



# The New Epistle

*a newsletter of*

## The Progressive Episcopal Church

Volume I Number 5

July 2015

JULY



## *Some thoughts for July*

As we enter July, many of us launch ourselves into summer activities with our families. Children enjoy a few months with no school with its annoying teachers and awful tests and pop quizzes. No more of that nasty math with that impossible algebra to learn, no more English with the sentences to diagram (does anyone still do that, or am I just that old?). Many families will travel to various places in the United States and around the world in search of fun, adventure, history, art, and also renewal and growth.

On the fourth day of July, we commemorate our nation's independence from England here in the United States. Fireworks, picnics, family & friends are the order of the day. My great-grandfather wrote in his journals that a popular activity in his area was anvil shooting, though I reckon that's not much done anymore, although there are a few videos on YouTube.

While most of the clergy of The Progressive Episcopal Church are in the United States, we do have some clergy in England, and also a handful in other countries including Korea. Therefore we are mindful that our Independence Day is not observed in the other countries represented in TPEC. However, we can look this American holiday and find some universal lessons that transcend country and border.

The American Revolution had at its roots taxation by the English crown that was seen as unjust. Protests escalated and grew more intense. In 1775 a war began between the Colonists and England, and in 1776 the Continental Congress declared its independence from England, but yet the war continued until 1783, and ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris and the Treaty of Versailles.

The United States has seen since then many things against which people rebelled as unjust. In the 1600s, Europeans largely came to the New World to seek freedom from oppression of one sort or another. Yet in time, the New World began to erode those freedoms. Slavery appeared. Women and people of colour had no rights and very limited freedom. In our westward expansion to the Pacific Ocean we waged genocidal war against the free people who had lived in this land for thousands of years, stealing their land and denying their humanity, enabled and empowered by the Discovery Doctrine. Slowly, ever so slowly, the tides began to turn. Only after great conflict was slavery abolished, and the concept of all people regardless of race being equal began to slowly seep in to society. Yet progress was slow. Eventually blacks were granted the right to vote, but women, still seen as lesser to men, could neither vote nor own property. Women were, in fact, still seen as property owned by their father until marriage, at which time ownership was ceremonially transferred to the husband. In due time and after long struggle, women's suffrage won the day, and women (for the most part) had equal rights as men with regard to vote and own

property. But yet another barrier stood in that people of different races could not marry. Nearly every state had an anti-miscegenation law. Slowly the states rescinded their laws until in 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled such laws as unconstitutional, and the remaining states' laws were overruled.

The anti-miscegenation laws, like so many other laws before them, treated people as unequal on the basis of gender and race. Yet in one of the founding documents of the United States is found the admonition that "*all men are created equal.*" When we read the teachings and parables of Jesus, we find the very same message. Even the arrogant, bullying, self-appointed and often contrary apostle Paul understood this!

In 1967, the U.S. Supreme Court removed a large obstruction to marriage equality when it ruled that whites could freely marry non-whites. Just as in the recent same-sex marriage ruling, various state authorities attempted to deny marriage licenses to mixed-race couples, as we are seeing currently in Texas and Alabama with regard to same-sex couples.

The American Revolution was over injustice. For more than 200 years we have continued to seek justice for the oppressed, and for those who have been denied their humanity as God's children. This is by no means limited to the United States. This struggle continues throughout the world on both small scale and large scale. Here in the United States there is frustratingly slow progress being made with respect to the oppression of our Native peoples, yet the oppression continues as sacred lands are being taken away and the Discovery Doctrine is still part of our country's laws.

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, Americans will celebrate their independence from England and its unjust colonial governance and taxation at the time. But today we are at peace, and we are allies. As we in America commemorate that Independence with fireworks and picnics, let us be mindful of those native people in our own country, as well as those around the world who are still struggling, fighting, for their own freedom from the oppression and persecution they face daily. We must at the least remember this in our daily prayers, and also where we can we must do our part, to the best of our ability, to help those who are still waiting for their freedom attain theirs by *living* the liberating Gospel of Jesus.

*Amen.*



## Ministry Spotlight – *Rev. Colin Keller*

SAFE HOUSE PROGRESSIVE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ([safehousepec.wordpress.com](http://safehousepec.wordpress.com)), is both a church plant of the Cumberland Diocese of the Progressive Episcopal Church, plus a Facebook-based Group, combining a membership of the best minds from the GBLT Christian, Progressive Christian, and the ISM Communities that reside on Facebook. Safe House Progressive Episcopal Church is a re-invention of Rev. Colin Keller's now-defunct, Shelter Community Church, [www.sheltercc.org](http://www.sheltercc.org). With the Ministry Team of Abigail & Lacie Hester we began Safe House in January of this year. Our goal is to be a Progressive, Sacramental, GBLT Church that embraces the Sacred Feminine in all of our liturgical work. We are currently working with Liturgical forms derived from the Christian Godde Project's Divine Feminine version of the New Testament, [godde.wordpress.com/the-divine-feminine-version-dfv-of-the-new-testament/](http://godde.wordpress.com/the-divine-feminine-version-dfv-of-the-new-testament/). Our main Goal is to build a Community Liturgy that is able to be used by all whom wish, whether in the Clergy or Laity. It is our sincerest hope that from our work, ISM communities will continue to grow and expand with a set of Liturgical work, new , fresh, and vibrant for generations to come,. We are grateful and humbled to be chosen as a spotlight feature in the New Epistle, and would like to take this opportunity to invite all of the PEC Community to be part of Safe house Progressive Episcopal Church's main [Facebook](#) group, and also participate in our Public Face Book Page, [Safe House Community Liturgy.](#)



# LEARNING ABOUT GOD FROM CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

By Ven. Thurlow Weed

*I have been the organist for St Johns' Episcopal Church (ECUSA) in Lancaster, Ohio for a little over three years. It was designed & built by local architect Daniel Sifford, who also designed & built many stately homes in the area. The church is erected to God, and dedicated to the Holy Saints John of Jerusalem (John the Baptist & John the Evangelist). The architectural style of the building is English Tudor, but is also a scale representation of King Solomon's Temple. The following is a sermon slightly modified into an article for newsletter purposes.*

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it was customary for masons & woodcarvers to include all manner of motifs in their work as visual aids to teach the mysteries of God. St Johns' Church includes a number of features that, although in plain view, can be easily missed.



St Johns' Church, Lancaster, Ohio

Standing in front of the church, one observes a flight of steps leading to the front door. These steps are divided into two sections of 8 and 7 steps. In Ezekiel 40:26-31 we find a description of the 8 and 7 steps leading to the outer court of King Solomon's Temple. There is also a tradition that divides the 8 steps into sections of 3 and 5. The first 3 steps represent the Sun, the Moon, and God. We read in the book of Genesis that God created the Sun to rule and govern the day and the Moon to rule and govern the night, and that God is ruler and governor over all things.

The first three steps also remind of the cardinal virtues of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. Brotherly Love teaches us to regard the entire human race as one family, created by God and inhabiting the same planet, and that we should therefore aid, support, and protect one another. To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all people, especially Christians. Following in the commandments of Jesus, we ought of necessity do what we can to soothe the unhappy, compassionate their miseries, restore peace; also to feed the hungry, and visit the sick. Truth is exemplified by our sincerity and plain dealing; in it our heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity.

The next five steps remind us of the human senses, which are Hearing, Seeing, Feeling, Smelling, and Tasting.

Hearing is that sense by which we distinguish sounds and are capable of enjoying all the agreeable charms of music, and the sounds of the natural world around us. By it we are able to communicate with each other, as intended by the Wise and Beneficent Author of Nature.

Seeing is that sense by which we distinguish objects, and all such things that are displayed in the vast natural landscape around us that God has created, and continues to create through the natural forces of earthquake, fire and flood.

Feeling is that sense by which we distinguish the different qualities of objects, such as hardness or softness, heat or cold, roughness or smoothness.

Smelling is that sense by which we distinguish odours, the various kinds of which convey different impressions to the mind.

Tasting enables us to make proper distinction in the choice of our food. Everything that enters the stomach must undergo the scrutiny of tasting.

These noble senses work together in harmony, and can be illustrated thusly, using a theme that seems to pop up on Facebook quite a bit: We see & feel the bacon as we place it in the skillet, after which we see & hear it cook and smell its welcome scent. We then use the sense of taste to provide the final appreciation of this wonderful food. (Sorry, I just couldn't resist the bacon illustration!)

Moving right along, we come to the final seven steps, which allude to the seven arts and sciences, which are Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Music.

Grammar is the science which teaches us how to express our ideas in correct language. It is by Rhetoric that elegance of diction is taught. Logic is that science which teaches us to form clear and distinct ideas, and prevents us from being misled by similitudes or resemblances.

Arithmetic is the science of numbers, that branch of mathematics which considers the properties of numbers in general.

Geometry treats the powers and properties of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness are considered. By Geometry the architect is enabled to construct his plans and execute his designs.

Astronomy is that science which treats of the heavenly bodies, their motion, magnitude, distances, and physical constitution. How eloquent of Deity is the Celestial Hemisphere, spangled with the magnificent heralds of God's infinite glory!

Music is that science which affects the passions by sound. There are few who have not felt its charms, and acknowledged its expressions to be intelligible to the heart. It is a language of delightful sensations far more eloquent than words; it can wrap us in melancholy, and can elevate us in joy.

The Bible teaches us there are many gifts, but it is the same Spirit that gives them. I'm particularly gifted in the music department, and also grammar, as well as rhetoric (usually). In Arithmetic I'm functional, but my gift of astronomy is limited to knowing that the sun rises and sets, there are solstices and equinoxes, and that there is a solar system of which we are a part, and I can name all the planets, but don't ask me too much more than that. Oh, I also know the universe is supposed to be 94 billion light-years in size.



*Boaz & Jachin, and empty niches*

*The steps also remind us of our journey ever onward and upward through life, when we shall eventually enter the Celestial Temple, that House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Upon ascending the stairs, we find ourselves standing at the doors to the church. We read in the book of Kings that on the porch of King Solomon's Temple were two brazen pillars, cast in the clay ground between Succoth and Zeredathah. The two towers on the front of St Johns' church are intended to represent these two columns: Boaz on the left, and Jachin on the right. Boaz signifies "strength", and Jachin signifies "to establish in the Lord." Between the two towers are two empty niches representing the Holy Saints John, but also representing the unfinished Temple; unfinished because of the untimely death of its architect Hiram Abiff, the widow's son. It also reminds us that we are unfinished spiritual temples, on a journey toward completion in God.

Passing through the red doors, we find ourselves in the Narthex, a place representing the porch of King Solomon's Temple. We then pass through another set of doors into the Nave, which corresponds to that portion of the Temple called "The Holy Place." Further to the east is the Altar within the Sanctuary, which corresponds to the Holy of Holies in King Solomon's Temple.



*Pomegranate ceiling, also symbolizing the peace after the War of the Roses*

I now draw your attention to the ceiling, which has several interpretations. The red diamond-shaped portions are symbolic of the Red Rose of the House of Lancaster, and the white medallions represent the White Rose of the House of York. Lancaster and York were the two branches of the House of Plantagenet, both branches competing for the English throne in the War of the Roses. Henry VII (of Lancaster) won, then married Elizabeth of York, thus uniting peacefully the two Royal Houses into the House of Tudor.

But a closer examination of the ceiling reveals much more, and one quickly sees that the plaster medallions are of two different designs.

The one with the plain rounded sides is actually four fleur-de-lis springing forth from a central node to form a cross Fleury. The lily, from the retired situation in which it grows, denotes Peace. This is the peace of God that passes all understanding. The peace that ended the War of Roses. The lily is also a symbol of innocence and purity. The lily is also associated with Mary the mother of Jesus, who is also called the Rose of Sharon.



*Pomegranate with Fleury cross*

The other medallion is a stylized pomegranate combined with a Fleury cross. The pomegranate, from the exuberance of its seeds, denotes plenty, or abundance. This reminds us of the abundance of God's grace, God's love, God's blessings, God's forgiveness, -- all of God's abundance.

During the Renaissance, it was common to depict the interior of a pomegranate by creating a diamond-shaped grid pattern in black, with each diamond filled in red, with a white dot in the center representing the seed. Now look at the ceiling again. The ENTIRE CEILING is a representation of the interior of a pomegranate. The ceiling reminds us that we are covered with, showered with, the abundance that is God: blessings of grace, love, forgiveness, compassion, gifts, the Spirit ... the list goes on. Now look at those long brackets that run east-west, and look at the lattice-like filler that is inside them. This is carved wooden NETTING. Remember the passage found in both Matthew and Mark about being fishers of men? Also each knot in a net is connected to another knot. So too are we connected one to another as the body of Christ.



*Fleury cross*



*Net-work inside brackets*

Back to those two columns on the porch, Boaz and Jachin. We read in the Book of Kings that atop those two columns were chapiters, and those chapiters were adorned with lilies, pomegranates, and net-work.

As the eyes are drawn heavenward to God, we behold above symbols of lilies to remind us of God's peace, and the need for purity of heart, mind and soul; we behold the symbol of the pomegranate to remind of us the abundance of God's gifts of love and grace and forgiveness; and the network that reminds us that we are all God's children, and thus all connected one to another as members of one human family scattered the world around.

From the abundance of God's grace and blessings, to the gift of Jesus the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, who came to teach us, to remind us, to make us fully aware of God's presence within us, within each and every one of us, an awareness that would reconcile us to God. A reconciliation that Jesus gave us in the Last Supper, commemorated here around the Altar in the Holy of Holies of the Temple. That Holy of Holies that Jesus made accessible to ALL people, not just the great high priest of the Temple, but indeed to ALL people.

This beautiful building designed by Daniel Sifford teaches us, reminds us of the most basic and therefore most important aspects of our faith as Christians. Ascending the stairs which remind us of our innate human gifts of senses and skills, and of our journey ever onward and upward through life, passing between the two pillars which reminds us of our strength established in God, as we enter the Holy Place, spangled above with lilies, pomegranates and net-work to make us mindful of our one human family in God who covers us with blessings and the peace that ends wars, as we journey together in God's presence to His Altar here in this Temple, erected to God and dedicated to the Holy Saints John of Jerusalem.





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# July 2015

Churchman's Ordo Edition

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>READINGS</b> Mass — Year B Office — Year One  Weekday Eucharistic Readings for use throughout the year are found in LFF, pages 498-528.  <i>See Notes on Reverse</i>  [ ] - In some Places	Glo.—Gloria Cr.—Creed Prf.—Proper Preface of Adv.—Advent Inc.—Incarnation Epi.—Epiphany H.Wk.—Holy Week Eas.—Easter Asc.—Ascension	Pen.—Pentecost Tri.—Trinity Sunday A.S.—All Saints St.—Saint Ap.—Apostles Ded.—Dedication Bap.—Baptism L.D.—Lord's Day	[The Most Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ]  <b>1</b>	Feria  <b>2</b>	Feria  <b>3</b>	INDEPENDENCE DAY  <b>4</b>
The Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  <b>5</b> <small>Proprietary 9 Glo.Cr.Prf.L.D.</small>	[Sexburga, Abbess of Ely, c. 700]  <b>6</b> <small>[Common of a Monastic II, Glo.Prf.St.2]</small>	[Paladius, Apostle of Ireland, 5th Cent.]  <b>7</b> <small>[Common of a Pastor, Glo.Prf.St.1]</small>	[Ss. Aquila and Priscilla, Martyrs, 1st. Cent.]  <b>8</b> <small>[Common of a Martyr I, Glo.Prf.St.3]</small>	Feria  <b>9</b> <small>Proprietary 9</small>	Feria  <b>10</b> <small>Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, c. 540</small>	  <b>11</b> <small>Glo.Prf.St.2</small>
The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost  <b>12</b> <small>Proprietary 10 Glo.Cr.Prf.L.D.</small>	[Silas, (Silvanus), Companion of Paul, Martyr, 1st Cent.]  <b>13</b> <small>[Common of a Martyr III, Glo.Prf.St.3]</small>	[Bonaventure, Bishop of Albano, 1274]  <b>14</b> <small>[Common of a Theologian and Teacher II, Glo.Cr.Prf.Tri.]</small>	Translation of St. Swithun, 862 [Vladimir of Kiev, 1015]  <b>15</b> <small>Glo.Prf.Epi. [Common of a Saint I, Glo.Prf.St.1]</small>	[Our Lady of Mount Carmel]  <b>16</b> <small>Props for May 31 Glo.Prf.Inc. or BVM (TASB)</small>	William White, ✡ Bishop of Pennsylvania, 1836  <b>17</b> <small>Glo.Prf.St.1</small>	BVM on Saturday  <b>18</b> <small>Props for May 31 Glo.Prf.Inc. or BVM (TASB)</small>
The Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  <b>19</b> <small>Proprietary 11 Glo.Cr.Prf.L.D.</small>	Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Amelia Bloomer, Sojourner Truth, and Harriet Ross Tubman, Liberators and Prophets  <b>20</b> <small>Glo.Prf.Bap.</small>	Feria  <b>21</b> <small>Proprietary 11</small>	SAIN T MARY MAGDALENE  <b>22</b> <small>Glo.Cr.Prf.A.S.</small>	Feria  <b>23</b> <small>Glo.Prf.Epi.</small>	Thomas à Kempis, ✡ Priest, 1471  <b>24</b> <small>Glo.Prf.St.2</small>	SAIN T JAMES THE APOSTLE  <b>25</b> <small>Glo.Cr.Prf.Ap.</small>
The Ninth Sunday after Pentecost  <b>26</b> <small>Proprietary 12 Glo.Cr.Prf.L.D.</small>	William Reed Huntington, Priest, 1909  <b>27</b> <small>Glo.Prf.Bap.</small>	[Samson, Bishop of Dol, and Missionary, 565]  <b>28</b> <small>[Common of a Missionary II, Glo.Prf.Pen.]</small>	Mary and Martha of Bethany  <b>29</b> <small>Glo.Prf.Epi.</small>	William Wilberforce, 1833  <b>30</b> <small>Glo.Prf.St.2</small>	Ignatius of Loyola, ✡ Priest, 1556 [Joseph of Arimathea]  <b>31</b> <small>Glo.Prf.St.3 [Prf.Dead]</small>	Days of Special Devotion are noted with ✡

## Book of Prayer

- For Mar Melchizedek for healing following injury in a car accident.
- For peace in our nation in the unrest following the massacre at Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Many black churches have been burned in the aftermath which has erupted surround the Confederate battle flag.
- For those in our nation who feel their faith is shaken as a result of the SCOTUS ruling on marriage equality. We pray that they may come to understand the sometimes challenging mysteries in God's Creation, and that they may be reconciled to God's perfect and unconditional Love for all people as being in the image and likeness of God.
- All those around the world who are persecuted for their faith, or for any other reason.
- For those who have no work, and for those whose dignity is not respected.
- For the continuing search for the remains of Malaysian Airlines flight 370, lost on March 8, 2014; to date the plane has not been found. We pray that the families of those lost may feel God's comforting presence throughout the long wait for answers and closure.
- We give thanks for all those who minister to those in need; tending the sick, feeding the hungry, providing support and companionship to all those who are in distress, and who in any way serve to meet the needs of the world and community around them.
- For all of our clergy & ministries in TPEC and in the Diocese of the South PEC who continue to bring God's unconditional love to a world so much ion need of renewal.

### Birthdays in June

July 23 – Rev. Amanda Alley

