



The Herald

St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

Vol 54 Issue 7

July 2019

I'm looking at getting in some good children's books for our church. Ones about our August VBS theme of the environment, about responsibility, dignity and diversity, topics in line with 'Walking in Love', our current adult book study, and the 'Beloved Community' theme of our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry. If any of you have suggestions, let me know!

A long-time favorite book of mine is *Mister God, This is Anna: the true story of a very special friendship*, by Fynn. Anna, a 6 year-old, has a grown-up friend, Fynn, who describes Anna as a theologian, mathematician, philosopher, poet and gardener – and an angel - for her insight into love and Mr God. Here's one of their conversations:

"Mister God made everything, didn't he? Even the dirt and the stars and the animals and the people and the trees and everything, and the pollywogs?" The pollywogs were those little creatures we had seen under the microscope. I said, "Yes, he made everything."

She nodded her agreement. "Does Mister God love us truly?"

"Sure thing," I said. "Mister God loves everything."

"Oh," she said. "well then, why does he let things get hurt and dead?" Her voice sounded as if she felt she had betrayed a sacred trust, but the question had been thought and it had to be spoken.

"I don't know," I replied. "There're a great many things about Mister God, we don't know about?"

"Well then," she continued, "if we don't know many things about Mister God, how do we know he loves us?"

I could see this was going to be one of those times, but thank goodness she didn't expect an answer to her question, for she hurried on: "Them pollywogs, I could love them till I bust, but they wouldn't know, would they? I'm million times bigger than they are and Mister God is million times bigger than me, so how do I know what Mister God does?"

She was silent for a little while. Later I thought that at this moment she was taking her last look at babyhood. Then she went on.

"Fynn, Mister God doesn't love us." She hesitated. "He doesn't really, you know, only people can love. I love the pollywogs, but they don't love me. I love you Fynn, and you love me, don't you?" I tightened my arm about her. "You love me because you are people. I love Mister God truly, but he don't love me."

It sounded to me like a death knell. "Damn and blast," I thought. "Why does this have to happen to people? Now she's lost everything." But I was wrong. She had got both feet planted firmly on the next stepping stone.

"No," she went on, "no, he don't love me, not like you do, it's different, it's millions of times bigger." She sat on her haunches and giggled. Then she launched herself at me and undid my little pang of hurt, cut from the useless spark of jealousy with the delicate sureness of a surgeon. "Fynn, you can love better than any people that ever was, and so can I, can't I? But Mister God is different. You see, Fynn, people can only love outside, and can only kiss outside, but Mister God can love you right inside, and Mister God can kiss you right inside, so it's different. Mister God ain't like us; we are a little bit like Mister God, but not much yet."

May we all learn more and more of the height, depth and width of God's love this summer.

With love and prayers, Helen



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen
Van Koevering

Mass Market Paperback: 192 pages Publisher: Ballantine Books; Reprint edition (April 12, 1985)
ISBN-10: 9780345327222

Sr Warden's Corner

You know what word drives me crazy? “Melly.” What the heck does it even mean? I keep hearing people talk about burgers that have “melly cheese.” Does it mean they’re unable to commit as to whether it’s melted or not? Does it mean that it could potentially melt (like almost every other solid object in the universe)? Does it mean that it tastes good when it is melted (in which case MELT the damn stuff)? Does it imply that it is already melted (in which case we have a perfectly suitable word: melted)? I don’t hate the people that use the word. I just don’t like non-sensical gibberish.



Tony Lo Bianco

Kind of like how people have come to use the word “God.” I hear people (including myself) say it so often I’m not even sure what they mean by it. I have tried to make it the one and only word that is banned during the onslaught of video games that has taken over a certain child of mine’s room. Yes, that actually means that I would rather hear any of our usually considered “four letter words” than to hear shouts of “oh god!” Then I noticed just how often it is used by so much of our society. Oh my Go... well you get the picture.

I don’t think I’m being prudish here, and I will seriously challenge anyone to a swear-off if you so desire. But at what point did we lose so much reverence for the term we use to describe the holiest being in our universe? I know that it has become an exclamation. Maybe after we discovered that there were no atheists in fox-holes we discovered how many fox-holes exist in everyday life and just started shouting about them until the word entered our vernacular in a new way.

I think it’s time to bring it back. Not in some kind of “Let’s Bring God Back to America” kind of corny way. But I mean let’s bring the word back, and with it all of the feelings, actions, attributes and concepts the word describes. When I hear someone use the word “God” I want to know what they mean. How has God touched their life? How do they conceive of God? Is God the proverbial old man sitting on a throne in the sky? Is God a mystical energy force that binds the universe together? Is God the spirit of a friendly dog who licks your face after a hard day at work?

As I said, I’m guilty of throwing this term around far too flippantly myself. But if you hear me do so, I challenge you to ask me what exactly I mean when I say “God.” I hope you will check yourself in this way too: when you hear the word come out of your mouth ask yourself who or what God is... where you see God in your life right at that moment... how you can further God’s kingdom. Otherwise, God is just a syllable, and even “melly” is more than that.

Stewardship Corner

The Stewardship Corner is open even in Summer!

This one may be a bit shorter than normal, but it is always a pleasure to recognize all those instances of Stewardship month after month.

Now on to the “Stewardship Spotlight”. It shines on the sometimes dreaded “PLEDGE” word.

Many (actually most) of us pledge every year. AND most of us give over and above that pledge for various projects or needs that come up. For instance, let’s say that Joe & Mary Parishioner give to the Music Fund and then donates some money to offset a pancake breakfast event, and then donates some money to offset flower expenses at Christmas. ALL of that shows up in their Giving Statement which all parishioners receive about once a quarter.

However, what counts (or in Tony’s terms, what keeps his furnace running), are the PLEDGE dollars that Joe & Mary Parishioner have paid to the Church. If they give to all these other causes, but do not keep up with their PLEDGE, our parish may soon be in trouble. Our parish depends upon those pledges to “pay the bills”. Joe & Mary Parishioner need to keep up with their total Pledge dollar amount, at the minimum, by the end of the year, regardless of what else, over and above, they contribute to the church.

So, please look at what you pledged and what you have paid towards that pledge, and try to catch up if you are behind. The parish as a whole is running significantly behind actual pledge dollars received versus amounts pledged for time elapsed.

Again, your total giving statement includes more than your pledge. Please look closely at what you pledged and where you are at in the year. By the time that you read this, you should be at about 50% of your pledged dollar total by the end of June.

Let us give thanks for God’s summertime and for all the blessings of St. Raphael (with a bit of fun added in to show our humanity).

Roger L Kirk

Views from the Pews

We would like to encourage more parishioners to write articles for this column sharing their perspectives about the church, spiritual growth and other topics that may be of interest to our congregation. Submit your article to Dana Berry by the requested date on the back page to be include in the next month's issue

A Note from Ed Blackwell

Lately, I've been saying to myself, "Ed, you don't write enough about yourself." You will see this article which you are about to read is primarily about yours truly. While it may drift on to a different subject, it's primarily about me. What I have done in my 68 years, and a little of what I've hoped for, a little of what I've aspired to be, etc.

As many of you have noticed, I seem to be slowly losing my voice. I don't know if it is the lung cancer that has spread into my vocal chords, or what. I just don't know for sure. It seems to be happening at a gradual pace. Well, one could look at this condition in a positive way. It could be somewhat of a blessing in disguise. I am taking the time to do real listening. Listening to what people have to say. I don't need to respond verbally - no more than a simple nod of the head is sufficient enough to carry the message across.

People these days seem to be rally good at talking around themselves, so to speak.

I have a sneaking suspicion that there is a Brave New World out there just waiting for us to respond to it.

God's Love and Peace to all,

Ed Blackwell.

A PRAYER FOR THE POWERLESS -

Richard Dawahare

He tells me he's at the end of his financial rope. A very intelligent man, but without a work record. For the better part of two decades his job was taking care of an ailing mother. She passed, debts erased his inheritance, and he's down to nothing. No income, no assets, close to retirement age, but with no retirement or social security. He thinks he wants to be a masseuse, perhaps on a distant coastal locale, but it's on hold until he can deal with his finances.



She's a recovering addict, one year clean. Two children, but not yet back in her care. Penniless, homeless, and nearly hopeless. She's sober, but she battles daily against the urge to

use, a demonic force equal parts physiological and psychological, such is the hook of chemical dependency. Still, she's sober and knowing this gives her a fighting chance and so she sees a sliver of light on the far horizon, slight as it may be.

These are but two of the thousands I know or hear about daily. The poor souls with little to nothing of anything of material value, and many with even less than that, those without spiritual or attitudinal or intellectual resources either. I literally find myself praying for them throughout my days and nights.

Prayers are powerful. They may even lead to immediate relief, for the truly powerless—and most of us are at some point and to some degree, powerless—need immediate succor. We need food, shelter, human care and other sundry provisions. Somehow most scrape by, but humanity was meant to thrive!

And so, what God has put in my heart to share with the powerless is this: There is greatness within you! You CAN, with God's help, realize the greatness within you. Trust in God. Order up a crazy, whole enchilada trust, with extra salsa and two sides of refrieds (I love frijoles!). Put it all in God's hands, every ounce of it, then ask for direction. Rest easy, think about it, plot strategy and act.

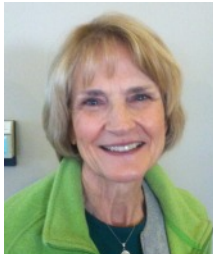
No matter if you are down and depressed, suffering in body, mind or spirit, poor or not, your destiny lies within. Pray, then act. And while nearly 100% of the powerless I have encountered express a belief in God (but they often appear not to have exercised their faith) there are some who do not. For them my encouragement is to realize that there IS an answer, rationally consider options, then think and act in a positive and hopeful way. [Side note: I don't worry about others' spirituality or apparent lack thereof I do pray for them (and all) and I KNOW that God is great in God's own mysterious way, and may already be in control of the life who denies God whether they know it or not, or maybe not, who knows but God, but we direct our own goodwill, good thoughts and prayers to all without discrimination, so it is all god, whoops, I mean GOOD, but God is Good so that Freudian slip is apt].

What about the many who have zero capacity to get out of their bed, or beyond the torment of a diseased mind—the aged, the infirm, the mentally incapacitated? These are the truly powerless. Like the babe out of the womb, their care is in the hands of others. We must pray for them and their caregivers and give thanks for a society that helps ensure the care for those without resources.

Pray unceasingly (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Or put in today's acronymic world, ABP— "Always Be Praying!"

Music Notes

After nine months of weekly rehearsals, our choir is taking a well-deserved summer vacation. But our congregation will still enjoy beautiful music each Sunday as our staff singers and volunteers take turns leading the hymns and service music during worship, as well as singing solo. This program has worked well in recent years and perhaps provides a little extra assistance in our congregational singing.



On the first three Sundays of August, Dr. Ron Pen will again be our guest organist. Dr. Pen is recently retired from the U.K. School of Music, and is a specialist in shape-note music. It is always a delight to have Dr. Pen, not only for his musical ability, but for his larger-than-life personality. He will be assisted by our cantors as well.

The choir will return on September 8, with first rehearsal Thursday, September 5. As always, we welcome new singers! Our choir is open to anyone who enjoys music, and you will find that it is an open, accepting, and caring group. Please feel free to speak to me any time after morning worship if you are interested in being part of the St. Raphael choir. We rehearse at 7:15 on Thursdays and 10:15 on Sunday mornings, September through early June.

Best wishes for a restful and pleasant summer!

Melinda Storey, Organist/Choirmaster

Crafter's Circle

The Circle will meet during July on the 13th and the 27th at 10:00 in the downstairs main room. Everyone is welcome to come and work on quilts, knitting or any other crafting items.

Sages to meet at Logan's

Join us on Thursday, July 18th at 11:30 AM at Logan's Steakhouse in Fayette Mall. Rose Conley is hosting. Please call her and reserve your place! 859-554-5361

Are you interested in being part of team ministry at St. Raphael's?

Contact Rev. Helen if you are interested in being licensed as a Pastoral leader, Worship leader, Eucharistic Minister, Eucharistic Visitor, or Catechist. Read Rev. Helen's article on the first page of the June Herald if you haven't. She will be happy to answer any questions about these roles.

Food Pantry Donations Requested

St. Raphael's food pantry is a little bare. We have mostly canned goods and not a good variety. If you can help by donating some items that could help make a balanced meal, some suggestions are: canned meats, soups, complete pancake mix & syrup, and spaghetti. Thanks for your help!

Book Study: Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices, 10 a.m. Sundays

All are invited to take part in our book study. The book "Walk in Love" is a 'journey through The Book of Common Prayer, the Christian life, and basic beliefs of our faith, guided by two Episcopal priests.' The group discussed chapter 7 last Sunday (June 24th), but it's an easy read and you can catch up or read independently at your own pace.

A few books are available for purchase in the box in the back of the church. Just leave a check or cash Sunday and it will be collected. Or, order one for yourself here: <https://www.amazon.com/Walk-Love-Episcopal-Beliefs-Practices-ebook/dp/B079H3N7XG/>

Facilitators are needed for upcoming Sundays. Sign up to lead discussion on a Sunday. The signup sheet is in the box with the books. All are welcome to join the book study at any time. In addition to appealing to a church-wide audience, this study is serving as preparation for Confirmation and Reception. Bishop Mark will be visiting St. Raphael's on Nov. 11. If you are interested in confirmation or reception, please let Rev. Helen know.



A Church Mouse in God's House

I hear about how you humans say that you just love the change of seasons. Honestly, I don't buy it. First of all, as I have previously noted, you spend almost all of your time inside and in climate-controlled settings. Do the changing seasons look nice from inside your double-paned windows? Second, on the rare chance that you do go outside you mostly just complain about it. "Oh my allergies!" "can you believe all this rain?" "Will it ever warm up?" "This Spring is lasting forever!" "We skipped Fall!" "Put on sunscreen!" Third, I have a cousin who lives in Florida. Another in Maine. They notice your migration patterns.

I could go on about how for some of us seasons aren't a luxury, but a way of life.

However, I'm going to be even more human than most of you are and just admit that I love Summer. Despite the fur, I love the warmth. There are lots of opportunities to play outside, including on your new trail (o.k., I'll give you props for that one). There's frequently food left outside, and everything just seems more alive. Or dead. Accidental mouse-deaths rise in the warmer months. It's not really that surprising. We're outside more, we're doing some risky things, our predators are out more too. We try not to let it get us down, but almost every year, it's "Marv got hit by a Chevy," or "the fox ate Sam."

We console the grieving by saying things like "only the good die young" (which I've been advised not to say to you all, since, well, nevermind), or "I guess it was their time." But, we know this isn't really true. When we mice live our lives to the fullest we know what can happen. I had a cousin who lived to be ten years old – most boring mouse I ever met. And most never met her.

I assume that there are some similarities in your population, but I imagine that they are less pronounced. I see lots of you living long lives, and they are not necessarily the quietist, most risk averse among you. In fact, sometimes I feel like the fuller you live your lives the longer you live!

I know that's not always the case. There are exceptions to every rule. But since I tend to believe that you all love the warm weather too, I bet I see you out there living it up this Summer. Not partying, at least not exclusively, but doing what each of you does best in your own way. That's one of the things I like about humans – you have the time to develop all kinds of skills and talents. And a human that lets the world see all that they can be... well that's an impressive sight.



Birthdays for July

| | |
|--------------------|---------|
| Bernice Wood | July 10 |
| Jake Van Koevinger | July 13 |
| Rose Conley | July 15 |
| Michael Cannon | July 18 |
| Joan Schmidt | July 21 |
| Anna Peterson | July 23 |
| Mathew Christiano | July 25 |
| Amy Smerick | July 25 |
| Olivia Vance | July 25 |

Anniversaries for July

Christopher Bollinger & Amy Smerick July 8

Please let me know if we miss anyone's special day!
We'd hate to leave out anyone on their birthday or anniversary. Send an email to me at danabruceberry@gmail.com if we don't have your dates.

St. Raphael Vacation Bible School is August 5 - 8, 9am - 3 pm

"For God So Loved the World" is the theme.

We invite all children ages 5 - 16 to celebrate the opening of Tobit's Trace, to connect nature to faith, the Eucharist, and the Bible with Rev. Helen Van Koevering. What's Happening at VBS 2019?

Learning in Tobit's Trace

Dr. Tom Kimmerer will be teaching about nature and tree planting. Come plant trees with us in Tobit's Trace.

Healthy Living and Nature - Nancy Christiano Mathews is connecting fun with veggies, healthy eating, and the reuse of plastics. Discover composting and making worm farms with

Music & Crafts Carol Summers - Learn about music and its ability to heal with Chris Young

Bonnie Conaway will put your creativity and artistry to the test

Enjoy storytelling with Carl Fosnaugh IV

Lunch provided daily. Deacon Paula Ott will lead children and adults in a Jewish Seder meal on the last day.

Download and share the [brochure](#) below. Contact us to sign-up, volunteer, and/or donate: email revhelen@sreclex.org or call 859-255-4987.

Saint Raphael's Episcopal Church

and

The Church of the Resurrection, Lexington

invite you to something
different...

Joining in with God's Life for the World

We invite all children ages 5 – 16
to celebrate the opening of
Tobit's Trace, to connect nature
to faith, the Eucharist, and the
Bible with
Rev. Helen Van Koevering

What's Happening at VBS 2019?

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Deacon Paula Ott will lead children and adults
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August 5-9, 2019

9:00 am – 3:00 pm daily

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

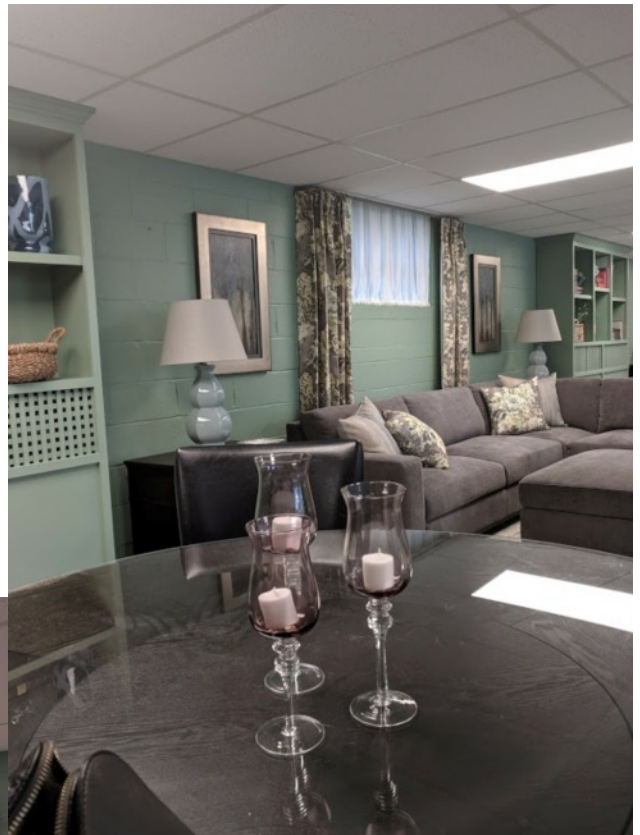
Saint Raphael's Episcopal Church

1891 Parker's Mill Rd, Lexington, KY 40504

Contact us to sign up, volunteer, and/or donate

revhelen@sreclex.org | office: 859.255.4987

Check out the new décor downstairs in the Family Life Area!



St Raphael Episcopal Church
1891 Parkers Mill Rd
Lexington, KY 40504
Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering, Rector
Phone: 859-255-4987
Email: Office: revhelen@sreclex.org or SRoffice@sreclex.org
Website: www.sreclex.org



The Herald is a monthly publication of St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church, 1891 Parkers Mill Road, Lexington, KY 40504. Phone 859.255.4987. Our newsletter is mailed or e-mailed free of charge to approximately 250 members and friends. If you have someone whom you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, please notify the Church Office and have them added to the list of friends.

Articles and news information for September must be submitted by **Friday, July. 21, 2019** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

Sunday Services

8:30 am Holy Eucharist (Rite I)

11am Holy Eucharist (Rite II)

Children are welcome during each service - there are activity sheets and coloring pages at the back of the church for their enjoyment.

Wednesday

10:30 am Book Club & Cookies

12 Noon Holy Eucharist with Unction

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