

# The Benediction

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

## The Rev. Jen Crompton

Trailblazer

## The Parish Council

Maureen Titus, Presiding Warden

Sandy Fisher, People's Warden

Cathy Gildea, Clerk

Lisa Gonzalez, Treasurer

Esta Kandarian, Abundance Shop

Pamela Bleisch

Sarah Chesebro

Diana Hammerlund

Berkeley Johnson

Michael Lucas

Brian Spolarich

## Benediction Publisher

Maureen Titus, Presiding Warden

## Benediction Editor

Cathy Gildea, cathy@gildea.com

## 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:

facebook.com/stbenslososos

or on our website:

stbenslososos.org/facebook including-live-stream/

Service leaflets are available each week under the Worship tab on our website

Church: 2220 Snowy Egret Lane  
Los Osos, CA 93402

Mailing: PO Box 6877  
Los Osos, CA 93412

(805) 528-0654

office@stbenslososos.org  
www.stbenslososos.org

Message from our Presiding Warden, Maureen Titus

New Year Greetings to everyone,

We recently held our Annual Parish Meeting to review what was accomplished in 2023. We had a very productive and interesting year; I hope you all have read the reports of the dedicated committees. It is amazing what we do here. We reviewed our financial health, voted on vestry members and diocesan delegates. The long-awaited Parish Profile was approved by Bishop Lucinda and released for everyone to read. Now we can publish it for the world to see what St. Benedict's has to offer. Our next Priest is out there just waiting to digest all the information and wants to know more about us. Please continue praying for this quest.



On February 2, I heard the groundhog didn't see his shadow this year, so that means an early Spring? Where do we go from here, I began to wonder. As I researched what this may mean for us, I found that Lent (is an old English word meaning "spring" the time of lengthening days).

As we know Lent will begin February 14, we will have services at the church and Ashes to Go will take place in front of the Abundance Shop. Many people in Los Osos

stop by just for that and I have learned they really look forward to St. Ben's doing this. The Stations of the Cross will be lovingly placed for us to view, meditate and appreciate the artist and donors who had them created for St. Benedict's. We are very grateful for the Hirahara Family gift.

On Sunday March 10 Bishop Lucinda will be at St. Benedict's for a visit and service. She will be able to confirm those who haven't had the opportunity to do so. If you are interested in confirmation, please talk with Rev. Jen Crompton or Lisa Gonzalez to learn what is required.

Chaplain Berkeley Johnson blessed us with a beautiful sermon, if you weren't here on rainy, windy Sunday Feb 4 you can read the sermon on our website. He spoke of the service ministries we undertake at St. Ben's, whether it be feeding people at community events, hosting meals or coffee hour, liturgy and altar guild committees. He said "our participation in worship is just as much an act of service, as our service, wherever it takes place, is an act of worship; we couldn't be serving without Christ's healing presence and touch in our own lives."

Thank you to everyone who is part of this beautiful, serving and loving congregation.

Peace and Love,

Maureen Titus

## An Update from Your Search Committee

Brian Spolarich, Chair

As announced at the Annual Meeting, our Parish Profile was approved by the Bishop, and has been published on the St. Benedict's website. The web address for our Profile is:

[www.stbenslososos.org/parish-profile/](http://www.stbenslososos.org/parish-profile/)

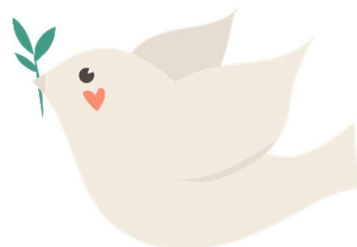
This is an important milestone and the result of the discussion, feedback, engagement, and prayers of every member of our parish. We worked hard to create a profile that was a faithful representation of who we are as a parish, what makes us distinct, our hopes and challenges, how God is at work in our community, and who we are seeking to lead us into the future. Anyone who participated in any of the transition related activities in the past year has contributed to the document, even if you did not write the actual words. Please note that while feedback is welcomed, this document cannot be changed without approval again by the Vestry and Bishop.

This document should also be understood first and foremost as an advertisement, a way to attract candidates who might be interested in our opportunity to learn more about us, and to invite them into relationship with us for a conversation. In other words, while this is "about us", it is not primarily "for us".

Our call is for a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time position, which we discussed at the Annual Meeting in some detail. Our budget cannot support a full-time call at this time, and the financial gap (around \$40k/year) is more than a "stretch". Although Caro+ was full-time at the end of her tenure, this was done in part to help increase her pension benefits after retirement and required spending savings and one-time funds to cover the difference. We know that the current clergy job market is challenging for congregations (there are more open positions than clergy to fill them), but this is our current reality. We will pray that God provides us an abundance of candidates, and that one will be right for us and we for them.

Looking forward, the next steps are:

- Post our job advertisement on the Episcopal News Service "Jobs & Calls" web site: [www.episcopalnewsservice.org/jobs/](http://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/jobs/) This is the primary place that Episcopal clergy will look for new opportunities. Our position will be posted for two months, including for at least a week after Holy Week.
- Conduct implicit bias training with members of the Search Team to ensure we are following fair and legal hiring practices.
- Schedule Zoom calls with first round candidates after they have sent their application materials to Canon Martha. She will perform a basic screening and forward applications to the Search Team. The Search Team is charged with presenting at least two candidates to the Parish Council to bring forward for in-person interviews.
- Conduct in-person interviews second round candidates with the Parish Council and Search Team. This interview would occur over a two-day period, and would include formal interviews, a home Eucharist and sermon, tour of the local community and our campus, meeting with the Bishop, and informal conversation over shared meals.



Based on the outcome of these in-person interviews, the Vestry would call a candidate as our Priest-in-Charge with a renewable three-year contract.

- Many thanks to all the members of the Search Team and Transition Team who have labored with great care and diligence to get us to this moment.

## Highlights from the Annual Meeting

Cathy Gildea, Clerk

On January 28th we held our Annual Meeting for the parish. Presiding Warden Maureen Titus led us as we reviewed the prior year in photos and financial and committee reports. For the past eight months, St. Benedict's has been faithfully and lovingly 100% led by our lay members. Thank you so much to everyone who continues to make this a vital beloved community! We have been so blessed to have Rev. Jen Crompton, our supply clergy, and lay Ministers of the Word lead us in worship and walk with us on this journey. In addition to not having a permanent priest yet, we continue to search for a musician to accompany us during worship so that Ann Lucas can enjoy her own much-deserved retirement. In both the search for a priest and a musician we are challenged by a shortage of job seekers, but continue to trust that the Holy Spirit will show us our path forward.

For the business portion of our meeting, we elected our new leadership; congratulations to

Vestry members Michael Lucas and Brian Spolarich

Diocesan delegates Lisa Gonzalez and Diana Hammerlund. Alternate is Bryson McKelvey.

Brian Spolarich presented an update on the search for our new priest (see article on prior page). Lisa Gonzalez presented the 2023 financial statements and the 2024 budget for approval.

Minutes from annual meeting are posted in the long room.

## Long Term Financial Planning and the Search Process

Cathy Gildea, Clerk

Our transition and search process has presented us with the opportunity to look at our financial planning through a new lens in addition to the annual budgeting process. Both 2023 and 2024 are atypical years for our finances because of the difference between funding supply clergy and a permanent priest. In 2023, we had a full-time priest for half the year. In 2024, we have funds budgeted for a new priest but do not really know when that person will come. The good news is we are able to save up some reserve funds while we have supply clergy, but we also have the uncertainty that comes with the timing of the search process.

To support the search process, the vestry needed to understand what funding will be available for our new priest as they begin their long-term ministry with us. By analyzing trends in income and expenses over multiple years, we reached a few important conclusions.

- The Covid pandemic and transition period make it difficult to create a smooth comparison over recent years.
- While we were able to achieve full-time status for Rev. Caro prior to her retirement, this included using reserves and one-time sources of funds such as PPP loans and special gifts designated for that purpose.
- While income from the Abundance Shop is increasing, regular pledging has been impacted by the departure of donors passing away, moving away, or leaving the church. So, while total income is growing, it is not growing fast enough to support calling a full-time priest at this time.
- We are the fortunate beneficiaries of a bequest from the Faye Hogan estate, which we will offer as a housing equity share as part of our 'terms of call' for our priest.
- We continue to share the hope that God's abundance will enable us to support a full-time clergy salary in the future.

## Star Party

We gathered together on Friday January 5th to celebrate Epiphany with our annual Star Party. After a delicious potluck supper, Liz Maruska, Maureen Titus, and Berkeley Johnson each found the traditional coin in their piece of cake, designating them our Epiphany royalty. Following the star, they processed through the sanctuary to the creche to commemorate the journey of the three wise men. Everyone was invited to take a "star word" for the year for reflection and then we removed the Christmas decorations, blessed the church, and marked the lintels with a chalk blessing for the new year.

**Quiz:** what is the significance of the designation "20+C+M+B+24" on the lintels? It stands for the Latin words *Christus Mansionem Benedicat*, which means "May Christ bless this house." The letters also stand for the traditional names of the Magi who visited Christ: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.



## Abundance Shop

Esta Kandarian

This year I would like to ask particularly for everyone to pray that our customers truly feel God's love when they visit the Abundance Shop. We hear heartbreaking stories of hardship really every day.

We are off to a busy start this year, with January 2024 sales rather unexpectedly exceeding January 2023 sales by close to 20 percent. It truly feels like loaves and fishes at the Abundance Shop! We plan to tithe to the same 14 local non-profits we supported in 2023.

Valentine's Day decor is out and going fast. We are looking forward to Ashes to Go on February 14th! We hope you'll come by. Thank you for your support.



## Key Takeaways from COP28

Mike Eggleston

When I was less than year old, folk singer Ed McCurdy wrote these words: “Last night I had the strangest dream, I ever dreamed before. I dreamed the world had all agreed to put an end to war. I dreamed I saw a mighty room; the room was filled with men. And the papers they were signing said they’d never fight again.”

It’s not that simple. Yet I think of that song whenever I think of the countless details and negotiations that go into global meetings like COP 28, the UN sponsored gathering in December of 2023. COP28 brought together over 97,000 delegates including 150 heads of state to take common action on climate change. Dreams of peace and ecological well-being can only be realized through countless actions undertaken by people and sometimes opposed parties working together. As I read of what the parties at COP28 meeting in Dubai agreed upon, I find hope. Not so dreamfully easy as signing papers to end all war. But in real waking life, COP28 seems to have taken many steps to move us closer to ending our war on nature and building an ecological civilization, including the following.

- Four pillars to addressing climate action were set: a.) fast-tracking a just, orderly, and equitable energy transition (essentially to renewable sources b.) fixing climate finance; c.) focusing on people, lives, and livelihood; d.) underpinning everything with full inclusivity. Examples under those four headings follow.
- World leaders pledged to triple renewable energy capacity by 2030. The economics of producing renewable energy are improving. Presently human efforts produce about 388 gigawatts of renewable energy annually, growing in 2023 by 450 GW. The intent is to be adding over 1000 new GW each year.
- Mobilization of funding from private and governmental sources is ongoing and increasing. For example, the Green Fund has received new contributions totaling \$12.8 billion, and a new fund for Loss and Damage to least developed countries was adopted, with pledges by December of \$770 million. Equally important, multilateral development banks all over the world are adopting frameworks for greening the financial system and expediting nature conservation, such as the Nature Solutions Hub for Asia and the Pacific.
- Building resilient food systems that adapt to climate change impacts is vital. 153 national governments committed to a Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action. 140 national governments joined the Declaration on Climate and Health which commits to strengthening of health systems present and future. 200 leading NGOs signed a Call to Action for Transforming Food Systems for People, Nature, and Climate.
- A Youth Climate Champion was appointed, and ongoing input from youth increased. The Podong Indigenous Peoples was launched, providing funding directly to indigenous peoples for projects they will administer. COP32 was charged to report in detail on the Gender-Responsive Just Transitions and Climate Partnership on which at least 78 nations have recently signed.
- The lists go on. Most of the efforts I’ve noted here come from a **“Summary of Global Climate Action at COP28”** which lists 57 areas of actions undertaken.

They didn’t sign just one paper to put an end to war. It will take much more than that. I do ask people to neither ignore the annual COP meetings nor to easily agree with pundits who say “it doesn’t do nearly enough.” Those pundits are very probably right. Yet...we need to do what we can and appreciate what we can. May God help us to bring good dreams to reality.

### Lent Madness

By Maureen Titus

Recently I read about something called Lent Madness, which started in 2010. Maybe some of you are already aware of this creative way learn about the men and women who are on the Episcopal Church’s Calendar of Saints. It is a unique Lenten devotion during Lent, if you are curious go to [www.lentmadness.org](http://www.lentmadness.org) for more information on how to play this unique game. Perhaps a group might be interested in this. The Forward Movement Executive Director, Rev. Scott Gunn is involved with this as well. The Day by Day daily devotional booklet many read is part of Forward Movement.

## Eat Green – Enjoy Good Health for Yourself and the Planet

Don Maruska

Did you know that reducing food waste is the top thing that households can do over the coming years to diminish greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs)? Did you know that shifting to a plant-rich diet is the second most impactful thing typical households can do? Did you know that producing and delivering four ounces of beef generates over 6 pounds of GHGs compared with less than one pound of GHGs for plant-rich protein? I learned these facts in the research for “Solve Climate Change Now: Do What You Love for a Healthy Planet.”

Fortunately, the ResilientSLO program powered by Cal Poly and Cuesta Climate Fellows can show us how to enjoy making healthy transitions. You can see a short video clip about reducing food waste at <https://youtu.be/VdfmEL50Twk>. Here’s a link to a clip about eating a more plant-rich diet <https://resilientslo.org/action/eat-lower-down-carbon-chain>.



Look for notices from the Benediction Weekly for information about this and other workshop opportunities to take personal action for a healthy climate.



## Spiritual Conversation

Roz Malone

The Tuesday Spiritual Discussion group will be using a Lenten program sponsored by a group called Living Compass. The six-week program includes Sunday and weekday meditations for the Lenten season. We will begin the program on Tuesday February 20, 2024 at 10.30 on Zoom. The program booklets are available as pdf electronic copies for free or a print copy available for \$1.00 plus postage. A limited number of print copies have been received and will be available in the back of the church. If you are not planning on attending the Tuesday group, feel free to take one of the booklets for your personal use.

Order booklets at <https://www.livingcompass.org/advent-lent>.

The group meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 am on [Zoom](#). You are welcome to join the conversation even if you don’t read the book.

Our Living Compass theme for the 2024 Lent season is ***Practicing Forgiveness with All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind.***

Designed for both individual reflection and group study, this daily devotional provides a foundation for seeking a deeper experience of Lent—one that prepares us for the coming of Easter.

## Update from the Liturgy Team

Sarah Chesebro

### Lent

Lent is upon us – that challenging season when we remember that we are mortal and that we are mired in sin and at the very same time remember that God’s grace meets us where we are.

#### Ash Wednesday

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>. We will be offering Ashes to Go at the Abundance Shop from 7:30 a.m. – 11 a.m. immediately followed by a Prayer Pop-up and a service in the church at 7 p.m.

### Holy Week

#### Palm Sunday

Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday on March 24<sup>th</sup> when we remember Jesus’ triumphant ride into Jerusalem. There will be an 8 a.m. service with Blessing of the Palms. The 10:30 a.m. liturgy will also begin with Blessing of Palms, Procession, and Passion Gospel.

#### 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. The wonderful Stations were gifted by the Hirahara family and made for us by Chloe White: Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. and Good Friday at 2:15 p.m.

#### Maunder Thursday

On March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. we will remember Jesus’ last supper with his friends and the subsequent betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane. After a simple Eucharist with (optional foot-washing) 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

We will mark the day when Jesus was crucified with a traditional Good Friday liturgy on March 29<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon. The church will be open for prayer and meditation from then until 2:15 p.m. when we will walk the Stations of the Cross.

#### Holy Saturday and Easter Vigil

On Holy Saturday March 30<sup>th</sup> we will remember 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 just after sunset, at 7:45 p.m. 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.

#### Easter Day Sunday

On March 31 our celebration continues on Easter Morning with a contemplative communion service at 8:00 a.m. and a Festival Eucharist at 10:30 a.m.



## The Benediction

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church

2220 Snowy Egret Lane

Los Osos, CA 93412

---

### *St. Ben's Events*

#### **February**

February 14 *7:30 - 11 am Ashes to Go*  
February 14 *7 pm Ash Wednesday Service*  
February 17 *Retreat for Vestry &  
Search Committee*

#### **March**

March 28 *7 pm Maundy Thursday*  
March 29 *12 pm Good Friday service*  
March 30 *7:45 pm Great Vigil*  
March 31 *Easter Sunday services*

---