



Change Is in the Air...

Can you feel it? It seems like change is everywhere these days! Spring poppies are covering the hillsides where brilliant green grass is growing, birds are building nests in anticipation of new fledglings, the air is growing warmer, and the days are growing longer. These changes that nature brings are truly gifts from God. There is another big change is in the air as we move closer and closer to reopening. Each day I become more optimistic that we will soon be able to worship together in person again at St. Bede's. In small steps, much like the grass growing blade by blade or nests being constructed stick by stick, we are steadily moving toward being together. It is a truly joyful thing. Thanks be to God!

In faith and peace,

– Sue Sartor, Senior Warden

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A Letter from Rev. Dan

*“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

Greetings in the Name of Christ,

One of the great questions that faces the faithful in Christ in all ages is “how are we to be in the world around us?” Given what we learn about God in the Scriptures, and particularly through the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, what kind of people ought we to be? How are we to live and to conduct ourselves?

Many times, the answer to that is a challenge to the person we find ourselves to be at the outset of asking the question. The Christian Scriptures, after all, present a narrative where the divine God calls humanity to repent of their evil ways and to do the things that are necessary and in keeping with the revealed will of God.

The authors of Scripture were not shy about presenting the failings of humanity and where we had fallen short of the desires and intentions of God. Even for the first human beings created, one of the first acts that they perform is to transgress against the command of God to not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From that deed, a cascade of evil follows, driven by greed, envy, malice, deceit, and all kinds of wickedness.

The human condition, in the world of the Scriptures, is that we, in and of ourselves, are desperately in need of a change of heart.

The blessings which Jesus pronounced in the beatitudes are a reminder to us of the kind of people that God desires us to be. It is the poor in spirit, not the proud or the arrogant, who are citizens of the Kingdom in heaven. Those who mourn are not left desolate, but God will come to their aid to comfort them. The meek, not the aggressive and boastful, will inherit the earth. Those who are hungry for righteousness will be filled, not those who seek to fill their bellies with excess. Those who show mercy

will receive it themselves. The ones with a pure heart will be the ones who see God around them. Those who work for peace are the ones that God will call “My children.” And those who are persecuted when they strive for righteousness in this world are the ones who will enter the kingdom of God.

What these blessings teach us most is that we need God’s help. We need the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in us and in our world to help us to be the people God wishes for us to be. And we need to be willing to examine our hearts, looking for the ways that we can continue to do better, and to be better. To be loving and kind, holy and righteous. To be godly, and to strive for justice and peace in the world. And that in all that we do, we look first to God for guidance on how we are to be in the world around us.

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

Dan+

Dan Spors+
Rector, St. Bede’s Episcopal Church
2650 Sand Hill Rd.
Menlo Park CA 94025

Looking Ahead: Key Dates on Our May and June Calendars

- 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 21: Deadline to submit music requests for the Feast of St. Bede to Kathy
- May 22: Copy deadline for June *Bede’s Journal*
- May 25: Feast of St. Bede - A Musical Celebration, 7:30 p.m. (Zoom)
- May 31: Memorial Day : *Parish Office Closed*

- June 2: Bede’s Book Club, 9:30 a.m.; Buildings & Grounds Committee meeting, noon
- June 8: Finance Committee meeting, 4 p.m.
- June 15: Vestry meeting, 7 p.m.
- June 22: Copy deadline for May *Bede’s Journal*

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.

Reverend Dan opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

By previous agreement, Irene Lawrence's term as clerk ended after this meeting. Nancy Stork was nominated and elected our new clerk.

With the departure of Van Jepson, there is a vacancy on the vestry. Because his term was to end this year, the vestry felt there was no need to replace him immediately, it was decided to wait until the next regular election to fill the empty position.

Julie Backlund presented the financial report for the month of March. The PPP loan (\$72,110) was forgiven and so was moved from accounts payable into income. Further income was received from pledges. In addition, St. Bede's received a payment of Trinity School expense credits.

For his move here, Dan received a moving allowance. Because moving allowances are now taxable wage income, he was required to pay payroll taxes on the allowance, and was out of pocket because of that. Vestry approved the finance committee's recommendation to pay Rev. Dan \$1437.29 so that he will be fully reimbursed for moving expenses including applicable payroll taxes.

Julie then led us in a discussion of the Capital Projects 5-year plan. Originally, the 2021 plan had included improvements in landscaping, signage, and the Lehman Hall kitchen floor. However, the boiler in the Trinity School Learning Center failed unexpectedly, and the vestry approved its replacement in March and moved the kitchen floor to be considered again in 2022. This month, in the light of the expectation that St. Bede's may begin to hold in-person activities again soon, the need for improved audio-visual upgrades in the church has arisen (discussed below) and the issue of the kitchen floor is more imminent. The vestry will revisit this in May.

Julie also reported that an audit of our finances by the Diocese is scheduled for 2 June 2021.

Dan led the discussion of the audio-visual upgrade. Churches in the diocese have been given permission to hold in-person services (after meeting all diocesan requirements) beginning on Pentecost, 23 May. But we would like to continue including the homebound and distant parishioners who have been able to worship with us from their homes on Zoom. Trinity School is also enthusiastic about the prospect of having working parents, grandparents, etc., involved in school activities. Vestry approved Dan's proposal to purchase and install a camera, mixer, computer and accessories not to exceed \$7500, so that we may share worship services and other events in the church with those unable to join us in person.

The vestry liked the way Nancy's text on Bede's Way was morphed into a collect, and sees opportunities to use both the text version and the collect version. The vestry decided to begin using

them and adjusting them if necessary. Nancy Stork will provide an article in Bede's journal to introduce the new Bede's Way to the whole congregation.

Dan reported that his immediate focus is on the possible reopening of St. Bede's on Pentecost. We must have a written plan approved by the Diocese including all the requirements—masks, distancing, etc. He's also concerned with community building and the life of the parish beyond Sunday morning. Some things to think about: Morning or Evening Prayer, weekday Eucharists, rector-led Bible study. He hopes that opening up to in-person activities again will bring back families with children.

Dan also reported that Trinity School is optimistic about the number of admissions for the next school year. Enrollment may be in the mid-140s.

Miranda Pinckert and Dick Zeren reported on the work of the Building and Grounds committee. The relatively small repairs made over time in the landscaping and irrigation systems have resulted in a great difference in water usage and cost. Our green composting bin has been removed because our landscape service does not use it, and it was being filled with all kinds of trash by random outsiders. As part of protecting volunteers from unnecessary pressure, Dan requested that if anyone noticed a church maintenance issue, they should bring it to Siri, rather than directly to Jon Backlund, chair of the Buildings and Grounds Committee. The committee is installing a defibrillator in Lehman Hall, and is considering one in the church.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Approved minutes from past vestry meetings are available. Please contact Senior Warden Sue Sartor if you are interested.

-- Laura Gable, Junior Warden

Let's celebrate St. Bede, new life and Pentecost with music, together!

During COVID, the musicians of St. Bede's recorded a magisterial body of beautiful music for our Zoom worship services and the 12 Days of Christmas. Would you like to hear some of your favorites again?

We'll be celebrating the Feast of St. Bede on **Tuesday evening, May 25 at 7:30 p.m.** on Zoom with a by-request concert of favorite hymns, choral anthems, and instrumental music from the past year's recordings.

To be sure that your favorite(s) are included, please send in your requests to Kathy at kmckee@stbedesmenlopark.org by 5 p.m. on **Friday, May 21**. You can find a list of the available recordings [here](#). To join the concert on May 25 at 7:30 p.m., click on this [link](#).

"There is in Being an infinite desire to give itself in love and this gift of Self in love is for ever answered by a return of love...and so the rhythm of the universe is created." – St. Bede

My New Favorite Composer EDMUND RUBBRA

And an oratorio (symphony?) for the Resurrection



After a lifetime of performing and listening to choral music of every style and century, it's a treat to find that there are unexplored geniuses yet to be discovered. A satellite radio broadcast recently brought my attention to Edmund Rubbra, an Englishman who lived from 1901 – 1986. A pianist and conductor as well as a composer, he accompanied renowned tenor Peter Pears and conducted at London's famous Prom concerts. Raised as a non-conformist (i.e., not a member of the Church of England), he converted to Roman Catholicism in 1948, and most of his sacred choral works were composed after that time. He studied with Gustav Holst and was a great promoter of that composer's music; Vaughan Williams presumed that he would be passing on to Rubbra the mantle of England's greatest symphonist.

One of his most moving pieces isn't quite sure whether it's a symphony or an oratorio. A large work for full orchestra, chorus and three soloists, it gives the Easter story a grand musical expression, much as Bach's St. Matthew and St. John Passion settings did for the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and burial. Rubbra's *Sinfonia Sacra* was composed at the suggestion of his publisher, Bernard de Nevers, who was inspired by a painting he saw at the National Gallery of the Risen Christ.

(<https://www.museothyssen.org/en/collection/artists/bramantino/risen-christ>) It begins with Jesus (baritone) crying "Eli, Eli, lama sabachtani", mere minutes from the end of his ordeal on the cross. It moves forward through to the Ascension, with narration sung and spoken by a contralto, Jesus sung by a baritone, and Mary of Magdala sung by a soprano. The chorus tenors sing the words of the two angels at the tomb, (John, chapter 20) an orchestral piece represents the conversation on the road to Emmaus, (Luke, chapter 24), and the full chorus sings the words of the disciples who witnessed his

ascension, (Luke, chapter 24). Interspersed with the narrative are four lovely Lutheran chorales, set to English texts written by de Nevers (representing Protestantism) and four choruses of Rubbra's own composition on Latin texts, (representing Catholicism). The music is mystical, ecstatic, poignant, and triumphant in turn, tonal and approachable while at the same time lush with rich, romantic passing dissonance. Inspired more by the great polyphonic music of the Renaissance than by folk tunes or other nationalistic influences, his music is complex and compelling, and absolutely worth a listen.

The one recording of the *Sinfonia Sacra* available features the BBC National Chorus and Orchestra, with Richard Hickox on the podium and Lynne Dawson, Della Jones, and Stephen Roberts in the solo roles. You can find it on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAK5uy_n24oOgVH9AN-CibLhRKTBIadDbCf3U5s, and to purchase via download through Presto Classical's website at <https://www.prestomusic.com/classical/products/7922788--rubbra-symphony-no-9-op-140-sinfonia-sacra-etc>, in both hi-res FLAC and lo-res mp3 formats.

-- Katherine McKee, Music Director

Community Outreach Update



The Community Outreach Steering Committee met on April 2, 2021. Below is a summary of our discussions and actions. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the committee if you have questions or suggestions. Members are: Chair Sue Sartor, Vestry Liaison Vicki Blayney, Angela Sherry, Deb Blackmore, Becky Zeren, John Hickson, Anne Vitullo and Reverend Dan (ex-officio).

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

- **Reviewed Operating Procedures**

The team reviewed our operating procedures and made suggested updates to reflect current priorities for Outreach: support for the food insecure, the unhoused, literacy programs and housing education/advocacy.

- **Debriefed the Poetry Webinar**

We raised \$1300 on the event! \$700 was spent to purchase copies of the anthology and provide honoraria to the two former inmates who were panelists, so there was a net amount of \$600 that was added to the Seccombe Fund. Extra copies of the anthology are available for purchase in the church office.

- **Discussed Future Projects**

- Due to COVID restrictions, we are on hold for another delivery to **LifeMoves** shelters. We are hopeful that we will be able to do so this summer. Vicki Blayney is in close communication to be ready when restrictions are eased.
- John Hickson reported that he delivered our gift of \$350 to the **Samaritan House Free Clinic** to purchase blood pressure monitors.
- Becky Zeren is collaborating with Trinity School staff to join their **food drive** in May. Details are forthcoming.
- **Notes to parishioners** will be sent soon to announce when we will be reopening for on-site services.

-- Sue Sartor, Chair, Community Outreach Steering Committee

Trinity School Update

In the April Trinity School update, Board of Trustees member Ann Latta described how Trinity School has continued to provide an exemplary (mostly in-person) educational experience during the 2020-21 school year, despite the pandemic. That, in itself, is quite a remarkable achievement. But in addition to that, Trinity School has also been able to continue its important, future-focused work to revise its Strategic Plan for another three-year period.

I can remember participating in the kick-off of the strategic planning process at an all-day (in-person!) meeting in late February 2020 with Head of School Matt Allio, the Board of Trustees, and senior Trinity School staff and faculty members. We were off to a good start, and then two weeks later, the world looked much different as the scope of the pandemic began to emerge and schools pivoted to distance learning. While the planning process and timeline has necessarily been extended, I am proud of, and grateful for, Matt's leadership and the "above and beyond" effort that has allowed this process to move forward during the 2020-21 school year. It has required Matt, senior staff and trustees to shoe-horn additional work into already full schedules. The work continues and by no later than fall of 2022, we should be sharing the results of the plan with the entire Trinity School community, which of course, includes St Bede's.

-- Michelle Swenson, Chair, Trinity School Board of Trustees

A Bede's Book Club Update for Spring and Summer

Our meetings are on the St. Bede's calendar on the first Wednesday mornings of each month at 9:30. Our upcoming meetings will be on May 5, June 2, July 7 and August 4. Please email Helen Greenwood to receive a Zoom link for the May 5th meeting.

There are so many good books just now and not nearly enough time to read them all. We decided that further suggestions and discussion are needed before we decide. Our interests are in non-fiction exploring our Christian faith and social justice and fictional works that illuminate the human story. Please email your suggestions to Deb and we will put our heads together on May 5.

Here are some titles that members have already suggested.

How God Becomes Real: Kindling the Presence of Invisible Others

Tanya Luhrmann, Stanford University Professor of Anthropology and St. Bede's congregant

Drawing on ethnographic studies of evangelical Christians, pagans, magicians, Zoroastrians, Black Catholics, Santeria initiates, and newly orthodox Jews, Luhrmann notes that none of these people behave as if gods and spirits are simply there. Rather, these worshippers make strenuous efforts to create a world in which invisible others matter and can become intensely present and real. The faithful accomplish this through detailed stories, absorption, the cultivation of inner senses, belief in a porous mind, strong sensory experiences, prayer, and other practices. Along the way, Luhrmann shows why faith is harder than belief, why prayer is a metacognitive activity like therapy, why becoming religious is like getting engrossed in a book, and much more.

A fascinating account of why religious practices are more powerful than religious beliefs, *How God Becomes Real* suggests that faith is resilient not because it provides intuitions about gods and spirits—but because it changes the faithful in profound ways.

The Templar's Garden

Catherine Clover, Historical Fiction Writer and St. Bede's congregant

This story is set in Gascony (France) and England in 1452. King Henry VI has a tenuous grip on the regions and the country is on the brink of civil war after the Hundred Years' War.

Young mystic Lady Isabelle d'Albret Courteault's family is forced to flee the Duchy of English Gascony for a new and unforeseeable life in England. While they become established in the courts, Lady Isabelle discovers dark secrets about their chaplain and tutor. As their growing relationship places her in harm's way, can she remain steadfast in her promises to uphold the monarchy and her faith?

Set amidst a period of grave uncertainty, this is the story of a woman learning to stand up for her beliefs in a patriarchal world - a beautifully crafted narrative of faith, love and grace.

Nomadland: Surviving America in the Twenty First Century

Jessica Bruder, Journalist

From the beet fields of North Dakota to the National Forest campgrounds of California to Amazon's *CamperForce* program in Texas, employers have discovered a new, low-cost labor pool, made up largely of transient older Americans. Finding that social security comes up short, often underwater on mortgages, these invisible casualties of the Great Recession have taken to the road by the tens of thousands in late-model RVs, travel trailers, and vans, forming a growing community of nomads.

Bruder tells a compelling, eye-opening tale of the dark underbelly of the American economy—one that foreshadows the precarious future that may await many people. At the same time, she celebrates the exceptional resilience and creativity of these quintessential Americans who have given up ordinary rootedness to survive.

This book has been made into an award-winning documentary, featuring actor Frances McDormand, showing on Hulu and in theaters.

Julian of Norwich: Wisdom in a Time of Pandemic and Beyond

Mathew Fox, Episcopal Priest and Theologian

Julian of Norwich lived through the century of bubonic plague that killed close to 50% of Europeans in the 1300's. Being an anchoress, she "sheltered in place" and developed a deep wisdom that she shared in her book, *Showings*, which was the first book in English by a woman. A theologian way ahead of her time, Julian develops a feminist understanding of God as mother at the heart of nature's goodness. Fox shares and interprets her teachings in this powerful and timely and inspiring book in seven compact chapters.

Do you have another title that you would like the Bede's Book Club to consider? Please let us know and join us on May 5.

All are welcome to join our discussions whether you have read the book or are just interested in hearing more about it before you read.

--*Deb Blackmore, Bede's Book Club Coordinator*

Celebrations: May Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays:

- 3 Ann Latta, Hasma Serverian
- 4 Joshua Knowles
- 5 Juliet Knowles
- 6 Cameron Bowman
- 9 Alec Drobac
- 13 David Shaw Bass
- 14 Eliza Barrett
- 18 Kirk Festing
- 20 Catherine Ross
- 22 Christopher Brown
- 28 John Hickson, Katina Mitchell
- 29 Douglas Blaney, Hal Louchheim, Baden Skey
- 31 Elizabeth Skey, Ian Hersey

Anniversaries:

- 5 Elizabeth & Nicholas Flegel
- 7 Joshua & Juliet Knowles
- 8 Kirk Festing & Annie Zhou
- 10 John Hickson & Sarah Babin
- 28 David Chu & Irene Lawrence

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, Clerk
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