



From Our Rector & Deacon

Life in our continuing dispersion: Sept 2020

There is no doubt about it – we are in rapidly changing times where no one has trod before! As I write, we are making plans for the next transition to in-person and inside worship as safely as we can and following all the guidelines. We aim to be able to live stream our 11am Eucharist service by the end of September, and provide space for the numbers that both the size of our sanctuary space can provide and the guidelines we have agreed as the Diocese of Lexington.



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

I'm aware that not one size fits all for St Raphael's. Some do not have online possibilities to participate in the services we have provided during these last several months. They welcome our news and need us all to reach out in the ways that we can (phone, cards, notes). Others have been enabled to participate during this time as they were already shut-in and/or distant from the church, and they want us to continue with online services. I know that many find it fun and freeing to have online services that they watch in their own time, place and in their PJ's if they want! Others have enjoyed being in our beautiful grounds for our shortened Eucharist services over the summer, whether they have watched the earlier recorded service or not. I also know that, in our super-connected world that shares this historic moment of common suffering, several folk around the world are also able to gain comfort from our services and prayers.

I also know that this is an opportune time to develop our own prayer lives. I offer a traditional prayer form here:

The Examen is the bedrock of Ignatian spirituality – a way to reflect on your day and be mindful of the grace and goodness that holds us, and become ever aware of the room there is for us to take action and grow. In times of rapid change, tension, uncertainties, taking time to reflect is important. The Examen provides an alternative to our BCP forms of prayer, being adaptive to our unique situations. First, take a moment to settle, be comfortable and simply breathe. Close your eyes if that helps. Someone once likened this to a rock settling on the bottom of a lake after its thrown in. Settle yourself, and then reflect on these steps:

1. Honestly acknowledge how you feel about whatever happened or didn't happen today.
2. Ask for God's light to illumine your day:
 - a. Your connections with others – who is interwoven into your life, who you take for granted, who you have not connected to today.
 - b. Listen to your emotions, pay attention, listen to God's love for you and them.
 - c. Reflect and pray on what you might be invited to grow and do about these connections and disconnections.
3. Take a deep breath as you return to your day.

Please keep an eye out for our eminders and bulletins during the next few months so that we can remain connected as best we can. I'd like to also remind you of ongoing Healing Eucharist services that I have been recording more recently from my desk – please join us if you have someone in need on your mind and let us add that person to our communal prayers. Let's support one another as much as we can until we meet again!

With love, Helen



Season of Creation—The Jubilee - Deacon Charles Halton

In September (and one week in October) we will depart from the normal lectionary readings and observe a four week series titled Season of Creation. We will join many Episcopal, Orthodoxy, and Catholic communities all around the world as we reflect on the biblical theme of Jubilee.

Jubilee is an observance that is prescribed in the Old Testament (Leviticus 25) that was supposed to be celebrated every fifty years. However, even though this stipulation is described in detail, there is no record in the Bible that it was actually observed in ancient Israel. When we understand what Jubilee is, it becomes clear why it was never practiced.

The Old Testament outlines a calendar that is based on the number seven and the ideal of restorative justice. These two ideas fit hand in glove in Hebrew, and then later, in Christian imagination. There are seven days in the week, Sunday being the first day. The last day of the week, Saturday, was set apart as a day of rest or Sabbath.

In the ancient world, there was no concept of the weekend. Workers were expected to toil away from sun up to sun down every single day. In most ancient cultures, workers were released to attend to religious liturgies one day per month. Other than that, they were put to work.

The writers of the Old Testament stipulated that people should have one day off of work every week so that they could refresh themselves physically, mentally and spiritually. They also applied this time of weekly rest and refreshment to agricultural animals (Exodus 20:8-11).

Years were broken up into seven year chunks. Farm owners could cultivate their fields for six years but were required to let the ground rest every seventh (Leviticus 25:4). In biblical vision, all parts of the universe—humans, animals and earth—are mystically united to God and all parts of the universe should be respected and given a chance to heal and be nourished.

Every fifty years, or after seven cycles of letting agricultural land rest, was supposed to be a Jubilee year in which all lands that were sold off during the previous forty-nine years would revert back to their original owners. This was an act of restorative justice. It allowed for the perpetual egalitarian distribution of property. It prohibited a handful of people from hoarding all of society's wealth. It is probably this very feature of Jubilee that made those in power in ancient Israel refuse to observe it. This ethos is still with us today.

The biblical idea of Jubilee is just as important today in the United States as it was thousands of years ago in ancient Israel. I look forward to meditating on its importance with you as we head into September!

Keep the faith,

Charles

Senior Warden's Corner



Dave Sevigny
Sr. Warden

COVID-tide has disrupted normal routines for most all of us. At our vestry meeting this week in the parish hall, all 9 of our vestry members and Rev. Helen gathered to just be in the same space for a while-safely. We were all masked and it was great to see some of us face to face-or mask to mask as it was on Tuesday. Members shared their good news for the last month. It was apparent to me that in the midst of COVID, transformative change was still going on in the lives of our vestry-talks of challenges of school starting up, toddler vocabulary increasing, a few engagements, long delayed home improvements taking place, new pets, improved work situations and life and relationship experiences filled the room. It was comforting to know that signs of good and normal things still are happening in our world.

I am going to ask you to disrupt your routine and take about an hour of your time in the following weeks to consider your spiritual life in the form of a survey as part of the Renewalworks process (www.renewalworks.com). Many Episcopalians are uncomfortable with talking openly about our God experiences, and how our daily and weekly routine includes (or does not) some form of prayer, reflection, contemplation. This survey asks you to really consider those things and share them in survey form-anonymously. Some of you might respond by saying "That is my own experience, and I don't want to share it". And I would respond to you with something like "What concerns you about it? The bedrock of why we are together as a church community is that we believe in the life giving salvation of Jesus Christ and we want to do that in community-and we've currently chosen the one on Parkers Mill Road to do it in." I think the real concern that some of us might have (me included) is that we might be afraid of what we learn about ourselves as we take the survey. We might get the feeling that we maybe are not really working the muscles of our spirituality. We may walk the walk and talk the talk, but maybe we need some help.

The survey is anonymous, and it is supposed to make you think and perhaps be uncomfortable. The reason the data is so valuable to us as a parish is that it allows us to consider the overall landscape of spirituality at St. Raphael's. A group of about 20 of us have agreed to analyze and discuss the data and findings over the



course of 6 meetings that will begin in September and end after Thanksgiving. There is anecdotal data that supports long term viability of churches with a focus on spiritual growth, and we want to create a path to grow to an even more vital parish. The findings will be telling and will help us formulate a plan for increased development opportunities to grow in a closer and deeper relationship with our triune God. The findings will be reported to the parish around the New Year.

I share with you I have taken many surveys in my life. I have taken so many weight, exercise and nutrition surveys, its mind boggling. I love fiddling with them and saying, “hmmm, I wonder if I ride 10 miles on my e-bike, it’s really only counts for 5 miles of regular biking”. I always try to get the survey to tell me that maybe I am doing a bit better, or that I may not actually be overweight, or maybe I am doing the right amount of exercising. Do not overthink this one. Take it honestly. There is not right or wrong. I know that most likely I will realize that I need to spend more time in this part of my life. I will probably figure out that I am not over disciplined when it comes to prayer and contemplation. And maybe I need a personal coach to help me with this discipline?

Who better to coach me then a group of friends all trying to do their part of living more Christ-like on Parkers Mill Rd? Please be part of my coaching team by taking the Renewalworks survey September 20 and help your church be even more vital as we move into next year.

Dave Seigny
Sr. Warden

Finance Information

Roger Kirk, Finance Chair

Message from the Finance Committee Chair Aug. 2020:

Great news is (likely) not far off. The Parish is making some investments, thanks to several generous donations, in our technology and broadband capabilities. If all goes well at some point, we will be able to hold some (very) limited services inside the church and livestream the service. Many decision points lie ahead, and of course we are at the mercy of this ugly virus. Pray that sometime soon we will all be able to actually see our collective faces (behind masks, of course).

As a Parish, our end of July financial's showed us with our heads still above water. The entire Parish thanks you for your diligence in keeping up with our pledges. 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

A Positive Way to Start Your Day

Mitch was a family friend. Long before he became Judge N. Mitchell Meade (the “N” is for Noah) my dad and uncles knew him well growing up in Whitesburg, down in Letcher County in southeastern Kentucky. I got to know Judge Meade over the years as he and his family visited our home and we went to games together. Later, when I was in law school, he asked me to be his law clerk, an experience I will always treasure.



Richard Dawahare

During this time Judge made a visit to our home that I will always remember. I don’t know why we remember certain events more than others, but on this day as we were talking I suddenly had the urge to ask him about the most important book that he had ever read, something that he could recommend to me. His answer was swift and sure: The Power of Positive Thinking, by Norman Vincent Peale, which I immediately dug into.

Over the years I have read and re-read this wonderful book. In it, Dr. Peale prescribes the perfect path for a positive life full of hope, peace and prosperity. He taught that anybody can improve their life with a positive and hopeful change of mind, and that the techniques for doing so begin at sunup, continue throughout the day, to the minute we lay our heads on our pillows before drifting off to sleep.

And so for you, dear reader, I present a morning exercise adapted from Rev. Dr. Peale’s book (but please note, there is no substitute for reading his life-changing prose):

FIRST: Just after waking, get out of bed and say four times, “This is the day the Lord has made, I will REJOICE and be GLAD in it!”

SECOND: Say your morning prayers, expressing gratitude and praying for others and yourself.

THIRD: Say each of these quotations three times (or more as you may wish), in order:

“I believe today will be a wonderful day, I feel great physically, mentally and emotionally. God is here and God is with me and God will see me through. Thank you dear God for everything I have and shall have and share, thank you dear God for EVERYTHING!”

“I put it all in your hands dear God. I BELIEVE! I place this day, my life, my work and my loved ones in the Lord’s hands. Only good is in the Lord. Whatever happens, whatever results it’s the Lord’s will and it is GOOD!”

“If God be with us, who can be against us.”

“I can do all things through God and through Christ who strengthen me.”

You can develop your own style or make adaptations as the spirit moves you. The idea is to put positive, TRUE thoughts into your being from the get-go. Then plop nougats of positivity throughout your day, interspersed with your ongoing conversation with God and with Jesus (I kind of picture them as the Dynamic Duo with Jesus walking with me on a minute to minute basis, under God’s ever-present eye).

These nougats could be famous quotations, experiences, history, stories, the smile on a child’s face, a butterfly darting to and fro, a tree lifting its branches to the heavens, and a million other things that you will notice as more than merely positive.

Miraculous!



Announcements & Upcoming Events



Coffee & Brunch with the Bishop

courtesy of
Deacon Charles, Lori, and Grey Halton

Sunday, September 27
9:30am – 10:45am
St. Raphael's Back Lot

September 27 Bishop Mark will be visiting

9:30 – 10:45am Bishop Brunch! Deacon Charles's family is offering coffee and brunch with Bishop Mark. Please come and safely celebrate the Bishop's visit and welcome the Deacon's family to St. Raphael.

11:00am Live Services; please look for signups in forthcoming E-minders. You must register to attend indoor services.

1:00pm Reflection of Baptismal Vows with Bishop Mark via Zoom; Zoom link to participate in forthcoming E-minders.

Watch the E-minders for updates on these events.

A Church Mouse in God's House



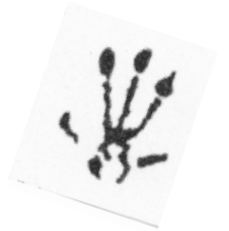
I see you are sending your little ones back to school. Or, rather, having them start school again. I like your new method. We mice are generally home-schoolers, as you may have guessed. But your hybrid model seems like it has some advantages.

For instance, how do you know that what you are learning is true? I agree that parents should be authority figures, but what if knowledge is passed down from generation to generation and it's just not true? My parents believed and told me that the Earth was flat, and I just believed them. Then one day I asked where the world ended and he yelled "Vladivostok!" Well I had rummaged through some old board games and immediately realized his belief was based on the game of Risk.

But what if I hadn't had that experience? And do I really know that the Earth is a sphere now? I believe it, I've done some further reading, but I can't prove it. Even in your kids' schools are they getting the full unvarnished truth? I thought "Juneteenth" as just a funny word, and I heard a lot of you say, "we never learned that in school." Who decides what the kids learn? And what happens if they question?

And here's another thing... Is it better to know something or believe it? I hear your lot say that you believe certain things - a resurrection from the dead, a virgin birth, wine being blood. Sometimes somebody will say, "how do you know?" And the response will be "I believe." And everybody will be like, "oh wow, that's serious!" But really? Why is belief more powerful than knowledge? My father believed that mice were falling off the end of the world outside of Vladivostok, but I don't see any wisdom in that.

Maybe my tiny mouse-brain (or heart) just can't handle it. Maybe there are beliefs that convey truth in ways that simple knowledge doesn't. And maybe that's why the knowledge you gain at school should be balanced with the wisdom of family beliefs.



Birthdays and Anniversaries

September Birthdays

Kym Dedman	Sept. 2
Mark VanKoevering	Sept. 6
Mike Gilmore	Sept. 7
Kevin Davis	Sept. 12
Christopher Bollinger	Sept. 14
Steve Krolak	Sept. 15
Beth Bollinger	Sept. 16
Moses Massaquoi	Sept. 19
Alberto Mazzonleni	Sept. 12
Don Miller	Sept. 19
Michael Binkauskas	Sept. 20
Steffen Wilson	Sept. 21
Stephanie Fox	Sept. 22
Vicki Stevens	Sept. 25

Anniversaries in September

Kevin & Afsi Davis	Sept. 6
Bill & Debbie Emerick	Sept. 12
Dick & Doris McNaly	Sept. 16
Jonathon & JeanEllen Melton	Sept. 29

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) or the parish office.

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

Announcements - Continued

"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



New Office Hours

The church office is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 10am-2pm, and is closed on Wednesday. The new hours will be posted on the church website and on the office answering machine as well in the bottom section of the E-minders. As you may have read in the E-minders, our Parish Administrator, Carl Fosnaugh has moved to a new position within the VA. His last day as our administrator was Aug. 26. If you need assistance and call the office, please be sure to leave a voice mail so that your call may be returned if no one is immediately available.



In September, St. Raphael is celebrating the "Season of Creation" with our Lectionary readings. Deacon Charles will offer his reflections on the topics of God's creation from the forests, land, wilderness, ending with rivers in October.



Our Sunday School project's first recycled bench for the children's play area!


The bench is made from the recycled bottle tops we've been saving for the past year or so!

Thanks for picking up the completed bench and delivering it to the church, Nancy and Hunter.

Services - Current Schedule

Sunday

**IN PERSON Sept. 6,13,20,27 (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



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Articles and news information for Oct. must be submitted by **Sept. 25, 2020** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

The Herald is a monthly publication of St Raphael the Archangel Episcopal Church.