



Weekly News

March 6, 2024

Note from the Rector

Dear Friends,

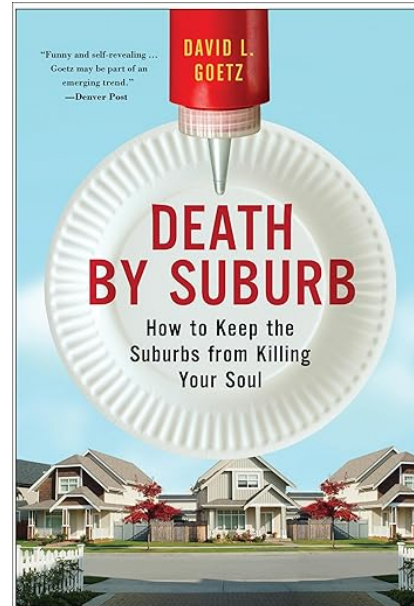
In his book [*Death by Suburb: How to Keep the Suburbs from Killing Your Soul*](#), David Goetz offers a spiritual practice that is little different than most. This particular practice is in response to what he calls self-love (in the negative sense). Goetz is talking about those things that feed the ego. Self-love or the inflated ego is fed by the acquisition of what he calls "immortality symbols."

These symbols (or idols) are markers of success in the secular world. Symbols might include cars, homes, jobs, vacation property, country club membership, jewelry, etc. Goetz argues that the most significant immortality symbol in the suburbs are successful children. While none of these symbols are inherently bad, they can, if we aren't careful, give us a warped view of ourselves and others. These symbols can puff us up and tear others down (or vice versa).

Ultimately, there is really only one immortality symbol that we should seek and that symbol is revealed in our baptisms. After the baptism, the priest dips her finger in oil and, with the mark of a cross, anoints the newly baptized with the words, "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism and marked as Christ's won forever."

As Goetz says, the immortality symbols that we seek in this secular world will only serve to make us spiritually bloated. The immortality symbol given in Christ will make us fit for service in the kingdom of heaven. For Goetz, seeking the symbol that gives life isn't as simple as choosing the healthier symbol. We aren't that good.

Left to our own devices, we are going to choose what serves the self. But, as Goetz says, the journey to God is *through* the self. He goes on to argue that in order to go *through* the self to God, we must let the self (or ego) die. And what better place to die to self (or ego) than at the foot of the cross - the place where God gave us only Son to die for us and because of us so



that we might have life.

In the end, Goetz says, "This suburban practice is a journey of prayer unlike any other prayer. It's listening not for the voice of God but for the voice of self. And then allowing the self to die to benign neglect."

Our conversation on this topic continues on Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. I hope to see you there!

Faithfully,

Jack+

Lenten Suppers Continue Tonight!!!



Lenten Suppers

Wednesday, March 6th
Supper @ 5:30 p.m.
Program @ 6:10 p.m.

Exploring Holy Week



Supper Host
Pier 45 Peer Group

On the Menu
GUMBO
+
Kid's Plate



Supper will be followed by programming for all ages.
Nursery is open.

Adult Class Offering
Exploring Maundy Thursday
with Brian Denton

Pier 34 Picnic



Pier 34 (30s/40s Peer Group) gathers for a picnic lunch after church on Sunday. Peer Groups exist to connect and promote fellowship between congregants in similar life stages. To learn more about all of our Peer Groups, please contact [Kathy Lounsbury](#).

Foyer Group



A Foyer Group gathers for lunch following Sunday worship. Foyer Groups exist to gather small groups of congregants who represent various age groups. To learn more, please contact [Kathy Lounsbury](#).

Scripture Lessons for Sunday



Sign-up Central

- The Abbey Feeding Ministry
- First Light Shelter Meals
- Weekend Backpack Program
- Sponsor Sunday Flowers
- Host Sunday Social
- Presentation of the Gifts
- Realm Events

[Click here](#)

The graphic features a blue background with a large red circle behind the text 'Sign-up Central'. To the right, there are two Polaroid-style photos: the top one shows a group of people in a kitchen setting, and the bottom one shows a large bouquet of colorful flowers. A red oval with the text 'Click here' is positioned over the bottom photo.

Recent Sermons & Teachings

Sermon

The Rev. Emily Collette - March 3, 2024
Third Sunday in Lent

Sound files and full transcripts can be found by clicking the image below. You can also "follow" The Episcopal Church of the Ascension - Vestavia Hills, AL on iTunes or Spotify.

“IF WE TAKE SERIOUSLY
THAT WE ARE MADE IN
THE IMAGE OF A LOVING
GOD, WE CAN AFFORD TO
DO NO LESS THAN DO OUR
OWN CLEANSING WORK OF
FLIPPING TABLES, DRIVING
OUT THE THINGS THAT
NO LONGER GIVE LIFE,
AND LISTENING DEEPLY
AND SINCERELY TO WHERE
GOD IS CALLING US TO
CHANGE.”

The Rev. Emily Collette

Pastoral Care

If you are admitted to the hospital, have need of prayer or counsel, or unable to attend church, please contact our Rector, The [Rev. Jack Alvey](tel:205.914.5225) (205.914.5225) or our Pastoral Care Team Chair, [Elizabeth Tanner](tel:205.541.0419) (205.541.0419)

Giving Options



Plate & Pledge



Online via Realm



@Ascension-Episcopal

Latest Announcements from

Ascension

Keep in Touch!



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