

St. Luke's Episcopal Church

JULY/AUGUST 2017 Newsletter

From Fr. Tim

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A few weeks ago I invited you to join in “crafting” the sermon time by asking me any questions you had related to Church, faith, religion, and St. Luke’s. It’s something I’ve been doing for years now and it never ceases to amaze me, the provocative and faithful content of your questions.

Funny to imagine, but I used to worry that no one would ask anything. No longer is that my concern! In fact, given the usual abundance of questions, it has become my practice to devote the following month’s Anchor article to tackling a few more of your queries. So, here you go...

Several of the questions focused on the addition of two new clergy to our staff, the Rev. Deacon Christine Cassels and the Rev. Deacon Dante Tavolaro. I’ve said this before but it bears repeating, I am so excited to have them as partners in ministry! People wondered not only about the roles they will play at St. Luke’s, but also about the length of their tenure with us.

Christine is what’s known as a “vocational deacon;” her calling is to continue secular work while also serving the Church. Dante is a “transitional deacon,” singularly focused on and employed by the Church, with plans to be ordained to the priesthood some six to twelve months later.

Regarding how they will be incorporated into our life and ministry, let me talk in terms of both liturgical function and parish roles. Liturgically, for the next several months, both will function in a similar capacity. The deacon’s part in Episcopal liturgy includes reading the gospel, leading the prayers of the people, preparing the table for the Eucharist, assisting with the distribution of communion, and dismissing the congregation for our service in the world. Christine and Dante will play these parts equally. Likewise, each will take turns preaching, although Dante, with both more time and training, will preach more often.

Now, the roles they will play in the life of the parish will differ, with some of those differences to be discerned as the three of us meet over the summer. For certain, Christine’s role will have a narrower focus as she is with us mostly on Sundays and then only occasionally at other times throughout the week. As we all have experienced, she has tremendous pastoral gifts, and I imagine she will have an expanding role in making weekly visits to shut-ins and nursing homes. In addition, I have come to appreciate her great organizational skills, so you can expect her also to be using those talents in support of what we do (God knows, we need all the organizational support we can get!).

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As for Dante, because he will work more hours at St. Luke's, you can expect the span of his roles to be wider. (Although don't forget, one quarter of his ministry time, paid for by the Bishop's contributions, will be devoted to establishing an Episcopal ministry on Rhode Island College's campus.) What we know for sure is that a good portion of his efforts will focus on evangelism/outreach to the "unchurched" and faith formation. Over the summer weeks I look forward to working with Rodney, Dante, and a few others, planning an alternative worship experience we might launch sometime in the fall. Beyond those roles, what I can say with certainty is that, already, I have come to marvel at his considerable and diverse talents. Stay tuned as time and conversation allow us to further define his role.

Finally, there were two additional questions about our deacons, one specific to Christine and one to Dante. Someone asked, "How long can Christine stay at St. Luke's?" My hope and expectation is that Christine will be with us between three and five years. As you may know, a vocational deacon's position comes by way of the Bishop's assignment, so we all should pray that he sees fit to keep her at St. Luke's as long as possible!

Someone else, knowing that Dante is a "transitional deacon," asked, "Has a transitional deacon ever been denied ordination to the priesthood?" The answer is, "Yes," however, such a turn of events is rare. The transitional time for the aspiring priest is not so much a time for further testing and evaluation as it is a time to steep the individual in the servant-aspect of one's ordained call—an aspect that does not cease even once priested.

Interestingly enough, four different cards spoke about the Book of Genesis and the creation stories. One asked about how the church reconciles the creation story with science. Let me start my answer by saying this: Science and scripture are two very different narrative forms and need not be mutually exclusive, but rather can be viewed as parts of a whole. For most (although not all) Episcopalians, the creation story is understood to be a story that conveys truths more than facts. While many Episcopalians respect and embrace the scientific community for its explanation of facts, we view those facts as partners to a deeper and richer understanding of creation history. For these Episcopalians (myself among them), Genesis speaks to the transcendent truths that God is timeless, that God has a part in all of creation, and that we are in fact created in God's image—although not to be considered gods ourselves.

Speaking of being created in God's image, one person asked what does it mean to be "in God's image," while another person, referencing Genesis 1:26 (*"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.'"*) wondered, Who is "our"? Well, here the first question is a bit easier to answer than the second.

I think to be created in God's image refers to something more figurative than literal. I believe it captures the notion that we share in God's capacity for love, for compassion, for grace, and for creation. I do not believe it means that God has hands and feet like we do—much less a long white beard or a male gender.

The particular use of “our” (Genesis 1:26) in the creation story has a number of possible explanations. One is that the authors of Genesis were quite accustomed to speaking of multiple Gods, and in fact, some scholarship suggests that the notion of one God doesn’t really surface in the Hebrew Scriptures until Deuteronomy. An alternative hypothesis is that this language serves as a precursor to the Trinitarian formula, although there is little historical evidence to support such an argument. Under the banner of complete transparency, I must confess there is no single and obvious resolution to this mystery.

Perhaps the multitude of explanations should be of little surprise—given that most scholars believe the book was drafted in 6th century BC and composed in a Hebrew not easily interpreted... which additionally might provide an explanation to the individual who observed on his/her card, “Genesis did not sound like the Genesis in my Bible. Who rewrote it?” For the record, all of our sacred texts have been translated numerous times by numerous writers for numerous reasons since the original composition.

Finally, let me turn to address a handful of single questions which range from the sacred to the serious to the speculative.

One person questioned, “**Does the Holy Spirit live in non-baptized people?**” I would say, “ABSOLUTELY!” Baptism is not so much a conferring of the holy spirit as it is a celebration of the holy spirit which already dwells in each of us. Referring back to the earlier question regarding being made in God’s image, I think one of the aspects of this likeness is that each of us carries a spark of the holy... and does so by birth not by baptism.

Another individual wrote, “**Where did the fear and hatred of Muslims originate? Is there any rationality behind this fear?**” Oh, this is a serious and sad question indeed. Serious, in that it is based upon what I believe to be an accurate premise—I think there is much fear and hatred of Muslims these days. Sad, in that I think it originates, ultimately, from the nature of humanity which fights for the claim of THE Truth and does not gently tolerate different understandings of what is holy and what is God. Certainly this is the case of the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.

Finally, regarding the question of rationality, I suppose it would be wise and even rational to fear any form of extremisms, including Islamic extremist. Without a doubt, history has witnessed the horrific violence extremism can beget. But let us not confuse extremism, which has participants from all three of the Abrahamic traditions, with the traditions themselves.

Lastly, to depart from a hot topic and end on a cooler, even if more speculative note, one person asked, “**When will the church get air conditioning?**” To that question, I have two responses: I hope in my time here, but God only knows!

Summer blessings,

Tim

Dante's corner...

I am incredibly excited to officially begin my ministry at St. Luke's! I hope you are excited that the curate has finally arrived. At this point you might find yourself asking a few questions about me and my ministry, so let me try to answer a few things upfront.

Where are you from?

I am originally from Croton-on-Hudson, New York, but have lived in Rhode Island most of my life. My wife, Kaytee Stewart, and I live on the East Side of Providence, having most recently moved from New Haven, CT.

Where were you before St. Luke's?

I've spent the last three years in New Haven, CT working on my Diploma in Anglican Studies at Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, and my Master of Divinity at Yale Divinity School. I spent my senior year of seminary completing an internship at The Church of the Redeemer, Providence (which also happens to be my sponsoring parish). Prior to going to seminary, I spent two years on staff at St. Peter's by-the-Sea, Narragansett as the Director of Ministry, and I spent one year at St. Martin's, Providence as the Director of Christian Formation.

What will you be doing at St. Luke's?

In addition to the day-to-day stuff clergy do (I'll let you know when I figure out what that is) I will be working with our formation programs, newcomer ministry, outreach programs, and evangelism (how we engage the community and spread the good news about what we are up to). In addition to this I will also be launching a new chaplaincy program at my alma mater Rhode Island College – Go Anchormen!

What do we call you?

I want to make sure that we are all comfortable in how we refer to each other. If you are more comfortable referring to clergy by their first name, then please feel free to call me Dante. If, on the other hand, you are more comfortable referring to clergy by a title, then please feel free to call me Fr. Dante.

You're a deacon? I thought we were calling a second priest.

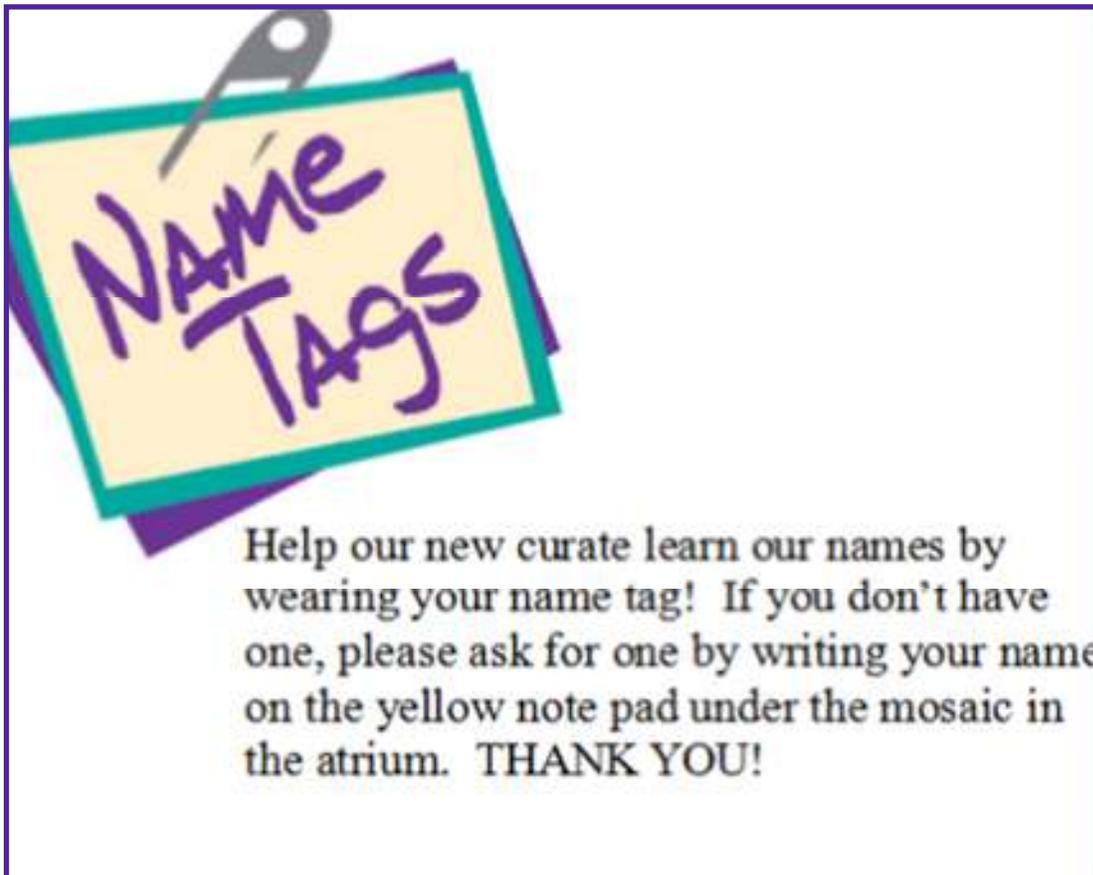
On June 3, 2017 I was ordained a deacon; however I am a transitional deacon (unlike Christine who is a vocational deacon). All priests spend at least six months as transitional deacons, and this time serves as a final formation piece before being ordained to the priesthood. In many ways, the diaconal ministry is the foundation for all other forms of ordained ministry (priest and bishop) in the church. God willing and the Bishop consenting, I will be ordained a priest sometime in December.

What do you do when you're not here?

I absolutely love to cook, and am very happy spending hours in the kitchen. More specifically, I love making homemade pasta and bread. When not in the kitchen I can be found reading, attempting to play golf, spending time with family and friends, and most importantly watching baseball. As you will all find out soon enough, being a New Yorker, my baseball allegiance does not rest in Boston, but in the Bronx. That's right, your new curate is a Yankee's fan.

Over the coming weeks and months I look forward to meeting and getting to know you all. May God who has already begun a good work in this place continue to bless our new ministry together.

Dante





Summer Music at St. Luke's

While the full choirs are on break until after Labor Day, many musicians will still be busy making music at St. Luke's over the summer months. Depending on the Sunday, we'll enjoy the occasional pick-up choir, several wonderful vocal soloists, and the amazing Three Amigos. I'll be at the organ/piano most Sundays, but when I'm away everyone can look forward to the superb musicianship of Jay MacCubbin and Michael Ryan. Joyful music will resound over the summer!

Several of our youth choristers are continuing to rehearse as they prepare for week-long, highly demanding music courses. Brooke Morganti and Kathleen Palmer are getting ready for the St. Thomas Girl Chorister Course held at St. Thomas Church in New York City, July 29 – August 6. Palmer Berry, Sebastian Borgia, Caitlyn Holmstedt, Kalli Marek, Katrina Marek, Catherine Pilkington, Laurel Ann Pilkington, Ryan Scarber, Shawn Scarber, Matthew Tibbitts, Michael Tibbitts, and I will be attending the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM) Newport, RI Course, July 31 – August 6.

If you find yourself near New York City or available to drive to Newport, here is the schedule of public services. Please come out and support our wonderful choristers.

St. Thomas Girl Chorister Course St. Thomas Church, 5th Ave, New York City

Choral Evensong	Tuesday, August 1 & Thursday, August 3 at 5:30pm
Holy Eucharist	Sunday, August 6 at 11am

RSCM Newport, RI Course

Hymn Festival	Wednesday, August 2 at 7:30pm St. Joseph's Parish, 5 Mann Ave, Newport
Evensong	Thursday, August 3 at 5pm Chapel at St. George's School, 372 Purgatory Rd, Middletown
Evensong	Friday, August 4 at 5pm Grace Church, 300 Westminster St., Providence
Holy Eucharist	Sunday, August 6 at 10am Chapel at St. George's School, 372 Purgatory Rd, Middletown

Here's to a wonderful summer at St. Luke's. Let's all make a "joyful noise" as we offer our musical prayers and praises together.

Rodney



**St. Luke's Women of Grace
is hosting a BBQ
Thursday, July 13th at 5pm**

Join us on Thursday, July 13th for hamburgers and hot dogs flipped by our own Women of Grace. After you enjoy a delicious meal, head over with your lawn chair or blanket to Academy Field (across our parking lot) for a concert.

ALL ARE WELCOME.

Free will offering.

Episcopal Charities Update

Dear Fellow St. Lukes Members,

By now you have received a letter from the diocese giving you some first-hand examples of how your donation helps Rhode Islanders in need, and today I had a closer glimpse into what our donations to Episcopal Charities really do. It was the first time I'd made a site visit to one of the agencies that have applied for funding from Charities. That visit changed my support for Episcopal Charities from a routine yearly donation to a personal, heartfelt act of compassion.

This agency is dedicated to supporting people who receive the devastating diagnosis of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). As you may know, ALS is a fatal neuromuscular disorder characterized by progressive degeneration of motor cells in the spinal cord and brain. When the motor neurons die, the patient becomes completely paralyzed, unable to move, communicate, eat and eventually breathe unassisted. With this degeneration, the mind remains alert and fully intact. The agency's case load is typically 70-90 patients—far more Rhode Islanders afflicted with this disease than I ever dreamed.

As the director and support staff members explained how they lend support to those touched by ALS, I began to realize how important our funding is to this organization, which receives no funds from its national organization or from the state. I was amazed to hear that insurance does not cover many basic necessities to live a halfway normal life with this horrible disease. Through its equipment loan program, the agency provides items such as communication devices, adaptive devices that allow a patient to feed him or herself if they still have use of their limbs, hospital beds and lifting chairs, transportation to the clinic, the clinic itself, and respite services for caregivers. Raising funds to support all these services is all at the grassroots level, through events such as the annual walk held at Goddard Park, special events, and funding from organizations such as Episcopal Charities.

As we ended our conversation, the agency leader stated that they never turn down a request for help, and there is no waiting period or long applications to begin service. The diagnosis of ALS is devastating, and the good work this agency does helps the patient and family through their darkest days.

If you have made your pledge to Episcopal Charities, thank you. If you have not, please consider doing so. Your donation is desperately needed.

Sincerely,

Holly Barton

Chair, St. Luke's Episcopal Charities campaign

Join us on Sunday, July 16th at 4pm
for a special concert with

Fran McKendree

"Fran will make your heart sing, your feet move, and your soul open. Through song, story and life experience, Fran brings an authenticity that truly inspires every gathering." ~ the Right Rev. Brian Prior, Episcopal Diocese of MN

St. Luke's Church, First Evangelical Lutheran and United Methodist Church, invite you to a free concert with Fran McKendree at the

United Methodist Church

1558 South County Trail, East Greenwich

**Admission is free. All contributions go to support the
East Greenwich Interfaith Food Cupboard.**

<http://www.franmckendree.com/>



photo by E

SAVE THE DATE!

**Church
Picnic**



Sunday, July 23rd

Goddard Park Carousel

10:15 ~ Worship service -

ONLY 10:15

The 7:45 service will be held at St. Luke's as usual.

Followed by a church BBQ and picnic
The Three Amigos singing, games, arts & crafts,
and music for children. Please save the date
and join us for a wonderful day!

St. Luke's provides the hamburgers & hot dogs.

We are asking our guest to bring their own drinks as well as a dish to share. Please indicate what food item you will be bringing.

PLEASE RSVP TO BARBARA at barbara@stlukeseg.org,
call the church office, 884-4116
or sign up on the sign up sheet in the atrium.

Loaves & Fishes RI



Needs for Summer-Collecting for July 22nd

Thank you all for your continued support of this outreach ministry. We are in need of the following clothing items for our summer runs to Woonsocket.

Men and Women's ~ summer weather clothing - if it's summer clothing we need it!

Shorts ~ athletic & jeans (or casual)

Shirts ~ men's- white t- shirts, men's & women's- t- shirts, athletic tops, women's - casual tops

Socks ~ women's

Womens ~ underwear, bras, cami's, sports bras

Womens ~ hot weather dresses

Mens and women's ~ sandals and sneakers

Mens and women's ~ baseball caps and hats

Kids Clothing/Shoes:

Teen athletic shorts and t-shirts

Flip flops and sneakers

Socks and Underwear - all sizes

All casual little boy & girl clothing

Please hold your fall/winter items for September. Thanks!

Choirs at St. Luke's . . . Looking towards fall!



While many of us are enjoying vacations, lazy days at the beach, cookouts and swim parties, it's hard to remember that fall will be here before you know it! Please consider adding one of the St. Luke's Choirs to your fall schedule.

Contact Rodney Ayers, Minister of Music (rodney@stlukesge.org or 884-4116) if you or your child(ren) are interested in being part of the music program. Look for more information in August about our exciting choral programs for adults, children and youth



Powered by:

East Greenwich Chamber of Commerce

Two more **MAIN STREET STROLLS** are scheduled in EAST GREENWICH:

Thursday, July 20	<i>Music on Main</i>
Thursday, August 24	<i>Taste of Main</i>

Both events run from 5 to 8pm. Come and Support St. Luke's at our booth next to Walsh & Associates (294 Main Street)



BOOK GROUP

"The St. Luke's 'Book Group' wants to extend an invitation to anyone who might be interested in joining us when we start up again in mid September !

We read a variety of books and the discussion is always varied. We enjoy the friendships that are enriched by this experience and want to expand our circle!

Meeting time is 10:30 Tuesday mornings and we finish in time for the Healing Service at noon.

More details will appear in the September newsletter...Meanwhile please consider joining us!"

ATWATER-DONNELLY DUO TO PERFORM IN E GREENWICH



The popular and award-winning duo Atwater-Donnelly will hold a concert at the Westminster Unitarian Church, 119 Kenyon Avenue, E Greenwich on Saturday, July 29, 7 pm. Aubrey Atwater and Elwood Donnelly will perform traditional American and Celtic favorites along with their own original songs and poetry. Their vocal talents, enhanced by a variety of musical instruments, is a must-see summer event.

Their relaxed stage presence and performance is filled with humor and is appealing to all ages. Aubrey and Elwood never quite know what numbers they will do until they appear on stage! Aubrey says, "One of my favorite parts of our creative life is crafting shows right before the watchful eyes and ears of our audiences. As we survey the crowd, talk to people, and get a feel for our surroundings, we make snap decisions, selecting what song, dance, or instrument feels just right at that moment. We hope you enjoy this exciting foray into the oral traditions of American heritage music and dance!"

Tickets can be purchased by going to Westminsteruu.org. Ticket prices are \$15/adult; \$5 for kids 12 to 18 years old; free for under 12. Don't miss this terrific summer concert performed in air-conditioned comfort. For more information, call the church office at 401-884-5933.

PROPERTY BREAKFAST

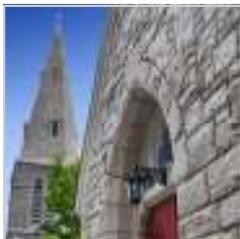
Our monthly Property Breakfasts will continue this summer on the 3rd Thursday – **July 20, August 17 and Sept. 21**. We hope you'll come when you're in town.

Cindi Lovejoy cooks a delicious breakfast and we have a coffee break as well. There always are both indoor and outdoor projects needing attention. Specifically outdoors we'll be pruning shrubs and trees and weeding.

At this moment we are looking for someone to take charge of the fish pond in the courtyard. We can help you learn what needs to be done. Please call us if you would like to take on this project.

New volunteers are always welcome (no reply needed) and we look forward to seeing everyone.

Sandy and Peggy Rubel (884-6594 or



St. Luke's Episcopal Church
99 Peirce Street
East Greenwich, RI 02818
www.stlukeseg.org

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