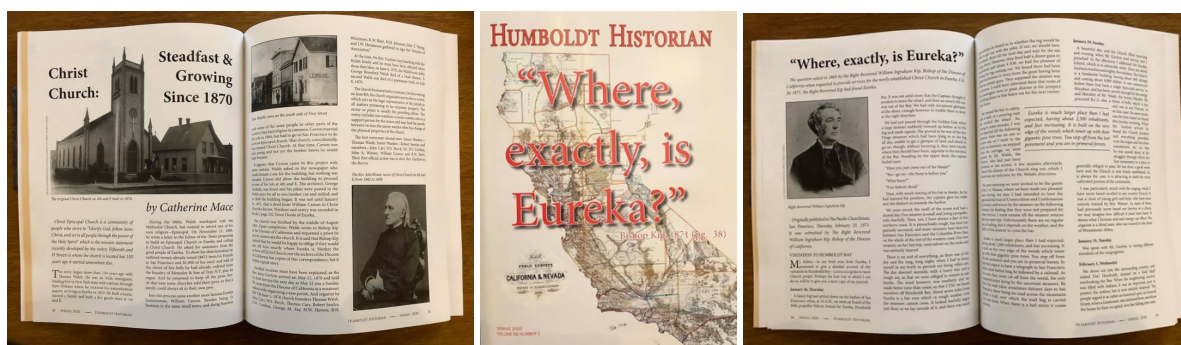


Rector's Report Sunday March 29, 2020

On Shrove Tuesday (Feb 25), the Associates of the Community of the Transfiguration gathered at the Transfiguration House for Eucharist and lunch. Christ Church then hosted the Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner, thanks to Vickie Patton and her many helpers. Although our attendance was lower than usual (due to growing concern about COVID-19), we had a wonderful feast along with an introduction to Lent Madness and the burning of the palms. On March 1, the Humboldt County Historical Society released the Spring 2020 issue of the *Humboldt Historian* featuring two articles about Christ Church Eureka: one article written by parishioner Catherine Mace about our church's 150-year-old history and another article including entries from Bishop William Ingraham Kip's journal entries from 1871, when he visited Eureka to consecrate Christ Church.



On Sunday (March 1), I began teaching an Inquirers / Confirmation Class after the 10:30 am service. On March 4, my clergy support group also met at the Transfiguration House for a meeting and an early birthday celebration. On my birthday (March 6), Ashley and I attended the opening of a photography exhibit at HSU by Dave Woody, where I met the new university president Tom Jackson Jr. We then attended the performance of "The Complete Works of Shakespeare" by the Reduced Shakespeare Company at the Van Duzer Theatre. I'm glad we began Sacred Saunters before the first Sunday of Lent so that we were able to have two Saunters this Lent instead of just one.



On Tuesday (March 3), I led a class on the Fourth Gospel and the Five Senses during the Lenten Soup Supper. During the first week of March, we placed a new sculpture ("Our Good Angels" by Connie Butler) in the chapel courtyard and we hung up a framed portrait of Bishop Megan Traquair in the

narthex. On Saturday evening (March 7), we held a beautiful memorial service for Irene Hannaford. On Monday (March 9), I met with Irene's family at Ferndale Cemetery to inter Irene's ashes. On Tuesday (March 10), I led a class on the Fourth Gospel and the Five Senses for the Lenten Soup Supper. This month's special sesquicentennial events with guests Anne Holcomb and Betty Chinn were postponed as a result of COVID-19 concerns.



On Thursday (March 12), Bishop Megan directed all the congregations of the dioceses to cease gathering for regular Sunday worship and to offer worship using online tools. We live-streamed Friday Morning Prayer on March 13 through Facebook Live (currently 146 views) and then live-streamed Sunday Morning Eucharist on March 15 (currently 501 views). The video recordings remain on the Facebook page and then I download them and upload them to [the Christ Church YouTube page](#).

On March 16, I received the final draft of the cover of my book *Theodicy and Spirituality in the Fourth Gospel* (see page 4). The book is available for pre-order on Amazon, but will not be released until late April. I'm glad I was able to show the final draft to my father Bob London because early on Thursday morning (March 19), he passed away after a long battle with acute myeloid leukemia at MD Anderson hospital in Houston TX. I'm deeply grateful for all the sympathy cards and messages I have received from parishioners. At midnight on March 19, the Humboldt County 'shelter-in-place' took effect so I decided to observe the Jewish practice of "sitting shiva" in order to grieve for my Jewish father from March 19 – 25. During this time, I offered Morning Prayer on Sunday March 22 (209 views) along with Compline on Tuesday nights and Morning Prayer on Friday mornings. All in-person meetings on campus have been cancelled.



Because I stayed home last Sunday, I asked Bishop Megan if we could transfer Laetare Sunday to this Sunday March 29 so that we can claim our hope and joy in the promise of the resurrection during this time of death and despair, while singing "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee." The bishop gave us permission and I have invited parishioners to send pictures of themselves wearing pink, as is the Laetare Sunday tradition. I am currently considering other creative ways for us, as a church, to feel connected during this time of isolation and to uphold our core value of fellowship.



Thank you so much, Christ Church Eureka Vestry, for the lovely lemon tree!
- Ashley L. Bacchi

RELIGION | BIBLICAL STUDIES

"Daniel DeForest London offers a compelling reading of John 9–10 that challenges anti-Semitic interpretations of the gospel. Through mimetic theory, readers encounter a Johannine discourse aimed at breaking down the divide between victims and victimizer, and a Good Shepherd who invites them to deflect their need for finding blame onto the cross. Thoroughly informed by contemporary scholarship, this is a timely and significant contribution to the recovery of lament and protest prayer in the Church."
—WILLIAM MORROW, Queen's University

"London's premise is that we're addicted to blame—*somebody* must be at fault for the pain we're experiencing or the fix we're in!—which sets in motion the tragic human cycle of scapegoating and persecuting, of violence and counterviolence. London's Jesus won't play that game. Instead, he invites us to blame him, even kill him, as a way to open our eyes and heal our souls. This is a most beautiful and creative retelling of the Jesus story, written from the heart.

A beautiful blend of careful scholarship, biblical insight, spiritual depth, and genuine humanity."
—DOUGLAS FRANK, author of *A Gentler God*

Daniel DeForest London argues that the Fourth Gospel offers a potentially transformative response to the question of suffering and the human compulsion to blame. Based on his reading of John 9 and 10, London argues that the Gospel does not offer a theodicy, but rather a *theodical spirituality*, an experience of praying the question of suffering and remaining open to a divine response. London shows how the Johannine Jesus's response poses three sets of symbols in dichotomy (day/night, vision/blindness, sheep/wolf), each subverted by another, core symbol (light, judge, shepherd). By interpreting these symbols in light of mimetic theory, he argues that Jesus's response reveals the scapegoat mechanism in which an innocent victim is blamed by violent victimizers. However, rather than blaming the victimizers, Jesus continues to engage with the characters who appear to be villains: the light of the world transforms night and day into one continuous day; the Good Shepherd welcomes sheep and wolf into his beloved flock. In this way, readers are invited to bring to the Johannine Jesus their own violence, resentment, and wolfish rage regarding the question of suffering and to experience the theodical spirituality of the Fourth Gospel.

Daniel DeForest London (PhD in Christian Spirituality, Graduate Theological Union) is the rector of Christ Episcopal Church in Eureka, California.

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London

THEODICY AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL



THEODICY AND SPIRITUALITY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

A Girardian Perspective

DANIEL DEFORST LONDON



Praise for *Theodicy and Spirituality in the Fourth Gospel*

"In this readable and pioneering book, Daniel DeForest London offers a transformative reading of John 9 and 10. Employing the 'Anthropological tale' of René Girard as an interpretive key to this section of John (i.e., the human propensity toward blaming and scapegoating), London shows how the Johannine Jesus transforms both victim and victimizer. The theodical spirituality emerging from his exegesis offers the promise of liberation and new life to the reader, the church, and the world. This is the most important theological book I have read in the last twenty years!" —**Peter Rodgers**, Center for Bible Study

"The problem of suffering is one of the most pastorally important issues in the Christian life, but a preacher hoping to offer a comforting word is faced with a tangled web of competing philosophical and theological explanations that finally fail to satisfy the quest for good news. In response to this challenge, London takes a deep dive into John's story of 'The Man Born Blind' (9:6–10:21). Respectful of the human urge to assign blame for misfortune, London's approach instead emphasizes the evocative language of this Gospel, offering a perspective that suggests a path to spiritual transformation and an invitation to intimacy with God." —**Linda L. Clader**, emerita, Church Divinity School of the Pacific