



*The Rev. Daniel Cenci
Rector*

Making a Spiritual Resolution

I recently read an article online which gave the statistics regarding New Year's resolutions in the United States. I was surprised to learn that nearly half of all Americans make an annual New Year's resolution. Unfortunately only 8% of those who make a New Year's resolution actually achieve their goal.

I was also interested to learn that the top ten New Year's resolutions made by Americans primarily focus on three general categories; financial health, healthy relationships and physical health. For the most part, the majority of the top ten resolutions made by our fellow Americans were positive and beneficial. All of these categories are indeed important aspects of life and certainly deserve our attention.

But I could not help but notice that there was a significant element of our lives that was **entirely missing from even the top 20 list of New Year's resolutions. That element is our spiritual health.** It is clear in these statistics that most Americans at least desire to be healthy in a well-rounded and holistic way; yet many seem to be less concerned with their spiritual wellbeing than they are with other aspects of their lives.

Our spiritual health is extremely important. Just as obesity or chain smoking is a threat to our physical health, so too is the lack of a grounded spiritual life a threat to the health of our souls. Our spiritual vitality also has an impact on virtually every other aspect of our lives. Without a healthy relationship with God there is little hope that we will be successful in the long run. Perhaps there is even a correlation between the lack of success in achieving secular **New Year's resolutions and the lack of concern for spiritual growth and discipline.**

I therefore want to encourage each of you this year to consider making a spiritual New Year's resolution. This can be in addition to, or in place of, the other resolutions that you might have been planning to make. Try to make a resolution that will both help you grow in your spiritual walk with Jesus Christ and make you more aware of God's call and God's continued action in your life. I have listed a few possible spiritual resolutions below, but please do not be confined to this list. Pray and listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as you seek to honor God in 2021.

In Christ,
Rev. Daniel

Possible Spiritual Resolutions

1. Resolve to begin and end each day with a simple prayer.
2. Resolve to set aside time each day for Scripture reading. Perhaps try to read the entire Bible in 2021.
3. Resolve to attend worship every Sunday (even on vacation!)
4. Resolve to attend our weekday worship services.
5. Resolve to serve God regularly through volunteer work in the community.
6. Resolve to start a new ministry or lead an existing ministry in our community.
7. Resolve to set aside time for family prayer and worship.
8. Resolve to spend time each week engaging in discipleship with others.
9. Resolve to read a spiritually significant book.
10. Resolve to be a spiritual mentor for a child in your life.

VESTRY

December Vestry Minutes:

Minutes of the November 2020 meeting were approved (Joe Peel/Mickey Golden)

Christmas Eve service for families will be at 4:00pm with **children's sermon and the Midnight service will begin at 10:30** with music by Douglas Blackwood and the service (Eucharist) will begin at 11:00pm. It will be a candlelight service. Churches are exempt from the curfew imposed by our Governor. Christmas morning at 10:00am will be a short service.

Senior Warden: Todd White's report is in the annual meeting report. Each Vestry member will be given a list of parishioners to contact in order to keep in touch with people in the church who are not able to attend in person because of the COVID pandemic as well as those who are! We need to keep in touch with all who go to the church and make sure they know what we are doing and watching out for them. Any questions or concerns they have need to be addressed.

Junior Warden: Wes Lupo reported the HVAC in St. Philip's is being replaced in addition to his report within the agenda. Much work has been completed in 2020! The lights in the parish hall have been removed and taken to be cleaned and restored and re-wired for safety purposes. They will return when finished and installed.

Treasurer: Gary Cooper went over the budget for 2021 in detail with salaries and income and expenses and reported that we are actually above 2019 in our pledges even though there are several who have still not pledged. We are in good shape financially (November income exceeded our November expenses). Motion to approve (Mickey Golden/Joe Peel) passed. The Robinson Charity Fund was also detailed and motion to approve passed unanimously.

Parish Life and Adult Education: Sue Scurria reported that the budget needs to allow more money if there are to be activities for 2021 when things open up and the budget was amended to add \$500 to that line item. Motion to do so passed.

Worship: Mickey Golden reported that he has contacted area downtown churches for participation in the Stations of the Cross which will be held at 10:00am on March 26, 2021 with eight churches participating: Cornerstone Missionary Baptist, Holy Trinity Community, Olive Branch Missionary Baptist, Mount Lebanon AME Zion, First United Methodist, Cann Memorial Presbyterian, First Baptist and Christ Episcopal. Communications: Michelle Flach reported that the cords for live streaming have not been working properly and Daniel has met with the company who did the major sound system in the church. They can design a system for us using a camera mounted in the balcony. Cost estimated for this is \$3,500 and motion to have this put in place was approved (Todd/Ron).

Outreach: Ron Turlington reported that he wanted to hold \$1,800 out to give to SOULS ministry for 2021 and donate \$500 to MACU for their roof cave-in. SOULS \$1,800 was

approved but further investigation into the cause of the roof failure and possible insurance coverage is needed before the \$500 will be voted on to MACU's roof damage. Stewardship and Planned Giving: Joe Peel reported that Kim Willis has done a good job of contacting those who have not pledged and that we are doing well in that regard though we still have some pledges out.

Growth and Evangelism: Mary Gillam reported that she has contacted someone who will help with advertising and promoting upcoming services at Christ Episcopal through Facebook and Instagram. Mary asked that anyone with photos

or news please contact her through email and send photos if possible.

Rector's Report: Daniel Cenci outlined the events he has participated in for the month of November which included services, pastoral visits, board and staff and committee meetings, etc. He has met with a new Coast Guard couple who is interested in coming to Christ Episcopal and is desiring to strengthen our ties to the US Coast Guard. Daniel also reported that in light of COVID restrictions, we will have the Lenten Services in 2021 on Wednesdays but no lunches. The reasoning was that we are already having services on those days so we will do the Lenten services on Wednesdays. One more Compline for 2020 and afterward we may have Evensong during Epiphany rather than Compline so those will be at 5:00pm. Daniel also noted that our attendance is rising!

Old Business: Mural on Todd's Pharmacy's blank exterior wall was discussed and Joe Peel is working to discover cost of a "wrap" rather than painting directly on the bricks because of a rough surface. The wrap will be on a solid surface which will be mounted on the brick wall and will last quite well. Cost would be around \$2,100 for an 8'X16' size sheet. A sample was passed around. Joe Peel agreed to head up a committee for this.

Update from carpet committee: more time, information and pricing is needed before any recommendation can be made to the Vestry at this time. We are aggressively researching more affordable solutions to the runner(s) and rug. Nominees for the 2021 East Carolina Diocesan Convention which will be held on February 13, 2021 were Susan Hartley, Mary Gillam and Todd White. Daniel Cenci called for a vote to approve and it passed unanimously. The attendance of all delegates will be via Zoom because of COVID restrictions.

New Business: Daniel polled the Vestry for a date for the Vestry retreat in January of 2021 and all approved Saturday January 9, 2021 as the date for this to be held at Christ Church. On Sunday, January 10, 2021, the new Vestry will be commissioned at the 10:30 service. Trinity Center requires our deposit and/or reservation if we are planning to attend in 2021 and it was unanimously decided to wait until 2022 for planning a retreat at Trinity Center (again, due to COVID restrictions).

Discussion was held on a possible mission trip to Ecuador in July of 2021 with a team of 6-10 team members and all

felt that would be good to try to put in place since there was no mission trip in 2020. Edla Stevens and Hunter Michael are working on getting that trip put together. Americans were not allowed entrance into Ecuador this past year because of the virus. Reservations are due 2 years ahead with deposit being required a year in advance.

Discussion about a possible partnership with St. Luke's in Currituck took place since Bishop David Bane will be retiring from that duty at the end of 2020. It is hoped that someone fresh from seminary might be in a program where the person would serve as a deacon for the first six months and then become ordained as a priest for the remainder of the time in this "Second Three Years" program. As Grafton Beaman said, "It would be a "win-win: situation." The funds could come from a total of three sources (the "Lilly" endowment (spelling?), St. Luke's and the Diocese). The person could work under Daniel (the Priest-In-Charge) overseeing the young priest working both at St.

Luke's and also some in Christ Episcopal. All agreed that is definitely worth looking into. Lastly, bonuses for the staff were discussed and all agreed that Daniel, Douglas and Kim will receive that same bonus (amount to be disclosed at time of being given).

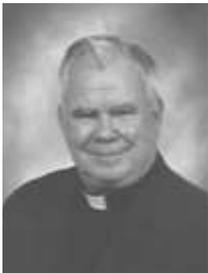
At 8:03pm a motion was made and approved (Joe/Ron) to adjourn and Daniel closed with a prayer, blessing and dismissal.

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A NEW YEAR - 2021
Christ Church Cathedral located on Monument Square in Indianapolis, published a weekly parish newsletter and when I was in that Diocese always enjoyed reading a message entitled, "from the Dean..." It was written by Bob Giannini, the Dean of the Cathedral. He is a gifted and talented writer and priest.

In the midst of cleaning up my home office space recently (New Year's resolution?) I ran across an old copy and read it over again, and again. Bob was commenting on the movie and novel, *The Last Picture Show*, written by Larry McMurty. In it he quoted the thoughts of Ceil, the model for a 50's exotic girl, who had gone on and made good as a vice-president of a university and now returning to address her home town graduation. I quote a few of her thoughts derived from Bob's message:

"... Did anyone ever tell these kids to hold themselves above the crowd? To value their own special selves, and not be 'too available?' ... That the only remedy for the superiority of another is *love*? Did anyone ever tell them, as my mother did over and over: *Don't quit, no matter what. Keep on keeping on. You can do it, whatever it is for you.* Did anyone ever tell them that nothing is lost? That they can build on experiences whether good or bad? ... Shall I tell them that simply to be conscious is to be confused; that no one escapes confusion or sorrow; that the joyful and wonderful high points of their lives are precious



Fr. Jim McGee
Rector Emeritus

gifts, not entitlements?"

There is much more, of course, but I felt inclined to share these words as significant and worthy of reflection.

I bring them to your attention because now, as we begin a new year, is the traditional time to reflect on the past, to take stock on where we are, and then set resolutions - goals, to trim our sails and set our course for something better - to make our life, personal and corporate, more meaningful - to bring real joy into our lives.

Even with the good leadership of our Rector and lay leaders, the family of Christ Church has experienced a difficult year. The governmental mandates to control the Coronavirus has negatively affected our lives in a host of ways and that is certainly been true of church life. From no worship, to outside services, we are now allowed inside our holy space with attendance limitations. The lockdown has affected parish life activities, pastoral care, Christian education and service as well as Sunday worship. (and ol' folks miss *un abrazo*) Yes, we are glad to see 2020 come to an end.

"Did anyone ever tell them that nothing is lost? That they can build on experiences whether good or bad?" Those words of Ceil certainly are true. Paul wrote the **Philippians from his prison cell**, "*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*" And from the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "*Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.*"

So, let us use the beginning of a new year to renew our baptismal covenant and with a fresh impetus to seek and to serve our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We all have a job to do in this New Year as we seek to **make Christ Church an exciting presence of God's work and worship here where we live, move, and have our being.** There is a proven method to do this. We will find that it is in our church life - our worship, our study, our caring for one another, and our ministry to the world - that we enable each other to live continually in **God's Grace.** Grace - that relationship, that dynamic, which exists between God and His people. We call it the Paschal Mystery. We do not understand it, **but are aware of its benefits.** It is Jesus Christ's mystical presence within the body - the faithful company of believers.

As we seek to live a life in Grace, God will give us all that we need to form us, and His church into a wonderful spiritual machine, out in the world loving and serving Him who creates all things, and who loves **each of us so very much.** Pray then: "*Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in them the fire of your love.*"

Fr. Jim



THANKS TO ALL
THOSE WHO
HELPED MAKE
OUR CHURCH
BEAUTIFUL AT
CHRISTMAS!!



ECW



ECW
I so appreciate your generosity for the gifts for our families this Christmas on the Angel Tree. It will be much more joyous for them now!
Blessings,
Jane Harris
ECW President

Children's Corner

Lessons from the Epiphany

The Wise Still Seek Him

"Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you."

Isaiah 60:1

As we take the month of January off from Children's Chapel, I encourage you to explore how we can continue to seek Jesus in today's world. The QR codes here will take you to a short video and a list of crafts that you can complete at home. Enjoy time reflecting upon the Magi and their journey for Christ!

For those attending services, feel free to utilize the busy bags for children located in the Narthex!



VIDEO



CRAFTS



CHURCH LIBRARY...

Winter Reads in our Church Library

Recent additions to the church library include:

CASTE by Isabel Wilkerson

Now on the New York Times best seller list, this book caught my eye when parallels to the American and Nazi history of slavery and incarceration were drawn.

CIRCA 1903:NORTH CAROLINA'S OUTER BANKS AT THE DAWN OF FLIGHT by Larry E. Tisa

As a native of North Carolina and a retired teacher and librarian, I thought I could learn no more about our coastal history, I was surprised by what I had missed of our commercial and domestic past. I even rushed to further explore the history of canals and inland waterways which date back to early civilization. The Wright Brothers and their success which led to the aviation industry is included, but also the emergence of tourism as well as interstate commerce.

If you are now wondering why I chose to add it to the church library, read about the contribution to Roanoke Island by the Episcopal Church Women of North Carolina.

HEAVEN AND HELL: A HISTORY OF THE AFTERLIFE by Bart Ehrman

Best-selling author Ehrman, professor of Religion at UNC, is the author of many books and is a frequent guest on the lecture and media circuit.

UNAPOLOGETIC by Francis Spufford

The subtitle **WHY, DESPITE EVERYTHING, CHRISTIANITY CAN STILL MAKE SURPRISING EMOTIONAL SENSE** prepares you for an untraditional approach to today's serious discussion of religion. One reader describes the book as "fresh, lively, provocative, insightful, articulate, witty, honest, shocking, profane, Christian."

A HISTORY OF THE BIBLE: THE STORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL BOOK by John Barton

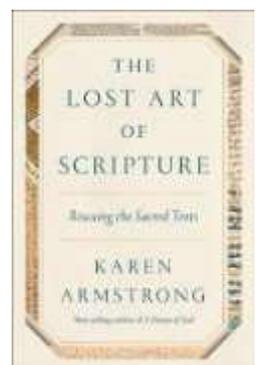
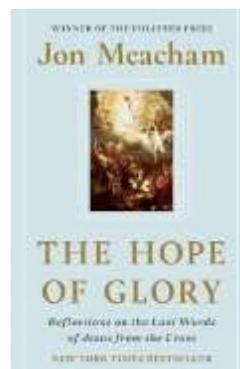
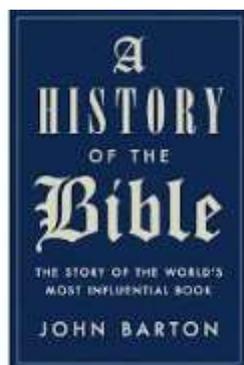
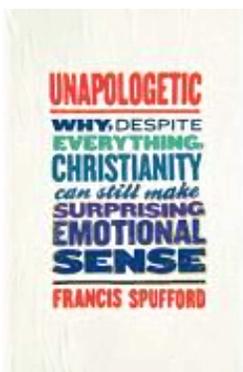
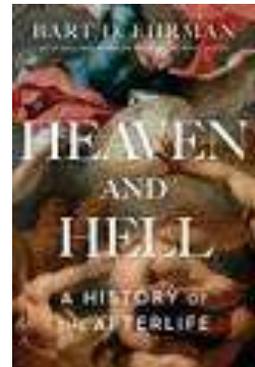
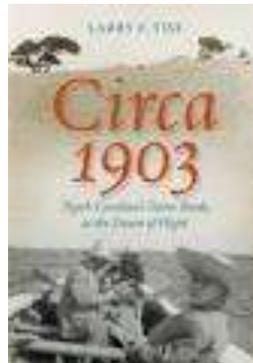
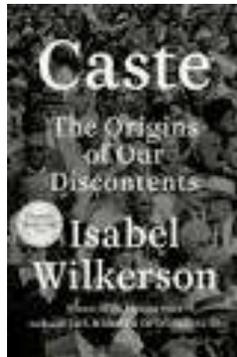
Barton explains how and by whom these disparate pieces were written, canonized (or not), assembled, and interpreted.

THE HOPE OF GLORY, REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS FROM THE CROSS by John Meacham

THE LOST ART OF SCRIPTURE: RESCUING THE SACRED TEXTS by Karen Armstrong

Armstrong argues that only by rediscovering an open engagement with their holy texts will the world's religions be able to curtail arrogance, intolerance, and violence.

Anne Sanders
Church Librarian



January Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	2 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP
3 8:00 am Holy Eucharist 9:15 am Rev. Daniel SS Class 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	4 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	5 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	6 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:30 am Bible Study, Parish House 5:30 pm Epiphany Service	7 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	8 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	9 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP
10 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Rev. Daniel SS Class 10:30 am Morning Prayer Vestry Installation 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	11 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	12 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	13 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:30 am Bible Study, Parish House	14 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	15 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	16 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP
17 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Rev. Daniel SS Class 10:30 am Morning Prayer 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	18 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	19 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	20 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12:00 noon HE at SP	21 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	22 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP Newsletter Deadline 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	23 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP
24 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Rev. Daniel SS Class 10:30 am Morning Prayer 5:00 pm Evensong 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	25 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP	26 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 1:30 pm Staff Meeting 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	27 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:30 am Bible Study, Parish House 12:00 noon HE at SP	28 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 5:30pm SOULS feeding 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous	29 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP 7:00 pm Alcoholics Anonymous	30 7:00 am Morning Prayer at SP VESTRY RETREAT
31 8:00 am Morning Prayer 9:15 am Rev. Daniel SS Class 10:30 am Morning Prayer 7:00 pm Narcotics Anonymous						



The Rt. Rev. Bishop Bane

Bishop's Meanderings...

Well, if there was ever a year that could really test my faith in a loving God, 2020 will do. What an unmitigated disaster in so many ways, so much loss, confusion, anger, division, violence, suffering, and death. Many people say that if there is such suffering, then a loving God is obviously not there. We have all heard, and maybe said, "How can a loving God allow this pain and suffering in the world?" "Theodicy" is the attempt to explain how a loving God could create a world with so much evil, and this has been a fundamental human question from the beginning. The hard truth is that we simply cannot put God and "why" in the same sentence and expect any satisfaction. We do it all the time, yet we will never get the answer we want because we are not God. If you and I could understand and explain God and God's ways, then God is just one of us, no less but also no more. The power of faith is that we choose to believe sometimes, *many* times, *against* the evidence.

So what *is* faith? Well, it is not "knowledge." Rather, it is confidence, trust, reliance, conviction, assurance, loyalty, commitment, and allegiance. And above all, it is a *personal choice* we all make every day of our lives. God has made promises to us about his unwavering and eternal love for each of us, but not a life without pain and loss anymore that his son Jesus experienced. We just finished our annual celebration of the birth of Jesus. When the angel announced to Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God, the Messiah, he did not add, "because you are the Mom of God you will live in a mansion, have servants and catered meals." We might think she deserved that, but God calls upon us to live a life without a price tag. He calls us to a life of sacrifice, of not putting ourselves first, and we do not like that in the least. Mary gave a "yes" that changed the world forever, and also lived a life with pain and loss just as every human who has ever lived. If we wait to say yes to God until we receive the answer to our "why?" we will never be people of faith.

There is a cost to being people of faith. We won't always fit into the world very well. Sometimes when we try to be faithful to God and do what is right, what is noble, what is pure, what is most excellent, we may find irritation from others. As we begin 2021, may we be the people willing to accept that cost and focus on the good we can bring into the world instead of simply being a victim of the bad behavior of other people. Instead of complaining that God is not handling the situation in the way that would please me, what if I seriously and intentionally looked for the proof of God's presence in the midst of the suffering? He is there, in quiet loving acts of so many people, in the sacrifices people make for others, and in little acts of kindness around us every day, even in days like we saw in 2020.

In Christ's love,
+David

January Birthdays

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Daniel Cenci | 29 Layton Umphlett |
| 3 Dee Rudd | 30 Ron Turlington |
| 4 Anne Elliott | |
| 4 Jane Harris | |
| 7 Amy Bryson Mira | If your birthday or anniversary is |
| 10 Tracy Dean | not listed, please contact the |
| 11 Caroline Hughes | church office. Thank you! |
| 11 Lydia Gardner | |
| 12 Gray Little | |
| 14 Susan Griffith | |
| 15 Ginger Sanders | |
| 17 Sally Bruderle | |
| 20 Beverly Madrin | |
| 21 Dianne Wells | |
| 23 Kim Cooper | |
| 23 Steve King | |
| 24 Will Jennings | |
| 24 Cameron Pharr | |

January Anniversaries

- 9. Beth and John Foreman
- 26. Kristin and Speight Bunn

Parishioners in Assisted Living

Brookdale of EC, 401 Hastings Lane: EC 27909
 Juanita Mullen Helen Gibson
Elizabeth City Health & Rehabilitation, 1075 US 17 S: EC 27909
 Jim Hathaway

At Home

Flora Robinson, 201 E. Main St., PO Box 186, EC 27907
 Ann Hughes, 1514 Crescent Dr., EC 27909
 Betty Ingram, 2121 Rivershore Road, EC 27909
 Nancy Ferebee, 337 North 343, Camden NC 27921

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To be a Loving Family in Which Christ is Known and Proclaimed As Lord and Savior.

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Rector The Rev. Daniel Cenci Retired Bishop The Rt. Rev. David Bane
Rector Emeritus The Rev. Jim McGee Music Director/Organist Douglas Blackwood
Parish Administrator Kim Willis Co-Directors of Youth Ministry Whitney and Chris Pullet
Director of Children's Ministry Jessica Cenci
Nursery Coordinators Reinga Hammond and Lauren Flach
Librarian/Historian Anne Sanders Treasurer Gary Cooper

VESTRY (2021)

Grafton Beaman Anna Smith Wes Lupo Michelle Flach
Devon Morrison Speight Bunn Sue Scurria Mickey Golden
Bettie Lyons Mary Gillam Joe Peel Phil Hornthal

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