

# 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

Alan Kiste

Lorienne Schwenk

Lynn Wise

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

**Sunday Services**

Refreshments and fellowship follow service.

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 Family 'Messy Church'

*1st, 3rd, 5th Sunday each month:*

10:30 am Children's Chapel

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**Dear Friends:**

Only six weeks to go to our Gratitude Dinner! This is a highlight of the year for me, when we get together to do nothing except enjoy each other's company and be grateful for God's blessings to us. I've started on my list of things I'm grateful for in our common life together:

I'm grateful for faithfulness: For the altar guild who make sure everything is ready not just on Sundays but also on Tuesdays and second Saturdays. For Stef who makes our service bulletins and Benediction Weekly and keeps me on track. For people who empty the dishwasher.

I'm grateful for courage and risk-takers: for the group of intrepid yet experienced teachers who created the first ever Vacation Bible Camp here at St Ben's and gave a group of children a new experience of church and of fun together.

I'm grateful for generosity: it was amazing how quickly the money for the road repair was given. Thank you to each one who wrote large checks to cover that unexpected expense.

I'm grateful for volunteers: for the dedicated people who sort and save and sell, and savor the neighbors who come into the Abundance Shop. For those who have spent time learning more about how to help those in mental pain or how to safeguard the children and vulnerable ones in our midst.

I'm grateful for conversation: for the 8 o'clock group who leap into the Scriptures each week and teach me so much; for the Vespers group who share their lives as well as their spiritual insights and for the poetry reflections of the second Saturday service.



I'm grateful to God for bringing each one of you into this odd thing we call the Body of Christ and specifically into this manifestation of it here in Los Osos. We are richer for each other. We are challenged and supported and blessed by our experience of community in Christ. I am grateful for each guest and newcomer, and saddened by each one who moves on to other places or other paths.

Of course this list isn't in any way complete. My heart swells every time we get to worship together and to manifest our true identity as the children of God, members of Christ.

As we enter the Season of Creation followed by the season of Gratitude, I hope that you too will think of all the things and people for whom you are grateful, and give thanks to God and one another.

with thanks and blessing,

Caroline J. A. Hall

@StBens\_LosOsos

## Finance and Building



At the end of July, the Operating Fund was ahead by \$13,000. About \$6,000 of this was due to people paying their pledges in advance (thank you) and the other \$7,000 was from the Abundance Shop. A big shout out to Deb, Karin and all the volunteers who make this miracle happen. We have largely managed to keep expenses within the necessary limits but have had a couple of unexpected items so expenditure is over by \$1,000.

However, the vestry is aware that we are not putting money aside for necessary anticipated expenditures and are still paying the Rector for only three-quarter time though she is working roughly full-time, so an ad hoc budget committee is being formed to consider what our “real” budget should look like.

Repairing the road was an unexpected expense which is unlikely to occur for another 10-15 years but which we could have anticipated. Thanks to the generosity of several households, we have enough money to pay for the new road surface. Praise God and thank you all.

The veranda has been repaired and repainted which was necessary maintenance that had been delayed until after the sprinkler pipes were installed. This used up the Building Fund. Our thanks go to everyone who contributes to the Building Fund on a regular basis so that we have the money for large repairs as well as new building.

You will remember that we have to install the fire sprinkler system before we can do anything else that requires a permit. This got stuck for a long time but now we have a new electrician on the job and are hopeful that we will soon see more progress, but in the meantime PG&E have warned us that it will cost more than we had been told. We wait to see what that means.

### Highlights of the Parish Council

- We welcomed Susan Miller to the vestry to complete the term vacated by Lynn Wise. Lynn and Ted will no longer be attending St. Benedict's. They are missed.
- The Parish Council recommended that Berkeley Johnson be formally admitted to the discernment process for Holy Orders. The next steps for him are to have his psych eval and meet with the Diocesan Commission on Ministry who will make a recommendation to the Bishop. Please hold Berkeley in your prayers.
- Laura DeLoye has been working in the office for six months and the vestry agreed to increase her pay to honor her excellent work which was described as “nothing short of stellar.”
- Liz Maruska explained that the ever-increasing ground squirrel population is threatening expensive plantings. The Parish Council agreed (with several abstentions) to ask the maintenance crew to actively discourage squirrels in those areas.
- Following the conversation started in the last Benediction, it was agreed to use the Bidding Book only for people who those in attendance that day wish to remember in prayer. Those we wish to pray for long-term will be mentioned by name when we have healing services and in the prayers of the intercessory prayer circle.
- The Abundance Shop has had several cashiers resign and so new volunteers are urgently needed. Homeless people and others in need will now be asked to get vouchers from Los Osos Cares so that cashiers will know when it is appropriate for them to have free merchandise as several people have been exploiting the loose system, and it has been difficult for cashiers to know how to respond.
- We agreed to have an end of summer barbecue with music from high school band, Jenna and the Funky Fellas.
- We also agreed to contribute \$500 to the cost of Bishop Mary's farewell event.

## Look busy, the Bishop is coming!

Bishop Mary will be with us on September 29 at the 10:30 service. This will be her last official visitation and she will be confirming Maureen Titus, Sharon Porter and Jane Wu. Bishop Mary will continue as our bishop until January 11, 2020 when she will pass her crozier to Bishop-Elect Lucinda.

There will be an opportunity to say good-bye to Bishop Mary in San Luis Obispo on October 11. This is a deanery-wide event and is being catered so tickets are required. Please see John Cribb if you would like to be added to the list for tickets. John will also be happy to accept any donations towards this event. A gift for Bishop Mary will be organized separately.



## End of Summer Bash

July 29 at 3:30pm. Come and bring your friends to hear the amazing Jenna and the Funky Fellas. Several of us have heard and enjoyed this high energy group of Morro Bay High School students. They will be playing many songs we oldsters know and there will be room to dance.

Barbecue will be served at \$15 per person (eat-in or take-out as supplies last) and there will be a no-host bar. The music is free but we always welcome donations. Bring your friends and let's party!

## Gratitude Dinner

**EVENT!** Yes it's that time! **This year the Gratitude Dinner will take place on Friday October 18.** The dinner is provided by the Parish Council – there's no need to bring anything except yourself. Please plan to come and we will give thanks for all God's blessings. If driving at night is difficult for you, please contact Laura in the office and we will try to get everyone a ride.

## Hollister Institute re-visioning

Several people have been meeting to discuss the future of the Hollister Institute, and a meeting was held after church on August 25 to give other people a chance to weigh in. We have basically agreed that

- we want to continue the Hollister Institute as an outreach activity to engage others in conversation with us in topics of religion, philosophy, ethics and spirituality
- that Hollister groups should have an intellectual appeal which does not exclude art and other creative expression
- ideally we would have 3 or 4 sessions per year each lasting 4 -6 weeks.
- in addition to collecting ideas from a wide group we need a smaller council to discern the ideas that will have the most "juice" and to find people to lead them; and also to consider development of the Institute.
- each session will also need at least one logistics person.

For more information, and to volunteer please talk to Jane Wu or Susan Miller.



## First Saturday: Landscapes of Grace

The Rev. Susan Plucker writes: "Jesus said: "Come, follow me." My invitation for this first Saturday morning in October is: Come, journey with me and discover glimpses of the mountain, the wilderness, the garden and the road of our four gospels. The material presented will be an introduction and brief overview to the work of Alexander Shaia with whom I was present for several years in the early as he was preparing to first publish his first book, The Hidden Power of the Gospels; Four Questions, Four Paths, One Journey. Dr. Shaia's approach to the gospels as four spiritual movements within our spiritual journeys can help us to read, study, pray and incorporate into our lives the awe-

some gifts of the scriptural foundation of our faith. Bring yourself and a spirit of openness. No hiking shoes or special gear required.

Alexander Shaia writes, "It was around 11 p.m., November 1, 2000. For some thirty years, I had puzzled a deeper truth in Early Christianity's choice of precisely four gospel texts and their sequencing into a Three-Year Sunday Reading Cycle. What lay behind those choices? Were they the result of a believed oral tradition? - winners in a protracted theological tussle? or were the four clearly inspired?

On that cold, clear, starry night in Northern New Mexico, I was up late reading Robin Griffith-Jones' *The Four Witnesses*. Suddenly, an answer arrived to my long held queries - an answer that satisfied both my critical mind and long-ing heart. I reached for a legal pad and furiously wrote in a first attempt to describe the contour of this new landscape.

What followed has been years of research, questioning, challenging the premise, traveling thousands of miles, addressing hundreds of communities, leading seminars with clergy and spiritual leaders and writing, writing, refining and rewriting. Today that insight is called by a formal name - [Quadratos](#)."

## Los Osos Cares

For some time, Los Osos Cares has been attempting to create an authorized parking program which will allow homeless people in Los Osos to sleep in their cars without being harassed by the sheriff. The Los Osos Library is willing to try a three month pilot project starting October 1 for 3 cars only. In order to make this happen we need volunteers to check people in each evening (about 8:50- 9:15) and out again each morning (6:45 - 7:05) making sure the parking lot is clean and ready for the public.



If you can help a couple of times per week, please see Caro+ as soon as possible. Thank you.

## Walking Your Talk

There are two additional opportunities in September to put your feet where your mouth is. On September 21 EcoSlo is holding its annual Creeks to Coast Clean Up from 9am to 12pm. For several years, St. Benedict's has fielded a team to help clean up an area of the beach. If you are interested in being part of the team this year, please see Caro+.

On September 28, Trinity United Methodist Church is holding a sponsored Hunger Walk. This will be a pleasant walk around Baywood Park, starting at Crizer Construction at 9am. Team members can donate the money they raise to provide food for local families served by Trinity's food program, People Helping People of Los Osos Cares. Envelopes to collect donations and a sign up list are available in church.

## Welcome to new and newer ( and less new) people

In the last few months we have been catching up with people who have joined St. Benedict's in the last few years but never been formally welcomed and acknowledged. Members of St. Benedict's commit to showing up, making regular donations to the church and praying for our mission and ministry. Pictured here are Esta Kandarian, Rev. Carol and Rev. Jerry Walton, Jean and Jack Senter, Berkeley Johnson, Jane Wu, Ed Valentine, Sharon Porter, Helen Schneiders, Elaine Beckham, Rev. Susan Plucker, Linda Turney, Maureen Titus and Linda Quesenberry.

Others recognized include Jim and Roz Malone, Deb Garza, Dianne Long, Susan Miller and Brad Stamets, Tamara Cox, Suzan Vaughn and Pat Henry, Marion Hart, Kyan Vander Weele and Arianna Welch.





## Special Services Coming Up

On Wednesday October 2, there will be a special evensong at St. Benedict's with a combined choir from several of the deanery churches (Episcopal churches in SLO county). We will be celebrating St Francis Day. Please plan to come.

On Thursday October 24, our sister congregations of St Luke's Atascadero, and St James, Paso Robles will be celebrating the addition of Rev. Jim Arnold to their team. Everyone is invited. The service will be held at Bethel Lutheran Church in Templeton in the evening, and Bishop-Elect Lucinda will be officiating.

**Blessing of the Animals:** On Sunday October 6 we will be celebrating St Francis Day and invite you and your friends to bring their dogs, cats and other (well-controlled) critters to be blessed at lawn in front of the South Bay Community Center at 3pm and the parking lot by the Middle School field at 4pm. This is an easy invitation to introduce your friends to St. Ben's.

## Vacation Bible Camp

Laura DeLoye

St. Ben's hosted our first Vacation Bible Camp this summer from July 22 – 26. It was "All Aboard the Gospel Train!" from 9:00am-12:00pm each day!

We were small in numbers this first year, but it was a success for the children who came. They met new people, learned more about the stories of Jesus and got to know St. Ben's a little better.

From sharing in singing to healthy snacks and homemade cookies (special thanks to all who provided these delicious goodies!); from drumming on the veranda to playing with a parachute on the lawn; from riding on the make-believe train to the scavenger hunt on Friday – there was much fun had!

Many thanks to the entire St. Ben's team who pulled together the activities, the snacks, the t-shirts, the mowing of the grass and filling in of the ground squirrel holes, the bible stories, the games, the crafts, the care, love, laughter and smiles.

Gratitudes to the team led by Dianne Long, Ann Lucas, Pat Stoneman, Pamela Bleisch, Carol & Jerry Walton, Jean Senter, Stacy Long, Barry Turner, Laura DeLoye and Caro+.

There are plans to invite the children and others back over the course of the year – stay tuned for how you can get involved.



## Donations to 40Prado Warming Shelter

Sharon Porter

One year ago, September 2018, San Luis Obispo proudly opened the doors to its new homeless shelter, 40Prado Warming Shelter. Daily, it provides food, shelter and personal care to men, women and children, who are offered assistance in seeking permanent housing, counseling, job training, and veterans services. 40Prado provides not just a Shelter, but a means to an end.

The end of summer, however, means it's back-to-school time and the beginning of fall. Kids, parents and not-parents need stuff to help them get a good start each day. St. Ben's parishioners traditionally donate non-perishable breakfast food and personal items, such as cold and instant-hot cereals, fruit juice and squeeze fruit packets, breakfast bars, coffee, packaged creamers and sugar; disposable plates, cups and utensils. Peanut butter and jelly is a favorite mainstay for any meal. Also, the Shelter always welcome toiletries, such as toothbrushes, travel-size toothpaste, soaps, shampoo, and razors. <https://friendsof4oprado.org> can provide you with more ideas.

Your donations are gladly accepted throughout the month. Please place them in bins behind the last pew near where the choir sits. Following the 1st Sunday of the month's Prado Potluck, I'll collect them and deliver them to the Warming Shelter. If you have any questions, please let me know.

## Living Abundantly—The Abundance Shop Journey of 25 Years

Karin Cake, Don Maruska

For decades, St. Benedict's Episcopal Church has been seeking to live out the Gospel truth—Jesus came that we may have life and have it abundantly. This showed up in the early days when we had “abundance budgets.” These were budgets where the expenses exceeded the pledges and historical plate giving. We trusted that if we were true to our belief in God and applied intentional effort to follow that belief, the money needed would follow. This wasn't easy. In fact, at one point, even the diocese advised us that we should close St. Benedict's. Nonetheless, we persevered.

A big part of making up the difference has been the proceeds from the Abundance Shop, which have grown steadily, even as thrift shops have proliferated in the area. First, we decided from the start that we would call our shop the Abundance Shop because we were truly giving from the abundance of our worldly goods to offer opportunities for people in need.

We've had a number of items donated to help our community outreach efforts; dolls, a large mermaid fountain, collections of pewter, silver and glass, books and pictures. The donors have usually been looking for how best to donate these items, and to whom. We're happy to be the ones to find a new home for their treasures! Items of high value, especially those too fragile to be handled a lot, are often passed to a skilled online seller. Since there are costs for shipping and handling, insurance, etc, those are higher priced and sometimes attract online buyers from other countries.

Second, St. Ben's tithes 10% of proceeds from the Abundance Shop to other charities working in the community, even when we haven't hit all of the revenues we need for our own budget. This positioned the Abundance Shop as a broader community resource. And the story continues.

What have we learned:

- We can live the gospel truth of Jesus coming that we may have life and have it abundantly.
- People are preferentially attracted to our message of abundance. It's far more attractive than talking about hand-me-downs.
- Giving to others even when we haven't yet set aside enough for ourselves results in more people contributing to us. Sacrificial giving works.

As we move forward we ask ourselves, “How might the work of the Abundance Shop impact your life in a fruitful way?” Blessings to you and all who keep the faith at the Abundance Shop.

## Abundance SHOP: A First Hand Account

by Anonymous

I worked at the Abundance Shop for 18 hours under the Supported Employment Program with Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA). The program places people back into the work in collaboration with various job sites in the community. People from TMHA are paid minimum wage to work at these sites, but most of the people I worked with at these sites were volunteers.

I am glad that I chose Abundance Shop as my first work site. The people there were energetic, devoted, and very accommodating. I immediately felt comfortable and it was easy to fit in. I worked mostly as a “sorter,” and was also trained on the cash register. It was good practice as was being around new people and getting back into a daily routine of being on the job. (continued)

### Now at the Abundance Shop...

A recent visit to the Shop revealed a surprising abundance of owls! Stock up on these smart-looking, Fall-appropriate feathered friends.



The work of being a sorter was simple, yet challenging enough, and it was a learning experience for me to help in the process of recycling all the stuff – mostly clothing and housewares— from donation to pricing and displaying it for sale in the store, or repurposing it to outside markets. The store, being small, keeps only the best, newest items. Much is re-donated to another, larger thrift store, and the really worn out clothing and other textiles go to be recycled for the fibers.

It was astounding to see how much stuff people get rid of or throw away. Some donations came unwashed and messy, others nicely sorted and clean. Just as it is important to understand where our food comes from, it is critical to know how our clothes and everything we use is dealt with once we are finished with it. Organizations like the Abundance Shop are doing a great service to their community and to the environment.

Finally, I want to add that my first day at work I felt a little bit odd and awkward. I found that at both sites I worked the volunteers assumed at first that I was just another volunteer. When they asked me the normal questions people ask you when you're new, I told them I was with TMHA. Most were not aware of what that was, and so I told them what the acronym stands for, "transitions mental health association." On a visceral level (and may be it was just my own head talking to me), I felt a twinge of that stigmatization associated with mental illness. TMHA is an organization that supports and helps people with mental illness and other problems, such as a history of homelessness, segue back into the work world. This is just an observation I made and not a criticism of any one place or person. I would like to suggest a solution. Perhaps there should be an orientation of the TMHA supported employment program workers to the staff (including the volunteer staff) at the employment sites. This would make it easier on the folks in transition, and it would help to breach the gap and create relevance at the job site.

As a whole though, my experience has been a positive one. I feel more self-confidence, more connected, less isolated, stronger, and healthier. Thanks to the Abundance Thrift Store, Manager Karin Cake for asking me to write this article, and to my job coach at TMHA, Natalia, for pushing me and helping me move forward towards self-reliance and success.



## Earthcare News

John Horsley

**Climate Change Conference :** Join us at St. Paul's/San Pablo, Salinas on September 14 for Earthcare's conference on the stewardship of Creation at a time of climate change.



The three speakers are:

- Paul Deis, Educator, Citizen's Climate Lobby, The Climate Reality Project, who will present our current understanding of global warming from climate science;
- The Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Missioner for Creation Care. Diocese of Western Massachusetts , who will present a spiritual/theological framework for the climate crisis (Margaret has also been helping us to organize the conference in a series of long distance discussions by phone);
- Lisa Altieri, CEO, Climate Solutions.Net, who will present practical tools to put care for Creation into action.

The program also sets aside time for prayer, singing and small group discussion. You can register online (registration is \$25) on the conference web page at the El Camino Real Diocese web site ([www.realepiscopal.org](http://www.realepiscopal.org)), where full details on the conference can be found.

**Presentations by Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas:** Margaret also has a busy schedule in the days leading up to the conference. After speaking in Santa Barbara, she will be the speaker at three events in this area sponsored by Earthcare and People of Faith for Justice. In these presentations Margaret will show how caring for the Earth can become a spiritual practice that deepens our relationship with the Sacred.

"Earthcare, SoulCare: Reflecting Together" Tuesday, September 10, 7:15pm at St Benedict's

"Earthcare, SoulCare: Reflections from the Front Lines" Tuesday September 10, 12pm at Bethel Lutheran Church, Templeton.

"Healing the Earth, Healing Ourselves: Stepping into the Great Work" Wednesday, September 11, 10am at UCC of SLO.

September October 2019

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