



It seems hard to believe that I have actually been with you at St Raphael's for three months now! It seems like a lot is going on – Sage's, Coffee and Book club, healing services, 'Faithful Conversations', as well as our regular Sunday services – and this weekend we see the first of our summer 'dinner church' times together.

Every time we meet together, we get to know one another better, hear another story, share another idea. You are a church that certainly knows how to come together for fun (and food!), and that is the basis for 'dinner church'. Just an excuse to get together! But our meal in the Undercroft will be blessed with a brief Eucharistic prayer, take some cues on hospitality from the early church, welcome some who may not be our regular members, and the conversation at our tables will be opened up to thoughts around justice, and mercy, and peace. And, ultimately, how the St Raphael's community might be able to join in with God's work in our wider neighborhoods of Lexington and beyond. Be the change we want to see and show God's love where we are.

I hope to see you all there – if not this weekend, then on the last Saturday of July and August! Just let Nancy Christiano know so that we can save you a place at a table ☺

And may you all continue to enjoy the summer, your families and the change of pace. And a Celtic prayer for this season for you all:

May the road rise to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
May the rains fall softly upon your fields,
And may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

Peace and blessings,
Helen



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen E.P. Van Koevering

4th of July Safety for Animals

Remember to protect your pets this 4th of July during neighborhood fireworks explosions. Consider putting your pets in a safe, escape-proof room or crate during parties and fireworks.

Keep horses and livestock in safely fenced areas and as far from the excitement and noise as possible.

Keep sparklers, glow sticks, fireworks, charcoal and kabob skewers away from curious pets.

Check your yard for fireworks debris before allowing pets outside to play or relax. Even if you didn't set off fireworks yourself, debris can make its way into your yard, where curious animals may pick it up to play with or eat.

Check your pastures and remove debris to protect horses and livestock.

If you hosted guests, check both your yard and home for food scraps or other debris that might be dangerous to pets, such as food skewers.

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/July-4-Safety.aspx>

Senior Warden's Corner



I should not wonder at the mustard seed
God made the atom
It is the wisdom of creation
That sings down through the eons
That growth begins in tiny bits
And will not be denied
Like the sprout that cracks the stone
To grow upon the mountainside
Or through the pavement of a city street
A dream begins by listening for the first
Note of the Godsong deep within.

As we begin the process of finding our Vision for St. Raphael, and indeed also for our diocese, I urge all of you to participate by bringing your dreams and ideas to share as we gather together. Don't be shy.

Each and everyone of you are valuable members of the congregation, and all of you have talents and gifts to give. You may surprise yourself when you find them. "Welcome Regardless" is our way of life at St Raphael. How can we make that stronger as we reach out to the community? How will we use our resources to do God's work in our corner of the world and beyond? I think we should begin by getting to know each other more fully.

Please attend the Dinner Evenings on the last Saturday of June, July and August. Bring the children, too. It is vacation time. If you cannot attend all three, please come to at least one or two. It's Potluck so bring a dish or dessert. Begin to think about what our Vision could be and how we can best accomplish it.

Love to you all,

C.C.

Stewardship Report

Thanks for joining us at the Stewardship Corner!

July is here. Hot dogs, burgers, Fourth of July, humidity, stewardship, heat, bugs (some flying, some crawling), plants sprouting up in our backyard gardens, lawns growing faster than you can cut them.

Whoa, wait just a minute. Was Stewardship hidden in that nice set of July memories? As they say in my grandparents' Harlan County, "you betcha". Stewardship is ALL year long. Many, if not most, think it is something you hear about in October, November, and December. Not a chance. Yes, the church needs your pledge and plate dollars. Electric bills (insert a HUGE thank you Lord for having us invent air conditioning) go on relentlessly all year long. Yes, the church occasionally needs you to step up with some other items that need financial attention from time to time.

Yet what St. Raphael needs is your stewardship all year long. Your stewardship of faith and witness, such as when you see that opening to invite someone to church, since they see you living what you learn at church. Your stewardship of time, from those who serve (and march) to meetings regarding ongoing "business" of the church (think Vestry) or finances (think Stewardship Committee) or property (think Property Committee) or the Logistics of Love (think ECW), and dozens of others not listed.

St. Raphael needs your stewardship in ways small and simple. Giving an extra smile or friendly pat on the back to someone having a tough time. Giving your wit when someone is so focused on what is happening in their lives just a simple brush with humor will snap them out of it. Or doing something simple like picking up bulletins from pews when church is over, or picking up a small piece of trash from the floor when you see it.

And it needs your stewardship of expertise. The moment when everyone else is perplexed and you say "I know how to do that, let me help."

I see you ALL practicing Stewardship every day and every week. Keep it up, and we are all better for it.

Roger L Kirk

A View from the Pew

Jesus beyond Christianity

I spend about an hour a day in my car. For years I listened to mindless radio or music. Since I park at the library when I am in court, it dawned on me—why not listen to books on tape? I just finished *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, by Stephen Kotkin. At nearly 1000 pages, it is no light read, but it is sensational, covering the history of that era as much as Stalin.

It may surprise you to know that Stalin, a Georgian born in 1878, was raised a devout Orthodox Christian, a choirboy no less. He loved to sing. At 20 Stalin spent a couple of years studying to be a priest in the monastery. But around 1900 the centuries of cruel Czarist rule was nearing its end. The great Russian motherland had had enough of their corrupt autocracy.

As with all great change movements, the youth led the way. Stalin and others from various parts of this vast land, including Lenin and Trotsky, abhorred the injustice and inhumanity of the imperial autocracy. Thus, Stalin left the monastery to work for change spending the next 17 years in and out of prisons around Russia, including Siberia.

Kotkin reviewed the tenuous string of events that led Stalin to power. For while the 1917 revolution was inevitable, and needed to happen, it was not a given that Lenin's Bolsheviks would prevail. Among the groups vying for power, the Bolsheviks were the most extreme. They insisted on complete collectivization, and abdication of private property.

But Lenin was flexible, and willing to adjust for long-term success. Unfortunately, Lenin had a series of strokes starting in 1920 and by 1924 was on death's bed. Through iron will, focus, and a prodigious work ethic, Stalin seized power and installed his vision of rigid communist ideology: total collectivization, no private property, no free markets, no freedom period. Anything from before—the wealth, the privilege that for so long led to so much misery and injustice had to be snuffed out.

So too the church. The revolutionaries knew that the Orthodox Church had enabled and abetted the tsarist autocracy over the centuries. They were, quite literally, partners to the injustice and inhumanity that so many had suffered for so long.

Coincidentally, Russia's pre-revolutionary status was similar to that of Israel during the time of Jesus. In ancient Israel the top 1% had all the wealth and power. Poverty, injustice and hopelessness reigned throughout the land. This was all enabled by the Jewish power structure, the head priests, and the Pharisees and Sadducees. To the suffering masses they scolded, "You're poor? You're sick? It is because you or your ancestors have sinned, and you have no way out!"



It was into the vortex that Jesus was born. He told the power elite that they had it all wrong. He taught the good news that God loves and forgives, that the poor, the weak, the sick, i.e. the many, had salvation available to them right then. All one need do is to love God with all one's heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love their neighbor (and even enemy) as themselves.

Jesus taught that when people applied this guiding principle in their personal lives, whole societies would follow. Thus, in Acts 4:32-36: ³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

Ironically, this is an uncanny description of ideal communism! Of course, communism as practiced fell far short of the ideal. And the people in Acts were full of the spirit, and had the love and teachings of Jesus firmly rooted in their souls. Agape, Golden-Rule love saved the day, not institutionalized religion. The teachings of Jesus brought salvation, not the traditions of man.

Salvation came from Jesus, beyond Christianity.

Circling back, Christianity enabled czarist atrocities. Today a Christian-backed president and his party oppose the Jesusian ideal. They giddily cut services for the least of us while making the rich even richer. As Kayla Chadwick wrote in the Huffington Post, their "gleeful exuberance in pushing legislation that will immediately hurt the most vulnerable among us is chilling."

Most recently, they've put kids in cages. Although Trump grudgingly retreated as this was going to print, how on earth did this once-great nation ever allow it to happen in the first place?

It's all about values. We've let political and social expediency override the values of Jesus. When we recall his teachings and apply them assiduously in our public and private lives, his values will reign supreme. And this will make America great again.

Richard F. Dawahare

Reverend Helen's Service of Installation

Save the date ~ The service has been set for Sunday August 12, 2018 at 3:00pm, and St. Raphael's wants to put its best face on for all the guests from all over the Diocese and from West Virginia.

Please donate freely as there will be extra expenses incurred for printing, food, flowers, music, etc. Dana Berry will be the logistics point person for the entire event, and ECW has volunteered to coordinate the food. If you would like to volunteer in any capacity, please let Dana (danabruceberry@gmail.com) know as soon as possible. We'll need extra ushers, greeters, people to help set up and clean up afterwards, servers on the altar, etc.

Please put INSTALLATION on the check or on an envelope or even a sticky note attached to Cash (yes, we DO take Cash, believe it or not).

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Roger.



July Birthdays

Diana Trapp	July 6
Bernice Wood	July 10
Jake Van Koevering	July 13
Rose Conley	July 15
Joan Schmidt	July 21
Lora Carter	July 22
Carole Mize	July 22
Ron Vittitoe	July 22
Amy Smereck	July 25
Olivia Vance	July 25
J.M. Huertas	July 30
Sam Lorton	July 31

July Anniversaries

Amy & Chris Bollinger July 8

Datebook

July 3-15 Rev. Helen will be traveling and attending the 79th General Convention in Austin, Texas. While she is gone there will be no Wednesday services or study groups on Wednesday July 4, or July 11.

Sunday, July 8 - our supply priest will be Jan Cottrell for both 8:30 and 11:00

Sunday, July 15 - our supply priest will be Jan Cottrell for both 8:30 and 11:00

Wednesday, July 11 - Regular Wednesday services and study groups resume.

July 15 9:30 am Tobit's Trace Visioning Meeting - all are invited to the meeting to discuss our Vision for this project.

Tuesday, July 17 - Vestry meeting at 6:45 PM

Thursday, July 19 - Sages will meet at 11:30am at O'Charley's on Harrodsburg Road (Turfland). Paula Brockman is hostess, 554-6055, nanapcb@aol.com.

Sunday, August 12, 3 PM - Helen will be installed as Rector at St Raphael.

Teddy Bear Tea Party in June



St Raphael Episcopal Church
1891 Parkers Mill Rd
Lexington, KY 40504
Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering, Rector
Phone: 8592554987
Email: Office: bonnie@sreclex.org
Website: www.sreclex.org



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Articles and news information for April must be submitted by **Friday, July. 23, 2018** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

Sunday Services

8:30 am Holy Eucharist (Rite I)

Nursery provided from 10:45am to 12:15pm

service for children: infant to 2nd grade

11am Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Wednesday

10:30 am Book Club & Cookies

12 Noon Holy Eucharist with Unction

6:30 pm Evening Prayer with Unction (healing prayers)