

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER

July 5, 2026

HIDDEN

discovering our purpose

by Drew Downs

In the gospel, we read about Jesus giving thanks to God for hiding things from the wise and revealing them to infants—which certainly resonates with another phrase he uses, “little ones”. I think a lot of wise people get squirmy about this idea for obvious reasons. One being it means God is hiding things from them, and that doesn’t feel good. And because, as it goes, giving the truth to those we still consider babies is not the most effective strategy in our world.

What it highlights, however, is both our commitment to keeping things as we know them and God’s commitment to waking us up from this slumber. Because none of this relies on the certainty of our comprehension. It relies on our trying to figure things out. And as much of the mystery is reading into what makes infants more suitable than adults for connecting with God. Or, to put it more directly, what about us is hostile to the truth and what must we let go of?

ORDINARY TIME

2026

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Patriotism & Christianity

Two hundred and fifty years ago, something like 90+% of Anglican clergy were forced to flee the colonies. One of the oaths these priests swore at their ordinations to the priesthood was to serve the King of England as the head of the church. It was not a binding of priests to the nation, but its sovereign as the church's overseer. A great portion of these people sided with the cause of independence but could not participate in it themselves. It is not just that they could not take up arms (which, itself, is considered a violation of oaths by many), but that they could not go against their own church. They were stuck.

I also think it is easy to mythologize the founding of the United States in righteous terms, even as the traditional language around the fight for independence is intentionally secular. This has offered a kind of alternative civic religion to the public that both mimics the practice of faith and stems from some shared origins with religious tradition. Feelings of solidarity, communion, and virtue are married to liturgical elements of common practice to connect our souls to our nation with the same material of which we are called to connect with God.

Landmark celebrations make introspection unavoidable. Yet we are no less directed to participate in a different, divine project that is unbounded by human territories, tribal makeup, and creedal priorities. A project that has a tendency to erase our divisions at the very moment that it magnifies our character. As Paul articulates that we are no longer divided by gender, enslavement, nation, or tradition, but one people in Christ, we are being compelled to let go, not of who we are, but of what prevents us from sharing a table with our neighbors. And as people of faith, we are drawn to serve these priorities above all others.

With love,
Drew+

ORDINARY TIME

2026

FOR SUNDAY

Proper 9A

July 5, 2026

Collect

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Reading

Matthew 10:40-42

Jesus said to the crowd, "To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.'

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and

ORDINARY TIME

humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Reflection

Jesus expresses deep displeasure for the relative ineffectiveness of his ministry. It’s a strangely candid moment, really. Jesus has sent his people out and it seems as if there were more skeptics in the world than he had bargained for. And the lectionary, for its part, skips over the most incendiary part, where Jesus even brings the proverbial receipts, calling out whole communities for their indifference and expressing deep condemnation for it. I think we can all relate to this frustration.

And yet, Jesus’s critique is focused, not on skepticism, but on the more fundamental role of separation in the people’s attitudes. He compares them to children complaining about each other. And the complaints, notice, are about what other people do or don’t do in response to their actions. “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.” **I** did this thing, why didn’t **you** respond? Extend it out. I cooked the dinner, why didn’t you say thank you? I cut my finger, why didn’t you say “are you all right?”

Jesus isn’t saying expectations and commitments are bad. But notice the one-way ratchet effect that happens here when it always centers on *me* or *we*. Truths give way to distortions. This makes the pivot to John work. He points out that these skeptics always center it on themselves. *John ate nothing and they called him a demon while I ate food and they called me a glutton.*

Jesus’s teaching here recenters the followers’ focus from themselves and toward a more collaborative approach by arguing that going it alone is a heavy burden, but teaming up with Jesus makes it way easier. Then we both have skin in the game.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
215 N. 7TH ST TERRE HAUTE IN 47807
812.232.5165

STSTEPHENSTH.ORG