

# 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 Parish Council**

Stef Shuman, Sr. *Warden*

Jane Wu, Jr. *Warden*

Lisa Gonzalez, *Treasurer*

Deb Garza

Diana Hammerlund

Steve Hirahara

Esta Kandarian

Alan Kiste

Michael Lucas

Lorienne Schwenk

**Benediction Publisher:**

The Rev. Dr. Caroline J. A. Hall

**Benediction Editor:**

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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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**Dear Friends:**

I have been fortunate in the last few weeks to be able to take time away from the parish to rejoice in God's goodness to us in Creation and in spirit. For a week early in February, Jill and I travelled to the coast of Texas to observe Whooping Cranes as part of a research project with Sam Houston State University. Although the weather was cold and windy and we had to wear every layer we had taken, we thoroughly enjoyed getting to know some of these birds almost personally as day after day we watched and recorded their behaviors. Then at the end of the month I was honored to lead a retreat for a group of women, mainly from St Stephen's and elsewhere.



Both of these opportunities gave me a chance to connect with God in a way that I often don't during the week here at St. Ben's. I have been reflecting on why that might be, and how I can bring that same connectedness into the often-mundane tasks associated with organizing a parish and keeping up with y'all to the best of my ability.

I don't have a clear answer, but I have two inklings that I want to share with you. The first is the Serenity Prayer; "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage (and time) to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference." It's a simple prayer but as I use it each day I am discovering that I can be less stressed. If I am late there is not much I can do about it. I can fret about why I didn't leave in time, or how badly I feel about keeping people waiting but fretting doesn't do anything but make me tense, and then I arrive bad tempered. How much better to accept serenely that I have failed to accurately assess the time and arrive joyfully ready to engage with whatever comes next.



The second inkling is remembering why I am doing things. I am doing them in order to further God's reign, or in order to share God's love, whether that's a meeting, a conversation or writing a newsletter article. If I'm doing them for any other reason, then they probably are not worth doing. It often takes a zillion little actions to make a difference, and it's easy for me to get caught up in the details and forget the big picture.

But that's what Lent is for. Lent is for remembering the big picture. We are made of stardust and sunlight. We are not God, we are just mortal and one day we will certainly die. But there is a lot of life to be lived and God's love and forgiveness are boundless. So we don't need to dwell on the difficulties ahead or get tangled up in the details.

I hope that you will join me this Lent in considering those moments when you feel closest to God as you understand God and imagining how it might be to live like that every day, every moment. And perhaps your Lenten discipline will be finding ways to do that, to bring your everyday reality and your God moments into closer relationship.

with love in Christ,

Caroline J. A. Hall

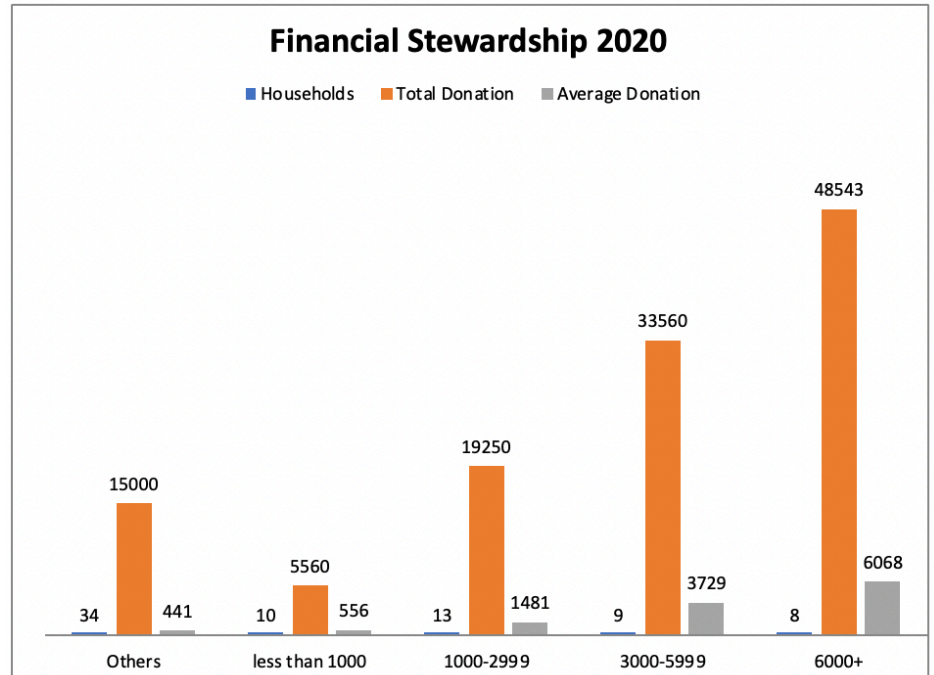
@StBens\_LosOsos

## Finances

We started the year in a strong financial position thanks to the abundance of the Abundance Shop in 2019, generous end of year donations and prepaid pledges for 2020. Thank you.

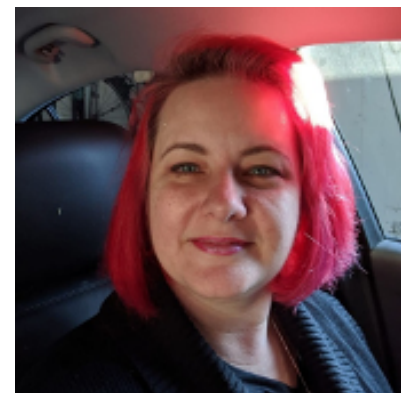
Several people have asked about the Rector's salary and why making it full-time is not a greater priority. The reality is that we are running the church on a shoestring and there is no additional money to be used to increase anything (there is no fat in our expenditure budget that could be used to increase her stipend.) This year the Vestry is paying the Rector three-quarters time salary based on her experience and the size of the church whereas in the past it has paid the diocesan minimum based on having a little church and no experience. This is a significant increase of about \$7k but to go to full-time would mean at least another \$35k. For us to pay the Rector more we need to either attract more members or we each need to contribute more.

At the Annual Parish Meeting we shared these data (chart to the right). This shows that a small number of households contribute a large part of the budget. In fact 17 households cover a little under half of our expenses. We are very grateful to them and also grateful to those who cannot contribute so much (remember the "widow's mite?") The Abundance Shop currently contributes 26%. Let us continually praise God for the abundance with which we are blessed in so many ways.



## Welcome Stephanie Olsen!

We are delighted to welcome Stephanie Olsen as our Administrative Assistant. Stephanie also holds down the office at St. Stephens in San Luis Obispo so comes to us with a great deal of experience. Because she is now serving two churches, Stephanie is here in the afternoons and so the office is open 1:30 to 4:30 Tues-Thurs. Please make sure you give Stephanie a warm welcome!



## Highlights from the Parish Council

- The Parish Council welcomed two new members: Stef Shuman and Esta Kandarian, both experienced Vestry members. Stef will be acting as Senior Warden (once again) this year and Jane Wu will be Junior Warden, assisted by Michael Lucas.
- The Parish Council Retreat will be held March 6 and 7, when the Mutual Ministry Review responses will be studied in more detail and the five year plan reviewed.
- The Rector will be on sabbatical from mid-August until Mid-October

## Building

Yes, the sprinkler project is still happening. New plans are being drawn up to be Ok'd by the county, new calculations are being made. We wait. Our thanks to Junior Warden Jane Wu, and Michael Lucas for continuing to ride this tiger.

## Annual Meeting

At the Annual Meeting held on January 26, over an excellent lunch prepared by Barbara Schipper (thanks Barbara) we elected two new vestry members, Stef Shuman and Esta Kandarian, and Deanery/Diocesan representatives John Cribb, Lorienne Schwenk, Barbara Hirahara and Alternate, Steve Hirahara. The Annual Report was presented, including the Senior Warden and Rectors' reports (it is available here: <http://www.stbenslososos.org/2020/02/27/annual-report-2020/>) and the 2020 budget discussed and adopted.

Because of the importance of remaining open to one another even when our ideas differ during this divisive time, especially in an election year, we took the time to engage in a table conversation on Politics in Faith Communities. (<https://www.livingroomconversations.org/topics/politics-in-faith-communities/>) Many people found this very helpful and expressed an interest in further opportunities for similar conversations.

We also reviewed in brief the Mutual Ministry responses which will help to guide the Parish Council and the Rector in their plans for this year.

Last but not least we made two presentations – the **Vestry Cross** was awarded to Ann Lucas for stepping up to lead the Music Program when John Cribb was taken ill, and the **Above and Beyond Award** went to Pat and Suzan Vaughn for the many ways they contribute to the congregation, not least with their generous hospitality and leadership of our contribution to People's Kitchen. (Photo Caro+ and Pat Henry)



## Open Conversation

Open Conversations are an opportunity to learn more about the Episcopal Church and St. Benedict's in particular. They are a time for us to explore the way we do things, the way we think about things and the differences between different perspectives. There are no dumb questions and no silly answers. We especially invite people who have started coming to St Benedict's more recently to join with long-term members in mutual exploration.

On **Tuesday March 17 at 7:15 pm** we will reflect together on Forgiveness, and on **Tuesday April 21 at 7:15 pm** we will talk about Creation Care together with members of Earthcare.

You are welcome, if you wish to come at **5:30 for Vespers or 6:15 for a potluck supper**.

## Lent is here!

**Lenten reflection booklets** are available in the church. Lent is not Rocket Science: *The season of Lent prompts us to ask questions, big and small, about the nature of our being and about our role in the world. In these daily Lenten reflections, astronomer, physicist, and Episcopal Bishop W. Nicholas Knisely explores the intersection of faith and science, creation and the cosmos.* These booklets are available for free; however, a donation of \$5 covers our cost.

**Lenten Pilgrimage: Calling all adventurous spiritual seekers...**join us as we explore six women, their lives and times, and the questions and journeying that they spark for us. Each of these sessions stands alone – we invite you to join us on a Lenten pilgrimage of exploration.

- March 3 Eve
- March 10 Brigid
- March 17 The Desert Mothers
- March 24 Hildegard of Bingen
- March 31 Harriet Powers
- April 7 The Bride

This pilgrimage of reflection is grounded in the work of Jan Richardson, [The Sanctuary of Women.](#)

*Desert ammas, medieval mystics, women quiltmakers, and creative artists, biblical women from Eve to the beloved in the Song of Songs, as well as women working for justice: all these provide Jan Richardson with fodder for the fresh and sometimes unexpected reflections she has gathered into In the Sanctuary of Women. Through prayers and poetry, theological reflection and storytelling, Richardson opens up the rich possibilities of each day. Not your common prayer companion, Richardson will provoke thought and provide insight for any adventurous spiritual seeker. – Wendy M Wright*

Each day there will be a short Prayers for the Morning at 9:45 then after a short break, 20 minutes of Centering Prayer/silence together followed by the class at 10:30. You are welcome to come for any combination of these prayers and group work.

Everyone is welcome, (both men and women) whatever your spiritual background. Your experience may be richer if you choose to read the book but it is not required. The class will be led by the Rev. Carol Brubaker Walton and the Rev. Caro Hall.

**Quiet Morning:** on **Saturday March 21** there will be a Lenten Quiet Morning from 9:30 – 12:30. This morning's activities will draw from the same book *The Sanctuary of Women*, and will include times of meditation, personal reflection, poetry art and maybe even chant. Led by Caro+

### **Stations of the Cross:**

The wonderful Stations gifted by the Hirahara family, and made for us by Chloe White are back up! On **Weds April 1**, we will host the Chamber of Commerce in a social event so that we can make these beautiful sculptures available for others to enjoy.

We will also walk the stations together during Holy Week on **Tuesday April 7 at 4:30** and **Good Friday April 10 at 11:15 am and 2:15pm.**

## **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.

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. April 5 10:30 a.m., Palm Sunday Liturgy with Blessing of Palms, Procession and Passion Gospel.

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 4 at 4:30pm, and Good Friday at 11:15am and 2:15pm.**

Maundy Thursday April 9, 7:00pm 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 10, 12noon, 7:30pm** (stations at 11:15 and 2:15) 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 11, 7:45 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 7:45pm 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 12: 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.

## Altar Guild Luncheon

The Altar Guild will meet for a special morning of reflection, Eucharist, training and lunch on **Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup> 10:30 – 12:30**, led by Sarah Chesebro and Caro+. This will be a great time for anyone who would like to join the Guild to learn about it. If you are interested in the sacred work of preparing the church for worship and caring for our special linens, chalices and so on, please contact Sarah Cheseboro, Altar Guild Director.

**EVENT!**



## Trauma Informed Care

Many of the people that God asks us to reach out to in the community have experienced considerable trauma in their lives. It is helpful for us to have a greater understanding of the effects of trauma so that we can be courteous and loving as we develop friendships with them. There are a couple of training opportunities coming up;

**March 20**, Cuesta College: Trauma Informed Care an Integrative Approach

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/trauma-informed-care-an-integrative-approach-tickets-91701604969>

**April 24**, French Hospital: Using a Trauma Informed Lens: <https://sloco.wufoo.co.uk/forms/meutlkyvjv6sk/>

## Donations to 40Prado Warming Shelter

Sharon Porter

When I helped to serve at the People's Kitchen at the Prado Warming Shelter in February, I was impressed at the efficiency of our volunteers and the variety of food served to mostly men, women and some children. Everyone filled their plates and some were careful to avoid gluten, sugar, sodium and milk.

Although full-course lunches prepared and delivered by organizations and churches are ready to eat, the Shelter prepares dinners and sometimes breakfasts in their commercial kitchen. Your healthy kitchen staples are vital to the Prado chef. Packages of such items as dried grains, pasta, tuna fish, large cans of beans, fruits and vegetables, peanut butter and oatmeal, are all welcomed donations.

Non-food items like travel-size toiletries, paper cups, new socks and underwear and personal hygiene items are also appreciated.

As St. Ben's representative to the Shelter, Caro blesses your offerings that have been placed in the church bins before I take them to Prado at the first of the month. I sort through the donations and remove expired food and loose packets that the Shelter does not accept. Last month over 15 pounds of canned foods had to be discarded.

For your convenience, I have posted lists of preferred donation items to carry with you or post on your refrigerator. Prado is appreciative and grateful for our mission to help hungry and poor people. Thank you for your generosity.

**ACTION!**

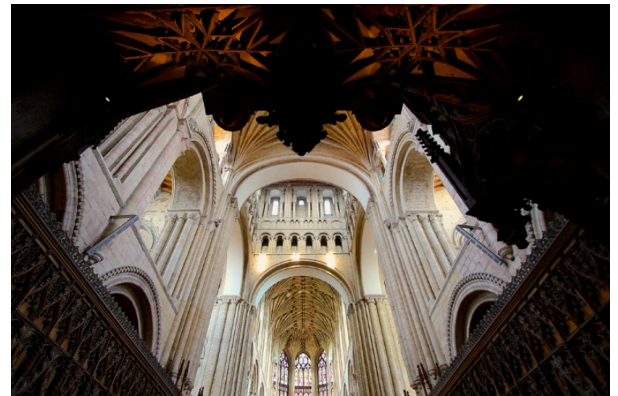
# Hollister Institute

## **Hollister Institute: Sacred Light presented by Michael Lucas.**

**Sacred Light: Gothic Light** on **Saturday March 7 at 3:00pm** will examine the origins of the Gothic by Abbot Suger in Paris, inspired by writing attributed to St. Denis, and its lightning-like expansion across northern Europe and especially the English Gothic. Michael's own images will include Durham, Salisbury, Ely, Winchester, and York Cathedrals, Cambridge and Oxford.

**Sacred Light: Nordic Light** on **Saturday March 14 at 3:00pm** will examine examples of contemporary/post-WW II spiritual architecture from urban and rural Denmark and Finland, rethinking wood, stone, space and light, including works of the great Finnish architect, Alar Aalto.

Michael Lucas is Professor Emeritus in Architecture at Cal Poly, and former Associate Dean for the College of Architecture and Environmental Design. He has been coordinator for the undergraduate thesis year, originated the current Beginning Design curriculum, as well as originator of several general education courses in the humanities focused on architectural topics available to students across the university. His research is primarily in architectural theory and environmental philosophy, centering on the changing relationships between architectural phenomena [such as light], and culture. Both talks are free and open to everyone. Donations are welcome.



## **Hollister Institute: 12-Step Spirituality.**

**Thursday Evenings 7-9 p.m. April 23 and 30.** Everything you wanted to know about 12-step spirituality, but were afraid to ask. This 4 hour offering is an opportunity to become familiar with the AA 12-step spiritual journey. No prior reading or book purchase is required. Reading suggestions will be available for your perusal. Our time will include some AA history, a review of the steps, my experience with the steps, and plenty of time for questions and personal reflection; including how to follow on afterwards, if you so desire, either in a group setting or individually. The Rev. Susan Plucker is an ordained Episcopal priest, retired from 20 years full-time ministry in the Diocese of Northern California (leading churches in Folsom, Red Bluff and Auburn). She has been exploring the landscapes of Christian Spirituality for about 45 years, at last count. That exploration includes her own journey, always with a spiritual guide or companion (i.e., spiritual director), and then moving on to teaching, assisting, walking with others on their journey as she continues reading, and learning from other recognized Christian authors and leaders in the field. Susan is a recognized spiritual director, retreat leader and teacher. Susan has twenty-four years experience with 12-Step Spirituality and continues to practice it daily on her own spiritual journey.

## Faith Climate Action Week, April 23 – May 1

Barry Turner

Two weeks after Easter, St. Benedict's will join churches around the world to celebrate *Earth Day*, which we will observe on April 26. Nationally, we join over 10,000 churches in a campaign for climate healing and action to raise our voice as faith communities in response to global warming.



St. Benedict's Earth Care Committee has planned two events which we hope will draw the interest of both parishioners and our local community. The first is an invitation to hear Scott Seacrest of "*Natural Investments*" on Thursday, April 23 at 7:00 pm. Then on Friday, May 1, at 7 pm we will host the award winning movie, "*The Human Element*."

**EVENT!**

Scott is an Accredited Asset Management Specialist with more than 20 years of experience in the investment industry. He focuses on investment and personal values alignment, clean technology and alternative energy investments, fossil fuel company divestment, sustainable retirement planning, and the overall building of durable financial prosperity for clients.

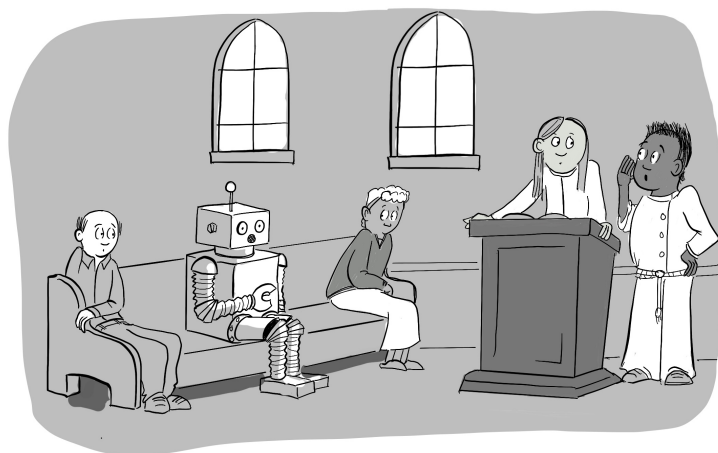
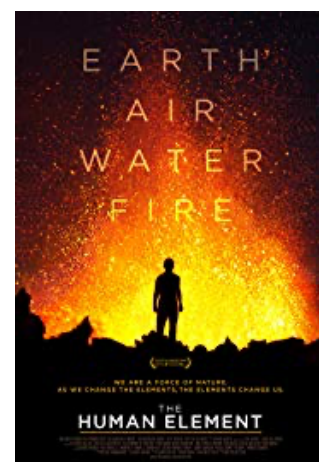
He will speak on opportunities and strategies to incorporate sustainable investments on your path to long-term financial success, and become highly aligned with your social and environmental sensibilities along the way.

(Continued on the next page.)

**The Human Element** (2018) Directed by Matthew Testa. Staring James Balog. *The Human Element* screened at the San Francisco International Film Festival.

Renowned photographer James Balog (CHASING ICE) uses his camera to reveal how environmental change is affecting the lives of everyday Americans. Following the four classical elements— air, earth, fire and water— to frame his journey, Balog explores wildfires, hurricanes, sea level rise, coal mining, and the changes in the air we breathe. With compassion and heart, THE HUMAN ELEMENT tells an urgent story while giving inspiration for a more balanced relationship between humanity and nature.

*"We are changing the other elements. At the same time, the elements are changing us. I want to bring this story to life."* -James Balog, *The Human Element*



**Caption Contest!** Thank you to those who submitted captions for this cartoon.

*"Okay, but...if it can't sin because it doesn't have free will, why is it taking communion?"*  
(Pamela B)

*"Psst. Maybe you should cut back on those sermons about diversity."* (Jeff W)

*"He kept on quoting the 23rd Psalm.... 'Thou anointeth my head with oil....'"* (Jill D and Caro H)

March April 2020

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