

# THE MAGDALENE

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**From the Desk of Fr.  
Neil...**

## WAITING ON GOD

Psalms 27:14 says, "Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!" (ESV) Wait for the Lord is what David tells us. It's obviously good advice, since the Holy Spirit included it in the Bible. And yet living out this short, simple command out is not always easy for us.

Does waiting on the Lord mean that each time we go to make any decision, no matter how small, we should consult the Lord? Does it mean that we should expect some sort of sign from Him before we act? Does it mean we should sit and do nothing until we do get that sign?

On the other hand, if we make a decision before getting a clear sign from the Lord are we being presumptuous? Are we taking things into our

own hands? Is this sinful? Once we start down this road we can either get into trouble, or we can do nothing at all and never even begin to go down that road.

The Bible has commands for us all throughout. Thou shalt. Thou shalt not. Believe this. Don't believe that. Seek this. Avoid that. So we can't really say that the Bible does not give us direction. Yet, when it comes to making certain decisions, sometimes Christians become paralyzed and unable to make a move. Someone desires to change careers. Another person wants to get married. Another wants to buy a new home. Each of these is an important decision and should not be entered into lightly. But what does proper waiting look like? Is this how we are to live as Christians? Are we to not make a move until we get a clear, unmistakable, obvious sign from God?

When I ask the people what sort of sign they are expecting from God, they really can't say. They can't be specific. They usually answer by saying; "I'll know it when I see it." But even then they can't even give me a hint.

But all of this misses the point of what it means to live and walk obediently to God and to make proper decisions as Christians. On page 49 of the Book of Common Prayer we find this prayer, "Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favor, and further us with thy continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy Name, and finally, by thy mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

All that we do...all our works have to begin, continue and end in God. This means that when considering taking a new job or marrying a

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**Sunday Services:  
8am Mass  
10am Choral Mass &  
Children's Sunday School**

**Wednesday Service &  
Anointing of the Sick: 9am**

certain person, for example, we aren't commanded to seek a sign from God. We are to act in accordance to this prayer. Act in faith that God's guidance will be there and that by His Spirit we will make decisions that bring Him glory.

We are never going to be able to know every possible combination of things that could happen or go right or wrong. The decisions we make then must be guided by the principles of the commands of God summarized in loving God and loving neighbor. (Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18)

Take the scenario of changing careers. If taking the new job will leave you with less money and your family will suffer then it's probably not a good move. You don't need a sign from God for this. You already have one. Loving neighbor means taking care of those in your family. No decision is going to be without the possibility of it going wrong.

In each decision, whether it be large or small, good or bad, we should think about what that prayer asked. First we ask God in prayer for direction. "Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths." (Psalm 25:4, ESV) Second, we acknowledge that God is at work in us. He works in us through the things we do, from beginning to end. "...for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13, ESV) Finally, we make decisions ultimately to glorify Him. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17, ESV)

## NEWS REPORT

### PRESERVING THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Rev. R.C. Sproul, a Presbyterian minister and who began his ministry in his native Western

Pennsylvania and became one of the most influential leaders in the resurgences of biblical literalism and doctrinal Calvinism among conservative Protestants, died December 14th. He earned degrees at Westminster College, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and the Free University of Amsterdam.

As an ordained minister and founder of Ligonier Ministries (1971), he was the author of dozens of books and featured in countless teaching tapes, videos and radio broadcasts.

We can only speculate that his drive to teach the Word of God over 40 years was solidly founded on scripture, and his robust desire for evangelism.

The Rev. Sproul's biblical beliefs crossed over many denominational lines. He asserted the infallibility of scripture in history and science, including a literal reading of the Genesis accounts of creation and Noah's flood.

He was also influential among a segment of conservative Protestants who embrace "Reformed theology", or the doctrine of grace, anchored in the theology of John Calvin. These include a firm belief that God has full sovereignty over human events, including predestining those who are saved. "Anything that happens in this world cannot happen apart from divine sovereignty," he taught. "...If God is not sovereign, God is not God."

The Rev. was a role model to many pastors. He would speak along with others to audiences at conferences that drew thousands from various denominations. This great minister will surely be missed. Let us pray that his tremendous work will continue to promote biblical literacy for decades to come.

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## **OUTREACH FUNDS COLLECTED FROM 2017**

Our very special thanks to everyone who gave and attended the many Outreach events throughout this year.



We are proud to announce that we gave \$5,000 to our ACC missions in Venezuela and \$200 to Mary's Kitchen in Orange again this year.

Please come to the Annual Meeting to here about the other organizations we helped during the year.

Praise God for His Spirit in us!

## **CHECK OUT THE NEW CONFERENCE ROOM**

Yes, we have a beautiful new space in the Parish Hall to have prayer, and small group meetings. This space was created to give us a quite peaceful place to meet while others are in the main hall.

Thank you Fr. Neil for moving your office so that space could be used for gathering together without participants climbing up the stairs.

## **BEAUTIFUL VOICES ADORN CHRISTMAS**

Once again our fabulous choir came together to sing beautiful traditional Christmas hymns for us at our Christmas services. Their voices adorn our prayers like a bouquet of shimmering light over a dark lit night.

Please remember these people silently in your mass prayers of thanksgiving.

## **MORE THAN A TITLE**

Out of respect for the office of priest or deacon, we address any man holding these offices by his title the same as we would our Bishop or Archbishop.

## **ORDO CALENDAR ACTIVITIES**

### **COMMEMORATING POLYCARP**

Polycarp will be commemorated on January 26<sup>th</sup> as the first recorded martyr in post-New Testament church history. Polycarp (69-156AD) had been a Christian since he was a child, but the Romans didn't get around to killing him until he was in his eighties.

He lived during the most formative era of the church, at the end of the age of the original apostles, when the church was making the critical transition to the second generation of believers. Tradition has it that he was personally disciplined by the Apostle John and that he was appointed as bishop of Smyrna (in modern Turkey) by some of the original apostles.

In his later years, he tried to settle disputes about the date to celebrate Easter, and he confronted one of the church's most troublesome heretics, the Gnostic *Marcion*, calling him "the first born of Satan," when he ran into him in Rome. Polycarp was also responsible for converting many from Gnosticism. His only existing writing, a pastoral letter to the church at Philippi, shows he had little formal education, and was unpretentious, humble, and direct.

Such traits are especially evident in the account of his martyrdom, which was written within a year of his death. It is not clear exactly why he

was suddenly, at age 86, subject to arrest, but when he heard Roman officials were intent on arresting him, he decided to wait for them at home. Panic-stricken friends pleaded with him to flee, so to calm them, he finally agreed to withdraw to a small estate outside of town. But while in prayer there, he received some sort of vision. Whatever he saw or heard, we don't know. He simply reported to his friends that he now understood, "I must be burned alive."

Polycarp is reported to have said, "He who grants me to endure the fire will enable me also to remain on the pyre unmoved, without the security you desire from nails." Article source: Christianity Today Online

**Read Mark 9:41-50**

## CURRENT EVENTS

### HELPING HANDS FOR TEAR DOWN

All parishioners are asked to stay after the **10am mass on January 7th** to box and put away the Christmas tree and decorations. Please contact Lou Carlson if you plan on helping before the meeting. We need at least one man to carry it upstairs.

### CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Confirmation class for young adults will **begin on January 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am**. You must attend these classes regularly **through June**. If you are interested in making this commitment, please contact Sharon Edlin.

### ALL CHURCH 2018 ANNUAL MEETING

**What happens at an Annual Meeting?** The short answer is that it is a Reporting of the

Operational and Financial affairs of the church for the year. Theological and organizational topics are not covered in this meeting so please direct your questions to our Rector, Fr. Neil outside of this meeting.

You will hear reports from all of the Officers, and Guild/Group Chairmen about what their group has accomplished over the year. Most important, you will **hear Fr. Neil's vision for SMM in 2018**.

**This meeting requires a quorum**, so all members of St. Mary Magdalene (SMM) Church are encouraged to attend. The Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:15am in the Parish Hall. A no-host Brunch will be served for \$7.00 per person catered by Blue Frog. Children under 9 years old are free. You are also welcome to bring your own brown bag lunch.

### PLEASE STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AS A MEMBER

The good news is that all persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized, confirmed, attendees for at least three months and contributing to the church may be considered a Member of the church. All you need to do is provide Fr. Neil with a copy of your sacramental paperwork. Contact Fr. Neil for details on how to transfer your paperwork. Check the Members list posted in the Church Lobby.

**All bona-fide members of the church are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on January 28th.**

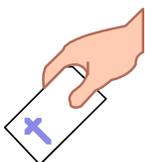
### LOOKING FOR A CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION

Your monetary donations to SMM are truly a gift to us and to you. We use these donations

throughout the year to pay for church expenses such as the building, insurance, office supplies, etc. In addition, your donation is considered a charitable contribution for income tax purposes. Our treasurer will provide you with a personal annual giving receipt at the end of each year.

### **MONETARY CONTRIBUTIONS COUNT TOWARDS MEMBERSHIP**

Thank you to everyone who pledged to give money to the church for the upcoming year via an annual pledge card. **Your gift, written down on a “pledge card”, makes up the revenue dollars recorded on our 2018 Annual Budget.**



If you are new to the Anglican Church and plan on giving a monetary gift regularly, please ask our Treasurer, Lynn, to provide you with a box of envelopes and a number so that she may keep a record of your charitable giving. She will also give you with an annual receipt of your combined charitable contributions.

If you don't feel like you can predict what you may give to the church. Your spontaneous contribution may still be tracked by simply using an envelope from the pew rack and writing your name on it.

**Without the Treasurer knowing of your giving, we will not know if you are a member in good standing.** So please put your gift in an envelope and write your name on it no matter what the amount. We want to embrace you as a member of our church family.

### **SELECTION OF OUTREACH RECIPIENTS FOR 2018**

**Discussions on Outreach recipients and projects for next year will begin in January. Fr.**

Neil assisted by Violet Younis, Outreach Coordinator, will be focusing us on Projects for 2018 with the overall goal of promoting “Christian Evangelism within our local community and the wider Church”.

Guidelines for the selection include: One recipient within our local community and one recipient organization within the Anglican Catholic Communion. Non-profit multi-national organizations are excluded with the exception of veteran organizations. In addition to these guidelines, Fr. Neil may bring us an “immediate need” that we are obliged to respond to. If you are interested in faith based service work, **please contact Violet to get involved for the upcoming year.**

### **LAST CHANCE TO SPLURGE COME TO SHROVE TUESDAY**

Treat your little ones to delicious home made pancakes. Stuff them with whipped cream and fruit or drown them in syrup or chocolate.

Feast on juicy bratwurst, polish and Italian sausages, potatoes and desserts.



How about a little fun? Watch a 2-year-old try to flip a pancake or try out our new pancake in the corn hole game. What a riot!

**Tuesday, February 13th, 6:30pm until the last pancake is gone.**

\$6.50 - Adults, \$5.00 - Kids (5 -18yrs old), Toddlers - Free.

### **LOOKING FOR PANCAKE MAKERS**

Two pancake makers are needed for Shrove Tuesday. If you are interested in making

pancakes for your church family on Shrove Tuesday, please contact Sharon Edlin.



## THE SEASON OF LENT

### **ASH WEDNESDAY** **AN EARLY CHURCH RITUAL**

The first day of Lent is Ash Wednesday. The name came from the ceremonial use of ashes as a symbol of penitence during Mass.

Today, the ashes we use are obtained by burning the remains of the palm branches blessed on the previous Palm Sunday.

During mass, the priest marks your forehead with the sign of the cross in ash and says: "Remember, man, thou art dust and unto dust thou shalt return."

**Mass will be held on February 14<sup>th</sup> at 9am and 7pm.**

### **LENTEN PROGRAM**

Father Neil will be conducting a Lenten Program on Tuesday evenings at 7:00pm following our Meatless Supper followed by the Stations of the Cross, Evening Prayer or other bible based activities.

Please check the "Calendar At A Glance" on the back page for more details.

### **MEATLESS SUPPERS** **NOW ON TUESDAYS**

Looking for support and a little fellowship during Lent. Come to our simple Meatless Suppers.

Bring your friends and family. It's free. If you would like to volunteer to cook, please sign-up on the Volunteer Sheet in the Lobby or contact Anne Peterson. This is not a potluck and no desserts will be served.

Fr. Neil has moved our Meatless Suppers to Tuesday evening to give those people living outside of Orange an opportunity to come. For more information please talk to Anne.

**Suppers begin on February 20th at 6:30pm.**

### **ARE WE OFF THE HOOK** **FOR FASTING?**

Here are a couple of bible verses that will provide you with some insight to the question of: Are we off the hook for fasting? **Fr. Neil will be collecting your thoughts in a receptacle in the church lobby. Watch for his answer to this Lenten question.**

EZRA 8:21 "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods."

DANIEL 9:3 "Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes."

ISAIAH 58:3 "Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it? Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers."

ACTS 14:23 "And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed."

MATTHEW 9:14-15 "Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."