





**On-Going  
Activities  
at St. Ben's**

**BIBLE STUDY** - Come join us for Bible Study at 9:20 a.m. every Sunday except first Sundays.

**DREAMS & SPIRITUALITY GROUP**- First and third Thursdays, 7-8:30 pm.

**EARTHCARE** - A discussion/action group to formulate local solutions to environmental concerns. Second Wednesdays at 2:30 pm.

**HEALING SERVICE** - a time for prayers for healing at the 10:30 service on 5th Sundays.

**HOLLISTER INSTITUTE** - Opportunities for stimulating discussion and thoughtful exploration for everyone, whether or not they are members of a church. See website.

**INTERCESSORY PRAYER CIRCLE**- Prayers for the community and the world. 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays, 10am.

**LITLOVERS' BOOK CLUB** - Discussion and fellowship. 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays 1pm in members' homes.

**LUNCH BUNCH** - lunchtime social gathering following church, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sundays at Celia's Garden Café.

**MEET ME IN MORRO** - lunchtime social gathering, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at varying restaurants in Morro Bay.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** - morning social gathering, 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturdays 9am at Sea Pines Golf Resort Grill.

**PEOPLE'S KITCHEN** - Providing and serving food at Prado Day Center, 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of odd-numbered months.

**POTLUCK AND PRADO** on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of each month donations to Prado Day Center are collected, and potluck lunch follows 10:30 service.

**VESPERS AND CONVERSATION** 5:30 pm Tuesdays. Vespers service using varying liturgies, followed by potluck supper.

**VESTRY / PARISH COUNCIL**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays at 6:30pm  
Maria Kelly, Sr. Warden  
Anne Kanter, Jr. Warden  
John Cribb, Francis Rivinus,  
Lisa Gonzalez, Barbara Schippers,  
Kathie West, Esta Kandarian  
Rod Morse and Ken Kenyon.

### Hineni

Several of you have asked me about the Leonard Cohen song with which I started my sermon last Sunday. If you missed the sermon, you'll find it on our website, [www.stbenslososos.org](http://www.stbenslososos.org).

I see it as a prayer to a false god. The God of Cohen's poem wants the world darker - he wants people to be broken and lame in order for him to be the great healer - he wants people to feel shame so that he can be glorified. His glory results in human pain.

This is, of course, a complete misreading of scripture. Yet we see this dark god portrayed in the Bible in a number of ways - for example, the idea that God ordered the Israelites to massacre their enemies.

We have a tendency to make God in human image rather than allowing ourselves to be remade in God's image. And the God we make is often fearful and demanding, like the god in this poem.

I imagine that the religious leaders who demanded Jesus' death believed that they were doing God's will. In Cohen's words, they thought that God wants it darker, and so they killed the flame.

I know that many people who voted for an apparently racist and misogynistic president believed they were doing God's will.

The hope comes with the word Hineni which is Hebrew for "I'm here" or "I'm ready". Although it might mean that the singer is ready to make it darker, because this is what Abraham said when God prevented him from sacrificing his son Isaac, I see it as a hopeful and even defiant cry to the true God, the God of light.

In my view, "You want it darker" is a lament about the darkness of the world and the way it perceives God as wanting us to hate and exclude. But the true God is waiting for us to respond, Hineni, I am ready - use me.

And then, as Cohen says in Anthem which I played at the end, we can...

### "You Want It Darker"

If you are the dealer, I'm out of the game  
If you are the healer, it means I'm broken and lame  
If thine is the glory then mine must be the shame  
You want it darker: We kill the flame

Magnified, sanctified, be thy holy name  
Vilified, crucified, in the human frame  
A million candles burning for the help  
that never came  
You want it darker

Hineni, hineni, I'm ready, my lord

There's a lover in the story  
But the story's still the same  
There's a lullaby for suffering  
And a paradox to blame  
But it's written in the scriptures  
And it's not some idle claim  
You want it darker  
We kill the flame

They're lining up the prisoners  
And the guards are taking aim  
I struggled with some demons  
They were middle class and tame  
I didn't know I had permission to murder  
and to maim  
You want it darker

Hineni, hineni I'm ready, my lord

Magnified, sanctified, be thy holy name  
Vilified, crucified, in the human frame  
A million candles burning for the love  
that never came  
You want it darker; We kill the flame

If you are the dealer, let me out of the game  
If you are the healer, I'm broken and lame  
If thine is the glory, mine must be the shame  
You want it darker

Hineni, hineni  
Hineni, hineni  
I'm ready, my lord

Hineni Hineni, Hineni, Hineni

*Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in.*

**Keeping in Touch during the Week.** For counsel & spiritual care, please contact any of the clergy: The Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall, 704-5826; The Rev. Mary Elizabeth Pratt-Horsley, 528-7497; The Rev. Donna Ross, 235-5117; The Rev. Barry Turner, 784-0670; or The Rev. Faye Hogan, 541-4595. Call Celeste Pennington with pastoral care & prayer chain requests, 771-8974.

**St. Benedict's Episcopal Church - 2220 Snowy Egret Lane - PO Box 6877, Los Osos, CA 93412**

[office@stbenslososos.org](mailto:office@stbenslososos.org) Telephone: (805) 528-0654 [www.stbenslososos.org](http://www.stbenslososos.org)