

The Benediction

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

The Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall

Rector

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*

Michael Lucas, *Jr. Warden*

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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 service.

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Dear Friends:

I was startled last Sunday when I came out of church and saw the red-winged blackbirds flocking. I hadn't realized that fall was so close. The blackbirds flock and eat together, building up community and body fat for their migration south to winter in Mexico. And what better place to do that than St. Benedict's?

Most of us don't need extra body fat, but like the blackbirds, the fall is a good time for us to reconnect in community, which we do in October when we celebrate our annual Gratitude Dinner, giving thanks for the blessings that God has given us during the year. And once again, there is so much to be grateful for.

I am grateful for every conversation I have with each one of you; those that are just fun, those that are superficial and those that are deep and challenging. Each time we connect we are manifesting the new kin-dom of God which is one of co-operation, hope and reconciliation. I am grateful for every time we gather to consider the things of God, whether on a Sunday morning, at Vespers or in a Hollister Institute class. Every time we share God's word together and hear from others on the same or parallel paths, we are enriched and given a deeper knowledge of the One whom we long to know. I am grateful too for stories of healing and new life, as well as for the times when we share one another's grief and sadness. At a time when our society is so fragmented, and across the world thousands of people are migrating in hope of a better life, these are not gifts to be taken lightly.

This last year has seen several new programs coming to life. Through the very fertile relationship with Los Osos Cares, the brainchild of Linda Queensberry, St. Benedict's has been able to find a number of new ways to connect with those living on the edge of our community. In addition to being the first group to volunteer to serve at the Community Dinner, St Ben's members spearheaded the opening of the Warming Shelter last winter and are now hard at work creating an Authorized Parking Program in partnership with other groups and individuals in Los Osos. AND Barbara Hirahara has led us in the formation of a Laundry Love program where once a month our neighbors who have low or no income can get clean clothes.

I am grateful for the generosity of a few members who have made it possible for the fire sprinkler system to finally be installed. When I first became Priest in Charge of St. Benedict's the fire sprinkler was the next project to be completed, and at last it will be done in a few weeks! I could go on and on... I hope my sharing of these few gratefuls has stimulated yours and together we can praise God for the wonders that s/he does among us and for us. See you at the Gratitude Dinner on October 14!

In Christ,

Caroline J. A. Hall



Highlights from Parish Council

- We plan to do an internal audit this year if we can find the necessary volunteers
- We will get a bid for repainting the ceiling and outer high beams of the veranda
- We agreed to install another fence at the Abundance Shop in the hope of reducing trashing
- Agreed to install blinds in the high windows on the west side of the sanctuary
- Agreed to use some of the Outreach budget to sponsor activities put on by other community organizations as a way of building relationships
- We are grateful to JW for repainting and improving the play equipment

Fire Sprinkler Update

The sprinkler system is now complete inside the building. The next step will be to build a pump house for the pump (which is on order) and to complete the electrical work. Our gratitude goes to those who have made generous donations so that we can get this completed.



September is the Season of Creation

During September, we focus our worship and education around the theme of Creation: how God is revealed to us in creation, and how we are called to be stewards of Creation. One of the insights of our time is that humanity is not somehow different from, or exalted over, Creation but is just as much a part of it as butterflies, bluebirds and black holes.

Loving and serving God means loving and serving our environment and our planet. Here in Los Osos we are privileged to live in great beauty; it is not just our privilege but our calling to find ways to live sustainably which enable all beings to flourish.

Our celebration of Creation ends with the feast of St. Francis which we will commemorate on Sunday October 7.

Thomas Merton- Prophet and Mystic of Creation:

You are invited to enter a profound and personal contemplative experience with Thomas Merton in this 6 week conversation. Together we will explore the significance of Creation for Merton's own experience of God. We will discover his intimate rapport with creation as the body of divinity – at once veiling and unveiling the God he so longed to behold and be held by.

Each week we will watch a 30 minute video presentation by gifted professor, author, psalmist, and spiritual animator, Sister Kathleen Deignan CND. Weaving together word and song, Sr. Deignan will lead us steadily closer to the horizon of insight Merton spent his life trying to disclose. Whatever your familiarity with the teaching of Thomas Merton, this fresh look at him as creation mystic and ecological prophet will engage you anew.



Sessions started on Thursday August 30 and run for six weeks. You may participate in a group at 10am led by Barry+ or at 7:30pm led by Caro+. Each session will last about 1¼ hours.

Gratitude Dinner!

Our annual Gratitude Dinner will take place on Friday October 12. This is a special dinner provided by the Parish Council in gratitude for all the blessings that God gives us. Everyone is invited. That includes all the Abundance Shop volunteers and everyone who is in some way connected with St Ben's. If you are reading this, then you are invited and we hope you will come.

The Gratitude Dinner will be followed in Sunday October 14 by our celebration of St. Benedict's Day. St Benedict is our patron saint and so once a year we have a special service to commemorate him and to give thanks for his ministry and the ministry he has passed on to us.

The Bishop Search

The Search Committee for our next bishop is well underway. Among other things, they are currently preparing a profile of who we are as a diocese and who we are looking for in our next Bishop. There are two ways for you to contribute to this process.

1. Complete the on-line survey which you can find on the Bishop's Search page on the diocesan website: <https://www.realepiscopal.org/bishops-search/>

2. Participate in a Listening Session on Sat September 8 10-12 at St. Stephen's, San Luis Obispo. This is an opportunity to share your responses to a number of questions about the diocese and the challenges/opportunities you see.

You can keep up to date with everything that is happening by reading the weekly newsletter from the diocese. If you don't get it already, you can sign up here: <https://www.realepiscopal.org/newsletter-signup-along-the-kings-highway/>

Jazz Concert

A big thank you to everyone who worked to make our 19th Annual Jazz Concert and Silent Auction such a special afternoon. Thank you to the leadership team of Lorienne Schwenk, Pamela Bleisch and Esta Kandarian; to the cooks Lorienne, Barbara Hirahara and Fred Leahy, wine servers Maureen Titus and Ron and Laura Thompson; and to everyone who moved furniture, put up flyers sold tickets and special blessings to those who cleaned up afterwards. Thank you!



Authorized Overnight Parking

St. Benedict's Homeless Outreach Team (St. Ben's HOT) has for some time been working on the issue of providing safe overnight parking for people who are living in their cars. Thanks to Alice Welchert who has taken the lead in discussions with the Sheriff's Department about creating a local program, as well as representing us at LOCAC meetings when the possibility of an ordinance banning overnight camping has been discussed.

On Tuesday August 28, in collaboration with Los Osos Cares, St. Ben's HOT held a public meeting at Sea Pines at which Kristine Schwartz of the New Beginnings Counseling Center in Santa Barbara spoke. They have a successful program with over 100 people participating, and another 80 on the waiting list. Their presentation went along way to helping Los Ososans feel that we can do it here, and a working group was formed to set up a pilot project with just a few cars in one parking lot.

Congratulations, St Ben's HOT and Los Osos Cares!

Los Osos Showers

Apart from a place to live, people without housing most need clean clothes, showers and a place to charge their phones. Phones can be charged at the Abundance Shop. Clean clothes are available through Laundry Love. Now we need showers.

Following the successful trial run with the Hopes Village shower unit, People Helping People is fundraising for a mobile shower unit for Los Osos. It will be available at the South Bay Community Center whenever there are volunteers to run it. There were hopes of building a shower but given the constraints of the planning process etc. this would have been more expensive and taken much longer than purchasing a mobile unit. We hope it will be here by November when the Warming Shelter starts up again. The cost will be about \$28,000.

On Sunday September 2, we will be inviting you, as well as bringing your gifts for the Prado Day Center, to make a financial contribution to the Shower unit. Special envelopes will be available. If you are not going to be at church that day, you may make a gift at any time. Please make your checks out to St Benedict's and write "showers" in the memo line. Or you can make a gift on-line at www.stbenslosos.org/support. Please indicate that your gift is for Homeless Outreach.

Showing some "Laundry Love"

Danna Dykstra-Coy

Recognizing a community need, some members of St. Benedict's Church have teamed up to provide free laundry service for low- to no-income residents. The "Laundry Love" volunteers show up at Osos Clean Laundry the last Wednesday of every month from 5-9 p.m. with quarters, detergent, laundry supplies and a smile.

The word is spreading about this well-received community service, which started in the Los Angeles Diocese. "Laundry Love is not just about helping people who are living on the edge, but it is a way of forming and deepening relationships as we wait for the clothes to wash and dry," says St. Benedict's Rev. Caroline Hall.

Each month the St. Benedict's Laundry Love team serves about 20 people who each bring at least three loads of clothing and blankets to wash and dry. Flyers about Laundry Love night are posted in the area, but most hear about it through word of mouth. The hours spent waiting and folding clothes is filled with joyful conversation and connecting. The St. Ben's volunteers also give out bottles of water and snacks. Barbara Hirahara coordinates the ministry service. "We all need help from time to time," she says. "And clean clothes feel better."



Three Easy Ways to Support St. Benedict's

1. If and when you shop at Amazon.com, access their website by going to ours first. It only takes a few clicks to go to www.stbenslosos.org/support and then clicking on the Amazon icon. Then you just shop normally and we get a percentage. Don't be fooled and go to AmazonSmiles – we get a much smaller cut if you use that system.
2. Register your Ralph's card. You have to register every September so now is the time. You have to do it through the Ralph's website, starting September 1. Our organization number has changed and is now HV013. If you are registered it will tell you at the bottom of your receipt that Ralph's is donating to St Benedict's.
3. Register your Food4Less card in the same way. We have a new organization number which is DH925.

Earthcare: What We're Up To (A Lot!)

Joe Morris

Though summer can be a lull for some church committees, that's been the opposite for St. Ben's Earthcare. During Bishop Mary's visit to our congregation in June, she had a special luncheon with Earthcare members and heard a report on our environmental doings. Apparently, she was convinced of their worthiness, for she then asked us to present a short report ("Missio-mercial") at October's annual Diocesan Conference and, in addition, suggested we organize a 2019 diocese-wide conference on Earthcare. This will involve the participation of congregations across the diocese and feature keynote speakers. On both ideas, we have been working actively. With the tech help of Suzan Vaughn, we've prepared a video Missio-mercial and are formulating plans for the 2019 conference.

And more. . . By the time you receive this copy of the Benediction, the six-part series on "Thomas Merton and Climate Change" will have already started (Thursdays, August 30-October 4th). September Sundays feature ministry on the Season of Creation, with topics on: Planet Earth, Humanity, Sky, Mountain, and Healing of Creation.

Come and join us! We meet on the second Wednesday, 2:30-4 p.m., at St. Benedict's.

EVENT!

#PrayFastAct nourishes spirit and action

Don Maruska

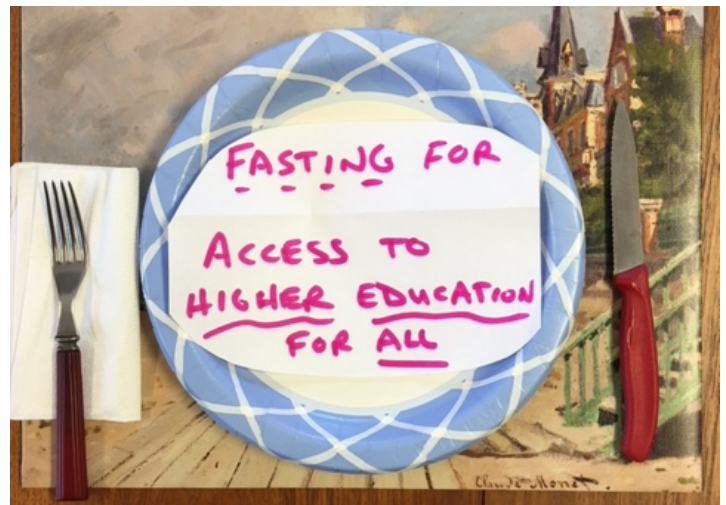
I was intrigued by the notice in St. Ben's bulletin on August 19 about the #PrayFastAct movement on August 21, so I tried it. First, watching the Presiding Bishop's short video about the whole PrayFastAct program was inspirational. Then, I planned my prayer, fast, and action for the August 21 theme of higher education.

ACTION!

It was easy to follow the prayer offered in the bulletin. I hadn't fasted in a while, and didn't know what to expect from my body. It actually felt very reward-

ing. I fasted from dinner the night before through to dinner on the 21st. My occasionally growling stomach acted as a strong physical reminder of those who have less. During the day, I read about the higher education issues and sent personal emails with specific requests to

Congressman Carbajal and to Senators Feinstein and Harris. I also posted the photo (attached) on Facebook and Twitter with #PrayFastAct and a statement of solidarity with the efforts of the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to highlight the critical need to ensure access to higher education for all.



(#PrayFastAct continued)

I hope others in St. Ben's will try the next fasting opportunities. They occur on the 21st of each month through December. Maybe we can create an ad hoc group at St. Ben's to expand awareness and participation.

PrayFastAct offers a simple, direct, and powerful way to message the gospel and enjoy the personal blessings that flow from it.

Thank you St. Benedict's for bringing this opportunity to our attention.



New Monarch Butterfly Life at St. Benedict's

photos by Danna Dykstra-Coy

The milkweed plant just steps off the veranda recently attracted at least a dozen Monarch caterpillars that happily munched on the red and orange buds and green leaves. Some caterpillars were seen curling in the letter "J" position, indicating they were preparing for the next metamorphosis toward becoming Monarch Butterflies.

We'd been on the hunt in recent weeks for the well-hidden green chrysalises or pupae, which generally hang from nearby plants or walls, but had no luck finding them. However, over the past few days Monarch butterflies have been spotted flitting about the milkweed plant and gardens surrounding the veranda. Be sure to watch for them the next time you are at St. Ben's. The caterpillars from a few weeks ago are now butterflies flitting about St. Benedict's gardens!

Support for Prado Day Center

Alice Welchert

The Prado Day Center has provided services for homeless people in SLO County since 1997. Every day 90 to 100 people -- women, men and children -- come to the Center for help. There is a breakfast program, the People's Kitchen (daily lunch), lockers, showers, washers and dryers, and some case management. The center is open from 8:30 to 4:30 seven days a week. During very cold or rainy weather Prado hosts a warming center. Overnight beds are available at the Maxine Lewis shelter. A new homeless services center is under construction that will combine the Prado Day Center and Maxine Lewis. It is called 40 Prado after the street address.

When I joined St. Benedict's in 2003, our congregation had already been serving bi-monthly lunches at People's Kitchen and making regular donations of food, clothing and hygiene items. These days worshippers will sometimes see a donation box at the center of our gathering that is wrapped in the photographs of Ansel Adams. My brother, Stan, loved Adams' evocative photography so I gave him an Adams calendar every Christmas. Stan also wanted to help homeless people. It seemed fitting to cover a box in pages from one of his calendars. Usually two donation boxes are behind the pew closest to the northeast door. Donations are ALWAYS welcome.

(Prado continued)

Breakfast program donations especially needed

Unlike People's Kitchen lunches that are sponsored by specific organizations, the breakfast program functions on a catch-as-catch-can basis. Our donations may make the difference between a child starting the day with something to eat or going hungry. What can you give to make a difference?

- Ultra-pasteurized milk is **ESPECIALLY** needed because it does not have to be refrigerated until after opening and has a long shelf life
- Soy and nut milks that do not require refrigeration before opening
- Instant hot cereal and regular cereal
- Juices
- Canned fruit or fruit in jars such as peaches, plums and applesauce
- Peanut butter and jelly or jam
- Graham crackers
- Protein bars
- Paper cereal bowls and plates
- Knives/forks/spoons

Other needs:

- Small hygiene items from hotels
- New socks
- Canned foods such as soup, chili, tuna fish (uncooked pasta, rice, tomato sauce, etc. can't be used)
- Laundry detergent
- Backpacks in good condition

Are you being called?

When Suzanne and Bill Dannenbring moved a few years ago, they passed the Prado baton to me. I am now also involved in outreach to our Los Osos neighbors -- Community Dinners, Laundry Love, the effort to establish overnight parking. I need to pass the Prado baton to someone else. It is not time-consuming. Collecting donations involves writing brief announcements for the Benediction Weekly, making occasional announcements during worship services, and writing brief articles for The Benediction. You would not even have to drive -- Suzan Vaughn lives close to the Day Center and has offered to deliver the donations to Prado. A new face to the program and new ideas might increase donations. If you are interested please let me know.



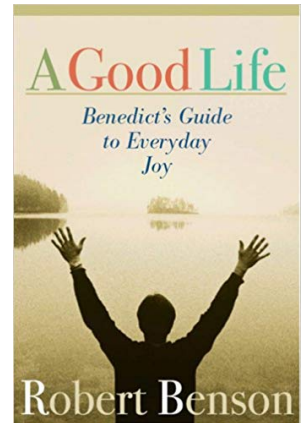
“I think I liked the Peace better *before* we started doing the conga line.”



Hollister Institute: A Good Life: Benedict’s Guide to Everyday Joy

This group will be an opportunity to revisit the Rule of St Benedict, in a conversation based on the book, *A Good Life* by Robert Benson. The publisher says:

"There is no shortage of good days," writes Annie Dillard. "It is good lives that are hard to come by." Reflecting on what makes a "good life," Robert Benson offers a warmhearted, humorous guide to enriching our lives with the wisdom of Benedict, a 6th century monk. Each chapter is shaped around a Benedictine principle: prayer, rest, community, and work, and reveals the brilliant and infinitely practical ways that Benedictine spirituality can shape our lives today. Benson is honest and wise, sharing his own failings and the constant tension that he feels between the demands of the temporal and the spiritual. For anyone who feels caught in a web of conflicting priorities, or who finds the pace of modern life more draining than fulfilling, *A Good Life* will come as a welcome treat for the soul.



Led by Caro+, the group will meet on six Tuesday afternoons at 3:45pm, starting Tuesday September 25.

The topics for each week are: Longing, Prayer, Rest, Community, Work, Living

Participants are encouraged to read the book which is available from Amazon both new and used. (Remember to go to www.stbenslosos.org/support on your way to Amazon.com so we get a percentage.)

Canterbury Enchilada Festival

Berkeley Johnson

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for the 2nd Annual SLO Enchilada Festival on Saturday, October 6th, from 11am - 2pm at St. Stephen's, SLO. We will have local vendors and restaurants vying for "Best Enchilada," and it's up to you, the attendees, to taste and vote for your favorites.



Tickets are \$25 for the general public, \$20 for students, and \$5 for children 10 and under. Tickets will be available in your local parishes and online. Details to follow in the coming weeks!

We are still in the planning stages, but anticipate adding a beer garden this year, in addition to having live music, a salsa competition (no dancing required) and a nacho bar during the festival.

This fundraiser is in support of the Canterbury Shire Episcopal Campus Ministry, now in its 12th year serving college students and young adults in the SLO deanery.

Thank you for your support, and we look forward to seeing you on Oct. 6th!

More pictures of people (and food!) at the Jazz Concert.



Monarch Caterpillars in the St. Benedict's Gardens



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