

ST. PETER'S ANGLICAN CHURCH **Newsletter**

News | Faith | Theology

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 VBS 2017
- 1 The Centurion Project
- 2 The Pastor's Corner
- 3 Call to Apostles-By-The-Sea
- 4 Praise Notes



Vacation Bible School 2017

By Amy Stoltzfus

VBS 2017 is scheduled for June 19th-22nd. We will gather each morning from 9-12 and explore the vastness of God's love for us. Kids will leave knowing that the God who created the universe wants to have a relationship with them. Each day will be filled with songs, crafts, Bible stories, games, snacks and mission lessons that will reinforce our theme. In preparation for this event, we need you to:

- 1) Register your children who are 3 years old through 5th grade by June 19th. Registration is currently open to members of St. Peters by going to this link: <https://goo.gl/forms/7dGt5XW5NqDN46Cw2>. We will open registration to the community in May. We can only accept 60 children to VBS, so please sign up now!
- 2) Consider serving the week of VBS – VBS is a huge outreach ministry of our church and we need a lot of volunteers to make this week a success. Please consider volunteering and serving our church and community this week. Contact Amy Stoltzfus or Peter Smith if you want to help.
- 3) Please pray for our leaders as they plan and prepare, for enough volunteers to have a successful week, and for the children who will be here that they will leave VBS different than how they came.

The Centurion Project

By Grace Wiley

Last month, the Special Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplaincy (JAFC) held an intensive, three-day retreat called the Centurion Project at the Rolling Hills Retreat Center in Calera, AL. The Centurion Project is a ministry that aims to support and heal military veterans and first responders who struggle with post-traumatic stress, combat operational stress, and moral injury. The retreat culminated in a worship service where the servicemen who attended were surprised by friends, family members, and others in the body of Christ who welcomed them home and thanked them for their service. Some of these men had never been thanked for the sacrifices they made, nor told that anyone was happy to see them return home. It was a blessed time of healing, love, and regeneration through the power of the Holy Spirit.



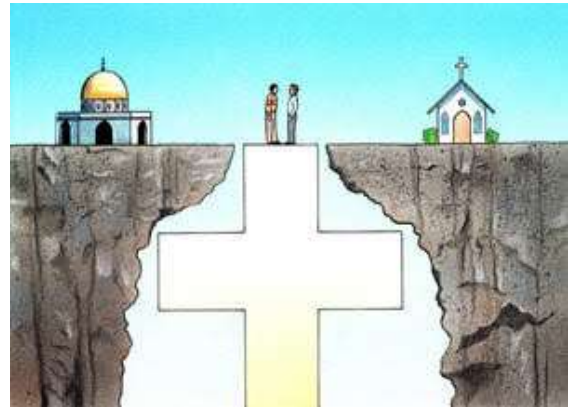
The Pastor's Corner: What About Our Muslim Neighbors?

By the Rev. Dr. Mark Quay

The news is full of articles about Muslim men killing themselves and others in the name of Islam. This is not limited to the Middle East or even Europe. Since the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993, Muslim terrorists having been attacking Americans in our own land. Understandably, this causes a great deal of concern. It seems to many that Western culture is in a battle with Islam for its very existence.

As someone who was once an Arabic linguist and Middle East intelligence analyst, who has studied Islam under Muslims of various “denominations,” and who has kept up with events since leaving that profession, I want to offer some informed background knowledge into this situation.

Islam is not monolithic. There is no one Islamic faith group. You have no doubt heard about Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, but there are many other sects beyond them. There are also divisions within divisions and the various groups are often mutually antagonistic. Arguably, the most dangerous sect is found within Sunni Islam, the Salafists. Theirs is the ideology behind Al Qaida and the so-called Islamic State. While idolized by many non-Salafi Muslims, the majority are concerned that the Salafists will prompt a Western backlash that will greatly curtail the civil liberties that Muslim immigrants now enjoy.



There are “no-go” areas in many European cities. There are cities within European countries with large Muslim immigrant communities where there is little to no cooperation with the local police. Obviously, this is concerning to the governments of these nations, and rightly so. If the law is being flaunted, authorities must step in. This is somewhat similar to what has happened in the past, even in America, with other migrant groups. However, if history is any indicator, most will eventually integrate into the greater society, just as Irish, Italian, Polish, and Jewish Americans (for example) have done.

Many Muslim immigrants want to establish Sharia law. This is consistent with their theology. However, there is more than one interpretation of Sharia (there has been since the second generation of Islam), with many moderate and extremist views. Depending on the community under consideration, this can vary from imposing strict divorce laws to capital punishment for apostates. While we may disapprove of the establishment of any Sharia law, we need to know what interpretation we are arguing against.

Most Muslims come to the West to seek better lives for their families. True, there are some covert operatives who want to bring our culture to its knees. But most Muslim families want to be good citizens and take advantage of the economic prosperity of the US and Europe. Do they want to influence the surrounding culture? Yes, just as we Christians should want to do. This does not mean we should approve of their efforts – we most decidedly should not! Yet at the very least we should understand them.

Muslim terrorist organizations are recruiting young men and women from prosperous Muslim families in the West. They are taking advantage of the nearly universal disillusionment which young people of all creeds and no creeds have. In the 60s and 70s it was Communism, remember? This does not vindicate the efforts of the recruiters – indeed they are very dangerous – but it does put them in perspective.

Muslims do not worship the same God we worship. The true God revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ, (see Col. 1:15-20; 2:8-15). Muslims do not believe (1) that Jesus is the Son of God, (2) that he

is both God and man, and (3) that he is the Savior of the world. To them, these three beliefs are nothing short of blasphemy. They respect Jesus as a prophet of Allah (as they do Abraham and Moses). Allah is not the God of the Bible, and the creeds of the undivided Church. To say we worship the same God is to disrespect their religion.

The answer to the present conflict with Islam is not to be found, ultimately, in any government action. (I offer no comment one way or the other on anything our government or the governments of other Western nations are doing.) The reason for this is that conflict is fundamentally spiritual. It is truly a battle between two very different ways of understanding the nature of God, humanity, and creation. Just like the Jews and the Samaritans of Jesus' day (see John 4:22), these views are not religiously compatible, but that does not stop us from being good neighbors.

The arrival of many immigrants to our nation, regardless of their ethnicity or religion, provides us with innumerable opportunities to share the Gospel. In fact, this is the answer to this conflict and indeed any conflict. Only the Good News of Jesus Christ can end the strife between men and women. Missionaries tell us that Muslims are coming to Christ in historic numbers. Let us be a part of that: pray for Muslims around the world; be a good neighbor to the Muslims in your community. Be the face, voice, and hands of Jesus Christ to those who do not know him as the only way, and the only truth, and the only life. Amen.

Call to Apostles-By-The-Sea

By the Rev. Dcn. John Bacon



Ever since the age of twelve, I have hoped that God would call me to preach the Gospel in the church. Thanks be to God; I have received that call! In confirmation of ADOTS' assessment for my call to church plant, as well as your parochial affirmation of my call to the priesthood, Apostles-By-the-Sea (GAD, ACNA) has extended the call to me to serve as the first diocesan church-planting curate! I will serve two years as a curate at Apostles-By-the-Sea with the express purpose not only of ministering to their parish, but also planting a new parish in Panama City Beach. The Lord has opened this amazing door of ministry for us and has also led the way for us to find a rental property near the community which we have targeted for planting – Panama City Beach's growing residential development, Breakfast Point.

As our world becomes increasingly volatile and uncertain, the urgency and certainty of the Gospel remains. The need for Gospel-centered, sacramental, liturgical churches is higher than ever, as well as the transformation of lives and creation of community which comes with them. While this call will not be easy, we believe in the promise and presence of our Triune God. We are excited to serve with Fr. John Wallace and his family. We are zealous for the name of Jesus Christ to be lifted high, and we are more thankful than ever for your kind, tender investment in us these past three years!

Please stop me or contact me by phone or e-mail to learn more about Apostles-By-the-Sea, the church plant vision, how we have received this opportunity, or how you can support us. We specifically need thirteen more partners to give \$100 per month, or twenty six more partners to give \$50 per month. A new auto-draft option, supported by Apostles-By-the-Sea is available upon request. Thank you to those of you who have already pledged your support or anonymously given! Thank you for your investment in my little family and the call of the Gospel that we share.

Praise Notes

A Testimony from Richard Randolph

I grew up in the Episcopal Church: Episcopal Youth Fellowship, acolyte, an Episcopal prep school and college, usher, stewardship chairman, vestry. I was a relatively good person, did some good things – surely God would want me when my turn came. But it wasn't until 1974 that I was *personally* challenged concerning my separation from God and my need for a Savior from my sin. I wanted eternal life and a personal, one-on-one daily walk with that Savior, Jesus, through the Holy Spirit.

One day, I was reading *Seed Faith* by Oral Roberts, and I realized I was “religious,” a “churchman,” but not a follower of Christ. In this book was a prayer for being born again (John 3:3). Convicted, I prayed the prayer and moved on to the next chapter which introduced the Holy Spirit and had a prayer to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6). I thought, “Okay, in for a penny, in for a pound,” so I prayed this prayer also. Sitting there at my desk, I had such a sense of God's presence and His love right there with and in me that I began to thank Him, praise Him, worship Him out loud. Suddenly, I realized I was no longer speaking in English but in a language I did not recognize (I Corinthians 14:14-15). And the more I did, the closer I felt to God (Jude 20) and the more confident and empowered (Acts 1:8) I felt about serving and witnessing for Him.

I discovered that praying in tongues is from the Holy Spirit, a gift to be received as we would from a loved one – it's our personal choice, personal yieldedness, if you will (I Corinthians 14:18). It has and still does play a tremendous part in my walk with the Lord. When I don't know how or what to pray, which happens frequently, I can pray in the Spirit, in my weakness (Romans 8:26), with the confidence that it is the Holy Spirit praying through me to God's heart – always accompanied with that peace that passes all understanding.

As I look back now, I realize praying in tongues (Acts 10:44-46) is not something to be wary of, but something to be “earnestly desired” (I Corinthians 14:1) and, in faith, sought after (Luke 11:9+). Speaking to Him, through Him in the “language...of angels” (I Corinthians 13:1) has, since 1974, opened to me a steadily deepening friendship with Him who is our guide and the Agent of God's grace in me and in this heart-sick world.

Centurion Project, Cont'd.

The next Centurion Project is expected to be held in September of this year. However, more than \$12,000 will need to be raised within the next four months to make this incredibly impactful program possible, as it is completely free for the servicemen and women who attend. The cost for one attendee is \$1,500. If you feel so led, please consider making a donation at <http://anglicanchaplains.org/wp/the-centurion-project/>. If you'd like to help in other ways, you can participate in an off-site prayer team, write letters to the veterans thanking them for their service, or join in at the worship service at the end of the next retreat and be a welcoming face as the attendees arrive in the chapel. There's even a closing banquet which is completely free for all who attend!

As always, we covet your prayers for this ministry and all the other efforts of the JAFC. Your intercessions can and do make a difference. If you'd like to learn more about the Centurion Project or the Jurisdiction in general, please contact me at gracewiley@anglicanchaplains.org, or by phone at (501) 993-7500.

The July-August issue of the St. Peter's Newsletter will be published on Sunday, June 25th. If you would like to contribute an article, please submit your work along with any accompanying images to the editor, Mrs. Grace Wiley, via email to gewiley38@gmail.com by Friday, June 16th. Articles may be edited for length and content. If you have any questions, contact the church office at (205) 879-7173.

St. Peter's Anglican Church
3207 Montevallo Road
Mountain Brook, AL 35223