

# The Benediction

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos, California

**The Rev. Dr. Caroline Hall**

Rector

**The Rev. Barry Turner**

Associate Priest

**The Rev. Susan Plucker**

Associate Priest

**The Parish Council**

Maureen Titus, Presiding Warden

Lisa Gonzalez, Treasurer

Pamela Bleisch

Sandy Fisher

Cathy Gildea

Está Kandarian

Helen Schnieders

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**Sunday Services**

**8:00 am** (2nd, 3rd, 4th Sunday each month) - Eucharist, live at church and available on Zoom (link may be found in the Benediction Weekly under the News tab on our website.)

**10:30 am** - Eucharist, live at church and live-streamed on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/stbenslososos/](http://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,**

The swallows are back! I know that they make a mess on the windows and it's probably not good for the building but I love that last year we got a colony of swallows for the first time, and they liked it enough to come back. I rejoice in every new bird we have on the grounds, every new creature that walks through because it is a sign of the land coming back to life. When we first moved here it was a rough plot of dry land with scrubby grass but with hard work, time and patience it is gradually becoming a beautiful expression of God's abundance.

I am similarly grateful for each one of you and for all the different people God brings through our doors. I rejoice when I see new faces and give thanks for each of you who makes an effort to get to know our guests. We were all strangers once but we have grown together in Christ into one body. Radical welcome means that we not only welcome people expecting them to adapt to us, but we also allow ourselves to be challenged and changed by them.

Following the pandemic, we find that we are a smaller number (and older!!) than we were, so this is a good time to challenge ourselves to open our hearts and minds to more and different people. In our prayers it is useful to think about what St Ben's has to offer and to ask God to send us people who will benefit from serving and worshiping God with us, rather than getting into a place of lack in ourselves. We do have a great deal to offer and I invite you to think about what drew you here or what keeps you coming and imagine another person who might enjoy that same connection. Then pray for them – even if you don't know them – and if you do, invite them to come to church with you.

God is already working in our midst to meet all our needs and to guide us into the paths of ministry that s/he has for us. Inside this newsletter you will find some information about the trailblazer position. I am excited that the Parish Council has applied for someone to help us explore new ministry, and am hopeful that we may be successful in our application. This will be a big step for us. It will mean change. But the people of St. Benedict's have never been afraid of change, never afraid of trying new things.

In Jeremiah 29 God says, "For I know the plans I have for you... to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." You know I hate taking verses out of context but I think that if God promised that to our spiritual ancestors who were exiled into Babylon, s/he also promises it to us. Our part is to hear what God is doing and get onboard.

Blessings to you all,



Caroline J.A. Hall



@StBens\_LosOsos

## A Report From Your Transition Team

Alan Kiste, Convener

As you know, Caro+ has announced her retirement in Spring of 2023. I am the convener of the Transition Team (Michael Lucas, Lorraine Schwenk, and Jane Wu) and I want to update you about our work. First, it is important to state that our Team is not a search committee. It is premature to be thinking about a search committee or the search process. Nothing regarding a search process has been decided and, according to diocesan guidelines we will not be actively searching for another Rector until Caro+ has retired. Our job as a Transition Team is to gather data about how the church runs, Caro+'s roles and what she does, and most importantly, to help our Parish get ready for her retirement.

While many people are understandably curious about what will happen after Caro+ retires and lots of people have been chatting informally about that, in all honesty, I believe those discussions are premature and not particularly helpful at this time. We have about a year before Caro+ retires, and during this time our work as a Parish needs to be devoted to celebrating our many years together with her as our Rector. Making plans for her replacement before she has retired is, in my opinion not only disrespectful to her and her work here with us, but also short-circuits the time we need for an authentic and heartfelt goodbye. Remember that once she leaves, Caro+ cannot return until invited by our next Rector, so we really do need to be intentional about these last months with her and not muddy the waters with concerns about hiring her replacement.

Yes, next steps are important, and we have elected a Parish Council who is in contact with the Diocese about next steps, because it is important that they plan ahead so that the rest of us can instead focus on saying goodbye. Let's trust our Parish Council to do their work and recognize that they may not be able to share everything because hiring decisions are personnel matters that require privacy to protect applicants. For the rest of us, Scripture reminds us that "for everything there is a season", so let's let this be a season of thanksgiving, celebration, and farewell.

In the here and now, our Transition Team has several thoughts about how to prepare to say goodbye. Of course, we're going to have a great party for Caro+ upon her retirement! But in the meantime, there will be several other ways that you can join in to help us all get mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepared including book groups to study and discuss effective ways to be the church during transition, and grief support groups to help us cope with the many losses we have experienced over the last few years. We hope that these opportunities will help us prepare as much as is possible for the changes that are coming. If you have additional ideas, you're welcome to join our Team and volunteer to help lead our Parish during this transition.

## Highlights of the Parish Council

- Agreed that it is time for safety and liability reasons to reduce the squirrel population as they are undermining the parking lot and pathways
- Agreed to apply for a Trailblazer position (see article)
- Messy Church will be starting again in May as a once a month evening program for children and their adults
- Sandy Fisher was elected as People's Warden. Sandy will not be "in charge" of facilities in the way that a traditional Junior Warden is. Hannah and Caro+ will continue to deal with small issues through the office, and larger things will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- Abundance Shop sales for the first few months this year were an increase on last year.
- In order to have a stable clergy transition we need to shore up our committee structure so we are as lay-led as possible.



## Finances

By the end of March we were a bit behind on operating income but this is due to a timing issue, not anything of real significance.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter</b>	Income: 51,511	Budget: 60,846	Difference: -9,335
	Expense: 56,248	Budget: 56,336	Difference: 88

We have sent \$3,000 to help Polish refugees through the Pentecostal fellowships in the Nowy Sacz area of Poland.

## Trailblazer?

As part of the Bishops Appeal, Bishop Lucinda is planning to create a new position in the diocese, that of trailblazer. This will enable someone who has just completed seminary to participate in a parish with a view to helping that parish expand their ministry. They will spend two years getting to know the local area and the church in order to form new partnerships and so open up avenues of communication with new groups in the community.

The Parish Council has designated family and young adult ministry an area of ministry focus and so has applied for a trailblazer, jointly with the Canterbury Foundation which ministers to students in SLO. The diocese will pay 50% of the trailblazer's salary and benefits and we would split the other 50% with Canterbury. For this year, and perhaps next we have special gift funds that can be used for this.

If our joint application is successful (we hope to know by mid-May) the trailblazer will come to us in June as a deacon and will be ordained priest while they are here. They will be mentored by Caro+ but will NOT replace her when she retires. We will need to have another priest to minister to the parish, because the trailblazer would be working on their own special project. But they won't be doing this alone – the hope is that they will be able to build capacity in the congregation for this new ministry area – so we need to be right there alongside them.

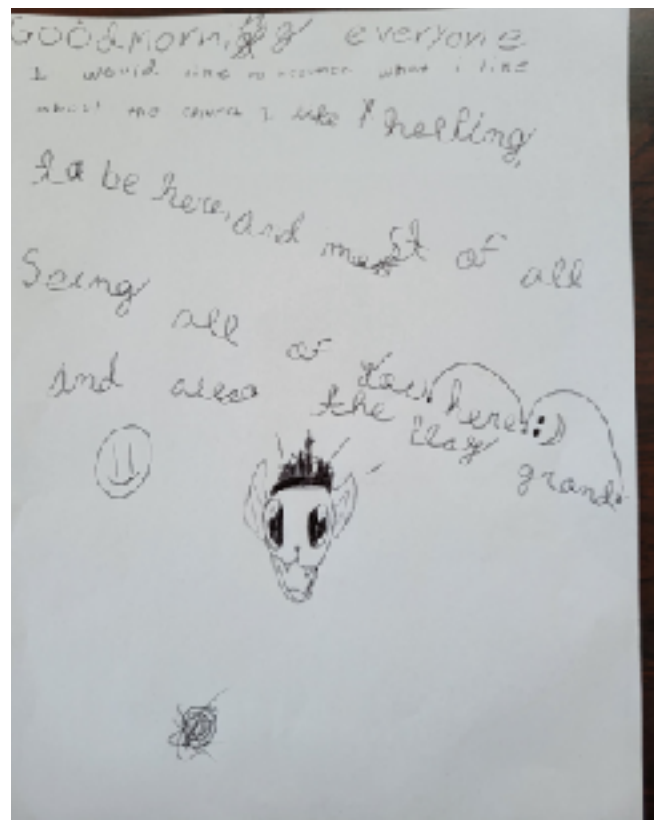
Please be praying for this person, for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as the Bishop places them and for our ministry to families and younger adults. And we will need to find them accommodation so please be looking for a small apartment.

## Ari's announcement

Ari is our youngest member (Diana Hammerlund's granddaughter) and on Sunday April 24 she made her first announcement. She said, "Good morning everyone, I would like to announce what I like about the church. I like helping, to be here, and most of all seeing all of you here; and also the playground." Thank you Ari – we like seeing you here too!

## Liturgy Committee

A Liturgy committee will be starting to meet in May. This group will take some time to learn about liturgy (that's the structure and the content of our common prayer) and will then begin to design liturgies for a variety of services. If you are interested, please let Caro+ know.



## Spiritual Conversation

Do consider joining the Tuesday morning conversation on Zoom. A new conversation on Ignatian spirituality has just started. Ignatius was a Spanish Catholic priest and theologian, who helped found the Jesuits to be missionaries and teachers. Ignatius paid particular attention to the spiritual formation of his recruits and recorded his method in the book [Spiritual Exercises](#) (1548). In time, the method became known as Ignatian spirituality.

The book which is providing a basis for the discussion is "[The Jesuit Guide to \(Almost\) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life](#)" by James Martin. You are welcome to the conversation even if you never read the book.

## General Convention

Every three years the Episcopal Church meets in convention. It was due to meet last year but was delayed because of Covid. There are two houses – the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. Deputies are elected by their diocese (four clergy and four lay people) and this year Caro+ has been elected as the 1<sup>st</sup> clergy alternate which means she gets to go and take part, and then if one of the El Camino Real clergy deputies needs time out, Caro+ will get seat, voice and vote for that session. Caro+ has been to General Convention before as an LGBTQ activist – this is her first time as a deputy.

General Convention meets for worship every day and spends most of its time reviewing, discussing and voting on proposed legislation. Just as in the US Congress, there are legislative hearings and then resolutions have to be passed in both houses and so it takes quite a bit of time. This year it is meeting in Baltimore for 12 days starting July 4.

## Transitions

Anne Kanter is moving to live in Washington State with her husband Dave who went ahead of her several years ago and is taking her mother with her. We expect May 15<sup>th</sup> to be Anne's last Sunday with us but of course we'll be delighted if she shows up the next week!!



Anne and her mother Pat at the Gratitude Dinner.

We just heard that **Pat Armstrong** died last month. Pat and her husband Sam joined St Ben's in the late 90s when we were meeting in the Community Center. They were leaders in the church for many years. Sam died of ALS, and the Catalina Ironwood trees in the center island were planted in his honor. Pat served on the vestry, cleaned the

church, hosted a monthly eucharist in her home, served on Caro's discernment committee for ordination, was a delegate to diocesan convention and was on the Diocesan Council, and she always had a cheerful laugh and smile for everyone.

If Pat were here she would tell us that she has not died but has "graduated". Her daughters will be coming to St Ben's to scatter her ashes at some point soon and we can have a small service for her then.



The Vestry in 2005: left to right, behind: Pat Armstrong, Carol Marble, Bob Pelfrey; in front Betty Field-Haley, Mary-Elizabeth+ and Suzanne Dannenbring



St. Benedict's building was built at Camp Roberts in 1941 and moved to its current location the 1990s.

# Earthcare shows inspirational documentary “Youth v Gov”

John Horsley

On Earth Day, April 22, The Earthcare team presented a special showing of the award winning documentary “Youth v Gov”. The movie relates how 21 young people, most of whom not old enough to vote, have been suing the U.S. government for violating their constitutional rights to life, liberty, personal safety and property through their willful actions in creating the climate crisis. The persistence of these young people in the face of all the obstacles that the government threw at them is moving and inspirational. The movie was followed by a lively informal discussion.

The movie was made available by Interfaith Power and Light, a network of more than 22,000 faith communities committed to addressing the climate crisis. It was provided as part of their Faith Climate Action Week, the theme of which was “Sacred Trust:: Our children’s right to a livable future”.

(If you missed the movie but would still like to see it, it will be available on Netflix from April 29).



# Ripples of Goodness for the Earth from St. Benedict’s

Don Maruska

The bioreactor we built at St. Benedict’s in October 2021 has inspired another one to be planned on May 21 at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. “The Earthcare Team at St. Benedict’s is delighted that our initiative is having ripple effects,” commented Don Maruska. “What we do even at our parish level makes a difference elsewhere.” The Rotary San Luis Obispo de Tolosa team who learned by doing in building the bioreactor with us will be leading the effort at the Botanical Garden. The build will occur 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday, May 21. If you’d like to join in the effort, please contact Don Maruska by phone or text at 805-550-6946.

Meanwhile, St. Benedict’s bioreactor continues to feed the growth of mycorrhizal fungi that will enhance trees and plants on the church property with product to share. The bioreactor has another six to eight months to go to complete its cycle.





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



*"I appreciate your commitment to our Earth Day pledge, but maybe you should change into your vestments after you bike to the church."*

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