
Stay Connected – Sunday 14th September

Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

This Week's Reading

Bible Reading: Luke 15. 1-10

Peter's Blurb

Hello everyone,

And the beat goes on! And so does the rain! Without a doubt this has to be the rainiest summer in decades – over 7 inches in the past 30 days alone. Not that the annual average is off-scale – it's not – it just seems that we have had more days with showers than normal. We are still thankful, however, that the Hurricane season remains somewhat mute. The weather patterns are weird though and seem less predictable than we are accustomed to. I hope that is not a false comfort – many of the longer-toothed among us recall Hurricane Emily in 1987 which had already been a Hurricane, forecast to diminish and fade away, instead of which it suddenly became reinvigorated to Cat 2 very close by Bermuda. Caught us unprepared and un-predicted hitting us early in the morning. Did a lot of damage too. Some old salts figure something similarly unpredictable could be in store this summer as the conditions are so generally abnormal. Let us pray that not be the case.

Archdeacon John led our 8 a.m. service this morning and Rev. Jennie was with us for 9.30 a.m. which was well-attended as usual although there were fewer children. Maybe back to school was too much for them 😞 but we did miss them. Hopefully, they will all be back with us next Sunday 😊

Something to look forward to coming up on Sunday, 5th October at the Cathedral at 4 p.m. It is the occasion of the annual Archdeacon's Visitation Service at which the Archdeacon reports on the progress of the Diocese over the past year and sets out his hopes and aspirations for the year ahead. It is also the service at which our Church Wardens and Vestry Members take their oaths (pledges, really) and are officially sworn into office for the year. It is also a good opportunity for all our ordinary members to go along in support of those we elected to office, to serve our parish, as a mark of our appreciation for all they do for us. So, mark the day in your calendars and come along if you can.

BUT! Wait! There is more! Also at the same service Rev. Dr. Sharon Prentis, the wife of our recently installed Canon Residentiary and Sub-Dean of the Cathedral Rev. Calvert Prentis, will be collated and installed as Canon Theologian for the Diocese.

I don't know about you, but in the 50+ years I have been involved in the Diocese I don't recall this being a position I have been aware of. It is highly possible that it has been a role quietly filled by one of our canons as a part of their regular duties or maybe it is a first. In the latter case, then, it could be an occasion of some significance and we should welcome Rev. Sharon into the position. I (naturally) looked it up and found that:

“A canon theologian is a clergy member within a Christian cathedral or diocese who focuses on theological matters, serving as a teacher, researcher, and spiritual leader for the church and the broader community”. (AI Overview)

Did I say that all this is happening at the Cathedral on **Sunday, 5th October at 4 p.m?** 😊 Hope to see you there. I have made mention of some additional, dare I say lesser, events in the Coming Events section below.

Back to today! Lisa-Dawn, in her role as Church Warden, gave us an update on the progress of the work of the Priest Search Committee. Out of a number of applications and expressions of interest the committee had ZOOM meetings with 4 of the (presumably) more promising of the applicants. In the week ahead they will discuss what they gleaned from those sessions with a view to narrowing it down to the point where an on-site formal process could be initiated. It is always a challenging task identifying a prospective candidate and getting to the point where the committee, together with church members, can meet and greet prior to making an offer and hopefully sealing a deal.

And next Sunday our two services will be led by Archdeacon John and Rev. Terry respectively. Do also check the Coming Events section below. Until next week...

Love
Peter

Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!

Rev. Jennie's Talk

Luke 15:1-10

The Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin

Last time I spoke to you I remember we had a rather uncomfortable scripture to delve into; and we considered how the God who loves us helps us to grow closer to him as we reflect on the difficult scriptures.

We also looked at how we study scripture as part of the bigger story in context... so today we are talking about 2 parables but I am going to also speak about the third parable in this chapter because the 3 go together (and I checked that I will not be overflowing into someone else's lane....Rev. Terry will be speaking to you next week, but the second half of this chapter doesn't show up until the fourth week of Lent.)

Have you ever lost something? As I was writing my sermon one of my family members had just been rather frustrated looking for something. Finally, after I got up to help, I found the item...exactly where I told them it would be. They weren't looking very thoroughly...

But in today's scriptures we read about two hypothetical things that were lost... a sheep and a precious coin which are searched for with great commitment. However, the majority of the text does not speak of what was lost, but of the **rejoicing** that ensues when those things are found.

And these stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin lead to a story of a lost child: the story we know as the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*. Unlike the lost sheep and the lost coin, the lost son is lost of his own volition; it's his own choice. The son has chosen to go his own way; he has shamed his family. He has asked for his share of the family inheritance while his father is still living and he subsequently leaves and squanders the money, wastes it on things that are intemperate, meaningless and even disreputable.

But I want to focus on the character of **God** in all these stories: whenever we read parables it is good to examine them to see who the characters are and see, in particular where God is in the story.

When you think of God the Father, how do you imagine God?

For the Jewish people it was considered idolatrous to have images of God, especially as there were other cultures and religions that worshipped idols. The 10 commandments tell us that we should not worship idols, and for this reason Christians were even cautious about having artistic representations of God. In the Renaissance more started to emerge, although early on only God's HAND was shown (such as in Michaelangelo's Creation of Adam).

Even today, we are more likely to see scenes of Jesus (God the Son), but there is still some caution in artistic representations of God. Our minds are naturally creative, so I wonder how you imagine God? Specifically, what is God *doing* when you imagine God?

In some of the artistic representations that I found of God we had a kind of *hovering* God, a God who is *sitting*

still, I found a cartoon of God shaking his head at the mess we've made, there was even one of God throwing lightning bolts!

All of these are just human depictions of God.....

But none of the pictures I could find showed a God who was doing the things he is doing in the parables of Luke 15.....

What is God doing in today's scriptures? Where is God in the parable? He is **SEARCHING!**

And in the final parable, the prodigal son.... after the son finally decides to return home to the father, having wasted all the father's money and treated him with dishonour, what does the father do? The scripture says this:

[The prodigal son] set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he RAN and put his arms around him and kissed him.

So, in these three parables we see a God who is actively **searching** for one lost sheep, even though he still has other sheep... **searching** for a precious coin.... And in the story of the prodigal son we see a God who is **RUNNING** to meet the sinner, his precious child who has returned to him for mercy.

Romans 3:23 says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God AND all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Jesus Christ.

None of us can measure up to God's standard, that is why God the Father sent Jesus.

However you picture God the father, the image that I want you to take with you today is that if ever, whenever you stray, when you feel far from God, God **LOVES** you.... He still **searches** for you... and when you come back... he **runs** to greet you.

[See Philips, Craig and Dean **When God Ran** music video – will send to Whatsapp chat]

<https://youtu.be/1Akv2V5fNdk>

Father God, Thank you for your amazing love for us. Thank you that when we are still far off, you **run** to meet us where we are. We thank you that you are always a God of second chances and new beginnings. Help us to come boldly before your throne of grace to receive mercy whenever we stray from you. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

In our prayers

We ask for your prayers for Father Don, Margaret Blanchette, Al Spearing, Gill Rossiter, Sam & Marjorie, Gwyneth & Ralph, Jill, Barbara (Dyer), Vinette, Nancy, Gail, Janet & Gary, Tina, Val & Mark, Robert & Kalreeta, Jeannie & Bob and for Sally Brown and Hilda Warner. Prayers especially this week for John & Pansy and for John's Mum in Guyana who is unwell. We also ask for special prayers for all members of the church family who are travelling over the next few weeks.

This Sunday



Previous services and other videos are on our YouTube channel and/or our Facebook page at:

<https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>

Next Sunday

Next Sunday, **21st September** – We will have our usual services at St. Mark's with Peaceful Worship at 8.00 a.m. led by Archdeacon John and our Contemporary Worship and Junior Church at 9.30 a.m. led Rev. Terry Hassell.

Coming Events

- **Vendor's Market** – The next Vendor's Market will be held on **Saturday, 20th September;**
- **Take-Out Bar-b-que** – St. James' Church will be hosting a Take-Out Bar-b-que on **Saturday, 20th September 2025**, The in the Church Hall. **Save the date** - details to follow. See poster below.

- **Bereavement Support Tea** – our next monthly chat will take place at **3.00 p.m. on Sunday, 5th October** in the Parish Hall.
- **Blessing of the Animals** – this year’s service will take place at 3.00 p.m. on **Sunday, 12th October** at the Unfinished Church
- **Commemoration of All Souls** – this special service of commemoration of our dear departed will take place at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, 2nd November at 5.00 p.m. Names of loved ones to be called will be collected beforehand.

Down the Debt – St. Mark's needs your help in reducing the size of our debt which inhibits future investment in our church. If you feel you may be able to help with this please go to <https://stmarks.bm/donate/> where you will find details and an opportunity to donate.

Links:

Just a reminder – if you want to check vot’s happnin’ or vot’s comin’ dahn de road – you can find it all at our:

- **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/stmarksbermuda/>
- **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/StMarksChurchBermuda>
- **Website:** <https://anglican.bm/churches/st-marks/>
- **Holy Trinity Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/holytrinitychurchbda>

End Stuff:

Here’s a thought. It is always a great time for us all to review our pledging. If each of us is able to increase our pledge by 10% that would be a great boost to our cash flow (which as you know is tenuous at best). And, with our in-person collections still inhibited by numbers restrictions, please consider the opportunity to convert to pledging by Direct Deposit (see below). Your support is vital.

As always, another huge thank you to all of you who continue to support our church family with your pledges and donations via online transfer.

Direct deposits can be made to: Butterfield Bank for the account of:

St. Mark's Church Wardens – A/c No. 20-006-060-104125-100.

- **For Grave Payments** – when paying Grave Maintenance fees be sure to enter Grave Number and Name of Lessee e.g. “Grave 273 Peter Nash” in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.
- **For Cash donations** – if you do not have an Envelope # just be sure to also enter your Name and “Donation” e.g. “Nash Donation” in the **Beneficiary** space on the on-line transfer form.

Use of the “Beneficiary” space is IMPORTANT – it is the only way we have to identify who is paying and for what.
Come to St. Mark's – not just a Church but a family!

St. James Church *Annual Take Out BBQ*



September 20th, 2025

5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Location: Church Hall Cost: \$30

Chicken or Steak
Spanish Rice, Corn on the cob
Potato Salad
Coleslaw
Beets
Dessert

To purchase tickets, call:

Cherylyn: 238-3919 Eulene: 234-0595