

Bede's Journal

The monthly newsletter of St. Bede's Episcopal Church • September 2019



Soulwork in September

Soulwork is taking a late summer vacation on September 1 and 8. On September 15, Bishop Marc Andrus will present a bishop's forum at 9 a.m. in Lehman Hall.

We begin a new series on September 22, reading and discussing Atul Gawande's book *Being Mortal*. Gawande writes about aging and dying as both a physician and the child of elderly parents, and his work prompts reflections and conversations we all need to have about the end of life. This series meets for five Sundays, September 22 through October 20, at 9 a.m. in the Ford Room.

The Bishop's Visit: Sunday, September 15

Bishop Marc Andrus will visit St. Bede's on September 15, joining us for the 10:15 a.m. service and a luncheon to follow the service. The service will include confirmation and reception of parishioners who have spent time preparing this summer. To attend the luncheon, please sign up at coffee hour or call the church office at (650) 854-6555 by **Tuesday, September 10**. If you can help with set-up on Saturday, September 14 or clean-up on September 15, please contact Laura Gable at lwgable@hotmail.com or Helen Greenwood at heleng614@att.net.

Looking Ahead: Key Dates on Our September and October Calendar

September 8: The Choir returns, 10:15 a.m. service

September 15: Bishop Marc Andrus visits. No 8 a.m. service this morning

September 17: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.

September 18: Bede's Bedhead Book Club, 9 a.m.

September 29: Arts at St. Bede's with organist Domenico Severin, 4 p.m.

October 15: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.

October 16: Bede's Bedhead Book Club, 9 a.m.

October 20: Harvest Brunch, 11:30 a.m.

October 27: Housing Advocacy session, 11:30 a.m.

For the full calendar of upcoming events, visit www.stbedesmenlopark.org and click the link for **News and Events**.

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To the Neighbor Who Stole Our Rainbow Flag

Dear Neighbor,

It is odd writing this letter to you. I don't know anything at all about you except that you stole the rainbow flag off our church sign twice in the past month. I don't know who you are or why you did this or even how many of you I'm writing to, one person or two or three. I debated how to address you. "Dear flag thief" seemed too confrontational, and anyway the Christian faith teaches that the worst part of our lives, whether it's something we've done or something that happens to us, does not define us. Our relationship with God in Jesus Christ, established in baptism, defines us. Whoever you are, you must live nearby, which makes you our neighbor. So that's what I'll call you: neighbor.

So, neighbor, I'd like you to know why we fly that rainbow pride flag. It's because of all the prayer, conversation, and deep theological work the Episcopal Church has done over the last five decades. It was painful and acrimonious and it is still going on. The upshot is this: through all that prayer and conversation and theology, Jesus showed us that when he stretched out his arms on the hard wood of the cross, he drew all people into his loving embrace. We came to see that all people means all, regardless of race, color, class, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, political views, all those categories human beings use to divide people up. Jesus embraces them all—including you, neighbor. Jesus loves you as much as he loves us. We fly that rainbow flag to proclaim that Jesus embraces everyone, especially those who need extra reassurance that he loves them. This wasn't something we arrived at lightly, and it isn't something we are going to change. This is who we are, no matter how many flags you take down.

We knew, neighbor, we knew that some would disagree with us, oppose and threaten us, even. Jesus told us to expect it. Again and again he told his followers that his way is costly. If you had been in church with us this morning, neighbor, you would have heard Jesus tell the disciples that he had come to bring not peace but division. His message that the kingdom of God is near, that he had come to bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, let the oppressed go free, that was deeply divisive in Jesus' time. Good news for the poor and release of the captives means upsetting the systems that impoverish and imprison people. The rich and powerful want those systems to remain in place, and they will go to great lengths to keep the kingdom of God from disrupting the world. From the very beginning of his public ministry, Jesus was in conflict with the religious and secular leaders. The gospels are peppered with name-calling and arguments. In the passage we heard this morning, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem for the final showdown with these leaders, and he knows this confrontation will lead to his death. He hasn't got much time left, urgency infuses everything he does and says, he has got to proclaim the kingdom of God before it's too late, and he can't let anything stand in his way.

Following Jesus has brought division. Jesus' own family is divided; he has stepped back from his mother and brothers and sisters to do the work he has to do. His first disciples have left their families to follow him to his death, and possibly their death too. They knew that whatever happened to Jesus was likely to happen to his disciples as well. Leaving family is a big deal in a culture where children are obligated to honor and care for their parents. And the decision to follow Jesus continued to divide families in the first few centuries of Christianity, when Christians were persecuted by the Roman empire. I wonder, neighbor, if you've ever heard of Perpetua. She lived in Carthage, in north Africa, around the year 200. She was a well-to-do Roman woman, twenty-two years old, recently married with a baby son, and she had become a Christian along with one of her two brothers. She and her fellow converts were arrested, and her father, out of love for

her, visited her in prison several times and pleaded with her to give up her faith. He said, "Think of your brothers, think of your mother and your aunt, think of your child, just make the sacrifice to the Roman gods." Perpetua would not, and she and her companions died at the hands of the Roman emperor's men.

None of us in the twenty-first century expect to die for our Christian faith like Perpetua did. And the dominance of Christianity in western culture for the last fifteen hundred years has made us complacent about the risk of following Jesus. When pretty much everyone was Christian, there was no cost to it. But following Jesus *is* risky. It *does* bring division. We should expect to endure opposition because of our Christian faith. And some of us do face that individually; some of us get criticized or rejected by our families or coworkers because we go to church. But St. Bede's as a congregation hasn't had to face opposition. Our community gathers here on this beautiful campus on Sand Hill Road, and we've never faced any problems for being a Christian church.

Until you stole our flag. You stole a symbol that proclaims Jesus' love for everyone.

So thank you, neighbor. Thank you for reminding us of the cost of following Jesus. We needed that reminder, and now we're not likely to forget the cost of discipleship any time soon. We acknowledge in the St. Bede's Way that the impact of our words and actions doesn't always match our intent. Your intent, neighbor, may have been to express disapproval of LGBTQ people. But the impact of your action is to call us back to Jesus, to his loving arms embracing everyone, and to remind us that love like that isn't easy or simple, it is scary and hard, it cost Jesus his life and it costs us too.

Neighbor, do you know what we do when someone disagrees with us? We love them. We've had lots of practice at this. We disagree with each other all the time, and we still gather at the same table every Sunday. Neighbor, I wish you would come to St Bede's and meet us. We will greet you as though you were Jesus himself. We promise in our baptismal vows to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves, and we really do try to live that out. We will listen to you; we will seek to understand you and where you're coming from. We'll share with you where we're coming from, not to change your mind but so you can understand us. Then we'll invite you to eat with us, maybe here at the communion table if you're open to that, or else over coffee in Lehman Hall. The world is locked in conflict right now. Opposing sides barely know how to talk to each other anymore, and we think we have something to teach people about how to disagree. We would like to share our way of disagreeing while remaining in relationship with you.

Neighbor, I hope you will leave our flag alone in the future. If you steal it again, we'll put another one up. All you're doing is increasing the sales of rainbow flags; taking it really is pointless. But we mean it about meeting us. Even though it is costly, for him and us, Jesus' love embraces everyone, including LGBTQ people, including you. We'd like to show you what that means.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Gia Hayes-Martin, Rector
On behalf of St. Bede's

This sermon was preached on August 18, 2019.

Opportunities to Get Involved

Choir Season Starts the First Week of September

The robes are freshly laundered, new sheet music has been ordered, old favorites pulled from the music library, and the pencils have been sharpened. It's time for choir rehearsals to start up again, this year on **Wednesday, September 4**. The choir welcomes new members at any time of the year, but there's no time like the present! If you've been thinking about joining the choir, think YES!

Fluent music reading skills are not required, although the ability to match pitch is essential and familiarity with choral music is a plus. We'll help polish your musical and vocal skills. Beyond that, all that is necessary is a desire to serve the church through music, a willingness to learn music of a variety of styles, and a good sense of humor.

Singers of all ages are welcome. Regular attendance at mid-week rehearsals (most on Wednesdays, some on Thursdays) and Sunday morning services is expected and encouraged, with the understanding that everyone will need to miss now and then. Singing beautiful music to the glory of God is a sure way to strengthen one's sense of the mystery and beauty of creation, as well as illuminate one's own life of praise and prayer. Regular work and play with a dedicated core of church members provides a deeper connection to the community. And the fringe benefits of choir membership include your very own robe (no more fretting about what to wear on Sunday) and the best reserved seats in the house!

If you're interested in joining the choir, please contact Music Director Katherine McKee at kmckee@stbedesmenlopark.org.

Healing Racism Training

The Diocese of California is offering a Healing Racism training led by the Kaleidoscope Institute on **September 13 and 14**. Kaleidoscope is one of the leading facilitators of anti-racism training in the Episcopal Church and is known for its context-based work. The sessions will be held at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, 19179 Center Street, Castro Valley. The cost is \$25; scholarships are available. Register by **September 10** at diocal.wufoo.com/forms/healing-racism-training. Please let Gia know if you plan to attend, as she would like to have Bede's attendees share what they learn with the parish at large.

Christmas Hospitality

Join us for a hospitality team meeting on **Sunday, September 22** as we do some early planning for Christmas hospitality. We'd like to come up with a plan for the Christmas Eve community dinner that is festive and welcoming – but that doesn't burn out our volunteers. Grab a bite to eat at coffee hour and join us in the Ford Room at 11:45 a.m.

Community Outreach: Project Updates and Decisions

Following is a summary of the discussion at the August 19 meeting of the Community Outreach Steering Committee. Please contact a member of the committee (listed below) if you have questions or suggestions.

After reviewing St. Bede's Way, members addressed the following agenda items:

Home & Hope. Vicki Blayney provided a summary report on our week hosting Home & Hope in July and survey results. After a lengthy discussion, the Committee recommended that we not continue to participate with Home and Hope as a parish, and research other options for unhoused support. Our goal is to have a new partner in place by next summer. Parishioners may continue to volunteer with Home and Hope on their own if desired.

Life Moves Family Dinners. With Pam's departure, Katie Machemer and Vicki Blayney are taking the lead for these events. Katie has contacted Life Moves for a date on their fall calendar – now confirmed for November 17. Parishioners are encouraged to help with cooking, serving and clean up.

Housing Advocacy. Deb Blackmore provided background regarding the upcoming October 27 event. Rather than having another informational event, she recommended that we move on to taking action in our advocacy for local affordable housing. The fall event will be a postcard writing campaign for all ages. Suggested wording, supplies, light lunch and child care will be provided.

Advent Family Sharing. Angela Sherry is continuing as the lead for this event. She will find out what the dates and format will be for this year's effort (stockings for teens or gifts for families). The committee agreed to ask for donations to cover large-ticket items for families if needed.

Gala. The annual Gala will be held in May 2020, led by members of the Community Service Steering Committee and Hospitality Committee. Angela Sherry, Sue Sartor and Vicki Blayney offered to provide leadership. The group discussed a possible theme that would welcome all ages to participate. A final date and details will be determined and announced to parishioners.

Rummage Sale. The committee decided to discontinue the annual Rummage Sale. Those who participated in this event in the past are encouraged to volunteer for one of the above community outreach events.

– Sue Sartor

Community Outreach Committee members

Sue Sartor and Julie Backlund, Co-Chairs • Carol Brink, Vestry Liaison • Deb Blackmore • Vicki Blayney • Katie Machemer • Angela Sherry • Mary Working

Vestry View

This periodic report on the vestry's actions and decisions is part of our commitment to serving the Bede's community. Following are key action items discussed at the August vestry meeting.

Staffing. Interviews for the new parish administrator took place over the past few weeks. Gia hopes to make an offer soon and, if accepted, to have a new office administrator in place by the end of September.

Sharing Space with Trinity School. Trinity School has asked to use the Large Wyatt classroom this coming school year, Monday through Friday afternoons, for Spanish classes. The school is willing to pay an additional use fee to the church, which required an amendment to the use agreement between the school and the church. Vestry has reviewed and approved the amended use agreement which is effective for the 2019-2020 school year.

Re-envisioning School Chapel Services. Over the summer, Gia has been working with Matt Allio, head of Trinity School, and Kim Thacker, the school's religion teacher, to re-envision the school's morning chapel services to make them more developmentally appropriate and help children grow in faith. A new lectionary will be introduced this year, as well as a periodic series with speakers from other major world religions. Parishioners looking for a morning prayer service are welcome at school chapel services, which are held Mondays through Fridays, 8:20 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. during the school year.

Community Outreach. Vicki Blayney reported on key decisions that were made at the August 19 Community Service Committee meeting. The committee recommended – and vestry agreed – that we discontinue our participation with Home and Hope as a parish, and research other options to support the unhoused in our community. The annual Gala will return in May 2020 with a family-friendly event to raise funds for the Seccombe Outreach Fund. See the separate report on page 5 for more details about upcoming outreach programs.

New Capitalization Policy. Senior Warden Julie Backlund introduced a new capitalization policy that will help us to better define capital projects (typically large projects that support our infrastructure, e.g., a new roof on the church) vs. operating maintenance expenses. This policy will help with the annual budgeting process and define how funds set aside in endowment or reserves can be used. Vestry reviewed and approved the new policy.

Stewardship Campaign. The annual stewardship campaign will begin in late September this year, with pledge ingathering to be held at the Harvest Brunch on October 20.

Kitchen Use Guidelines. Junior Warden Anne Vitullo shared a draft of some general kitchen use guidelines that will be posted in the kitchen and shared with church, school and community groups that routinely use Lehman Hall.

Next vestry meeting: Tuesday, September 17 at 7 p.m. in the Ford Room. Members of the Bede's community are welcome to offer community input at the start of our business meeting.

Celebrations: September Birthdays and Anniversaries

Anniversaries are like birthdays: occasions to celebrate and to think ahead, usually among friends with whom one shares not only the past but also the future. – Zbigniew Brzezinski

Birthdays:

5 Jane Ross
6 Frank Hill, Kevin Kopczynski
9 Katharine Kearnan
10 Rachael Bowman
11 Quentin Long
13 Larry Bowman
16 Brendan Deocariza-Nee
18 Irene Lawrence
20 Carol Shedlock
24 Tim Brugh
25 Gia Hayes-Martin, Becky Zeren
26 Madeline du Lac
27 Daniel Machemer, Angela Sherry
29 Carol Louchheim
30 Mary Working

Anniversaries:

1 Kevin & Toffie Kopczynski, Jack & Linda Wenstrand
6 Doug Ross and Liz Bellock
13 Kathy Francissen and Van Jepson
15 Donna and Jack Reynolds
23 Erica Cicero and Ed Chrapla
25 Danielle & Roy Azem, Meredith & Michael Pellegrin

Supporting Arts at St. Bede's

Keep an eye on your mailbox for the new *Arts at St. Bede's* brochure to be mailed soon. This season will feature some perennial favorites (Collage Vocal Ensemble, Angela Kraft Cross, Kitka, and the Albany Consort), the return of the Menlo Brass who have not performed here for 13 years, newcomers Domenico Severin (organist) Elaine Thornburg (harpist) and Ensemble Draca (early music, headlined by our own soprano Katina Mitchell), and of course the St. Bede's Choir. A list of the dates can be found at <http://stbedesmenlopark.org/upcoming-arts-events/>. All events are on Sunday afternoons at 4 p.m.

As always, the series needs the support of its season sponsors: the Friends of Arts at St. Bede's. Your annual support of \$100 or more helps us keep wonderful performers on our roster and includes admission for two to all events. For those who can be more generous, donations in excess of \$100 are tax deductible. You don't have to wait until the brochure arrives to subscribe for the season, just visit us at <http://stbedesmenlopark.org/arts-series/>.

Whether or not you can make a financial contribution to the series, your time and talent would be most appreciated. For every event we need help at the box office, ushering, and with the post-concert reception. There is a particular need for many hands to help out for the Kitka concert on December 8, and for the two choir events on February 2 and March 15. If you're able to help out on any of the concert days, please contact Katherine McKee at kmckee@stbedesmenlopark.org.

– *Kathy McKee*

Bede's Bedhead Book Club

Please plan to join us for light-hearted discussion in the Ford Room at **9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month** through November. Our leaders and book choices for the fall:

September 18: Megan Ancker on Barbara Taylor Brown's *Altars in the World*

Reviewers say: *"With the honesty of Elizabeth Gilbert (Eat, Pray, Love) and the spiritual depth of Anne Lamott (Grace, Eventually), Taylor shares how she learned to find God beyond the church walls by embracing the sacred as a natural part of everyday life."*

October 16: Mary Working on Elaine Pagel's *Why Religion?*

Reviewers say: *"An extraordinary memoir of loss, spiritual struggle, illumination and insight – emotionally heartrending, intellectually exciting, a model of what a memoir should be."*

November 20: Deb Blackmore on Catherine Foxes' *Acts and Omissions*

Reviewers say: *"This novel brims with wit and heart, acknowledging the awkwardness and consolations of Anglicanism in the twenty-first century."*

Deepen your faith and your friendships. Bring your favorite coffee or tea and drop in to the Bede's Bedhead Book Club. Sign-up online on Sign-up Genius or contact coordinator Deb Blackmore at deb@blackmore.com.

– *Deb Blackmore*

News of Our Bede's Families

Megan Ancker notes that her son Scott and daughter-in-law Karina welcome Lia Maria Bowles on June 14. And her son Seth Bowles married Josephine Mickelsen on June 29 in Saratoga.

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park, CA. 94025 • (650) 854-6555 • www.stbedesmenlopark.org

Clergy and Staff

The Rev. Gia Hayes-Martin, Rector
Katherine McKee, Music Director
Rani Fischer, Organist
Angela Sherry, Bookkeeper

Sunday Services and Programs

Holy Eucharist at 8 a.m. and 10:15 a.m.
Soulwork Adult Education at 9 a.m.
Nursery at 10 a.m.
Children's Sunday School at 10:15 a.m.
