



Carolina
GRACE

GOLD FOR THE SOUL

WILDERNESS 2015



Carolina
GRACE

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Welcome back to Carolina Grace and our Lenten issue, “Wilderness 2015.”

Lent is the season of the church year when we, like Jesus, enter the wilderness, or desert—a period and place of disorientation and perhaps even danger—a place where wild beasts roam, yet a place where angels, the messengers of God, are also present. In Mark’s account of our Lord being driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, we discover that the angels minister to him. Angels, God’s own messengers, are with Jesus and provide for him in that place of utter aloneness.

The wilderness can be a place of struggle, but it can also be a place of rebirth and reorientation.

It is our hope that you find yourself renewed as you make your way with others who find themselves journeying through the wilderness.

Peace and Hope,

*Calhoun Walpole, Editor
Grace Episcopal Church, Charleston, and
The Episcopal Church in South Carolina*



A SERIES OF MEETINGS IN THE KINGDOM OF THE THIN PLACES IN SILENCE, DARKNESS AND YEARNING

Come, Lord Jesus.

Lift me to the shimmering thin places,
The Kingdom of the Thin Places
where I know you are waiting for
me.

Lead me through that thin place filled
with silence...

where a hungry child is waiting,
waiting, waiting for my hands to
feed her.

Draw me across that thin place limned in
darkness...

where a blind man sits uncomfort-
ed in a corner waiting, waiting for
my footsteps.

Fill me with your Spirit as I go into that
thin place chosen for those who yearn...

where a human-trafficked girl is
waiting for my voice to rise in her
defense.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Meet me in the Kingdom of the
Thin Places where I know you are
waiting for me

That I may go into that Kingdom
and find you there...

You. There: hungry, blind, traf-
ficked.



Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.
Lord, forgive me
 and empower me to yoke myself to you and
 to bear your precious burden of love
My Jesus, you say that your yoke is easy and your
burden is light.
Holy Spirit, Fill me, then Lift me,
O God, Lead me,
Jesus, Draw me
 To your yoke and your burden with joy in
 the Kingdom of the Thin Places
 Where I may feed you, Jesus,
 King of the Hungry Child.
 Where I may comfort you, Jesus,
 Lord of the Blind Old Man.
 Where I may defend you, Jesus,
 God of the Trafficked Young
 Girl.
You are waiting for me in the glorious Kingdom,
The Kingdom of God on earth
where I come so close to You every day in prayer
and in people,
where I find You here, right here
my Jesus, Thou my brother,
my Jesus, Thou my sister,
my Jesus waiting for me to come to you.

*Gwin Hunter Hanahan
St. Matthias' Episcopal Church
Toccoa, Georgia*





THE SILENT WILDERNESS

The word silence is defined in most dictionaries as something that does not exist, something that is not there. It is, they say, the absence of sound. Put in such a negative voice, one is led to think that silence must be quite vapid, without any substance, form-

less and worthless. Silence too can be a wilderness, but there is usually a way out of it to a higher ground with great meaning for humanity.

Considered in a different light, “silence” can be defined as the harbinger of some of the greatest powers in creation. Take sunlight as an example.



Sunlight, traveling to us from a distance of 93 million miles without making any audible sound, is unspeakable power. It is the *sine qua non* of all life on the planet. It is the thing without which no life can exist, and it is silent. It is hard to imagine the strength of its silent life-giving force.

Another thought about the quality of silence...God's grace. God's favor and grace is poured upon us every hour of every day without making so much noise as the sound of a gnat flying through the air. Grace comes to us silently whether we like it or not with power and great glory. And it recharges our spirits just as the power of the sun fuels the physical nature of the globe on which we live, all in a rush of beautiful silence.

A third ever present silent force is God's love for us and ours for each other. It is in all places on the earth. And it is, if we pull ourselves together and follow the dictates of Jesus himself, mutually shared among all mankind...always moving powerfully and silently.

Beryl Markham writes about another quality of silence. She says it can speak to us. How can something that we know is soundless speak to us? "There are all kinds of silences," she says, "and each of them means a different thing." She explains, "There is the silence that comes with morning in a forest, and this is different from the silence of a sleeping city. There is silence after a rainstorm, and before a rainstorm, and these are not the same." The idea that she writes about is that some silent messages may come from an empty chair recently left by a laughing child, or some might come from the dusty keys of a piano that sometime gave way to raucous and gay laughter. This kind of silence, she believes, can be happy or melancholy depending upon the circumstance from which it emits, but it speaks to us in the form of a soundless echo, and it is silence that we hear. It is full of the abundance of life and sometimes comes with great power.

Thomas Tisdale
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston



THE GIFT OF WILDERNESS TIME

“When you pray, go into your room and
and shut the door...”

Matthew 6:6a

These are words taken from the Gospel for the First day of Lent, Ash Wednesday. They speak to our need to be apart, our need to retreat, the need for wilderness, that is, a solitary and simple place. We are forced to feed a new desire, the desire to escape the busyness of the moment.

Jesus models this well in a number of places in the gospels even if the people give him precious little space to enjoy such solitude.

Yes, Good News needs to be proclaimed.

Yes, there are always good works needing to be done.

But since, you and I as Christians are being called to do this for a lifetime, we need to feed the soul that is being called to repeatedly act out such vital ministries.

There is seldom a perfect time to go apart, to seek the wilderness moment. And yet, we know we must. And not long after that solitude is embraced we feel the re-filling of our souls, we sense the re-kindling of our energies, we know the Spirit within has been, at long last, released to nurture and to encourage and to enliven our starving and parched being.

How can I reach another soul without first nurturing the one within?

How can we touch another with God’s healing grace before we ourselves know that same touch deep within?

How can you say another good word to the world beyond if this same empowering word is not allowed the time to echo within the many caverns of your own inner being?



Leo Tolstoy once said, “Everybody thinks of changing humanity, nobody thinks of changing himself”

My father enjoyed telling a story taken from his own father’s ministry. My grandfather was also a priest of the Church. One day a parishioner raced into my grandfather’s office at the Church of the Comforter in Toronto. He found my grandfather kneeling in prayer. The first words that came out of that parishioner’s mouth: “Great, you’re not busy!”

Not busy! It seems that we are always free to do but seldom free to simply be; to be still and know that God is God. Let’s embrace our Lenten wilderness as the gift it is:

A gift of God for the people of God.

O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength; by the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Michael Wright
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*

“The desert represents the true battleground of the soul, where the consolations and distractions of human intercourse are stripped away.”

HUGH S. PYPER IN “DESERT” IN
THE OXFORD COMPANION TO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT



SILENCE

I am a “tortured contemplative.” I am a pronounced extrovert, and so solitude, and the silence which is supposed to come with it, are not natural for me. I once lived near a noisy road in suburbia, so silence was not easy to find. There were noisy dogs next door, and the noisiest neighbors God ever made. One of them was addicted to gas-powered, outdoor lawn maintenance tools. Another was hard-of-hearing and kept a television on his screened-in porch. My wife and I had put a lot of work into creating a back yard retreat, complete with a garden and a fountain we named “Arathusa,” after the nymph of streams and rivers. Imagine my frustration when, sitting in my back yard, “Family Guy” would be blaring from a TV 30 feet away from me. I was a clockmaker, and so we would have a hundred clocks that tick-tocked, some busy and fast, others slow and hypnotic, some that chimed every 15 minutes. And so silence—physical silence, that is—was a GIFT.



It still is. It is like water for my thirsty soul. It is so pure, true silence is, in its nothingness, that when I come by it, I am deeply grateful for it.

Cave divers tell us that there is nothing so silent and life-giving than floating in a cavern under water. Like being in the womb, and so like being “born again.” True silence can engulf and embrace a person. It has a dimension of its own. It frightens the uninitiated because at first silence gives room to the din of voices in one’s head. But don’t be afraid. Let the voices surface and float away. They can’t harm you. Stay there long



enough for the deeper silence to take hold. The deeper silence where God lives. And let it penetrate, and permeate. Until you are shot-through with silence. This is one way to conquer our inordinate fear of death, for when you realize that God lives in this silence, then the absolute silence of the grave becomes absolute God, because the more real the silence is, the more real God becomes.

But that's just the power and gift of exterior silence.

There is a silence far more powerful than all the confusion and noise and clamoring and clanking of the gates of the Hell we often experience here. It is the inner silence—the silence of the soul—that transcends conflicted thought and emotion, conflict in the world, conflict and strife and terror and abuse and violence and hatred and lust—all things over which my soul can become unsettled. This silence of soul, when learned, is available upon demand. No matter the state of the exterior, which takes great intentionality and effort, if not luck, to bring into silence, silence of the soul is a rest that passes all understanding. You first know it when you contemplate God long enough for Him to get into you. And then you can learn to call upon this silence at any time. It is a silence that comes even while in the midst of trauma. It is the peace of God under lashings and insults and blows to the face and on the cross that gave rise to Jesus' generosity of soul to forgive and love even His tormentors. It is the touch of God, it is the “unleashing” of God upon the world from the soul. Imagine if we could “unleash” God upon the world with this inner silence. Picture open hearts in the desert, silently pouring God out upon the sand until we are knee-deep in Him. Picture the flood rising above our heads. Picture cave-diving. Go. And learn silence. And then, go. And practice it. On the seventh day, God rested. And was silent.

Chris Huff
St George's Episcopal Church
Summerville



DESERT PLACES OF DREAMS

Confusing,
Frightening,
Draining,
Devoid of dressing—

Heat,
Bitter
Cold,
Danger abounding—

Wild beasts
Everywhere;

Thirst,
Anguish,
Deafening aloneness.

In the company of angels
Serving,
Tender care
Giving,

A yearning for the order of Life
Everyday—
Chaos,
Dreams,
Real, or imagined—

Life is
But a dream,
And the desert the place
To awaken.

*Calhoun Walpole,
Grace Episcopal Church, Charleston, and
The Episcopal Church in South Carolina*



DESERT CROSSING

For many Mexicans or Central Americans new to the United States, the image of the desert is a vivid one, particularly for those who have crossed the border clandestinely, that is, “illegally.” Such persons know better than most what it means to dwell among wild animals amidst the dangers of both night and day. They know well the risk of entrusting their lives to human “coyotes,” who might take their money and think nothing of leaving their cargo in intense heat or cold, defenseless, with no food or water, and without appropriate clothing. Many become disoriented, only to die in the desert. And—when crossing the border—jumping into the Rio Grande at night at its deepest and widest points is the safest—but riskiest—bet in order to avoid detection.

For most, they will face that desert again—just

as we will. And perhaps we need to be reminded that Jesus is with us as we encounter the desert. As mystical friends have recounted to me, sometimes even angels, the servants of God, appear in the desert to minister to them and remind them that they are not alone.

I think of an old friend, Doña Francisca, a Guatemalan lady for whom Spanish is her second language; her first language is Mayan. She lost most of her family during a paramilitary massacre of her village during the thirty-five year civil war that ravaged her country. Doña Francisca has a regal bearing. I think about the heyday of Mayan civilization when the Maya were creating calendars and performing neuro-surgery. Arguably, at one time, they were the most advanced society in the world.

After the massacre of her village, Francisca re-





solved to get her children out of Guatemala. She went to Mexico to learn Spanish and earn money cleaning hotel rooms in Cancun. She walked her children across the

desert, and recounted a dream she had one night along the way. The Virgin of Guadalupe appeared to her at a crossing, and indicated to Francisca which path she should take. The



Virgin then went ahead of her, showing her the way. During the waking hours a couple of days later, the party reached that same crossing; and Francisca remembered the visit from “la Virgencita,” and the view of the path that she was to take. Not surprisingly, it was a route that led them safely to their destination.

Francisca would remark to me those years later, “I came to this country with no food, no clothing, no money. All I could bring with me was my faith.” Sometimes, when it’s all said and done, our faith

and love are all that we have left. And the choice presented to us is whether we wish to toss that faith and love aside in a heap of bitterness and unrealized dreams, or whether we wish to move forward in the promise of new life and new hope—resurrection.

Each desert experience thus becomes an opportunity for resurrection, as the reality of any struggle can enable seeds of despair to sprout ultimately into stalks of promise.

*Calhoun Walpole,
Grace Episcopal Church and
Episcopal Church in
South Carolina*

“But what is the way forward? I know what it isn’t. It’s not, as we once believed, plenty to eat and a home with all the modern conveniences...It’s not a better low-fat meal or a faster computer speed. It’s not a deodorant, a car, a soft drink, a skin cream. The way forward is found on a path through the wilderness of the head and heart—reason and emotion. Thinking, knowing, understanding.”

LAURENCE GONZALES, *EVERYDAY SURVIVAL:
WHY SMART PEOPLE DO STUPID THINGS*





FRESH STRAWBERRIES

Wilderness. A place of desolation, where the traveler gropes in the darkness—thirsty, weary, despairing. Tolkien describes Sam and Frodo’s trek in their wilderness, the dry and barren land of Mordor, with these words: “The night seemed endless and timeless, minute after minute



falling dead and adding up to no passing hour, bringing no change.” We also have been in our own dark places, experiencing loss and pain that pierces our soul and seems to extinguish the light.

But not quite.

“Do you remember the Shire, Mr. Frodo? It’ll be spring soon. And the orchards will be in blossom. And the birds will be nesting in the hazel thicket. And they’ll be sowing the summer barley in the lower fields...and eating the first of the strawberries with cream. Do you remember the taste of strawberries?”* Rising from the gray slag heaps of Mordor comes the memory of strawberries, red and sweet, color and life in this place of death. Sam clings to this memory, shakes off despair, and takes one more step on his wilderness path.

When we are in wilderness places, we can also cling to our particular “taste of strawberries.” Sometimes the dark seems so overwhelming that the vision of one, small strawberry is all we can manage. Remember the sunrise on the beach that Thanksgiving weekend? Remember the courage she showed in her illness? Remember how the beauty of music brought you to tears? Remembering these gifts of grace gives us the assurance that the Father of Light is always present, no matter what lies on our path, a path through the wilderness. The Light overcomes the darkness. Always.

*Debbie Bandy
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*

**From the script of Return of the King, directed by Peter Jackson*



CHRIST IN THE COUNTRY

If you forget to shut a door, you may well be asked if you were born in a barn. The sarcastic inquiry is ill-conceived, though, for barn doors, like fence gates, are more important to close than house doors. Growing up in an agricultural society, our Lord would have known this fact, for after all, he was born in a barn.

I have always been drawn to the rural nature of Jesus. Nazareth was a small town, and in those days, even city folks in places like Jerusalem were never too far removed from the realities of the natural world.

Cousin John the Baptist had been called a “voice crying in the wilderness.” Upon being baptized by this uncivilized and uncorrupted noble savage, it seems only appropriate that Jesus would, as Huck Finn might say, “light out for the territory.”

While his journey into the wilderness was arduous, he needed to be outdoors in his father’s unaltered world. Of course, this odyssey was no walk in the park. Even so, this walkabout was indeed a retreat--a time for fasting, reflection, and ultimately, renewal. Here is the setting Jesus chose to wrestle with the devil and realize with clarity what he must

*“Thousands
of tired,
nerve-shaken,
over-civilized
people are be-
ginning to find
out that going
to the moun-
tains is going
home; that
wilderness is a
necessity.”*

JOHN MUIR
IN OUR
NATIONAL
PARKS



do. Not only did he survive this season under the stars; he returned with strength and readiness.

The late Andrew Lytle, Southern Agrarian and editor of the *Sewanee Review*, illustrates this outdoor tradition,



of which Christ was the encapsulation: “prophets do not come from cities promising riches and store clothes. They have always come from the wilderness, stinking of goats and running with lice and telling of a different treasure.” What young children aspire to be businesspeople? They want to be outdoorsmen—anglers, foresters, cowboys—people who understand this “different treasure.”

Back from the wild, Jesus continued to spend much of his time outdoors. Just like us Lowcountry folks, Jesus liked going out in the boat with his friends. On the water and away from the cities and crowds, Jesus cultivated relationships with the apostles. And, this natural world was a ripe setting for supernatural miracles. Under trees, out in the sun, and on the mount: in such places would He build His church.

As outdoor enthusiasts, we realize the alluring declaration that some get more religion out of a walk on the beach than a morning in church. Truth be told, sometimes we might, too. Nature is our retreat, but it would be too easy to stay in the wilderness. We have to get in the woods to make sense of things, but we must return, to make sense of the world. How else could we share this “different treasure” this whole Christianity thing is all about?

*Ford Walpole
Church of the Holy Communion
Charleston*



SAILORS AND LUNATICS

LATITUDE 21.76.48 N

LONGITUDE 72.17.45 W

PROVIDENCIALES, TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS

This voyage did not begin, back in August 2009, with the idea that it would change my life or anyone else's. Seeing no better plan, I had cast my fate to the wind; but the wind being the fickle fellow he is, I expected nothing more from this gesture in the end than I would from a helium balloon that escapes a child's hand. The thrill and wonder of its sudden rise belies the quiet ignominy of its inevitable, unseen descent.

Yet, what I came to see in my little vessel, as she completed each successive leg of the voyage, bloodied but unbowed, was a realization of what we were both stubbornly capable of achieving. I began to kindle a hope, and soon that hope became a plan, that I might actually keep going.

Let there be no mistake:

there is madness in any attempt at a voyage around the world in a small boat. I have known sailors all my life, and I am here to tell you that no one who seeks such an adventure is in his right mind, nor has anyone in his right mind ever completed the task. To the willing fool it offers scorching sun, sudden storms, poor food, scarce water, sleepless nights and lonely days among other petty discomforts and mortal dangers.

Hollywood, the artist's canvas and the printed page have yet to capture the stark reality of the unforgiving sea. Ages before Darwin, the writer of Genesis revealed the ocean to be the origin of species with the words, "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life. . . ." Yet for all its teeming

From *Once Upon a Gypsy Moon*, Chapter 41





vitality, the sea is a billowing desert to mortal man. He cannot live long in it or upon it. The faith of Peter could not traverse it, and not for nothing did the disciples wake Jesus to quell its rage. Its watery depths wait ever

ready for the careless step or the failing grasp that, in an instant, can turn a sailor's bright, sun-kissed afternoon into the twilight of his eternal repose.

But sane or not, each man has only his own heart to guide him—not



those of his wiser friends. If he has a deep yearning to go, he is not likely to find any greater peace in the resistance of that desire. The only thing left is for him to sail and to keep sailing until he either comes to his senses, comes all the way around to the place where he began, or sinks somewhere in between. By just such a course was the New World discovered by a small group of terrified Italians. By this same haphazard route must every man find his own destiny, using whatever vessel his life may offer. All of us, before the end, must find our way to some unseen shore, however distant, and there plant the flag that will stand as testament to the reason why we made the voyage.

I am accustomed to being asked by strangers, well-meaning friends and family whether I am afraid that I might encounter storms, fall overboard, be set upon by bloodthirsty pirates, or suffer some life-threatening illness in the middle of the ocean, far from aid. When they

bring up these wild imaginings, I first reassure them that my days at sea are not nearly so cinematic. Yes, there is a risk in ocean voyaging. The boat has not been built nor the man born to sail her who can survive every storm. But dangerous storms come and go according to a predictable calendar in most parts of the world. What can be predicted can be avoided, and what cannot be avoided cannot be helped. A careful man and a well-found boat are both safe at sea, and to cross oceans is hardly to test the Lord's mercy in the way some do by jumping out of airplanes, smoking cigarettes, or running with the bulls at Pamplona.

It is wrongheaded, in my view, to imagine that life is lived on a linear plane somewhere between opposite poles of risk and reward. There is another dimension. Even the most sober, sane and cautious life is temporary. What makes for a life well-lived is not the length of our days but how we spend them.



Never sail an ocean and you will surely never die at sea, but die you surely will. We cannot stack that deck or cheat the dealer. Yet we Americans in particular strive mightily to do so.

Much has been written about our youth-oriented culture, and that phenomenon is easy enough to understand. Who wouldn't prefer to be young and attractive and vital? But less is understood about the flip side of our preoccupation with youth, which is an irrational fear of death. We seem to regard death not as the inevitable end of all things, but as a kind of grand larceny of our basic human rights. Our uniquely American lust for justice will not be served until the root causes of this heinous crime, be they the failures of our medical or politi-

cal or economic systems, are legislated and litigated into oblivion. This is the great folly of our time.

Like the bloom of a rose, the beauty of all life is organic and, therefore, limited by time. Look around you. Most of the people you see will have left this

earth in fifty short years, and the rest will be crowding the exits. Yet, knowing this, when we hear the story of a man and woman who are lost at sea or killed by

Somali pirates while living out their dream to sail the world, some of us privately congratulate ourselves for having the good sense to stay home. We see their deaths and shudder, but were we able to foresee our own deaths, would we feel so smug about our choices versus theirs? Isn't it really our manner of

*"In the desert
we rediscover
the value of
what is essen-
tial for living."*

POPE FRANCIS
IN *EVANGELII
GUADIUM*



living that matters most, not our manner of dying?

It is an article of popular faith that if only we eat our vegetables, recycle, and exercise regularly, we can somehow arrange to meet death on our own terms, peaceably in our sleep. Such nonsense. Death is not a peaceable fellow, no matter where he does his work. But life is different. She is a fickle beauty to be relentlessly wined and dined, and no man stands a chance to win her heart unless he is willing to risk losing her forever.

Our irrational hope that death will come for thee but not for me drives the nation's politics, the world's economy, and many of the choices of our daily lives. We plan for the future as though we will live forever, yet we worry incessantly about pensions, health insurance, and jobs. We protest that our leaders aren't doing more to address the crisis of our dependence on these castles of sand. For the vast majority of us, however, this anxiety cannot be explained by

any reasonable fear that we will ever be hungry or lack the basic comforts of life, many of which are beyond the imagination of millions of people in the Third World. For many of us life is rich to the point of gluttony, and that overconsumption more than anything else is what threatens our longevity.

So, to my worried family and friends clinging tightly to this life, who see sailing upon the open ocean as a reckless risk of all that I should hold dear, I lovingly demur. The world offers no safe harbor—that is an illusion. The end comes for us all, and if we choose to remain in port, it will come for us, there. I for one am in no hurry to rush out to meet it, but neither do I see the point of altering my course in fear of its arrival. It is life that I am at risk of meeting on the open sea—not death, who already knows where to find me.

*Michael Hurley
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*



IS GOD ON OUR SIDE?

The cavalries charged
The Indians died
Oh the country was young
With God on its side.

Bob Dylan

As we have reached the Sesquicentennial of the bloodiest episode in our history, the perceived role of God in the Civil War is worth examining. Both sides were convinced God was on their side. The Union Army marched into battle singing the Battle Hymn of the Republic:

In the beauty of the lilies,
Christ was born across the sea

.

As he died to make men holy,
We will die to make men free.

The Confederacy adopted as its motto, *deo vindice*, translated as “God will vindicate us.” When the fighting finally ended at Gettysburg, the battlefield was strewn with 8,900 dead bodies. The hordes of undertakers who came to carry away the corpses, inventoried the possessions of the fallen soldiers. They reported that almost every soldier, on both sides of the conflict, carried with him into battle a Holy Bible. In his second inaugural address – perhaps the greatest speech in American history – Lincoln observed: “Both read the same Bible and prayed to the same God and each invokes His aid against the other.”

When I was a child, I was forbidden to speak two names in my grandfather’s home. One was William Tecumseh Sherman and the other was Abraham Lincoln. Old times there were not forgotten. Unsurprisingly, I grew up without learning much about Sherman or Lincoln. Lately, I have revisited the thoughts of Lincoln, published and unpublished. He was inaugurated for the second



time on March 4, 1865. As he delivered his inaugural address, the specter of his own demise was present in person. John Wilkes Booth was in the audience. Lincoln would be shot dead forty-one days later. The Civil War was drawing to a close. The victory by the Union was all but certain. Lincoln had every reason to seize the rhetorical high ground. He did not, however, speak of triumph. He spoke of reconciliation. He believed God's purpose was unknowable. He warned against the idea of a tribal god. He said that God had given both North and South the terrible war as "the woe both sides were due." He quoted the Sermon on the Mount, "let us judge not, that we be not judged." After his death, an undated manuscript was found among his papers. He had written:

The will of God prevails — In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, and one must be wrong. God cannot be for, and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is somewhat different from the purpose of either...

Lincoln concluded his second inaugural address with these words:

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

One hundred and fifty years have passed since Americans went to war against themselves. We would all do well to remember and heed the words of Abraham Lincoln.

*Alex Sanders
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*





ONE RIVER, ONE BOAT

I know there's something better
down the road.

—Elizabeth Alexander

Because our history is a knot
we try to unravel, while others
try to tighten it, we tire easily
and fray the cords that bind us.

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The cord is a slow moving river,
spiraling across the land
in a succession of S's,
splintering near the sea.

Picture us all, crowded onto a boat
at the last bend in the river:
watch children stepping off the school bus,
parents late for work, grandparents

fishing for favorite memories,
teachers tapping their desks
with red pens, firemen suiting up
to save us, nurses making rounds,

baristas grinding coffee beans,
dockworkers unloading apartment size
containers of computers and toys
from factories across the sea.

Every morning a different veteran
stands at the base of the bridge
holding a cardboard sign
with misspelled words and an empty cup.

In fields at daybreak, rows of migrant
farm workers standing on ladders, break open
iced peach blossoms; their breath rising
and resting above the frozen fields like clouds.

A jonboat drifts down the river.
Inside, a small boy lies on his back;
hand laced behind his head, he watches
stars fade from the sky and dreams.



Consider the prophet John, calling us
from the edge of the wilderness to name
the harm that has been done, to make it
plain, and enter the river and rise.

It is not about asking for forgiveness.
It is not about bowing our heads in shame;
because it all begins and ends here:
while workers unearth trenches

at Gadsden's Wharf, where 100,000
Africans were imprisoned within brick walls
awaiting auction, death, or worse.
Where the dead were thrown into the water,

and the river clogged with corpses
has kept centuries of silence.
It is time to gather at the water's edge,
and toss wreaths into this watery grave.

And it is time to praise the judge
who cleared George Stinney's name,
seventy years after the fact,
we honor him; we pray.

Here, where the Confederate flag still flies
beside the Statehouse, haunted by our past,
conflicted about the future; at the heart
of it, we are at war with ourselves

huddled together on this boat
handed down to us – stuck
at the last bend of a wide river
splintering near the sea.

Marjory Wentworth
Poet Laureate of South Carolina
Mount Pleasant, S.C.



HURRICANE

After the floods,
back in the eddies, in the inlets,
we shake ourselves
like dogs and say
my God, what a disaster.

Red-eyed, foul, exhausted dogs,
no birds in sight to hustle home.
Only the loss and death,
only the dark of fear.
My God, wash the dogs' world in light.

*Harriet Popham
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*

AMBIGUITY

1. Language learning experts claim that the “ability to tolerate ambiguity” is an important personality trait for individuals learning another language. I find that tolerance of ambiguity is helpful in my Christian journey as well.

Just as a language learner does not need to understand every single word in “a foreign language” to get the general idea, so a Christian seeking to deepen his or her faith does not need to understand every single verse in the original Hebrew or Greek to move closer to God.

Jesus said “Do you love me? Feed my sheep.” There is no written documentation that clarifies if He meant that literally or figuratively. If he meant it literally, there is no direction given as to whether or not we are supposed to feed people only a vegan diet or if meat and potatoes will suffice. No one is sure.



Being comfortable with ambiguity (or one's own inability to comprehend), in a world where only the observable and measurable matter, makes one the odd person out. However I find that sitting with the questions rather than rushing to explain everything can open up possibilities far beyond customary, historically safe human boundaries.

It reminds me of the poetry in the last stanza of a favorite hymn:

“Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render: O help us to see
‘tis only the splendor of light hideth thee.”

2. When I was young, I loved experimenting in the kitchen and cooking different desserts. Without fail, when I hit a snag, the first question my mother would ask me was “Did you follow the directions?” As an 11 year old, of course, my answer was “no.” I was inspired and wanted to create something delicious, I didn't want to be burdened down by something as pedestrian as directions like something on a math test!

Later in life, when I developed more patience, understood measuring and appreciated how much easier it is to make cookies when the butter has softened to room temperature, I follow the directions. However, part of me treasures those aspects of life that do not have directions such as falling in love, raising children or moving closer to God. I love embracing the mystery of God, feeling the lifting of the “direction” burden and look forward to the day when all the laws are lifted and all our creations are perfected in Christ.

*Hayden Shook
Grace Episcopal Church
Charleston*



WHAT LENT MEANS TO ME

As a young girl, Lent to me was known as a time to give up something, which for any young child can be hard to do because we don't fully understand the true meaning of Lent and why it is a time for preparation, reflection, and renewal. I can always remember my parents and grandparents encouraging me to give up something I loved, which for me translated into candy, junk food, soda, my Nintendo DS, and less time on the computer and watching TV. As a child it was especially hard for me to understand why I would want to do that. However, now looking back I can see the importance of Lent that my family instilled in me and my faith with Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Being young and learning about the Episcopal Church and exploring my faith, it's the little things such as giving up my Nintendo DS as a child that I can now un-

derstand the importance and the meaning of Lent. That was only the beginning of what soon became the most important part of my walk with God. As a young adult, Lent has been a time where I can still take away the distractions of the everyday hustle and bustle, and add a set time or times each day for reflection, contemplation, and prayer. It may seem like a simple practice, but as a college student it can be challenging at times. This will be the year that I want to keep that set time for reflection and prayer throughout the year, not just for the forty days of Lent. Sometimes we get so caught up in our busy lifestyles that we forget to take quiet time with God, and just step back to see what he has in store for each and every one of us. This means not only going to church on Sundays but maybe attending another service during the week, or even a ministry within the church. I'm sure we can all





Photo courtesy: Barbara Dotterer

find a few extra minutes, especially now with smart phones...there's an app for that! Even if it is just reading the daily bible verse before you head into work, school, or wherever your life takes you. Setting aside our individual quiet time with God is when we discern the most, and we can truly hear the voice of God, and listen to what he is call-

ing each of us to do. Lent is a time of reflection, contemplation, and prayer, for preparation as we awaiting the coming and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Brianna Furey
Christ Church Episcopal
Norcross, Georgia*



EVOLVING FAITH

Since Charles Darwin published *On The Origin of Species* in 1859, a narrative has grown that disseminates what I believe to be a false split in a still unsettled, in fact growing dispute about the very nature of revelation and God's Word. On one side are those who contend that God is revealed in a literal or near literal interpretation of scripture. On the other are those who believe scripture's account of revelation can be reconciled with Darwin's Theory of Natural Selection as well as the many other great discoveries of science. They see scripture differently from literalists, holding in esteem its metaphors and poesy, its harmony with much of the extra-scriptural realm.

A wise friend of mine likes to say, there's always a third choice. Perhaps there's an entirely different and better narrative than either a literalist rejection or metaphorical assimilation of science with faith.

I've begun to wonder if *On the Origin of Species* and all rigorously tested scientific observations of the glorious universe we inhabit are much more than either entirely distinct from biblical revelation or a new way to interpret old scripture . . . if in fact they comprise what is, in effect, a third Testament, a not yet (and likely not ever) canonized and endlessly incomplete look into the way God is increasingly revealed in the unfolding mystery of God's creation.

Much of the resistance to self-evident truths of science seems to be triggered by castigating theories such as evolution as flawed because they run counter to the Genesis creation stories. We've seen this in our history before. Think of the centuries it's taken for much of the church to accept the Copernican theory of a universe in which our world is a tiny, randomly located spot rather than the center of it all. Detractors of science contend that theories, supposedly unproven, lack validity; whereas the Bible is valid because it's the word of God. But we'd do well to remember that evolution is a theory in exactly the way that



gravity is, and that exactly what the Bible reveals has grown along with advanced insights into how it was formed.

Is science merely an apple to religion's orange? Is evolution merely a lens through which to look at biblical accounts of creation in a certain way, or is it something much more? Could we possibly come to see it as the nature of God itself?

“And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to him.”

MARK 1:12-13

We can agree, can't we?, that our knowledge of God is constantly evolving. Is that just us, just creation and its creatures in motion, or is God evolving too? In many circles it's accepted orthodoxy that God didn't become incarnate in Jesus Christ until humanity had sufficiently evolved to be ready for him - a notion that, if not in being, at least in our understanding God has and continues to evolve. Surely we can see that the God whose Son was led into the wilderness to wrestle with his inner demons as having evolved beyond the God who exiled Adam and Eve from Eden's idyllic wilderness, beyond the God whose angel wrestled all night with Jacob beside the River bank . . . beyond the God Moses and the Israelites encountered in the Si-

nai. Evolved just as the Bible that tells these and so many other stories has also evolved (and continues to). Just as the God you and I first met as children in Sunday school evolves in our minds (and hearts, I hope) as we mature.



The narrative I hope to reflect on this Lent and perhaps beyond is one that, rather than juxtaposing evolution and the rest of science with theology, works to apprehend theology and science as parts of the same whole — a whole that is a kingdom divided when ANY way God is revealed is seemingly invalidated by the self-imposed limits of our vision. Rather than counter to or even consistent with the word of God, I can't help wondering if evolution is the word itself. Could it be that just as Jesus Christ is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, so, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit, he is Evolution? Perhaps the answer doesn't really matter, but pondering the question strikes me as a worthwhile exercise in faith.

*John Fisher
The Episcopal Church on Edisto
Edisto Island*

THINKING OF LENT

Another Lent begins. As my old Headmaster used to say at the beginning of each school year, “Here we all are again!” Once again we hear the invitations to self-examination and admission of our past failures. The chances are most of us will have committed more or less the same sins as last year all over again: unless, of course, we have actually succeeded in adding a few new ones. Shall we feel that we have made any spiritual progress at all since last year? Probably not! But in any case, as our spiritual directors or soul friends will have pointed out to us if they know their job, it is really not up to us to say.

So—another beginning. But perhaps that is the very thing we ought to reflect on. Another beginning. And here, indeed, the very name of the season—“Lent”—will help us. It is so much more usefully informative than its rather prosaic romance equivalents, such as the Italian



Quatrogesima or Spanish Cuaresma—equivalents that really tell you nothing, save the length of the season. But “Lent” says something about the season’s quality, for “Lent,” the philologists tells us, derives from Middle English “Lenten,” which means “spring.” So it is in itself a reminder that our lives, indeed our world is by its nature a constantly recurring series of new beginnings. New springs. New years.

In the same way, the theologians tell us, heaven itself will always be a beginning. There will always, to all eternity, be more of paradise ahead of us than we yet have known or dreamed, always new possibilities, new things to learn and become: for God’s possibilities are infinite, and God will always give more of God’s-self to those who seek. Heaven, says Israel, is to be a perpetual Shabbat—a perpetual rejoicing in the eternal Shalom—the eternal peace and harmony of God. We Christians rejoice in that insight, and also add to it our own: that heaven is also always a perpetual first day of the week, a perpetual Sunday, that is, a perpetual day of resurrection, always offering new hopes, new beginnings, and new life in the inexhaustible possibility of the One who makes all things new. Of one thing we may be absolutely sure: there is no coming to the end of God.

So, to return to our own situation: Here we all are again! It is the beginning of Lent again. God is shaping us by God’s Providence, even in our failures, so long as we keep our eyes and our hopes towards God. Stay faithful!—which is the Christen way of saying, “Hang in there!” God knows that all our beginnings, our countless beginnings, are not in vain. “Fear not, little flock,” says Our Lord, “for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” “Therefore, my beloved,” says St. Paul, “be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.”

Christopher Bryan
The University of the South
Sewanee, Tennessee



HTTP://WWW.PARTENIA.COM

In 1995 the rogue bishop Jacques Guillot was stripped of his French diocese, in Evreux, and exiled by the Vatican to the diocese of Partenia, in Algeria.

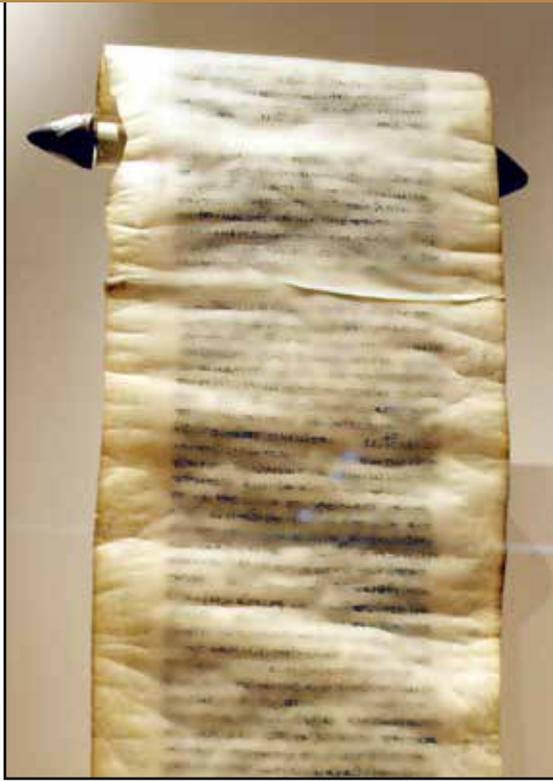
Cullen Murphy
The Atlantic Monthly

A far cry from the ancient comté.
It might just as well been some outpost
In Palestine when the first poets proclaimed
From on high FEAR NOT in a heavenly
Spondee. Or think of Homer, elevenly
Homers, singing dactylic hexameters
To sheep when the men were off fighting.
A bishop is no less a poet manqué.

Evidently the Vatican must keep
A tight lid on its subjects. Like a course
En *collège*, none get erased from the books.
It might prove convenient to simply teach
Langue d'Oc in a *crypte secrète*, to reach
Les morts. So there is many a diocese
Such as Partenia on the Vatican scrolls,
Where time has made *les croyantes* sleep.

Cullen Murphy goes on to explain the Pope
“Keeps hundreds of defunct ancient dioceses
On the books, mostly as way stations for bishops
Awaiting the call to living communities but also
As repositories for the odd problem case.” Go
There and see for yourself if anyone still
Inhabits these vast deserts of eternity. The rogue
Bishop is sitting *ex cathedra* pronouncing hope
That some rough beast through silicon and sand





Is slouching toward Bethlehem to be born.
That is why he has set up a Web site
Where once Arian Vandals and pagan Moors
Camel trekked over the dunes. Crystal cores
Giving off charges are a kind of miracle
Of sorts. “He wanted a cyberdiocese,
With a chat room,” at his apostolic command,

“An electronic catechism, and an archive
Of sermons.” He preaches them to the jackals
Not unlike the dogs you can see are the only
Worshippers on a Sunday morning at Chartres.
Still, no doubt, there are Catholics *en parte*,
As many as the two *hérétiques* in the clapboard
Country church in Béarn, or the three gathered
Together at Our Lady of How-Do-We-Survive.



What can be wrong? Jesus played his part,
Too. For forty days he consorted with
The devil in barren hills around about
Galilee. Maybe there the encryption
Of truth he first decoded. The Egyptian
Flight could have been an attempt to read
The pyramids at a particularly favorable
Alignment of the stars. And his heart

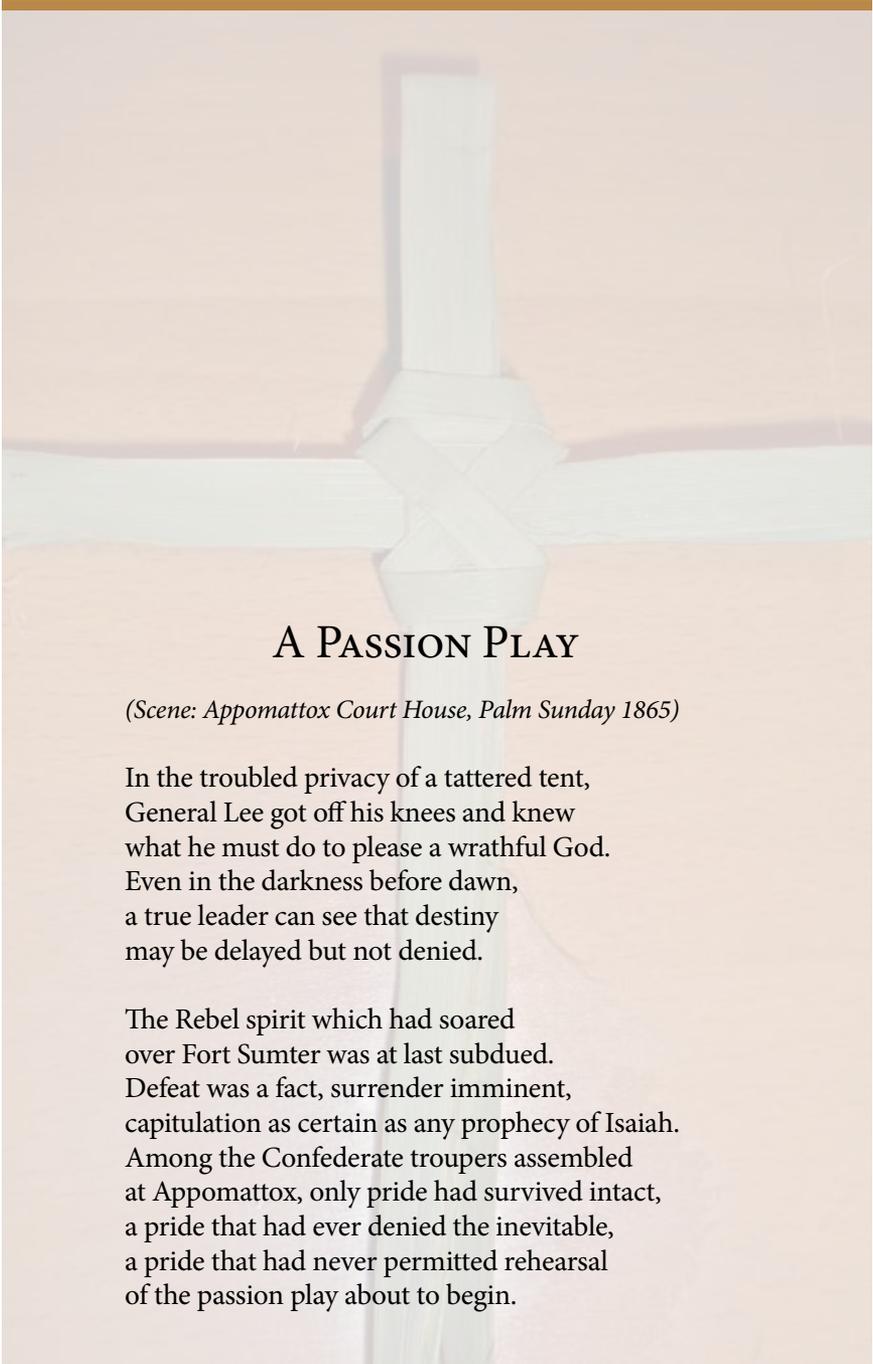
Was so much in Gethsemane. “Let this cup
Pass from me,” he said. He sweated huge
Drops of blood just thinking about the problem
Of how to pick the right site for the connection
Of his phone lines to get the best reception.
On a hill somewhere outside of the city,
He was counting on that, and just a few
Saints, none with any clue of what was up.

A bard could be a bishop such as Guillot.
He types out his prayers on a keyboard
To be filed away as a petition to his God.
He consults his hard drive and finds all things
Wise and wonderful, but when he brings
Questions to it, sometimes it crashes.
His sacrament is turning grapevines into
Thorns where words become la jus bons mots.

“Mon vers est ma fois!” a CD Rom
Once quoted a rimailleur who made engravings
For his poems. Only six visitors showed
Up at his first Paris exhibition. All
Their lives they were in exile, the two,
Telling tall tales about the Bible. To check
The bishop out try “a voice crying from
The wilderness, at www.partenia.com.”

Charles Tisdale
Rockingham County, North Carolina





A PASSION PLAY

(Scene: Appomattox Court House, Palm Sunday 1865)

In the troubled privacy of a tattered tent,
General Lee got off his knees and knew
what he must do to please a wrathful God.
Even in the darkness before dawn,
a true leader can see that destiny
may be delayed but not denied.

The Rebel spirit which had soared
over Fort Sumter was at last subdued.
Defeat was a fact, surrender imminent,
capitulation as certain as any prophecy of Isaiah.
Among the Confederate troupers assembled
at Appomattox, only pride had survived intact,
a pride that had ever denied the inevitable,
a pride that had never permitted rehearsal
of the passion play about to begin.



The curtain rose on Palm Sunday,
a circumstance some suppose to be coincidence.
The site's natural scenery was right:
gentle hills, open fields, a wood
filled with blossoming dogwood,
and here and there a split-rail fence.
Awaiting a cue from Lee were the relatively few
surviving players he was about to surrender
in order to save their lives
even if it broke their hearts.
They were as grey as what they wore.
In the wings with Grant were several times as many
players in less tattered costumes of blue.
They held rifles and sabers,
guidons and battle flags, too.
When the proverbial cast of thousands was in place
and the only props missing were palm fronds,
Lee, the leading man in this real-life drama,
rode in, not on a never-ridden-before donkey,
but not cocky either,
just too proud to be too humble.

Millions have been moved by this image
of a man at the heart of their history.
And well into a new millennium
curtain calls continue, reviewers rave
wherever Southern is spoken

Eugene Platt
St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Charleston, and
St. James Church, James Island



A MAGDALENE POEM

The Roman soldiers 'round him
A thousand army wide,
Jesus bled and suffered,
Gave up the ghost and died.

Now we just want to tell you
How He went down in the grave
With the burden of a nation
And sinners to be saved.

How before the break of day
The stone was rolled away,
The gardening Jesus waiting,
Now hear our Mary say,

“O what to me your mama’s care,
Her house so safe and warm?
The folding blossom of my hair
Will hide us from this storm.”

But Jesus Lord had risen,
To that place of prayer and rest,
And He bid her out the glory
That she’d find herself now blest

“O hiding hair and dewy eyes,
I am no more with death.
My heart upon your warm heart rest,
My breath unto your breath.”

“Now go and tell the others
that I have gone away.”
And she went and told the others,
Not all she’d heard that day.

*William Baldwin
St. James-Santee Episcopal Church
McClellanville*



ON THE BRICK CHURCH ROAD

And why should woman,
the helpmate of man,
be denied the utility of wings?
Birds fly,
and on the face of things
it does appear that having wings
is a good thing to bring up at the next God meeting.
But would the Brick Church angels circumvent,
cry foul! shout
Flight is only for the holy.
No gossamer gowned women
should be racing up this sandy road,
flapping, flapping, rising by inches
from the soft forgiving earth,
trailing feathers,
wailing in the effort taken,
and with deportment forsaken,
settling soon
in the higher branches of the pines
from where they call down
encouragements to men?

William Baldwin
St. James-Santee Episcopal Church
McClellanville

"In the end, despite the large volume of bad news, we can conclude with an affirmation. We can say with Wallace Stevens that 'after the final no there comes a yes.' Yes, we can save what is left. Yes, we can repair and make amends. We can reclaim nature and restore ourselves. There is a bridge at the end of the world."

GUS SPETH, *THE BRIDGE AT THE END OF THE WORLD*



THE CHARLESTON MUMMY POEM

Make a list:
Wet fronds at night,
The Canterbury vicar,
The bark,
The bite,
The pale all right--
I've found a place to hide me.
Mummified
I took a ride
From Rutledge up to Meeting.
Did my best
With wrestling test.
I know now
Why God made me.
To holy be
Between the trees
And let the whale
Confess me.

William Baldwin
St. James-Santee Episcopal Church,
McClellanville



Photo courtesy: Flickr



IN CONTEMPLATION

When I consider how I must die,
Come to pieces, have pearls for eyes,
Be somewhere else as dead and gone,
Drift with the tide, meander on,
Then rage with storm, rush with sea,
Knocking over houses, trees,
Wilding beauty, have my way,
I guess I'd say that death's okay.

*William Baldwin
St. James-Santee Episcopal Church
McClellanville*

THESE HULLS

The hulls with planks unlocked, tilted masts,
glass of muddened windows smashed, these
took in unmoved weariness the passing tides.
Yet down below we found tarred nets
with fiddlers black and quick
as spiders on the brain,
found them when the waters
slipped away.

Oh, let me now born to age and torn
by all remembered things pray
for grace in any place
and be content to lay among the dead
who're buried neither on the land
or in the sea, but find instead
a common rest where mud is covered
by the tide and hell is stilled forever.

*William Baldwin
St. James-Santee Episcopal Church
McClellanville*



The editorial committee of
Carolina Grace invites contributions
for the upcoming issue on this theme:

SUMMERTIME: RECREATION
AND REFRESHMENT

Our hope is to reveal with consistency the breadth and depth of our rich heritage as Anglicans. Contributions should be uplifting in tone and reflective of God's active presence in our lives. Submissions may be of any genre; they should not exceed 750 words. Electronic submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. The editorial committee reserves the right to make reasonable corrections to grammar and syntax and to determine whether or not a submission appropriately fits the theme of the issue and the direction of the journal.

Please email submissions to jesticpg@cofc.edu, with
"Carolina Grace submission" in the subject line.

We must receive submissions by April 10, 2015,
for our next issue.



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A COLLECT FOR CAROLINA GRACE

God of Grace and Glory, be present with us to guide and nurture, to comfort and instruct. May the words contained herein continue to feed us as they themselves have been the product of your sustaining presence in the lives of your faithful people. This we pray in the name of the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Collect written by
J. Michael A. Wright
Rector, Grace Episcopal Church, Charleston*

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