



From Our Rector & Deacon

Well, how's it going? How is Lent going with you, with your heart, soul and mind? And with your neighbor? I hope you found a couple of prompts in the Lenten packets to an observance of this time that will connect us on the journey in some way. I was so sorry that we weren't able to be face to face on Ash Wednesday (though not only because of covid restrictions, but all that icy weather too!). That service holds so much that makes a profound start to the Lenten journey:



Rev. Canon Dr. Helen Van Koevering

Firstly, the Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ....

And then, at the imposition of ashes, 'Almighty God, you have created us out of the dust of the earth; Grant that these ashes may be to us a sign of our mortality and penitence, that we remember that it is only by your gracious gift that we are given everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen' I always feel myself in awe of the next words repeated every time I mark each forehead: 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.'

That's a deeply calming thought – that we are held in God's hands from beginning to end, creation through to eternal life. We are dust. This is a right beginning for repentance, forgiveness and turning around. We are worthy of God's grace even though we are dust. Beloved just because we are. We all are. And a willingness to open us ourselves to forgive and be forgiven is a mark of our humanity touched by God. The Lord's Prayer is central to our worship, where we request our daily bread from God, which includes our own forgiveness and our forgiveness of others. Our words acknowledge what our souls know – that we flourish in restored relationships and that involves us all in the healing of what we all have wounded. What we need is grace and re-creation for a new way moving forward. The bread comes down from heaven to give life to us and the world. As I once heard someone preach, mutual reconciliation is a sign of the Spirit, a new possibility and a sign of God's future at work.

All around us, we see signs of urgent need for the work of reconciliation – the environment, our race relations, our areas of social inequalities, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our families, and our churches. Lent is a time for reconciliation that begins with remembering ourselves as dust, and praying 'create and make in us new and contrite hearts'.

See you soon!

With my love and prayers,
Helen



Deacon Charles

As we are on a Lenten journey toward Holy Week I am already thinking about the biblical stories of Jesus' last week of his earthly life and what it can teach me here and now. One of the stories circulating most often in my head is the one St. John records about one of the most powerful teaching demonstrations of Jesus entire ministry (John 13:1-20). The disciples had gathered around a table to eat with Jesus one last time. Just before the meal, Jesus got up and washed the disciple's feet.

It was a selfless and others-serving thing to do. People in the ancient Mediterranean wore open sandals, and they walked through dusty streets that were often littered with trash and stained with sewage. When an individual of means arrived home, the person of lowest rank in the household would bring a water basin and towel to them, take their sandals off, and wash the grime from their feet so they didn't bring disease and filth inside.

After Jesus dried the last of the disciples' feet, this is what he said: "For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them."

Jesus teaches his disciples several things here. Among them are that all the followers of Jesus are on an equal plane. Every organization needs leaders, but no leader grades out of acts of service. Every disciple of Jesus shares a central calling—to serve those around them with acts of love. We often think of deacons as exemplifying this act of service and in many ways they do. I wear a sash that goes across my chest which represents this dedication to acts of service. But no one is exempt from this holy, joyous and difficult invitation. In fact, some bishops wear a deacon's stole underneath their vestments to remind them that they always retain this service role. But a life of serving others includes us all—ordained and lay. Many communities of faith remind themselves of this teaching each Maundy Thursday when the congregation liturgically washes each other's feet.

Depending on the prevalence of covid in our city, we might not get to do this together this year, but nonetheless, let us make a point of reminding ourselves of the importance and centrality of service within the Christian calling. What if each of us created a new habit of looking for ways—small and large—to engage in five acts of intentional service each week? That would be 260 intentional acts of service per year! It could be as simple as calling or emailing a lonely friend to say hello or donating food to the pantry. Individually, these acts might seem small, but if all of did them consistently, they could change our city.

Senior Warden's Corner

Planning



Dave Sevigny
Sr. Warden

As we fully enter lent, the vestry has finished a retreat that was a combination in person and remote two-day event in early February. The conversations we had were difficult at times, juggling both in person and remote participants. Like the celebration of Pentecost, I felt like we were having multiple conversations in different languages, but in our case, we all weren't hearing each other.

It has made me reflect that COVID has created different church views of reality for us. Without the normal feedback loop that takes place when we see each other each week on a Sunday, we tend to not always know if we are communicating in the same language, and if the message is getting heard. We do not realize that parishioner A may be getting hugely fulfilled by attending a mid-week livestreamed evening prayer, parishioner B has found a new way to pray daily, and parishioner C may have checked out altogether, because that is all they can manage, and are just waiting for life to return to some sort of normal again. You will start to see some changes in the way we communicate and interact during livestreams to try and break those barriers down.

With this in mind, Rev. Helen, Deacon Charles and myself met this week after a multiweek pause to discuss visioning and planning. Typical vestry activities at this time of year include putting together a planning calendar and events around basic church themes and seasons. This year is profoundly difficult because we are weary of guessing at the future—one that continues to be uncertain. We realized during the Renewalworks process last year that began our discussion of spiritual renewal, that we lacked a solid foundation and visioning of what a truly enlightened parish of St. Raphael's might look like over the next 5 years. Rev. Helen's experience with explosive church growth in Mozambique, Deacon Charles passion for visioning and planning, and my type A driving mentality, might have been just what God planned for St. Raphael's at this time.

So several of our parishioners and leadership will be taking the season of Lent to pray, contemplate and plan. Our goal is that during the Easter season, we will have something more profound to share with you all. Like Christ's triumph over death at Easter, may we be filled with his guiding light for our church and its people. May God bless all of you during this season!

A View from the Pew

Presidents, Pink Floyd, and Church Pew Poets

I was working on my piece for this issue, finally getting to a topic I've long wanted to explore, namely, that many of the exhortations of Jesus were made to his audience at that time, for that time, a fact that has been lost on generations of believers. But fate intervened. I am reading (listening to) President Barack Obama's incredible new autobiography, *A Promised Land*. From the time I heard his 2004 keynote speech for John Kerry I knew he was a man of destiny, that he would be our next president. Generations from now he his presidency will be marveled about and studied the world over. Just how this most improbable but purely "anything is possible in America" story came to be will studied and lauded. Americans will one day hoist this achievement as proof of the bedrock truth of America's world-leading foundational values. "Liberty and justice for all" and "All people are created equal" are no mere slogans. Maybe they'll make "Obama—the Musical" someday. And maybe it will dwarf Hamilton. I hope so. But I digress.



Richard Dawahare

President Obama narrates the book himself and is spellbinding. Only in America can a son of a hippie-era mother, who left two husbands to assert her independence, who was a progressive humanist and raised her children to care and treat others right, who raised her son partly in Indonesia, then sent him to her parents in Hawaii (where he WAS in fact BORN!), who only met his Kenyan father once during a summer visit, who was lackadaisical in school, and only caught fire while in college when he had an epiphany of what America needed and that we truly did have more in common, we just needed to listen to one another, who focused, made wise decisions about jobs that suited his calling (legal aid lawyer, community organizer, law teacher), met his wife, and started analyzing how best to instill his vision of unity and an America that works for everybody, asking himself just what he could do and how he, a non-politician outsider, should proceed. A combination of fate, vision and the help of others propelled him to an Illinois state representative seat, a failed run for Congress, a couple of years focusing on his family that now included his two young daughters, then a successful run for US Senate, and then his "Audacity of Hope" capturing the nation, leading Senate leaders Harry Reid and Ted Kennedy to encourage him to go for the presidency.

After his announcement speech before thousands of supporters he recalled a well-wisher saying that this was God's plan, and it was his destiny. Obama then said that he did not believe in destiny: "The truth is, I've never been a big believer in destiny. I worry that it encourages resignation in the down-and-out and complacency among the powerful." Earlier he had said that "I suspect that God's plan, whatever it is, works on a scale too large to admit our mortal tribulations; that in a single lifetime, accidents and happenstance determine more than we care to admit; and that the best we can do is to try to align ourselves with what we feel is right and construct some meaning out of our confusion, and with grace and nerve play at each moment the hand that we're dealt."

This struck me, for I had been waiting to hear what role God and his faith had in his story, but he never mentioned it until now. And while I am very early in the book, and while I am sure he is a man of faith, to this point he did not seem to depend on some divine direction, but, just as he said, to align himself with what he felt was right and to live each moment best he could. This resonates with me, but I must admit, at this stage of my life I pray for direction on nearly every step I make.

I was musing on this in the car when Sirius played a Pink Floyd song from *Dark Side of the Moon*, one of the most popular albums of all time. And like much of the music from one's senior year in high school, it is among my all-time favorites. I once read about the band members and learned they are all atheists. I mused about that: this group of supremely talented musicians, good family men even (at least David Gilmour, learned from a recent tv special). These geniuses put out music that stirs my senses and rocks my soul. And to the extent that all good music and art (side query—is there any really not good art or is it all just in the eye of the beholder??) is from or of God, well, theirs certainly was, whether they acknowledged a belief in a deity or not. The point is, well, they just did, like Obama, following their own talents and doing what they could in the moment.

Next, standing in line at Starbucks, time to check the phone. A Facebook message, oh good, another superb poem from our own C.C. Johnson! The constant theme in C.C.'s poetry is the overwhelming reality of peace and joy she experiences from her total faith in, dependence upon, and deliverance received from God and the healing hand of Jesus. Seemingly completely the opposite of the faithful but rationally-driven President Obama, and of the non-faithful deniers of any higher power just doing their thing, C.C. totally puts it all in God's hands. She shares in a most artistic way how her complete dependence on God gives her a peace that truly surpasses all understanding.

But David Gilmour looked pretty happy, now a 70+ something maybe grandfather, strumming his famous guitar on one of their classics. President Obama seems to be fulfilled with a similar sense of peace and joy. And both have achieved the pinnacle of success and accomplishment just doing their thing the best they could do in the moment.

Religion, no religion? Belief, no belief? Faith in a supernatural power, no such faith? For me, is success, peace and joy only possible through constant prayer and dependence on the light from above, like C.C.? Maybe it is a both/and. We can have that faith, knowing that God is directing like C.C., all the while staying present in our world, aligning with righteousness, and doing the best we can in each moment, like President Obama, and then just releasing our inner artist like Pink Floyd.

Perhaps the answer lies in another famous musician's exhortations: "Whatever gets you through the night, it's all right, it's all right." Fittingly, John Lennon's other verses are whatever gets you through your life and whatever gets you to the light. It's all right, it's all right.

Richard Dawahare, February 26, 2021

Upcoming dates in the Justice Ministry:

St Raphael's Network Meeting: Wednesday, March 17th at 6:30pm. All St Raphael's members involved in or interested in justice ministry should attend! We will hear updates on our work in the justice ministry, build relationships within the congregation, and choose names to invite to the Nehemiah Action.

The zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85285570342>

Zoom meeting ID: 852 8557 0342

Rally: Tuesday, March 23rd at 7pm on zoom. We will hear issue updates, check in on our network building, and prepare for the tension at the Nehemiah Action. All Justice Ministry Network Members from across Lexington commit to attend.

Nehemiah Action: Tuesday, April 27th!! Together as people of faith we will present our city officials with proposals for change! This event is for everyone. There will be a drive-in option and an online option.

More about BUILD

Building a United Interfaith Lexington through Direct-Action (BUILD) is an organization of 26 religious congregations located in Lexington, Kentucky. BUILD is an interfaith, interracial, grassroots, multi-issue, proactive organization. Since its inception in 2003, BUILD has been constituent-led and employ the practices of direct-action community organizing. BUILD is developing a powerful grassroots organization, made up of congregations situated in low-to moderate-income communities that are capable of creating system-wide change in Lexington.

The goals of BUILD are:

- To develop a responsible organization to address local issues of concern to member congregations/groups, through a process of education, training, research, and action.
- To strengthen the individual congregations/groups by training existing leaders in organizing skills, identifying and training potential leaders, building the participation of larger numbers of their members, and attracting the participation of new members.
- To build and deepen relationships among diverse segments of our community by bringing together groups from various cultural, economic, and religious backgrounds around common interests.
- To enable religious congregations and neighborhood groups to act on our shared values of human worth, dignity, and justice.

Call for articles for future Herald Newsletters

We'd like to offer an opportunity to all our parishioners to write articles for the Herald each month. You can submit an editorial piece on a matter of Spiritual Reflection, a poem, or something that has meant a lot to you during this Covid-time. Please keep in mind that this is not a place to debate political topics, but to share something that has made your life better, or more spiritual. We would need the article to be less than 400 words, and should be submitted to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com by the 15th of each month.

A Church Mouse in God's House

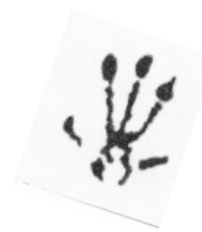


Did you see me? I was there... You had to look pretty closely, but during one of the online services you may have noticed yours truly making an appearance. It wasn't intentional, but my friends and family have been making a big deal about it ever since. And really, I have to admit that I think some of the fame has gone to my head.

And this brings us to yet another difference between our species. As mice we generally try not to be seen as much as possible. You've probably noticed that we hide in the dark, in holes, in any place that you are not looking for us. Sometimes our lives depend on it. Sometimes it's just our nature. I don't want to generalize, but it seems that a lot of your species like to be seen and heard as often as possible. I know that some of you are more like us, but for others it almost seems like your lives depend on being noticed.

I often wonder why this is the case. Do some of you need constant validation in order to prove to yourselves that you are worthy? Are you compensating for some lack of attention during childhood? Are you worried that someone else will get the credit that you deserve?

I guess it's not altogether unhealthy. I mean, we do need leaders who are role models to speak out boldly for things that are right and that they believe in. As usual, we mice could probably learn a few things from your behavior in this regard. But I also hear you tell each other that you are worthy no matter what. That it is not what you have accomplished or failed to accomplish that defines you as a person. How many times have I heard one of your leaders say that your God loves and values you simply because you are a member of creation. Do you believe that?



Announcements & Upcoming Events

Please continue to support St. Raphael Episcopal Church.

Introducing a new online giving portal in 2021 - Engage

St. Raphael Church has a new online giving portal called Engage. This portal will replace our Virtual Collection Plate with Square. Engage Online Giving allows you to create one-time and recurring gifts from any computer or mobile device. Users can view and give to a full list of all giving funds. You can set up multiple credit cards, debit cards, or ACH checking accounts. Users can also update their own data (addresses, family members and even upload a picture). Users can view their giving history (includes giving in previous years not given through Engage).

To access Engage and setup your user account, please go to <https://engage.suran.com/sreclex>

You can also access this page via the menu on our website at sreclex.org.

Plans for Lent

The season of Lent is fast approaching, a time of penitence and reflection leading us to Holy Week. To encourage your Lenten journey this year, we will be sending out Lenten materials over the next two weeks which will include:

1. Anglican prayer beads and prayers to use those beads on Fridays during Lent. In our recent parish spiritual inventory, we heard of the desire to grow spiritually and we are focusing on some different ways of developing our prayer lives in this first part of 2021. During Epiphany, we looked at praying with icons like the ones we have in St Raphael's. Now, during Lent, we shall practice the tactile aid to prayer that are Anglican prayer beads. Instructions are also included in the packet, and we shall follow this form of prayer together on Fridays in Lent at 11am on Facebook. Some, who are already used to praying in this way, might want to purchase this Lent devotional that uses beads to pray daily, with Scriptures.

3. For families, and for any who enjoy coloring (another great aid to meditational prayer!), there are also materials to focus on the Stations of the Cross every Friday in Lent and Good Friday in Holy Week. You might like to color all of these designs to create your own Stations at home.

We will be focusing on the Stations of the Cross in a variety of formats each Friday during Lent, and Deacon Charles and I will be offering a recorded series of Stations from various locations around Lexington on those Fridays at midday. More details will follow.

4. As a reminder that Lent is a time to fast and respond to the needy in our community, our Lent packet also includes a Lent Appeal list to replenish our Angel Pantry. We have distributed the food donated during Advent to the homeless, and there are so many needy in these days. Please bring your contributions to church during office hours (10am-2pm Monday to Thursday).

5. There are also a couple of helpful, fun charts to help you think about your Lenten discipline this year that doesn't involve giving up chocolate! Enjoy!

Lenten Study - Five Spiritual Exercises

Would you like to feel God's presence more deeply? We will offer a Zoom-based course that will introduce five ancient spiritual exercises that have helped Christians cultivate a more joyful and life-giving relationship with God and neighbor. The class, led by Deacon Charles, will meet for five Sundays at 9:30 a.m. in Lent.

To receive the Zoom link for these sessions, which will begin February 21st, please make sure you are on our email list. If you don't receive weekly emails from St. Raphael's please sign up by notifying the office.

Lifeline Screening hosted at St. Raphael's

Save the date: Friday, April 23, 2021.

Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings, will offer affordable, non-invasive and painless health screenings at St. Raphael Episcopal Church on Friday, April 23, 2021.

A package of five screenings to identify risk for stroke, heart disease and other chronic conditions will be offered:

Carotid artery ultrasound to identify plaque buildup in the carotid arteries, a major risk factor for stroke

Abdominal aortic aneurysm ultrasound to identify presence of an enlargement in the largest blood vessel in the body

An EKG to identify the presence of atrial fibrillation, which increases the risk for stroke

Ultrasound of the lower legs to look for plaque buildup known as peripheral artery disease

Ultrasound of the shin bone to identify risk for osteoporosis

These 5 vital screenings are offered for only \$149 and take 60-90 minutes to complete. If you register today, you will receive a \$10 discount.

Register by calling toll free 1-888-653-6441 or text the word "circle" to 797979.

The mission of Life Line Screening is to provide advance, yet affordable and convenient health screenings that supplement your traditional healthcare.

They can help make you aware of a previously silent, unrecognized problem that can now get treated at an early stage, or confirm that you are on the right path and should continue your healthy habits.

March Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Christopher Young	Mar 2	Vicky Colliver	Mar 18
Erika Mayers	Mar 4	Gail Miller	Mar 19
Marla Fox	Mar 6	Nancy Marshall	Mar 20
Debbie Emrick	Mar 9	Amy Fowler	Mar 23
Kate Melton	Mar 9	Jackie Murphy	Mar 23
John LoBianco	Mar 11	Ron Formisano	Mar 31
Annette Bigler	Mar 14	Mary Glancy	Mar 31
Adam Curci	Mar 16		
Laura Formisano	Mar 16	Jeff Carter	March 15
JeanEllen Melton	Mar 17	Dave & Paula Sevigny	March 19
Amanda Whorley	Mar 17	Mary Glancy	March 27

Anniversaries

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:

Prayers Requested

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.

Currently in need of prayer: Kenneth, Seth, Noah, Maggie, the Fowler family, Carl, Gail, Annette, Erika, Diane, Louise, Anna Margaret, Marge, Jim, Gordon, Eloise, Michael, and Elaine.

Recent Deaths: Delmer Cox's mother, Geneva Cox passed away Thursday, Feb. 25th. Please keep Delmer and their family in your prayers.

Please keep in your prayers all who have fallen ill from Covid-19. Please stay safe during this holiday season and find ways to stay connected and express love for one another while following recommended health guidelines.

Easter Flowers



As some restrictions are lifting with the decrease in active Covid Cases, the possibility of having in person Easter Services seems more certain, but is not 100% guaranteed. In years past, we have asked for donations for Easter Flowers for the Easter Service. This year, since we're not 100% sure what will be "the norm", we thought we would offer the opportunity for parishioners to donate towards altar flowers for the entire Easter Season, not just the First Sunday of Easter.

We expect to move into our plan for in-person services during this time (watch for further notice from Rev Helen) so would like to welcome folk with beautiful arrangements filling the church through the whole season.

People who donate in memory of a loved one before Holy Week shall have their and loved ones' names listed in our Easter Sunday bulletin.

Order for Easter Flowers

Please send an email order to the church to revhelen@sreclex.org by March 21st

Checks should be made out to St Raphael Episcopal Church, and on the memo line - write "Easter Flowers."

Email the following information by March 21:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Donation Amount: \$ _____

In Memory of: _____

In Thanksgiving for: _____

In Honor of: _____

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.



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

Articles and news information for Feb. must be submitted by **Mar. 22, 2021** to Dana Berry at danabruceberry@gmail.com

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