

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*

Lisa Gonzalez, *Treasurer*

Diana Hammerlund

Esta Kandarian

Alan Kiste

Barbara Schippers

Lorienne Schwenk

Lynn Wise

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Parish Administrator

Danna Dykstra-Coy

Office Tues-Thurs, 9:30-12:30

Sunday Services

8:00 am Holy Communion
with inclusive language

10:30 am Holy Communion
with music

First Sunday of each month:

10:30 am One service of Holy
Communion with music

2nd & 4th Sunday of each month:

9:30 am Children's Messy Church

Refreshments and fellowship follow service.

Church: 2220 Snowy Egret Lane

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Dear Friends:

I am still basking in the afterglow of Christmas at St. Benedict's. What a wonderful celebration of the nativity of Jesus Christ, the very reason for our being and the author of our calling!

We welcomed so many of the community for the Carol Concert that cars were parked all the way over to Clark Valley Rd and we couldn't fit everyone in! The music was wonderful and the audience enthusiastic. My thanks to John Cribb, Ann Lucas and the choir who have been practicing since June for this opportunity to share the love of God with people who don't get many opportunities to hear of God's unconditional love.

And many thanks also to the small team of altar guild, flowers and hospitality people who worked behind the scenes to make sure that everything was in place, the church looked and smelled beautiful and every person was welcomed as if they were Christ himself.

One of the wonderful things about St. Benedict's is the involvement of the whole of the Body of Christ. It takes every one of us to do what we do, on Sundays and special days, in maintaining the infrastructure so that we can minister to one another and the community, and in our specific ministries whether those are organized by the church or are in home or community. Each of us is called to be a minister. Church is not a spectator sport but is an integral part of our serving God, and sharing the good news with all those around us regardless of who they are.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people to be his very own and to proclaim the wonderful deeds of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (I Peter 2:9)

During Epiphany (which starts January 6 and continues until the 5th of March) we will be focusing on "member's ministry". I will be inviting you to share with one another the ways that you minister. Some of these are obvious - like participating in People's Kitchen or Laundry Love. Some of them are less obvious - like caring for a neighbor or picking up after other people's dogs, or loving your granddaughter and teaching her about God.

When we can identify where and how we minister whether as individuals or as the collective Body of Christ, then we can think more clearly about how God is at work in that situation and can pray more effectively that God will be manifest.

We are called to minister, and we are called to "proclaim the wonderful deeds of the one who called you out of darkness". Epiphany is the season of revelation - a time for us to remember all the ways that Christ is manifest in the world - so that we too can "proclaim" or at least gossip about the ways that God moves in our lives.

Thank you for being an important part of the way God moves in my life.

With love,

Caroline J. A. Hall



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Caroline". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Annual Meeting

Coming up at the end of January, we have our annual Parish Meeting. If you come to St Ben's regularly, make a donation and pray for our mission and ministry then you are a member and we hope you will come along so that you are informed and can provide your input to our work together.

The meeting will take place almost immediately after the 10:30 service. Lunch will be provided and we plan to finish no later than 1:15. Included in the agenda will be a report from the Rector and Senior Warden, information about our budget and discussion of plans for 2019.

We will also elect new members to the Vestry and Parish Council (three year term) and as Delegates to Deanery and Diocese. This year's delegates will represent St. Benedict's at the Electing Convention for the next Bishop as well as the fall Diocesan Convention. If you are interested in serving on Vestry or as a Delegate you need to be Episcopalian (confirmed or received). Please see Esta Kandarian or Barbara Schippers for more details.

Please plan to come to the Annual Meeting!

Building and Grounds

A big thank you to Liz Maruska for her generous donation of a gardening team to keep the north and east sides of the church looking beautiful. We can always use other willing eyes and hands to keep the rest of the property in good shape. JW has been caring for the "grass", and weed-eating. In his absence, Larry had planned to cover for him but until one of them returns or we get another volunteer, we will go back to using an outside service for a monthly cut.

The pump has been installed but not the electricity and we have discovered that PG&E has planned for overhead wiring whereas we wanted it underground. Due to the cost difference we will probably end up with an overhead solution, but for right now things are on hold. Thanks to Michael Lucas for working on getting this all sorted.

Finances

St Ben's started 2018 with a budget that expected us to have to pull \$5000 from our reserves by the end of the year. It is not unusual for churches to operate with a God-gap but it can become irresponsible when we just go ahead without paying any attention to how we might reduce expenses or increase income if the Holy Spirit does not provide as we hope. As so often, God has provided for our needs, this time through the hard work of Deb Garza, Abundance Shop Manager; Karin Cake, the Retail Manager, and a long list of volunteers from the congregation and the community. The Abundance Shop has indeed been abundant this year. Largely as a result of their work, on top of everyone's already generous support we end the year more than \$15,000 in the black!

The budget that the Vestry will be recommending for 2019 includes cost of living increases for the Rector and the Music Director but otherwise keeps expenditure as much as possible the same as 2018. This is because the financial commitments received for 2019 are lower than they were in 2018 so even with extra income from the Shop we need to be prudent. The budget will have a projected shortfall of \$10,000 but there is enough in reserve from this year should we fail to make up the gap during the year.

The Rector will still be paid three-quarters time and the Administrative Assistant will remain at just nine hours per week. THANK YOU to each one who contributes faithfully, to the Abundance Shop volunteers who work so hard and to God who provides for all our needs.



Highlights of the December Parish Council Meeting

- The proposed budget for 2019 was discussed and received
- The complication with electricity supply for the pump was discussed
- Danna's resignation was noted with dismay and sadness
- The proposal for a mural on the north end of the building was tabled pending more information about cost etc.
- Michael Lucas presented possible Mutual Ministry Review questions which led to a general discussion about the purpose and process for this annual review
- The Nominations Committee of Barbara Schippers and Esta Kandarian was commissioned to recruit Vestry members for 2019
- The Bishop will visit on Ash Wednesday (to bless the Stations of the Cross) and September 29 2019

Mutual Ministry Review (is Coming!)

Michael Lucas, Jr. Warden

“Provoke one another to love and good deeds... encouraging one another.” -Hebrews 10:24-25

All associated with the church are receiving and passing onto others God's gifts. We have a mutual ministry that takes many forms of involvement and engagement across our spiritual landscape. We look for your reflections as members of the St Bens community upon all that goes on in our parish ministry, across worship, education, fellowship, stewardship, and care for each other and for our larger local, regional, national and international communities. The purpose of annual review is to be frank and provide insight as we continually discern, develop, and maintain strong ministry. The central question is “how well is this congregation, its lay and ordained leaders, programs, and use of our gifts, meeting our expectations of what can be achieved in our mutual ministry?”

One of the annual tasks of the Parish Council is to lead the reflection on the efficacy of our ministry-as-a-whole, the nature of the way we perceive our mission, conceive our wise use of opportunity, human resources and use of our facilities in fulfilling our corporate spiritual mission. This includes opportunities for the reflections of all those in our community, as well as the Parish Council and clergy.

The congregational input will begin at a post-worship event on January 06, and across the next weeks via an email survey link. Sunday the 6th we will have Parish Council members at various theme/area tables and ask for your input through discussion, or if you are more comfortable simply providing text, we will have a mechanism for that too. There will be an additional web-based means that will be sent to the email of all members of the congregation who have provided the directory with an email contact. The Parish Council will review the initial input at our January meeting [prior to our Annual Congregational Meeting] and annual retreat, February 22/23, and report back.

Homeless Outreach Team

As usual, a lot of ministry is going on, as members of St. Benedict's assist and befriend those in need in Los Osos and beyond, and they become our friends, neighbors and fellow church members .

- Laundry Love continues every last Wednesday of the month, 5-9pm, under the leadership of Barbara Hirahara. We are there to provide free laundry, friendship (and pizza) for those of no or low-income. Donations of cash and laundry supplies are always welcome. Maureen Titus is now the treasurer for this ministry so please give her your quarters (and \$\$\$ bills too.) Barbara would love to have some more volunteers.
- We continue to provide a meal each month – one month at 40 Prado, the new homeless services shelter in SLO, and one month at the Los Osos Cares Community Dinner. The numbers seem to have increased in SLO so even if you haven't done it before, please consider providing a casserole for 8-12 so that we can continue to give a hot lunch with love to everyone who needs it, or coming to help serve the food. The Los Osos Cares Community Dinner will be changing to Thursdays at some point in the New Year and may grow bigger then.

(Homeless Outreach, continued)

- The (Los Osos Cares/ People Helping People/Community Center/St Ben's) Warming Shelter has opened again this winter with Steve Hirahara at the helm. So far it has opened five times and sheltered 2 to 12 people each time. Parks and Recreation is no longer letting us use the Schoolhouse so we are in need of a space on nights when the Community Center is booked until late.
- Your donations for breakfast at 40 Prado are as needed as ever. Please remember to bring non-perishable items which can be eaten cold or micro-waved. Alice Welchert would welcome another person to step in as the lead connection with 40 Prado and to take our gifts there on a regular basis.

Congratulations!

To our very own **Linda Quesenberry**, who has been declared this year's Citizen of the Year by the Los Osos and Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce. Linda was the creator of the Los Osos Community Coalition and the Resource Center from which Los Osos Cares was born.

Linda has a wonderful gift for making connections and bringing people together to do something which benefits the whole community. Go Linda!

The Chamber of Commerce Awards dinner will be held on January 18. Please see Caro+ if you would like to be part of the St. Benedict's table to help celebrate Linda.

Also to **Caro+** who was awarded the Bishop's Cross at the Diocesan Convention in November. The Bishop's Cross is awarded to people who have served the diocese in exceptional leadership. She is the fifth person from St. Benedict's to receive this award – Howard Vollmer, Mary Elizabeth Pratt-Horsley+ Donna Ross+, and Lisa Gonzalez have all been honored in the past.



Opportunities for Ministry

In addition to the Sunday morning ministries, positions on the Parish Council and Diocesan Representatives, there are many other opportunities to serve God and the congregation's ministry. Some of these are:

- Webmaster, or at least web updater: Help us to keep our website current and looking spiffy
- Audio techies: prepare the mics and control sound levels during the 10:30 service
- Audio editor: extract the sermon (and any special music) from each week's audio recording, make minor edits and upload to the website
- Flier poster: take fliers of St Ben's events to stores and local noticeboards for posting (once or twice each month)
- Reminder: call or email the Sunday ministers to remind them of their commitments
- Cashier or Sorter at the Abundance Shop

Training will be provided. Please let Caro+ know how you can help.

Farewell to Danna

Danna has been our Administrative person for almost three years and we have come to know and love her, and depend on her for reminders, publicity, communication and friendly good humor (and did I say, photos!). Now we have taught her how to run a church office, Danna is going on to bigger and better things. Starting in mid-January, she will be the Administrator at El Morro Nazarene Church, which is her home congregation. After a long search, they have a new minister who is looking for someone to help him develop their ministry in Los Osos.

Our prayers and blessings go with Danna as she starts her new adventure.

We have been advertising for a new person and the Parish-Staff Liaison team will be working with Caro+ to interview people in the hope that the new person will be on board very soon. Danna's last day is January 10.

Quiet Morning of Art and Meditation, Saturday February 2nd

"The soul is like a wild animal—tough, resilient, savvy, self-sufficient and yet exceedingly shy. If we want to see a wild animal, the last thing we should do is to go crashing through the woods, shouting for the creature to come out. But if we are willing to walk quietly into the woods and sit silently for an hour or two at the base of a tree, the creature we are waiting for may well emerge, and out of the corner of an eye we will catch a glimpse of the precious wildness we seek." Parker Palmer



This morning together is a time to catch a glimpse of our souls. Using a poem, or maybe two, as a way to listen to the depths of our being we will sit silently together and then listen as each of us watches for our wild soul to emerge. Art materials will be available for continuing exploration. No experience is necessary - this is not an art class!

Led by the Rev. Caro Hall and Bob Pelfrey (Art Professor Emeritus, Cuesta College)

There is no charge but your donation is welcome.

Earthcare News

John Horsley

With the help of our media expert Suzan Vaughan, Earthcare has produced a video about its mission and activities. The video, entitled "The Stewardship of Creation: One Congregation's Response", was one of the "missio-mercials" shown at the Diocesan Convention on October 27th, where it was warmly received. You can now view the video on the St. Benedict's web site (it comes up automatically on the home screen after a few seconds), so have a look and let us know your impressions.

On Sunday December 2 Earthcare hosted a visit by Jeff Diehl, a member of St Barnabas, Arroyo Grande, who was Vice Chair of the legislative committee responsible for the resolutions relating to Environmental Stewardship and the Care for Creation at the 79th General Convention last July. In an informative presentation after the 10:30 am service Jeff reviewed all the environment and climate change resolutions considered at General Convention, of which 20 were adopted. The most important resolutions were summarized in the November-December 2018 issue of *The Benediction Newsletter*. Full details on the resolutions can be found on the St. Barnabas web site at saintbarnabas-ag.org/environment.

Planning has begun on Earthcare's most ambitious project so far, a diocese-wide conference in September, 2019 on how churches can respond to the environmental crisis, with the title "The Church was Made for a Time Like This". The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care, Diocese of Western Massachusetts, has agreed to speak at the conference and is assisting us in our planning.

Deacon Dispatch

Rev. Sharon Dalrymple, Deacon

In the book of Revelation, Christ says He will make all things new.

And, we too, on this first day of the New Year often vow to make changes in our own lives. My resolutions are probably not unlike those you might make—things like eat less and eat healthier; get more exercise, be better organized and manage my life better with less stress and a more positive attitude, and most importantly, vow to be more gentle, patient, and loving with all brothers and sisters.

It all sounds like a great plan. And it works..... for a while. Then I find myself and my new plans faltering, and then here I am regressing and falling back into my old habits. I have heard it said that “old habits die hard”. I have to admit that it must be true for me.

But, how lucky for us that God doesn't regress and doesn't falter in carrying out His promises. God said He would send mankind His son, named Jesus to be born of a woman and live among us, and God did. We celebrate that birth with great anticipation every year.

God said that His son would grow up to teach us how to live, and Jesus did just that. God gave us the commandments, but it was Jesus living among us and sharing parables we read in the Gospels that taught us exactly how to live those commandments.

God said that Jesus would sacrifice His life for us in a cruel and harsh way so that we might have eternal life. Jesus was obedient to His father, even to suffering death on the cross. And, in the end of His earthly time, Jesus returned to His father, but He did not forsake us. He left the Holy Spirit to be our light and our sustainer in this world.

So, what excuses do we have for not being able to stay on task and living our resolutions? Well, my friends, I don't think we have any excuses. We may not always be successful, but we need to hang in there and keep trying. And if we start to lose our resolve what should we do? We can do just what Jesus did. He prayed. God listened and helped Jesus stay the course. He can do the same for each of us.



Maybe no one will notice if we just leave the Christmas garlands up this year.

St. Benedict's Profile: Maureen Titus

By Danna Dykstra-Coy

In every newsletter we are profiling a member of St. Benedict's Church as a way to build relationships and learn more about the wonderful things we are doing to share God's love.

Maureen Titus says she has attended St. Benedict's Church two years "inconsistently." But in recent months she has stepped up with regular volunteer service at Community Dinners, the People's Kitchen, Laundry Love and one day a week at the Abundance Shop.

"What I like about our church is that it is inclusive of all people, and that it is very socially active. We don't come here to sit in the pews and do nothing," says Maureen. "This church practices what it preaches."

Maureen is the mother of two daughters, Julie and Natalie, a grandmother of four grandchildren and a great-grandmother of one. She has been a dental hygienist 41 years. She teaches part-time at Hancock College in the Dental Assisting Program. For years she has taken her

oral hygiene training and skills beyond the dental office to facilities and homes of people with disabilities, the elderly and even at children's health fairs. As a registered dental hygienist, Maureen has a range of duties, including cleaning patients' teeth and gums and providing instructions to patients in preventative care.

"Dental care is so important to overall health care," says Maureen. "Yet often people with ALS, MS, Parkinson's or Alzheimer's (Disease) aren't comfortable outside their home surroundings, so they aren't going to go to a dental office. You need to go to them." Maureen has advocated for years for hygienists to provide such care in her role as a chairman of the California Dental Hygienist Association's Government Relations Council.

Additionally, as a Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer 23 years, Maureen has advocated for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court and other settings. Her primary responsibilities were to gather information, review court documents and records, interview the children, family members and agency professionals involved in the children's lives. Maureen retired from CASA two years ago, but found it to be a rewarding experience. "I did it because those kids needed somebody."

Maureen met Rev. Caro+ when she was San Luis Obispo County's first CASA Director. Maureen's longstanding relationship with Caro+ brought her to St. Benedict's, where she especially enjoys the church's community activism.

"With the crummy political stuff going on in our country, I like to think, 'What can I do as an individual to make things better?'" says Maureen. "What can I do to be part of the solution - not part of the problem?"

"Well, I can cook. I can serve," she says. "I can make somebody's life a little easier."



Abundance Shop

Deb Garza

The past six months have been filled with challenges and growth. No matter what “ups and downs” we have, we have THE BEST volunteers and that has made all the difference. We have been having Bi-monthly meetings to discuss the concerns of the volunteers and to go over shop policies and training. This past October we revamped our Shop Policy Manual as we updated and added to it.

With Karin Cake’s knowledge and savvy, the shop always looks professional and inviting. She shares her experience and guides volunteers by imparting her knowledge and helping to create a cohesive look for the shop. Karin’s husband, Steve Cake makes several trips in his own personal truck to off load the abundance we cannot take at the shop.

Our best day for sales on a regular basis is Tuesday. Manned by Steve Hirahara in the morning and the Cake husband and wife duo in the afternoon, they go above and beyond and drive a hard bargain.

Other St. Benedicts members who make a big difference at the shop include Esta Kandarian, Lynn Wise, Maureen Titus, Connie Weldon and Bryson McKelvey who all serve as cashiers, some volunteering in dual roles as sorters as well. Bryson does an amazing job with our books and lends a variety of skills to all aspects of the book section of our shop. It is always organized and looks good.

In addition to the above volunteers we have many non-church members who serve St. Bens by their service in the Abundance Shop. These are community members who appreciate the shop, St. Bens community work and everything the shop stands for through St. Bens.

Without the tireless hours that ALL these folks have spent volunteering, the Abundance Shop would not be the success it is...or the success it is becoming.

A special thanks to Caro+, Lisa and the Parish Counsel for all their support and guidance and a special welcome to Sharon Dalrymple who recently started volunteering her time as she is able, to offer counsel to volunteers at the shop.

We are looking forward to another great year at the shop, striving to always serve St. Benedicts proudly and growing the shop to be even more successful.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



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