



The Church Mouse

We gather joyfully to worship God and go out with gladness to do Christ's work.

LIVING IN THE SPIRIT

The Feast of Pentecost is almost upon us, and we give thanks the choir from the Women's Prison in Swannanoa will be with us to sing and worship on Sunday, June 9. The Feast of Pentecost, of course, celebrates the first Pentecost. It is celebrated on the Sunday 50 days after Easter (the name comes from the Greek pentekoste, "fiftieth"). It is also called Whitsunday, though we do not hear that so much anymore.



This is one of our major feast days, and one of my personal favorites! The Holy Spirit is how we know the spirit of Jesus in our world today. She is most often referred to as a "she" - one reason I like her, and she is alive and moving among us - here at St. John's, and in the world around us. The Holy Spirit is the great connector, the Advocate, the Comforter, and the one who empowers us for ministry. She is like the wind, blowing where she will, calling us together, calling us to **live** in her.

During my pilgrimage time on the island of Iona in Scotland, I was keenly aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit. I was part of a group of 40 in John Philip Newell's pilgrimage program on Celtic Christianity, and it was absolutely amazing. We prayed together every morning at 7:30 am in a medieval chapel, and again at 5 pm in an 11th century chapel. The prayers were simple, and we spent considerable time in silence in between them. For me, spending time in silence in a group is one of the best ways to connect with the Holy Spirit.

John Philip Newell, former abbot of the Abbey on Iona, and a Scottish minister, author of the Rebirthing of God, Celtic Benediction, Christ of the Celts, and others, taught each morning, tracing the lineage of the strain of Celtic spirituality, of which we are heirs in the Episcopal Church. He has the brightest, clearest eyes I think I have ever seen on a human being-- in other words, he practices what he preaches! For that week, we lived in strong connection to the earth - in a most beautiful place -- reacquainting ourselves with the rhythms of nature in the crashing of waves, the singing of birds, and our own walking, praying and listening.

When I arrived on the island, I wept because I was so thankful to be there -- having yearned to go for years. When we did a long pilgrimage hike one day around the island (I did not make it the full 9 miles!), we came upon St. Columba's Bay -- the bay where St. Columba landed in 563 AD, having set sail in a rudderless boat, a

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coracle, from Ireland. He then converted the Norse kings in Scotland to Christianity, and established a Christian community on Iona.

When we came to St. Columba's Bay, again I felt such a strong presence of the Holy Spirit -- connecting me to my core being, bringing peace and comfort of great depth. We also visited Martyrs' Bay - where a number (perhaps 30, perhaps 70) monks were attacked and killed by Norse Viking invaders. So the island has known deep suffering, too.

So, how do you experience the Holy Spirit in your life? Where? When? What helps you connect to her? She is a powerful force in our Christian lives, and my prayer is that each and every one of us here at St. John's can find ways to live more closely "in" the Holy Spirit. For she blows where she will, and she renews, and enlivens, and brings new life. She promotes our spiritual growth, and longs for us to reach our full stature in Christ, to be just who God has made us to be - individually and as a community.

May you know the gift of the Holy Spirit in this season of Pentecost!

In Christ,

Joan

Going to the Margins

It is time for us to once again be on the move with social justice. Interest has been expressed by some of our members in participating in the Episcopal Church's program on racial healing entitled **Sacred Ground**. It is a part of the Becoming Beloved Community process. In 2015, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church voted to spend two million dollars on racial healing and justice in the church, and some of those funds carried over to the new triennium which began with the 2018 General Convention in Austin Texas.

Sacred Ground is a film- and readings-based dialogue series on race, grounded in faith. Small groups are invited to walk through chapters of America's history of race and racism, while weaving in threads of family story, economic class, and political and regional identity.

The 10-part series is built around a powerful online curriculum of documentary films and readings that focus on Indigenous, Black, Latino, and Asian/Pacific American histories as they intersect with European American histories.

Sacred Ground is part of Becoming Beloved Community, The Episcopal Church's long-term



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commitment to racial healing, reconciliation, and justice in our personal lives, our ministries, and our society. This series is open to all, and especially designed to help white people talk with other white people. Participants are invited to peel away the layers that have contributed to the challenges and divides of the present day – all while grounded in our call to faith, hope and love I have reviewed the syllabus for the program, and it looks to be one that allows for us to go deeper on this issue than some of the other programs I have been part of. So, I would like to show the film that introduces the program on Sunday morning, June 16, at 10 am in the Parish Hall. Please try to be present for this! Then we will gather names of those who would be interested in participating in the program.

I would also like to encourage a short "civil rights" pilgrimage for us, perhaps at the conclusion of this series, if we have enough interest, to Atlanta, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama (the lynching museum-founded by Bryan Stephenson, whose book, [Just Mercy](#), we have already read together), and perhaps elsewhere. Catherine Meeks, whom I heard speak at the faith and justice program I attended earlier this year at Kanuga, directs the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing (for the Episcopal Church, with hopes to move beyond our confines) in Atlanta. There may be opportunities through this Center for greater understanding as well.

Please pray and ponder this opportunity. I hope we can have a good representation to join in becoming part of the Beloved Community in the Episcopal Church!

Joan

Church Things

We are in need of more ushers. Please, please, consider this ministry! It is easy to greet folks as they enter; training will be provided. It is an important way we show that special gift of hospitality. (and we are lacking in that when we do not have ushers!)



Our ushers are responsible for straightening up the pew racks in the sanctuary. Please, let us try to help them by seeing that the books are returned to the pew racks, placed right side up and in good order! Thank you. This will save our ushers time and effort. Also, please bring your bulletins to the table in the Narthex/lobby for recycling - please do not throw them into the trash. We want to be good stewards of the environment! Thanks for your help with all this.

Thank You!

Thank you again to Mary Ann Ransom, nanaransom43@gmail.com, who has graciously taken on

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responsibility for putting this newsletter together. Wasn't the May edition just great? Awesome job, Mary Ann! Something for our children and young people, plenty of photos, and things we did not know about some of our parishioners! Please, let us be sure to help her by submitting articles to her in time for publication at the first of each month. Her deadline is the 25th of the preceding month, and she likes to publish the newsletter right on the first of each month. Mary Ann also serves as Diocesan Episcopal Church Women President, and helps care for her grandchildren, so let's help make her life easier by submitting those articles, and minding the deadlines!

Thank you!

Many thanks also to Walt Ward, David McGrath, Javi Suarez, Kade Ward, and all the others who helped with all the phases of constructing the fence around the playground! It will be completely finished by the time you read this newsletter, and it looks so very nice!

Special **thanks** to David Hilton, who spent 5 days last week cleaning up the Memorial Garden and grounds! Whew! That was a lot of work! We appreciate all your efforts, David!

LITURGICAL NOTES

On Passing of the Peace

How we love to Pass the Peace here at St. John's! The exchange of the peace is an ancient tradition in the church and has been a part of the Eucharistic liturgy from at least the 2nd Century.

The tradition has its roots in the Early Christian practice of greeting one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, 2 Corinthians 13:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:26, 1 Peter 5:14). Men and women at the time would worship in separate spaces, or sides of the room, so this kiss was most often shared men with men, women with women. Iconography and accounts of the practice indicate it was mouth to mouth, not mouth to cheek. It may seem strange, but it wasn't too unusual for the culture. By the Middle Ages, however, the culture had changed and the peace would be passed by kissing a crucifix that was then handed around. Today, we mostly just shake hands, but here at St. John's there are lots of hugs, too!

This passing of the peace is to be a time when we all recognize that we are reconciled in Christ. .. Jesus taught that we should also be reconciled to one another, telling us that if we are going to the altar and remember that a brother or sister has something against us we should go and be reconciled with them before we try to make good with God (Matthew 5:23-24). As we pass the peace

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we should not only give hugs to our friends, but also make sure that we go and offer peace to anyone with whom we have a problem. There was a time when the Deacon would watch for unreconciled members of the congregation and tell them they couldn't come to the communion rail until they worked out their differences! The prayer book instructs priests that "When the priest sees that there is hatred between members of the congregation, she shall speak privately to each of them, telling them that they may not receive Communion until they have forgiven each other" (BCP 409). And if the person or persons on one side truly forgive the others and desire and promise to make up for their faults, but those on the other side refuse to forgive, the priest shall allow those who are penitent to come to Communion, but not those who are stubborn." Passing the peace is not, then, simply a time of friendly hellos, but is instead a time when we participate in the reconciling love of God. We can't love God if we can't love another and so it is an essential task of the church to help break down the walls of division and bring forgiveness, even in the toughest of situations. This is what we are enacting as we pass the peace each Sunday. It is an act of rebellion and resistance against all of the forces of division and hate in our world to simply hug someone and say "The Peace of the Lord Be with You!"

And a plea from your priest: Passing the Peace is a time for the above, and not a time for coffee hour exchanges; please save those for coffee hour or another time! Not all in our midst enjoy the very extended "passing of the peace," so let's consider the needs of all, and keep our liturgy moving! Thank you!

Another Plea for Quiet Before Church

It is a wondrous thing to love one another and rediscover that love every week in church! But, please, if you need to have conversations with others before church, please do it outside. Those ten minutes before church are a time for prayer, reverence, quiet, and for listening to our very accomplished musician's beautiful preludes. If you must speak to someone during this time, please do it in a whisper! Thank you!



Vestry News

As of May 22, the new fence is now wrapped the full way around our playground. Kudos to Walt Ward, David McGrath, Ben Hall and family and Javi Suarez and family who contributed time and skills to the project. Deep appreciation goes to Walt Ward for continuing to oversee the task even after his term on the vestry was over. The fence makes our playground more inviting as well as safer than it has been before.



Mary Sorrells



Walt and David completed installing the fence. The photographer caught David in the midst of winding an extra-safe extension cord. The bright color prevents tripping accidents.

Our next project is improving our ability to hear during parish gatherings in the parish hall. Our junior wardens, Karen Smith and Shirley Pope, are now in the process of taking bids on sound abatement. Our space, tables and food invite us to stay and talk awhile. We are setting our sights on 2019 to be the year we can hear one another better than ever!

Stewardship Notes:

Our 2019 focus on stewardship is creation care. Towards that end, we have invited parishioners to bring in a mug or two from home so we can set our plastic mugs aside.

Speaking of plastic we have begun trying to bring down our use of single-use plastic. For the time being, we are using up what has already been purchased, and do not plan to buy more.

The web site www.ashevillegreenworks.org offers daily tips on cutting down on our use of plastic. I strongly encourage everyone to get the notices. From shopping, to laundry, to gardening, this site gives practical alternatives to using plastic and Styrofoam. It is not easy to reduce our use of plastic. But as we raise our awareness and practice, it will become easier.

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Vestry News

(Stewardship News Continued from page 6)

Any major holiday from Memorial to Labor Day will see overstuffed garbage cans at the local parks. Styrofoam plates, cups, bowls, flatware, cling wrap, aluminum foil, solo cups and thousands of plastic drink bottles. So how can we break this habit and still have a clean and safe cookout?

Check out these 6 steps to help you slow down on single use plastics at your next cookout.

Step 1) Remind your friends before the cookout that you're trying to reduce the amount of plastic used. This way it's not a huge surprise to everyone when you're glowering at them over the Styrofoam cups they brought.

Step 2) Carry your precious edibles in washable, sustainable containers made from glass, ceramics and / or metal. We're open to the idea that folks have a varying degrees of food preferences but we should also think the same way about the items transporting our delicious dishes. Under the correct conditions some types of plastic product can leach harmful chemicals into your food.

Step 3) Bringing cold drinks? Pass on the plastic containers of beverages and opt in for aluminum containers. It's more expensive to purchase singles of drinks but these containers can be easily recycled.

Step 4) Ready to cut that carbon footprint even further? Switch out your animal products with vegetable based proteins. There are loads of products that can help you slow down on animal proteins and satiate your cravings. Check out <https://impossiblefoods.com/> and <https://www.beyondmeat.com/>

Step 5) Bring along extra reusable bowls, plates, flatware and serving utensils for your guests. Go a step further and have your wash pan with you to tidy up some of those items for the trip home.

Step 6) Bring a cardboard box for recycling, a lidded bucket for compostables and a bag for landfill items. You can make sure your cookout is as low impact as possible by sorting onsite and carrying it home with you. www.ashevillegreenworks.org

Mary Sorrells, Senior Warden

June schedule for Kitchen Helpers

2 - Mary Sorrells, Margaret King

9 - Shirley Pope, Ann Warren

16 - Judy Smith, Marte Wilder

23 - Rose Wilkerson, Walt Ward

30 - Paul Templon, David Hilton



*The LORD created me at the
beginning of his work, the first
of his acts of long ago.*

Proverbs 8:22, NRSV

Outreach News

News From the Outreach Committee



The Outreach Committee has chosen a couple of exciting projects to help young people in our community. The first one is the **Family 2 Family Duffel Bag Project** announced at church recently which will

benefit a needy young lady who is a student at Reynolds Middle School. Please help her have a good summer by purchasing a gift card to Target, Walmart, an area restaurant or movie theatre or by purchasing a clothing item for this girl -- size L women's or 9.5 for shoes. Please place your item in the duffel bag at the back of the sanctuary by **this Sunday, June 2**. If you have any questions, please text or call George O'Neal at 832.799.0624.



The second project is the **Family 2 Family College Dorm Project** which is a wonderful opportunity to help a young lady who will be graduating from Reynolds High School and attending Western Carolina University in the fall. This project is being coordinated by Leslie Anderson, and you'll be hearing more about this in the near future from Leslie.

St. John's has a rich history of helping those in need in our community, and please do your part in making a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

George O'Neal



- 11 - Sara Davis
- 12 - Roberta Rhodes
- 17 - Sandra Rhodes
- 20 - Bruce Carscaddon
- 22 - Keith Keener
- 24 - Sharon Rhodes
- 28 - Leslie Anderson



- 2 - Tim & Sharon Rhodes
- 4 - Herb & Jane Johnson
- 4 - Rose & Steve Wilkerson
- 9 - Walt & Susan Ward
- 27 - Chris & Sandra Rhodes



June 16



June 14

Oh, Who Made That?

It is no secret that our St. John's family is made up of a bevy of talented folk, and that includes many who are well-versed in culinary creations. We hope to feature special recipes in this column selected from our parish gatherings. Benjamin Hall made this eye-catching recipe, Bird's Nest with Robin's Eggs for our Easter Sunday feast.



Sarah Downing

You will need:

- 1 large muffin tin
- 1 package muffin liners or cupcake liners
- 1 cup pretzel sticks (broken to different length, 1" 1.5" etc.
- 1 container of chocolate dipping sauce (the kind that will harden when dry)
- 1 cup All-Bran cereal
- 1 package Brock's Robin's Eggs, malted milk candy

Place a few pretzel sticks around the edge of the muffin liners followed by All-Bran. Drizzle melted dipping sauce over and repeat until it resembles a bird's nest. Lay three malted milk eggs in the center of the nest while the chocolate is warm.



Benjamin says: This takes a little practice to get the treats to resemble a Robin's nest.

If you can find a small crafted Robin to add to the side of the nest it looks great. It also works for different types of birds as well. I wish you happy nesting.

(Sarah has offered to do a short column each issue called "Oh, Who Made That?" It will be a recipe that someone made for a recent after-church luncheon that got lots of positive feedback. She will include the recipe, when it was served and a little bit about it.)

Thanks Sarah. Mary Ann



June 9th

Potluck Feast (please sign up to bring dish in the Parish Hall), and Voices of Hope, The Swannanoa Women's Correctional Center choir will sing.



June 16

Harvest Hootenanny

Planning for St. John's 2019 Harvest Hootenanny Underway!

The Harvest Hootenanny Committee of St. John's is currently busy planning for another exciting fall dinner, dance and fundraiser. The event will be held Friday, September 20th from 6:00 to 8:00 pm in the parish hall of St. John's. Our Hootenanny will again include a catered meal by



resident chef extraordinaire John Fisher, dance music by Chris "Motown" Rhodes and his Crew and a silent auction fundraiser under the direction of Karen Smith. The silent auction will again this year feature gift cards, theme baskets, food items and individual auction items. Admission to the Harvest Hootenanny event will be \$25 per person – same as last year. A portion of the proceeds will go this year to Meals On Wheels. (Prior proceeds to local entities have ranged between \$500 and \$750.) The balance of the proceeds will of course go towards operational expenses of the parish.

How can you help? There are many ways in which you can help our event be successful this year. Certainly by attending the event and bringing your friends, relatives and neighbors. If you are interested in performing a job at the event, please contact Tim Rhodes at rhod315@bellsouth.net or 828-545-8834. We also need help soliciting or buying gift cards for the auction; we will need folks to once again assemble theme baskets; we need baked goods and other food items for auction and we need folks to donate new or very nice gently used individual items for auction. For any of these donations, please contact Karen Smith at 828-298-0922 or klsmith771@gmail.com.

We look forward to another very successful Harvest Hootenanny this year. We look forward to everyone participating and playing a part. Most of all we look forward to the wonderful fellowship on September 20th when we all gather as a parish family!

Tim Rhodes

Summertime prayer

In "The Summer Day," Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver (1935-2019) captures the season profoundly as a time to pay attention, especially to the wonders of Creation; to let oneself be idle sometimes; and to let one's time of quiet rest, meandering through meadows and gazing at grasshoppers, be prayer.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields ...

Search online to read the entire work. Let it inspire you for a walk with God through one of these summer days.

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Upcoming Events

Wednesday, June 26 at 11:30 am - All parish luncheon at the Lake Lure Inn, 2771 Memorial Hwy, Lake Lure NC 28746



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