



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED PRESIDENT'S DAY
Monday, February 18, 2019



RECTOR'S CORNER

Part 3:

Midrash

Editor's Note:

This is the final part to Rev. Sandy's three part series followed by excerpts from Richard Rhor's daily blog.

We may find Jesus' teaching, in dialogue with our own knowledge, study, intuition, and experience, that the Law (Torah) is indeed summed up in His two imperatives:

LOVE GOD
LOVE NEIGHBOR

*"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."
- Matthew 22:36-40*

God as Love reveals its self in a myriad of sizes, shapes, and forms. Definitively in Jesus of Nazareth and by extension all human form. Divine Love overcomes all opposites and therein lies its power to heal all/any division. This is the mystery often quoted as "unity in diversity" spoken of by the Christian mystics throughout the ages. It forms the basis of our understanding of the Trinity: The Eternally One in the many, and the Eternally Many in the One.

We know Jesus spoke in parables. We know he prayed with and without words. We know he taught and modeled a way of life that was often challenging and counterintuitive to the acceptable religious norms of his day.

We know there are irreconcilable historical discrepancies in the Old and New Testaments that cannot be harmonized. We may find there are stories that offend our sensibilities. These need not discourage us. There may be stories that move us profoundly to conversion of heart and mind drawing us closer and closer beyond the written word or image into the mystery we call "God." These need not be an occasion of spiritual pride.

All things work for good for those who love God. - Romans 8:28

The Bible is good, and it is a gift, but it is not God! Let us rest in and embrace it fully with an open mind and heart aware that through it God's Spirit is working mysteriously in our lives. When at last the mind of God and heart of God are united as one in us, all division and suffering cease. God has, indeed, reconciled us to Himself, and this is the greatest gift.

As the essay below invites, let us all be open to infinite possibilities. Let us probe the depths of sacred scripture to its depth and beyond. It is there we may discover our participation in the life of God and gracefully and humbly incarnate it for the love of God and love of neighbor. Amen.

In Christ,
Sandy +

Excerpt from Richard Rohr's Daily Blog "Midrash" <https://cac.org/midrash-2019-01-07/>

Midrash: Monday, January 7, 2019

More than telling us exactly *what to see* in the Scriptures, Jesus taught us *how to see, what to emphasize*, and also *what could be de-emphasized or ignored*. Beyond fundamentalism or literalism, Jesus practiced a form that the Jewish people called *midrash*, consistently using questions to keep spiritual meanings open, often reflecting on a text or returning people's questions with more questions. It is a real shame that we do not imitate Jesus in this approach. It could have saved us from so many centuries of righteousness, religious violence, and even single-issue voting.

Rather than seeking always certain and unchanging answers, the Jewish practice of *midrash* allows many possibilities, many levels of faith-filled meaning--meaning that is relevant and applicable to you, the reader, and puts you in the subject's shoes to build empathy, understanding, and relationship. It lets the passage first challenge *you* before it challenges anyone else. To use the text in a spiritual way--as Jesus did--is to allow it to convert you, to change you, to grow you up as you respond: What does this ask of me? How might this apply to my life, to my family, to my church, to my neighborhood, to my country?

While biblical messages often proceed from historical incidents, the actual message does not depend upon communicating those events with perfect factual accuracy. Spiritual writers are not primarily journalists. Hebrew rabbis and scholars sometimes use the approach of *midrash* to reflect on a story and communicate all of its underlying message. Scripture can be understood on at least four levels: literal meaning, deep meaning, comparative meaning, and hidden meaning.

The *literal* level of meaning doesn't get to the root and, in fact, is the least helpful to the soul and the most dangerous for history. *Deep* meaning offers symbolic or allegorical applications. *Comparative* study combines different texts to explore an entirely new meaning. Finally, in traditional Jewish exegesis, *hidden* meaning gets at the Mystery itself. Midrash allows and encourages each listener to grow with a text and not to settle for mere literalism, which, of itself, bears little spiritual fruit. It is just a starting point.

Whatever is received is according to the manner of the receiver. [1] This statement from Aquinas was drilled into me during seminary. People at different levels of maturity will interpret the same text in different ways. There is no one right way to interpret sacred texts. *How you see is what you see*; the *who* that you bring to your reading of the Scriptures matters. Who are you when you read the Bible? Defensive, offensive, power-hungry, righteous? Or humble, receptive, and honest? Surely, this is why we need to pray before reading a sacred text!

Jesus consistently ignored or even denied exclusionary, punitive, and triumphalist texts in his own inspired Hebrew Bible in favor of passages that emphasized inclusion, mercy, and honesty. For example, referencing two passages from Exodus (21:24) and Leviticus (24:20), Jesus suggested the opposite: "You have heard it said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you...turn the other cheek" (see Matthew 5:38-39). He read the Scriptures in a spiritual, selective, and questioning way. Jesus had a deeper and wider eye that knew which passages were creating a path for God and which passages were merely cultural, self-serving, and legalistic additions.

SENIOR WARDEN NEWS:

A Belated Happy New Year to All!

The theme for this year's Vestry Retreat was "Nothing endures but change," (Heraclitus). Yes, 2019 will be a year of transition. Sandy will be leaving us, and we will



launch a search for someone to replace her. To that end, we have selected as co-chairs, *Darelle Jordan* and *Sharon East*.

Bishop Reed attended a portion of our retreat to lead us through the process the church would be following and encouraged patience with the progression, noting that when the procedure is short-circuited, the results prove problematic.

He also noted that we are entering a period of waiting--like Advent--active, hopeful waiting.

This is also a time for unity and "business as usual." As a community, let us support Sandy in her new venture, and continue the work we are assigned, knowing the Spirit is working on our behalf.

Also, know that your Vestry is here to serve you; please contact any of us if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

"Lord, let us start our work in faith, continue in obedience and finish with love." - prayer from a church in Quantock Hills, England

Blessings,
Nancy Jenkins

*Please See Below for a Handy Chart of the Vestry Names and Email Addresses.
You may want to print it out and save.*

Contact information may also be found at: <https://www.ststeve.org/vestry>

David Boles	david@wimberleyace.com
Carla Daws	geminipisces@hotmail.com
Ken Ellis	kjellis101@gmail.com
Veronica Erwin	veronicaerwin47@gmail.com
Greg Estes	gregoryestes@rocketmail.com
Nancy Jenkins	nmjenkins@austin.rr.com
Dr. James May	drjamesmay@gmail.com
David Reynolds	breynolds1960@austin.rr.com
Ann Robertson	annrobertson95@gmail.com



REMINDER
MON-SUN:

**CHURCH AND SCHOOL
HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACES
ARE FOR THOSE IN NEED.**



WISH LIST

OFFICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We're wishing you were here!

We've got free hugs, coffee, and tea waiting for you in the church office in exchange for a few volunteer hours a week.

- Monday mornings
- Wednesday mornings
- Wednesday afternoons

Would you rather customize your schedule? Have a knack for organizing? If so, helping clean, cull, and tidy the church closets and cupboards may be just the new 2019 project you are seeking.

Wising you were here already!

For more information, contact: Jeannetta Watson, jwatson@ststeve.org.



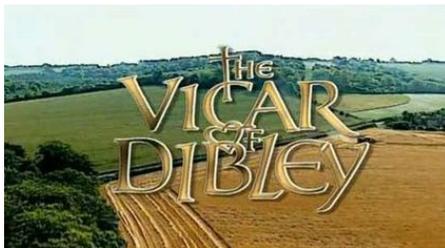
DOK Meeting

Sunday, February 17, 2019 @ 12 noon

Meeting Room #1

For His Sake, the Daughters of the King will gather for prayer and discernment on Sunday, February 17, 12 noon, in Meeting Room #1. We welcome you to be with us.

For more information, contact: Dale Cegielski, doilydo@yahoo.com.



Great Generations Gathering

Wednesday, February 20, 2019 @ 11:30 a.m.

McArthur Hall

All are invited to a British comedy program, immediately following our 11:30 a.m. lunch. Be prepared to laugh while enjoying "The Vicar of Dibley" about a female priest in England in the 1990s.

For more information, contact: Carroll Dolezal, carrolldolezal99@gmail.com.



Big Scoop Planning Meeting
Friday, February 22, 2019 @ 10:00 a.m.
OFFSITE: W.I.S.D. Office, 951 FM 2335

Come join us as we start to work on The Big Scoop Ice Cream Festival 2019. We will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 22 at the Wimberley Independent School District's office located at: 951 FM 2325.

The Big Scoop is a wonderful fundraiser for Camp Good Sam Wimberley, a summer program for at-risk children in our area. Come be part of this wonderful community event.

For more information, contact: Ann Robertson, annrobertson95@gmail.com.



FAMILY CELEBRATION SERVICE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2019

10:30 a.m.

St. Stephen's Church

For Adults, Teens, Children, Everyone!

FAMILY CELEBRATION SUNDAY services are held at St. Stephen's Church on the last Sunday of the month during the school year, excluding December. Children participate fully and the sermon follows THE STORY schedule and is adapted for all ages.

This month is the story of The Return to Babylon!

Free Child care is available for infants & toddlers.

St. Stephen's MelodyMakers lead music & worship.

YOUTH holding Taco Fundraiser after service.

The St. Stephen's students and families are especially invited to join us on February 24, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. in the church sanctuary.





Deer Creek Services

Sunday, February 24, 2019 @ 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 @ 3:00 p.m.

OFFSITE: Deer Creek Wimberley, 555 RR 3237, Wimberley

During the remainder of February, St. Stephen's will be offering two services offsite at Deer Creek Wimberley. All are welcome to attend.

As part of the rotating schedule with other area churches in the Ministerial Alliance, SSEC will be at Deer Creek on Sunday, February 24, 3:30 p.m. Please join Circle of Care's [Connie Maverick](#) and [Sharon East](#) as they lead this offsite service of hymns, lots of gospel music and familiar prayers.

On Wednesday, February 27, 3:00 p.m., St. Stephen's will share a Holy Eucharist service with the residents of Deer Creek as part of the Community of Hope's regular 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month ministry. All are welcome.

Deer Creek Wimberley is located at: 555 RR 3237, Wimberley, TX 78676.

For more information, contact: Sharon East, sharoneast@verizon.net.

TED Talkers

Wednesday, February 27, 2019 @ 12 noon

McArthur Hall

Please join us for TED Talkers on Wednesday, February 27, at 12 noon. We will be watching "Why theatre is essential to democracy" explained by Oskar Eustes.



TED Talkers is held twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesday. We watch a pre-selected TED Talk video together at 12 noon, eat our brown bag lunch while watching the video, and enjoy a facilitated discussion of the TED Talk. Coffee and water are provided. It all wraps up by 1:00 p.m.

TED talks are videos created to provide information from a variety of people knowledgeable on an immense number of topics; they provide information but also invite conversation. Each is about 15 minutes long. If you are curious, visit www.ted.com and select and watch a topic of interest to you: science, ecology, history, you name it!

TED Talkers is open to the general public, and you are encouraged to bring a friend, neighbor, and join in our sure-to-be lively, mind-stimulating discussions. We'll have a warm cup of coffee waiting and there's always room for one more.

TED TALKERS WINTER 2019 SCHEDULE

MARCH 13, 2019

MARCH 27, 2019

For more information, contact: Jo Bourke, jobourke33@gmail.com, 512-468-1267.

Big Band Mardi Gras Dance/Concert FREE!

Saturday, March 2, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.
OFFSITE: Wimberley Community Center

Yes, Mardi Gras is coming! We are going to let the good times roll with a **FREE** dance to celebrate! Not only will we be playing great big band music, we will also bring New Orleans to Wimberley through music.



So, get out your dancing shoes, find your Mardi Gras mask, round up your friends, and get some tickets. (The tickets are **FREE**, but we have a fire marshal limit of 150 party-goers.)

The Wimberley Valley Big Band is a 501c(3) nonprofit dedicated to bringing quality Big Band music to the Wimberley Valley.

Get your free tickets: jazztix4u@gmail.com. Donations appreciated!



Newcomer Potluck
Sunday, March 3, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.
OFFSITE: Veronica Erwin's Home

It's a great time to meet other newcomers to St. Stephen's and enjoy the hospitality of Vestry member Veronica Erwin as we meet for a potluck dinner on Sunday, March 3, 5:30 p.m.

Rev. Sandy and Newcomer Coordinator Robyn Sanders will help us get to know all about the St. Stephen's church and community. Children are welcome. *We love 'em!*

For more information, contact: Newcomer Coordinator, Robyn Sanders,
rswelcomessec@gmail.com

YOUTH FUNDRAISER: SHROVE PANCAKE DINNER

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 @ 5:30 p.m.
McArthur Hall



The SSEC YOUTH are hosting a Shrove Pancake Dinner in McArthur Hall on Tuesday, March 5, 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Proceeds go towards the JH/HS summer mission trips.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES



St. Stephen's invites you to a Holy Eucharist with Ashes

ASH WEDNESDAY

March 6, 2019

offered three times in the Chapel

8:00 a.m.

12 noon

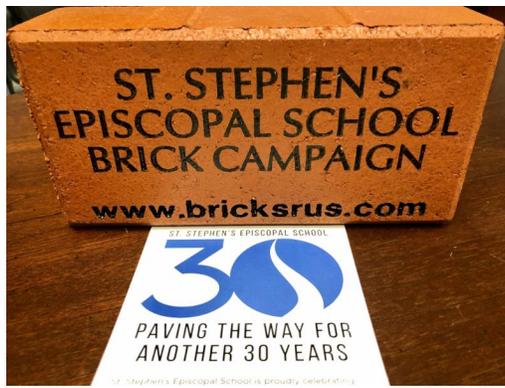
6:00 p.m.

LIFE AT SSEC

The month of February is often synonymous with love. What an amazing gift of God's love we all were to share during Louisa James Brewer's baptism! Parents Emily and Austin Brewer wish to share, "We are so grateful to be part of the St. Stephen's community."



Buy a Brick or Bench and Support SSES



Tuition at St. Stephen's Episcopal School (SSES) covers 70% of the school's operating expenses. Each year the gap is filled with generous donations and community participation.

This year's annual campaign is spectacularly unique. SSES has partnered with Wimberley Gardens to update and beautify an underutilized area of the school. You can help by donating to the SSES Annual Fund and receive a customized brick or bench to be placed in the renovated garden space.

Download your [order form](#) today.

**Orders will be taken through:
THURSDAY, FEB. 28, 2019
Thanks!**

For more information, contact: Vickie Johnson, SSES Office, office@ststeveschool.org.

Community of Hope Ministry

HOPE
LIVES

Do you need someone...

*To listen, without judgment, to what is weighing on your heart?
To recognize your needs and respect your rights to your feelings?
To honor any conversation with complete confidentiality?
To support you as you take steps of change on your journey?
To just walk with you and let you be you.*

Each one of us, at some point in our lives, could use a "companion" to walk with us during the challenges of our journeys. A Community of Hope Lay Chaplain is someone who cares about you, will not promise miracles, will not decide for you what you should do, will not take steps for you, and will not rescue you. He or she will be available to you, support you, pray for you, and assure you that you are God's beloved. Please, if you are walking alone, invite one to join you on your path.

For more information during February and March, contact: Becky Denton, dentonrebecca1@gmail.com, or Dot Green, dotgreen@anvilcom.com.

ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL
PICNIC
AT THE
VISTA

Extravaganza is now
PICNIC AT THE VISTA!

Save the Date!

March 30th, 2-6pm

at VISTA BREWING in Driftwood

A Family Event with activities for kids, plus our traditional live and silent auctions, live music, and great Vista food and beer. Please invite your friends and neighbors; this event will be fun for everyone!

Tickets available for purchase in the school office or at

<https://ststephens.tiptopauction.com/extravapicnic>



UPCOMING SUBMISSION DEADLINES

The eNEWS is published on Fridays generally every two weeks and delivered straight to your e-mail's in-box. If you have an e-mail address update, please make sure to send these to the church office.

With more than 20 ministries and groups here at St. Stephen's Church, we've got a lot happening! Help us cover your event by submitting articles, photos, and artwork to: *Communications Manager, [Jackie McFadden](#)*.

UPCOMING DEADLINES:
12 noon Wednesday or earlier

February 27

March 13

March 27



SAVE THE DATES

SUN, FEB 17

Adult Confirmation Class #2, 12 noon, Meeting Room #1

SUN, FEB 17

Daughters of the King, 12 noon, Meeting Room #1

SUN, FEB 17

Regular YOUTH Meeting/Confirmation Class, 5 p.m., McArthur Hall

MON, FEB 18

Office Closed for President's Day

WED, FEB 20

Great Generations Gathering, 11:30 a.m., McArthur Hall

SUN, FEB 24

YOUTH Taco Fundraiser, after both 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. services, McArthur Hall

SUN, FEB 24

Family Celebration Sunday, 10:30 a.m.

SUN, FEB 24

Deer Creek Sunday Service, 3:30 p.m., OFFSITE: Deer Creek, 555 RR 3237

WED, FEB 27

TED Talkers, 12 noon, McArthur Hall

WED, FEB 27

Deer Creek Eucharist, 3:00 p.m., OFFSITE: Deer Creek, 555 RR 3237

WED, FEB 28

Vestry Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Meeting Room #1

SUN, MARCH 3

Newcomer Potluck, 5:30 p.m., Veronica Erwin's Home

TUE, MARCH 5

Shrove Pancake Dinner, 5:30 p.m., McArthur Hall

WED, MARCH 6

Ash Wednesday Eucharist with Ashes, 8:00 a.m, 12 noon, 6:00 p.m., Chapel

Are you on Facebook? St. Stephen's is!

**[Click here to visit our Facebook page](#)
and don't forget to **LIKE** and **SHARE** us!**

Please contact the church office at 512.847.9956, Monday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Fridays 8:30 a.m. until 12 noon, if you have any questions.

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)