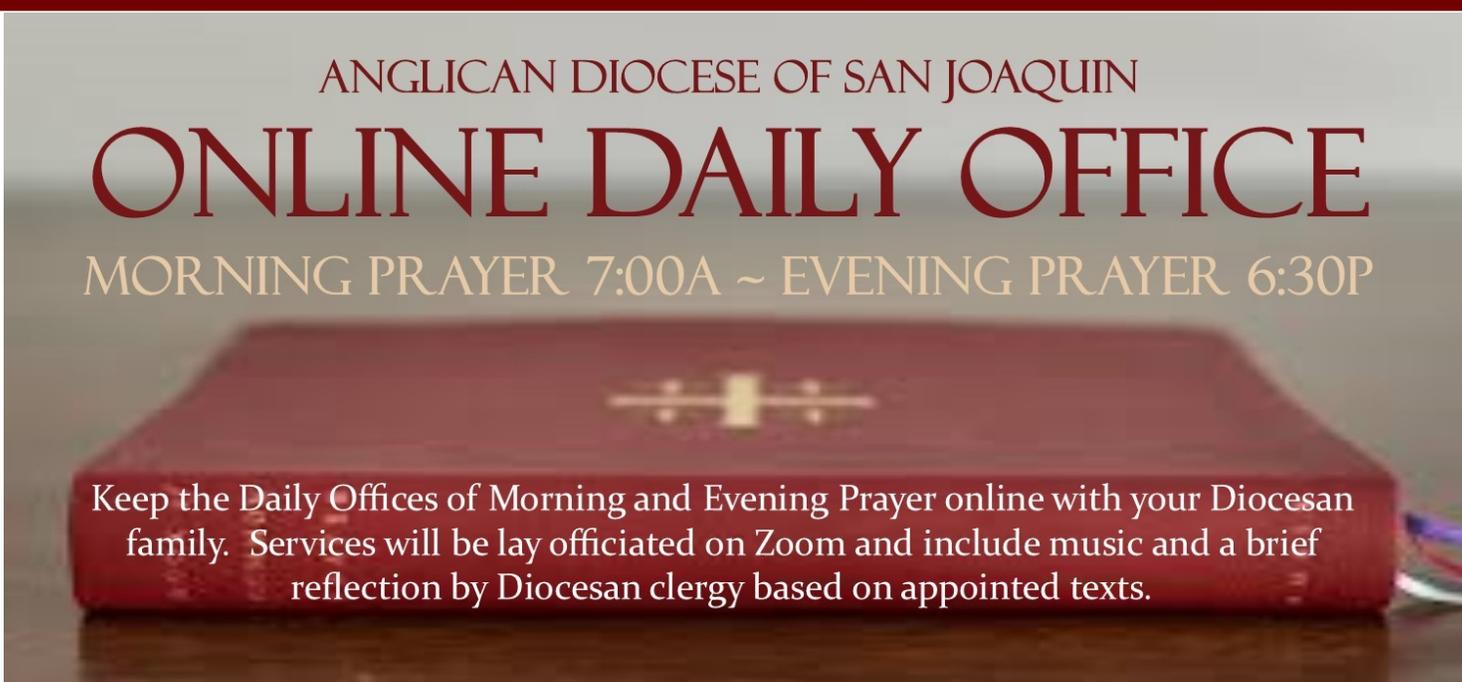




According to the 2019 *Book of Common Prayer*, the Form and Manner of Ordaining Deacons, it states that the Office of Deacons share in the humility and service of our Lord Jesus Christ for the strengthening of the Church and edifying his people, which is His body with preaching the Gospel, proclaiming Christ, instructing both young, middle and old in the Catechism and furthermore to bring the needs of the world to the Church in caring for the stranger, helping the poor and helpless. A scripture I refer to often for encouragement is 2 Timothy 1:9 which states, “*He has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything that we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.*”

There is no higher calling than to serve Christ’s Church. I pray with the help and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to continue full of faith and of the Holy Spirit into becoming a Deaconess in the ACNA for the honor and glory of God.

Note: If you'd like to know more about Delores’ discernment and formation you can contact her at itsmeddee@gmail.com.



ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF SAN JOAQUIN
ONLINE DAILY OFFICE
MORNING PRAYER 7:00A ~ EVENING PRAYER 6:30P

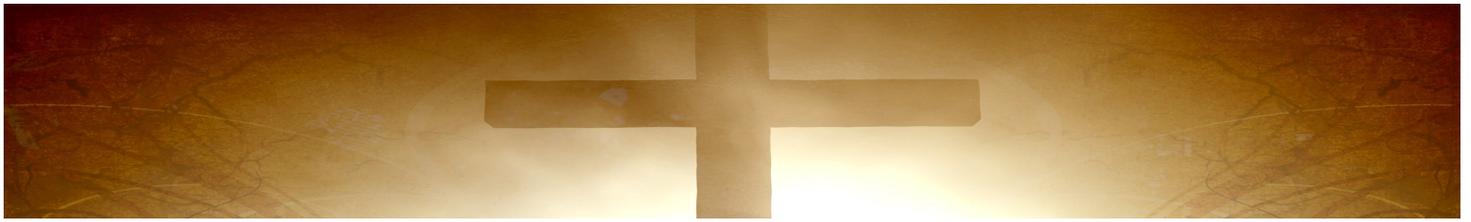
Keep the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer online with your Diocesan family. Services will be lay officiated on Zoom and include music and a brief reflection by Diocesan clergy based on appointed texts.

Sign Up to Participate

To keep the Zoom gatherings secure, participants will receive login information after signing up at

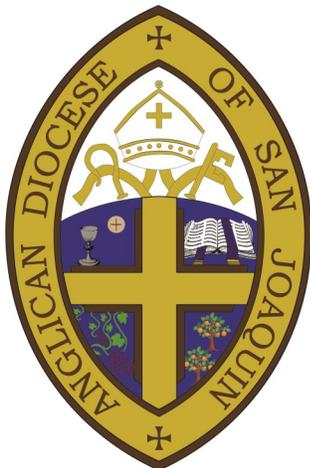
www.dioceseofsanjoaquin.net/daily-office.html

If you are interested in becoming a licensed Lay Reader and officiating, please contact
Fr. John Roberts revjohnroberts@gmail.com or
Fr. Karl Dietze karl@trinitybakersfield.com



Bishop's Note series--

The ***Bishop's Note*** is a pastoral message published weekly by Bishop Eric Menees. To subscribe, send an email message with your email to receptionist@dioceseofsanjoaquin.net.



The San Joaquin Anglican is published monthly by The Anglican Diocese of San Joaquin, California.

Submissions will be accepted for consideration anytime. Contributions **must be received by the 20th** of the month for possible inclusion in the newsletter in the following month.

Please send these to melody@ctkridgecrest.org

Thank you!