

On the Spiritual Side

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Caroline Oakes: Mind and Spirit Choosing what matters is what matters most

Recently overheard: "I'm busy all day long. Still, at the end of the day, I feel as though I've accomplished absolutely nothing I wanted to accomplish."

How many of us feel that way most every day?

In his classic bestseller, "First Things First," Stephen Covey explains the reason: We are addicted to urgency.

Urgent tasks have a deceptive irresistibility, a sense of necessary priority, whereas tasks that truly matter most to us are rarely urgent, and are often pushed aside.

Covey says our struggle to choose importance over urgency is caused by the powerful pull between what he describes as "the clock and the compass."

The clock represents our schedules, commitments, appointments and activities. The compass represents our vision, values, mission, conscience and direction.

"The struggle comes when we sense a gap between the clock and the compass — when what we do doesn't contribute to what is most important in our lives," Covey says. "The pain of that gap can bring feelings of deep emptiness,

a sense that we're not really living our lives."

Covey's famous hands-on "big rocks and pebbles" demonstration of putting first things first is even more timely now than when his book was first published in the 90s. (Remember when we thought we were busy?)

Standing in front of an audience with two large, clear buckets on the table in front of him, Covey fills one bucket about halfway with little pebbles, and then tries to fit the large rocks up to the lip of the bucket. Of course, only a very few big rocks fit, leaving

important "big rocks" on the table.

In the other bucket, Covey places all the big rocks in first, one by one. He then pours the pebbles in and shakes a bit. Amazingly, the pebbles slide down and around the big rocks so that all fit together in the bucket.

"Put your big rocks in first," he says.

Take a moment and consider — What are the "big rocks" in your life? What vital tasks are getting continually pushed aside by seemingly urgent tasks?

In a world where constant virtu-

al connectivity now compounds the sense of urgency we have throughout each day, we need the prophetic voice of Stephen Covey, ever reminding us: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."

Caroline Oakes, a Bucks County resident, has a master's degree in Ascetical Theology and is writing a book on the prayer practice of Jesus, mindfulness meditation and the human spirit. Follow her on Twitter @carolineoakes.

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St. Philip's hosts charity program coordinator

Parishioners from St. Philip's Episcopal Church in New Hope recently welcomed Lauren Salminen, New York coordinator of the Carpenter's Kids, an international program benefiting AIDS orphans that is headquartered at the Episcopal Diocese of New York and the Diocese of Central Tanganyika, Tanzania.

Since Jan. 1, St. Philip's has been supporting the education dreams of 40 AIDS orphans in the village of Nghulugano, Tanzania, through the Carpenter's Kids program. The program began in 2005 as a partnership between the Dioceses of New York and Central Tanganyika, and has participating Episcopal/Anglican parishes in four countries and six U.S. states, including Pennsylvania.

The program's basic mission is simple but vital: to provide uniforms and a hot breakfast to AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children in the East African country of



The Rev. Michael Ruk of St. Philip's New Hope and Lauren Salminen of the Carpenter's Kids Program.

Tanganyika, there were an estimated 40,000 AIDS orphans in 2008.

Since the program's inception, participants have committed to sponsoring one or more children for five years—the length of a standard education in Tanzania. Sponsorship of a child is now \$80 a year. One-time donations of any size are also welcome. Participating parishes are invited to visit the children they support through trips organized by the Diocese of New York. There will be two such trips in 2013: from July 15 to 27, and from Aug. 5 to 17.

"When we hand a child a uniform and their guardian is standing there and looks you in the eyes and gives you a hug because her child can now go to school, it's beyond words," Salminen said.

For information about the Carpenter's Kids program, contact Lauren Salminen at 212-316-7432 or L.Salminen@Dioceses.org.

Tanzania. While primary education is free in Tanzania, families must provide their children with school uniforms—a requirement that puts a primary education out of reach of AIDS orphans and other extremely impoverished children.

In the Diocese of Central

HAPPENINGS

Portrait painter tackles health care

Theresa BrownGold speaks about health care and the stories represented in her paintings at 10:30 a.m. Sunday, April 14 at Pebble Hill Gallery, 320 Edison-Furlong Road, Doylestown.

Her paintings are featured in the exhibit "Art As Social Inquiry" in the church's art gallery until April 28.

BrownGold is a portrait painter who uses art to start dialog around social issues, such as health care, assault weapons, immigration and war. Each of the 50 portraits tells a different and personal story of accessing health care in the United States.

Saint Andrew's Church holds Evensong for Easter

Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, 50 York St., Lambertville, N.J., presents its monthly Evensong at 4 p.m. Sunday, April 14.

Music by Thomas Tallis, Robert Lehman, Gerre Hancock and Charles Villiers Stanford will be featured. The congregation will be invited to join in chanting the psalms and singing hymns.

The Rev. Richard W. Townley,

rector of Saint Andrew's, will officiate. Organist-choirmaster Michael T. Keavane will direct the choir and play St. Andrew's 1892 Hook and Hastings tracker organ. For information, contact 609-397-2425 or standrews@snip.net. All are welcome.

Speaker discusses anti-Semitism on college campuses

Mark Busch speaks about anti-Semitism on college campuses at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 16, at Temple Judea of Bucks County, 38 Rogers Road, Furlong.

Busch is a lawyer and past president of the board of Rutgers University Hill in New Brunswick, N.J. Among the subjects he will talk about is what Rutgers is doing to foster a pro-Israel atmosphere.

Service includes special blessings; group takes in show

Shir Ami, 101 Richboro Road, Newtown, holds a blessing of the auxiliary presidents and their boards at Sabbath services 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 12. The temple choir will sing. For information, call 215-968-3400.

The temple's 50 Something

presents Steve Solomon's "My Mother's Italian, My Father's Jewish, I'm in Therapy" at 2 p.m. Sunday April 21 at the Bucks County Playhouse. Reservations are a must. Tickets are \$40, and transportation is on your own. Call Jerry Thomas at 267-202-6366 to R.S.V.P.

Quakerism in a Nutshell workshop offered

Wrightstown Friends Meetinghouse, 535 Durham Road, Newtown, hosts Quakerism in a Nutshell, a workshop led by Melanie Douty Snipes of the Fallingston Quaker Meeting, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday April 20.

The public is invited to learn about 21st century Quakers and how their faith has formed them. Topics include the Quaker testimonies, whether Quakers have ministers, and when and how Quakerism got started. God and Quakers and Jesus and Quakers also will be discussed.

Lunch will be provided. To register, and for information, contact Holly Olson at 215-860-9747 or hollybq@verizon.net. The workshop is free; however donations are appreciated.

Author of book on autism speaking at librarians' luncheon

Virginia Breen, author of "I Am in Here: The Journey of a Child with Autism Who Cannot Speak but Finds Her Voice," is the keynote speaker at the Spring Luncheon of the Buxmont Church Librarians and Delaware Valley Chapter of the Church and Synagogue Library Association on April 13.

The 12:30 p.m. luncheon at the First United Methodist Church, 300 N. Broad Street, Lansdale, caps a morning involving workshops titled "Panning for Gold, Spiritual Truths in Children's Literature," led by Marjorie Geissing and "Laughter in the Library, Laughter in Your Life," by Virginia Webb.

Breen's daughter, Elizabeth Bonker, is profoundly affected by autism and cannot speak, yet she illuminates the inner world of autism through poems that she types one finger at a time. Breen shares her experiences of working with her daughter and helping her find a voice.

Breen's book has been recommended by the National Autism Association. She and Elizabeth have appeared on the "Today" show and the "700 Club."

Books will be available for purchase. Registration information is available from ndkauffman@verizon.net or nmgrieser@gmail.com.

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Quakers...

Faith, Witness, Process...

What's it all about?
Join our workshop to find out!
April 20, 10am-2pm (lunch included)
Registration deadline April 19
Free of Charge (Donations gratefully accepted)

Wrightstown Friends Meetinghouse
535 Durham Road, Newtown, PA 18940

Contact Holly Olson
215-860-9747
hollybq@verizon.net

Worship Directory

SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Sunday, April 14, 2013
The Rev. Dr. Tyson Frey, Sr., Pastor
9:30 am Worship / Sunday School
10:30 am Fellowship and Refreshments
Nursery Service Available
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The Rev. Mark E. Rudolph, Rector
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