



The New Epistle

a newsletter of

The Progressive Episcopal Church

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Holy Week



Praxis Communities

Praxis Communities are learning communities where people can act and reflect together in hopes of transforming both the church and the world.

Core tenets of Praxis Communities include:

- ☐ Know People By Name—Learn people’s stories. Root communities in relationships. Invite people to join a practice and become friends with people who long to be practitioners. Seek the places where God’s Spirit is already active and intentionally have conversations with those on the margins.
- ☐ Give Permission— Say yes and bless. Practice invitation and give away the best ideas. Let your gifts be a blessing and encouragement to others.
- ☐ Respect the Seasons — Create and experiment without taking on the burden of perpetuity. A practice that is established and grows but then falls away is not a failure. It has lived out its season and should be honored for the gifts it has given.
- ☐ Accept the Beautiful Mess — Love messiness. Accept that half-finished projects, tables covered with paint, awkward moments in worship, vegetable gardens filled with weeds are full of hope and promise. Believe that messes are the way that God’s Spirit moves over us, helping us to create something new out of the chaos. Dive in, join the fun, take risks, and seek beauty in unexpected places and people.
- ☐ Participate in the Church Beyond The Church — Recognize, promote, and participate in practices that belong to other communities. Look for the sacred in common places. God is out ahead of us, acting in our world in ways that our institutions blind us to. The work of the Holy Spirit transcends any settled community. Join in that work by spending time in collaborations between churches and praxis communities, and by lending your presence to groups outside the church, then return to a core community and tell them what you’ve discovered in the practice of others.

Praxis communities can take many forms. It may start as a small house church of like-minded people who see a particular need in their community that is not being met. Following in the teachings of Jesus, they find themselves becoming an intentional community, making use of available resources to address otherwise unmet needs in their community, town, or city. It brings with it an awareness that The Christ is always with us wherever we are. A group in Ohio has started a “flash mob” approach on Compline with a group of about a dozen. They are armed with leaflets of this short evening Office, and will be spontaneously reading the office in a popular local park. Invariably passers-by will join them in praying this ancient Office. There are no strings attached, no “come to church on Sunday” invitations; just a “flash Compline” and that is all. It is a faith in practise that transcends all boundaries of denomination and creed.

It is about meeting people where they are; it is about discovering needs around you and addressing them; it is about God’s love in action, as Jesus calls us to do.

The church in the first century frequently met in homes for weekly praise and thanksgiving, and to share a common meal together, a meal of which what we call Eucharist was an intrinsic part. Around the table they would discuss the preceding week’s labours, and talk about what was needed for the week ahead. It was of time of sharing the thanksgivings and also the needs of the community around them. After the meal, and in the time until the next community Sabbath meal, the people would be worshipping with their feet and their hands in service.

This concept of Praxis Community is very much the heart and soul of the Progressive Episcopal Church. It was intended from our humble beginnings under Bishop Jack Stafford that this Church would be “A Community of Communities.” In 2017, with our nation under great duress from its administration, there is much opportunity to unite in community to

address vital needs. And it is already happening! For example, when news of the President's intention to eliminate the community grant program that provides significant funding for state and local Meals on Wheels programs, cities and towns across the country experienced an outpouring of not just financial support, but also *people* support! Meals on Wheels in and of itself can be thought of as a type of intentional Praxis community.

The recently-formed Arkansas Social Justice Center is an example of a Praxis Community formed to address the needs of the often oppressed and marginalised communities in that state, particularly in the southwestern portions. The Diocese of Southern Ohio (ECUSA) has a vibrant network of Praxis Communities. We invite you to explore their website <http://praxiscommunities.org/> and reflect on how you might join a praxis community in your area or start your own. You will find there are *always* needs to be met. Consider what you might do to contribute to the betterment of your community. Perhaps volunteer to be a driver for Meals on Wheels. Perhaps organize a fundraiser to help pay for school lunches for children whose families don't qualify for assistance but still cannot afford school lunches for their children. There are opportunities all around us.

Be Christ's Living Gospel!



We offer this article from the above-referenced Praxis Communities website of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio. It is reprinted here with permission from Rev Jane Gerdson.

Forming a Community of Practice

"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds." – Hebrews 10:24

The year after I graduated from college I worked at a church in Boston, Massachusetts. My job was to develop children and youth programs within a congregation where there were not very many young people of any variety. As I started my job, I naturally gravitated to the few other young people in the church: the newly ordained curate, a young married woman who lived down the street from the church, and the sexton and his wife, who happened to live in the fourth floor apartment of the church. The five of us spent many hours together – initially as we served the Tuesday evening dinner for the homeless community each week and then later we started meeting for coffee to share our lives together. We began reading books – I remember animated conversations in the church garden discussing Herman Hesse's, *The Glass Bead Game* but we read and discussed books about theology and church history too. At one point we started an art studio in an unused classroom turned storage space, trying our hand at painting and sculpting together. We started meeting regularly to cook and eat dinner together and plan our next project or experiment. It was during this year together that I heard my own call to the priesthood. Each of us, in fact were working out our vocation together – trying to understand what God was asking us to do with this life.

It's only now, looking back, that I see the way this small group of people who met and bonded together for a short period of time helped shape my life and ministry. We needed each other as colleagues, as friends, as followers of Jesus. We were what I would now call a community of practice. One of the things I am learning in my work with fresh expressions is that people are tired of sitting in rooms behind the closed doors of the church and talking about what we might do. I think we are tired of planning and watching and waiting. Young adults, but I believe Christians of every age, want to stop talking about their faith and want to start practicing it. But we are scared – we are scared we can't really live the way of Jesus. And without a community of people to support us and challenge us and force us to try new things – we will probably just keep talking.

So I wonder what would happen if we started to form these kinds of communities – small groups of people who commit to an experiment together. What if we made art together? What if practice contemplative prayer? What if we gather each week to meet face to face with the homeless or marginalized in our community? And what if we have dinner together afterwards to talk about our experiences? What if the Christian life was less like an art museum and more like an art studio? Would you be willing to join such a group? Who might you invite to form a community of practice? Are there people who don't go to church but are curious about Jesus that might be willing to join in your experiment? I believe that these communities of Christian practice are reshaping the church today from the outside in. I know that these kinds of communities have helped me learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus and have framed the landscape of my faith life. I see God's movement in our world stirring up new communities who are challenging each other to live the way of Jesus. I challenge you to join in.

Rev. Jane Gerdsen

August 21, 2013

praxiscommunities.org



We are now using Realm software to better connect with our clergy! Not all our clergy follow our Facebook pages, which – outside of email – has found itself being a primary method of communication of announcements, happenings, etc. The new software allows us to connect with all of our clergy at once, and also make sure all clergy receive the newsletter.

Each of you who are active TPEC clergy have received an email invitation to join Realm. The process is quite simple: click on the link provided in the invitation, create a username (your email) and a secure password. You will then be able to log in to Realm and be able to access all announcements and even post announcements yourself about things that may be happening in your community that you would like the rest of us to know about.

As of this newsletter, there are 12 invitations that have gone unanswered. If you have a Realm invitation sitting in your Inbox (and be sure to check your Spam folder to make sure it didn't end up there!), please respond and sign up. Through Realm we can thoroughly connect with all our clergy. In time, we will look into adding members of our individual communities, such as Lighthouse Community Church, or the Arkansas Social Justice Center.

Realm has the advantage of being accessible on cellphone, tablet, or any other device. Once we are set up for it (hopefully later this year) you will be able to start making contributions through Realm to support the administrative expenses of the church so that one individual does not have to continue to pay it out of his personal checking account.





Autism has long been considered to be a medical condition and mental disease, and has been approached and “treated” accordingly, often with heavy doses of medication to “control” the autistic person. But slowly – painfully slowly – there is a movement to see autism not so much as a disease, but as a different state of being which includes an entirely different and unique language that must be learned by non-autistics in order to be able to communicate easily with autistics. If you were to decide to go live in a foreign country, you would first need to learn the language spoken so that you can communicate with people. It is ultimately no different with autistics; however, the language is not always a spoken one. It can be through noises, gestures, body

language, or any number of other forms. Once we learn the language the autistic person “speaks,” communication flows as easily as if we were having a conversation in English with our spouse or co-worker.

The Rev. Dr. Dan L Edmunds is a TPEC priest in Pennsylvania who has worked for decades with autistic people, and takes a non-pharmaceutical approach. As we observe Autism Awareness Month, you are encouraged to consider Dr. Edmunds’ approach to autism; contemplating and meditating on this approach applies equally in many other places.

“I have seen a process in the ability to adopt an attitude of autistic empowerment for some persons. It begins with the idea that autism is a thing that is to be eradicated. This is ignorance. I do not blame some persons for holding such an idea initially as it is pervasive in the messages in society and may be all they initially know. From this emerges the idea that one might be able to accept autistic person but has an attitude of pity and feels bad that they are different. This is tolerance. The next stage is where one is able to see autism as not a thing but a mode of being of the person. This is awareness. Beyond this one begins to not focus merely on challenges but to also see strengths. This is acceptance. One then starts to understand the diversity in means of communication and no longer expects the autistic person to conform to contrived standards of communication. This is a furtherance of acceptance. From this point one is able to incorporate respect, dignity, presuming intellect, embracing diversity, and promoting self advocacy. This is empowerment.

So one moves from ignorance to tolerance to awareness to acceptance to empowerment.”

-[Rev.] Dr. Dan L. Edmunds, Ed.D.



The Mandatum

In the middle of April we will observe Holy Week, and many churches will have a Maundy Thursday service with foot-washing and stripping of the Altar(s). For us as Progressive Christians, the foundation of our faith lies not in creeds or doctrines, but in the mandate – *the Mandatum* – that Jesus gives to his disciples as he is taking the role of a servant and washing their feet. It is a simple instruction that transcends all our creeds, doctrines, theologies, and anything else we come up with: --

“Love with humility by serving one another.”

A Creed from the Iona Community:

We believe in God above us,
maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon, of water and earth, of male and female.

We believe in God beside us,
Jesus Christ, the word made flesh,
born of a woman, servant of the poor,
tortured and nailed to a tree.
A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,
he died alone and forsaken.
He descended into the earth to the place of death.
On the third day he rose from the tomb.
He ascended into heaven,
to be everywhere present throughout all ages,
and His kingdom will come on earth.

We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit burning with Pentecostal fire,
lifegiving breath of the Church,
Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
source of all resurrection and of eternal life. Amen.

*An Affirmation of Faith from New Zealand:*

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous, good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your Gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.
You are God.
We place our trust in you. Amen

<h1 style="margin: 0;">April 2017</h1>						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>READINGS Mass—Year A Office—Year One</p> <p>Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFE, pages 498-528.</p> <p><i>See Notes on Reverse</i> [] - In some Places</p>	<p><i>Lenten Note:</i> All weekdays in Lent are Greater Ferias, with memorials either ignored or commemorated. The letter (R, W) denotes the color if the memorial is kept. Propers for Lenten Weekdays are found in LFE.</p> <p>All Lenten Weekdays are traditionally marked by Special Devotion.</p>	<p><i>Holy Week Note:</i> The red color used in Holy Week, Passiontide Red, is a deep color. It is not the more festive red used for Pentecost. Violet should be used if Passiontide Red is not available.</p> <p><i>Easter Note:</i> Readings for Easter Ferias (Weekdays) are found in LFE, pages 65-81.</p>	<p>Glo.—Gloria Cr.—Creed Prf.—Proper Preface of Adv.—Advent Inc.—Incarnation Epi.—Epiphany H.Wk.—Holy Week Eas.—Easter Asc.—Ascension</p>	<p>Pen.—Pentecost Tri.—Trinity Sunday A.S.—All Saints St.—Saint Ap.—Apostles Ded.—Dedication Bap.—Baptism L.D.—Lord's Day</p>	<p style="font-size: 2em; color: purple;">✠</p>	<p>Lenten Feria (Frederick Denison Maurice, Priest, 1872 - W)</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">1</p> <p>Prf. Lent 1 (Glo. Prf. Bap.)</p>
<p>The Fifth Sunday in Lent [Passion Sunday]</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">2</p> <p>Cr. Prf. Lent 2</p>	<p>Lenten Feria (Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253 - W)</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">3</p> <p>Prf. Lent 2 (Glo. Prf. St. 2)</p>	<p>Lenten Feria (Martin Luther King, Jr., Civil Rights Leader, 1968 - R) [Isidore of Seville, BCD 636 - W]</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Prf. Lent 2 (Glo. Prf. Bap.) [Glo. Cr. Prf. Tri.]</p>	<p>Lenten Feria (Vincent Ferrer, Priest, 1419 - W)</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">5</p> <p>Prf. Lent 2 [Common of a Pastor, Glo. Prf. Bap.]</p>	<p>Lenten Feria</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">6</p> <p>Prf. Lent 2</p>	<p>Lenten Feria [Tikhon, Patriarch of Russia, Confessor and Ecumenist, 1925 - W] [John Baptist de la Salle, Confessor, 1719 - W]</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">7</p> <p>Prf. Lent 2 [Common of a Pastor, Glo. Prf. Tri.]</p>	<p>Lenten Feria (William Augustus Muhlenberg, Priest, 1877 - W)</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: purple; text-align: center;">8</p> <p>Prf. St. 2 (Glo. Prf. St. 1)</p>
<p>The Sunday of the Passion: PALM SUNDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">9</p> <p>Violet may be used. Cr. Prf. H. Wk.</p>	<p>MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">10</p> <p>Violet may be used. Prf. H. Wk.</p>	<p>TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">11</p> <p>Violet may be used. Prf. H. Wk.</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">12</p> <p>Violet may be used. Prf. H. Wk.</p>	<p>MAUNDY THURSDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">13</p> <p>Violet may be used for the Offices; White for Mass. Prf. H. Wk.</p>	<p>GOOD FRIDAY Fast</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">14</p> <p>Black may be used.</p>	<p>HOLY SATURDAY</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">15</p> <p>Violet may be used; White for the Vigil.</p>
<p>The Sunday of the Resurrection: EASTER DAY</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">16</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">17</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>TUESDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">18</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>WEDNESDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">19</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>THURSDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">20</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>FRIDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">21</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>SATURDAY IN EASTER WEEK</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">22</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>
<p>The Second Sunday of Easter [Low Sunday] Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: white;">23</p> <hr style="border: 1px solid white; width: 50%; margin: 5px auto;"/> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: white;">30</p> <p>The Third Sunday of Easter Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>[Mellitus, First Bishop of London, 624]</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">24</p> <p>[Common of a Pastor II, Glo. Prf. St. 1]</p>	<p>SAINT MARK THE EVANGELIST</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: red; text-align: center;">25</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. A. S.</p>	<p>Feria</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">26</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>Feria</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">27</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>Feria Abstinence Dispensed</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">28</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. Eas.</p>	<p>Catherine of Siena, 1380</p> <p style="font-size: 4em; color: white; text-align: center;">29</p> <p>Glo. Cr. Prf. St. 2</p>

April Birthdays	
Rt. Rev. Francesca Fortunato	25
Rt. Rev. Dan Varga	27
Rev. Jarrod Cochran	29



FOR SALE – Single owner tomb. Only used three days, and still has that new tomb smell. Reason for sale.. resident was resurrected.

