

# 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 Hamnerlund

Steve Hirahara

Esta Kandarian

Alan Kiste

Michael Lucas

Lorienne Schwenk

**Benediction Publisher:**

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**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

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**Dear Friends:** This is hard isn't it? I had no idea that we would still be sitting on our hands after four months... and I know that for many of us this is becoming very stressful.



The stresses are different for each of us and they're not well defined but as the days go on our stamina seems to drop, and whatever our neurosis of preference – depression, anxiety, paranoia – it's getting triggered. And, for me anyway, there are the things I didn't do in the first couple of months, things I put off because we were in crisis or things I simply forgot about and they haven't gone anywhere, and now they are bringing their friends to play. On the other hand, those of you who are very organized folk are running out of projects to do and classes to take.

And if that wasn't enough we have the inequalities of our society being brought into the light through the tragic death of George Floyd and too many others. And in the background, the relentless heating of the planet.

There are many things to grieve for, many things to lament over, and our scriptures let us know that it is just fine to do that. We don't need to have a relentlessly positive attitude. But every psalm of lament has a turning point, a point at which the lamentation turns to thanksgiving – the psalmist turns from his or her own preoccupations and looks toward God with praise and thanksgiving.

I see this more as a both/and then an either/or. There is much to grieve and much to lament over but there is also much to give thanks for. The very love of God is, in itself, enough. That God gave us life, the wonder and sustenance of Creation, and then came to live among us accepting a shameful death at the hands of those who would destroy love, only to rise again and conquer both death and sin – that is enough.

We are dwellers in this world but also in the reign of God which is here and not here, now and not yet. And every time we act with love we are building the reign of God. Every time we turn to God in prayer whether prayer of lament or prayer of joy, we are building the reign of God. Every time we choose compassion over judgment, we are building the reign of God.

There's a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke, [Go to the Limits of your Longing](#) in which God says: "Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror, Just keep going. No feeling is final, Don't let yourself lose me."

Perhaps that's where we are today – experiencing both beauty and terror. The key is not to resist but to let it happen knowing that we are securely held in God's love. No feeling is final – this too will pass. And we keep going. We keep going together. We are still the Body of Christ. We are still God's chosen and God's beloved. Let us never lose sight of that.

Thank you for walking with me this road of beauty and terror. Thank you for building the reign of God. Let us never lose sight of the one who sent us, who walks with us and who beckons us on.

Blessings,

Caroline J. A. Hall

@StBens\_LosOsos

## **When, when, when?**

Many of us are eager to start meeting again and yet we want to do so in a way that is as safe as possible for everyone. We have all read horror stories about choir practices or church services that have led to many people getting sick and even dying. We don't want that to happen here.

All the congregations in the diocese have been asked to prepare return to church policies. We gathered a team of Stef Shuman, Sarah Chesebro, Cathy Gildea, Kathie West, Celeste Pennington, and Stephane Olsen who developed an excellent plan. So here are the basics:

- Everyone will wear a face covering
- Initially there will be no more than 25 people in the church who will sit 6 feet apart (except for couples or household groups). In order to make that happen we will need you to sign up in advance
- The greeter will ask everyone how they are feeling and anyone who is not well will be asked to return home. We will keep a list of who came in case it is needed later for contact tracing.
- There will be no singing, no touching, no reception of communion, and no coffee hour.
- We will continue to have a live-streamed service at 10:30 on Sundays for the foreseeable future.
- It may be that we will choose to have a service on a Sunday afternoon or a Wednesday for the first couple of weeks so we can iron out issues with how we do it before we combine the Sunday morning live stream with an embodied service.
- We are not anticipating having outdoor services at the church because of the wind, the road noise and the ground squirrels. However we might consider having small services somewhere else outdoors.
- The sanctuary will ONLY be available on Sundays and Wednesdays in order to avoid a lot of cleaning between times. The only exception will be the Saturday night eucharist.

In order to do the Sunday livestream as well as have people in the church, it would be ideal to have a tech person who would manage the live-stream. There are many wonderful things we could do technically if we had more expertise. So if you know of someone who is a whiz at the technical production of a/v and might be available on Sunday mornings, please let Caro+ know.

At present, numbers of people infected with Covid 19 are rising in the county. We probably will not meet in person until that changes. The most important thing is to love one another however we can and that means staying safe.

## **Finances**

Thank you for your generosity! So far, we are keeping close to budget with both income and expenditures. The Parish Council decided in a spirit of love and faith, to pay all employees during the shutdown, even though the Abundance Shop was closed and there has been less activity generally since we can't use the church building or meet elsewhere.

We applied for and received a Payroll Protection loan and expect that this can be converted to a grant. It will make up for some of the lost income from the Abundance Shop. That is the big unknown. We had budgeted for \$50,000 income from the shop this year. The shop is now open again from 11 - 2 each day, thanks to Deb and Esta's leadership and our dedicated volunteers. The limited hours are to allow sorting and re-stocking to happen when the store is close to customers AND because many of our volunteers are older or have underlying health conditions so we don't have as many people available to operate the shop.

Whether we will make as much as we had budgeted from the shop for the next six months will depend on the progression of the pandemic here in the county.

Thank you again to each one of you who has made a special donation to St Benedict's during this difficult time. You help to make everything possible.

## Highlights of the Parish Council Meeting

- We are on the last leg of the sprinkler project – yay!! The contract was signed with PG&E and came in less than we expected.
- The Pre-Re-entry task force is doing a great job developing our official plan, but we don't know when we will start meeting in person again.
- The Abundance Shop has re-opened and did well in its first few days. Kudos to Esta and Deb.
- Caro+ will recruit people for the new Membership Committee.
- Caro+ will not be taking a sabbatical this year.

## Black Lives, White Privilege

A big thank you to Pat Henry for organizing the panel last month. If you are interested in continuing this conversation please talk to Pat or to Cathy Gildea. Cathy has some books which she is willing to lend out so that we can all educate ourselves.

## Blessings to Go!

For five Wednesdays, starting the last week in May, Caro+ and Lorieanne offered "Blessings to Go" outside the Abundance Shop. Each week we waved and sent a silent blessing to over 500 people who drove past, and prayed in person with from 5 to 15 people. A big thanks to Sarah Chesebro who set up the table, brought beautiful flowers each week and stayed to keep Caro+ company when Lorieanne was unable to come. And thanks also to Stephanie Olsen who made beautiful blessing cards that we gave to those who stopped by, and to Violeta Vallin who translated the blessings into Spanish.



## An Open Letter to Bishop Lucinda

Alice Welchert

For several years I have been troubled that the name of our diocese is "El Camino Real" and that the logo includes a mission bell. This name and logo reference a military-mission system that perpetrated crimes against humanity on the indigenous peoples of California.

The California State Parks website states: "The 21 missions that comprise California's Historic Mission Trail are all located on or near Highway 101, which roughly traces El Camino Real (The Royal Road) named in honor of the Spanish monarchy which financed the expeditions into California in the quest for empire."

I don't know why the diocese adopted a name that honors monarchy and empire.

Below are some relevant references from The Guardian and Bioneers. I think the panel discussion on "California Indian Genocide and Resilience" is powerful and I hope you will find time to listen to it.

I also recommend the scholarship of Kent G. Lightfoot, Professor of Anthropology at UC Berkeley, specifically his book *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers*. It's a scholarly work -- not at all polemical. Here are a few excerpts:

"The padres subjected the neophytes to a rigid schedule (time discipline) of prayers, meals, work, and more prayers, announced by the ceaseless tolling of the mission bells."

"The padres employed a variety of coercive measures, including solitary confinement, whippings, stocks, and leg chains, to punish neophytes for infractions against the work schedule and moral code." (continued...)

“The Fernandinos focused their enculturation program on young children. Adults who converted to the Catholic faith often maintained their Indian cultural beliefs, values, and identities, which the padres found almost impossible to erase. Consequently, the indoctrination of children began at a young age. The padres separated them from their parents and any elderly relatives.”

“The separation of young children from the elders of their tribes was a calculated move by the padres to accelerate the acculturation process and destroy Indian culture.”

The Anglican Communion Environmental Network made a Juneteenth statement about environmental racism that included the following: "We call attention in particular to the impact of environmental racism on indigenous peoples decimated by the effects of colonization. Tribes of people were enslaved, and annihilated by harsh conditions and by diseases for which they had no immunity in the first decades of colonization." This statement applies to what colonizers did throughout the Americas, including in "El Camino Real."

Right now, Confederate statues, as well as statues of Christopher Columbus and Junipero Serra, are being toppled and buildings are being renamed. To me, the name “El Camino Real” and the mission bell are as offensive and clueless as the Confederate flag. I believe it is past time that our diocese chooses a name and logo that reflects Christ rather than Christian imperialism.

## The Bishop is Coming!

Bishop Lucinda will join us for a virtual visitation on Sunday July 12 when we will also be celebrating St Benedict's Day! Since the Bishop will be celebrating in her own home, the easiest way to do this is to use Zoom. <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/797776046?pwd=VUFZSXY3UVpNVitJaDl2VmhmPS3E2UT09>

(If you have not used Zoom before you may want to practice in advance to make sure that everything works.)

But we will be live-streaming it from Zoom to Facebook so you will still be able to join in on Facebook.

After the 10:30 service, Bishop Lucinda will join us for a few short statements about who we are and what's important to us and then will participate in a general discussion. Everyone is welcome.



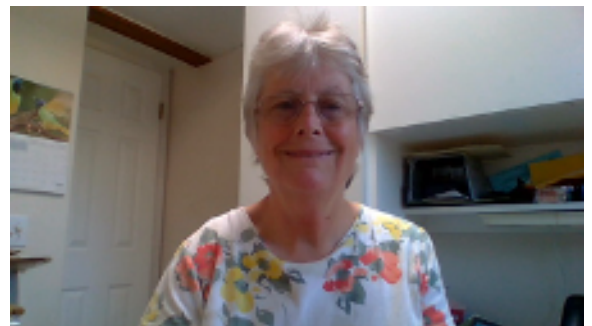
## Abundance Shop

Karin Cake

when money is tight, donating merchandise to the Abundance Thrift Shop helps the church by thousands of dollars a month! Way better than bake sales, and you get the bonus of more room in your home! Donation times are Tuesday - Thursday 11-2

## Pausing...

Consider taking a few minutes (about 3) at the end or the beginning of your day to pause and reflect. Each day at 7pm (or thereabouts) Caro+ is posting a short video with a reading and a prayer. You can find it on Caro's Facebook page or on St. Benedict's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/stbenslososos/](http://www.facebook.com/stbenslososos/)).



## Lamenting Our Losses/Litany of Praise and Gratitude, May 30, 2020

An adaptation of Psalm 139, in part, and requests from the congregation of St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos, in recognition that lamenting our losses and being grateful for what is, are compatible even in their apparent contradiction. Until we approach the pain of our loss we cannot reach through to the other side where gratitude resides. -Carol Brubaker Walton

We who are connected through the Christ we follow take time to acknowledge the pain of our losses in the past months.

On this day in 2020 we REMEMBER

Our first Sunday without the celebration of Eucharist, when we worshipped as a computer community.

O God, you have searched us

And known us. You discern our sadness close-up, And are acquainted with our grief.

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST.

We do not dismiss lightly

These losses which we've suffered, Yet are unable to mourn physically, In close proximity, As a community,

In itself a loss.

**O God have mercy.**

With Sarah, we remember how hard it was to lose her brother And be unable to console her mother or her younger brother. We pause, we take silence, we weep with her.

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST. With Judith, we remember how difficult for her to wave at family members yet not go near them.

And, finally facing her mortality,

Recognizing the next days, months, or years could be shortened.

**O God have mercy.**

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST.

With sadness we recall those in our midst, or related to or loved by those in our midst who have died, and we have been unable to gather for grieving as a community.

We RE-MEMBER their names... Rachel Espinosa, Daniel Renninger III, David Higgins and others

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST.

You, O God, Discern our sadness, And are acquainted with our grief and loss.

We RE-MEMBER More losses Events and gatherings, Uncelebrated graduations, Birthdays, Anniversaries We RE-MEMBER Losses related to cancellations of long-awaited vacations, of reunions, of nights-out with friends, of dinners and special dates, of family events, of musical concerts.

Milestones unheralded.

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST

We RE-MEMBER childhood play time losses from summer camps, from sleep-overs, from play dates, from swimming pools. Exercise, competition, entertainment foregone From sports events and gyms. Baseball, football, volleyball and soccer games

We RE-MEMBER and LAMENT

All loss of life, everywhere, loss of employment, loss of income, loss of a sense of meaning and worthiness. Loss of housing, loss of food security. God have mercy.

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST.

We RE-MEMBER and LAMENT our national insecurities, our embedded systems, our inequality. Our unconfessed racism and hatred. For every loss of life by human hands or by silence.

We lift up these names: Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd,

Rayshard Brooks, and other persons of color who have died violently.

**God have mercy.**

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD US FAST

We RE-MEMBER those attempting to escape violence in other countries. You, O God are acquainted with their loss and grief.

**God have mercy**

YOUR HAND SHALL HOLD THEM FAST

We RE-MEMBER

To express our gratitude in praise

And in song. For you, O God, have searched us and Known us.

We give You gratitude, O God,

With Jane,, who has been able to be home, without fixed schedules that she can share what she has with her neighbors, while her neighbors share hope, music and good humor.

We are grateful, with Judith that she could see her brother in England one more time.

We RE-MEMBER all who have kept in touch digitally by any means available waving, drive-by celebrations

All who have retained their sense of humor, and shared generously.

All who have cared for the sick, the homeless, those in grief, those in despair, the hungry, in body, the hungry in spirit.

Here are many we think of now, As we take one holy moment of remembrance now.

And we say, together,

**Thank you, God.**

We've asked church members to share what they have been doing during the pandemic. Some of the responses are on the following pages.

Greetings from SLO! Sharon is waving brooms at spiderwebs outside and Jane is experimenting with cauliflower pizza crust. Charlie sits with us for church but sleeps through the service.  
*Hugs to all.*  
*Jane Wu*



Before Covid19, this was to be my self-declared sabbatical to explore new opportunities. Much of May was managing my health and June recovering. Participating in "Rooted and Rising" discussion group at St. Ben's, listening to "Turning to the Mystics" podcasts (Thomas Merton), writing the "Grow and Enjoy Your Business" series, and baking with Liz and Kate have been nourishing mind, body and soul.  
*- Don Maruska*

So, I am fine, well some of the time. Missing going to the church, and my ukelele group and the LIBRARY!!  
*Miss all of you.*  
*- Kathie West*  
P.S. Forgot to mention how wonderful it is that Caro+ does so much for us virtually.

**Contemplation 4/24/2020**  
In the beginning  
I thought you'd cast us out.  
  
When I awoke  
into this changed world  
sorrow rose  
like an infant snake  
emerging from a broken shell.  
  
I was no longer able  
to dive through the materiality  
of my old and damaged body  
into dreams  
I'm now convinced  
I'd been a fool to believe.  
  
Instead I brooded  
on the suffering caused  
by this pandemic,  
  
kept watch  
over pain and isolation,  
fear and despair,  
  
until I remembered  
the sky and its depth,  
the earth and its warmth,  
saw again the filaree,  
red maids, and beetles  
attending a ringneck snake  
on her circular path  
  
past the even smaller creatures  
you,  
in your infinite love,  
keep spinning into life.  
*~~~~~Carol Alma McPhee*



"Shelter-in-place" in our county began when I was living by myself and almost, but not quite, recovered from two knee surgeries and a serious infection. Within two weeks, my daughter moved me up to live with her family in Moss Beach, and I remained there for almost three months, staying in touch with St. Benedict's through the eight o'clock Sunday service, Tuesday morning prayer and book discussion, and Vespers on Zoom. Before I left my home in San Luis Obispo, I'd begun my version of a contemplative life, and I did my best to continue it up north, the conversations I enjoyed through these Zoom meetings keeping me grounded. Each day I'd write a poem about my experience; now I have a series of poems called "Contemplation." Here is one of them.  
*- Carol A McPhee*

Kate is enjoying writing up a storm of fiction. She also started a contract job analyzing and summarizing legislation. She's been leading the household efforts to bake tasty sourdough bread and make oat milk.  
*- Don Maruska*

While we've been resolving medical issues, we've also enjoyed time on our own and with friends in the social distanced beauty of our local area.  
*- Don Maruska*

I am healthy, for my age, and keeping busy with Community Dinners, Laundry Love and the Abundance Shop. Still haven't completed all my household to do projects that I had planned on doing during this stay-at-home time, maybe someday.  
*Peace and love to everyone.*  
*Maureen Titus*

The best thing to come from this time is my new podcast on the Hobbit and the Lord of the Rings.  
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/a-sacred-fellowship/id1519124710>  
Everyone is invited to listen and to participate!  
*- Lorienne Schwenk*

Steve Cake describes himself as happy, healthy and not getting out in the weekend Pismo crowds. Karin is reconnecting with old friends. She also reports having been slowed down a bit since the smoke from the Pismo fire was so close...hopes to heal from that soon.  
  
We hear the Thrift Shop is feeding the church again, changing donations to support funds.  
  
They accept donations each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 11 to 4.  
*- Karin Cake*



# Hollister Institute

Join us for six weeks of exploration together as we consider the insights of the book [The Untethered Soul](#) and how it can help us on our Christian journey.

Here is what the publishers say about it:

What would it be like to free yourself from limitations and soar beyond your boundaries? What can you do each day to discover inner peace and serenity? *The Untethered Soul*—now a *New York Times* bestseller—offers simple yet profound answers to these questions. Whether this is your first exploration of inner space, or you've devoted your life to the inward journey, this book will transform your relationship with yourself and the world around you. You'll discover what you can do to put an end to the habitual thoughts and emotions that limit your consciousness.



By tapping into traditions of meditation and mindfulness, author and spiritual teacher Michael A. Singer shows how the development of consciousness can enable us all to dwell in the present moment and let go of painful thoughts and memories that keep us from achieving happiness and self-realization.

*The Untethered Soul* begins by walking you through your relationship with your thoughts and emotions, helping you uncover the source and fluctuations of your inner energy. It then delves into what you can do to free yourself from the habitual thoughts, emotions, and energy patterns that limit your consciousness. Finally, with perfect clarity, this book opens the door to a life lived in the freedom of your innermost being.

The conversation happens on Tuesday mornings for six weeks, starting July 7 at 10:15 (after Prayers for the Morning at 9:45). Everyone is welcome, of any faith background or none. Zoom: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/797776046?pwd=VUFZSXY3UVpNVitJa-Dl2VmhPS3E2UT09>

## "Creation Is Suffering -- How Will We Respond?"

Over seven weeks this spring, a dedicated group participated in the Hollister Institute's program based on the book, "Rooted and Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis." We experienced the power of many voices from multiple faith traditions. For our concluding session, Lorie Schwenk arranged for the editor of the volume, Leah Schade, a Lutheran minister and professor, to join us for discussion.

As we met, read, prayed about, and discussed the material, we found many insights and much to urge people of faith to take action. Each of us found topics that resonated deeply with us and prompted personal responses. Here are a few perspectives. We hope many more in the parish and beyond will join us in the journey of reclaiming stewardship for our planet.

### **The World as a Sacrament**

We wrestled with the question posed by the editors of this book: "How can we use our voices and [actions] to make it politically possible to do what is scientifically necessary? This will not be easy. We will have to root ourselves in the love and justice of God." (p. 109) As a long time student of Christian theology I was impressed by the work both historically and today by the Orthodox Church. The Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis, archdeacon and theological

advisor of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew describes the early history of the eastern Christian theologians who can lead the way today in this crisis of the natural world. At the heart of this tradition is the conviction that the world is a sacrament, a mystery revealing the divine in tangible Creation. "As he [Bartholomew] regularly contends, climate change is not primarily a political or a technological issue; it is not essentially a technological or technocratic challenge. It is as we have come to appreciate, fundamentally a religious and spiritual issue. Religion, therefore, has a vital role to play." (p. 111) Taking that seriously as people of faith, the ball is in our court. We have an incredibly important part to build momentum for a movement that will make what seems impossible, possible. [Barry Turner]

### **The Call to Sacrificial Giving and Action**

Did you know that if everyone on the planet were to enjoy the current North American affluent lifestyle that we'd have to have five to six planets worth of resources to support them? In short, we have lived far beyond our means and far beyond our fair share of resources. I hear this as a call for sacrificial giving. That's the giving up of excessive consumption so that we and others may enjoy the truly abundant life God offers for all. Since the "Rooted and Rising" program started, I have upped my activism. This has included petitioning the State of California to ban fossil fuel extraction from within 2500 feet of residences, churches, schools, and health care facilities to protect health and reduce our carbon footprint. I've also advocated for the SLO County Board of Supervisors to permit County residents and businesses to enjoy carbon-free energy (and save money) with Monterey Bay Community Power. Please let me know if you'd like join in activism for a healthy planet for all. [Don Maruska]

### **How can we tell the Gospel/Ευαγγέλιο of LIMITS that restore life?**

I mean it when I use the word Gospel. In considering Climate Change, the COVID19 pandemic, and the uprising of the #BLM movement over the past few months, the amount of work that must be done is overwhelming, and despair is easy. As we reflected on our callings, there are a few places where "Limits" is the Good News.

Firstly, there is a limit to what we can do, so do that. It is okay to stretch and add something new to your life as long as you don't think you have to solve any problem in its entirety alone. Don't want to attend a protest? Help make signs. Can't afford to change to solar power in your house? Buy the solar package from PG&E.

Secondly, limit the despair. None of us knows the future or the outcome. Assuming all is disaster or that everything will be okay means your energy is in the future and not the present. Despair is a future vampire to your energy and emotion. Despair is also living in the past. We cannot bring back one wrongly murdered life. Embrace the present and know that it will contain anxiety. See the first point. Do what you can. Be good to the environment now. Be good to your neighbors now. Accept that if you are not a person of color, you have some privilege.

Third, we have been reading Romans 6 both in the daily lectionary and the Sunday readings. In that chapter, Paul presents the idea that we are all slaves to something. Yes, slave is a strong word. Use "servant" or "prisoner" if you prefer. Something is chaining us, limiting us. Is it debt? Is it health? Is it media? Is it acquisitiveness? We are limited by our chains. Paul invites us to choose to be enslaved to God. The limits placed on us by a life in God are the kind that free us. Keep praying. Keep turning your worries over to God. Your ability to live in the present, manage the anxiety, and do God's work in the world will increase. I believe it.

Fourth, please EVANGELIZE this Gospel of limits. Can you talk to friends and neighbors about the environment and Climate Change? If they are uncomfortable with that language, can you talk about what is happening to God's Creation? If you are looking for pointers for discussing the environment vis a vis the COVID pandemic, please talk to anyone on the Earth Care Committee. Tell everybody the GOOD NEWS of LIMITS. [Lorienne Schwenk]

### **Antidote to Despair**

Some of the authors of the essays in "Rooted and Rising" envisage deeply pessimistic scenarios for the future, including even the disappearance of humans as a species (which I refuse to envisage). The antidote to this despair I found in an essay not by a Christian, but by an atheist, Roger Gottlieb, a philosophy professor at Worcester Polytechnic. He points out that our knowledge of the future is necessarily limited - we don't know how things are going to turn out. Rather than succumbing to despair we need to have the courage to live with the uncertainty. Anyway, he asks "is the future where you would want to spend your mental time". We would surely want to embody our love for creation by acting now to protect the environment, *whatever* the future holds. Moreover, despair over the future is only possible if we forget our gratitude for the present. The author believes that gratitude can be an important psy-



chological or spiritual element in enabling us to carry on with a modicum of contentment and even joy despite what we are doing to nature. "We can decide that gratitude is possible, that it makes sense, and that we want it to be part of our lives". These thoughts have inspired me to (a) focus on what I can do *now*, about climate change rather than obsessing about possible catastrophic scenarios and (b) to practice gratitude as a spiritual exercise. [John Horsley]

## The Long Green Season

Stef Shuman

Green is the liturgical color that marks Ordinary Time: the season between Pentecost and Advent, and the season between Epiphany and Lent in the church year. Liturgical colors are used in altar cloths, vestments, banners and other touches. St. Benedict's also uses colored wall hangings in the window behind the altar. We are currently displaying the three patchwork panels entitled "The Long Green Season." These hangings were created for us by the Rev. Ann Lining Smith, completed in 2005 as a gift to the parish. Here is what Ann Lining said about it:



*"I conceived this project in 2000 during the final stages of the search process in which the Rev. Mary Elizabeth Pratt-Horsley was called to be second Rector of St. Benedict's. I invited members of the congregation and friends of the parish to contribute green cotton fabric, with the description 'if you say it's green, then it's green.' Forty-three cottons arrived, plus a Guatemalan mat, some upholstery fabric and a rayon scarf. Fabrics came from England, Missouri, and across the Diocese of El Camino Real. I thought it could be completed in the space of six weeks, in time for Mary Elizabeth's institution as Rector. What was I thinking? Five years later, it was completed."*

The overall design is twenty-one feet long by forty inches wide. Originally intended to be one continuous loop to be hung over a rod and rotated through the weeks of the season, it was finished as three separate seven-foot panels to be displayed simultaneously, at the request of Mary Elizabeth.

The overall quilt block pattern is known as Broken Dishes. What appears to be broken may appear as a whole when the order in the chaos is found. Themes both obvious and subtle follow more or less the lessons appointed for the two green seasons.

The first panel (far left) celebrates the season of Epiphany, the feast of Pentecost, and Trinity Sunday, with references to Epiphany (star) the Holy Spirit (whirlwind, fire), the Holy Trinity (shamrock), and the Creation story (void, water, vegetation, creatures of the earth, birds of the sky, fish of the sea).

The second panel references the summer readings, including the feast day of St. Benedict and lessons of the bread cycle of readings. The overall theme is the feeding of the five thousand. Thirteen stylized baskets are incorporated in the whole, twelve for the leftovers indicating abundance, and one specifically for the people of St. Benedict's to give away.

The third panel contains allusions to the lessons and times of autumn and pre-Advent. It includes fourteen bears (*osos*), twelve for the apostles, one for Mary Magdalene the apostle, and one for the people of St. Benedict's in their role as tellers of the gospel and witnesses to the risen Christ. Can you find the 14 bears? I confess I can only find thirteen of them.

Study the panels and you'll begin to see the connections. Ann Lining says the ones she put in intentionally or discovered after the fact are not the only ones possible. Let the people discern what scriptural and inspirational references they may.

We are ever grateful to Ann Lining Smith for her artistry and her generous gift of her time and talent. There is a reference binder available at the church listing the lessons used and a key indicating who gave which fabric. Ask an Altar Guild member.

## The Shire @ Canterbury

Berkeley Johnson

As part of my transition away from campus ministry with Canterbury, and pursuit of new directions in ministry, I have been receiving grief training with Dr. Alan Wolfelt at his Center for Loss in Ft. Collins, CO. Over the past few years, I have attended two of Dr. Wolfelt's four-day grief workshops: the first focused on "companioning" the bereaved; and the second focused on developing counseling skills. Additionally, as many of you know, I have been with Wilshire Hospice here locally for the past nine years as a spiritual counselor, and have now worked with hundreds of families and thousands of patients going through the grieving and dying process.

I have learned through this training that we all are grieving various losses and changes in our lives at any given time, and learning to "see" these losses through the lens of grief can often bring about clarity, understanding, and an inner peace that might otherwise escape us. I have had the opportunity to facilitate two grief-support groups at St. Benedict's, Los Osos - the most recent one being online - and I would now like to offer a similar online grief-support group to the deanery at large.

This group will be for "non-death loss", so if your primary loss or grief right now is due to the death of a loved one, that is best addressed with grief counselors available to you, primarily through our local hospice agencies, and I am happy to help get you connected to those resources as needed. This group, on the other hand, will be for other types of loss such as loneliness, isolation, or sadness due to the pandemic or general state of the world; the loss of a home or job; divorce, separation, or the end of a significant relationship; or perhaps a tragic accident or illness that has altered your or a loved one's life. Any of these situations can and often do trigger grief, causing us to go back and revisit older traumas that were never quite fully resolved.

If you are interested in being part of our next group, slated to get started in July, or if you have any questions, please contact me by email at [berkeleyjohnson@gmail.com](mailto:berkeleyjohnson@gmail.com) or phone (805) 550-5133. I will save the majority of details for those of you who contact me, but the basics are 1) we have room for about 8-10 participants, and 2) it will be a "closed" group, meaning that once it forms, there will be no newcomers, and once you commit, you agree to remain with the group through to its conclusion. This is because of the trust relationships and bonds that develop between members which are central to the group's process and well-being. The number of sessions will depend on, and roughly match, the number of participants.

## Stephen Ministry

Are you interested in becoming a Stephen Minister or learning the philosophy and practices of Stephen Ministry, for your own benefit or to support caring work you are already doing? Stephen Ministry is a spiritual approach to caring for people experiencing difficult life situations. Through initial training, Stephen Ministers learn how to strengthen their own relationship with God, and to bring the Holy Spirit into relationships with others, to promote God's healing grace.

A new Stephen Ministry Zoom training class is being formed. It will meet Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for one hour. Each lesson is being divided into two parts to avoid "Zoom fatigue." The first session is planned for Tuesday, July 28. There are eighteen lessons. At the end of the lessons, students decide if they would like to become Stephen Ministers.

If you are interested in participating, contact Judy Gilbert ([judygilb46@gmail.com](mailto:judygilb46@gmail.com), 805-305-8035), Paula Smith ([pb-smith135@gmail.com](mailto:pb-smith135@gmail.com), 805-710-3493), or Fr. Mark Hall ([krametoc@cell2000.net](mailto:krametoc@cell2000.net), 209-609-7044) You can become a Stephen Minister from the comfort of your own home. Shirts are required, but shoes are optional!





We've asked church members to share what they have been doing during the pandemic. Some of the responses are on this page.

I really miss the services....the music, singing, Communion and everyone holding the Presence.

I Enjoy staying home, going on hikes, reading, doing art work and not going to the store. My neighborhood has a much better sense of community; the children are home and out riding their bikes, everyone walks and stops to talk. Many in the neighborhood are growing vegetable gardens and trading food. The birds are singing louder. -Joan Ghilotti

Virtual church, beach with dog, groceries at 6 am with mask, special clothes, and purl < may have to give that up. -Susan Miller

Being sheltered has been a challenge because in reality I have been home since surgery in December. I have learned that my love for reading has got me through and taking little day trips around the county with my husband. We have been able to get many things crossed off our "to do" list. I have been enjoying church on Zoom but miss everyone. -Linda Quesenberry

My granddaughter, Areanna, painted this picture yesterday of Sabrina. We've been hanging out at home and she's been being creative. -Diana Hammerlund



This summer Pamela is working in the library of SLO Classical Academy, readying it for the students' return to school in the fall — we hope! Tim continues working from home to ensure that students and faculty have online access to the resources of Cal-Poly's library. AK, age 20, keeps quarantine at home with us while striving to maintain his equilibrium— not easy for a young man of color in these times. He delivers for Do-orDash, masked & gloved. Reva, age 23, lives in Pune, India. She & her apartment mates keep strict quarantine, while she stays very busy studying Public Health with online courses at Cuesta. She loves monsoon season. -Pamela B



**The Benediction**

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church

2220 Snowy Egret Lane

Los Osos, CA 93412