

# 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 lan-  
guage

10:30 am Holy Commu-  
nion  
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:** Have you ever noticed how difficult the lives of Bible characters were? Perhaps it is because I am privileged to have lived my life in peace and prosperity that I never really noticed before that most people in the Bible were dealing with some serious issues – famine, slavery, shipwreck, invasion, and death to mention a few.

Our faith and traditions were birthed in times of personal, national and international difficulty. So they are resilient. The truth of God's love and the saving efficacy of Christ's life, death and resurrection are as valid and valuable in our times of personal, national and international difficulty today as they were then. In fact, times of social unravelling provide an unequalled opportunity to revisit the ancient mysteries, texts and traditions and mine them anew for the wisdom and support they provide in times of new challenge.

We are living in a strange time of fire and pestilence, when values that we hold dear are being ignored, even mocked, by those on high office and truth is being manipulated for ideological ends to the extent that we often cannot trust our elected leaders or their representatives even when our lives may depend on accurate information. I think some of the prophets would find this all surprisingly familiar.

And their message was one of faithfulness – God's faithfulness and human folly. They called God's people again and again to the path of justice, because justice was the sign of faithfulness to the covenant. God's part was to be there, through good and ill, loving and caring and steadfast. Faithful. And our part is also to be faithful. Which means living as Jesus showed us.

We will often fail. That's a given but God's grace is always sufficient for us. God always welcomes us back when we realize that we have gotten caught up in fear, anger or hatred, failing to come from the true place of God's presence in our hearts and souls. God always welcomes us back when we become indifferent or avoid the challenge of justice.

In these months before the election, it is likely that we will be challenged again and again. It is likely that we will have responses of anger, hatred or fear and that at other times we will want to turn our backs, pretending that nothing is happening. It is likely that we will suffer from "compassion fatigue".

But whatever happens, God is faithful. God's love and strength are sufficient for our need. We are the ones whom God has called to live as his Body. We are the ones who are called to bring his kin-dom on earth. It isn't easy. It isn't just about being nice people. It is about being people of justice and peace, people who are faithful to God's covenant.

Let us remember our spiritual ancestors, and let us take heart. God I our strength for the journey.



## Highlights of the Parish Council Meeting

**Memorial Grove** – St Ben's Earthcare has been talking with Greening Los Osos about creating a memorial grove of trees on the west side of the building. Michael Lucas has drawn up a map of where trees might be planted, and Sage landscaping has given us a list of possible trees, based on those already growing well. Greening Los Osos would plant and tend the trees for their first few years. Members of the community would be invited to dedicate tree to a loved one. There would be paths in between them.

Separately, Earthcare has talked with Bear Roots about planting additional trees on the periphery and the parking lot island but we would need to provide the money for these.

**Teams** – in the PC annual goals we agreed to set up teams for Stewardship, Membership, Finance/Endowment and Transition. The Membership team is ready to go but we are still gathering people for Stewardship and Finance. If you can help in these areas, please let Stef or Caro+ know.

**Cloister Groups** – at a meeting of Cloister leaders it was agreed that this would be a good time for some shuffling around to give more opportunities for people to connect.

**Abundance Shop** – is going well but profits are much lower than budgeted due to the pandemic. As a result it will not be able to contribute as much to the church as in the past and the PPP loan only covers a small amount of this shortfall. Agreed to send a letter to the Parish to let everyone know.

The big question before us is “how do we maintain and grow over the next few years given the lack of in-person services etc.?”

## Meeting in-person

We have started tentatively meeting in person outdoors in small groups and so far the results are good!! Celeste Pennington and Carol McPhee invite you to join them for a socially distanced silent meditation every Thursday at 4pm on the veranda of the church.

Also, 8 people met on a very hot afternoon at the home of Leslie Stanley in SLO. We were grateful that she has a shaded veranda and look forward to a return visit. A couple of other households have offered to host, so look for those possibilities coming up soon.

## Finances

Thank you to everyone who has responded to our letter about the financial predicament that we find ourselves in. As we explained there, the Abundance Shop has been badly hit by the coronavirus. Although we are now open thanks to our dedicated staff and volunteers we are still in reduced hours as most of the volunteers are in the 65+ age range with other health conditions and therefore especially vulnerable to the virus. In August our sales picked up by 30% which is a wonderful increase, but even so our monthly net was \$1500 less than we had budgeted.

(Finances, continued) Thank you! Thank you to everyone who has made an additional gift to St. Benedict's to help us through this difficult time. Your generosity makes a huge difference.

We are particularly grateful to have received a donation in honor of David Higdon, son of Marianne and brother of Sarah Cheseboro.



## Requesting Prayer at St. Benedict's

**Bidding Book** If you have prayer requests to be read aloud at Sunday morning services, please get them to Stef at [stefshuman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:stefshuman@sbcglobal.net) or text her at 1-805-534-3622 by Friday. Names will not be carried week-to-week, so if they are to be repeated, please send them again.

**Facebook Comments** During the 1030 service there is an opportunity for Facebook viewers to type in names for prayers; however, due to delays or technical issues, the service ministers may not see them to read them in the service. But other parishioners can see them and pray for your requests.

**Intercessory Prayer Group** Ongoing prayer requests may be sent to our Intercessory Prayer group at [prayers@stbenslosos.org](mailto:prayers@stbenslosos.org). You may be as specific as you wish about what the prayer need is. All requests are treated confidentially. Keep in touch with this group for updates when the situation changes. If you would like to be added to this group, please let Stephanie know: [office@stbenslosos.org](mailto:office@stbenslosos.org).

**Healing Prayers** If you'd like someone to pray with you by phone, contact the healing prayer minister of the week, whose name and phone number is listed in each week's Benediction Weekly email.

## Canterbury: Meet Kacei Conyers

Hello! My name is Kacei, and I'm the new interim chaplain at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (and potentially Cuesta College). I'm also serving as Episcopal Chaplain at Stanford. I'm grateful for the work that Chaplain Berkeley and students at Cal Poly SLO have done in laying a strong foundation of anti-racist and LGBTQ+ affirming Christian presence at Cal Poly SLO and I strive to continue that work with you. If you are a college or graduate student and are interested in campus ministry, I'd love to get to know a bit about your story over a virtual coffee. If this interests you, schedule me [here](#). I'd also love your feedback on what you think this ministry should look like for the year. Feel free to email me at [kacei@sloepiscopal.org](mailto:kacei@sloepiscopal.org) with your hopes, dreams, questions or comments. Visit us online at [www.instagram.com/sloepiscopal](https://www.instagram.com/sloepiscopal).

I'd also like to introduce Soul Care Hub! This is a newly forming regional group of young adults, college and grad students campus ministers. Our website is coming soon. You are invited to be part of the process! If you'd like to be involved in creating content email [chaplain@echousesf.com](mailto:chaplain@echousesf.com) or [kacei@stanfordcanterbury.org](mailto:kacei@stanfordcanterbury.org). Our first event is a Netflix party on Thursday September 10 at 6:30pm. Sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/soulcarenetflix>

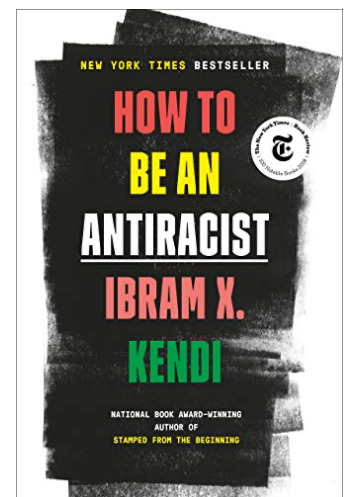
## What are you reading now?

Cathy Gildea

Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, I have been working my way through a related reading list including "How to be an Antiracist" by Dr. Ibram X. Kendi. His premise is the only way to undo racism is to identify and describe it -- and intentionally dismantle it. Kendi uses experiences from his life to illustrate concepts of racism, the impact they have, and changes in his beliefs over time. Some of these will feel familiar and some may challenge you to think about racism in new ways.

He reframes conversations about race to focus on racist ideas and policies and asks us to replace them with antiracist ideas and policies. Central to his thesis is the invitation to look at our personal relationships through the lens of antiracism and truly see all people as individuals, not representatives of their race. I find this idea an inspiring complement to our baptism covenant to seek and serve Christ in all persons.

Up next time, why is it so hard for well-meaning white people to do just that? A discussion of "White Fragility" by Robin DiAngelo.



## Caring for Creation Calls for a New Story

Don Maruska

(I found these views from selected excerpts of Jim Antal's book, *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change*, compelling. Thought you'd find them interesting. Don Maruska)

Wresting our future from the grip of fossil fuel seems impossible—our addiction is too strong, affordable options are too few, and the powers that defend the status quo are mighty, indeed. . . . We cannot be freed by chipping away at this millstone. We must begin to live into a new story by changing the human prospect [of destruction] and restoring creation's viability.

We can't accept God's invitation to help create a new story unless we are willing to take action. We become partners with God when we act in unfamiliar, untested ways. Those new actions will be guided by a preferred future that embraces:

- resilience in place of growth
- collaboration in place of consumption
- wisdom in place of progress
- balance in place of addiction
- moderation in place of excess
- vision in place of convenience
- accountability in place of disregard
- self-giving love in place of self-centered fear . . .

As broken-hearted as God must be over what we have done to the gift of creation, God still has a dream. . . . God dreams that humans seek spiritual rather than material progress. God's dream envisions a just world at peace because gratitude has dissolved anxiety and generosity has eclipsed greed. God dreams of a time when love and mutual respect will bind humanity together, and the profound beauty of creation will be treasured. Let us embrace God's dream as our own. Suddenly, the horizon of our hope comes nearer. As we live into God's dream, we will rediscover who we truly are and all of creation will be singing.

## Take the Faith Climate Justice Voter Pledge

Don Maruska and Barry Turner

When people of faith vote our values, elected officials take note. We can help make change by electing leaders who are committed to ending structures of oppression, ending environmental injustices, and tackling climate change.

While it's not the place for St. Ben's to say for whom you should vote, we can let people know the values for which we are voting. It's easy to do online. We've signed the Faith Climate Justice Voter Pledge and invite you to join us. See <https://www.faithclimatejusticevoter.org/pledge-to-be-a-faith-climate-justice-voter/>. The Faith Climate Justice Voter Campaign is a nonpartisan Interfaith Power & Light led campaign and includes several faith and climate partners. Don Maruska posted a video online about why he took the pledge, you can see it here: <https://ipl.soapboxx.us/video-single/1597169277035>.





## **What you can do now - Join the St. Benedict's Team for Practical Climate Solutions**

Barry Turner and Don Maruska

We don't have to wait for the elections to take climate action. The Episcopal Church has a major initiative for all dioceses, parishes, and parishioners to take specific climate actions and track their results. You can find it at [www.sustainislandhome.org](http://www.sustainislandhome.org). There you will find that St. Benedict's currently has 12 households participating with 37 actions already taken by participants, 15 new actions taken, and 2,367 kwh saved as a result. While this is more participants and more results than any other church in the diocese so far, we need more members of St. Ben's (hopefully everyone) to participate and to do more.



The Earthcare Committee encourages each of us to do our best and thanks you for whatever you can do. Together we can boost our stewardship of the planet and celebrate our successes together.

### **Creation Care Webinars from Our Diocese**

St. Benedict's Earthcare Committee recommends your participation in the upcoming Zoom meetings offered by St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (Mountain View) Creation Care Task Force. We hope you will join us in taking advantage of the invitation to join these free sessions at **7:00-8:30 p.m.** on the designated dates.

#### **Wednesday, September 9: Regenerative Gardening**

Regenerative agricultural practices can be applied to the suburban environment to improve soil health and crop yield, and to help address climate change. Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/CC-Gardening>

#### **Wednesday, September 23: Reducing your Carbon 'Footprint'**

What is the real cost of food on the environment? Did you know that bringing food to your table accounts for as much as 25% of human carbon emissions. Learn how simple things, like reducing food waste and eating vegetarian once a week, can have a big impact on global warming. Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/CC-Foodprint>

#### **Wednesday, October 7: Environmental Justice (as part of LAUMC)**

An intergenerational, multi-racial movement promoting environmental, economic and social justice for where we all live, work, play, learn and pray.

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/CC-EnvJustice>



### **The Hollister Institute visits Romans**

A new Hollister Institute group will take on the study of Paul's Letter to the Romans beginning **Thursday September 3 at 11am.**

Considered the most challenging – and yet most brilliant – of Paul's writings, Romans has had an enormous impact on the development of Christian doctrine and theology and indeed the history of Christianity. Reading Romans brought about the conversion of St. Augustine in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, influenced Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century became the turning point of John Wesley's life.

Find out why. Join us for this discussion group Thursdays in the Zoom Room. Led by Caro+ - each session lasts one hour.

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