

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

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Jane Wu, Jr. *Warden*

Lisa Gonzalez, *Treasurer*

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Sunday Services

8:00 am - Worship service with

Scripture reflection, via Zoom.

(Zoom address is available under the

This Week heading on our website.)

9:30 am - Outdoor worship in park-

ing lot, weather permitting.

10:30 am - Spiritual Communion ser-

vice, live-streamed on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/stbenslososos/

or on our website:

<http://www.stbenslososos.org/facebook-including-live-stream/>

Service leaflets are available each week

under the Worship tab on our website

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Dear Friends,

Easter is early this year. Since it's related to Passover, which typically begins on the night of a full moon after the northern vernal equinox, its date varies from year to year.

There's a complicated formula in the Book of Common Prayer (p.880) for working out the date but these days most of us just type "date of Easter" into Google.

Yet somehow I feel as though Lent took me by surprise, and I may have just gotten into Lent when it'll be Easter... I don't think I'm the only one for whom the slow days of the pandemic seem to pass so fast that I can't keep track. We are without our normal markers, and the ones we have are not ones we want to have - 500,000 dead; purple to red; a year since the first days of sheltering at home. It seemed like a bit of an adventure at first, but now it's all just more of the same.

Which is why it is especially important for us to celebrate the liturgical seasons this year. Yes, we are in Lent. This is the season of deepening into our relationship with our Maker as we remember that we are mortal and that we are accountable to God for the way we live the lives we have been given - the ways that we love ourselves, our neighbor and God.

And in just a few weeks we will start the wild ride that is Holy Week as we remember the events of the last week of Jesus' mortal life. This is part of our salvation history. This is a vital part of the Great Story of humanity played out in the life of the Man-God. It is essential to our understanding of who we are as disciples of Jesus in a way that I can barely articulate. Rather like telling a funny story that falls flat - "you had to have been there." Unless you intentionally participate and allow yourself to be moved and changed by the deep rituals of our re-remembering of the way humanity tried to destroy God, you will not fully connect to that deep truth which cannot be expressed verbally.

Which is fine, because each of us is in a different place. But this year it seems especially relevant to participate in the rhythm of God's life as we continue to navigate the strange and uncertain waters of the pandemic.

One thing that we know and know for sure, is that our God is a God of resurrection and our God will be bringing new life even out of this fallow period, this time of separation and... whatever it is for you. And on Easter morning we will celebrate that once again the plot to kill God has failed and new life bursts forth. The cycle of death and rebirth is intact. Christ is Risen!!

And we are called to be people of the resurrection - people of hope who hold firm to the hope that God is indeed working God's purpose out in our midst in every moment. I look forward to reaching Easter with you, a pinnacle of hope made more sublime by our communal walk through Lent and the darkness of Holy Week.

Yours in hope,



Thank you,

Caroline J. A. Hall



@StBens_Los-

Highlights of the Parish Council meetings

The Parish Council met three times after the Annual meeting; first to welcome and introduce new members (Barbara Skippers, Ben Nucum, Helen Schneiders and Maureen Titus); then for a training session with Bishop Lucinda and finally in the regular monthly meeting.

- We reviewed the Mutual Ministry Review responses
- We agreed to renew the lease on the Abundance Shop for another five years
- Caro+ is planning to take her sabbatical in the late summer this year as she did not take it last year
- The Abundance Shop has had an encouraging start to the year
- Our finances are good as many people prepaid their pledges for the entire year and we expect to get another PPP loan.
- We agreed that the Laundry Love proposed for Morro Bay should be overseen by Los Osos Cares, not St Benedict's. We still hope to start a second one on Los Osos geared particularly to seniors but need a volunteer to head it up

The Parish Council normally meets at 12:30 on the third Sunday of the month and is open to anyone to attend.

The Sprinkler System

So near, and yet so far!

The good news is that PG&E has provided the power, and Michael Lucas has filled the tanks with a hose. The not-so-great news is that we now need an alarm system on the equipment which we weren't expecting and that comes with a \$7000+ price tag and a few more weeks wait.

Hopefully this will be the last surprise... we had hope for Thanksgiving, maybe we will have it done for Easter, or failing that, Pentecost!

Music

A big thank you to Ron Labrie who has been playing for us for most of 2020. We are glad to welcome back John Cribb on the organ and organizing our other musicians so that Sunday morning will have greater variety of voices and styles of music. Ann Lucas will be playing once a month and when a piano piece is the best option to support our worship.

It will be a long time until we can sing in church but we are glad to have a mini-choir singing using an app which allows us to record one voice at a time until we have a choir; and excited that Ruth Baillie has found a way that we can sing in the safety of our cars and hear one another over the radio. We have the equipment on order... look for a parking lot hymn sing coming soon.

Farewell to the Cloister Groups

It's a year this month since we put the Cloister Group structure into place. Our Cloister group leaders have been wonderful and many of them have worked really hard to stay in touch with y'all. But it seems like the energy has gone out of it now so we are letting it go.

However, we still want to keep in touch. If you would like to receive a regular check-in by phone or email please let Caro+, Stef or Berkeley know. And don't ever hesitate to pick up the phone and call someone else in the church. Chances are they'd love to chat as well.

Think before you speak

One of the comments in the Mutual Ministry Review was that we can be cliquey and assume that everyone agrees with us. This can be upsetting for people who disagree but feel that their opinion is such a minority view that it will

be discounted. This is of course not what we want to have happening in an “inclusive” church. Inclusive means inclusive of people with whom we disagree politically or in other ways.

So please let’s remember never ever to describe another group of people in disparaging terms; whoever they are, they are beloved of God. And if you do feel hurt by something that someone says, please have the courage to let them know that what they said was hurtful to you.

This is of course especially important in emails and texts – if you are stung by something please check out the intention before you snarl back. But it’s also important in these days when conversations are shouted from behind masks and none of us hear as well as we used to when we could see each others mouths!

Abundance Shop

Thanks to everyone who brings in donations, buys stuff and volunteers in the store. Everything helps. There have been some changes in the last couple of months – Esther is now firmly in charge as the manager and that, together with vaccinations, is encouraging more of our community volunteers to return to sort all the things and clothes that com in the door each week. In order to assist the flow, especially as we still have reduced volunteer hours we are only accepting donations when the shop is open, Tuesday through Thursday. At other times you can put clothing into the Eco bin outside the shop.

Ann Lucas is now cashiering two days a week which allows Esther more time to sort and to manage all the functions of the store. Steve Cake plans to continue to volunteer which is wonderful – its so useful to have “old” hands who have seen the shop through many of its phases, as well as new people.

The shop was closed for some of January and has had to limit the number of shoppers during February to seven in the shop at a time, but now the county has moved into the Red zone we can increase that number to fourteen, which is almost unheard of so for all intents and purposes occupancy at 50% is unlimited and it gives our guests a more leisurely experience than when they know there’s a line at the door.

January netted about \$1500, a little more than we budgeted but February sales are up by \$2500 which is wonderful to see. This is a special ministry which not only shares the love of God with many people but also provides income to the church. Thank you to everyone who makes it possible.

Introducing...Ben’s Blog

Ben's Blog is a weekly offering by Ben Nucum, who is on our Vestry. Ben is reflecting on the readings for the coming Sunday and posting his blog early enough each week. We can read his thoughts and do our own reflections on what we will be hearing the upcoming Sunday.



Find Ben’s Blog under the News section of stbenslososos.org.

Quiet Morning of Meditation and Reflection

Join us on **Saturday March 27 from 9:30 to 12** for a quiet morning of Meditation and Reflection as we begin Holy Week. We will follow a pattern of shared silence, reflection on a poem or Bible passage using the reading as a way of encouraging our souls to connect and speak to us, and time alone for journaling or art work or whatever your soul is calling you to for that time. This is an opportunity to make time to be quiet and reflective in company with others and in your own space with spirit.

It will be in our normal Zoom room and led by Caro+.

Hollister Institute

Hollister Institute Book conversation

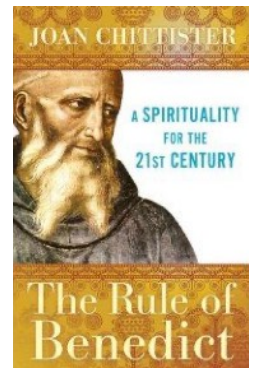
During Lent the Tuesday group is reading “[The NonViolent Life](#)” by John Dear who argues that we must practice nonviolence toward ourselves as the beloved of God, non-violence toward others, and also engage in the worldwide movement for peace. Starting on Tuesday April 13 The book will be “[Beauty the Invisible Embrace](#) “ by John O’Donohue.

As he focuses on the classical, medieval and Celtic traditions, on art, music, literature, nature and language, O’Donohue reveals how beauty’s invisible embrace invites us towards new heights of passion and creativity. His words return us home to the dignity of silence, the profundity of stillness, the power of thought and perception, and the eternal grace and generosity of beauty’s presence. In this masterful and revelatory work, O’Donohue encourages our greater intimacy with beauty, and celebrates it for what it really is: a homecoming of the human spirit.

There is more information about the book here: <https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/09/21/john-odonohue-beauty-love-desire/>

This group is open to everyone and anyone and meets from 10:15 to 11:30 on Zoom. It’s fine to come even if you haven’t had a chance to read the book.

Every Tuesday morning at 9:45 there is a short service of Prayers for the Morning to which you are also invited whether or not you join in the book discussion.



The Rule of Benedict

Starting after Easter, Lorie Schwenk will be leading a seven week reflection on the Rule of St. Benedict. We will be using Joan Chittister’s book, which contains the rule and her reflections. Please contact Lorie if you are interested so we can determine the best time and date for this class. 805.200.7908 or purrbythesea@gmail.com.



“Here we have the Feed-the-Hungry Committee, the Green-Earth Committee, The Fellowship Committee, and the Purchase-Another-Card-Table Committee.”

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. At the 9:30 outdoor service we will 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. **Sunday March 28**, services at 8 (Zoom) 9:30 in-person and 10:30 on Facebook will all reflect this joy and grief.

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. This year we will not be displaying the wonderful Stations gifted by the Hirahara family, and made for us by Chloe White. However you can make a private pilgrimage with them at any time by participating in the service on our website: <https://www.stbenslososos.org/stations-of-the-cross/> We will also walk the stations together during Holy Week on **Wednesday March 31 at 5pm**

Maundy Thursday April 1, 6:30pm On Maundy Thursday we remember Jesus' last supper with his friends and the subsequent betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. This year we will enjoy an *agape meal* together on-line. An agape meal is literally a love-feast, a communal meal shared among Christians with love. You are invited to prepare a simple meal in your home which we will bless and then enjoy eating as we remember the last supper together. Afterwards, 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.

Good Friday April 2, 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** Then in the evening at there will be a simple on-line service of **Tenebrae or darkness starting at 7:30** as we hear the reading of John's account of Jesus' trail and death, gradually extinguishing the candles.

Holy Saturday and **Easter Vigil April 3, 7:30 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 7:30pm 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. There will be two possibilities this year – the diocese is preparing a Vigil service which you can watch or, if there is enough interest, we will hold a simple service Vigil for a Pilgrim People service in the parking lot around the fire pit starting at 7:30. This will be shorter and simpler than the average vigil service yet will include eucharist.

Easter Day Sunday, April 4: 8 am and 10:30 am Our celebration continues on Easter Morning, with a contemplative communion service at 8am and an in-person Eucharist at 10:30am. If we are not able to share the 10:30 Eucharist on Facebook there will be an additional Facebook only service at 12noon.

Participate in Special Earth Day Prayer Service and Online Workshop

By Earthcare Team

Once again, St. Ben's will offer an informal, noontime prayer service in honor of Earth Day, April 22. Then, at 7 p.m., plan to join us for a discussion about "Sacred Ground" -- how restoring the health and productivity of our soils will also sequester carbon to help address climate change. "Liz and I have attended workshops on regenerative agriculture," explained Don Maruska. "This is the most compelling opportunity we've heard to do something that will benefit us all." The sessions will occur on St. Ben's Zoom channel. More details will follow.



Remembering Karin



Karin Cake has been such an important part of our lives these last ten years that it is difficult to believe that she has gone on to her next life, especially as she left before we had said goodbye.

Karin first came to St Benedict's when she became sweethearts with Steve Cake, and soon found herself embraced by the community and able to share her unique gifts with us. Her work as a massage therapist and interest in alternative healing made her a natural to be part of the Healing prayer team when it was formed, and she was also an important part of the intercessory prayer circle for many years.

Later she brought her gifts for retail and her eye for beauty to the Abundance Shop, working closely with Francis Rivinus when the store was moved to its current location five years ago. At that time she purchased fixtures and had the vision for creating a place where both beautiful pieces and household items could be displayed and purchased at good prices. The change in location and Karin's leadership as volunteer Retail manager helped to increase the Shop's abundance.

Karin had a wonderful gift for friendship and many of us have been blessed by her bright reflection, natural laughter and generous interest. Our hearts go out to Steve and to Cathy Gildea and their families at this painful time.

Although there will not be a memorial service for Karin yet, there will be an opportunity to meet with each other and with Steve to remember her and to laugh and cry together. Please join us on **Zoom at 4pm on Wednesday March 10.**

A service of Remembrance Friday March 19 5pm

March 19 marks one year since we went into the first Covid shelter-at-home. We will be marking that day with a service remembering all those who have lost their lives in the pandemic, especially the more than half a million Americans who have died and their families. A deanery-wide service (including all the Episcopal churches in San Luis Obispo county plus San Ardo) will take place at 5pm on Zoom. Check the Benediction Weekly for the Zoom address.



EarthCare Drafts 5-part Climate Series

Caro Hall, John Horsley, Barry Turner, Don Maruska, Mike Eggleston, and Bob Pelfrey

After months of research, development, and video recording, St. Ben's Earthcare team has completed a draft "Beginner's Guide to Creation Care and the Climate Crisis." As Caro described, "The SLO Deanery is making the first offering of the five-part series, which includes study guides and video recordings." The initial session "How Do Christians See Creation?" attracted participants from St. Stephen's and St. James. Subsequent sessions address: "What is climate change and what are its consequences?" "What's a Christian to do about climate change?" "What can we do as a congregation?" and "How are we called to be public advocates for climate health?" Each session has an opening and closing prayer, relevant Bible study on the topic of the session, a video, and discussion questions. We were delighted to have The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, a climate activist and editor of "Rooted and Rising" join us on the fifth session about advocacy. In the hopes of offering the materials to congregations across the country, the Episcopal Church has provided some funding to support out-of-pocket production costs.

Barry Turner, John Horsley, Caro, Mike Eggleston, Bob Pelfrey, and Don Maruska all contributed to the effort with Jay Matthew, the Parish Administrative Assistant, providing some video editing support. "Sorting through the scientific, theological, and practical aspects of climate change and making them accessible to congregations has been a huge lift for our team," Barry noted.



A Beginner's Guide to Creation Care and the Climate Crisis

engage your congregation in thoughtful discussion

Objectives:

- ⇒ Understand climate change and climate actions
- ⇒ Encourage reflection and conversation
- ⇒ Support climate stewardship actions by individuals and your congregation

You can access the materials by clicking on "Beginner's Guide To Creation Care and the Climate Crisis" in the banner on St. Ben's home page www.stbenslosos.org. Be sure to share your feedback on what you learn and suggestions for ways to help congregations use and act on the information.

Memorial Grove

Liz Maruska

Three members of the civic tree planting group, Greening Los Osos, met in late January with Liz Maruska, Caro, and Michael Lucas to discuss plans for a memorial grove on the western side of the St Benedict's property. The Greening Los Osos representatives led by Tony Salome were very positive about the project. They felt that 30 smaller flowering and ornamental trees were most appropriate and could sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Their landscape architect will draft a plan and present it to St Benedict's the first week in March.

Meanwhile, the Gardening Club of Los Osos has donated a 7 foot New Zealand Christmas tree and planted it on the parking lot island. Look for bright red blooms in Spring.



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