

# The Benediction

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

**The Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall**

Rector

**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**

Pamela Bleisch Strawn, Sr. Warden

Lisa Gonzalez

Diana Hammerlund

Esta Kandarian

Alan Kiste

Michael Lucas

Francis Rivinus

Barbara Schippers

Lorienne Schwenk

Lynn Wise

**Benediction Publisher:**

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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:**

This has been a very active few months for us as we have started two new programs to serve our neighbors; Laundry Love and the Warming Shelter. Although these provide practical services, even more important is the development of relationships and friendships. Jesus not only healed people, he ate and talked with the marginalized in society. The Abundance Shop, Peoples' Kitchen, Community Dinners, Warming Shelter and Laundry Love give us an opportunity to follow in his footsteps and hang out with people we wouldn't meet any other way. It also gives us an opportunity to fulfill our baptismal vow, "to seek and serve Christ in all people."

I am grateful to everyone who participates in these programs and am aware that probably twelve to fifteen people are doing most of the heavy lifting. If you are not yet part of that small but mighty band of apostles, I encourage you to consider how you might make a contribution so that you too can both learn from our neighbors and bless them with your presence and your love.

Earthcare has been active as well – you may have seen the letter published in the New Times and the Tribune regarding the County Supervisor's failure to support Community Choice Energy (which would have created a supply system using far more renewable power sources.) At the February Deanery meeting hosted by St. Ben's, our speaker (from the non-profit Interfaith Power and Light) pointed out that power and transport are the two biggest creators of carbon which is now in our atmosphere at perilously high levels. Earthcare will be exploring ways in which we can reduce our carbon footprint. Also

in this issue you will find details of a nature retreat being planned in Yosemite in May. What better way to reconnect with our planetary home?



All this activity can sometimes feel overwhelming – for a small congregation we are certainly moving mountains – and Lent is a good time to re-focus on the spiritual part of the two great commandments – to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Outer work needs to be balanced by inner work, and we can't just leave that up to our

intercessory prayer and healing teams; inner work is ours to do as well.

What a difference it would make if during this liturgical time – the whole of the month of March – each one of us spent 10 minutes each day just sitting with God, giving that time to God with no agenda, no expectations and nothing but love and an openness to God's presence? I invite you to join with me in this practice, and as I do it I will be encouraged knowing that we are joining in this as a community of intention, intentionally turning to God as we understand God. For it is in God that we find our grounding and our strength to serve. Without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit we get depleted and out of balance.

"Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever." (Eph. 3:20)

With love in Christ,

**Rev. Caroline J. A. Hall**

## Homeless Outreach: Warming Shelter

For about a year we discussed the possibility of opening a warming shelter in collaboration with Los Osos Cares, People Helping People and the South Bay Community Center. In January all the pieces came together and St Ben's ran a quick pilot project when we had two nights of torrential rain. Thanks to everyone's hard work, especially Joe Morris and Barbara Hirahara who were two of our first overnight chaperones, it worked and people were sheltered.

We learned a lot those first nights; like which rules are really necessary and that the Red Barn leaks and is too draughty to be useful. At the end of February we hit cold weather and rain and were able to open five nights in succession with up to 12 guests each night.

The warming shelter aims to be open whenever there is more than 50% chance of overnight rain forecast or the temperature is forecast to be less than 37 degrees. It takes place in either the Community Center or, when it's not available, the Schoolhouse next door. When there are events in both places we are looking at opening later, but usually we open at 6 and dinner is available then. Doors are "closed" at 8 – but a big disadvantage with the schoolhouse is that the bathrooms are outside.

Two volunteers (one male, one female) stay overnight with 4 hours sleep each (9:30-1:30, 1:30 – 5:30). Folks are woken up at 5:30 and breakfast is brought in and a couple of volunteers come to organize packing up and cleaning up the space to be done by 6:15am. People Helping People provides a small storage area behind the Community Center stage and we need to be packed away before a 12 step group comes in at 6:30.

The Community Center allows the warming shelter to stay for free but we have to pay for the Schoolhouse. The Abundance Shop has made a generous grant of \$1000 to support his work. Thank you to all our Shop volunteers.

This is a community partnership and, many volunteers are community members, not members of St. Ben's. Ideally we would have a full team (set up, dinner, overnight, breakfast, clean-up) on call for every night of the week.

If you can help our unhoused neighbors to feel warm and cared for please talk to Barbara Hirahara, Jim Arnold or Caro+.

## Homeless Outreach: Getting Clean

After a place to live, most homeless people long for a shower and clean clothes. As we go to press the first **Laundry Love** is happening. On the last Wednesday of each month we will be offering free laundry to low or no-income residents of Los Osos. This is a program that was started by a congregation in Ventura who say "We see the laundromat as a place where strangers become friends, kids are known by name, hope is being hustled, and the worth of every human being is acknowledged and celebrated."

### Your Vestry/ Parish Council for 2018

Your vestry/ parish council for 2018 is: Pamela Bleisch, Lisa Gonzalez, Diana Hammerlund, Esta Kandarian, Alan Kiste, Michael Lucas, Francis Rivinus, Barbara Schippers, Lorienne Schwenk, and Lynn Wise. The basic responsibilities of the vestry/ parish council are to help define the mission of the congregation; to support the church's mission by word and deed, to ensure effective organization and planning, and to manage resources and finances. The vestry/ parish council meets monthly. At the vestry/ parish council retreat on Saturday, March 10th, your Council will articulate the mission of St Benedict's, brainstorm goals for the year, and define measurable objectives.

The rector is the presiding officer of the vestry/ parish council. The senior warden is a support person for the rector; Pamela Bleisch is serving in this role. The junior warden has responsibility for church property and buildings; Michael Lucas is serving in this role. Lisa Gonzalez continues to serve as Treasurer, and Lorienne Schwenk is serving as the Clerk of the Vestry.

Please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Vestry/ Parish Council with any questions or concerns that may arise. We are here to serve you!

(Homeless Outreach: Getting Clean, continued)

Barbara Hirahara is spearheading this effort and to get it started the Vestry has allocated some funds which we have had for a long time that were earmarked for outreach.

If it's as successful as we expect, we will need to create an ongoing fundraising activity. If you can be part of bringing laundry love to those who live on the margins, please talk to Barbara H. or Jim Arnold.

Barbara Schippers has been involved with Hope's Village for a long time, and they have purchased a **mobile shower unit**. This will be in Los Osos for the first time on March 8 and we may need volunteers to welcome guests and help with that event. If you are interested please see Caro+ or Barbara S.

### Baptism or Confirmation?

Bishop Mary will be visiting us on June 17<sup>th</sup> and she will be ready and willing to baptize, confirm or receive anyone and everyone into the Episcopal Church. Baptism is the full initiation into the Christian family, confirmation is the adult proclamation of faith. Classes will start in mid-May. Please let Caro+ know if you would like to participate either in preparation for baptism, confirmation or reception or just to deepen your understanding of the Christian faith.

### Farewell to Donna+ and Rob: March 16



All good things must come to an end, and Rob and Donna's time as part of the leadership team at St. Benedict's is drawing to a close. In late April they will be heading up to Santa Rose to find out what God has in store for them next.

Since Donna+ has been an important part of the diocesan leadership, helping to keep everything running smoothly in between Bishops, we thought it important to have a celebration of their ministry with Bishop Mary officiating. She can be here **Friday March 16**, so that's when we'll celebrate.

**EVENT!**

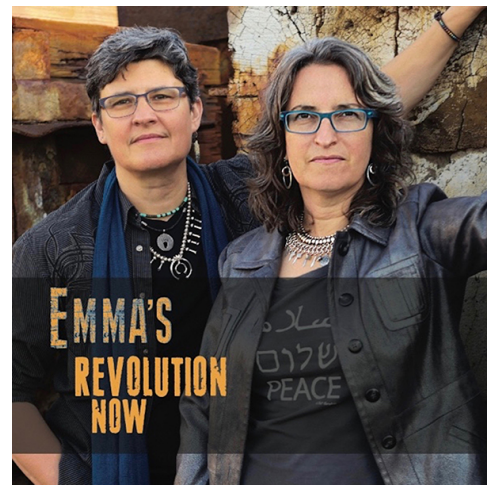
We'll have a special Evensong at 6 followed by a party. Anne Kanter is coordinating food so please let her know how you can help.

### Emma's Revolution, April 15 7:30pm

People of Faith for Justice (PFJ) is a social justice organization that draws together people from many different congregations in SLO to speak up for the God of love. St. Benedict's has been a sustaining and active member from the beginning. In order to pay the insurance, office supplies etc. etc. PFJ invites donations and holds occasional fundraisers. This special fundraising concert will be held at the United Methodist Church on Frederick Street in San Luis Obispo.

Emma's Revolution is the award-winning "activist power duo" of Pat Humphries & Sandy O, whose songs have been sung for the Dalai Lama, praised by Pete Seeger, and covered by Holly Near. With beautiful harmonies and genre-defying eclecticism, Emma's Revolution delivers the energy and strength of their convictions, in an uprising of truth and hope for these tumultuous times.

**EVENT!**



Tickets are \$25 at the door, or a mere \$20 in advance. You can also make a donation if rather than listen to great music you'd like to have a free evening. Caro+ has tickets for sale.

## **Deacon Dispatch**

Rev. Sharon Dalrymple

As we move toward Easter in this Lenten season, hopefully we spend this time in reflection of where we have been, spiritually, mentally and figuratively, and where we might be headed in life, on those same three planes. As I get older and realize that while I hope God is not finished with me on this earth before my name is called to a new life with Christ, my aging steps are heading daily in that direction.

Certainly there are things I want to do, places to go and people to see before I am called home, but those are earthly things. In Colossians we are told that Jesus wants us to set our minds on things above and not on early things. That is a hard thing to do most of the time, isn't it? We are so caught up in life that we rush through life as if our pants are on fire and we are running everywhere looking for a fire extinguisher.

I find I am frantic to get things done without ever seeming to catch up. For the longest time I have just wanted to start my day on my porch close to my garden or at least in the house looking out at the flowers in my garden, waiting for the hummingbirds, drinking my coffee and reading my bible. I have wanted to connect with God. Why is it that I cannot seem to make that time for listening and talking with God?

Am I that busy? Obviously, my priorities are skewed. I do have moments during my waking hours where I talk to God, but that is a brief sentence or two or a brief prayer or two. My soul longs for that deep connection with the Almighty—a time for renewal to help see me through my day. I know God is waiting for all of us to make that connection. God loves us, cherishes us and reaches for us, just waiting for us to reach out too and take the hand that is offered.

Always I am exhorting you, my brothers and sisters, to reach out and touch somebody. Lent is a perfect time for each of us to make that space in our day to reach out and touch God—to let God into our hearts, minds and souls. My golly a revelation! That is where we need to be headed—setting our minds on things above: spiritually, mentally and figuratively!

## **Dear Parish Communities of St. Stephen's, SLO & St. Benedict's...**

After much prayer, and consultation with Fr. Ian, Rev. Caro, and the SLO Canterbury Board, I am writing to let you know of the upcoming transfer of my parish membership from St. Stephen's to St. Benedict's.

Over the past several months, I have been sensing a call from the Holy Spirit to re-enter the ministry discernment process and explore what the future might hold as far as a "next step" for me vocationally within the Church. In order to gain deeper clarity around this call, I feel it is necessary to transfer my parish membership to St. Benedict's.

Essentially, as I considered the extent of my current involvement at St. Stephen's, both as a parishioner and as the Canterbury Chaplain, it became apparent that were I to attempt to conduct my ministry discernment process there as well, it would result in having to distinguish between too many roles, all in the same place.

Conversely, transferring to St. Benedict's will both clarify my role at St. Stephen's as the Canterbury Chaplain (where the campus ministry and my work will remain "housed"), and create a fresh space in which to discern the ministry to which Christ might be calling me.

Thank you to both church communities for your love, prayers, and support at this time of transition, and please feel free to check in with me along the way. Discernment is a life-long process, and I am always happy to discuss how each of us is being called to serve Christ, in our own lives, and in the lives of others.

Peace,  
Berkeley Johnson  
Canterbury Chaplain

### 3rd Annual Chili Cook-Off

Berkeley Johnson, Canterbury Chaplain

Please join us **Saturday, March 10th** for our 3rd Annual Chili Cook-Off with Silent Auction & Raffle Fundraiser at St. Stephen's from 4-6pm.



If you are planning to enter a chili, please contact me, or your Canterbury Board Rep, to let us know. We are hoping to have chili entries from each church!



Similarly, if you have any items or services you would like to donate to the Silent Auction, please be in touch with your parish's Canterbury Board Rep, or contact me directly at [canterburyslo@gmail.com](mailto:canterburyslo@gmail.com). Or, if you know of someone or a business that might enjoy, or be willing to make a donation, please let us know and we can send you a donation request form. This is a big part of our fundraiser!

Once again, we have a generous donation of a trip to offer for the silent auction: **four nights at Los Abridados Resort & Spa in Sedona, AZ, Oct. 24-28, 2018!**

Plus of course the Raffle! We have three items this year: Apple Watch, Amazon Echo, & Amazon Kindle!

So, please mark your calendars and plan to come and taste and vote for your favorite chili!

### By Land and By Sea, We Must be Fossil Free!

Alice Welchert for Earthcare

We recognize that Creation is sacred. We are called to care for Her and protect Her from assault. Two imminent threats to the ocean and the Central Coast must be stopped. (Continued on the next page.)

(EarthCare, continued)

#### Protecting California Coastal Waters: A call to action

The Trump administration is trying to open up the outer continental shelf of the United States to oil exploration, leasing, and drilling (the coast of Florida was exempted for political reasons). The proposed leasing program represents the largest expansion of offshore oil & gas activity in U.S. history. In a strongly worded letter to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) the California Coastal Commission called this proposal "outrageous." We know that oil spills in one form or another are inevitable. We know that climate change is real, disastrous and caused by the human species. We know the ocean and marine life, from plankton to whales, are imperiled.



Long before oil and gas are extracted the search for them using seismic airgun blasting disrupts and destroys sea life.

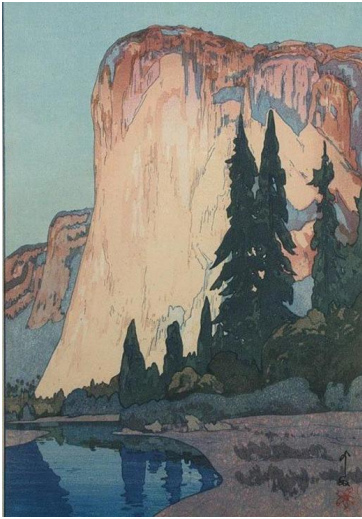
**What we can do?** You can make your voice heard about the proposed drilling by going to the BOEM website <https://www.boem.gov/National-Program-Comment/>. We have until March 9th to comment. If you're not sure what to say, the Sierra Club has an email already written for you to send: [No oil drilling in our oceans! — AddUp.org](#) If

you want to do even more read the Opinion piece in *New Times*, by Andrew Christie, Director of the Santa Lucia chapter of the Sierra Club, (February 15 - 22 edition, page 10). Then send an email and/or phone members of our recalcitrant Board of Supervisors who have failed to take a commonsense and principled stance against this outrage.



## An EarthCare Trip to Yosemite, May 10th-13th, 2018

Come with us on a very special trip for three nights to Yosemite National Park, when the falls are the fullest! We will spend time exploring its scenic beauty and also our spiritual connection with nature. We have reserved economical tent cabins in Half Dome Village each night, which include two single beds to a unit. Nearby are restrooms, showers, a cafeteria, and camp store with lunch supplies.



Come up on Thursday, when the Park is the quietest. Friday and Saturday mornings, Joe will guide you on short, easy nature walks, and on Sunday, Barry will lead a special outdoor service. Afternoons are free to do as you please, or just relax. Don't miss our Saturday evening social!

Cost of the trip is \$250 per person for the three nights lodging (plus \$30 Park entrance fee per car). Since the tent cabins are double occupancy, if you do not indicate a tent mate, we will choose one for you. Or you can have your own tent cabin for \$500. Meals and transportation are your own responsibility, though we will be providing carpool information prior to the trip. Children over 10 are welcome, accompanied by a parent or guardian. Everyone will need to sign a standard liability waiver form.

**Deadline** for making reservations is **Thursday, April 26th**. (For cancellations and refunds, we must also receive notification by that same date.) To reserve a spot, mail a check for \$250 made out to "Joseph Morris" to reservationist:

Barry Turner, 891 Vista del Brisa, SLO 93405. Also include: two self-addressed, stamped envelopes for reply, with your name(s), address, phone, and email, and information whether you would like or can give a ride. For further information, feel free to contact Barry at 805-784-0670 or [carltonba@gmail.com](mailto:carltonba@gmail.com) or Joe Morris, 805-549-0355 or [dpj1942@earthlink.net](mailto:dpj1942@earthlink.net).

Apply early, as space is limited to 15 people. Joe Morris and Rev. Barry Turner, Co-leaders

## Hollister Institute: Developing Compassion in Daily Life: Is It Possible?

**Thursday evenings, 7-8:30 p.m., March 8th and 15th, at St. Benedict's Church**

Few people would probably deny the truth of St. Paul's humbling reminder: "If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or clanging cymbal." Yet it remains a difficult piece of advice to follow, a perplexing challenge - and more so today in an alienated society. In these two sessions, we will explore on a very personal level the journey of compassion: kind awareness and action toward suffering, both in others *and* in ourselves.

We begin in the first session with self-compassion. This aspect of self-care is too often confused in society with self-pity or laziness. We will examine the relevance of age-old Buddhist teachings and modern psychological research in learning how to treat ourselves in a friendly way, and see its linkage in sustaining our energy in caring for others. Several meditative exercises to foster self-compassion will be demonstrated.

In the second session, we explore compassion for others, learning how it is not a forced, but an *inherent* disposition in all of us—but too often blocked by social and personal barriers like competition, guilt, social isolation, and self-focus. Can we actually grow in compassion and learn sincere kindness toward people who seem undeserving, unpleasant, or inimical to us?

In both sessions, we will devote ample time to personal discussion and the experiences of participants. We can all learn from each other about these crucial spiritual topics.

A limited number of copies of the recommended book for the series, The Compassionate Life, by the Dalai Lama, will be available for purchase at St. Benedict's, at a discount price of \$8.

Led by Rev. Caroline Hall and Joe Morris

## “Ashes to Go” - A New Approach to Christian Tradition

Danna Dykstra-Coy

For the second year, Rev. Caro and Rev. Sharon set up a table outside the Abundance Shop early on Ash Wednesday to administer ashes to people on the go.

While being marked in ash with the sign of the cross is customary at the start of Lent, some churches, like St. Benedict's, are taking the tradition to the streets. It's a powerful way for people to encounter God where they are, in the midst of their busy lives.

“Ashes-to-Go provides a playful way for us to have conversations with members of the community and extend an invitation to them to think about God, and to consider worshipping with us,” says Rev. Caro. “Many of the people who stop are members of churches, or have been in the past. Others are completely new to it.”



Danna Dykstra-Coy

(Ashes To Go, continued) As well as ‘ashing’ those who stop, Rev. Caro says they try to wave at every car that passes. “Most people smile and wave back.”

Rev. Caro and Rev. Sharon set up their table at 7:30 a.m. with large signs and handouts explaining the Ash Wednesday custom and inviting people to worship at St. Ben's. They administered ashes to 44 people over four hours. Some people drove up and some were on foot or bicycle.

The custom of ashing, which began in the Middle Ages, is a sign of penitence and serves as a reminder of our mortality. It turns our attention to the creative power of God, and God's ability to heal the brokenness in our lives when we offer that brokenness to God. Some clergy are taking to the streets because they believe that reminder of need, humility and healing shouldn't be confined to a church building, although passersby are encouraged to make time to worship with a church community.



Thanks to Liz Maruska the east side shrubbery and iris garden have been transformed with dead or dying shrubs removed and new ones planted. Photo Danna Dykstra-Coy

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