

*St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, Whiterocks*

**Don't Miss Bishop Hayashi's Visit to St. Elizabeth's  
THIS SUNDAY, September 19 at 10:00 am**

We'll be gathering outside, so bring your lawn chair and umbrella (for the sun)—Please maintain social distance; masks are only needed if you want to join the singing.

Dear St. Elizabeth's Family,

September 14, 2021

We assume the disciples did the best they could under the circumstances, but sometimes they were shockingly clueless. Imagine walking along with Jesus and arguing about which one of them was the greatest! This came after he told them he'd be giving up his life for their sake, which they couldn't understand, so they ignored it. Maybe that passage is in the Gospels to make us feel better when we're bewildered.

In the world of Jesus, status was turned upside-down. "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all, and servant of all," he said. The boss, or whoever tries to have power over others, ranks the lowest in his eyes. If you find yourself in a position of authority, the only hope is to use your influence for the good of others, not to build yourself up. There's no such thing as "greatness" in that world, only faithfulness.

In my early twenties, I literally fell into my career as a preschool teacher. One of my friends had been bugging me to visit the day care center where she was working, and to get her off my back, I finally went. Within a couple of hours, I was transfixed by the wonder of being with a group of young children. At times it was noisy and chaotic, but the kids were present in every moment and fully engaged with their emotions. They were suspicious of adults with agendas and drawn to the ones who were curious and playful. They readily accepted anybody who was ready to have some fun, no matter what their age.

I can see why Jesus chose a child to be the model for his new status order. "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me," and by doing so, "welcomes the one who sent me." Connecting with God is not that difficult, if we just stop pretending to be in control and go along for the ride. Who is the greatest? It's Jesus of course, because he never claimed power over others, never built himself up at anyone's expense, and in the end, he stepped back so the Spirit could go to work. Now it's our turn—not to dominate or succeed, but to give ourselves to God. It's child's play, really...

Michael+

*Gathering in Our Hearts*

**Prayer for Grace**

Lord God, Almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Scripture Passage** Mark 9:30-37 (*in insert*)

## from Psalm 51

Open my lips, O Lord,  
and my mouth shall show forth your praise.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God, \*  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Cast me not away from your presence \*  
and take not your holy Spirit from me.  
Give me the joy of your saving help again \*  
and sustain me with your bountiful Spirit.

## Reflection

Let me make my witness as simply as I can: I am a believer in second chances, in peace and reconciliation, because I stand in need of mercy, knowing life can begin again, if love is allowed to heal. I am a believer in something greater than myself, greater than all that is, the source and the salvation of all creation as far as the eye can see, each life and soul cherished, every innocence redeemed. I am a believer in kindness and fairness, because they are words of transformation, cornerstones of community, the justice we seek right under our noses. I am a believer in us, in you and me and all the people we have never met, but always knew, the human family we could be, if only we have the courage of our convictions.

*Episcopal Bishop Steven Charleston, Choctaw nation*

**Remember** those among us who are in need of prayer. We pray for rain, for safety from wildfires, and for the firefighters who protect us. In our church family, we remember Matthew, Kathy, Amanda, Julia, Tiarance, Chris, Tony, Leanna, Judy, Connie, Lyn, John, Sterling, Kaysen, Christopher, Eve, Logan, LeeRoy, Julia, Arick, Leo, Hudson, SueAnn, Redrock, Dave & Nora, Tyler, Rodricka, Ina Jane, Peggy and Reuban, and for those who have died. We pray for first responders and medical workers, those from our reservation serving in the Armed Forces and for all veterans. We say the **Lord's Prayer** out loud.

## Prayer for Young People

God our Father, you see your children growing up in an unsteady and confusing world: Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Blessing

The Peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

*If you can, join us for in-person worship at St. Elizabeth's on Sundays at 10:00 am.  
You can also look for prayers and a spiritual message on Michael Carney's Facebook page.  
These short services are recorded every Sunday morning and can be viewed at any time.*