



Reverence for Nature

There is a bunny in my back yard. It feels special to me, maybe because rabbits are not as prolific as other animals like squirrels in our part of the world. I wonder where it sleeps, and whether it is young or old. It seems smaller than the rabbit that visited us this time last year, so maybe it is her offspring? Watching it chase the birds is entertaining. Similarly, a sparrow's nest graces the geranium pot on my friend's back porch. She has spent time researching the sparrow life cycle and is waiting excitedly for the eggs to hatch. As difficult as the past year has been, we are grateful for how COVID has helped us observe these small miracles. May you find something equally captivating this spring!

In faith and peace,

– *Laura Gable, Junior Warden*

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A Letter from Reverend Dan

Jesus Christ is risen today, alleluia!

Greetings in the Name of Christ,

One of the most memorable moments in any sermon in an Episcopal Church for me came during a children's sermon on Easter morning. The priest sat down among the children who had come forward, and holding up a giant, stuffed Easter bunny asked the kids, "What is this?" They all astutely replied, "The Easter Bunny!!!" To which the priest replied in the most cheery and excitable of voices, "That's right! It's a pagan fertility god!"

But this day, Easter, is about more than cartoon bunnies and sugary sweets. For disciples of Christ, Easter is about new life. Rebirth. Renewal. Resurrection. It is about the hope that, just as Jesus rose from the dead, that you and I too will rise to newness of life.

For sure, in Christ we have hope for the next life. But I have long believed that if the Good News is to be truly good, it must have meaning for this life as well.

I first came into believing this when I was learning about the Rwandan genocide of 1994. At that time I was in the camp of believing that love for this world is hatred toward God (see James 4:4), and that the good and righteous thing to do was to be "in the world but not of the world," acting and thinking as though this world and this life are irredeemably evil, and it is only in the next life that God's will and God's rule can be perfectly experienced.

But thinking about the genocide in Rwanda changed all that. I began to ask myself, how can the Good News be good at all if it didn't have any bearing on life in this world? How is it truly good if a nation where 90% of its citizens identify as Christian could perpetrate such evil on one another? Isn't there more to the Good News than just hope that the next life is going to be better? What about today? Here? Now?

But thanks be to God, I discovered the truth that God does care about today. Here. Now. After all, It was this same Jesus, brought back to life from the grave, who was raised in a living body, who had earlier taught his followers to pray, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on Earth..." Earth. This life. Jesus taught us to pray that God's Kingdom could come on Earth, and that God's will would be done on Earth, just like it is in heaven.

And what is God's will on Earth? That we would be people of love. That to love is the greatest commandment, and the second greatest too. Just before his death, Jesus told his disciples that the whole world would know that there is something special about them because of the depth of their love (see John 13:34-35). So if we are to be people of God, we are to love, in this life. Here. Now. Today.

So we find that resurrection is not just about what will happen to our souls after we die and are flung off into the next life. It is about the rebirth of the whole world. Because of Christ's resurrection, we are changed today, and through the love of God which has been given to us, our love transforms the world around us today.

It is a high calling which we have been given, to follow in the way of our savior who took up his cross for us. But in the end, it is my belief, that the way of Jesus is the best possible way to live.

Blessings to you all, and may God be with us always.

Dan+

Looking Ahead: Key Dates on Our April and May Calendars

April 4: Easter Sunday

April 5: Easter Monday: *Parish Office Closed*

April 7: Bede's Book Club, 9:30 a.m.; Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting, noon

April 13: Finance Committee meeting, 4 p.m.

April 20: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.

April 22: Copy deadline for May *Bede's Journal*

May 5: Bede's Book Club, 9:30 a.m.; Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting, noon

May 11: Finance Committee meeting, 4 p.m.

May 18: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.

May 22: Copy deadline for June *Bede's Journal*

May 31: Memorial Day : *Parish Office Closed*

Vestry View

This periodic report on the Vestry's actions and decisions is part of our commitment to serving the St. Bede's community. Following is a brief recap of key issues discussed and actions taken at January's Vestry meeting.

Dan opened the meeting at 7:04 and Sue led the opening prayer.

Financial Report: Julie Backlund, St. Bede's treasurer, reported that the change of banking signatures previously authorized by the vestry has been effected. However, Chase Bank required that St. Bede's former treasurer, Hal Louchheim, remain as a signatory of the checking account until the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan is forgiven. Vestry agreed to this requirement.

Julie further reported that the PPP loan forgiveness application has been completed and submitted, and, since we easily meet the requirements, she anticipates it will be approved within about ninety days. For the record, St. Bede's is not eligible for a new PPP.

Finally, St. Bede's financial documents have not been audited for three or four years, as the diocese has not had an auditor until recently. Now, Julie expects an audit to be completed by September. There are no unexpected changes in February's financial statements; both income and expenses are under budget. Both the insurance recovery for our scammed parishioner and an expense reimbursement from Trinity School will appear in the March statements.

Outreach Committee: Sue Sartor moved that the Vestry approve an expenditure of \$350 from the Secombe Fund for Outreach, to be payable to the Samaritan House Redwood City Free Clinic by the end of the month. The funds will be used to purchase Omron blood pressure cuffs. She also moved that the Vestry approve two \$100 honoraria expenditures for Joe Ngaloafe and Cesari Hardiman for their presentations at the *Unlocked Voices* webinar on March 18, 2021. Vestry approved both expenditures.

Buildings and Grounds: The hydronic heating boiler in the Trinity School Learning Center failed recently. Jon Backlund explained that while these systems have significant ecological and environmental advantages, they are also prone to failure; this one lasted thirteen years, compared to an average lifespan of ten years. B & G obtained three bids for the replacement, and recommends using Bay Hydronic, Inc., at a cost of \$26,500. Jon estimates that replacement will take six to eight weeks. Vestry agreed to this expense.

Committee Formation for 2021: Vestry members assigned themselves to various committees and work groups.

- Stewardship: Laura Gable, Nancy Stork, Vicki Blayney, Sue Sartor
- Finance: Irene Lawrence
- Buildings and Grounds: Miranda Pinckert, Dick Zeren
- Personnel (all ex officio): Sue Sartor (Senior Warden), Laura Gable (Junior Warden)

- Nominating (all ex officio): Anne Vitullo, Deb Blackmore, Carol Brink, Sue Sartor, Vicki Blayney, Dick Zeren
- Deanery representatives (elected): Michael Graebner, Irene Lawrence; alternate, Laura Gable
- Trinity School Trustees (appointed): Jon Poe, Michael Swenson, Ann Latta. Ann's term expires in June
- Community Outreach: Sue Sartor, Vicki Blayney
- Hospitality: Laura Gable
- Ad Hoc Housing committee: Nancy Stork, Susan Chan Egan

Rector's Report: Dan presented the annual Parochial Report, which describes our attendance and activities to the diocese. Vestry agreed to the report with a few minor corrections.

Dan also reported on Children's and Youth Ministry: At the moment, parents are too overwhelmed and children have too much screen time already for a successful restart of CYM. He is keeping the doors open, but doesn't expect anything to happen until we can meet in person again.

Sue noted that she recently put an article about Dan in the local Almanac.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50.

– *Irene Lawrence and Laura Gable*

Community Outreach News

The Community Outreach Steering Committee was very busy these past couple of months! On March 18th we hosted a webinar, Unlocked Voices, spotlighting the poetry of participants in the Project READ programs at local jails. Invitations to the event were shared with Trinity School and Trinity Church, as well as friends and family of participants. Over 30 people attended and learned about various literacy programs available to inmates from instructors as well as from Lisa Rosenberg, 2017 Poet Laureate from San Mateo County. It was inspirational to hear personally from two former participants who shared how the power of poetry has changed their lives forever. As Cesari, a former inmate put it, "Poetry brings you back into the fold of humanity." The Holy Spirit was definitely among us that night as we saw her presence in the lives of those doing this good work in the community and "bringing [people] back into the fold of humanity." This event was sparked by the Outreach Committee's desire to continue reaching out to the jails (in past years through the choir) even during COVID times. A special thank you to Nancy Stork for making the connections with program staff and coordinating book logistics, Laura Gable for being our webmaster, Siri Huntoon for assisting when needed, Angela Sherry for managing registrations and tracking funds (over \$450 net was added to the Seccombe Fund!) and Becky Zeren for her undying enthusiasm for literacy. Becky was so moved during rehearsal she wrote her own "I Am" poem for the event! Ask her about it!

In addition to the above, the Committee learned of needs at the Samaritan House Free Clinic from member John Hickson. They are particularly in need of blood pressure monitors. Although the

Committee's focus is on local literacy efforts and programs that support the unhoused/food-insecure, members agreed that it is better to support a need when we can. It was decided to provide 10 blood pressure monitors for a total of \$350 to the Clinic. Vicki Blayney is in contact with LifeMoves to keep up to date on their needs. They were most appreciative of the linens and towels that were delivered at the end of February. Vicki is hoping to hear soon about when we can resume providing dinners for their shelters. Our hope is to be able to do some cooking at the church together again, possibly outdoors on the barbeque, or provide a dinner by participants cooking at home as we did last summer. Please watch for more details to come!

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the committee if you have questions or suggestions. Members are: Sue Sartor (Chair), Vicki Blayney, Angela Sherry, John Hickson, Becky Zeren, Deb Blackmore and Anne Vitullo. Reverend Dan Spors is an ex-officio member. There are opportunities for parishioners to contribute their time and talent throughout the year, so please watch for upcoming events and volunteer sign-up information. Our next meeting will be held on April 1st.

-- Sue Sartor, Chair

Buildings & Grounds News

The St. Bede's Buildings & Grounds Committee kicked off 2021 with a big effort to improve the landscaping around the sacristy and Hill Center, hopefully for our parishioner enjoyment as we reopen. More immediate plumbing and HVAC needs had been addressed in 2019 and 2020 and some of the landscaping and irrigation work received relatively less attention.

In January we began a new relationship with Albert Oteiza Landscape Management. The Oteiza family name is well known and respected locally, as Albert's father managed a successful landscape management firm in this area for decades, and this is where Albert learned during his youth. Albert Oteiza was selected after we interviewed three competing local firms, all with excellent references and attractive offers. His firm's local experience with similar customers, attractive pricing, comprehensive work scope, and work scheduling were deemed the best.

B & G meets with Albert the first week of each month to set priorities. To date his crew has done major pruning and shaping of existing plantings, and soils amendment and replacement, in the courtyard raised beds and around Hill Center. The irrigation systems are under extensive review to minimize water use and maximize effectiveness consistent with plant health and maintenance. The irrigation systems around Hill Center and Wearmouth Garden have been completely replaced. Some selective new plantings will be made as we move into spring.

The St. Bede's Buildings & Grounds Committee is here to maintain our campus and keep it attractive, safe, efficient, and accessible. It is currently comprised of Siri Huntoon, Mike Sartor, Ed Lee (Trinity School CFO), Jon Backlund (Chair) and Reverend Dan Spors (ex officio). This year we are delighted to be joined by new members Miranda Pinckert and Dick Zeren. Monthly meetings, held at noon outdoors, are informal and open. Community input is always welcome.

--Jon Backlund, Chair

Deanery Meeting – Zoom on March 6, 2021

The Deanery of the Peninsula met for the first time this year on Zoom. Although separated for over a year due to Covid-19 restrictions, a great deal was accomplished over the net. In spite of the time lapse between deanery meetings and remote-only attendance, much excellent work in preparation for a more normal functioning time was achieved. After intense study and conversation the deanery bylaws were revised in the interest of creating a more transparent and open deanery governance. The 41 deanery delegates, representing a majority of Peninsula parishes, quickly approved the revised bylaws.

Essentially, the items of concern for the deanery were twofold. First was role of the diocese in its interactions with the various deaneries, many of whose members now serve in various diocesan positions. The diocese sees the deanery as an important channel of communication between the diocese and the individual parishes. A diocesan desire is to strengthen its relationship with both deanery and parishes through effective engagement and education as to diocesan goals. The second concern was to enhance deanery interaction among the local congregations. Meaningful conversation and interaction between parishes enlivens the overall life of the Church in a given area due to the immediacy of contact among local congregations.

As a result of a survey of Deanery of the Peninsula parishes (80% response) we have decided to form several taskforces to develop process and practice goals for the areas of Mission Outreach (particularly in Adult and Youth formation) and Parish Administration (cost saving shared purchase plans, better utilization of IT, adoption of best practices). It is clear that much of the leadership within the diocese and deanery originates at the local parish level.

Developing effective clergy and lay talent is crucial to the flourishing of both diocese and parish in the Bay Area. Engaging the skills and commitment of individuals will start with deanery action as we seek a more effective way of introducing our new members to what the Deanery of the Peninsula is about. Our shared commitment is only important if it is indeed shared so that we all grow in our common understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it. It was on this positive note that the Deanery Convocation completed its meeting.

--Michael Graebner, Deanery Delegate

St. Bede's Choir to premiere Chris Brown's *Stabat Mater* Friday, April 2 at the service for Good Friday

One of the silver linings to be found within this past year's horrific events has been the opportunity for artists, writers, and composers to find more time to create. The St. Bede's community is blessed with creative members; we were privileged to hear from a few of our authors in Soulwork sessions early in 2021. For Holy Week this year, the choir has the honor of making the first presentation of one of our own choir members' new compositions, Chris Brown's setting of the 13th century hymn text *Stabat Mater*.

To crib from Chris' own notes on the piece, the text is a hymn to Mary, imagining her suffering as she watches her son die on the cross. The poem is an early example of a spiritual practice later adopted by Ignatius of Loyola – namely, inhabiting a Bible story so completely so as to become in spirit a character from that story. Echoes of this practice resurfaced in the great Passion oratorios of the Baroque era, in which some solo arias and choruses reflected upon the story from the perspective of the performers' current time, in the midst of the Biblical story being narrated in the past tense by other solo parts and choruses. The earliest musical settings of course would have been plainchant; Chris includes a Gregorian chant setting of the text in the middle section of his new composition.

The full poem has twenty stanzas of three lines of trochaic tetrameter, with a rhyme scheme of AAB. Subsequent verses often have a pattern like AAB, CCB, etc. With this tight and compelling structure, it is no wonder that the text has been set by a very long list of composers, even though it was suppressed from the Roman Catholic liturgy by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) (and later restored by Pope Benedict XIII in 1727). Perhaps the best-known is the magnificent setting by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi (1710-1736). Many other notable composers have set the text, even during the time that it was out of favor as an approved part of the liturgy. A greatest-hits list would certainly include settings by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, Antonio Vivaldi, both Domenico and Alessandro Scarlatti, Joseph Haydn, Franz Schubert (2 different settings, one in G major and one in f minor), Gioachino Rossini, Antonin Dvořák, Giuseppe Verdi, Francis Poulenc, and James MacMillan.

Chris' setting employs SATTBB choir, contralto soloist, organ, tubular bells, and string bass. He set four of the original 20 stanzas, and added a final stanza of his own. In that last stanza, the language moves to the present tense, (the Historical Present, as Latinists would say), in the tradition of Loyola and other early hymnodists. In this last verse, the contralto soloist takes the voice of Mary, present in that horrible, historic moment, seeing her child die in front of her eyes.

1. At the cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful mother weeping,
close to her son to the last.
2. Through her heart, his sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
now at length the sword has passed.
5. Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear mother to behold?
8. She beheld her tender child,
saw him hang in desolation,
'Til his spirit forth he sent.

I stand, sorrowful mother,
weeping by the cross
While my son... (hanging one...)
Oh! Son!

-- Katherine McKee, Music Director

A Year of Grace and Learning

Matt Allio, Head of Trinity School, in a reflection to the school community, described this past year as “A Year of Grace and Learning.” On March 17, 2020, after a short, intensive few days of preparation, the school made the transition to distance learning. Service projects like Big Help Day were put on hold, and graduation was a drive-through event.

In fall 2020, recognizing that students learn best in person, teachers and staff put in place an every day, all day learning program. With support from The Village Doctor and a program of testing and quarantine, students have thrived. Matt attributes success to the incredible efforts of teachers, who balanced their own family learning and health responsibilities with exemplary teaching and emotional support. The School Board attributes a large part of the success to Matt, and we all are so aware of the grace of God at work among us. We are fortunate to have the infrastructure of open hallways, generous classroom space, and a superb HVAC system; but we also know that the love we have for one another and the students in our charge has led to a challenging but highly successful year.

-- Ann Latta, Trinity School Board Member

Celebrations: April Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- 3 Anne Poulson
- 5 Donna Reynolds, Jake Norman, Robert Churchill
- 6 Lucy Churchill
- 7 Ronnie Sue Leith
- 8 Maya Azem
- 10 Michael Knowles
- 11 Danielle Azem
- 16 Emily Flegel
- 26 Melissa Valentine
- 27 James Madison
- 30 Jack Reynolds
- 30 James Bartosh

Anniversaries:

- 2 Miranda Pinckert & Christian du Lac
- 4 Deborah & Peter Blackmore
- 17 Larry & Rachael Bowman

Please let the parish office know if you are celebrating a birthday or anniversary this month!

St. Bede's Episcopal Church

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

Sunday Services: Morning Prayer, 9:30 a.m. on Zoom

Vestry

Julie Backlund, Treasurer
Vicki Blayney
Susan Chan Egan
Laura Gable, Junior Warden
Irene Lawrence
Miranda Pinckert
Sue Sartor, Senior Warden
Nancy Stork
Dick Zeren

Staff

Rev. Daniel Spors, Rector
Katherine McKee, Music Director
Rani Fischer, Organist
Siri Huntoon, Parish Administrator
Angela Sherry, Bookkeeper

Committee Chairs and Volunteer Leaders

Altar Guild: Deb Blackmore, Elaine Kreigh, Sue Sartor, Anne Vitullo

Buildings and Grounds: Jon Backlund, Chair

Community Outreach Steering Committee: Deb Blackmore, Vicki Blayney, John Hickson, Sue Sartor, Angela Sherry and Becky Zeren

Finance: Julie Backlund, Treasurer;
Michelle Swenson, Assistant Treasurer

Hospitality: Helen Greenwood, Kathy Thompson and Anne Vitullo, Captains

Deanery delegates: Michael Graebner and Irene Lawrence

Trinity School Board representatives:

Ann Latta, Jon Poe and Michelle Swenson