

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

Susan Miller

Jane Wu

Benediction Publisher:

The Rev. Dr. Caroline J. A. Hall

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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

Church: 2220 Snowy Egret Lane

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Los Osos, CA 93412

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Dear Friends:

One of our newer members recently said that one of the things she likes about St. Benedict's is that we talk to each other about God and how we experience God. I like that too. I particularly cherish the conversations at Vespers, the Sunday 8am service and the Saturday night Eucharist when we explore the scriptures together and relate them to our own lives and thinking. I know these conversations also happen in the Sunday morning Bible Study and Education for Ministry. It takes courage to take the scriptures seriously and allow ourselves to be formed by the Holy Spirit through them, especially when we constantly have to re-interpret the language and concepts in a new way.

This is a new time, and we are the ones who have been called to read the ancient truths in the light of our own culture and our own situation. In order to do that with integrity and clarity, we stand firmly in the tradition of the saints and apostles so that we can know that although the new spirit will break the old wineskins, it is from the same vintner.

Many of us experience God most directly in music and in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. This direct experience of the living God also informs our understanding. The two go together, knowledge *of* God and knowledge *about* God. And then there's God revealed in Creation and in the moment by moment living out the gospel. Sharing our understanding and our experience - our God moments - with one another, builds up our faith and helps us to have trust and courage even in the darkest times.

This is why faith community is so important to me. I am much more able to connect with God as a result of my relationships with all of you. Your faith and your willingness to share your thoughts as we serve and worship God together inspire and uplift me. Thank you each one for your unique contribution to this church and your service to the God we worship and the Creation s/he has made.



We are entering the last few weeks of the Church year which culminate in the Reign of God Sunday, when we focus on the time when all things will come into balance and all will be restored or made new. And then it's Advent, and before you know it, Christmas.

In the busy-ness of Christmas it is easy to lose sight of God. It is easy to get so caught up in everything that needs to be done, in plans and gifts and parties that we lose sight of connecting in a deeper way to Godself. I would like to suggest that we might together engage in an Advent discipline to help us remember.

Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, who was our speaker at the Earthcare conference in September has written a little book of Advent reflections, Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down and I hope that many of us will read it and talk to one another about its way of revealing God.

We can use the strengths of this faith community to support one another in celebrating Christmas with our family and friends while staying deeply grounded in our faith, hope and love.

blessings,

Caroline J. A. Hall

@StBens_LosOsos

Notes From the Junior Warden

Michael Lucas

Dry Bones Fall 2019 will be memorable for our new cleaned and painted veranda, our new road surface and our last meeting with our current Bishop in our space with new members as well as new upper shades and clean windows. The qualities we have grown accustomed to carry with them a gently increasing cost of upkeep, refinish and renewal, as our 70-ish/almost 20-year-old building matures.

The Vestry noted that these ongoing expenses were significant, and significantly depleted the building fund. I worked with Parish Council Member Jane Wu, who has facilities management background to work on a ten and twenty year possible expense list. These building 'life cycle costs' are of course just a best guess, as prices in construction are very dependent on having a specific person to do the work for a price, and fluctuations in costs due to intensity of the regional construction market. That work was further reviewed by Susan Miller Stamets and Lisa Gonzalez, and by Parish Council at the October meeting in conjunction with budget reviews.

The summary is that our congregation is wise to put a minimum of \$10,000.00 aside annually, and perhaps as much as \$20,000 annually to form a Building Fund [a 'sinking fund'] to cover these expenses that arise in the ten and twenty-year windows. The \$10,000 represents our current level of giving to the Building Fund. While the road will be out of the ten year set, repainting and repairing parking is around the corner, along with repainting the rest of building, and contingencies for repairs to older electrical work, boiler, etc. Things like roof work loom just past the ten-year mark, along with the sanctuary floor and other major costs typical of an 80/30 year old structure. The bones are indeed good, and at this point dry- we hope to remain wise stewards of our wonderful facilities and grounds we enjoy from the wisdom of our founders. As you consider your annual giving, please reflect that our building fund is essential to the quality of worship, fellowship, and community outreach we have been blessed with.

Still Not Sprinkling It is difficult to construct a critical path, let alone believe the story of PG&E, our electrical and fire consultants- it is the stuff of novellas or a Netflix series with twists and turns. Thoma staff attempted to get a permit in August, and the County was unable to accept it...and our electrical engineers, Thoma, had new staff for us to work with shortly after. They basically started the electrical work over, and that included PG&E have yet another round of requirements. PG&E has their own engineering department reacting almost in real time as to new best practices, and we are close to having documents for submission to obtain the electrical permits from the county. I am happy to have had Jane Wu take over the communication on this as my teaching is full time resumed across the fall, and she has really held toes to the fire. Perhaps that is not a good analogy. I am convinced the pump house would make a very good manger scene. At this point we believe we have the designated funds to complete the work.

Building and Finances

Our financial situation continues to be good. Thanks to all of you who contribute faithfully and to the abundance of the Abundance Shop, at the end of September we were \$8,000 ahead on income and about where we expected on expenses. However, some people give in advance, and so it may be a question of timing in which case by the end of the year that \$8,000 will have gone away.

The Parish Council has been looking at longer-term expenses – things that will need to be fixed at some point. We need to put away about \$10-12,000 a year for major repairs so we don't get caught short by things like the road repair. But anything new will cost over and above this. Your donations to the Building Fund make these things possible.

We are still paying the Rector only three-quarters time though she usually ends up working full-time. It will take an additional \$24,000 per year to bring her up to full-time diocesan minimum plus pension and health insurance. Right now the average annual donation is about \$1320 per person, though actual annual donations vary from \$120 to \$12,000. The average would need to go up to \$1560 per person, that's \$30 per week, in order to be able to pay Caro+ for the hours she is working.

We continue to wait for the electrician and the county to sort things out to get the fire sprinkler system up and running. Right now it seems that we will need a new set of drawings in order to proceed. That could be \$25,000 which we had not budgeted but we have some reserve capital funds that we could borrow from if necessary.

God is good, and the people of St. Benedict's are faithful and generous so we continue to give thanks for all that we have received and look forward to seeing even more of God's abundance manifest in the future.

Highlights of the Parish Council Meetings

- Following a request from Deb Garza, the Parish Council (PC) discussed the staffing structure of the Abundance Shop and finally decided to hire another part-time manager on a trial basis pending a full review of shop operations due by mid-January. The PC expressed its gratitude and admiration for all of the Abundance Shop volunteers for their ministry of love in the community
- Party Time! Organized the End of Summer Bash and the Gratitude Dinner.
- Reviewed the future maintenance needs concluding we need to build the Building Fund by \$10-12,000 each year.
- Discussed the importance of fully paying the Rector for the work she is doing.
- Following a request from Alice Welchert and a long conversation we agreed by majority, with several people dissenting, to remove the link to Amazon from our website because of their various controversial labor and business practices.

Gratitude Dinner

Many, many thanks to the Parish Council for a delicious dinner, and to Suzan Vaughn for the Gratitude video which will soon be available on the parish website. You won't want to miss this lovely tribute to all the things that God blesses us with. About 60 people came to celebrate the evening together, to give thanks to God, and to enjoy the annual "Awards Ceremony".

End of Summer Bash – Jenna and the Funky Fellas

What a fun afternoon we had, dancing with Jenna and the Funky Fellas and eating great barbecue and other delicious treats. Thank you to everyone who made it possible!



Thanksgiving Dinner(s)

We will enjoy Thanksgiving Dinner at the church at 1pm on Thursday November 28. You are welcome to come and bring friends or family. Please look for the sign-up sheet and indicate how many people you are bringing and what food you will bring. Your help to set up at 12 and to stay afterwards to clean up is most welcome.

Who will cook the turkey this year???

In the evening the regular Community Dinner will be at the South Bay Community Center **if** there are enough volunteers from the different groups. If you can help please contact Andrea Brown andrea.wwpotter@gmail.com.

EVENT!

First Saturday: Meditation and Self-Care with Rev. Nita Kenyon

At this busy time of year, consider giving yourself a present and taking time to learn more about meditation and how it can become a regular part of your self-care. The Rev. Nita Kenyon is ordained to teach Kriya Yoga and is the spiritual director of Awakening Meditation and Kriya Yoga Center in Los Osos. Nita (who is a former member of St. Benedict's) brings her warmth and compassion to the teachings of Yoga and supports others as they awaken to their essential nature. December 7 9:30am

Open Conversations

Open Conversations are an opportunity for newer and older members to reflect together on aspects of our spiritual and communal life. On November 19th at 7:15pm, we will have a conversation about prayer and the common prayer life of St. Benedict's led by Caro+. These informal evenings are a time to ask questions and raise concerns. We hope that you will consider joining in. There will not be an Open Conversation in December.

EVENT!



Central Coast Readers Theater

Please join the Central Coast Readers Theatre in an afternoon of poetic unease as the players perform *Poe Unplugged: A Post Halloween Visit to the Dark Side*. Directed by Jonniepat Mobley, the readers will present the musings and rants of the important American poet Edgar Allen Poe, who was one of the first writers of the Romantic era. Several of the cast are members of St. Benedict's. The event is Sunday November 10, at 3 pm at St. Ben's.. Suggested donation is \$10.

EVENT!

Christmas Schedule

The annual Christmas Carol Concert will be on the evening of Friday December 13. Please contact the church office(office@stbenslososos.org) if you would like a ride to and from the concert.

The Blue Christmas service for those who are finding the holiday season difficult happens on December 15 at 6:30pm.

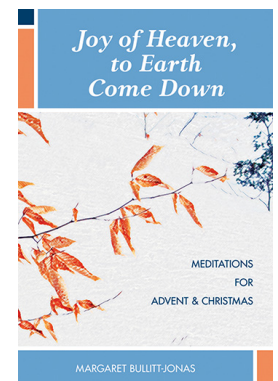
Christmas Eve services are at 4:30 with carols around the crèche and communion for all ages, then at 7:45 we warm up our voices with carol singing before the festival service of Christmas at 8pm.

Christmas Day we celebrate the nativity with a quiet communion service at 10am with just a few acapella carols, followed by brunch.

New Year's Eve is on a Tuesday and we will have a special Vespers of the New Year service at 5:30 followed by a pot-luck dinner.

Advent Reading Recommendation

Advent starts on **Sunday December 1**, and this year I recommend that you consider using *Joy of Heaven to Earth Come Down* by Margaret Bullitt-Jonas for your Advent reflections. Margaret was our speaker in September at the diocesan conference that Earthcare organized and you may have heard here speaking here at St. Benedict's. Look for this little book available at the back of the church by mid-November. We will have some opportunities to meet and talk about the book and what we are learning from it. Watch the Benediction Weekly for more details. Caro+



Safe Parking

Los Osos Cares started a pilot project of authorized parking at the Los Osos Library on Monday, October 21. Three people are signed up with the program and are permitted to park in the Los Osos Library parking lot from 9 pm to 7 am each evening. In order to make this happen, volunteers need to be there at the beginning of the time period (8:45-9:15pm) to make sure that the parking lot and the porta-potty are clean and there are no unauthorized vehicles there, and again in the morning (6:45-7:15 am) to make sure all is clean and that the parkers are on their way, and no unauthorized people are there.

Thank you to each person from the congregation and the community who have volunteered to make this work. Caro+ is still looking for someone to be the coordinator, and for some additional volunteers for weekend evenings. Please talk to her for more information.

Donations to 40Prado Warming Shelter

Sharon Porter

Just a helpful reminder as everyone enters into the holiday season, please look for some of these items on your shopping trips to bring to St. Ben's donation bins (located behind the last pew near the choir). More people, especially seniors, are coming to the Warming Shelter, now that the nights are longer and colder. They really welcome having these extras during their stay.

SUGGESTED DONATIONS for 40PRADO WARMING CENTER

(Please, no expired or partially-used items)

Peanut butter & jelly
Coffee, tea, creamer & sugar
Juice box drinks
Instant oatmeal cereal
Breakfast cereal
Instant hot chocolate
Dried fruit
Breakfast and energy bars
Trail mix and nuts in small packages
Chips
Kids snack items
Canned tuna or chicken

Paper plates, plastic flatware & bowls
Trash bags; Gallon-size Ziplock bags
Travel sizes shampoo, conditioner
Travel sized body soap or shower gel
Toothpaste and toothbrushes
Deodorant
Disposable razors
Hair brushes & combs
Sunscreen
Feminine hygiene products
White T-shirts
New mens, ladies and children's socks



From an Abundance Shop volunteer

I was given a lovely gift last week while working at the Abundance Shop. A woman came in and noticed our little alcove for prayer requests. She wrote one out and handed it to me. Seeing that she was visibly moved I asked if she wanted me to pray with her. We moved to a quiet corner. One of the many beautiful, human and holy connections at the shop. -Helen Schneiders

The Abundance Shop: Calm is the Balm

Karin Cake

Here are key thoughts from the recent Trauma workshop a number of our Abundance Shop volunteers attended. We had about 6 hours of helpful, discouraging, surprising and hopeful information to consider and to see how to put into our daily interactions with customers and shop neighbors.

The information was that childhood trauma (emotional, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, violence, substance abuse, mental illness and early loss of parent) are the foundations of Trauma. Trauma stays in the makeup of persons long-term and the more instances of early abuses, it seems, the more prevalent the effects. (continued...)

What we see is that irrational behavior is actually a predictable outcome of a traumatized life. As casual interchanges occur with those who could be expected to be influenced by hard and tenacious fears, PTSD occurrences, misunderstandings and confusion based on old trauma, we need to know how to respond in ways that will calm the trouble, not increase it. When we encounter a person who seems to overreact to an event or need, we can be the steady, safe one that reacts with compassion because we know not to increase the feeling of danger.

The loving help is to know a group of possible thoughts that can make a space of safety and trust where fear and dread were taking hold. Our coming from judgement, power, anger, fear and anxiety adds new trauma that increases the problem. If we can step aside from feeling attacked or manipulated, we can be clear with whomever we are interacting. The helpful ideas are being trustworthy, humble, collaborative and full of empathy. Talking with, respecting, listening to, and believing in persons helps them feel safe and calm in your presence. Calm is the balm that heals.

When we see an unhoused person juggling their need for food, a safe place to stash their gear, a way to sleep safe and warm and the fear they feel about people who seem like enemies, we can expect that they will be abrupt and demanding. We need to remember that their actions are making sense and we can be helpful in making their day easier, more predictable and healing. It asks a lot of our Volunteers to expect them to be ever wise and endlessly patient. Instead of that, we rejoice that they are willing to carry their best thinking and compassionate hearts with them as much as they can and to call for fresh Volunteers to step in when they have reached their limit.

The attendees found this workshop very helpful and are putting the practices into their daily interactions as the opportunities occur. We also see the effects of trauma in the world around us and are less activated by seemingly irrational behavior.

St. Benedict's EarthCare Hosts Seven Teaching Events on the Climate Crisis

The Rev. Barry Turner, EarthCare Committee

A year ago Bishop Mary invited, St. Benedict's Earthcare committee to host a diocesan conference on the role of faith communities in the Climate Change crisis. The result was our invitation to the Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullit-Jonas to visit the West coast for a week (9-8 to 9-15) of preaching, workshops, a clergy retreat and a diocesan conference, seven events in all. Margaret is the Missioner for Creation Care in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ (revivingcreation.org). A long-time climate activist, she believes that the ecological crisis – from climate change to the extinction of species – calls us to claim our kinship with all creation, to look deeply into our sources of hope, and to work together to build a just and sustainable future.

The presentations in Salinas were a first diocese-wide address on the spiritual dimensions of the climate crisis. Many congregations still are puzzled with what the church has to do with all of this. To help take the next step, Earthcare is planning a follow up to the conference with a 6-week Epiphany study prepared for diocesan churches with a challenging book full of resources, *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change*, by Jim Antal. We will offer that at St. Benedict's in Jan/Feb., 2020.

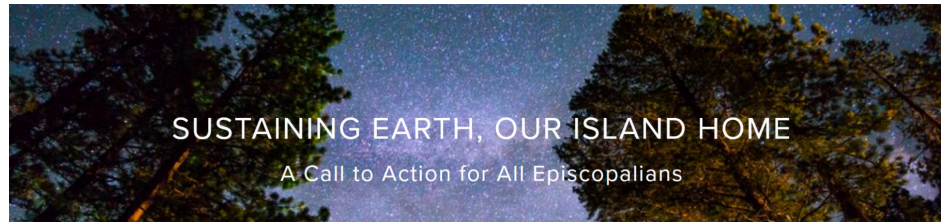
What Are We To Do?

'What are we to do? The majority of the US population sees the climate crisis as an urgent challenge but most people don't know what they can do. We see ourselves as individuals with little power to make a difference.



Bill McKibben says we need to move from an “I” to a “We.” The Episcopal Church General Convention Resolution 2018-C008: [Advocacy for Creation Care](#) invites congregations to leverage our power as community, beginning at the level of the congregation, then the diocese and the entire Episcopal Church. Working together raises our vision, builds advocacy and is a starting point for cultural transformation.

Toward this goal, the Diocese of California has pioneered the use of a Carbon Tracker tool named, *SustainIslandHome.org*. The website works from the assessment that households are responsible for 40% of carbon



emissions (including transportation). Beginning from the portal website, individual households identify their own diocese and parish to join with other households to aggregate their actions. A short inventory of your household usage establishes a private account and a baseline for your current carbon footprint. Over 70 different actions, each carefully explained, offer a wide range of possible next steps for moving toward more conservation and sustainability. Every parish is linked to its own geographical region with utility usage and economic resources available locally. Each household action is added with those of others in its own group and the total savings for CO2 emissions, gallons of water, and total cost savings is posted for your parish, then joined with the others in your diocese and then totaled with all other dioceses for the whole church.

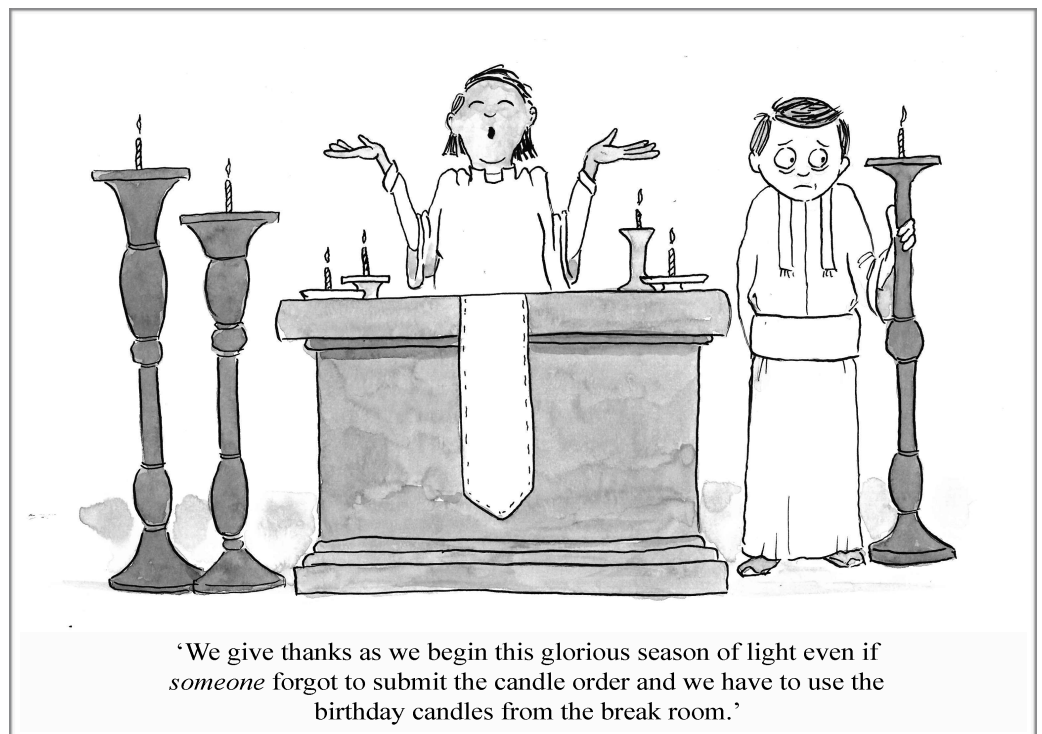
A general chart shows how your parish is doing within your diocese and your diocese with other participating dioceses (currently there are 21). Your own actions are not seen by others, only the aggregate actions of your parish. It becomes a community effort. If I can join with my neighbor, it is more likely that I'll do something similar. For the more competitive types you can set a goal to be the best group. Why not work on this together? *SustainIslandHome* is a way to do that.

After church on Sunday, Nov. 17, EarthCare members will introduce *SustainIslandHome* to our congregation of St. Benedict's. Plan to sit in and see a live demonstration of the website with explanations and descriptions of how it all works. It's not difficult. And it is completely voluntary how you may participate.

The massive work we are called to do in our generation can only be done together.

EVENT!

We are all in this together, regardless of the countless divisions of our world today. Our faith calls us to protect this planet Earth our Island Home for a sustainable future, for generations to come. What could be a more unifying work for our time?



‘We give thanks as we begin this glorious season of light even if *someone* forgot to submit the candle order and we have to use the birthday candles from the break room.’

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