



Humility in Power: The Ethiopian Eunuch

by Terence Aditon

One of the most beautiful stories in Acts is the story of Philip the Apostle, sent by divine direction to the Ethiopian Eunuch, who was coming from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship (Acts 8:26-40). Here is the story:

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."



The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is

to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

In the ancient world, eunuchs constituted a powerful caste of men, serving royalty and nobility. If we wonder why eunuchs should be so important in the social hierarchies of that time, one reason is evident: the man can have no sons to com-

pete for power with the princes or other heirs to titles and fortunes. This is patriarchy at its most critically cruel point: that a man be altered to serve the high-born and the rich. (Eunuchs also had a strong presence among the powerful in China. The practice of castrating men and placing them in service to kings and others in the upper ranks of society, was not confined to the Middle East or North Africa.)

Since eunuchs could not start a dynasty of their own to compete with those they served, the eunuchs were often among the most trusted servants of their society's richest classes. Many of them are found to be stewards of large landholdings, of treasuries and properties.

The Ethiopian Eunuch was a rich man, steward to Queen Candace (an actual historical figure). A steward such as he, would be the equivalent of the Chief Financial Officer of a huge corporation, and even that comparison barely does justice to the enormous powers of stewards to the rich in the ancient world. (Think of Joseph, steward to Pharaoh, second only to the king in power and authority.)

The scripture says that the Ethiopian Eunuch had gone up to Jerusalem to worship. Since eunuchs were expressly forbidden by the Law to worship in the Temple, how do we account for the Ethiopian Eunuch's presence there? Possibly he was impressed by the power of Israelite beliefs, and would be regarded by Jews as a 'righteous gentile.' Perhaps he was born to Jewish parents, or perhaps his high status and obvious riches, awed those who would have stopped him from worshiping in the Temple. It is a wondrous congruence that the Ethiopian Eunuch had purchased or somehow obtained a scroll of Isaiah, who denounced inequality and praised those who welcome the seeker after God. Again, this is an echo, in the miracles Jesus performed, the impression he made, on those who were outsiders to Jewish life: the Samaritan woman, the Canaanite woman, the tax collectors, the adulteress he saved from stoning, the lepers he touched and healed, the woman with the issue of blood, and therefore 'unclean,' who was healed by touching the hem of his garment.

"...true humility means we live the truth of who we really are, without pretension or deceit or false modesty. We acknowledge that there is wisdom greater than ours, and much to learn."

Bible stories have these echoes, in both Old and New Testaments. Philip's angelic summons to go to the Gaza road, echoes the summons to Ananias to heal the blinded Saul. (Acts 9:10-21). Those who are summoned are God's instruments for revealing the power and truth of Christ; their obedience to the call is an echo of the Lord's obedient life.

What is striking about the story in Acts, is that this powerful man, in a chariot, reading Isaiah, humbly said he could not understand, and needed someone to guide him. This was humility in its most pure and modest form. Think how willing people are today to acknowledge what they don't know. Think how often people resent someone who tries to teach something, however gently. A powerful man is assumed to be someone who knows the secrets to power, and is not assumed to be in need of a teacher. That is what makes the Ethiopian Eunuch a model for us all: true humility means we live the truth of who we really are, without pretension or deceit or false modesty. We acknowledge that there is wisdom greater than ours, and much to learn.

The Ethiopian Eunuch's openness to Philip's teaching, his recognition of the opportunity to be baptized, his joy as he continue on his journey, shows how powerfully the life and words of Jesus could fill and change every heart. May our hearts be that open, that humble, that joyful, in Christ.

Source: <https://www.episcopalcafe.com/humility-in-power-the-ethiopian-eunuch/>

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

For our in-person services to operate smoothly, we urgently need volunteers to fill important roles. We need Ushers and people who to come ahead of time to set-up, others who to stay and clean-up, and others who will help Altar Guild and wash our holy instruments and get them ready for the next service. The noon service schedule is independent of the 10:00 AM live streamed service, but if you are already scheduled for the 10:00 service and would be willing to serve at both 10 AM and Noon, please let us know. If you can fill these **urgent** volunteer needs, please call or email the office.

A huge **THANK YOU** to Angie Hoffman who came and weeded at the Rectory. And, to her husband Brian who came and hauled away many large bags of weeds! Their help has been priceless and so encouraging for Mother Mindy to have so much weeding done!

LAY EUCHARISTIC LEADERS SCHEDULE

MAY 30, 2021

10:00 AM LIVESTREAM

Lector: Eda Wilson

AV Technician: Bob Krumm

12:00 NOON OUTDOORS

Lector: Eda Wilson

Usher: Scott Fernhaber

Setup & Teardown: Scott

JUNE 6, 2021

10:00 AM LIVESTREAM

Lector: Randy Ridout

AV Technician: Breck McHenry

12:00 NOON OUTDOORS

Lector: Randy Ridout

Usher: Bob Krumm

Setup & Teardown: Scott

JUNE 13, 2021

10:00 AM LIVESTREAM

Lector: Eda Wilson

AV Technician: Bob Krumm

12:00 NOON OUTDOORS

Lector: Bev Wille

Usher: Bill Cannon

Setup & Teardown: Scott

ACTIVITIES AT ST. PETER'S

Sunday, May 30

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

Live Streamed on YouTube

12:00 PM Outdoor In-Person Worship

2:00 PM Planting of the Geraniums

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube

Sunday, June 6

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

Live Streamed on YouTube

12:00 PM Outdoor In-Person Worship

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube

Sunday, June 13

10:00 AM Sunday Worship

Live Streamed on YouTube

12:00 PM Outdoor In-Person Worship

5:00 PM Evening Prayer

Premieres on YouTube

Wednesday, June 16

6:00 PM Vestry Meeting on Zoom

Vestry Minutes May 19, 2021 (Via Zoom)

Present: Mother Mindy, Bill Cannon, Cole Jones, Bev Wille, Breck McHenry, Ginny Laurent, Bob Krumm

Executive Session

I. Check ins

II. Prayer

III. Minutes: Bill moved to approve. Cole seconded. All approved.

IV. Financial Report – Assets up due to the high market and substantial investments. Cole commented that Covid 19 made 2020 such an odd year. Perhaps we should compare to 2019 which would be a more accurate comparison. This year we are about 7,000. Behind in member contribution, but some people give their contribution in one lump sum at the end of the year. Any questions about this report. Ginny moved to accept, Scott seconded. All were in favor of accepting the financial report as presented.

V. New business:

A. Inside service:

1) For those who cannot come to outside service for whatever reason.

Mother Mindy asked how we could safely get people back in church.

Bev said if there is a way to include in the 10:00 Livestream that would be better than having a third service. Cole asked if we have guidance on how many can be in the church during the live streamed service. MM shared the screen showing our current Covid status. We are in new Yellow. This means we can gather indoors at 25% capacity for 30 minutes. Outside service can be an hour. Scott asked if she has contacted the individuals who haven't come, and see what their reasons are. Breck offered to call, but Mother Mindy suggested that it would be good for her to call as their priest. Are there others? Other names were mentioned. Bob asked if we could eliminate the RSVP? Bev suggested that Barb adds that into the email – that it isn't essential to RSVP.

2) For 8 AM Morning Prayer- Scott doesn't see an issue with it, there are so few in attendance. The location will in the Gathering Room instead of the Chapel, so we can be spread out. All were in favor.

B. Project Lists and Delegation of Next Steps - See attachment

Mother Mindy shared list of projects in order of priority:

1. **Readying the Nave for In-person services.** Scott will head the taskforce.
2. **Finishing our tech set-up** (repositioning the camera so it is not in the center aisle) Mounted in the back and can Pan, Tilt and Zoom. Scott will research the cost of this camera. We will continue to use the cameras that we have. It will be a 3 camera system, plus the laptop which is the slides for the people at home. Also need a new laptop dedicated for streaming (instead of using Mother Mindy's computer).
3. **Vestry Responsibilities Task Force** – There are about 4 descriptions of Vestry Responsibilities from other sources. Cole suggested getting someone who is a former Vestry Member to also be on this Task Force. Cole volunteered. Breck also offered to serve, and Bill as well.
4. **Schedule Special Meeting** in July for the purpose of electing new Vestry Members.

Mother Mindy made sure we are still on-track to have this meeting. Do we still want to do this? Bob, Breck, Cole, Ginny, Bill, Bev are all in agreement. Sunday, July 18 was proposed for a Special Congregational Meeting.

5. **Agape Essentials Care Ministry** – Mother Mindy will set up online forms, then we can start distribution.
6. **Undercroft Renovation** – Bob had offered to look into painting, Bill had tapestry murals painted for the walls, Scott looked into flooring ideas. The plan was to update cupboard doors, new lighting, new flooring, and sound deadening material.
7. **Rectory Porches** – both small porches are rotting. Had a quote last year for \$10,000. But now the materials have quadrupled in price. Discussion followed. First, we need to ask for an update of the quote. The question was raised: “Who owns the Rectory? St. Peter’s or the Diocese?” The Diocese owns the Rectory. We could pay for it by borrowing it from ourselves. Cole pointed out that we need to be very careful in touching the principle of the Endowment Fund. It would be different if we were talking about using the interest from that fund. A Capital Campaign would be an option. Mother Mindy said we do need to do something to fix the rotting wood problem on the porches, and it should be done before Fall ... not to go through another winter. We should find out what the actual cost is now. We need to get the Finance committee together and get their recommendation. Mother Mindy asked for permission to get the porches fixed. Scott moved, Bill seconded. Action Plan: Get information on fixing the porches and present it to the Finance Committee. Vote was taken, all were in favor.

VI. Reports

- A. **Jr. Warden** – quotes on Lawn treatment, and battery. Mother Mindy proposed authorizing Breck to choose the best quote for lawn treatment. Scott is not in favor of using chemicals on our lawn, with children using the space. Breck said TruGreen claims their products are safe for children and animals. Mother Mindy suggested that we table the discussion. Cole suggested we fertilize only, and vote on this so we can move on. This is the time of year to do it. Mother Mindy removed motion to table her previous motion, and made new motion to authorize Breck to fertilize only. Breck said he would get enough fertilizer to do the church lawn and Rectory. Breck seconded vote was taken and all were in favor.
- B. **AED** – Newer Phillips AED needs replacement battery. Breck made motion to get this battery, Scott seconded.
- C. **Proposal is to Purchase “TV Ears”** for use in the Sanctuary for those who are hard of hearing. Cost is about \$200. Discussion followed and it was approved.
- D. **Sr. Warden**- nothing to report.
- E. **Rector’s Report** – Already discussed.

Any Questions? Cole suggested Acker Millwork for any work needed on windows, and Dusty Barels for plaster work. He has used both and been very pleased with their work.

Mother Mindy closed in prayer. Bill moved to adjourn. Scott (and others) seconded!

Respectfully submitted, Barb Werner

BONIFACE BISHOP, MISSIONARY, MARTYR (5 JUNE 754)

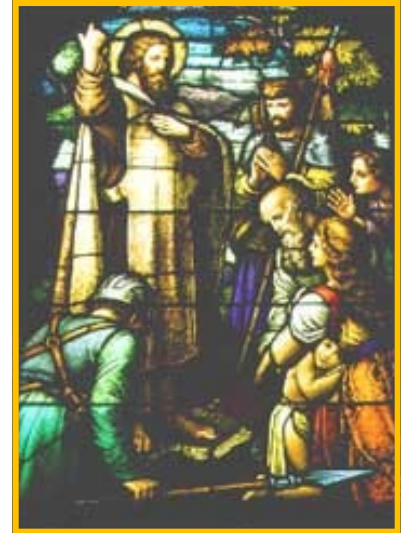
Wynfrith, nicknamed Boniface ("good deeds"), was born around 680 near Crediton in Devonshire, England. When he was five, he listened to some monks who were staying at his father's house. They had returned from a mission to the pagans on the continent, and Boniface was so impressed by them that he resolved to follow their example. Although his father had intended him for a secular career, he gave way to his son's entreaties and sent him at the age of seven to a monastery school. He eventually became director of the school at Nursling, in Winchester, where he wrote the first Latin grammar in England, and gave lectures that were widely copied and circulated.

At thirty, he was ordained and set out to preach in Friesland (overlaps with modern Holland), whence he was soon expelled because of war between its heathen king and Charles Martel of France. Boniface, after a brief withdrawal, went into Hesse and Bavaria, having secured the support of the Pope and of Charles Martel for his work there. In Hesse, in the presence of a large crowd of pagans, he cut down the Sacred Oak of Geismar, a tree of immense age and girth, sacred to the god Thor. It is said that after only a few blows of his axe, the tree tottered and crashed to the ground, breaking into four pieces and revealing itself to be rotted away within. It was the beginning of a highly successful missionary effort, and the planting of a vigorous Christian church in Germany, where Boniface was eventually consecrated bishop. He asked the Christian Saxons of England to support his work among their kinsmen on the continent, and they responded with money, books, supplies, and above all, with a steady supply of monks to assist him in teaching and preaching.

Boniface did not confine his attentions to Germany. He worked to establish cooperation between the Pope and others in Italy on the one hand and Charles and his successors in France on the other. He persuaded Carloman and Pepin, the sons of Charles, to call synods for the reform of the church in their territories, where under previous rulers bishoprics had often been sold to the highest bidder. He never forgot his initial failure in Friesland, and in old age resigned his bishopric and returned to work there. Many Frisians had been converted earlier by Willibrord (another Saxon missionary from England-see 7 Nov), but had lapsed after his death. Boniface preached among them with considerable success. On June 5, the eve of Pentecost, 754, he was preparing a group of Frisians for confirmation when they were attacked and killed by heathen warriors.

The historian Christopher Dawson estimates that he has had a greater influence on the history of Europe *than any other Englishman*.

Source: <http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Boniface.htm>



ALTAR FLOWER DEDICATIONS

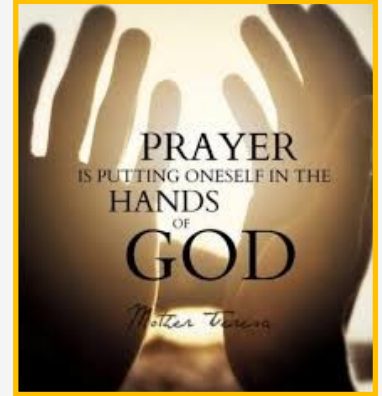
Now that we are meeting in person, we would like to restart having people sign up to donate flowers for the altar. If you have a particular date in mind, you may want to be proactive to request the Sunday that is available closest to that date. The donation for a flower arrangement is \$55. **Please call Judy at 920-723-7106** so she knows to order flowers.

You can also bring in flowers from your garden or cut flowers purchased at a store or farmers market. We thank you in advance for your participation in bringing the beauty of flowers to our worship.



PRAYERS

- Parishioner Cycle of Prayer - Tom and Doris Middlebrooks
- Ministry Rotation Prayer - Outreach Ministry
- For those who are sick: Bob & Kitty Martin, Jerry Swanson, Jack Schark, Bev, Marilou, Gary, Vickie, Janet, Joleen
- Happy Birthday Michael Bills and Angie Hoffman
- Diocesan search for next Bishop
- Prayer for difficult times (coronavirus)



To add someone to the parish prayer list, please e-mail the office at: office@stpetersfort.org, or contact Eda Wilson, our prayer net coordinator, edesw2@gmail.com.

If you someone you know and love has Covid-19 we would like to pray for them. Please email Eda and she will add their name to the prayer list.

This prayer was developed by the Diocesan Standing Committee to pray as the search for our next Bishop progresses:

Gracious and loving God in whom we live and move and have our being, We pray for your guidance and wisdom that we may faithfully follow your calling in our own lives and as we as the Diocese of Milwaukee discern the calling of our twelfth bishop. We give you thanks for the service of Bishop Steven Miller in the life of our diocese and for the blessings that marked his ministry among us. We also pray for his family during this time of transition. We pray for those whom you have called to serve on our Standing, Search, and Transition Committees, and we pray also for those who will respond to your call to enter into discernment with us to be our next bishop. Give us all listening and prayerful hearts for this most important task. This we ask in the name of the One who said, "Come, follow me." Amen.

Prayer for a Time of Pandemic Illness:



O God, our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, in this challenging and uncertain time of global pandemic and public health crisis, we come before you offering our prayers on behalf of those in need, the Church and the world. For all affected by the coronavirus pandemic around the world.

For the leaders of the nations that they may work together for the common good as the outbreak spreads. May barriers that divide be brought down and bonds of trust strengthened, to benefit the entire human family. Grant to our nation and its leaders, public health officials and government the will to act swiftly and decisively, with wisdom and compassion.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

May 27, 2021 Newsletter

ST. PETER'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

302 Merchants Avenue

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

Return Service Requested



**ST. PETER'S
EPISCOPAL
CHURCH**

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Rector: Mother Mindy

Valentine Davis

ST. PETER'S MISSION STATEMENT

To Lead Each Person into a Living Relationship with Jesus Christ,
Train Them as Disciples, and Make Jesus Known to Others.