

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*

Diana Hammerlund

Esta Kandarian

Alan Kiste

Michael Lucas

Lorienne Schwenk

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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/face-book-including-live-stream/>

Service leaflets are available each week

under the Worship tab on our website

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Dear Friends,

I just came back from the Community Dinner where I was dropping off my pan of black beans, and saw many of you doing the same. Thank you! And thank you to Barbara and Maureen who not only masterminded the dinner but also made enchiladas for a hundred. I am inspired by the many ways that St. Benedict's is involved in the community – for a little church we have a big impact. Our impact is not just practical but also subtle. It's not just that we provide food for folk at 40Prado or the Community Center or clothes and household goods through the Abundance Shop, but the *way* we do it which is so important.

We are the Body of Christ in the world, not just a non-profit. How each one of us relates to others is a demonstration of the reign of God. Wherever you are, whether in the Abundance Shop, the grocery store, the library, delivering meals or writing on Facebook or Neighbors, you are potentially bringing God with you. Every day I pray that wherever I am, those around me may be touched by the grace of God. That is, I think, what it means to be a demonstration of the reign of God – it is more than being loving, it is more than helping others; it is seeing in them the light of Christ and bringing into the interaction the graciousness of our God.

As we grow closer and closer to God and as the Holy Spirit cleans out our stuff, opens up our closed closets and transforms us more and more into the image of Christ we cannot help but become open vessels for God's love to pour through us into the world. But as you know, that kind of growth is never passive... we get to be active participants in God's work. We get to purposefully and intentionally turn towards others in our community whether that's at work, in the neighborhood or in a community group, whether it's in-person or online and we get to remember and behave like we are truly the ambassadors of the all-compassionate God.

Our gospel readings these last weeks in Easter have been talking about love and about how God's incomparable love and grace plays out in our lives. In Jesus we see a person who was comfortable at all levels of society but who particularly reached out to those who were outcasts, whether poor "sinners" or rich tax collectors. He shared his love and his life with each one. In our society, we know that rich people are often as empty in their hearts and spiritual lives as those who are materially poor. Abiding in Christ means sharing our love and life with those God sends to us.

St. Benedict's corporate ministry is important, and we are deeply grateful for each one who contributes in any way but each one of us individually is a minister of Christ – each one of us is a member of the Body of Christ – each one of us is called to share the love we know that God has for everyone (even the ones we don't like). Love means service. Love means seeing and serving the Christ in all persons. And that is transforming our society. Together we are changing Los Osos and beyond.

Together we are building the reign of God,

With love,



Caroline J. A. Hall



@StBens_LosOsos

Building and Grounds

We now have a landscape committee – thanks to Liz Maruska for pulling this group together. If you are interested in helping with the committee and/or with the grounds maintenance please talk to Liz. We also have another new tree – this is a small pittosporum at the west end of the St. Francis garden which will grow into a big pittosporum and fill in the gap which the wind roars through. Thanks to Liz and Ron Thompson for some new lavender to replace some which had died along the pathway. Thanks to Jay Matthew for power-washing to get rid of the cobwebs and dirt on the church building. And thanks to Dony Pelucca for the new plants in the veranda planters.

The alarm system for the fire sprinklers is just about completed so we are getting very close to the end of this project...

Highlights of the Parish Council meetings

- We received a second Payroll Protection loan and had the first one completely forgiven
- The Abundance Shop is doing much better financially than we had expected – thanks to Esta and everyone who volunteers there.
- Many people have made early payments on their annual pledges and as a result we have cash in hand right now
- The additional unexpected cost of the alarm system for the fire sprinklers comes to \$15380
- There will be additional un-budgeted costs for mowing as we had to find a new mowing company, and also for supply clergy when Caro+ is on sabbatical
- The Finance Committee will complete the audit this year. There needs to be a separate audit for the Abundance Shop.
- We agreed to renew the lease on the Abundance Shop for a further five year term
- There will be a second Laundry Love earlier in the day (11am-1pm) targeted at seniors. Jocelyn Williams who is not a church member has volunteered to head this up. A team of three additional people is ideal.
- Now the county is in the Orange category we can move services indoors but at reduced capacity. Agreed to try a lottery as a fair way to assign seating.
- We created several committees last year but they don't seem to be working very well.
- The Parish Council will have a special meeting on May 7 to consider the 5 year plan and the immediate goals for 2021
- Berkeley proposed a Pastoral Care Center – more elsewhere in this newsletter



Moving Church Indoors

Now that the county is in "orange", we can move back into the church but at reduced capacity. We will still wear masks and sit 6 feet apart and we will not be singing or hugging or serving coffee afterwards!

This means that for the 10:30am we can only seat about 25 people plus those who are helping to lead the service. We can add people on the veranda and probably in the Great Room. Rather than have a first come first served reservations system, the Parish Council agreed to try a lottery system.

This means that each week there will be a list of people whose turn it is to come to church in person. If your name is on the list and you don't want to come, **please contact Jay in the office** straight away and your seat will be offered to the next person on the list. Your name will go back into the pool for the next week.

We expect that everyone who wants to will be able to come to church about once every three weeks but since it is a random process we don't make any guarantee. If you don't use your seat and don't let Jay know, you will need to wait for the next three week drawing.

The service will still be live-streamed on Facebook so you can join in from home. For now, the 8am service will continue on Zoom. Vespers has already moved back to the church (Tuesdays at 5:30pm) and although we will not be sharing a potluck yet you are welcome to bring yourself a snack and stay to enjoy a soda or glass of wine afterwards.

Creating the Center for Pastoral Care & Grief Support

Berkely Johnson

I met recently with the Parish Council to discuss creating a *Center for Pastoral Care & Grief Support* at St. Ben's. The presentation resulted in a lively discussion, and I was asked to submit an article to the Benediction Newsletter as a next step to gauge our level of interest in such a project.

The idea is that, as pastoral needs arise within the parish, there would be a mechanism in place to address those concerns. While the present model of contacting the office or the Rector directly would certainly continue to exist, there would also be an alternative way for you to let us know about any needs you, or someone you know, might have. The *Center* would then collaborate with the Rector on an ongoing basis to review how the various needs within the parish are being addressed and met.

It is envisioned then that we would need someone who is willing to be a "point person" to receive requests, confer with the Rector, assign volunteers as appropriate, and generally keep track of how things are going. Thus, we are wondering who might have gifts to contribute to this ministry, and feel called to come and get involved.

Ideally, the *Center* could help organize coverage for short-term, one-time needs within the parish, such as bringing soup or a meal to someone recovering from surgery or illness, or helping with a specific project, like yard work, or cleaning out a garage; and then it would also be there to address more long-term requests, such as bringing communion to people on a regular basis, or simply offering pastoral visits and support to folks who can't, or don't, get out so much anymore. We discussed the possibility of utilizing Stephen Ministers, and having folks complete the Stephen Ministry training, so that they become more properly acquainted with how to provide pastoral care safely and effectively.

The other idea for the *Center* would be to provide Grief Support to folks in the parish as the need arises, and to assist the Rector in situations where they might not be available to respond "in the moment." The thought here is that we would be there to address immediate needs, and then assist with a referral for those who might need ongoing grief counseling.

All sorts of ideas grew out of the discussion with the Parish Council: we could offer grief groups, as we have in the past; the *Center* could host talks and educational opportunities; and we could eventually provide group spiritual direction to those involved in furthering their lay ministries through their work with the *Center*. Finally, it was noted, once the *Center* is established, it could become a means of outreach to people in the wider Los Osos community as well.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this idea. Please let me know if you are interested in being a part of this ministry, and of course feel free to contact me if you have any questions or thoughts to share about this project.

Hollister Institute

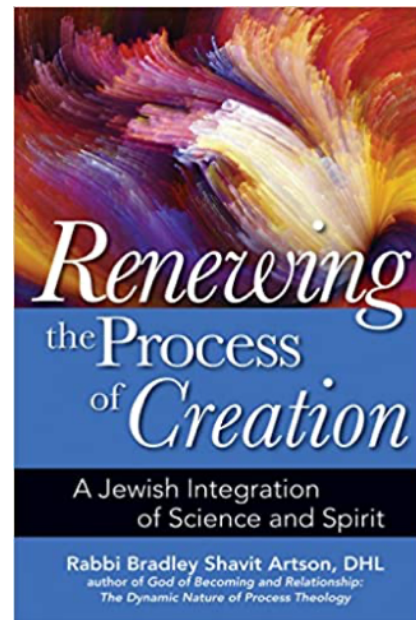
Hollister Book Study starting in June

During June, John Horsley will be leading a book study based on “[Renewing the Process of Creation](#)” by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson. This book draws on process theology, Judaism and science to consider the meaning of Creation, and humanity’s role as steward and partner in Creation. It will be a good follow-up to the current discussion that the Rev. Mike Eggleston is leading on Piglet’s Process – see Mike for more information on that.

Please consider taking part on Thursdays at 10am – June 3 to 24. You can be sure of a good and fascinating conversation.

Caro’s Sabbatical

This fall, Caro+ will be taking the sabbatical she deferred last year. Her last Sunday at St. Ben’s before she goes will be August 1st and she will return on October 31st for the celebration of All Saints Day. During her time away, she will mainly be visiting family and friends in the British Isles. Susan Plucker+ will be covering many of the Sundays when Caro+ is gone and there will also be other clergy coming to lead worship but otherwise the church will be completely lay led for the three month period. Please pray for our wardens Stef Shuman and Jane Wu as they prepare for this different time.



Laundry Love

Laundry Love is a program started by an Episcopal church in Ventura. Their website (laundrylove.org) says “Laundry Love washes the clothes and bedding of low/no income families and person(s) across the US. We brighten the lives of thousands of people through love, dignity, and detergent by partnering with diverse groups and laundromats nationwide.” Here at St. Ben’s, the program was started by Barbara Hirahara and others from the Homeless Outreach team.

The aim of Laundry Love is not only to provide clean clothing/ bedding but also to share God’s love with the people who participate. For some time, we have wanted to start a second program geared to seniors and have been awarded some funding from Dignity Health through our partnership with Los Osos Cares to do just that. Jocelyn Williams who is a local community member has offered to head this up. It will be from 11-1pm on the Last Wednesday of each month. If you can spare two hours once a month, please consider volunteering to be part of her team. Maureen Titus can put you in touch with Jocelyn.

Since Covid became part of our lives, the program has changed a bit – our volunteers no longer go into the laundry with the guests – we stay outside and give them the quarters and the detergent. That way we reduce the chance of infection. It is still possible to make relationships with those who come although the easy camaraderie of earlier times is a little missing.

(Continues on the next page)

The program is quite expensive. In April the evening program used \$298 in quarters. We are grateful that Dignity Health is underwriting this for us but will need to find other sources of funding in the future.

Laundry Love is just part of the way that St Benedict's connects with the community. The Abundance Shop helps us to share God's love with people from all walks of life and we continue those relationships in the Community Dinners and through the other programs of Los Osos Cares as well as all the other volunteer activities our members participate in, and the informal network we have in the community. Please remember to mention St. Benedict's whenever you can, and keep us in people's minds as the caring community we are.



Positive reviews for *Beginner's Guide to Creation Care and the Climate Crisis*

Don Maruska

The reports from a Deanery group using the Guide have been very positive. Survey results from the group, including members from St. Stephen's and St. Luke's, rated the video clips we made and discussion questions offered as "very useful." This feedback heartened the Earthcare Team (notably Caroline Hall, Barry Turner, John Horsley, Mike Eggleston, and Don Maruska) who la-

bored for months to prepare the five sessions and wrestle with Zoom recordings to produce the videos.

Have you read and reviewed the materials? If not, go to the St. Benedict's website and click on [Creation Care](#) in the menu and then "A Beginner's Guide." There you will find study guides to download and video recordings to watch.

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

Sacred Ground : What we can do for healthy soils and a healthy planet attracts wide audience

Don Maruska

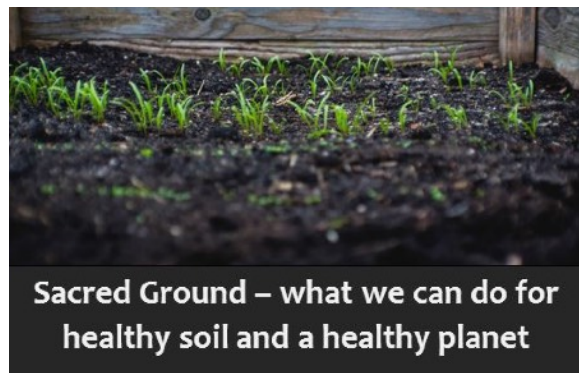
Did you know that if just half of the agriculture in the U.S. transitioned to proven healthy soils techniques that we could draw down all of the excess CO₂ in the atmosphere?

Over 60 people registered for the special Earth Day Zoom session that the Earthcare Team presented. We heard from Tim LaSalle, co-founder, Center for Regenerative Agriculture & Resilient Systems, Adjunct Professor of Agriculture, CSU Chico, Teresa "Tree" Lees, garden educator, and Greg Haas, Senior District Representative, Congressman Salud Carbajal (CA 24th District, member of House Committee on Agriculture).

The session highlighted some specific actions each of us can take:

- Join the Earthcare Team open to community participation -- send an email to office@stbenslosos.org to indicate your interest.
- Express your interest and support for regenerative agriculture - ask farmers about it, buy from farmers who follow regenerative agriculture.
- Join the Kiss the Ground community to keep up to date on regenerative agriculture activities - www.kisstheground.com/memberships
- Advocate with state and federal elected officials and agencies to support policies that promote healthy soils for a healthy planet.

You can watch a recording of the session and review the presentation materials at the Creation Care tab of www.stbenslosos.org.



Earth Day, Thursday April 22, 7 – 8:30pm

Benediction Cartoonist in New York(er)

Since taking over as the Layout Editor for the Benediction in 2015, Ed Himelblau has enjoyed including an original single-panel cartoon in most issues. "They aren't jokes about religion." says Ed, "I don't know enough about theology to do that. So I've focused on the mundane things that happen on the periphery... rummaging around in the church storage closet, handing out name-tags, that sort of thing." We are pleased to announce that, after about two years of submitting cartoons to The New Yorker magazine, Ed has made his first sale to that prestigious publication. "I'm really excited. Drawing for The New Yorker has been a dream of mine since childhood." We can't share *that* cartoon here because it hasn't appeared in print yet; however, Ed says the cartoon is about having an idea in the middle of the night and it, "features a chicken wearing a bowler hat." Below, we reprint some of Ed's cartoons from past issues of the Benediction.



Finally, I'd like to thank the Flower Committee for helping the Parish reach our monthly water-saving goal.



We have the Reflective Service from 8 to 9. That's followed by the General Service from 10:30 to noon...which is immediately followed by the All-Banjo Service from noon to 2.



"I think I liked the Peace better before we started doing the conga line."



Please open your hymnals to 377 as we sing together, The Beagle Unto Heaven Doth Bay...with accompaniment.

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