



# The Herald

## St. Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church

Vol 55 Issue 8

August 2020

### From the Rector

Well, I have some good news for you all! 2020 has been like no other on so many levels, but the ministry and mission of the church continues regardless, and I am delighted to welcome the newly ordained Rev Deacon Charles Halton to St Raphael's. He will be working part-time for the diocese in digital formation, as you may have read recently in news from DioLex. The 'new news' is that Charles will serve his curacy with us for the next several months as he transitions to ordination as a priest.



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

Charles was raised in Austin, Texas, and earned a marketing degree from Texas A&M University (and worked in the area of digital media), an M.Div from Southern Seminary in Louisville (where he later taught), and a PhD in Bible and Near Eastern studies from Hebrew Union College- Jewish Institute of Religion. He is married to Lori, a radiologist, and they have a 10 year-old daughter, Grey. Since retiring from teaching in higher education, Charles has focused his ministry on writing and working at the grassroots level with communities of faith. He co-wrote an anthology of the world's first literature written by women, 'Women's Writing of Ancient Mesopotamia' (published by CUP), and another book is on the way, 'The Human Shape of God' (to be published by WJK in Spring 2021). But he has other interests, like photography and travel, and I can personally vouch for his culinary skills!

Charles discerned his call to ordination with the Diocese of Kentucky, and was ordained there on July 22. He moved with his family to Lexington last year, and has been attending Christ Church Cathedral, but is now moving his canonical residency to the diocese of Lexington and joining in with us for the duration of his curacy. He will be ordained as a priest next year by Bishop Mark here in the Diocese of Lexington.

I am excited about the Halton family joining us at St. Raphael's, and I will be introducing you all to them on August 2 at our outdoor service! For this month's Herald, I asked Charles to tell us something about the opportunities that he sees for mission and ministry with St Raphael's in these times of Covid:

#### THE OPPORTUNITIES OF COVIDTIDE:

Charles Halton

The past months have been filled with struggle. We have sheltered at home, social distanced, had our gathered worship interrupted, felt increased tension with our partners and children, endured sickness, lacked employment or been furloughed, grieved loved ones, experienced fear and loneliness... A return to normal is not yet within sight. These are difficult times for all of us.



As challenging as they are, difficult times often present us with opportunities. Struggle can have a clarifying effect. When we are pressed against a wall, the distractions of everyday life fall away. Things that are most important to us come into focus. This renewed focus can redirect us if momentum has carried us away from a path we intended to follow or has caused us to miss a signpost directing us to beneficial new way. If we open ourselves to this possibility, hardships can create opportunities for us to more deeply live into our callings to love God and neighbor.

Covidtide has forced me to reconsider what it means to be the church. As I have reflected on these months when I have not been able to participate in weekly gatherings with my siblings in Christ, I had a realization. I had started viewing prayer as something I did every so often at a particular building, and I regarded the church as that building where Eucharists take place. This shift in my perspective didn't happen at once. It came about gradually as the years went by. These last few months of relative solitude have forced me to rediscover what it means to be, as our Presiding Bishop Michael Curry calls it, part of the Jesus movement today. I have learned, once again, that prayer is anything we do with an awareness that God is present with us. This is how St. Paul could gently remind the Christians at Thessaloniki to "pray continually" (1 Thes 5:17). Folding our hands before a meal, chopping onions, going on a walk, forgiving a family member for a cross word—all of these things can be forms of prayer.

The idea of what it means to be the church has taken on new dimensions for me as well. Church is not that building we are not longer able to fully use. Church is the people of God. It is a group of people who collectively experience the presence of God who moves within their midst (Matt 18:20). More specifically, in Episcopal tradition we think of the church as all of the members of our diocese. This means that Christ's spirit links us together with our sister in Corbin who is lonely, our brother in Covington who celebrates a new birth, our sibling across town in Lexington who are out for a jog. We are never alone no matter how isolated we feel. We are a communion of saints, fellow travelers along the way that Jesus modeled and taught. We are the church.

Being the church in these strange times will require us to do new things. Not all of these things will work. Some will. It will be difficult. It will be joyous. There will be great successes and hard challenges. There will be times when we want to quit. God has given us each other, in part, for those moments to encourage one another to keep the faith and not to lose hope. I know that you will be a great encouragement to me and my family as I serve alongside you as a deacon. I can't wait to see how God moves among us at St. Raphael's as we live into our callings to be the church today.

### Senior Warden's Corner



Dave Sevigny  
Sr. Warden

#### Tolerance and Questions

As I pass through our 5th month of mostly being in my own space, like most of you, each day is a bit more like Groundhog Day. I must continue reminding myself that this is a marathon, not a sprint. We just might be in this state for a while. COVID cases are rising as restrictions are eased, just in time for restrictions to come back to lower cases. It is a bit of a rollercoaster for me.

Fortunately, I have someone to share this with, my wife, Paula. Any of us that are married, or have kids, or live with someone, have begun to realize the occasional tension that arises when we are in such close proximity all the time to the ones we love. If your spouse used to go on business trips, you are probably secretly longing for them to go, for just a few days, someplace else. Tension has created a few issues for my household, and sometimes I just do not seem to say the right thing at the right time. We are working on tolerance right now by allowing each other to live the way we want, as long as it does not negatively impact the other.

Racial tensions and national elections are at the forefront of US minds and news again right now. It could be that COVID has allowed the time and space for people to really reflect on things, throw in some unbelievably bad deadly events that highlight it, and tempers start to boil. I have read several books the last six weeks. ([White Fragility](#) and [So You Want to Talk about Race](#)). I have listened to podcasts that have differing views. I love solving problems, but I realize that this one I cannot solve in my lifetime—it is so big, its overwhelming. This one, I can only move the ball down the field on and I will do my part to support.

The problem I find right now is that it is difficult to say most anything without offending on this issue or others that face us. It is the perfect opportunity for prayer and reflection. So, I contemplate, "What would Jesus do?". I did some research. I think Jesus would ask questions. I found this [online](#) and believe it's a way to seek tolerance, understanding, and awareness.

*Jesus asks 307 questions in the Gospels. But: Jesus uses questions differently than we commonly do today. We ask questions for information; Jesus asks questions to provoke transformation. We ask questions for answers; Jesus asks questions for awareness. Jesus asks questions to confront the listener with their own thought process, preconceptions, assumptions, and beliefs.*

So, I ask you to consider, in this time that we are still isolated, to continue to ask questions like Jesus would. Questions can transform the way we and others think. Find out why people think the way they do. You do not have to change their opinions with your opinions, just desire to do as Jesus would. Tolerance and questioning can be transformative for both parties. This transformation can lead to the ultimate goal—reconciliation. Be the Church, Be the Change.

#### 2020 Vestry Members & Commission Members

Sr. Warden: **Dave Sevigny** Jr. Warden: **Mike Booth** Clerk: **Dana Berry** Treasurer: **Paula Sevigny**

Assistant Treasurer: **Roger Kirk**

Property – **Nancy Christiano, Chair.** Members – Mike Booth, Mike Hart, Ken Cotrell, Jack

Supplee, CC Johnson, & Roger Kirk

b. Christian Formation/Stewardship – **Amy Fowler, Chair**, Members: Dana Berry, Dave Sevigny,

c. Finance – **Roger Kirk, Chair** Members – Amanda Vance, Afsi Davis, Patty Bond, Paula Sevigny., Janis

Rosebrook

d. Mission – **Afsi Davis, Chair.** Member: Chris Young, Margaret McLandry, Amanda Vance (dinner church

food coordination)

Parish Life / Care – **Carol Summers** Chair; members – Chris Young, Dave Sevigny



## Finance Corner

Message from the Finance Committee Chair July 2020:

Roger Kirk, Finance Chair

Have you tried our outside services on Sunday morning yet? I have and have to say that it is a very Godly and calming services. I truly felt in the presence of the Lord. This is the first tiny step in our battle with the Pandemic and we are all thankful to the Diocese and to the Parish for providing us some much needed time spent worshipping together.

I want to thank all members of the Parish, as the end of June financials indicated that we still remain on track with your pledge dollars. As I have many contacts across the Diocese and outside our denomination, this is truly amazing and a testament to the strength of the Lord in our Parish. Keep in mind that your continued support to the Parish of your pledges allows us to continue doing God's work in the best way we can, given the circumstances.

Please continue to contribute to other areas as you are able. This Parish is resilient and like our Episcopal leaders, strong and mindful that we need to stay safe! And most importantly, strong in the Lord, as He has commanded us. One day, we ARE going to have a joyous reunion to celebrate our passion for the Lord and this Parish. See you on Sundays—perhaps soon?

## A View from the Pew

### WILL THE REAL GOD PLEASE STAND UP

The serendipitous events of the last month have culminated with perfect timing for this piece. First, I have been re-reading [The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich](#) by William Shirer. I first read it over a decade ago and thought it should be required reading for all.



Richard Dawahare

As relevant for this piece, one of the many head-shaking phenomena that most struck me then, and again now, is these how these utterly Godless Nazi monsters [ooh, hold that, if God is everything my description is not accurate, but we'll circle back] nonetheless invoked God, thanked God after their many early victories, "victories" that the rest of the world accurately saw as horrific atrocities, starting with a blood-thirsty mania for war and ending with their attempted extermination of an entire race, the very bloodline and ancestry of Jesus Christ himself!

This was obviously the opposite of the unchangeable bedrock truth of our Good Housekeeping "God," the one reflected in Mr. Rogers Sesame Street goodness, the one in the Bible, the one who saves, rejoices at the recovery of one lost sheep, you know, GOD for God's sake. I'm constantly trying to reconcile our call to love yet stand for truth and justice.

I often end the night with a random pop into Psalms so I can fill my head positivity and the transcendent power of faith in a good and all-powerful God. This same night my fingers alighted, purely by chance, on Psalm 15:

*"Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may live on your holy mountain? 2 The one whose walk is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart; 3 whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbor, and casts no slur on others; 4 who despises a vile person but honors those who fear the Lord; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind; 5 who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.*

And there it was: "who despises a vile person." That was me—now guilt-free! Well, not quite, because then I jokingly said to myself, "God forgive me for following your Word." Jesus brought a sword (but at least did later tell Peter to sheath his) flipped the money-changers' tables and shook the dust off his feet to non-believers, so maybe righteous anger is good. The key is to ensure our anger is grounded in truth and fact as measured by the teachings of Jesus, which mirror those of universal morality (so yeah, even good-hearted non-believers, i.e. atheists, are "IN" the kingdom of God and will end up in heaven whether they believe or not, won't that be fun to witness!).

Then, just as I was about to start this piece the fourth random occurrence: Bishop Mark's excellent sermon during Sunday's online service. You can access it on the church's site, as well as his other sermons and those of Rev. Helen, which are also terrific. [Together, they might be the best husband and wife preaching duo since Jesus and Mary Magdalene—WHOOPS, did I just say that, firmly, FIRMLY tongue-in-cheek?].

Bishop Mark spoke about the church's role in achieving justice. "Jesus brought a sword of justice to cut through the lies that separate us into competing groups of we and they." He contrasted those who want their freedom, their way and who use violence, prejudice, discrimination, and oppression to get their way regardless of the injustice to others. He quoted Walter Brueggemann, who said that we have substituted the gospel of Jesus for a belief in the false ideology of American exceptionalism, which in my interpretation is the belief that we can do whatever we decide is right regardless of the disparate impact on others because we are special.

But true peace can only come when we put God FIRST, and when we put our whole trust in God's hands, Bishop Mark observed. Of course, he means the will and way of the real God, the one of love and goodness, the one I read about every night in Psalms—THAT God, not one created by us for our own selfish pursuits. Bishop Mark said the Church's task is to face this false reality and assert the truth that this is GOD'S world and God is at work to free the oppressed, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, end the violence and overthrow the evil powers that corrupt what God has made. Amen! He pointed to St. James who said that "faith without action is dead." Therefore, we must disassociate ourselves from the myth of empire and align with God and neighbor. The Church must not be silent, he said.

"SPEAK HOPE AND ACT FOR JUSTICE," Bishop Mark exhorts us. Therefore, choose to follow Jesus and his transforming power to heal, living in a community that bears one another's burdens, forgives one another, living with kindness, generosity and grace and "challenge the seductive faith of our 'me-first' culture."

Then my own thoughts crept in: YES, I agree with all that Bishop Mark said. We should be the change that is needed. And we should be doing that more by promoting the values of God, and less the name of God. But since the days of our founders we live according to universal moral values, which are identical to the teachings of most of the world's religions and particularly the teachings of Jesus. It is this set of universal values that is so important to a peaceful, successful society where liberty and justice for all can flourish.

These values never change. ever: Truth, love, charity, compassion, and mercy. Every personal action, every state policy, every political utterance must be measured against these universal (i.e., secular, beyond religiosity) values. Where lacking, make amends, and where none, confront—SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER.

## Announcements



Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and Bishop Mark Van Koevering have prophetically called us to honor God's covenant of love, to respect the dignity of every human being, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to become the Beloved Community. They have spoken about the need for prayer to be accompanied by concrete actions. Daily prayer can transform our hearts and minds and shape our attitudes, behavior, and actions. However, much of our attitudes, behavior, and actions have implicit and unconscious bias and prejudice. To have our actions reflect the will of God, we need to have a more comprehensive understanding of the many ways in which our society and lives are influenced by the systemic racism that surrounds us.

Bishop Mark is calling all of us to a month of prayer and action, as we work together to address the brutal reality of racism in our society and church and to have the courage to be the change in our society and church that we desperately need. The Diocesan Commission for the Racial Reconciliation of All God's Children is offering a program of daily prayer and actions during the month of August. The work we have to do is different depending on whether we are white or persons of color. Therefore, we are offering one program for persons who identify as white and one program for persons who are black, Latinx, Native American or persons of color.

It is our hope as members of the Diocesan Commission that this initiative will be meaningful and transformative for everyone. May God be present with you and all of us as we journey together in becoming the Beloved Community.

"Yes Jesus, I want to be on your right or your left side, not for any selfish reason. I want to be on your right side or your left side, not in terms of some political kingdom or ambition. But I just want to be there in love and in justice and in truth and in commitment to others, so we can make of this old world a new world." -- The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. February 4, 1968

-Whit Whitaker and Rev. Carol Ruthven, Diocesan Commission Co-Chairs

Join us daily on Facebook and Instagram beginning August 1 for the prayers, scripture readings, and an action for each day that you can take to deepen your engagement with this material. The information, including a list of web, film, and literary resources, will also be available on our website.



## "Walk in Love" - preparation for Confirmation or Reception

Those interested in Confirmation or Reception should read 'Walk in Love: Episcopal Beliefs and Practices' by Scott Gunn and Melody Wilson Shobe. Study of this book and conversation with Rev Helen are part of the steps towards reception, confirmation or renewal of faith that Bishop Mark will bless in his visitation in September.



### Gardening Angels past and future!

Now would be an opportune time to get out your house while maintaining your social distance. The church grounds are bursting forth with growth and we need willing hands and healthy knees to participate in policing unwelcome invaders.

If you have questions, or need supplies, please let Kim Siahkoohi know - [siahkoohik@gmail.com](mailto:siahkoohik@gmail.com)



## A Congregational Time for Reflection

**Sunday, August 2, 12:00-1:00**

Where: St. Raphael's Parking Lot (bring your own lawn chair.)

Let's take some time together to reflect on who and how we are amid all of the upheavals and changes of the past six months! This conversation is part of a six-week process of self-understanding and connection using the Living Compass Adult Wellness Circles program that creates space for having open, authentic conversations about the important things that are happening in our lives in terms of our hearts, minds, strength, souls, and social responsibility. If you didn't attend the first week you are still welcome to attend - you can catch up and be part of the discussion.

Family groups who are living together are welcome to sit together in a non-socially distanced manner. Individuals/groups who don't live together will sit socially distanced (6 feet apart). All must wear masks. Please bring your own folding lawn-type chair if you can. This way we will minimize contact and potential to spread viruses. There is no access to the interior of the church, restrooms, kitchen, etc. If it is raining this event will be canceled.

## A Church Mouse in God's House



We lost a cousin last week. Sorry, I'm starting to talk like you all. One of my cousins died last week. That is the truth of the matter, and no matter how we sugarcoat it it's not going to change. We had known that she was going to die for several days. A few of us saw a tumor on her that had ruptured. It wasn't a pretty sight. It shouldn't have surprised me the way that it did, it's not like I've never seen death before but usually it is due to natural causes, like getting hit by a car. Seriously, how many rodents do you know that die from old age or chronic conditions. So along with the shock of losing her came those few awkward days of knowing that she would no longer be with us.

I know that this is more common in your circles. Humans lingering for long periods of time. Months, sometimes even years just prolonging the inevitable. I don't know how you do it. We too of course have our post death rituals, gatherings of bereavement, storytelling and mutual comfort. But to do all this while your loved one is alive is a whole different game.

In a sense I guess all our lives are like this to some extent. We all know that none of us are immortal, yet we often act like we are. The kindness we showed to my cousin as she neared her end is probably the kind of kindness we should all show each other all throughout our lives. When one of us is taken quickly we don't have time to make amends. And when one of us lingers in the final stages for too long we often forget the vibrant one that they used to be. While it is hard, I think it is a real blessing to have those few days with a loved one near the end. Certainly it is not easy to watch another suffer, and no one ever really knows what to say, but that time is precious.

I think I learned something valuable from this experience, something that you all probably know already. Show appreciation for those who travel with you through life. We are not always blessed to get to say goodbye. RIP Chloe.



## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### August Birthdays

Martha Helen Smith	8/1
Mason Whorley	8/1
Diane Davis	8/4
Kay Price	8/4
Ava Curci	8/15
Danielle Binkauskas	8/20
Connor Krolak	8/21
Medina Mullins	8/21
Leslee Roberts	8/25
Steve Garvin	8/27
Tyler Jacobs	8/27
Ginger Garvin	8/29
Shaunne Bourland	8/31

### Anniversaries in August

Nancy Christiano & Hunter Mathews	8/2
Erica & Ron Formisano	8/6
Marguerite Emmons	8/7
Ray & Diane Davis	8/24
Diane & Larry Whorley	8/24
Rose & Brad Cannon	8/26

Please let us know if we missed a birthday or anniversary! We try to keep the records up to date, but if you've recently joined the parish, we want to celebrate your special days with you! So, let us know! Contact Dana Berry, ([danabruceberry@gmail.com](mailto:danabruceberry@gmail.com)) or the parish office.



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Articles and news information for Sept must be submitted by **Aug. 25, 2020** to Dana Berry at [danabruceberry@gmail.com](mailto:danabruceberry@gmail.com)

## Services - Current Schedule

### Sunday

**IN PERSON Aug 2, 9, 16, 23 (weather permitting) :**  
**11:00 AM Shortened Eucharist Service**  
**on the Front Lawn of the Church.**

**Register to attend on line. Bring your own lawn chair**

### ONLINE:

**8:30am Morning Prayer - Facebook and YouTube**

### Wednesday

**12:00pm Morning Prayer - Facebook**

### Nightly

**7:00pm Evening Prayer - Facebook**