

# The Benediction

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos, California

**The Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall**

Rector

**The Rev. M.E. Pratt-Horsley**

Rector Emeritus

**The Rev. Donna Ross**

Associate Priest

**The Rev. Barry Turner**

Associate Priest

**The Rev. Faye Hogan**

Associate Priest

**The Rev. Sharon G. Dalrymple**

Deacon

**The Parish Council**

Maria Kelly, Sr. Warden

Anne Kanter, Jr. Warden

John Cribb

Elaine Goodman

Lisa Gonzalez

Esta Kandarian

Jo Oliver

Francis Rivinus

Barbara Skippers

Kathie West

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**Sunday Services**

The first Sunday of each month:

10:30 am One service of Holy Communion with music

All other Sundays:

8:00 am Holy Communion with inclusive language

10:30 am Holy Communion with music

Refreshments and fellowship follow each service.

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**Dear Friends:**

There's a wonderful prayer that we sometimes use at the Saturday evening eucharist. It seems to me to sum up this time in our church year, "What has been done has been done, let it be." And "The night heralds the dawn, let us look expectantly for a new day."

We are in the season of thankfulness for all that has been given us in our lives and especially in the past year. And we are beginning the season of preparation (Advent) as we look for the coming of the light.

The Parish Council outdid themselves this year with an amazingly delicious Gratitude Dinner. Thank you to everyone who contributed food, prepared and cooked and cleaned up, and to everyone who came. It's one of my favorite times of the year as we gather to be thankful for each other and for God's blessings to us.

And now we are thinking about the coming year and how our generosity can bless the church community with the resources that we need to continue to provide a place whether God is worshiped and where all who come are welcome to find a place at the table both figuratively and literally. Thank you to each one who shares of their own abundance so that we may abundantly share God's love and offer an alternative to the anger and divisiveness which are characterizing our society at present.



"The night heralds the dawn, let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities." Advent is the time of looking forward, of remembering that the coming of Jesus which we celebrate every year is also a reminder that at some point the world as we know it will come to an end. Whether the "Second Coming" is a cosmic event or a personal epiphany as we move through the curtain of death, there will come a time when we meet God face to face.

This is often used as a threat, but it is in reality an opportunity. The season of Advent uses the reality of the end of time to encourage us to live our lives as if every day really matters. Even when it seems that things are very black, there is a new day coming. That is the hope of the resurrection. There is a new day coming.

So let us give thanks for what has been, and start to live today as if the new day has come.

Blessings.

Caro+

Rev. Caroline J. A. Hall

Lord it is night. The night is for stillness.  
Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day. What has been done has been done; what has not been done has not been done. Let it be.

The night is dark. Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives rest in you.

The night is quiet. Let the quietness of your peace enfold us, all dear to us, and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn. Let us look expectantly to a new day, new joys, new possibilities. In your name we pray.  
Amen.

## Looking to the Future

As you know, the Parish Council has hired Adrienne Harris to help us develop a vision plan for the future development of our facilities.

Some of us are tired of the ongoing effort that it has taken to get this building to completion and are saying “Can’t we stop?” But there are others who are excited about new projects; St Ben’s Earthcare has a commitment to help us live as lightly and as synergistically as possible with the earth and they are reminding us that solar panels are an important priority; others have asked for a columbarium as soon as possible so that they can plan to have their final remains here in the place that they love.

We need an overall plan so that when someone says, I’d like to give you the money for X, we can say, “Great and this is where it fits into the plan.” We don’t want, for example, to put in a beautiful labyrinth only to find that it’s exactly where we need to expand the parking lot or that we have to dig it up to get to the septic tank.

The process has taken a little longer than we hoped, but by the Parish Meeting in January we should have plans and drawings for everyone to see.

## Building Completion

There are still a number of small items remaining to meet all the code requirements for the Great Room and beyond. We are hoping to get those signed off on very soon as that we can put in cupboards and move the stuff out of the storage unit and back into the church – or decide that we really don’t need it, and let it go!

There is one BIG issue that has come up. That is the fire sprinkler system. All new buildings are required to have a sprinkler system but for many years the County has allowed us to have a heat detecting system. The heat sensors have their own dedicated phone line and in the event that they detect heat they send an immediate alarm which is then transmitted to the fire department who leap into their vehicles and head for Snowy Egret Lane. (If they go off by accident, as they did this month, there are directions on the panel in the small meeting room about what to do.)

Now we have to put in a proper sprinkler system if we are to do anything that requires a building permit – such as expand the veranda or the parking lot (maybe even the columbarium). Don Shields has worked hard on getting ballpark estimates. Of course the code has changed since we started putting it in many years ago, and the costs have risen. We’re looking at about \$140,000. This would include upgrading the electricity supply which would be useful if we ever decide to build a Parish Hall.

If we don’t put in a sprinkler system we will need to take out the existing pipes from the sanctuary, which will cost \$5,000+.

Please pray that God will guide us in our consideration of this situation, giving thanks that God always provides us with what we need to do her work.

## Finances

We knew that this year was going to be tight financially, and in fact agreed a budget in which we planned to spend down our reserves. We hoped that miracles would again happen, and our income would far surpass our expectations.

So far that hasn’t happened.

Our pledge income is about on track. In other words, the folks who pledged to give to the church are keeping up with their commitments. The Abundance Shop is a little behind because we made the decision during the year to



(Finances, continued)

move the shop and that cost money, not to mention the higher rent and utilities. But it has proved to be a good move, and it seems that income is continuing to be higher than in the old space, so that may come up to budget by the end of the year.

Where we're falling down is on money put in the plate on Sundays. So far, this hasn't been as much as we had hoped.

It would be a great blessing to all of us if, whether you pledge or not, you would consider giving an extra donation to St Benedict's this year. Last time I went to a coffee shop it cost me \$5.40 for a coffee and snack. If each week for the rest of the year, each of us were to give \$5 to St. Ben's instead of our favorite watering hole, we could easily end the year in a good place.

A big THANK YOU! To everyone who has contributed to the Blessing the Future Fund. All that you contribute goes directly to paying off the principal of the loan. We are down to only just over \$90,000. Let's keep this up.

## Other easy ways to support St Ben's

There are two ways that you can give money to St Benedict's without it coming out of your own pocket. What could be better?

1. You can tell Ralphs and FoodForLess that you want them to make contributions to St. Benedict's by signing up on their website. You can tell whether you have done this, because at the bottom of every receipt it will say that you are giving to St Benedict's. Please take a look at your next receipt and if it doesn't mention St Benedict's make sure you sign up. They make us do this again September 1 every year so you may have given in the past but not still be enrolled in the system.
2. If you use Amazon.com, go to St Ben's website first and we'll get a percentage. Please go to [www.st-benslososos.org](http://www.st-benslososos.org), click on the right hand tab "About Us" and come down to "Support Us".

When you click on the Amazon picture it will take you straight through to the regular Amazon site. You need to do this EVERY time you use Amazon.

If you have a program to prevent ads from showing up it may stop you seeing the Amazon portal and so you'll need to disable it for our website.

You can use Amazon Smiles but we get a much smaller donation.

## Highlights from the Parish Council

- Thanks to Lisa's efforts, we have been able to make the apparent property tax arrears go away. Now Lisa will go back to the bank to get the loan re-amortized. Since this has taken so long and we have not been able to raise the Rector's compensation to three-quarter time as agreed in January, the Parish Council agreed to disperse a prior gift which had been held for continuing education in order to honor the commitment made to the Rector.
- Next year is our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Look for a Jubilee Dinner and possibly an Open House.
- Our annual audit was completed satisfactorily.
- The Bishop's visit in January 15.



Good News! We were cleaning out the storage room and we found the creche, the tall candlesticks, and Dorothy Bieler.

## **Baptism? Confirmation? Reception?**

Is God calling you to a closer relationship with him/her or the faith community? If you have never been baptized with a Trinitarian baptism then you may want to consider doing so, as it is the initiation into the Body of Christ. If you have, but it's time to make a new declaration of your faith, then please consider getting confirmed. Confirmation "confirms" the baptismal vows that you made or were made on your behalf. If you made an adult declaration of faith in another church, for example if you were baptized as an adult, then you don't need to be confirmed.

Many people at St Benedict's grew up, were baptized and made adult declarations of faith in a different Christian denomination such as Roman Catholic or Presbyterian. In order to be able to exercise gifts of leadership in the Episcopal Church you need to be "received" into the church by the Bishop. This is basically a public welcome.

For all of the above, or if you want to re-affirm your commitment to your faith, the opportunity is NOW! Bishop Mary will be here on January 15, and though we can baptize at any time; only she can offer confirmation or reception. There is a preparatory process so please let Caro+ know if you're interested.

## **Abundance Shop**

Francis Rivinus

October marked the beginning of the festive season with Halloween. Linda Blackwell and helpers set up special Halloween displays which added a seasonal interest to our shop. Once again, the additional space we have combined with restraint in how much inventory we put out allows us flexibility to make attractive displays for our customers without crowding.

Another change has been the addition of Larry Swafford to our volunteer ranks. Larry is skilled at fixing things as well as willing to lend a hand at almost any task. He complements Don Shields' talents and between them we have converted several donations with defects into saleable items. These include some furniture items with significant resale value.

The flow of donations continues in abundance and keeping up with it is a herculean task which our volunteers in the sorting area handle with skill and efficiency. A significant challenge is limiting the amount of new inventory to fit the space that we have so we maintain the attractive display and comfortable shopping environment that customers have been complementing us for since we moved.

Our shop has also been blessed with several new volunteers all of whom are welcome and needed. We are working to get better at assuring that every item of inventory has a price tag so that our cashiers aren't put in the position of 'off the cuff' pricing, negotiating and ringing up purchases. We are also working to improve at thinning inventory so that there is space for newly arrived items and we don't start to look like a cluttered jumble shop. To service these, various functions takes the skills of several volunteers as no single volunteer can handle all the different functions effectively. In the long term, we are looking to match shop needs with individual volunteer skills and interests and will be seeking to build up teams to address the different subspecialties.

As always we are looking for additional volunteer help both customer facing such as cashiers and in the back office. Welcome interest/skill sets include: pricing, display/merchandising and repair/renovation. If any reader feels moved to contribute to this important outreach effort of St. Benedict's, please contact me and let me know.

## **Prayer Board**

Francis Rivinus

A few years ago, Rev. Caro approached parishioner Bobbie Shields after a Sunday service about designing a prayer board for St. Benedict's volunteer-run thrift store, the Abundance Shop. The peg board would hang in the Los Osos shop and include small square cards for shoppers from the community to write on and post their prayers. "I told

Caro, yes, I would do it, if she would write something up (for the board) about how it (works),” said Bobbie.

The board, which hangs in the Los Osos shop, says this: “Please add your prayer request to this board, and take a moment to pray for others who have posted their prayer needs. Every week, St. Benedict’s Episcopal Church will pray for the needs listed here.” The board suggests adding a date to the requests that remain on the board for two weeks, along with the scripture from I Peter 5:7, “Casting all your care upon God for He cares for you.”

Bobbie removes the “prayer squares” every two weeks and regularly checks to ensure there are always enough available squares for the board. She refers the requests to St. Ben’s intercessors’ group for the church’s prayer list. Bobbie says the prayer board has been very successful and there are always new requests posted. “There for a while I had to explain to our prayer group that the prayers were not from my relatives, but from the family and friends of the shoppers at the Abundance Shop.”



Photo by Danna Dykstra-Coy

Prayers have included requests during dramatic community events, such as one from a family that lost their Lake Nacimiento home in this past summer’s Chimney Fire. Pets are often included in prayer requests, such a recent one including a woman’s chickens, Benjamin and Samantha, while the woman underwent a medical treatment. Bobbie enjoys this ministry and believes it’s important to reach out to the community, beyond the church walls.

Anyone with a heart for service and looking to fill a few hours each week is encouraged to volunteer for this rewarding ministry outreach. Desired experience includes working with the public, handling donations for non-profits or possessing skills in basic math and working with a cash register. Please contact Abundance Shop Manager Francis Rivinus at (805) 254-4055 for more information.

## **SLO Hunger Walk**

St. Benedict's participated in the 2016 SLO Hunger Walk on October 16, 2016, to help raise funds for the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County. Team St. Benedict's walked two miles along the strand in the rain, and raised \$620.00. The Food Bank works with many different agencies throughout the county, to distribute nutritious food to people in need.

## **St Ben’s is a Cool Congregation!**

We are members of Interfaith Power and Light – an organization that promotes stewardship of the earth. They ask us for an annual report and as a result of hearing about all that EarthCare has been doing, they nominated us and we received an Honorable Mention as a Cool Congregation.

Joe Morris will be going to the awards ceremony on Oakland on November 15 to represent us.

Congratulations, St. Benedict’s! and a special thanks to EarthCare!

# Hollister Institute

## Advent Lectio Divina with Isaiah the Poet

*Thursday mornings at 10 am (December 1, 8, 15)*

Isaiah was a great prophet; he was also a great poet. This Advent we'll hear readings from Isaiah, and pair them with readings from modern poets. We hope to listen deeply, and to focus on these questions:

- In light of the poem, what do you hear Isaiah saying?
- In light of the prophet, what do you hear the poet saying?
- From what we've heard and shared today, what do we believe God is saying to us in our time?

Led by the Revs. Donna Ross and Barry Turner, and poet Carol McPhee.

**Dec 1** Isaiah 2:1-5 and "The Hostages", by Muriel Rukeyser

**Dec 8** Isaiah 11:1-10 and "There was a Child went Forth", by Walt Whitman

Dec 15 Isaiah 35:1-10 and "Another Planet", by Dunya Mikhail

More Hollister classes are being planned for January-February (starting January 12) and March-April (starting March 2). Stay tuned!



## Upcoming Events

### Thanksgiving

We will have a Thanksgiving dinner at the church on **Thanksgiving at 1pm**. This is always a fun and delicious event. Everyone is welcome and so are your friends and family.

Look for sign-up sheets if you plan to come. Is it your turn to cook the turkey??

### Christmas

The choir is busy rehearsing for our Christmas Carol concert which will be on Saturday **December 17 at 3pm**. This is a great opportunity to introduce friends and family to the church.

The following day, **December 18**, our Blue Christmas service for those who are having a difficult time during the holiday season will be at 5pm.

**Christmas Day** is a Sunday so we'll have our Festival Eucharist in Saturday at 8pm and then a 10:30 am service (only) on the Sunday followed by a special brunch. Please bring a dish to share.

Christmas Carol Concert, Dec. 17, 3pm

Blue Christmas Service, Dec. 18, 5pm

Festival Eucharist, Dec. 24, 8pm

Christmas Day Service, 10:30 am (only), Brunch to follow

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