

THE FOURTH DAY

The FOURTH Day is a Regional Publication for the Diocese of NC

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Cursillo #109 is in beginning stages of planning for 2021. For further questions contact Weekend Leader Toni Routt at toni.routt@gmail.com or ask your parish

Ultreya ZOOM Meeting



Please come join in the Cursillo family reunion that we lovingly know as Ultreya.. Look for further info on how to connect to the next meeting.

When? February 14, 2021 **Where?** In front of your laptop, I pad, or cell phone. Please bring food and beverage of your choice, your physical self, and an open heart and an open mind

The November, 2020 Ultreya had had 26 Attendees -- at the Ultreya, including two from Ecuador --- so it was an International Ultreya....!

Requests for more frequent Ultreyas than every 3 months were heard after the closing Reunion prayer.....Ruth and Bob Bryant from St. Christophers gave our Witness Talk, and Mother Frances Cox gave the Clergy Response.

Ultreya

share the light

Sunday – February 14, 2021

5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Agenda

5:30 – welcome, introductions, Scripture meditation, prayer for the Holy Spirit

6:00 – break into zoom rooms for reunion groups

7:00 – witness talk

7:30 – clergy response to witness talk

7:50 – music postlude

7:55 – closing prayer

Guests are welcome. **Make a friend, Be a friend, Bring a friend to Christ. And bring your Valentine!** If you would like to be added to the invitation list please contact Cameron Cooke at Cameroncooke539@gmail.com

If there are floating reunion groups out there that are meeting we would love to hear from you to share your progress. Email us and don't forget your church name, address and zip code.

Announcements

Secretariat Members Needed

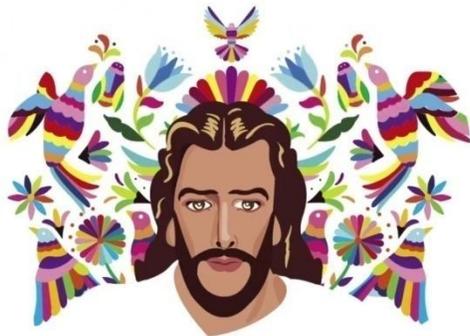
Volunteer are needed to help lead our NC Cursillo movement. Contact the current secretariat to learn more.

Need More Information?

To find out more about attending a three-day weekend or sponsoring a participant, contact NorthCarolinaCursillo@gmail.com

Secretariat meetings

The Secretariat makes plans and carries out activities for the ministry in this Diocese. Meetings usually run from 10 a.m. until 2 or 2:30 p.m. Meetings occur on the third Saturday of every other month and vary by location. Cursillistas are encouraged to attend; the meetings are open to the public. Contact NorthCarolinaCursillo@gmail.com for further information



Garrison Keillor on Episcopalians ...

An essay:

We make fun of Episcopalians for their blandness, their excessive calm, their fear of giving offense, their lack of speed and also for their secret fondness for macaroni and cheese. But nobody sings like them.

If you were to ask an audience in Des Moines, a relatively Episcopalianless place, to sing along on the chorus of “Michael Row the Boat Ashore,” they will look daggers at you as if you had asked them to strip to their underwear. But if you do this among Episcopalians, they’d smile and row that boat ashore and up on the beach!And down the road!

Many Episcopalians are bred from childhood to sing in four-part harmony, a talent that comes from sitting on the lap of someone singing alto or tenor or bass and hearing the harmonic intervals by putting your little head against that person’s rib cage. It’s natural for Episcopalians to sing in harmony. We are too modest to be soloists, too worldly to sing in unison.

When you’re singing in the key of C and you slide into the A7th and D7th chords, all two hundred of you, it’s an emotionally fulfilling moment. By our joining in harmony, we somehow promise that we will not forsake each other.

I do believe this, people: Episcopalians, who love to sing in four-part harmony are the sort of people you could call up when you’re in deep distress. If you are dying, they will comfort you. If you are lonely, they’ll talk to you. And if you are hungry, they’ll give you tuna salad!

Episcopalians believe in prayer, but would practically die if asked to pray out loud. Episcopalians like to sing, except when confronted with a new hymn or a hymn with more than four stanzas.

Episcopalians believe their Rectors will visit them in the hospital, even if they don’t notify them that they are there. Episcopalians usually follow the official liturgy and will feel it is their way of suffering for their sins.

Episcopalians believe in miracles and even expect miracles, especially during their stewardship visitation programs or when passing the plate.

Episcopalians feel that applauding for their children’s choirs will not make the kids too proud and conceited.

Episcopalians think that the Bible forbids them from crossing the aisle while passing the peace.

Episcopalians drink coffee as if it were the Third Sacrament.

Episcopalians feel guilty for not staying to clean up after their own wedding reception in the Fellowship Hall.

Episcopalians are willing to pay up to one dollar for a meal at church.

Episcopalians still serve Jell-O in the proper liturgical color of the season and Episcopalians believe that it is OK to poke fun at themselves and never take themselves too seriously.

And finally, you know you are a Episcopalian when:

-It’s 100 degrees, with 90% humidity, and you still have coffee after the service.

-You hear something really funny during the sermon and smile as loudly as you can.

-Donuts are a line item in the church budget, just like coffee.

-When you watch a Star Wars movie and they say, “May the Force be with you,” and you respond, “and also with you.”

-And lastly, it takes ten minutes to say good-bye

(NOTE: Garrison Keillor attends St. John the Evangelist Episcopal Church in St. Paul, Minnesota)

Cursillo at Christmas

www.BellevilleCursillo.org

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the 4th Day, Once again, our Christian journey finds us at the beginning of the Blessed and Holy Season of Advent. The weather is getting colder, the trees are bare, and the days are noticeably shorter, and there are obvious signs of change all around us. The new Liturgical Year is another sign of change. Advent gives us the opportunity to use the stillness and quiet of these weeks before the Incarnation to reflect, pray, and to accept Jesus in our lives in new and amazing ways, while we anticipate and await His return. But despite our best efforts, the time leading up to Christmas is often filled with business, distractions, and stress. We have our family traditions and gatherings, shopping, baking, wrapping, and yes all those “holiday” parties to attend. So much for the stillness and quiet of Advent, right? Such is the world we live in today, and this is what our culture has embraced as the norm for celebrating Christmas. But these are not altogether sad reflections on society as much as they are occasions to show the face of Christ in an increasingly secular world. Here’s why. As Christians, and especially Cursillistas, at Christmas we celebrate much more than the materialism and commercialism that has so taken hold of this most blessed result of God’s love for us. While we do, and should, take part in the festivities of the season--we celebrate Emmanuel—“God is with us” (Mt 1:23). We celebrate the coming of The Savior who has come to us, is with us still and will come to us again. We celebrate the One who gives us answers to the trials and evils of our troubled world. This is truly cause for celebration! We are not removed from the negativity of our world, we live as a Christian witness in it, embrace it with all its faults, and bring Jesus, and His unfailing message to it. And by the Grace of God, perhaps we change it one person at a time. We pray that this Holy Advent season be a time of reconciliation and change—change of heart for ourselves as well as our neighbor. May this be a season that brings hope to the hopeless and healing to the wounded souls of our time. And above all, may it be a season of the love and joy that the Prince of Peace makes ever possible, again and again. —Deacon Wayne Weiler

Coronavirus May Warrant Creative Approaches to Communion

Communion – *the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper* – is one of the central sacraments of the Christian faith. As such, denominations vary in their beliefs about how the rite should be performed.

As the number of cases of the novel coronavirus COVID-19 continues to rise in the United States, many churches – especially those whose members may include [vulnerable populations](#) – have begun to address the way in which they take Communion in order to limit the spread of the disease. Most of the population is at low risk for the disease, however, health experts warn that the elderly and people with underlying chronic medical conditions are at a higher risk.

While the bread and the cup should never be taken lightly, now may be a good time for churches to prayerfully consider temporary, creative approaches to Communion for the sake of their congregation's health and safety.

How is COVID-19 Spread?

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the primary way COVID-19 is spread is through **respiratory droplets**. These droplets are most often produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes but also can spread when an individual drinks out of the same container as an infected person.

For churches who partake in Communion using a communal cup, or by placing a wafer directly into congregants' hands or mouths, the risk of spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses is elevated, compared to congregations who pass out elements individually.

Creative Approaches

While the sanctity of Communion should always be a priority, some churches have turned to alternative means of passing out the elements in order to avoid spreading germs.

One option involves the use of [prefilled communion cups](#) that are individually sealed with juice and a wafer.

For churches who elect to use wine rather than juice, passing out individual communion cups and wafers on trays can still be a healthier option than using a communal cup and passing the bread or wafers out by hand.

Regardless of whether a church alters their approach or not, educating a staff and volunteers who help with Communion is key. Remind them if they feel ill, have a fever or cough, or have been in contact with someone who has had the virus, they should not help with Communion at this service. And before assisting with Communion, staff and volunteers should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer (at least 65% alcohol).

Holy and Healthy

Any church that considers even temporarily altering their Communion practice should do so with prayer and careful discernment.

In a time of heightened fear surrounding COVID-19 in our country, it's crucial for churches not to be alarmist.

Thom S. Rainer, founder and CEO of Church Answers, encourages local churches to "Focus on prayer instead of

panic... Encourage to pray for the cessation of the disease. Ask to pray for the victims and their families. Encourage to pray for the gospel to go forth boldly in the midst of this trial."

However, churches are not powerless in their ability to limit the spread of this virus in their communities. Considering creative approaches to Communion can have a significant impact on a congregation's health and safety.

People who are spiritual are more likely to do this: A new study suggests Americans who are highly spiritual are more likely to work to make a difference in the world
By [Herb Scribner@HerbScribner](mailto:Herb.Scribner@HerbScribner)

A [new study](#) suggests those who believe they are more spiritual are more likely to make a difference in their local communities. The study — called "[What Does Spirituality Mean to Us?](#)" and funded by the Fetzer Institute — found those who connect with a higher power are more likely to be active in their community by volunteering, donating and voting. But the study still shows how spirituality impacts everyday American life. "What the Fetzer study has uncovered is how much people are talking about connection when they talk about spirituality — connection between the inner and outer world and with others in community," Omar M. McRoberts, a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago and an adviser to the study, told [Religion News Service](#). "Spirituality is not a solipsistic endeavor where it's just about individual experience or elevation."

'Peace and clarity': What spending time outdoors can do for your heart, mind and spirituality

A [2016 Time magazine article](#) ... reported that seeing a stunning waterfall or breathtaking landscape can stimulate feelings of unselfishness and generosity, according to a 2015 study at the University of California, Irvine. "Experiences of awe attune people to things larger than themselves," researcher Paul Piff said in the article. "They cause individuals to feel less entitled, less selfish, and to behave in more generous and helping ways."

Interfaith revival offers spiritual healing amid the coronavirus pandemic

Jordann Rasmussen and Sheri Thatcher attend an Interfaith Spiritual Revival at the Capitol in Salt Lake City on Saturday. The event, open people of all faiths who wanted to exercise their First Amendment rights, was organized by Eric Moutsos, the former police officer who started the Utah Business revival Facebook group. "We keep talking about physical, mental and economic health, but we are seeing very little talk about our spiritual health in society right now, especially on social media," Moutsos said in a statement. Attendees at the revival were also asked to also make a charitable donation via Utah Business Revival's online virtual food drive.

Religious vs. spiritual: Study says the truly 'spiritual but not religious' are hard to find

The term "spiritual but not religious" has, over the last decade, evolved from an academic definition to a widely used label for people who have abandoned traditional congregations in favor of a more solitary form of belief and worship.

But new research by a Boston University sociologist has found that the ideas of "spirituality" and "religiosity" are rarely at odds but intersect often in the daily lives of people as they describe their spirituality. As one study participant who attends an Episcopal church north of Boston said, "I think of myself as spiritual. Because it doesn't matter what church I'm in. I am

who I am."

When people do draw a boundary between spirituality and religiosity, they are often making a political or moral statement rather than describing what they believe. "People who occupy this spiritual-but-not-religious category are really few and far between if you look at what people believe and practice," said [Nancy Ammerman](#), author of the study published in a recent issue of the [Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion](#). "You have to ask people what are they trying to tell us when they talk about themselves that way." And their answers paint a more complex picture of individuals' religious experience that can give faith leaders more insight into how best to communicate and find common ground with those who have a spiritual dimension to their lives but a negative perception of organized religion. " 'Spiritual but not religious' is a polling category, and people aren't polls," said [Ed Stetzer](#), a pastor who also heads [LifeWay Research](#), a Christian polling group affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. "As someone in the ministry, it is necessary to recognize that every person has a story to tell that defines (the spiritual and religious) differently. ... Each person is made in the image of God and it's worth understanding their thoughts so you can communicate to them an understanding of the gospel."

Spiritual packages

Ammerman, a scholar on American congregations who has recently examined personal beliefs and practices, gathered hundreds of those personal stories as part of a larger project recently published in the book "[Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes: Finding Religion in Everyday Life](#)." She explained that sociologists and pollsters offer a limited range of responses — such as not, slightly, moderately or very — when asking people if they consider themselves religious or spiritual. But those responses provide a shallow, one-dimensional picture that doesn't capture the full depth of an individual's beliefs or spirituality.

"There is a methodological issue here of how we have asked the questions and how we have imputed meaning to a particular group that falls into a particular cell of a two-by-two table," Ammerman said. "But it is much more than that. It's also about how our larger culture has picked up this term of 'spiritual but not religious' to describe a certain group of people."

To find out what people mean when they called themselves "spiritual but not religious," Ammerman's research team recruited a group of people reflecting America's religious landscape to be interviewed about their beliefs and practices. The volunteers were also given disposable cameras to snap photos of places important to them and asked to periodically record an oral diary about memorable experiences during the day.

While the sample was small — 95 people from Boston and Atlanta representing Catholics, conservative and liberal white Protestants, African-American Protestants, Jews, Mormons, neo-pagans and the unaffiliated — the interviews, photos and recordings produced about 1,000 personal stories that were put into a database and analyzed for their religious and spiritual content.

"We did not force respondents to say yes or no to questions about religion and spirituality, so we could simply listen for when they invoked this oppositional rhetoric, even if they were describing others, rather than themselves," Ammerman wrote. The researchers then organized the responses to questions about spiritual and religious experiences into four "packages,"

or ways of talking about spirituality. Often, a participant used more than one of these approaches:

1) Theistic. Spirituality is about God, especially one's relationship with God, and any mysterious encounters or happenings that result from it. Researchers found 71 percent of the sample referred to spirituality in God-oriented terms they learned from their faith traditions.

"I love to be out on that boat on the ocean for the same reason I like to be in my garden, 'cause I feel close to the Lord and the beauty of the world," a woman told researchers in explaining a photo she took of her family's boat.

2) Extra-theistic. Spirituality is not framed in theistic terms but rather as a kind of transcendence that is "bigger than me" and beyond the ordinary.

"Experiencing things that are calming and healing in what might almost be a spiritual way — I've had that from lots of things. Music, movies that I love, and books," a secularist from Atlanta told researchers. But most participants who were active in a religious group also expressed spiritual experiences in extra-theistic terms.

3) Ethical. Spirituality is living a virtuous life by helping others and transcending one's own selfish interests to seek what is right. This is a definition of spirituality that all respondents, from the most conservative Christian to the secular neo-pagan, agreed was the essence of authentic spirituality.

4) Belief and belonging. This spirituality package was defined differently by those who were active in a religion and those who weren't. "Believing, for instance, could either be a way of talking about devout spirituality or a way of describing superstition," Ammerman wrote. "Belonging can represent a positive identity or a symbol of being trapped in an authoritarian tradition."

She said that the tension between the two definitions sheds some light on why people would describe themselves as spiritual but not religious.

"Those who are actively engaged with a religious tradition were very likely to link their belonging positively with their sense of what spirituality is," Ammerman wrote. "Those who have rejected traditional religious participation, on the other hand, link belonging with an absence of spiritual authenticity."

Perception and misunderstanding

Among those who have a negative view of organized religion, Ammerman's team found that claims of being spiritual but not religious were a way for people to draw moral and political boundaries rather than make a statement of belief and practice, she said.

By analyzing participants' stories, researchers discovered that some people wanted to describe themselves as "spiritual" to avoid being perceived as selfish and unaware that there is something beyond themselves. But they didn't want to be labeled as "religious" because that identity has been co-opted by an image of someone trapped by rules, rituals and superstition, Ammerman said.

Carla Henry, a 49-year-old Pentecostal, wasn't part of Ammerman's project, but her attempt to distinguish between the terms "spiritual" and "religious" also illustrates how separating those aspects could create a misleading understanding of her religious experience.

"I would probably identify with the word 'spiritual' more, because to me it implies a more intimate connection (with God) than 'religious,' " she said. "To me, 'religious' means something that you are doing, where 'spiritual' is something that you are feeling or experiencing." But Henry, who is

affiliated with the Church of God in Christ, isn't hostile toward religion. She attended church regularly growing up, but in Utah, where she and her husband moved because of a job transfer, she doesn't attend church often because of her work schedule with the Federal Aviation Administration. And there is also the factor that as an African-American she doesn't have as strong ties with the local congregation as she does with believers in her hometown of Greenville, Miss.

"I should go to church more than I do. I miss out on the fellowship ... and the chance to grow spiritually," she said. "I have my church music that I listen to, and I watch some of the ministries on TV. I am not in the spiritual-only camp", Ammerman argues that her research revealed that both the affiliated and unaffiliated are misinformed about each other. "The 'religion' being rejected turns out to be quite unlike the religion being practiced and described by those affiliated with religious institutions," she wrote. "Likewise, the 'spirituality' being endorsed as an alternative is at least as widely practiced by those same religious people as it is by the people drawing a moral boundary against them." Henry would agree.

"To some, religion seems like something that says you can't do this and you can't do that," she said. "They don't understand that when you get into a relationship with God, you don't have the desire to do (things proscribed by your faith). So, it's not like you are being deprived."

Common ground

Based on the analysis of their personal stories, most of the people in Ammerman's sample were either both spiritual and religious or neither. Only five of the 95 appeared to fit the definition of "spiritual but not religious" in their practices.

"The dearth of actual practitioners of 'spirituality' who are not also drawing on religious communities and traditions reinforces the empirical picture that has consistently emerged from surveys as well," she wrote.

A [Pew Research Center survey](#) in 2012 found that the number of people who are not affiliated with a religion had increased 5 percent since 2007. That same survey found 18 percent of Americans identified themselves as spiritual but not religious, while 59 percent identified as both, and just 5 percent said they were religious but not spiritual.

But Ammerman explained that without digging deeper to find out why people identify as spiritual but not religious, the numbers can be used to create a "simple-minded" narrative of church attendance declining because people are rejecting organized religion and becoming individually spiritual.

She contends her research reveals the story is more complex, showing more common than uncommon spiritual practices and beliefs between those who say they are religious and those who don't.

"When we start drawing the lines starkly between religion and spirituality, we miss a lot of what's going on inside religious communities. And we mischaracterize a lot of the people who aren't in those communities," she said.

Stetzer agrees, saying Christianity is experiencing a collapse of nominal or "squishy" Christians — those who once identified with the faith, if only culturally, but now say they don't belong to anything. Those same people and others now outside of the church may not see Christianity as their first choice in their quest for spiritual fulfillment, but they are still seeking and asking questions.

"I don't think that is a bad thing," he said. "This is an opportunity to say real Christianity is when we live as Jesus has desired us to live and that is something different than cultural Christianity and is worth looking at."

Christian writer Rachel Held Evans recently wrote a piece for [CNN's Belief Blog](#) explaining why she came back to church after once counting herself among the spiritual but not religious.

"But eventually I returned, because, like it or not, we Christian millennials need the church just as much as the church needs us," she wrote, describing the practices and beliefs that can only be experienced within a congregation.

Ammerman said if faith leaders will listen and broaden their measures of religiosity and spirituality, they can connect with those who shun organized religion but value the spiritual and still embrace religious beliefs and practices.

"There is a great deal more commonality and openness between religious communities and the larger population than religious communities realize," she said.

The study also found:

Forty-five percent of respondents said spirituality impacted political views.

Thirty-six percent said spirituality influence their political actions. Forty-one percent said spirituality led them to hold politicians accountable.

The study took place before the coronavirus pandemic, which "could have a seismic impact on American spirituality in a way that won't become clear for a few years," according to [Relevant magazine](#).



**Merry Christmas, y'all! Best of 2021 to
you and... de colores!**