

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. Susan Plucker

Associate Priest

The Rev. Sharon G. Dalrymple

Deacon

The Parish Council

Pamela Bleisch Strawn, *Sr. Warden*

Michael Lucas, *Jr. Warden*

Lisa Gonzalez, *Treasurer*

Deb Garza

Diana Hammerlund

Steve Hirahara

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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:

During the Parish Council planning retreat, we enjoyed a visioning exercise when we imagined the St. Benedict's that we long to create together and came up with pictures, metaphors and images for the church we saw. The images were uplifting – one person saw a tree with room under and in its branches for all comers – which reminded me of the parable of the mustard seed where a tiny seed becomes a tree in which the birds of the air can build their nests. Others described images of joy and of worship as people of all kinds and ages gather together to celebrate the reign of God.

Wonderful, joyful images of who we can be.

But that is not the whole story. The following morning the choir sang an anthem,

“Come Away for a little time apart,

For the changing of the heart:

Come away to a taste so bitter-sweet, where hope and heart-break meet...”

Heart-break is as much part of our story as the glorious inclusion of all beings in joy and radical grace and acceptance. There is pain, there is heart-break and there is tremendous difficulty both in being human and in following Jesus. Yes, resurrection happens and so we are a people of “stubborn hopefulness”, but we must also acknowledge and support one another with the grief and loss that is inherent in our lives as mortal beings.

I have had people tell me that they don't want to come to church when they are feeling sad or depressed. But my friends, that is exactly when we need one another. When we are most vulnerable, when we can hardly bear to get out of bed, let alone face another human being. That is when we most need to be supported by the faith community; when we can no longer pray for ourselves we need the prayers of others.

We are about to step into the journey of Lent and Holy Week, culminating in the horror and loss of Good Friday. This is the time in the liturgical year when we make the space to remember the “taste so bitter-sweet where hope and heart-break meet.” Fortunately, every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection so we don't need to be too glum. But it is a mistake, I think, not to take Lent seriously. Because it represents in our corporate life the reality that we all face; joy and sorrow are closely linked – without one, we will not fully experience the other.

If we only celebrate Easter without facing the Passion of Christ – the tremendous suffering and pain that leads to the exuberant joy of the resurrection, then we are living at half-mast. This year we have the excitement of our new Stations of the Cross to help us more deeply explore the mysteries of the suffering God. I hope that you will join me in using them to take us deeper into the “taste so bitter-sweet where hope and heart break meet.”

with love in Christ

Caroline J. A. Hall



@StBens_LosOsos

Highlights of the Parish Council Retreat and Meeting

- we reviewed all the responses to the Mutual Ministry Review, noting both majority and minority voices
- we envisioned the church that God is creating in our midst
- we discussed the purpose of the annual Jazz Concert and possible alternatives
- we agreed that reviewing and renewing the Hollister Institute program is a high priority
- we decided to have Ministry Coordinators who will work with Caro+ and the members of the congregation to help each of us find our place in St. Ben's mission and ministry
- we changed the 5 year plan to include people of all ages and economic status in our description of how we want to increase our diversity
- The greeters and ushers team will be called the Welcoming Team and will be led by Steve Hirahara
- we had great food and conversation and a wonderful view – thanks to Ann and Michael Lucas for making their home available.

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross date back to the sixteenth century. They were created by Franciscan monks to help people go to Jerusalem in their imaginations and follow the path that Jesus is thought to have taken on the final day of his earthly life. Over the centuries, the exact number of stations and the events they depict have varied. The images are drawn both from the Biblical accounts and from traditional stories.

Local sculptor, Chloe A. White, has created a new set of Stations for St. Benedict's which draw from a slightly different set of images than usual, starting with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying to be excused from his ordeal "If this cup cannot pass by, but I must drink it, your will be done!" (Matthew 26:42)

These remarkable works will be displayed in the church starting on March 6, Ash Wednesday when Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves will bless them during a service starting at 7 pm. This is open to the public and will combine a traditional service with imposition of ashes and a pilgrimage through the Stations. The St. Benedict Singers will perform Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer".

Then there will be an Artist's Reception on Sunday, March 10 at 4 pm. This will be an opportunity to meet Chloe A. White and to hear more about the Stations from Bob Pelfrey (Professor Emeritus in Art History, Cuesta College). The church will also be open for viewing and reflection March 12-14, 19-21 and 26-28 between 10am and 12noon and on Sundays, March 17 and 24 from 1pm to 3pm.

The Stations will be up throughout Lent. On Saturday April 6, Caro+ will lead a Quiet Morning during which time we will be able to engage in a deeper way with the stations, relating them to our own personal lives and spiritual journeys. Regular "Way of Peace" services when we walk the stations and pray together will be held at 9:15am on Weds 3 and Weds 17 April, at 7:15 on Tuesday 16 April and at 2:15 on Good Friday.

Our thanks go to the Hirahara family whose generous gift has made these Stations possible, and to Michael Lucas who designed and created the display settings as well as to Chloe White for her dedicated and hard work over the past year.

Ash Wednesday

Lent starts on Wednesday March 6. Revs. Sharon and Caro will be distributing Ashes to Go outside the Abundance Shop from 7:30 to 12noon. Then at 7pm there will be a special Ash Wednesday service with Bishop Mary presiding. Instead of a eucharist we will travel together through the new Stations of the Cross.

Please note that there will be no midday service this year. If you need transport to be able to attend the evening service please let Laura in the office know. (office@stbenslosos.org, 805-528-0654).

Holy Week

Holy Week is a time for us to ponder the incredible love that Jesus the Christ, the Man/God showed to humanity by allowing us to kill him, and the tremendous sadness that we each have within our own nature the ability to do that to another human being. Jesus did not respond to human violence with violence but with non-violent resistance and showed by his resurrection that violence is powerless over life. God's unconditional love is shown in that even though humanity did its worst, Jesus the Christ came back and stays in relationship to us.



Palm Sunday April 14, 8am and 10:30 am

Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday, when we remember Jesus' triumphant ride into Jerusalem, incongruously on a donkey. This is the service when we process with palms and then go suddenly into the Passion Gospel, relating Jesus' betrayal, trial and death; it's a sudden change which brings us up short and connects us to the pathos of human love and human loss.

8 a.m., Contemplative Communion. 9:30 Messy Church, 10:30 a.m., Palm Sunday Liturgy with Blessing of Palms, Procession and Passion Gospel. *The families from Messy Church are invited to stay and join in the Palm Sunday procession.*

Stations of the Cross: walk the Via Dolorosa – the way of tears - which is also the Way of Peace and of Hope as we follow the story of Jesus' journey to the cross and beyond. Tuesday April 16 at 7:15pm, Weds April 17 at 9:15am and Good Friday at 2:15pm.

Maundy Thursday April 18, 7:30pm

On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus' last supper with his friends and the subsequent betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. After a simple Eucharist with (optional foot-washing) the church is stripped of all its color and artwork, ending with the stripping of the altar, reminding us of how Jesus was stripped naked. We depart in silence, just as his disciples left him, silently melting into the night. We will again be joined by friends from Trinity United Methodist church for this evening of bitter-sweet remembering.

Good Friday April 19, 12noon, 2:15pm, 7:30pm

Good Friday is the day when Jesus was crucified. The Scriptures tell us that he hung on the cross for three hours, which we remember from noon until three. Some people choose to fast until 3 pm as a way of personally connecting with Jesus' sacrifice. We will mark the day with a traditional Good Friday liturgy at 12 noon and the church will be open for prayer and meditation from then until 2:15 when we will walk the Stations of the Cross. Then in the evening at 7:30 we are invited to Trinity United Methodist Church where our combined choirs will lead us in a program of readings and music.

Holy Saturday and Easter Vigil April 20, 8:00 pm

Holy Saturday – the time when Jesus was in the tomb. Then ... finally we get to Easter, but we can't quite wait until Easter morning, so we celebrate the night of Jesus' resurrection starting at 7:30 pm on Saturday with the Great Vigil of Easter. During this ancient service we light the new fire and bring light into the church for the recounting of our salvation history. Then, after we have renewed our Baptismal Vows, we celebrate the resurrection in a joyful singing of the Gloria before celebrating the first Eucharist of Easter.

Easter Day Sunday, April 21: 8 am and 10:30 am

Our celebration continues on Easter Morning, with a contemplative communion service at 8am and a Festival Eucharist at 10:30am.

Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week

Amy-Jill Levine is an Orthodox Jew who is also a passionate teacher of the New Testament. In this six week series she places the events of Holy Week firmly in their Jewish context. She writes,

“We will delve into the history and literature of the last days of Jesus' life. We find ways to understand and question our own lives through the stories of his trials and choices. This Lenten journey challenges us to examine our consciences and find out how deepening our relationship with Jesus and the Bible brings us into closer relationship with others and the world.”

As we welcome the new interpretation of Jesus' walk to the cross in the Stations of the Cross, this year seems like a good time to revisit and re-acquaint ourselves with the narrative of Jesus' last week from Palm Sunday to Gathsemane.

This class includes a DVD presentation by Professor Levine as well as a short book. Your contribution of \$15 will help to defray the costs for buying the course.

EVENT!

Thursdays at 4pm starting on March 7th. Please let Laura (office@stbenslososos.org) know if you plan to attend so that we can order enough books. There is also the possibility of a Weds class at 11am starting March 13. Please let Laura know if you would prefer that time. If there are 5 people interested we will add the extra class. Led by Caro+

Bishop Search

The nominations are in, the discernment process is well underway and soon the Standing Committee will announce the slate of candidates for the 4th Bishop of El Camino Real. On Monday May 6, there will be an opportunity for us all to meet the candidates and get to know them a little.

Then on June 1, our delegates (John Cribb, Lisa Gonzalez and Lorienne Schwenk, with Ann Lucas as alternate) as well as our clergy will take part in the Electing Convention. In order to be elected, a candidate has to receive a majority of votes among both the lay delegates and the clergy.

We expect that the Bishop-elect will be in the diocese in the fall but they do not become Bishop until January 11th 2020 when Bishop Mary hands them the crozier – a symbol of the Bishop's pastoral office. Bishop Mary's last visit to St. Benedict's will be on September 29, 2019.

Congratulations to Jim!

Jim Arnold is just completing his second year at St. Benedict's as a deacon intern. He has been accepted as a candidate for ordination which means that there is just a little more paperwork to be completed and then he will be ordained. Yay Jim!

We expect that his ordination will be on June 22 at Trinity Cathedral in San Jose. We hope that many of us will be there to support him.

40Prado Warming Center Donations

Sharon Porter

The congregation and St. Ben's has been providing donations to the Prado Day Center Homeless Shelter for several years. On the 1st Sunday of the month in conjunction with our monthly Prado Potluck, donations are collected in the sanctuary. However, **every Sunday is Donation Day**. You can find the donation bins located behind the last pew near where the choir sits. Items the Warming Center needs are non-perishable foods, such as, instant hot cere-

ACTION!

al, cold cereal, box almond milk, juice box drinks, coffee, creamer & sugar, trail mix/nuts in small packages, peanut butter & jelly, travel size shampoo/conditioner/soap/toothpaste, diapers, men's socks, etc. The Prado Warming Shelter has asked me to extend their continuing appreciation.

Please visit <https://friendsof4oprado.org> for more ideas.

Messy Church Children and Families

Children and families are welcome at St Ben's. This year we have added a couple of new families to Messy Church and we hope that growth will continue. In order to provide excellent Christian formation for these youngsters we need a few more teachers/mentors. If you would be willing to help during the 1st part of the Sunday service or to lead Messy Church, please contact Pamela Bleisch.

Also, there is the possibility of having a Vacation Bible School for 3 to 7 year olds for a week this summer. Vacation Bible School is typically five mornings and includes story, music, crafts and snacks. If you would like to help with this, please contact Pamela or Dianne Long.



Messy Church present the Story of the Good Samaritan. The traveler is set upon by thieves. The priest and Levi walk past. Finally, the good Samaritan appears.

Deacon Dispatch

Rev. Sharon Dalrymple

Ah, another day of rain with more in the forecast this week and next as well. We have had a lot this year to the point of perhaps saying (out loud) "it just needs to stop"; it's messing up **"my"** plans! But you and I cannot make it stop, can we?

The word **"my"** in the previous sentence is a telling word often in our thought process. Just like the young man who tells Jesus that **"he"** has kept the commandments and done all **"he"** could to live **"his"** life correctly, so he as what more can **"he"** do to inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

I suspect that by now, you have all gotten my drift by the underlining, bold type and quote marks on key words: my, he and his. With our own affluence and lifestyles, the majority of us often think **"we"** should be in charge and even believe we should and can control our own lives. How wrong we are!!

In the deaconate process when we talk about ordination and especially when we get THE ALL IMPORTANT DATE (Wahoo!), the terminology is "I will be ordained on (i.e.) June 19, 2013. That statement is followed by "God willing" (and sometimes added) "and the creek don't rise!". We say that because it is not about what we want or even what the bishop wants. It is said because it is up to God. So it is with the rest of our lives. Are our lives predestined? I don't know the answer to that. It is really not important to me if it is or isn't, but what is important to me is that I remember that **"I"** don't control things.

I am able to do things by the help and grace of the Holy Trinity. Through prayer and discernment I am able to choose a path through life. Sometimes **"my"** chosen path doesn't work out. So hopefully I will not waste time whining, but will trust in God, back up, pray and try another path. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119) Our days are full of choices and I must let God lead me.

To channel some old song lyrics, "Who'll stop the rain?"...What I know for sure is, "It ain't me babe!" :)

St. Benedict's Profile: Ed Valentine

I think it's a great idea to feature parishioners in the newsletter each month. Good, at least, in the sense that it helps me to know you better. That said, being the actual subject of the profile is another thing altogether. Not knowing where or even whether to begin, let me dive into what St. Ben's means to me.

I think it's rare to find a mainstream church that is, at the same time, steeped in the traditions and practices of a collective faith and also open to all comers in whatever form their experiences of God take shape. I have looked far for such a church and participated in several along the way, and I am forever grateful for the wisdom and examples that have been shared with me at each stop. Here is different though.

I participate most frequently in the 8:00 a.m. contemplative format service. It is a type of give and take worship that opens me up and feels like the spiritual home I thrive best in. For all of its conversation, personal prayer, and intimate informality, the service still anchors on the reading of Holy Scripture and the liturgy of Communion. The combination of external and internal worship is a special blessing for me.

I am in my third year here. Early in that time, I saw Pastor Caro speaking at a forum on immigration justice. Later I saw her speak at a Women's March event in SLO. I was already in the St. Ben's community and needed no further "sign" that I was in the right place, but this tugged at my intuition that faith is a contact sport as well.

I've spent time serving on the Board of the Homeless Foundation of San Luis Obispo County which later became the Friends of 40 Prado. We were engaged in raising funds to establish a new homeless shelter in SLO. With the opening of the shelter, I have stepped back to pursue other callings. I share this bit of bio because few things in my life speak to me as clearly and restoratively as the communion of service - service which goes two ways always with me as the greater beneficiary. When I saw Caro out in the community speaking in the cause of social justice, I knew also that the spirit of that outreach would come back to enrich our church.

I've been in this region for over 20 years now. I wonder where the time goes. I came in the midst of a career in education and from a variety of roles and locations. I served in the San Luis Coastal School District first as Assistant Superintendent and then later as Superintendent - retiring in 2010. (Yeah, I'm 70 years old, so stop counting!). I've been married to Debra for 37 years and we raised our now grown children, Ann and Becky, in the schools and on the athletic fields of our community. Ann is a physical therapist and Becky is an architect. We have two grandchildren, a boy and a girl. (See photo of the girl. She's the good-looking one.)

We're told to count our blessings. Mine may be too many to comply. Life has had its struggles and hardships at times. All lives do. But family, work and worship have all been a special Grace given to me. St. Ben's has been a perfect place at a perfect time. Blessings to you all.



St. Benedict's in Bloom

Liz Maruska and Laura DeLoye

Enjoy the spring blossoms around the veranda and in the Iris Garden. The paperwhite narcissus and golden daffodils are amazingly fragrant. Keep your eye out for more iris blooms as Spring progresses. They have recently been divided and fertilized so I am hoping for a bigger, more colorful display. Let me know if you love gardening as much as I do.



Chili Cook-Off

The 4th Annual Canterbury Shire Chili Cook-Off is ON, and set for Saturday, April 6th, at St. Stephen's from 4-6pm!

Full details and a flyer with information will follow in the coming weeks, but in the meantime you can get ready to participate by marking your calendars! (Sat. 4/6 from 4-6pm), donating and/or soliciting Silent Auction items, planning to enter a chili in the competition, and promoting the event and selling tickets in your local parish.

Ticket prices will be the same as last year: \$15 at the door; \$12 pre-sale; and \$8 for children 12 and under. Ticket includes chili tasting and voting, and a pulled pork and coleslaw dinner with beverage. We will have a vegetarian dinner option this year as well! For the Raffle portion, tickets will also remain the same: \$5 = 1 Ticket; \$20 = 5 tickets; \$50 = 15 tickets; and \$100 = 40 tickets.

EVENT!

For any questions, or to donate Silent Auction items, please contact Chaplain Berkeley. Take care, and hope to see you on April 6th!

The Abundance Shop

Deb Garza

The Abundance shop continues to thrive and grow beyond our expectations and our dedicated volunteers continue to be the heart, soul and breathe of the shop. Every year we honor our volunteers by holding an event that they can attend that involves a shared meal.

On February 10, we had our annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch in the Great Room at St. Benedicts. It was catered by one of our loyal congregants and cook extraordinaire, Lorianne Schwenk of "The Singing Kitchen", her catering business. Did I also mention that she sings in the choir at St. Benedicts? We went with an Italian food theme that included an amazing antipasto-style spread of appetizers which featured some well received marinated olives, which turned out to be a crowd favorite. Then, I was able to personally serve each table their plates as I wanted to show my volunteers my appreciation for all that they do all year long by, serving them on this occasion. Although I wanted them to all just to sit back and enjoy, a few of them could not help themselves and gave me such much appreciated assistance. Dinner was a lovely baked chicken with a multigrain combination and green beans. Desert consisted of either dulce de leche cake or Ghirardelli brownie...or both. The food was amazing and we were able to send the left-overs at the end of luncheon to the Warming Center. Connie Weldon hand carried them to the center and there was enough to feed at least 8 people.

With sunflowers on the tables and warm fellowship added to the tasty lunch served, it was a successful, well received event that was appreciated by all who attended. A special thanks to Pamela Bleisch, Sharon Dalrymple and Rev. Caro Hall who helped in the set-up and tear down.

You cannot put a price tag on this time we spent together during this special event and the fellowship and unity it brings.



Please open your hymnals to 377 as we sing together, The Beagle Unto Heaven Doth Bay...with accompaniment.

March April 2019

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