

THE MAGDALENE

From the Desk of Fr. Neil...



NEW YEAR PRIORITIES

Every New Year we receive all sorts of advice coming from all different directions on how to live in the coming year, or what worked to make the last year successful. I came across an article while throwing away unwanted mail titled: *10 Life Lessons from Centenarians*. Now, Centenarians was a term I had not heard before until now, probably because I have not yet come close in age to that category. One hundred people who have lived to be one hundred years old were polled by a magazine to: "...examine their attitudes and opinions on health, relationships, and more."

The top ten things that these people attributed to them getting to one hundred years old healthy and happy, (number ten being the least and number one being the most popular answers), number ten was, "Eat as much cake as you can get." Yes, that is actually an answer.

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Rev. Fr. Neil Edlin, Rector

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

Wednesday Service: 9am

The number one answer was, "Think young." Some others of note were, "Don't smoke" which makes sense. "Go to bed early every night," which also makes sense. Others which were harder for me to understand were, "Stay upbeat," "Be good," "Laugh a lot," and "Connect with friends." This top ten list came across to me as a secular version of Proverbs. Wise things we can do and advice we can all heed to live long healthy lives. This is not the approach the Bible takes and it is not the approach the Christian is to take either.

Obviously I was not reading a religious publication, but I was sort of surprised that not any, or at least not enough Centenarians were religious enough to say anything that would register as spiritual sort of answer to land in the top ten! Again, this is not a religious publication I was reading, so for all I know answers like those might have been edited out. Whether they were edited out or not even stated, this is serious to me.

I know that there are also polling groups who will ask people similar questions of religious people and their findings will tell us things like, "People who go to church on a regular basis live a certain amount of years longer than those who don't," or "Those who pray regularly live healthier lives." I'm not always convinced of these findings either. These sorts of findings may be true sometimes, but we don't find this to be always true for those we read about in the Bible. Some lived very short lives, relatively speaking, and were very spiritual. And maybe the bigger issue here is, are we here to try to reach one hundred years old and be healthy, (which even I would like to do, by the way), or are we here for a different purpose and these

things like thinking young and eating lots of cake are things that may come and go but are not the goal in life, nor the reason we gain longevity.

This is not to put down this survey. It is to point out what our priorities should be and even though many of the things on that top ten list are important, their source is not man, but God.

So, let us first acknowledge that God is the reason we are here. He created us “in the beginning.” He formed our inward parts, and knitted us together in our mother’s womb” says the Psalmist. (Psalm 139:13 ESV) God said to Jeremiah the Prophet: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5 ESV) Paul wrote in Romans 8, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28 ESV) So life itself and vocation are appointed by God before we were created. This already determines purpose in our lives.

God determines the date and time of our birth and our death. Jesus said that the hairs on our head are all numbered and “which of [us] by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?” (Matthew 6:27 ESV) Job, speaking to God wisely said, “...[Man’s] days are determined, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass...” (Job 14:5 ESV) David wrote this in Psalm 139: “Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” (Psalm 139:16 ESV) So it is God who has ultimate control over the length of our lives.

Our lives also have purpose here as well. “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33 ESV) Paul says: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to

live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me.” (Philippians 1:21 ESV)

In the New Year I want to encourage us to seek wisdom, meaning of life, and true longevity from the Scriptures and Church attendance, being in fellowship with others who also desire the same things and are also striving toward the same goal. Eating well, getting lots of sleep and not smoking are things that may give long life here and now. Eating lots of cake, laughing a lot and staying up beat probably don't contribute too much in the big scheme of things. Health is obviously important and the body is given by God and should be taken care of to honor Him. But our top ten reasons for life must include more important and eternal things.

Paul saw the meaning of life and what was of the most value and he sums it up well in this line from 2 Corinthians. “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:16-18 ESV)

SHORT STUDIES

AND WHAT IS IT THAT WE LEARN FROM WHAT OUR LORD SAYS HERE ABOUT HIS OWN SECOND COMING?

First, we learn that no teaching about the Second Coming, no supposed sign or wonder, no prophecy or opinion whatsoever, should in any way alter the faith and morals taught to us by the Church. ‘Believe it not...Behold, I have told you before,’ our Lord says. The faith of the Church was once delivered to the saints and is now maintained in the Creeds and in the teachings of

the Councils and Fathers and in the consensus of Christians throughout all history. If the world is ending, or if the world is not ending, it in no way alters what we believe and how we should live. Our faith should be serene and unshaken by such concerns. The first fact about the Second Coming that our Lord speaks of in {Matthew 24} is that it will be used as an occasion to bring in false and misleading teaching, to bring in heresy. And we all know that even in our own day false teaching on this subject causes foolish and gullible people to quit their jobs and to go sit on a hill top and to worry needlessly. Believe it not, says our Lord. Be skeptical and cautious in such matters. Do not let what others say disturb you.

Secondly, we also learn from {St. Matthew} that the Second Coming will be absolutely clear and unmistakable. If we wonder about it, then it hasn't occurred: 'For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.' Chrysostom again, commenting on this passage, writes, '[A]s lightening needs no one to announce or to herald it, but is seen in an instant... even to those who sit in their houses, so shall the Coming of the Son of man be visible everywhere at once, because of the splendor of His glory.' (PL 23, col. 179)

And, again, St. Hilary writes, 'He shall neither be hidden in any place nor accessible only to a few, but...He shall be present everywhere and to the sight of all men.' So, save your money; don't buy the book. Our Lord's Second Coming requires no explanation or announcement. If someone needs a sermon or a radio broadcast or a book to explain why the Second Coming is imminent, again, believe him not. It requires no announcement. It will be utterly public knowledge.

Thirdly and finally, we learn from all that Scripture tells us about the Second Coming, that its timing is not only unknowable until it occurs, but also in truth is irrelevant. Our Lord's constant

refrain is to watch, to be careful, to be like servants waiting for their master's return, like guests waiting for the wedding party to arrive. Christians are called to watchful expectation. We should live every day as if it were our last day. We should prepare for every holy communion as if it were to be our viaticum, our death-bed communion. If we knew the exact timing of the Second Coming, that should affect our lives not one slightest iota. The duties that I have today would not be altered. The Creed that I believe would not be changed. The faith, hope, and love to which we are called would not become something else. We should always live carefully and watchfully, prepared equally for my going that we call death and for Christ's coming which we call the Parousia or the Second Coming. I do not know when I will die. I do not know when Christ will come. It is neither necessary nor desirable that I know these things. I need only know that they will occur and that I therefore should always be preparing myself for the inevitable day. This is, again, what Scripture and the Fathers teach us. St. Augustine writes, "...[T]he...approach of the Lord...comes daily nearer; but of how near it was said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons (Acts i.7). Consider when it was the Apostle said, For now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is passed and the day is at hand (Rom. 13:11-12); and see how many years have since passed: yet what he said was not false. How much more must we say the Lord's coming is nigh; we who have come so much closer to the end?' (Epistle 199.22)

Excerpt from the Sermon of The Most Rev. Mark Haverland, Metropolitan, ACC.

<http://oursaviouracc.org/Sermons/HaverlandSermons/Haverland%20Sermons.docx>

**ORDO CALENDAR
ACTIVITIES**

January 25th – The Conversion of St. Paul

Saul of Tarsus was a well-known tent maker. He was born in the city of Tarsus, where he inherited the rights of a Roman citizen. He was well educated in Jerusalem. His upbringing and education made him for a while the most dangerous enemy of Christianity, but *after* his conversion, it's most useful promoter.

While Saul was traveling to Damascus looking for followers of Christ, he saw a light from heaven, which caused him to fall to the ground. He heard a voice say, "Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?" Saul then asked, "Who are you, Lord?" Jesus spoke to Saul and said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Saul was sent into the city where he would be told what he must do.

The light caused Saul to go blind and he did not eat or drink for three days. He was visited in Damascus by a disciple sent by the Lord named Ananias. Placing his hands on Saul, Ananias restored his vision and informed him that he has been the Lord's chosen instrument to proclaim His name to the Gentiles and their kings and the people of Israel.

Read Acts 9:1-19

GUILDS, GROUPS & EVENTS

ALL CHURCH 2016 ANNUAL MEETING

So what's an Annual Meeting? The short answer is that it is a Reporting of the Operational and Financial affairs of the church for the year. It does not cover theological or organizational topics. These subjects are handled directly by our Rector, Fr. Neil. Any questions or concerns in these areas should be

taken up directly with 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 2016.**

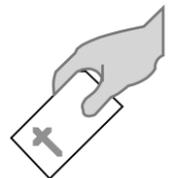
This meeting requires a quorum, so all members of St. Mary Magdalene (SMM) Church are encouraged to attend. The Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 24th at 11:30am in the Parish Hall. A no-host Brunch will be served for \$6.50 per person catered by Blue Frog. Children under 9 years old are free. You are also welcome to bring your own brown bag lunch.

STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AS A MEMBER

The good news is that all persons, eighteen years or older, who are baptized and confirmed, regular attendees and communicants in good standing for at least three months 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.

All bona fide members of the church are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting on January 24th.

YOUR 2016 CHURCH DONATIONS COUNT



Your monetary donations to SMM are truly a gift to us and to you. These donations are used throughout the year to pay for church expenses such as the building, insurance, office supplies, etc. In addition, **your church donation is also considered a charitable contribution** on your

income tax return. This money is called, “pledge donations.”

You are welcome to pledge at a specific dollar amount each week, month or year according to your desire. You are asked that this amount that you have decided to gift to the Church, be written down on a “pledge card” so it may be included in the annual budget. For those of you that are new to the Anglican Church, this action called “pledging”, is a traditional and customary way of giving.

If you have been using the envelopes in 2015 or are new to giving a monetary gift, there will be a box of envelopes with your name on them created. These envelopes also have a number associated with them so that our Treasurer can provide you with an annual receipt for Charitable Contributions if you desire.

If you have not used pledge envelopes in the past and would like to begin, pick up a box without a name. You may also use the envelopes provided in the pews. However, be aware that these individual envelopes are not labeled with your name or pledge number so you must write your name on it. Without this information, your donation cannot be credited to you!!

SELECTION OF OUTREACH RECIPIENTS



Discussions on Outreach recipients and projects for next year have begun. Fr. Neil, assisted by Violet Younis, Outreach Coordinator will be focusing us on Projects for 2016 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 if you want to get involved for the upcoming year.**

CRAFT GUILD SELECTS 2016 PROJECTS

The Craft Guild will continue to select projects for next year at their **Jan. 17th meeting.** **Some projects include stoma scarves, desert caps, walker bags and wheelchair blankets.** All the projects can be made with yard or cloth. Recipients under consideration include the active military, disabled veterans, UCI Medical Center trauma patients and our Military Chaplains.

We will also be planning for a couple of Crafty Demonstrations. If you would like to share a talent you have with the church, please contact Shirley or Robin.

Both men and women are invited to attend.

WOMEN’S DEVOTIONAL FOR 2016

January’s topic for discussion is “Pride – the Queen of Sins”.

Future topics include: “Getting Guidance from God – for Kooks or Everyone?” and “Worry - What Can a Girl Do?”



We look forward to seeing you on the **first Sunday of each month from 9:15am to 9:55am** in the Parish Hall.

BROWN BAG LECTURE CONTINUES

Fr. Neil will be presenting **Anglican Worship Service Using the Book of Common Prayer – Part 2 on Sunday, January 31st, 11:45am-1:00pm** in the Parish Hall. Bring a brown bag lunch and learn about the elements of the mass.

This is a great time to bring your questions concerning the origin of our prayers, and why we do what we do.

YOU MAY HAVE TEXT BUT WE'VE GOT SHIRLEY

Who is this woman that leaves me messages about current events in the church? Who is this woman that calls me and reminds me about my turn on the Treat Roster? It's Shirley Wicketts. She is a 10 o'clocker and you can most likely find her holding one of the baby's or chatting with one of the kids. Next time you see Shirley, thank her for taking on this great service ministry to keep us all connected and informed.

ALL MEN'S LUNCH KICKS OFF THE NEW YEAR

All the men in the church are invited to a no-host lunch at the Blue Frog Bakery in Orange on February 6th from 12:30am – 2:00pm to kick off the New Year. Put away your lawn mover, wash the car early and come out for a great sandwich, or a quick cup of coffee and some great conversation. This is a great way to get away from your "to do" list and meet a good bunch of guys. Any questions, talk to Lou Carlson.

THE NEWS REPORT.....

CHRISTMAS BRINGS US TOGETHER

Being part of a church family means spending time together. The Advent Season is no exception.

The month of December called all of us to rekindle our relationship with our Savior and with our Church Family.

Amelia, Gigi, Gino, Celes and all of us big kids had a great time and perfect photo opportunity for Christmas card pictures while trimming the SMM family Christmas Tree. The Women's Guild made lots of homemade Christmas goodies to eat that made the day feel like "home".

Mike Defusco lead about 25 church family members around the Orange Circle singing traditional Christmas Carols while he played guitar and Gino played the drum. We had lots of fun chatting, talking and singing together. At the end, we gathered around the "treats table" for a quick bite before leaving.

Thank you to every single person that stayed after 10am service to participate in these activities.

WELCOME ST. ANDREW'S PARISIONERS

God has once again blessed us with new members, this time from St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Los Alamitos. This church has recently closed and we are fortunate to have Dan and Sarah Barcroft, Amal and Jenny Fernando, Jay and Preethie Mendis, Jane Rothrock, and Cyndy Wolfe join us in worship. Welcome !

2015 MISSIONARY GOALS
ACHIEVED

“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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.”

Matthew 28

God has blessed SMM again this year by giving all of us a little extra money in our pockets so that we could contribute to God’s Missions.



In 2015, Fr. Neil called on all of us to join with Bp. Mustaq Andrew, missionary and evangelist to the people of Pakistan. His ministry includes more than 20 missions, and a school in the midst of a Muslim community.

Bp. Wilson Garang, missionary and evangelist to South Sudan pastors to a large number of village communities and missions. His ministry has been to provide a food, shelter and medicine as well as build the first church structure in his region as a testimony of God’s present in their lives.

Every day, these men spread the Word of God in geographical areas and conditions that we cannot even imagine. God bless you all for your support to these ministries.

270 POUNDS OF FOOD COLLECTED
TO FEED THE HOMELESS

Our **Advent Outreach Project**, God’s Harvest, will feed the 200 plus homeless people at Mary’s Kitchen because of your help.

Our contributions will reduce starvation and bring hope to these men and women.

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,... Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.”

Matthew 25

WOMEN’S GUILD
WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The Women’s Guild Party hosted at Mary Jo Osborn’s House was attended by 25 churchwomen. It was a great opportunity to reconnect with church family members and to get to know new members just joining our congregation.

Of course, the notorious Gift Exchange was smashing fun! Karen Carlson, Julie Pence and all the other fun loving participants stole just about anything they could to keep the game exciting.

Thank you Mary Jo for the fabulous food and use of your beautifully decorated home.

STAR WARS REUNION

Our Men’s Fellowship Group decided Christmas was a great time to prepare for the upcoming release of the new Star Wars movie by watching an old Star Wars episode. The men ate grilled sausages at Links Restaurant then settled down for the rest of the night with a bowl of ice cream and the movie. The only thing missing was an easy chair and a “remote control”.

LET YOUR GRACIOUSNESS BE
KNOWN TO EVERYONE

St. Mary Magdalene Church is rich in Anglican tradition that can only be appreciated in a

solemn environment. Our church service glorifies our Lord from the entrance of our choir until the last Altar candle is extinguished.

To fully appreciate our service, it is important that you find a seat before the service begins. Understanding that each of us have a preference as to where we would like to sit, please fill the front pews first because newcomers are more comfortable sitting further back.

Try not to leave during the service. Give yourself time to clear away the thoughts of the day or the week and prepare yourself for prayer. If you find yourself coming late to service, please use only the side aisles to find your seat.

The last two pews on the left are reserved for the choir. Please refrain from seating in this area. The chairs at the back are for those members who are frail or handicapped. If you require assistance, please speak to an usher.

Holy Communion is the most solemn and holy time, so please refrain from talking. If the choir is performing during communion, please sit quietly until the hymn has ended.

MEN’S DEVOTIONAL FOR 2016

2016 topics for discussion will come from the Parables of Jesus led by Brian Lee. We look forward to seeing you on the **first Sunday of each month from 9:00am to 9:30am** in the Parish Hall followed by Morning Prayer.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR CHOIR

What a fabulous offering of Christmas services. Please take the time to show your appreciation for their hard work by telling a choir member how much you love their commitment and contributions to our services.

CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

JANUARY		
Holiday Tear Down Party	1/3	After 2 nd Mass
Men’s Devotional	1/3	9:00am - 9:30am
Women’s Devotional	1/3	9:15am – 9:50am
Vestry Meeting	1/6	7:15pm
Men’s Group	1/10	11:30am
Women’s Guild	1/10	11:30am
Vestry Meeting	1/13	7:15pm
Craft Guild- Planning Session	1/17	11:30am
Annual Meeting/Brunch	1/24	After 2 nd Mass
BB Lecture	1/31	11:45am
FEBRUARY		
Vestry Meeting	2/3	7:15pm
All Men’s Lunch	2/6	12:30 – 2:00pm Blue Frog
Men’s Devotional	2/7	9:00am – 9:30am
Women’s Devotional	2/7	9:15am - 9:50am
Shrove Tuesday Feast	2/9	6:30pm – 8:00pm
Ash Wednesday Services	2/10	9:00am & 7:00pm
Men’s Group	2/14	11:30am
Women’s Guild	2/14	11:30am
Friday Soup Supper/Video & Discussion	2/19	6:30pm
Craft Guild-Knitting	2/21	11:30am
Fri Soup Supper/Evening Prayer	2/26	6:30pm
Women’s Tea for Living Well	2/27	10:00am
4 TH Sunday Brunch	DARK	