



From Our Rector & Deacon

Most newsletters I've read recently begin with words to this effect: "Good riddance to 2020, a year like no other..." Not that I don't feel like that myself, but I do somehow want to take some of the things I've learnt in 2020 with me. Or try to at least. 2020 is the year that I celebrated a big birthday, and, when a friend named the next decade the 'wisdom years', I've been wondering about what it means to be wise. I think it has a lot to do with learning from our life experiences and gaining new perspectives.



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

2020 held multiple learning curves for me. Online support from TEC, Diolex and across the world offered clergy an abundance of new learning and study opportunities. One thing I've noticed is how much preachers and scholars speak of 'looking through the lens of...' in Bible study. It's true that the Bible opens up to new perspectives other than our own as we read it 'through the lens' of the poor, of conflict, of privilege, of others different to ourselves. So, with Advent, I began to wonder what lens would be encouraging for this disrupted beloved season that ends a year and heralds the next. What lens might aid faith and understanding, peace, hope, joy and love in this complicated and difficult year of 2020, and offer trust and confidence to move into 2021?

Advent and Christmas 2020 needed renewed imaginations to look through the lens of the experience of the Christ Child. To see as the Child saw and sees it. To find joy and hope in new, unusual territory. In switching our traditional family Christmas Day to Christmas Eve because that's what worked this year; in waking up at 4am to Facetime our son and his wife in London unwrapping their gifts there; finding new board games for more staying in; delighting in church contact online rather than in-person, with music from Junghyun 'in absentia', and caroling with Chris and Tim, Margaret and Ben; enjoying the overflowing table that our Reverse Advent Calendar produced for the needy; and receiving the blessing of a request from church neighbors (Eric and Carol) for a wedding on New Year's Eve to turn 2020 around with a celebration of love. Gathering with just five to witness their beautiful wedding spoke volumes to us all of Advent's message of hope, peace, joy and love. Beauty, just like flowers that somehow grow in the cracks of pavements, can always surprise us. Our God is a God of wonderful surprises.

Playfulness goes hand in hand with children. What fun to celebrate being 60 with the largest number of birthday cards this December baby has ever received (as well as such thoughtful vestry gifts)! And greetings from around the world! And the gift of a bike to replace the one left in Mozambique! God has surrounded me with a small team who have made 2020 memorable and possible, and even fun. I found a special book about the Child for this year of 2020 - it's Luke's story of 'The Nativity', and Julie Vivas has illustrated it so honestly. It gave me a new view of the nativity in the sagging exhaustion of Mary, the wondrous delight of Joseph, the kitchen table conversation with angel Gabriel, the welcome of disheveled shepherds, and the Child in a diaper. It made me smile and remember my own birth miracles, and all that a newborn promises of hope, peace, joy and love. And the gift of Emmanuel, God's Son, who offers life and love to the whole world eternally!

God came as and like a child. The scandal of social distancing restrictions at times of traditional celebrations is changed by the perspective of the newborn Child. Hope cannot be taken away, our human connectedness will always find new ways for peace, and faith will stir us to seek joy and delight, and frame our season with love. May we take into 2021 what we have learned about ourselves and our world, trust even in our vulnerability, hope and reach out even in our own difficulties. Because the Child didn't come just for Christmas, but for the life of all the world every day and always.

Happy New Year!

Helen



A Common Humanity Practice

As we begin a new year I am thinking of ways I can more effectively integrate spiritual practices into my life especially as the pandemic has changed the ways we as Christians gather for communal prayer. I came across a suggestion by Archbishop Desmond Tutu that he calls "A Common Humanity Practice." He says it is particularly useful for times when we feel lonely.

Archbishop Tutu reminds us that in the times when we feel disconnected from the people around us we should remember that we share a deep and common bond with everyone on earth. He says, "We are all cousins, really, perhaps just a few thousand times removed." The Archbishop outlines this practice we can do when we feel alone:

Imagine someone you love—a family member, a friend, or a pet. Bring their image to mind and recall the love you have for them and feel from them.

Imagine their desire to be happy and avoid suffering. Reflect on how they live their life to achieve this aspiration.

Think of someone you know, but do not know well. Recognize how your feelings for that person are different from the feelings you had toward the person you previously thought about. We often do not feel a connection with people we consider to be strangers. But, try to imagine being this second person and the ways they desire to be happy and avoid suffering. They share these desires with you. Meditate on your shared connection with them—our common humanity as we both share the image of God in our creation. Perhaps they are at this minute lonely like you. Reaching out to them might be a gift.

Take this sense of connection to the rest of the world. What are the ways you can acknowledge your connection to every person in this world? How can we as Christian people live in ways that invite all people to share in our beloved community?

Throughout this next year it's my goal to engage in this practice several times per week. I hope that as I practice this my loneliness will transform from self-pity to gratitude for the world around me and a motivation to share the love of Christ with those I meet.

What spiritual practices are you integrating into your life for 2021?

*This spiritual practice can be found in The Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams, *The Book of Joy* (New York: Avery, 2016), pages 320-322.

Charles Halton

Senior Warden's Corner



Happy New Year! Like many of you, I am sure you are happy that 2020 is over. Each year at this time, I tend to reflect on the happy and sad times of the year and love starting out with a clean slate for the new year, where nothing is screwed up....YET! We've closed up the year with the birth of Christ, which brings new hope and new energy. On January 10 @ 11 a.m. we will be hosting our first ever virtual annual parish meeting via a Zoom webinar that will also be livestreamed on our Facebook page. I think you will be interested in hearing how far we reached in 2020 and how your support has allowed us to keep our ministries moving forward. God has continued to bless our small church on Parkers Mill Rd. Please join us for that virtual event.

I suspect in Q1 of 2021, many of our most vulnerable parishioners will receive the vaccine to dampen the fear of COVID. Around Easter, like Christ's emergence from the tomb, people will probably begin to emerge from their year long hibernation and enjoy the outdoors and some social gatherings. It will be great to see people that we have not seen in a long time.

Perhaps the pandemic has made me realize in 2020 that the best of plans sometimes just don't work out. Life is fragile. God has other things in mind for us. Life certainly got simpler in many ways in 2020. My hope is that in 2021, I remember to enjoy some of the very peaceful parts of life and routines that 2020 has brought me. A routine of prayer, reflection and investing in relationships.

Keep the faith and see you in 2021!

Dave Sevigny
Sr. Warden

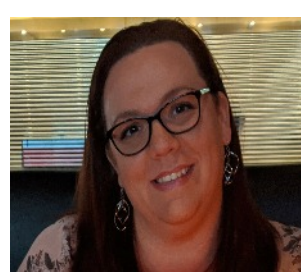


Finance Information

Happy New Year from the Saint Raphael's Finance Committee.

As the incoming Chair of the Finance Committee, I am looking forward to the new year with renewed hope for 2021; while remaining grateful for all the work and ingenuity that our leadership and community have brought together to keep us in communion throughout 2020. We are ending the year on a much better note than we originally expected once the pandemic hit.

We are expected to end the year in the black thanks to our amazing community who have remained faithful to our pledges. I know times have been difficult, and I am so thankful that St Raphael's has remained in your hearts and minds.



At the annual meeting we will be discussing our financial situation in more depth, outlining our goals and objectives as a parish for the upcoming year. This meeting will be conducted virtually, and instructions for participation can be found in this issue of the Herald. Information will also be available on our Facebook page, and sent out in eminders. We hope you will join us!

I would like to take a moment to personally thank our outgoing Chair, Roger Kirk for his three years of leadership of this committee. I am also grateful that Roger will remain on the committee for 2021. I will rest easy knowing I have his experience and perspective available. I also want to thank Patty Bond for her service to the Finance Committee as she rolls off the committee this year.

The current roster for the 2021 Finance Committee includes: Rev. Helen, Paula Sevigny as Treasurer, Dave Sevigny as Sr. Warden, and Afsi Davis and Roger Kirk as members. The Finance Committee generally meets the second Tuesday of every month to review our budget and financial standing throughout the year. If you are interested in service to Saint Raphael's and have the skills and/or desire to contribute to the financial health of our church, please contact me.

Thank you,
Amanda Vance
Incoming Finance Committee Chair | alvance13@gmail.com

A View from the Pew

Keeping Christmas

Another wonderful Christmas, thank you God, thank you Jesus! I am extremely blessed. But I realize that the more Christmases I have experienced inevitably leaves fewer ahead of me. Mixing Joel Osteen (the most positive people-empowerer on the planet, in one of his episodes he urges us to follow what God puts into our hearts to be our best selves regardless of what others may think, for we have such a short time to achieve our destiny and to be all God has in store for us--TARRY NOT!) with Schindler's List (when Oskar Schindler who after the allies liberated the Nazi death camps came to the realization that while he saved many during the holocaust he cringed with regret that he could have done more, just one more life, had he gone all out.) I now wonder HOW, how can I truly carry Christmas--the meaning and life-changing import of Christmas--with me throughout the year, every day of every year? Time is short--I should TARRY NOT!



Richard Dawahare

And so, what I am left with is this, simple: I will try to consciously, intentionally BE MORE LIKE JESUS every day. It begins and ends with love, for ALL, with huge amounts of TRUTH, JUSTICE, MERCY, compassion, empathy, humility, and forgiveness (for others as well as me) in between. I want to improve any situation into which my daily walk takes me, to be a force for win/win positivity for all, the best I can. Like you, I want to help people, encourage them, lift them.

Keeping Jesus in my mind, reading and re-reading his Way, his teachings, what he did and how he did it, has always fueled me. But as my time on earth grows shorter, I am reminded to focus even more on being like Jesus--the Reason for the Season and the most loving, honest, caring, and courageous leader our world has ever seen.

Yes, I want to be more like Jesus. You probably do too. And there is no religious test for this. "Jesus-love" lies beyond religion. His goodness and his Way are for ALL, and the more we all live like Jesus, the closer to "on earth as it is in heaven" we will come.

Richard F. Dawahare

Annual Parish Meeting & Vestry Candidates

St. Raphael Annual Meeting Notice Sunday, January 10, 2021 @ 11 a.m (Part of the 11 a.m. Livestream Eucharist)

The required annual meeting of St. Raphael Church will take place on Sunday, January 10, 2021 @ 11 a.m. The meeting will be integrated into the 11 a.m. Eucharist. The service and meeting will be in a Zoom webinar format and will be also be live streamed (with a slight delay) on Facebook only. Please register (required so we can certify attendance) to attend the meeting via Zoom at the following link:

When: Jan 10, 2021 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Topic: St. Raphael Annual Meeting, January 10, 2021

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kxmE4Mn7TdmONF5U6MoY8w

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Vestry Candidates: The following people have submitted their names for Vestry Candidates and, if elected, will serve from 2021-2023

Dave Sevigny
St Raphael member since 1996



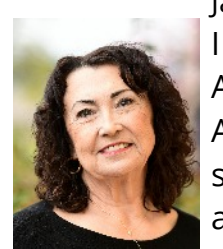
I came to St. Raphael's with my wife, Paula and two young children (Lauren and Andrew) in 1996. The kids are grown and gone, and Paula and I attend as often as we can. We travel frequently, and have a place at Lake Herrington, where we enjoy many sunny lazy days in the summer. I've been on vestries of four different St. Raphael's rectors, and served in most every position and function of our church, including the diocesan level. It is hard to believe that Paula and I are amongst the long-term members at this point, and we've seen a lot of St. Raphael's history. I am excited about serving again with Rev. Helen (my 5th rector) and a group of parishioners who are passionate about our church.

Margaret McGladrey, PhD
St. Raphael member since 2019



After growing up as the child of music ministers in the United Methodist Church in Oregon and serving as a deacon (a lay ministry order) in a Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) here in Lexington, I joined St. Raphael after falling in love with Anglicanism while living in Boston in 2018 for a postdoctoral fellowship. Anglicanism's combination of rich theological and liturgical traditions with heart-centered devotional practices, like the Daily Office that has become part of my life's rhythm, feels like coming home. My husband is a professor of Chinese literature and language at University of Kentucky (UK), and I manage several institutional research initiatives at UK in addition to teaching Kundalini Yoga for almost 15 years and serving vulnerable families through a variety of local mission and advocacy initiatives. This past year, I worked closely with Rev. Helen on our Virtual Dinner Church series to feature the missions of local nonprofit organizations and how these missions connect with Scripture and discipleship. You've also seen me in the St. Raphael choir loft before the pandemic. In addition to spending time with my faith community, I enjoy traveling and spending time with our fur-babies (two dogs and two cats).

Janis Rosebrook



I am a life-long Episcopalian. I moved here to Lexington 2 ½ years ago from Los Angeles. I've been a member of St. Raphael for a year and a half. In Los Angeles, I was a vestry member, and was a member of Diocesan Council. I served 4 terms as President of the Board of Directors for the Diocesan adoption agency.

At St. Raphael I work in the office (reorganizing the church files), am a Sunday School Teacher, lay reader, and was in charge of the acolytes. I retired from UCLA 12 years ago. At UCLA I was Assistant Dean and CFAO of a large research unit. I do not have children, but do have a nephew who lives in Bowling Green. I'm proud of his service as a first responder.

A Church Mouse in God's House



As we begin the artificial designation of what you refer to as a "new year" I have been reflecting on how you humans talk about time. It's pretty amusing. How many times have I heard you talking about the "storm of the century." The "game of the century." And of course most recently the "100 year virus." O.k., it's interesting that the Spanish Flu happened about one hundred years ago, but do you figure you're safe from another pandemic until 2120? After your "storms of the century" do you tell your road crews to take off for a century? I could remind you to live in the moment, but really, what's the point?

Another one of my favorite things you say is "never in a million years did I think X would happen." First of all, I don't even know what you're talking about. Do you mean that if you lived for a million years you couldn't see it happening? Or is it like some multiverse situation in which if you lived this one year a million times you couldn't see it happening? But either way... just how bad is your imagination? Given a million years I can see a LOT of things happening: an asteroid destroying all life on Earth; chickens learning to speak; aliens visiting us (and vice versa); glorious advancements in the production of cheese. Come on, you're supposed to be the big brains. But I hear people say, "never in a million years did I think I'd be unemployed, without food and soon to be evicted." Seriously, you think you're that special? Talk about privilege! News flash: plenty of people on the planet don't have to try (and fail) to imagine such things happening in "a million years" because they're living that reality already!

Is that why as a species you're not more generous to the less well off? Because you can't imagine their life, or you living it? Because you think you're entitled to a good life in a way that they're not? We mice know terrible things could befall us at any moment, we don't kid ourselves. We're grateful for what we have - and I don't mean the "royal we" - I mean what the community has, because it's not mine, it's our's.

Maybe in a million years you will begin to think along these lines. I CAN imagine it.



Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please continue to support St. Raphael Episcopal Church.

You can give online at our secure Online Giving page or mail in a check. The mailing address is in the footer of this email. Contributions in any amount are very much needed and appreciated.

ST. RAPHAEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LEXINGTON KY



Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God.

EPHESIANS 5:2

Please Subscribe to our YouTube Channel!

Once we get 100 subscribers we can add the St. Raphael name to our channel URL, which will help others to find it through Search. There is no cost to subscribe. You don't have to be a paid YouTube subscriber or church member to subscribe to our channel.

Upcoming Services & Information:

Sunday, January 3rd is the Second Sunday after Christmas

Holy Eucharist online January 3rd, 11 a.m. on Facebook and YouTube

Due to "red zone" status for Covid-19 infections for our county, in-person services have been cancelled for the foreseeable future. Rev. Helen will notify the congregation when in-person services resume.

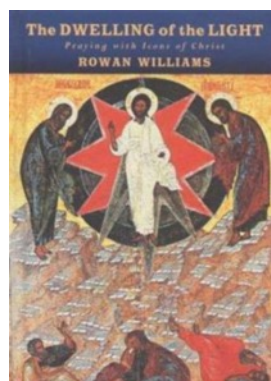
Compline services 7 p.m. Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays.

Deacon Charles and Rev. Helen will lead on alternate Sundays, Sister Becky Cooper and Rose Canon alternate Tuesdays, Erika Mayers and Diane Whorley will alternate on Fridays. Find the livestreams on our Facebook Page.

A message from Rev. Helen:

On January 6, we move into Epiphany on our journey towards Lent. This year, there will be a focus on spiritual growth at St Raphael's, a learning that came from our spiritual inventory last year, and a means of supporting and connecting us all in the ongoing social distancing required by the pandemic.

For Epiphany, we will be sending you prayers for these weeks and also chalk to mark your doors. Included in the packet, for those who let Rev Helen or Deacon Charles know, we will send a copy of Rowan William's short book on praying with icons, shown here. For those who prefer Kindle, please find this book. We shall plan a couple of Sunday zoom-times to chat about this. You might also remind yourselves of all the icons we have in the chapel of St R in the video posted to Facebook last week in which Margaret sang, 'What Child is this?'



Beware of phishing emails from the fake Rev. Helen or Bishop Mark.

Spammers have created fake email accounts using the profile pictures of Rev. Helen and also Bishop Mark and are using these accounts to ask for help. Please do not reply to these emails. Delete them. Official emails from Rev. Helen will come from revhelen@sreclx.org. Official emails from the diocese will come from an email address with a @diolex.org ending.

Becoming a Member - Family Information Record

Are you new to St. Raphael's? Does St. Raphael's have your updated contact information? Visit our new page: <https://sreclx.org/becoming-a-member-family-information-record/>

Christmas Offering

You are invited to make a Christmas Offering via our secure online form at <https://sreclx.org/christmas-offering/> or by mailing a check to St. Raphael Episcopal Church, 1891 Parkers Mill Rd. Lexington KY 40504

A Christmas Offering

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. John 1:14



January Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Gilbert Booth	Jan 5
Dana Berry	Jan 9
Al Smith	Jan 9
Amanda Vance	Jan 13
Carol Summers	Jan 14
Patty Bond	Jan 15
Paul Wilson	Jan 18
Michael Summers	Jan 19
Natey Peterson	Jan 20
Laura Vance	Jan 26
Kylie Van Koeving	Jan 27
Drew Anderson	Jan 28
Sonja Gaitskill	Jan 29
Trevor Krolak	Jan 29
Katherine Olson	Jan 29
Mellisa Booth	Jan 31
Heather Matics	Jan 31

Anniversaries

Shaunne Bourland	Jan 1
Don & Vicki Colliver	Jan 1

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.

Prayer Requests:

Long term prayer list: Art, Jack, Laura, Hilda, Lee, Mary Jane, Paul, Roy, Joan, Martha-Helen & Al, Pat Dinsmore, Steve & Ginger, Rose, Sonya, Don & Gail, Bill, Paula, Doug

Currently in need of prayer: Kenneth, Vicki, Seth, Sue, Tommy, Stephen, Noah, Maggie, the Fowler family, Carl, Gail, Annette

Recently deceased: Anna Mullins

Please contact Rev. Helen for prayer list changes.

Services - Current Schedule

Sunday Services

Virtual Worship on Facebook & You Tube

11:00 a.m. Rite II

Each week the Wednesday Noon Healing Service will be published to the Facebook Page.

Compline services

Deacon Charles and Rev. Helen will lead on alternate Sundays, Sister Becky Cooper and Rose Canon alternate Tuesdays, Erika Mayers and Diane Whorley will alternate on Fridays. Find the livestreams on our Facebook Page.



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Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koeving, Rector
Phone: 859-255-4987
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Website: www.sreclex.org

Articles and news information for Feb. must be submitted by **Jan. 24, 2021** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

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